

ITF Informal Transport Workers Project



Informal workers

ITF Joint Angola and Mozambique Campaign Seminar:

Multinational Companies and Informal Workers

Luanda, 28-31 July 2014

Informal Transport Workers



Special thanks to all the participants, and to the Federacao dos Sindicatos dos Trabalhadores dos Transportes e Comunicacoes de Angola (FSTTCA) for their generous hospitality and support.

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Dave Spooner, July 2014.

Introduction

A Joint campaign seminar on multinational companies and informal workers was organised for ITF affiliated unions in Mozambique and Angola in Luanda, 28-31 July 2014.

This is not the report of the seminar as a whole, but notes from the session discussing informal transport workers in the second half of the seminar. This is written from the perspective of the ITF's Informal Transport Workers Project, as a valuable addition to the regional leadership seminars on informal transport held in Niger (March 2014), Manila (May 2014) and Bogota (forthcoming, October 2014).

The seminar session was designed to enable participants to share and discuss experience and strategies for the successful organisation of informal transport workers, and the revision and reform of trade union policies, structures and procedures to enable informal workers to play a full and active part in the trade union movement.

Participants included representatives of

- Federacao dos Sindicatos dos Trabalhadores dos Transportes e Comunicacoes de Angola (FSTTCA)
- Sindicato Nacional do Trabalhadores dos Transportes Rodoviário e Assistência Técnica (SINTRAT), Mozambique
- Sindicato Nacional dos Trabalhadores da Industria Hoteleira, Turismo e Similares (SINDIHOTS), Mozambique
- Sindicato Nacional dos Trabalhadores dos Portos e Caminhos de Ferro (SINPOCAF), Mozambique
- Sindicato Nacional dos Trabalhadores da Marinha Mercante e Pescas (SINTAMP), Mozambique

Mapping Informal Transport Workers

After introductions and a briefing on the activity, the seminar was divided into three teams to gather information about informal urban transport workers in Luanda.

Luanda's passenger transport is dominated by *candongueiros*, or minibus taxis, run entirely by informal workers.

By talking with workers in and around the taxi stands, each team was asked to explore a series of questions:

1. What the workers do for a living (occupations)?
2. How much do they earn?
3. What are the employment relationships?
4. Are they organised? If so, how?
5. What are the key issues faced by the workers?
6. Who are (or could be) their 'bargaining counterparts'?



If time and circumstances permitted, they could also ask a sequence of supplementary questions:

1. How many workers are there in the workplace? How many men? How many women?
2. Where do workers meet when not working (restaurants, bars, churches etc)?
3. Where do they live?
4. How old are they?
5. Are there specific ethnic or social groups in the workplace?
6. What time do workers start / finish work?

Afterwards each team were given time to prepare presentations to the rest of the group. Taken as a whole, the presentations built a picture of the informal transport economy around the taxis in Luanda.

The three teams identified drivers, despatchers (*lotadores*)¹, conductors, and vendors (*zunguidos*) in the three taxi stands they visited.

Occupations	Earnings ²	Employment Relationships	Organisation
Drivers	The value of whatever fares they manage to collect after having to pay the vehicle owner KZ 10,000 per day, plus payments to the conductors, plus fuel etc. Suggested net earnings of +/- KZ 60,000 per month.	Informally employ conductors. Also pay despatchers (generally KZ 100 per trip).	None
Conductors	At the discretion of the drivers, but suggested net income of +/- KZ 3,000 per day	Informally employed by drivers	None
Despatchers	KZ 100 per bus-load	Self-employed. Paid per load by drivers	None
Street food vendors	Approximately KZ 2,500 per day	Informally waged by small, home-based, informal food producers	Some organised in association(s), but no details available
Other street vendors	Approximately KZ 3-5,000 per day	Self-employed	

Key Issues

Luanda is one of the most expensive cities in the world, and all the informal workers interviewed complained that they were not earning enough to live on. The high fees charged by the owners mean long hours for the drivers, starting at 5:00am, and even then they sometimes face a loss at the end of the day. The owners themselves are often policemen, powerful businessmen and/or politicians, organised into their own association. All the financial risk is carried by the drivers, the conductors, and the other workers dependant on the taxi industry.

¹ Widely known as “call-boys” elsewhere in Africa

² All figures are in Angolan Kwanza (KZ). USD 1.00 is approximately KZ 100.00

The drivers and conductors have no contract, no fixed working hours, no fixed income, no days off, no assistance when sick or injured, and no other forms of social protection. Verbal contracts with owners are on a daily or weekly basis.

In addition, the workers face harassment by the police. There are few and unclear stopping points, which causes frequent police intervention against the drivers. The vendors have no security or rights over their selling space and are frequently subject to seizure of their goods, arrest and beatings. Vendors are frequently injured by police attack or by being hit by vehicles.

The Informal Transport Economy

1. Who are the informal transport workers in our country? What do they do? (occupations)
2. Are there any women informal transport workers?
3. Where are they? (workplaces)
4. Are they organised?
 - a) in unions?
 - b) in associations?
 - c) in other ways?
5. Have we tried to organise them? What happened?

Organising Experience

The workshop was divided into national groups, with each asked to prepare a presentation on their experience in organising informal transport workers, and their unions' priorities for organising.

Mozambique

	Informal Occupations	Informal Women Workers?	Are they Organised?	Have there been Attempts to Organise?
Road Transport (SINTRAT)	Taxi and truck drivers, conductors, call-boys, supervisors, mechanics, electricians, painters, cleaners.	Drivers, conductors	Not in union, but in some associations and other forms of organisation	In process
Maritime (SINTAMP)	Carpenters, mechanics, sea-farers, cooks	Some fish-workers	Not in the union, but in associations that cooperate with the union	Yes
Tourism (SINDIHOTS)	Cooks, bar staff, bakers, function organisers, hotel cleaners	Many	Some	Yes
Docks & Railways (SINPOCAF)	Dockworkers	Some women dockworkers	Some are in SINCOCAF	Still negotiating

In 2012, the ITF with SASK support organised a workshop in Mozambique, and there were some similar discussions and activities to the seminar in Luanda, including a version of a mapping exercise

at a bus terminal. This established a small focal SINTRAT group responsible for organising at a bus stand. However, it proved difficult to recruit: people move on, and they seem to be “always starting” the process.

SINTRAT have held discussions with associations and informal savings groups, but the associations had their own rules and procedures, and were suffering from corrupt practices. This included using membership dues to bribe the bosses.



SINDIHOTS’s constitution allows for the inclusion of associations within the union structure. Informal food workers, particularly former hotel workers that now run their own snack bars and food stands, had formed ‘workers committees’, which were invited to affiliate to the union. The National Executive Committee was about to approve a new strategic plan, including the organisation of informal and casual workers.

It was noted that ASSOTSI (Associacao dos Operadores e Trabalhadores do Sector Informal), an association of informal workers in Mozambique, organised informal workers irrespective of occupation. It was also noted that the domestic workers union in Mozambique is very well organised.

Angola

Informal Occupations	Informal Women Workers?	Are they Organised?	Have there been Attempts to Organise?
Drivers	Some	Some informal associations	2006: an attempt to establish cooperative
Conductors	Some	No	No
Despatchers	Some	No	No
Stevedores	Some	No	No
Seafarers	Some	No	No
Fish workers	Some	No	No
Mechanics	Some	No	No
Painters	Some	No	No

The attempt to establish a cooperative of informal drivers was attempted in 2006, but reportedly failed when the government simply refused to respond to request for registration. It should be noted that some of the vehicle fleet owners are high-ranking government officials, and that the owners are well organised in their own taxi employers association. It is also significant that the rules for union registration in Angola require detailed information about individual members of the proposed union.

Angolan participants also reported that there was an association of street vendors and other informal workers, similar in character to ASSOTSI, but there have been no discussions between them and the unions.

Action Plans

The final session was concerned with the development of action plans by each of teams. The action plans were then presented and discussed with the plenary group as a whole.

Mozambique

- August 2014. Initiate research and mapping to determine the real situation for informal economy transport workers, with particular reference to:
 - Workers at the 'Junta' and 'Anju Voador' bus terminals in Maputo
 - Cleaners in Maputo railway station
 - Informal workers in the port
 - Informal workers in the tourism industry around 'Barraca de Museu' area of Maputo
- November 2014. Organise internal meeting to discuss informal worker organising strategy at the Mozambique ITF National Coordinating Committee.

Angola

- Organise meeting between unions in the transport federation / ITF affiliates to discuss informal worker organising strategy
- Organise meetings with informal workers' associations
- Contact government and the taxi-owners association to start process of recognition for collective bargaining

For news, updates, resources, links and other information about the ITF Informal Transport Workers Project, please visit the ITF's Informal Workers Blog at: www.itfglobal.org/informal_workers_blog.

If you would like to find out more about the ITF Informal Workers Project, or have any related queries, please email: dave.spooner@global-labour.net.