

INFORMAL TRANSPORT WORKERS PROJECT

EVALUATION REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Transport workers in the informal economy make up a significant and diverse section of transport workers globally, particularly but not exclusively in developing countries. They are an integral part of the transport industry.

The ITF Informal Transport Workers Project, implemented over three years, has demonstrated that they can be organized using varied and innovative strategies, are able to bargain collectively, and have the power to take action to back up their claims if necessary. It has also shown that informal transport work, although dominated by men, is by no means a male-only activity. Women informal transport workers are significantly present, but mainly in the lower segments of the industry and in service roles.

The project was particularly successful in reaching informal workers engaged in urban passenger transport through selected ITF affiliated unions in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It has also made some inroads into the long distance goods transport section in Africa.



More than 60 000 informal transport workers have been newly organized or joined the trade union family over the Project period, the biggest increases being a result of the affiliation of existing informal transport workers' associations. It was also especially successful in reaching out to women in informal transport and making them more visible.

Organising women into the unions -approximately 3,500 in total-, forming women's committees and electing women into leadership positions has given women confidence and a voice in the unions and in some cases with authorities and/or employers.

The Project introduced a number of method innovations, the most striking being the idea of working with and through 'mentor unions'. This not only made good use of existing union experience and capacities and was an effective use of resources, it also introduced new skills for both mentor and mentored unions. This was an experiment and the participants all testify to the power of the learning and sharing that has taken place as a result. Although success has been varied in different countries and regions, for a number of reasons, it has the potential to be a powerful methodology and warrants further development.

Other important innovations are the use of mapping to introduce union leaders to informal transport workers as well as to encourage their recruitment, especially of women transport workers; the setting up of the Informal Transport Workers Blog and the adoption of the Informal Transport Worker's Charter, providing a potential and focus for continuing activities and networking.

Overall the outcomes of the Project have exceeded expectations, achieving the anticipated result as well as some that are unexpected. Notable is the highlighting of, and linkages made with, existing ITF priorities such as BRT and violence against women.

The Project has been important in raising awareness of the effect of BRT on informal transport workers' livelihoods. It has also shown how violence and discrimination against informal women transport workers is rife. An additional "unexpected" outcome for the ITF is how the Project has helped to enhance the reputation of, and loyalty to, the ITF.

There are a number of ongoing issues and opportunities that still need to be tested over a longer period to assess the impact and sustainability. For example, can the unions successfully make the transition to full and equal democratic representation

in structures and leadership of informal transport workers? Can the organising process be extended creating a “mass membership” that can be activated in line with the ITF levers of power?

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure these can be followed through it is recommended that the ITF find ways to extend the project for a further three years. Regardless of whether a new project is possible, organising informal transport workers should continue to be a priority and be integrated into the strategies and activities of the ITF:

1. Include informal transport workers in current ITF priority activities, especially BRT and violence against women. Actively seek opportunities to do so in other strategic areas, with resources appropriately allocated.
2. Provide opportunities within the ITF for informal transport worker leaders to demonstrate the importance and potential power of organising informal transport workers, and the need for support and resources. Disseminate information widely amongst affiliates and beyond.
3. Positively promote the inclusion of informal transport workers in affiliate leadership positions (where informal worker members) and within the ITF structures, with special attention to women leadership.
4. Support networking between informal transport workers by providing practical support on communication and sharing experiences, and especially tracking and sharing how the Informal Workers’ Charter is being used as an immediate focus.
5. Be pro-active and take up opportunities to showcase the Project and work with other Global Union Federations (GUF), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the ILO, informal worker networks and supportive NGOs, on issues of workers in the informal economy.
6. Include representatives of informal transport workers in delegations and activities, for example, at the forthcoming ILC (2018-19) standard setting negotiations on Violence against Women and Men in the Workplace.

