



ATGWU CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP



KAMPALA, UGANDA, 13-17 JULY 2015

Workshop Report

Special thanks to all the participants, and to John Mark Mwanika, Stephen Abima and Aziz Kiirya at ATGWU for all their hard work in organising and hosting the workshop.



Jess Whelligan GLI

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Supported by FNV Mondiaal





INTRODUCTION

The ATGWU Capacity Building workshop was held in Kampala, Uganda, from 13-17th July 2015. The workshop was organised and hosted by the Amalgamated Transport & General Workers’ Union, Uganda (ATGWU) and brought together 15 participants from Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. The following unions/associations were represented:

Uganda: eight participants from ATGWU & its affiliates - Entebbe Stages Conductors and Drivers Association (ESCADA); Entebbe Airport Taxi Cooperative Society (EATCS); Kampala Operational Taxi Stages Association (KOTSA); Uganda National Lorry Drivers and Transport Association (UNLDTA) & GALIMA Fights HIV/AIDS Initiative (GALIMA).

Kenya: three participants from the Matatu Workers’ Union (MWU) & two participants from the Public Transport Operators’ Union (PUTON).

Tanzania: two participants from the Communication and Transport Workers Union of Tanzania (COTWU-T).

The workshop took place as part of ATGWU’s mentoring programme in East Africa, which aims to work with selected unions in Kenya and Tanzania in order to improve their capacity to organise and represent informal economy transport workers.

The objective of the workshop was to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and experience regarding how to organise and empower the informal transport sector. It included both class-room based and practical fieldwork activities, and culminated in each participating union producing an “Action Plan” for what they want to achieve in this area, with the support of ATGWU, over a twelve month period (August 2015 – July 2016).

During the workshop, some participants and visitors to the workshop took part in video interviews. These interviews, along with other project materials, can be found on the project blog:

<http://www.informalworkersblog.org/>

Mentor Unions

The ITF Informal Transport Workers’ Project works with six “mentor unions” in five global regions: **South Asia:** NETWON and ITWAN from Nepal; **Latin America:** SNTT from Colombia; **West Africa:** SYNATRA from Niger; **East Africa:** ATGWU from Uganda, and **Southeast Asia:** NCTU from the Philippines

These unions were selected as mentor unions at the outset of the project because they had already demonstrated their ability to successfully organise precarious and informal transport workers in their countries.

The role of each mentor union is to act as mentors and facilitators to other ITF affiliates in their country, region and/or specific transport sectors in order to achieve the project objective of *improving the capacity of unions to organise and represent informal economy transport workers.*

The **ITF Informal Transport Workers’ Project** is coordinated by the Global Labour Institute (GLI) on behalf of the International Transportworkers’ Federation (ITF). Running from 2013-2016, the project has the objective of improving the capacity of unions to organise and represent informal economy transport workers. The project is financially supported by FNV Mondiaal.

SETTING THE SCENE

WELCOMING REMARKS

Stephen Abima

The workshop was launched with a welcoming address from Stephen Abima, the informal economy programme officer for ATGWU. Stephen explained that because the workplace of most informal transport workers is “the road”, the workshop would be orientated around practical activities in informal workplaces, such as trips to bus stations and taxi parks, which would then be followed by group discussions and presentations.

Stephen called for unity between all workers, regardless of religion, and used a cartoon of two donkeys overcoming a problem through cooperative action (rather than fighting against each other) as an easy way of demonstrating the importance of working together (see Fig. 1). He explained that unions need to lead by example – to show that working cooperatively improves the livelihoods of workers – and others will follow.

Stephen also drew attention to the importance of unions campaigning for good governance and transparency, especially in the area of social security. He explained that workers lose out when politicians “have their hands in the social security pot” and therefore tackling corruption in this area needs to be a focus area for unions. He pointed to ATGWU’s recent success in getting union members appointed to the government social security board (over 50% of the board are ATGWU members) – a tactic which has “largely cleared up” corruption through increased oversight of government activity in this area.

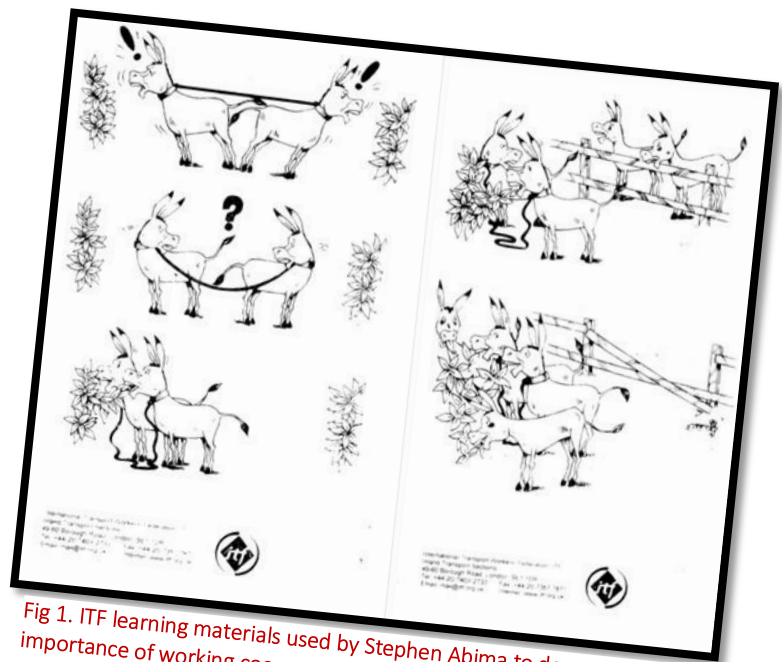


Fig 1. ITF learning materials used by Stephen Abima to demonstrate the importance of working cooperatively.

Aziz Kiirya & Owere Usher

The ATGWU General Secretary, Aziz Kiirya, and ATGWU National Secretary, Owere Wilson, also warmly welcomed participants and officially opened the workshop. General Secretary Aziz reiterated ATGWU’s commitment to organising in the informal transport sector and appealed to the participants



from Kenya and Tanzania to continue to work closely with ATGWU when they returned to their home countries.

Owere Usher highlighted the successful struggle undertaken by the ATGWU to organise taxi drivers in Kampala in the face of government interference in union elections (see KOTSA box, p.10). He urged participants to share their knowledge with others as well as to focus on the practical outcomes of the workshop.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

John Mark Mwanika, the project coordinator for ATGWU, outlined the four main objectives of the workshop:

1. To introduce participants to the ITF Informal Transport Workers' Project;
2. To give knowledge and skills to participants about the elements of a successful organizing initiative;
3. To map informal workplaces in order to find out exactly what informal sector workers do for a living, the challenges they face, their employment relationships and their bargaining counterparts;
4. To design union-specific action plans to set out activities and objectives to be achieved in the next 12 months (August 2015 – July 2016).

John Mark made it clear that the mentoring process was a work in progress, and that ATGWU was learning new things too. For example ATGWU had initially planned to mentor one union from Kenya, but after doing their research, they realised that there were two unions organising in the informal transport sector in the country – MWU and PUTON - and therefore both needed to be included in the mentoring programme.

ORGANISING INFORMAL TRANSPORT WORKERS – THE WHY, THE HOW

BACKGROUND

John Mark Mwanika and Stephen Abima gave a joint presentation which put the informal transport economy in historical context, and then made the case for “the why” and “the how” of organising in the informal economy. It was explained that the bus transport sector in Uganda, which is now mostly informal, used to be strongly unionised. This process of informalisation, coupled with job losses, happened as a result of the forced privatisation of huge swathes of the Ugandan economy, including bus companies, from the 1980s onwards. As was the case for many African countries, the turn towards privatisation and trade liberalisation during this period was a result of conditionalities attached to loans issued to governments by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

John Mark explained that workers in the informal economy have, for a long time, been ignored by trade unions. This is because many have regarded “self-employed” workers as not workers at all, and

therefore not eligible to join a trade union. National labour law, as in the case of Uganda, has often reinforced this position by barring self-employed workers from trade union membership. Despite these difficulties, John Mark made clear that organising in the informal economy is now a priority for the ATGWU.

THE WHY

The principle that all workers have rights at work, irrespective of where they work and how they work, was presented as anchoring “the why” of organising informal workers. John Mark and Stephen related this commitment to the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda and the recent Recommendation on the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy which was passed at the 2015 International Labour Conference (ILC).

It was explained that union awareness about the need to organise in the informal sector has increased due to a number of factors, primarily the growth of the informal sector and precarious employment in developing countries which, due to the informalisation of previously formal and often unionised jobs, has resulted in declining union membership.

While some unions are beginning to take organising in the informal sector seriously, not all have. It was explained that many unions and national centres continue to view informal workers as not being “real workers”, or as constituting an undesirable drain on union resources. Even those unions which have begun to organise in the informal sector are faced with many challenges.

One big challenge is the fact that the majority of informal workers are women and unions which have traditionally been male-dominated have found themselves ill-equipped to deal with this. Other characteristics of the informal economy – such as workers often being extremely poor and surviving on a day-by-day basis as well as being mobile and having no set workplace – add to the difficulties of organising informal workers.



John Mark Mwanika leading workshop discussions.

THE HOW

John Mark and Stephen told participants that “the how” of organising in the informal sector is a step-by-step process which begins with elected shop stewards, who are the face of the union in their respective associations. It was explained that unions/associations must set themselves clear organising objectives and identify clear strategies for achieving them - including outlining planned activities and designating people to have certain responsibilities.

Participants were reminded that the five pillars of trade unionism – democracy, voluntarism, independence, permanence and continuity - should both ground and guide their approach to organising in the informal sector.

ILO RECOMMENDATION

After introducing the ITF Informal Transport Workers Project to the workshop participants, Jess Whelligan (GLI) gave a brief explanation of the recently agreed ILO Recommendation on the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy (Recommendation 204). She explained that the Recommendation is the first international labour standard specifically aimed at tackling the informal economy and that while it is not an enforceable legal instrument, it can be used as a campaigning tool for activists working and organising in the informal economy, as well as a guide for governments who are formulating policies in the area.

Drawing on materials produced by WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment Globalising & Organising) - a global network focused on securing livelihoods for the working poor, especially women - she explained that the Recommendation could prove a valuable resource in negotiating with authorities because it:

- explicitly provides rights and protections for all informal workers;
- recognises that the “decent work deficit” is most pronounced in the informal economy;
- recognises public space as a workplace which informal workers should have “regulated access for use”;
- recognises the right of freedom of association and collective bargaining for informal workers and the right of their collective organisations to be represented at tri-partite discussions/negotiations on issues affecting them;
- provides for social protection to be made available to informal workers;
- provides for gender equality and the elimination of all gender-based violence and discrimination in the informal workplace;
- provides for any transitions to be formal employment to preserve and improve the livelihoods of informal workers – i.e. not come at the expense of these livelihoods.



Jess stressed that her explanation of the Recommendation was not exhaustive and that GLI/ITF would be looking to produce and make available resources about the Recommendation and its particular relevance to informal transport workers in the near future.

ORGANISING IN THE INFORMAL WORKPLACE

PRACTICAL ACTIVITY: VISITING INFORMAL WORKPLACES

In order for the participants to experience the informal transport economy in Kampala first-hand, they were sent on visits to taxi and bus parks in central Kampala. The group was divided into three subgroups of five participants – each accompanied by at least one ATGWU member - and sent to the following locations:

- group 1 visited the “Old Taxi Park”;
- group 2 visited Quaricel Bus Terminal;
- group 3 visited the “New Taxi Park”.

Participants were asked to talk to workers and address the following questions on their visit to the terminals:

- How are the workers organized? Who organizes them?
- Any positives and negatives in organizing?
- How are negatives addressed?

After conducting their fieldwork, all participants were invited to the office of KOTSA - a taxi worker association affiliated to ATGWU - where they met the Chairman and other members of the organization for a question and answer session.



Participants talk to workers at the Old Taxi Park.

Following the visits to the KOTSA office and the bus/taxi terminals, which proved very popular with the participants who enjoyed getting out of the classroom and meeting other transport workers, the three sub-groups were asked to present their findings to the group as a whole. Their presentations are summarised in the tables overleaf.

	How are the workers organized? If so, who organizes them?	Positives?	Negatives?	How are negatives being addressed? Or how <i>should</i> they be addressed?
<p>Group 1 – Old Taxi Park</p>	<p>Yes, workers are organized by KOTSA. There are elections for the leaders of each “stage”.</p> <p>Each driver is registered with KOTSA and has an identification card. The vehicle that they drive has a sticker.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership is well organized through KOTSA which makes the stages, which are governed by bye-laws, manageable. - The loading of passengers is well organized (“first come first served”) because the drivers and conductors are well organized. - The environment of the taxi park was good and the workers happy to interact. - The passengers and members felt secure. - Drivers recognized the union name which shows that effective organizing has happened (the recent face-off between ATGWU & the police during KOTSA’s elections has been very good publicity for the union). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in fuel prices affects operations – this can lead to the exploitation of passengers. - High taxes. - Workplace is too dusty. Members are annoyed that they do not see any improvements in their workplace, despite paying their taxes to the Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA). - There are not many women working in the industry due to discrimination, their own inferiority complexes and the risks associated with the job. - Harassment from the police for minor offences. - Excessive traffic jams. - Lack of respect for the job – the community views taxi workers as “illiterates”. - Struggle for leadership amongst members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More sensitisation programmes for members so that they understand the benefits of membership. - Increased publicity about the benefits of the union. - Lobby and advocate for the respect of informal sector rights by the KCCA/the police. - Participate in exchange visits with fellow unions worldwide. - Encourage women to join the taxi industry. - Elected figures should ensure they build the trust of members through transparency and accountability. - KOTSA and ATGWU should have a strong voice to combat harassment from the police and other authorities.



<p>Group 2 – Quaricel Bus Terminal</p>	<p>No, workers are not organized.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issues with Freedom of Association – workers at bus station were clearly worried about who was watching them talk. - Supervisors slap workers which makes them scared. - Issue of tribalism mentioned. - There is no job security which is the “worst problem for informal sector”. - There are too many buses, too few customers. - Customers don’t trust the buses. - Workers cannot directly contact the bus owner – everything is mediated by the manager who does not pass on complaints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ATGWU need to go in and start from scratch –the union hasn’t taken the bus workers seriously yet. - Names and numbers have been taken and ready for follow-up.
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<p>Group 3 – New Taxi Park</p>	<p>Yes, workers are organised by KOTSA. There are six elected officers for each stage, including a Defense Rep who checks people in the taxi park to see if they are armed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The leadership of ATGWU are viewed favourably by KOTSA members. - Workers said that there was a career ladder to climb – you can go from being a tout to a driver to a manager. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taxi drivers still work very long hours – they sometimes work from 5am to midnight, seven days a week. - Workers don’t receive a salary or have insurance. - There is no job security. - There are problems with the system for dealing with lost property – passengers don’t know where to go. - Workers don’t have uniforms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To combat a lack of insurance, each stage has a SACCO¹ which collects \$6000 per month for the school fees, health care, etc. of its members. For each ride out of the station, a small amount of money is handed over, which goes to the welfare fund.
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¹ Savings and Credit Cooperative.

DISCUSSION

The presentations about the visits to the bus/taxi parks were followed by a group discussion which was dominated by three main issues. The first was the problem of how to combat **discrimination against women** in the transport sector. John Mark posed the question of “how can we retain the women who are already working in the sector?” One participant commented that women often only stay in the job for a few months because they become pregnant. A female participant responded to this comment by saying that one way of retaining women in the transport sector would be for other workers not to “impregnate them”. John Mark said that pregnancy was used to undermine women, and that he was already discussing strategies on how to combat gender based violence with a Kenyan activist working in this area.

The second problem identified was the **short-term outlook of informal workers**. It was highlighted that a taxi driver never fills the tank of the vehicle, because they never know if they’ll be working the next day. This short-termism is also reflected by the fact that only 50% of KOTSA members are saving with a SACCO.

The other big challenge highlighted was that of **political interference**. Participants said that groups were vulnerable to manipulation by politicians or others vying for influence over the workers. The lack of education amongst the police was also cited as a problem because – as evidenced by the recent police interference in KOTSA elections (see KOTSA box) - police officers often have no knowledge of the rights of unions to hold meetings, organize workers etc.

KOTSA

KOTSA (Kampala Operational Taxi Stages Association) is an association of informal taxi workers. It has 30,000 members across 200 stages in Kampala and became affiliated to ATGWU in June 2015. KOTSA initially experienced police interference when its members attempted to hold union elections in late May/early June 2015, with police closing down meetings held by the association. However, ATGWU scored a major victory on behalf of KOTSA by successfully challenging the police interference by appealing to the right of trade unions to hold meetings free from police interference which is enshrined in Ugandan law.

Following ATGWU interventions, KOTSA was able to go ahead with elections and the police were forced to apologise to KOTSA members. The whole event hugely increased the profile of ATGWU amongst workers in the taxi parks, and provided a clear example of the benefits of union affiliation to KOTSA members.

At the Q&A held in the KOTSA offices, participants learned that KOTSA members pay 150,000 shilling per month to the association and that each stage has a representative on the Executive Board. There are also elected representatives for women, disabled people and children.

You can watch an interview with Aisha Nateza, the KOTSA Women’s Rep, on the project blog here:

[Interview with Aisha Nateza, KOTSA](#)



ELEMENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL ORGANISING CAMPAIGN

PRESENTATION BY YAZID BALIGASIMA, NOTU

What is informality?

On day two of the workshop, Yazid Baligasima from the National Organisation of Trade Unions (NOTU) – one of Uganda’s national trade union centres – gave an interactive and engaging presentation which explored the basic concepts of the informal economy, as well as strategies for an effective organising campaign.

He explained that NOTU was very supportive of the informal worker organising agenda. For example, NOTU has recently changed its constitution so that associations of informal workers can directly affiliate to the trade union centre without having to first affiliate to a trade union. It is also commissioning a study on how formalization of the informal sector can be attained in Uganda.

Yazid posed the question of “what is informality?” The question triggered a diverse range of answers amongst the group, with the ideas of workplaces being “unregulated” and/or “not recognized by law” being common points of agreement. Yazid then posed the question of whether the taxi parks that the group had visited were “informal” given that they are allowed to be there, and are regulated to some degree by KOTSA.

Yazid’s question again triggered a range of answers with some participants agreeing that the parks seemed to be “formal” in some sense, whereas others pointed to the lack of formal agreement between the taxi parks and the KCCA as evidence that self-regulation didn’t equate to formality. Yazid brought clarity to the discussion by setting out his definition of informality as workers being “pensionable” and having a contract which “isn’t just oral” because the employment law in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania does not recognize oral contracts.

Politics

Yazid told participants they would not be able to serve workers if they were “in bed with the government”. Workers’ organisations need to provide a strong voice to counteract the government and advocate for policies that are in the interests of workers in the informal economy. He warned against the dangers of “divide and rule” politics used by governments to control workers’ organisations and called for unity amongst taxi associations so that they can tackle the common problems of high fuel prices and excessive license costs.

Organising & Recruitment

Yazid then went on to outline strategies for effective union organising and recruitment in the informal economy. He drew attention to the democratic principles of trade unionism and said that the managerialism of some informal worker associations needed to be challenged. He also called for participants to be responsive to working patterns of the workers they are trying to organize – for

example, he would never try and talk to boda boda² drivers in the morning or the evening as these are their busiest times of day.

For further details from Yazid’s presentation, see the [ATGWU Workshop Report](#) on the project blog.

SIGNING OF A MOU WITH KAMBA

In order to see ATGWU’s informal worker organizing strategy in action, participants were invited to attend the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the ATGWU and the Kampala Metropolitan Boda Boda Association (KAMBA). KAMBA is an association of around 20,000 motorcycle riders operating in an around the Greater Kampala area, and is the ninth informal workers’ association to become affiliated to ATGWU. The event was attended by around 100 boda boda drivers.

Following the signing of the MOU, the Chairman of KAMBA, Ssemujju John, kindly agreed to be interviewed. The video of his interview can be found at the project blog:

[“The best way to start is to start now” – Interview with KAMBA Chairman \[July 2015\]](#)



ATGWU General Secretary addresses boda-boda drivers

MAPPING THE INFORMAL WORKPLACE

PRACTICAL EXERCISE: MAPPING

Participants were again split into mixed nationality/union groups to undertake fieldwork in downtown Kampala, and put what they had learned so far at the workshop into practice. The group was split into three subgroups and each was assigned an informal workplace to map:

- group 1 talked to trucking workers;
- group 2 talked to bus workers;
- group 3 talked to vendors based at Arua Park.

Participants were asked to build a detailed picture of the workplaces they were visiting by addressing the following questions:

- What do workers do for a living?
- How much do they earn?

² Motorcycle taxis are known as “boda boda” in Uganda.



- What are the employment relationships?
- What are the key issues faced by the workers?
- Who are (or could be) their bargaining counterparts?

After undertaking the mapping exercises, the participants fed their findings back to the group. Their presentations can be summarized as follows:

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
What do workers do for a living? Any other observations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers transport goods for a living. - They are organized into two associations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers are booking clerks from “Friendship Coaches” and conductors from “Gateway Buses”. - Workers who work from stands under umbrellas work for small companies. Big companies tend to sell tickets from counters, though sometimes workers working under the umbrellas will escort a customer to these counters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers deal in buying and selling small merchandise alongside the street and within Arua park e.g. sweets, miraa, airtime, food, drinks. - They are school drop-outs from the northern part of Uganda, i.e. Arua, Gulu and Nebbi districts.
Working hours?	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -They work 12 hours a day. - Some don’t work on Fridays because most of the bus owners are Muslims. 	- They start at 6am and leave very late.
How much do they earn?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They survive on commissions which means they “earn peanuts”. - They are paid per trip when they transport goods to their destination. - They should earn 10% of the profits of the trip. 	- Commission based: they get 10% of the total collection which is divided amongst themselves.	- Those who are employed (on a commission basis) can earn a salary of approx. 150, 000 shillings (\$41 USD).
What are the employment relationships?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They are employed by truck owners. - Some own their trucks but this is a tiny minority 	- Variable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some are employed and earn commission. - Others are self-employed.



	<p>(out of 80 drivers only 2 or 3 own their truck).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sometimes drivers hire their trucks. 		
<p>What are the key issues faced by the workers?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They do not have permanent parking space so drivers are always being moved from place to place. - Truck owners do not maintain the vehicles which makes it very difficult for drivers. - When goods are lost, the cost is passed onto the driver. - There is stiff competition between drivers. - There is no salary. - The price of the sticker (license?) from the KCCA is very high. - Lots of problems at the weighbridge – the officials there are corrupt. - Fuel prices are too high so trucks are overloaded to mitigate loses. - Security is a problem. When trucks are moving slowly uphill, goods can be stolen – thieves hang around steep hills to do this. - Trucks often move at night to avoid the heat – adding to the security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shortage of buses. - High fuel prices. - Lack of job security. - High taxes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KCCA harasses them and imposes high charges on them. - Vulnerable to the weather as they work under umbrellas. - No leadership to guide them. - The workplace is not hygienic. - Lots of congestion of vendors, passengers and vehicles. - Racism and segregation amongst themselves.



	problem.		
Who are (or could be) their bargaining counterparts?	-	- They only negotiate with managers, i.e. not the bus owners themselves.	- No negotiating partners because they are not organized. - ATGWU need to get involved to sensitise workers about the benefits of unionization.
Are there women in the organization?	- No, the three women who used to be in the organization have left – two for politics, one for marriage.	- No, there’s no gender balance.	- There are men and women but the majority of vendors are women.

EMERGING THEMES/IDEAS:

Following the group presentations, Yazid Baligasima (NOTU) led a group discussion in which the following common themes were highlighted:

Negotiating partners: John Mark noted that many of the participants had said that there was no negotiating partner in the workplaces they visited. He said that it was the job of organisers to identify the negotiating partner in every working environment – i.e. to ask, apart from the workers, who is influencing this workplace? The answer could be an organisation, a private individual, or a government authority. Whatever the case, these are the “bargaining counterparts” for the informal workers in that workplace.

Trust: The participants who had visited Arua Park commented that the vendors had already been organised into an association in the past, but the leader had disappeared with all the money. Therefore they were distrustful of people who wanted to “organise” them. The participants from Kenya said that many similar cases have happened in Kenya, which makes organising difficult.

Internal division amongst workers: The participants who visited Arua Park described how the workers were divided along tribal lines. Stephen commented that these vendors may be particularly difficult to engage with because many of them were ex-soldiers from the Amin-era.

Discrimination against women: The participants who visited Arua Park described how the women vendors had refused to talk to the female participants because they did not want to be advised by a woman.

SACCOs: Ugandan participants were able to point to some well-functioning SACCOs which provided a safety net for their members, but participants from Kenya saw SACCOs as problematic because in Kenya, SACCOs are controlled by employers.

“GETTING IT RIGHT”

PRACTICAL EXERCISE: VISITS TO ATGWU AFFILIATES

On the morning of day three of the workshop, participants were grouped according to their union and sent to meet with representatives/leaders of associations affiliated to ATGWU in order to better understand the inner workings of informal worker organisations in Uganda, including the challenges they faced and their relationship with ATGWU.

Participants also presented their own unions to the associations that they were visiting and both the visiting unions and their hosts made suggestions to one another about how they might overcome the challenges they respectively faced.

Following their visits, participants were asked to present their findings to the group. These presentations can be summarised as follows:

PUTON & UNLDA

PUTON members visited the Uganda National Lorry Drivers’ Association (UNLDA) in Bwaise, Kampala. They were accompanied by workshop participant and UNLDA member Musoke David, who is also the chairperson of the ATGWU Informal Committee, and met with a number of representatives of the association, including its General Secretary, Bbosa Hall.

Representatives from UNLDA and PUTON presented their organizations to one another and outlined the challenges they faced. These presentations were followed by a discussion between both organisations during which suggestions were made regarding how these challenges could be overcome.

UNLDA

Overview: UNLDA has 800 members and has a target of reaching 1000 members. Its representatives praised ATGWU for their work in uniting the organization, requested exchange visits with other countries to share experiences with other long-distance drivers and called upon the Ugandan government to help UNLDA achieve its objectives.

Challenges: accidents; police harassment/corruption; issues with weighbridges; low bargaining power; no consultation from government for policies that affect them; high fuel prices.



Meeting between PUTON & UNLDA (Image: ATGWU)

PUTON’s suggestions for UNLDA:

- ATGWU should become involved in the administration of weighbridges.
- UNLDA members should be sensitized about weighbridges and road rules/regulations.
- UNLDA should form a SACCO for its members.

- ATGWU should continue to visit UNLTDA to keep up-to-date with the experiences of the members and therefore represent them effectively.
- Ugandan government should include and consult UNLTDA when designing policies that affect them.
- UNLTDA should visit Kenya to share and compare notes.

PUTON

Overview: PUTON is a new union for matatu workers - drivers, conductors, etc – in Kenya. Matatus are minibuses that are known as taxis in Uganda.

Challenges: drivers and conductors are not allowed to join SACCOs; killings of drivers and conductors because of struggles with owners of vehicles.

UNLTDA's suggestions for PUTON:

- strengthen the union by mobilising members and mapping workplaces to identify new members;
- include boda bodas drivers, vendors & lorries in the union too;
- use the problem of drivers being refused membership of SACCOs as a rallying point;
- prove to the wider community that informal transport workers are not thieves, use campaigns, banners and engage with public responsibility/hospitals to do this;
- Kenyan government should involve the matatu community in decision-making and policy design;
- continue with cross-country visits.

ATGWU & KOTSA

ATGWU members from Entebbe Airport Taxi Cooperative Society and ESCADA visited KOTSA and learned about the history of the organisation, its relationship with ATGWU, its achievements and plans for the future as well as the challenges it faces.

Overview: KOTSA came about because of an administrative vacuum for taxi drivers in Kampala after the umbrella organisation, UTODA, was closed down. UTODA used to oversee taxi operations in the city on behalf of the KCCA. KOTSA has six taxi parks and operates over 200 stages with each stage having an average of 100 members.

Relationship with ATGWU: KOTSA has signed a MoU with ATGWU and pays affiliation fees to the union. Most notably the union has helped the association tackle police interference in its elections (see KOTSA box, p.10). It also provides capacity building training and member sensitisation for the association.

Achievements: ATGWU has helped KOTSA's name to become recognised. Members are now registered and have access to training.

Challenges: KOTSA only has limited resources to mobilise its members; political influence – politicians want to manipulate them; traffic police harassment; adversely affected by weather conditions; gender imbalance in the industry; harassment of women workers.



In the future, KOTSA aims to:

- introduce vehicles with bigger capacities,
- expand across the country;
- find ways of reducing the traffic jams;
- considering getting uniforms/identification cards for members;
- differentiate between vehicles at different stages with different stickers.

COTWU-T & GALIMA

COTWU-T members visited GALIMA, an initiative affiliated to ATGWU which was set up by women living with HIV/AIDS in the Katwe slum, Kampala. The COTWU-T members found out about GALIMA's history, the benefits provided to its members, the challenges faced by the organization and the support they would like to see from ATGWU.

Overview: formed in 2003, GALIMA is a group of women living with HIV. The group makes and sells food and crafts. It even has its own football team.

Benefits of membership: through being organized the members said that they have gained skills – for example the skills needed to make crafts and candles. They are able to fight against the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS and to educate others to do the same. They are able to pay for school fees/house rent through their earnings.

Challenges: GALIMA members said that they still faced discrimination from their community and don't have a market to sell their goods. They also pointed to the problem of people taking photos of them without helping them by buying something.

What do they need from ATGWU?

- A market/shop for their goods. Their previous shop was demolished by the city council.
- More workshops.
- Assistance in providing teaching to others to tackle the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS.

MWU & Entebbe Airport Taxi Cooperative Society (EATCS)

MWU members visited an office of the Entebbe Taxi Cooperative Society. They were accompanied by workshop participant and association member, Hope Edith Asimwe, and met with two drivers from the association, as well as the Chairman of the association.

Entebbe Airport Taxi Cooperative Society (EATCS)

Overview: the Entebbe Taxi Cooperative Society was formed in 1997 by a group of about 45 people who shared common interests/goals. A law was passed which said that airport taxi drivers must have an identity number and have a yellow stripe on their vehicle. With this identification system in place, the taxi drivers must now pay rental license to the government.

Who organises them? The taxi drivers organise themselves. An executive is elected at an annual meeting and they are allowed to work for two terms. However, if the elected person does not do their job well, they can be removed from office with a vote of no confidence.

Challenges: drivers are faced with stiff competition and it can be hard to convince workers to join. Authorities also take a long time to react to issues reported to them and there is a lack of gender balance in the organisation (due to the taxi industry being heavily dominated by men).

There is also the problem of sexual harassment for women drivers, though this is much less prevalent for airport taxi drivers because their passengers are generally seen as having “a name to protect”. There have also been some cases of male taxi drivers being approached by both women and men asking for sexual services – but this does not happen regularly.



Members of EATCS talk to MWU in their office.

Positives of organising: by forming small SACCOs, members have been able to buy their own cars. Before this they had to hire cars from outside owners. They also have a welfare fund which supports members when they are sick or have had an accident. The association provides training to teach illiterate members to read and write.

With the help of ATGWU, which the EATCS describes as “our lawyers”, the association has managed to negotiate with airport managers to get office space at the airport, designated parking space for their cars, protection for their jobs and a “voice” at the airport. Non-registered taxis are no longer able to pick up passengers at the airport. EATCS members said that these changes have meant that people are now starting to see taxi driving as a “good industry” – a job that deserves respect, which means that traditionally negative attitudes towards the industry are changing.

Plans for the future: EATCS is planning to merge smaller SACCOs into one big SACCO to enable the association to develop a driving training school, purchase land for farming and buy big buses. EATCS also aims to increase publicity about the benefits of becoming a member and persuade more women to become drivers and join.

MWU comments/suggestions for EATCS: Henry from MWU suggested that EATCS establish its own driving school to provide another revenue stream. He was also impressed by the lack of tribalism in the organisation, which prides itself on having all tribes/regions of Uganda represented.

MWU

Overview: Henry Nyabuto, General Secretary of MWU, explained that the MWU is a newly formed union of matatu workers in Kenya. In Kenya taxis are cars (not minibuses as is the case in Uganda), and these drivers are not members of the MWU.

Challenges:

1. **Politics** - MWU members explained that the political situations in Kenya and Uganda are very different. In Uganda, it’s clear that the President is prepared to support the union, but in

Kenya this isn't the case. Politics is dominated by tribal allegiances and successful associations or societies are seen as a political threat, because politicians presume that a rival politician "lies behind it". Due to these dynamics, the "big man" of an association is liable to be bribed by someone with a particular political interest.

Strikes are generally directly broken by the government, or rival unions are created by politicians to undermine established unions. This is a particular problem in Nairobi. They said that workers do not have a voice in the Kenyan parliament.

They also pointed to the strength of cartels, the criminal organisations which stand between the owners and drivers of vehicles, which they described as being "stronger than government" in Kenya.

2. **SACCOs** – Unlike in Uganda where SACCOs are controlled by their members/workers, in Kenya SACCOs are controlled by employers, and are run in their interests. MWU is aiming to tackle this problem by sensitising union members about their rights and their ability to set-up member-led SACCOs. However they are also faced with the problem that many people don't trust associations in Kenya because previous leaders of collective saving schemes have "ate" the funds. MWU aim to overcome this lack of trust by conducting their financial activities using Kenya Bank – because this is an institution that people tend to trust.
3. **Violence against women** – sexual harassment is a major problem for women workers in the matatu industry, as well as for female passengers. There have been some extreme cases of sexual assault committed in matatus by both matatu workers and passengers. MWU members said that one of the challenges in overcoming this problem is that drivers are afraid of reporting cases of sexual assault or violence more generally to the police, because they do not trust them. They are afraid that the police will either demand cash bribes or blame the driver for the crime.

EATCS suggestions for MWU: EATCS members recommended that the MWU focus their activities outside of Nairobi, in order for them to build their strength without garnering too much attention from government and the cartels. They explained that the Ugandan president is supportive of the ATGWU and its informal worker affiliates because they are seen as creating employment in a country which has few employment opportunities. If MWU is able to present itself in this way, this may be a way of breaking through the political infighting that unions are liable to become embroiled in.

ACTION PLANS



Participants pose for a group photo.

The workshop culminated with each union drafting an action plan for activities to be undertaken over the next 12 months, related to the project’s three key strands. A standard framework was provided for the participants to work from. It was agreed that unions would report news about their activities to John Mark on the 28th of each month, and that he would then collate these into a quarterly report.

A Whatsapp³ group was also set up by the participants to facilitate continued communication between the workshop participants themselves and between their unions and the ATGWU using their mobile phones. The Whatsapp group has proved itself to be the most popular method for keeping in touch amongst participants.

The action plans can be summarised as follows:

MWU, Kenya					
Objective	Activity	When	Who	Resources	Communications
Visibility of Women	Sensitisation of women	Sept – Dec 2015	Organisers & leaders	- Conference hall - Refreshments - Leaflets	MWU & Authorities (?)

³ Whatsapp Messenger is a smartphone application which allows users to send text messages, photos, and audio/film clips to other users using the internet connection on their mobile phone device.

				- Writing materials - Photos	
	Training of women	Continuous/ongoing	Same as above	Same as above	Trainees
Leadership education & dialogue	Meetings with leaders	Continuous/ongoing	Leaders in each country, GS, organisers	- Leader's office - Workplace	Leaders in each country
	Meetings with SACCO leaders	August 2015	Chairman, GS & educator	- SACCO office - union office	SACCO leaders (chairman & secretaries)
Organising skills, training and technical support	Training	Continuous/ongoing	Organisers	- Time - Venue - Means of transport	Informal transport workers
	Signing of CBAs with at least 2 SACCOs	October 2015	GS & SACCO directors	- Negotiators	Mentor union (ATGWU), COTU, ITF

PUTON, Kenya					
Objective	Activity	When	Who	Resources	Communications
Visibility of Women	Mapping & Sensitisation	Aug – Dec 2015	Elizabeth, Wanjiru, Nderitu	- Fares for transport - Note pads & pens - Meals & drinks - Funds	PUTON members, ATWGU, ITF
Leadership education & dialogue	Education & training	Jan – March 2016	Mbuthia & others		
Organising skills, training and technical support		April – June 2016	Mbuthia & others		

ATGWU, Uganda					
Objective	Activity	When	Who	Resources	Communications
Visibility of Women	3 – 5 women given special consideration both in work & leadership positions	Full year	Informal Committee & ATGWU	- Human resources - Funds	Mentor Union (ATGWU) & ITF
	Better communication	Within the year			
	Forming the informal sector women's committee	August 2015			
Leadership education & dialogue	Capacity building for leaders	Nov. 2015 & May 2016			
	Training of trainers	March & July 2016			
Organising skills, training and technical support	Mapping Qualicel bus terminal (bus workers) & Arua park (vendors)	Sept. – Dec. 2015			
	Recruit members & organize them into an association	Dec. 2015 – Apr. 2016			

COTWU-T, Tanzania					
Objective	Activity	When	Who	Resources	Communications
Visibility of Women	Sensitization	August & Dec 2015	Nice & Richard Education Coordinator	- Transport - Refreshments - Stationery	Participants Companies ATGWU ITF
	Training of women leaders	January 2016	Zonal Secretary Vice GS		

Leadership education & dialogue	Meeting of the leaders Training	April 2016	GS Education Coordinator ITF	- Stationery - Meals - Transport	East Africa Coordinator of ITF Education Coordinator of ITF
Organising skills, training and technical support	Training Organizing	June - July 2016	Organisers Transport workers Food vendors	- Stationery - Transport	ITF ATGWU COTWU-T

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATGWU	Amalgamated Transport & General Workers' Union (Uganda)
COTWU(T)	Communication and Transport Workers Union of Tanzania
ESCADA	Entebbe Stages Conductors and Drivers Association
EATCS	Entebbe Airport Taxi Cooperative Society
GALIMA	GALIMA Fights HIV/AIDS Initiative
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation
KAMBA	Kampala Metropolitan Boda Boda Association
KCCA	Kampala City Council Authority
KOTSA	Kampala Operational Taxi Stages Association
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MWU	Matatu Workers' Union (Kenya)
NOTU	National Organisation of Trade Unions
PUTON	Public Transport Operators Union (Kenya)
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative
UNLDTA	Uganda National Lorry Drivers and Transport Association
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment Globalising and Organising

Informal workers blog 

Informal Transport Workers' Blog

<http://www.informalworkersblog.org/>