

# Stories of Change

## 100% Fair work





## Foreword

100% Fair work, that is what CNV Internationaal is working for every day in Africa, Asia and Latin America. We do this by working together closely with local partner trade unions and by investing in good cooperation with other partners, such as companies and governments.

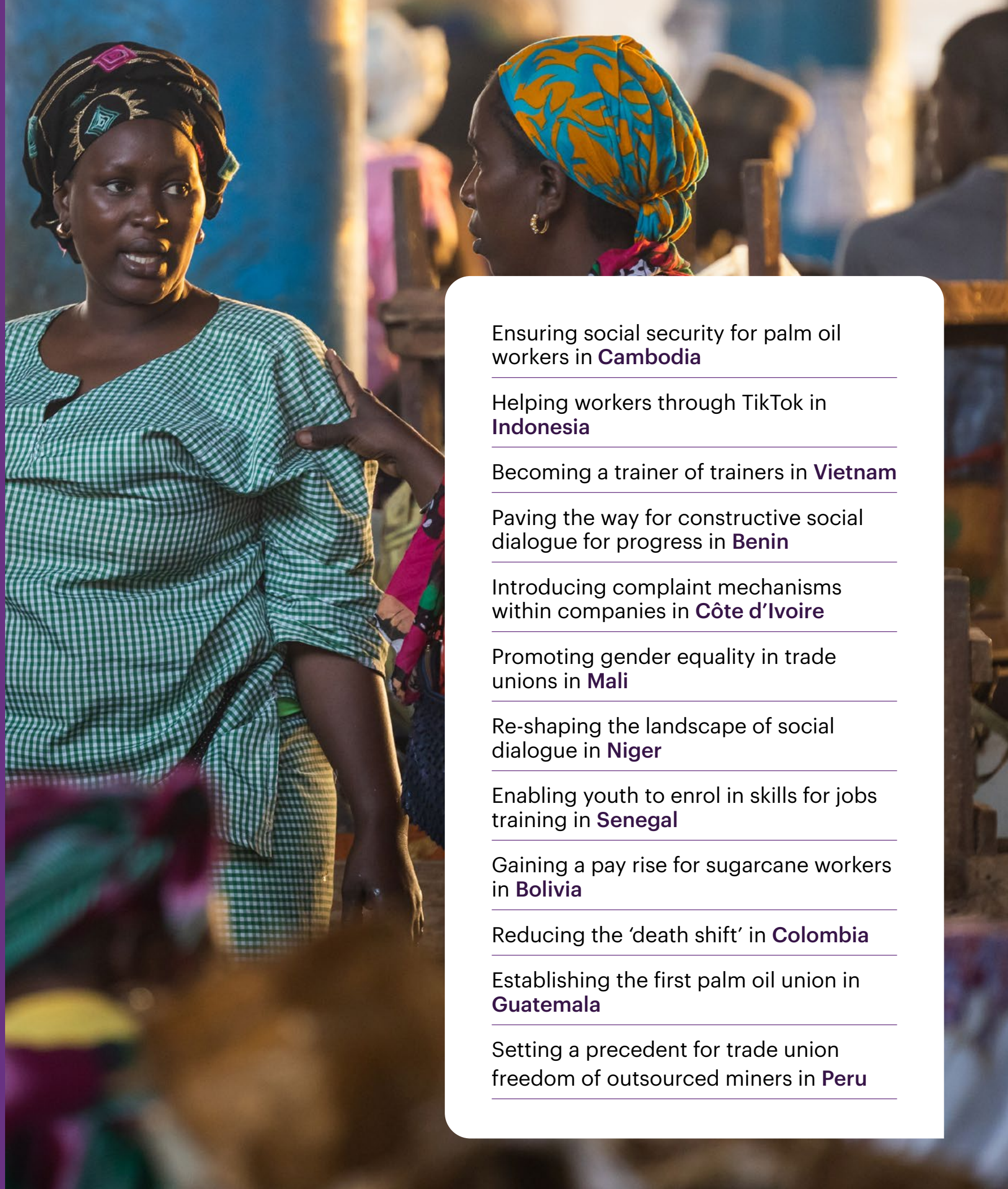
Fair work means that people can work safely and in all freedom, earning a living wage. Freedom of Association and social dialogue are important preconditions for achieving this.

100% Fair Work means that women and young people have the same opportunities on the labour market as everyone else: no discrimination in working conditions (e.g. wages, holidays, etc.)

Together with our union partners, we renewed our efforts for 100% Fair Work throughout 2023 to initiate change. The following stories of change give an impression of the results.

### Elles van Ark

Managing Director CNV Internationaal



Ensuring social security for palm oil workers in **Cambodia**

Helping workers through TikTok in **Indonesia**

Becoming a trainer of trainers in **Vietnam**

Paving the way for constructive social dialogue for progress in **Benin**

Introducing complaint mechanisms within companies in **Côte d'Ivoire**

Promoting gender equality in trade unions in **Mali**

Re-shaping the landscape of social dialogue in **Niger**

Enabling youth to enrol in skills for jobs training in **Senegal**

Gaining a pay rise for sugarcane workers in **Bolivia**

Reducing the 'death shift' in **Colombia**

Establishing the first palm oil union in **Guatemala**

Setting a precedent for trade union freedom of outsourced miners in **Peru**



It started with training workers about their rights

# Newly established union ensures social security for palm oil workers

It all began when CNV International's partner organisations, CLC and CAWF, learned about the dire situation faced by over 2,000 workers at the Mong Rethy Company in the Prey Nup District of Preah Sihanouk Province. Thanks to the trade union, palm oil workers in the Mong Rethy Company now have access to social security and health care, alleviating financial burdens and providing peace of mind. Me Rom, an active trade union member, talks about the journey towards this change.



"As workers, we were not aware of our rights in the past. Lacking access to social protection, we faced health risks and financial

insecurity. It all began to change when we came in contact with the people from the trade union and told them about our dire situation. They helped us and in 2021 we were able to establish a union for our palm oil plantation and I'm an active member of this union now."

### What steps have been taken?

"It started with training workers about labour rights and organising local trade unions on various palm oil plantations. We also started social dialogue with the company. This led to the Mong Rethy Company agreeing to register workers in the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) in April 2023. 215 NSSF cards have since been provided to union members."

### What are the future plans regarding social protection for plantation workers?

The union is working with the "Mong Rethy Company to ensure that all workers are registered with the NSSF by 2024. "I hope the union leaders can speed up the process of applying for the NSSF card, says Me Rom."

**"The union started a social dialogue. This led to the Company agreeing to register workers in the National Social Security Fund."**

"I was very happy when I got the health insurance card. I was ill and have needed medicine twice since last February. The insurance helps me a lot. It has really saved me. In the past, when I had to go to the hospital, I didn't have enough money to pay them."

**Mrs Me Rom**, 40 years old, is a union activist at the Mong Rethy Palm Oil Company where she has been working for ten years.



# Story of Change in Indonesia

Reaching workers on remote palm oil plantations of Kalimantan

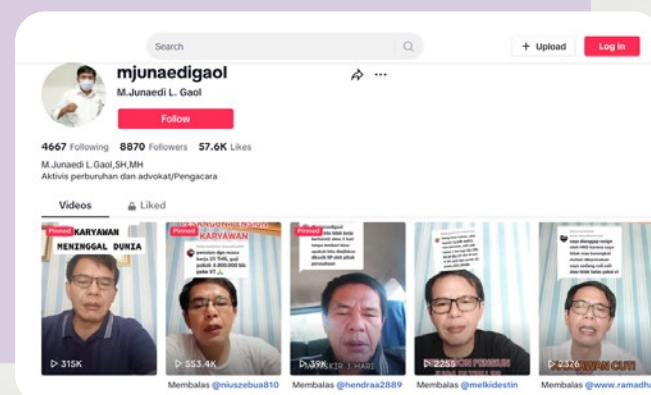
## Helping workers through TikTok

Junaedi, a labour lawyer who has been driven by a strong desire to protect workers' rights for more than 20 years, is a member of the Hukatan trade union in Indonesia. His work has shown him that reaching workers in the remote areas of Kapuas and Central Kalimantan is very difficult. He used to post on Facebook, but had very limited reach as few palm oil workers have Facebook. This led him to explore alternative methods of communication, and ultimately to him using TikTok as an outreach tool.

"I feel blessed that some of my videos have been watched by more than 500,000 viewers. The viewers have told me (online) that my videos are good and useful," says Junaedi, labour lawyer and activist since 2012. Junaedi currently holds two positions in Hukatan: Chairperson in Kapuas and Area Coordinator (Korda) for Hukatan Central Kalimantan.

**"Dear friends, we have a question about how to calculate the severance pay for a worker who has worked for 25 years."**

This was the introduction of a short video by **Junaedi Lumban Gao** which was streamed on 7 November 2023. It was watched by 553,400 viewers, a huge audience, even for Indonesia, a country of more than 270 million people.



### How has TikTok changed the way you engage with workers and address their concerns?

"Through my account, I can directly address their questions and concerns in real-time and reach a vast audience that was previously inaccessible. The platform's simplicity and accessibility have made it incredibly effective in disseminating information about complex issues such as severance pay and employment contracts.

The content of the live videos generally consists of providing answers based on questions from the 'comments' section. There have been large numbers of viewers on the topics of severance pay and employment contracts. One viewer asked, 'What is the maximum duration of daily work in the palm oil sector?' Another of the videos, showing Junaedi's speech during a strike by Hukatan at the Murung Raya palm oil plantation, has reached more than 180,000 viewers."

**Employment status  
remains one of the  
key issues in the  
palm oil sector.**

### Can you share a specific example of how your TikTok videos impacts workers' lives?

Calculating severance pay in Indonesia is complex. The amount of money workers receive depends not only on how long they have worked, but also on the reasons for their dismissal and the type of contract they have. Employment status remains one of the key issues in the palm oil sector. The Job Creation Law has extended the length of time for contract workers to become permanent workers from three to five years. A day labourer can remain in the same position for more than five years and even up to ten years. The problems also extend to the pension rights of daily workers. It demonstrates the hunger for information among workers. Through this platform we can empower workers to better understand their rights and advocate for themselves in the face of complex legal challenges. In addition to providing "free consultation", Junaedi is famous these days. Many labour activists have told him about what's happening on the ground, which has been very useful.

### How did the trainings by CNV Internationaal motivate you?

"I have actively participated in the trainings and other events organised by Hukatan and CNV Internationaal. The cooperation between Hukatan and CNV Internationaal allows workers in Central Kalimantan to see that attention to labour rights not only comes from Indonesia, but that it's also an international concern.

### Looking ahead, what do you hope to achieve through your continued use of TikTok as a tool for labour rights advocacy?

My goal is to continue leveraging technology to ensure that every worker in Indonesia has access to the information and support they need to assert their rights. Platforms like TikTok can help create a more just and equitable future for workers across the country.





## Story of Change in Vietnam

The programme has equipped me with invaluable skills

### Becoming a trainer of trainers has shown me a new path forward

In 2019, Ms Bich transitioned from a position as a researcher at the Ministry of Health to join the trade union. Motivated by her desire to use her legal expertise to protect the rights of Vietnamese workers, she worked in various departments within the union, eager to make a difference. The turning point came in August 2023, when she participated in a Training of Trainers programme facilitated by Dutch social dialogue expert Henk van Beers of CNV.

#### How did you apply this in your day-to-day work as a trade unionist?

"The programme has equipped me with invaluable skills. I liked particularly the "Seven Tips for an Effective Speech." I have revamped my presentations to ensure they are concise and engaging, visually impactful, and include interactive questions. The response from union leaders at the basis within companies has been remarkable! They are more attentive, inspired, and eager to learn from my presentations."

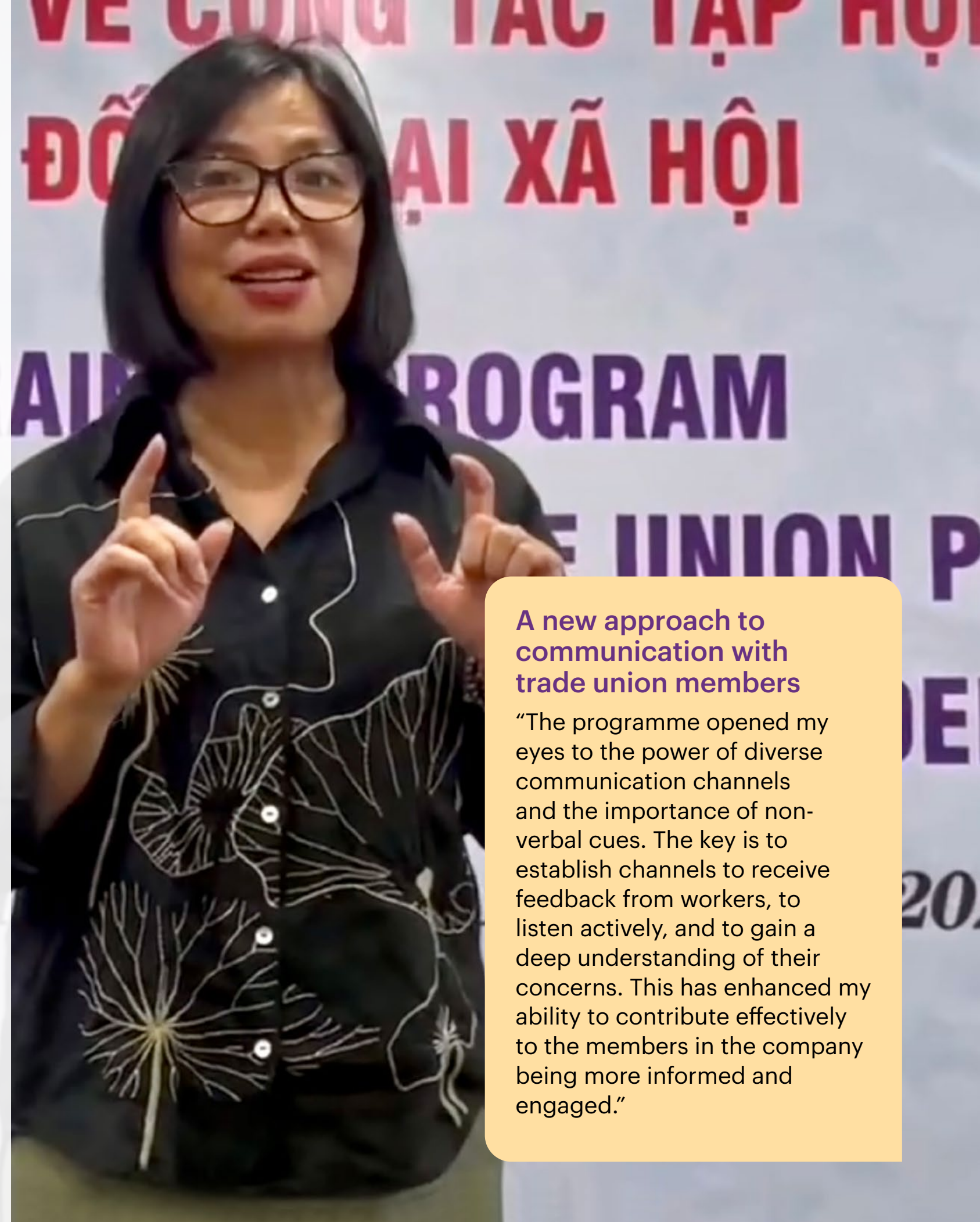
#### How do you envision leveraging these skills to empower your colleagues and create change within the union?

"My goal is to conduct training sessions for grassroots union officials in 2024, where we utilise the principles I learned in the Training of Trainers programme. By elevating the skills of my peers, I hope to foster a culture of innovation and

excellence within the union, ultimately empowering workers and strengthening our collective impact."

"I am eager to further refine my communication skills, particularly in social dialogue and negotiation. Mastering these techniques will enable me to better advocate for workers' rights and bring about meaningful change within the union and beyond."

The rapid growth of the labour force in Vietnam and the transition to a market economy call for a robust and practical transformation. Now more than ever, trade unions must demonstrate that they are organisations of the workers, for the workers. They must show innovation and genuine concern for workers in their efforts to connect with their members. The more empowered trade union officials are, the more workers will be protected and enjoy better benefits. This also means that workers will trust and choose to participate in the union, helping to build a strong organisation that represents their voices.



#### A new approach to communication with trade union members

"The programme opened my eyes to the power of diverse communication channels and the importance of non-verbal cues. The key is to establish channels to receive feedback from workers, to listen actively, and to gain a deep understanding of their concerns. This has enhanced my ability to contribute effectively to the members in the company being more informed and engaged."





# Story of Change in Benin

Enhancing responsible business conduct

## Paving the way for constructive social dialogue for national progress

Benin witnessed a pivotal moment in social dialogue when an agreement was signed in November 2023. This was a major milestone, formalising a collaboration between major trade unions and the two employers' organisations, CNP and CONEB. Our trade union partner, COSI Benin, with support from trade union CSA Benin, played a crucial role in establishing this unique framework for cooperation.

### How did this collaboration come about?

Noël Chadaré, General Secretary of COSI Benin says, "This initiative stemmed from the bold interventions of COSI Benin. We first developed a plan within the framework of the CNV Internationaal programme. Our objective was to facilitate a strategic collaboration between trade unions and employers to improve bargaining power. We hope this will further pave the way towards effective tripartite dialogue with the government, employer organisations, and unions, as this has become increasingly difficult in Benin in recent years."



### What does the future hold for constructive social dialogue in Benin?

Noël Chadaré says, "We hope this experience will serve as a beacon of success, demonstrating the power of dialogue to drive socio-economic progress. Moving forward, we envision a future where open and collaborative dialogue becomes the norm, fostering national development and enhancing responsible business conduct and industrial relations stability in Benin."

### Has this collaboration between trade unions and employers shown any results?

Noël Chadaré tells us, "Yes, this innovative approach has yielded tangible results, especially in influencing the negotiations to increase in the interprofessional minimum wage. These results combined with well-defined rules and an action plan, will work towards addressing other crucial issues, such as decent work, corporate social responsibility, and youth employability."



### Social dialogue is the most effective avenue

A shared belief in constructive and inclusive social dialogue is at the heart of this partnership. Both employer and worker organisations view social dialogue as the most effective avenue for achieving their goals. This motivated M. Albin Feliho, President of Confédération Nationale des Employeurs du Bénin CONEB and M. Regis Facia, of CNP Benin, Vice-President of Conseil national du patronat du Bénin CNP-Bénin, to formalise the cooperation between trade unions and employers.

**Our approach has proven to be a powerful catalyst in enabling unions to play a more significant role in negotiations. We especially saw this when an increase in the guaranteed interprofessional minimum wage (SMIG) was being negotiated. The wage rose from 30,000 to 42,000 francs, a significant win considering the sharp rise in the cost of living in Benin.**





# Story of Change in Côte d'Ivoire

Voicing complaints without fear

## Improving workers' rights and introducing complaint mechanisms

**Could you tell us how the initiative to improve workers' rights and complaint mechanisms at Société de Transport d'Abidjan (SOTRA) came about?**

"Our union, CISL Dignité, has always been a platform where workers can present their complaints and claims without fear," says Hyacinthe Coulibaly, Assistant Programme Coordinator for CISL Dignité. "However, our members from various companies have often faced difficulties in exercising their right to organise and engage in collective negotiations. When we approached the employers' organisation CGECI to raise awareness about these issues, they demanded evidence of rights violations. Unfortunately, we had no mechanisms to collect such complaints."

"Complaint mechanisms set up by the trade union mark a significant step forward in ensuring that workers can voice their complaints without fear. With more companies following SOTRA's example, we hope to see a widespread improvement in workers' rights along with a culture of open social dialogue and fair negotiations across the country."

**Hyacinthe Coulibaly** (Assistant Programme Coordinator, CISL Dignité).

While SOTRA management had already set up employer-financed complaint registers, Drissa Diarrasouba, Leader of USASO Trade Union at SOTRA, explains that workers refused to use them due to fear of being identified and facing reprisals. This was a significant barrier to voicing their grievances.

"We talked about this with CNV Internationaal", says Hyacinthe, "and together we developed a comprehensive programme." Here is a brief timeline of the following efforts:

- **2021:** First phase of training for both management and unions was launched.
- **April 2022:** ILO Conventions C87 and C98 promoted and advocated to CGECI by CISL Dignité, supported by CNV Internationaal's Africa team.
- **Mid-2022:** Proof of rights violations demanded by CGECI. We were unable to do this due to a lack of collection mechanisms.
- **August 2022:** Strategic plan prioritising the implementation of effective complaint collection mechanisms devised with CNV Internationaal.
- **June 2023:** Awareness-raising sessions among company managers and workers.
- **August 2023:** New complaint collection mechanisms installed and activated.



### At least 4100 workers benefit

"The new mechanisms, installed by the union itself, have reassured the workers," says Hyacinthe. "At least 4,100 workers at SOTRA directly benefit from these mechanisms. Workers now feel safer and more confident about reporting their grievances."

We have shared the example of SOTRA with other companies and it has inspired them to adopt similar mechanisms. Companies from various economic sectors, including chemicals (SIPROCHIM), hotels (SOFITEL ABIDJAN, HOTEL IVOIRE), breweries (BRASSIVOIRE HEINEKEN), and wood processing (Société TROPICAL BOIS, INPRO BOIS), as well as the Société Ivoirienne de Raffinerie, have registered with CISL Dignité to implement these mechanisms.

*Picture by Singoloua (Creative Commons)*



First phase of training for both management and unions.



Instalment of the complaint box at the SOFITEL hotel, with at the left Mr. Zime Yogbe, leader of the union Syndicat Libre des travailleurs at the Sofitel, in the middle M. Hyacinthe Coulibaly assistant programme coordinator of our partner union CISL Dignité and to the right M. Victor Koffie, Maître d'hôtel of the Sofitel.





## Story of Change in Mali

Participatory Gender Audit with tools developed  
by CNV Internationaal

### A crucial step towards equality for men and women in Mali trade unions

#### Making significant steps in promoting gender equality within trade unions

Both partner organisations in Mali did a Participatory Gender Audit with the tools developed by CNV Internationaal. It was a crucial step in identifying and understanding the inequalities between men and women in their organisations.

Both UNTM and CSTM have experienced a change in leadership since the beginning of the auditing process. They are demonstrating an increasingly stronger commitment to eliminating gender inequality in their unions. This success story of CSTM and UNTM leaders in promoting gender equality is an inspiring example of how new leadership and taking concrete steps can create more equal and inclusive organisations.

#### A participatory and inclusive approach

The success of this approach also lies in the participatory and inclusive nature of the process of the gender audit, which was piloted with the expertise of CNV Internationaal and its Africa office. This approach has led to a strong sense of

ownership for the audit process, not only from the women's committee, but especially from the leaders.

#### Gender inequality map

One key tool in this process has been the 'Gender Inequality Map,' which visually showed the differences between men and women in our unions. This Map has provided valuable information, allowing us to make concrete changes, such as adopting gender and age differentiated attendance lists for our Congresses and General Assemblies. These lists now also include quotas for women and youth participation.

#### Implementation

The leaders of both organisations are now planning to include quotas for women and young people in decision-making bodies at all levels of their affiliated organisations. Further, they are adopting an internal gender policy with mechanisms for preventing and addressing gender-based violence. They have also allocated a substantial amount of budget to supporting women's and youth committees in their unions.

#### Moving forward

The Gender Audit Steering Committee of both organisations will continue to follow-up on recommendations made from 2024 onwards, ensuring that the commitment to gender equality remains strong.

**A positive ripple effect of the gender audit is visible with other union federations now doing their own audits, further expanding this initiative.**





# Story of Change in Niger

Tearing down barriers to advance workers' rights

## Re-shaping the landscape of social dialogue

**In February 2023, CNT, our partner union in Niger, along with other trade union organisations of the Intersyndicale des Travailleurs du Niger (ITN) and the Alliance des Travailleurs du Niger (ATN), laid the groundwork for an unprecedented collaboration in a new Unité d'Action Syndicale. Halidou Mounkaila, General Secretary of CNT tells us about the importance of this collaboration.**

"We realised that traditional trade union actions often yield limited results, also in light of the current difficult situation of Niger. We saw that we needed a new approach."

### **Social dialogue in evolving work environments**

"Now we see the synergy between both trade union coalitions has created a pivotal shift in Niger's trade union landscape," says the leader of CNT. Together we have come to understand how imperative inclusive



*Lobby and advocacy workshop for joint trade unions*

social dialogue is when advocating for workers' rights, especially in evolving work environments.

This new Unité d'Action Syndicale has emerged as the embodiment of our collective voice. It ensures representation for all workers, irrespective of union affiliations. This step has underscored our commitment to leaving no worker behind and amplifying every voice in decision-making processes."

### **Collaborate to achieve common goals**

"We chose to prioritise unity over division, recognising the power of collaboration in achieving common goals. By fostering dialogue and tearing down barriers, we've laid the foundation for a more robust social dialogue and fruitful negotiations, ultimately advancing workers' rights. The results speak for themselves: Enhanced social dialogue, fruitful negotiations, and greater protection of workers' rights amid ongoing challenges."



*Group work during workshop social dialogue for trade unions*



### **No one left behind**

"This step marks a significant turning point towards respect for the principle of 'leaving no one behind' in trade union activities and actions. Every worker, every voice, regardless of where they come from, now has a common platform to be represented and heard."





## Story of Change in Senegal

2000 free education vouchers for young people,  
thanks to trade union advocacy

### Enabling youth to enrol in skills for jobs training in Senegal

The programme for Transformation for the Use of Professional Skills (Transformation pour l'Utilisation des Compétences Professionnelles) was launched in December 2023 in response to the pressing need to improve youth employability in Senegal. The programme aims to provide much needed vocational training, specifically tailored to the labour market for young baccalaureate graduates.

The 2023-2024 academic year marked a new milestone with the allocation of 2000 free training vouchers to young Senegalese. These vouchers allow them to enrol in long-term basic training courses varying from one to three years in length. This programme should lead to more young people obtaining various diplomas, such as a Certificate of Professional Skills

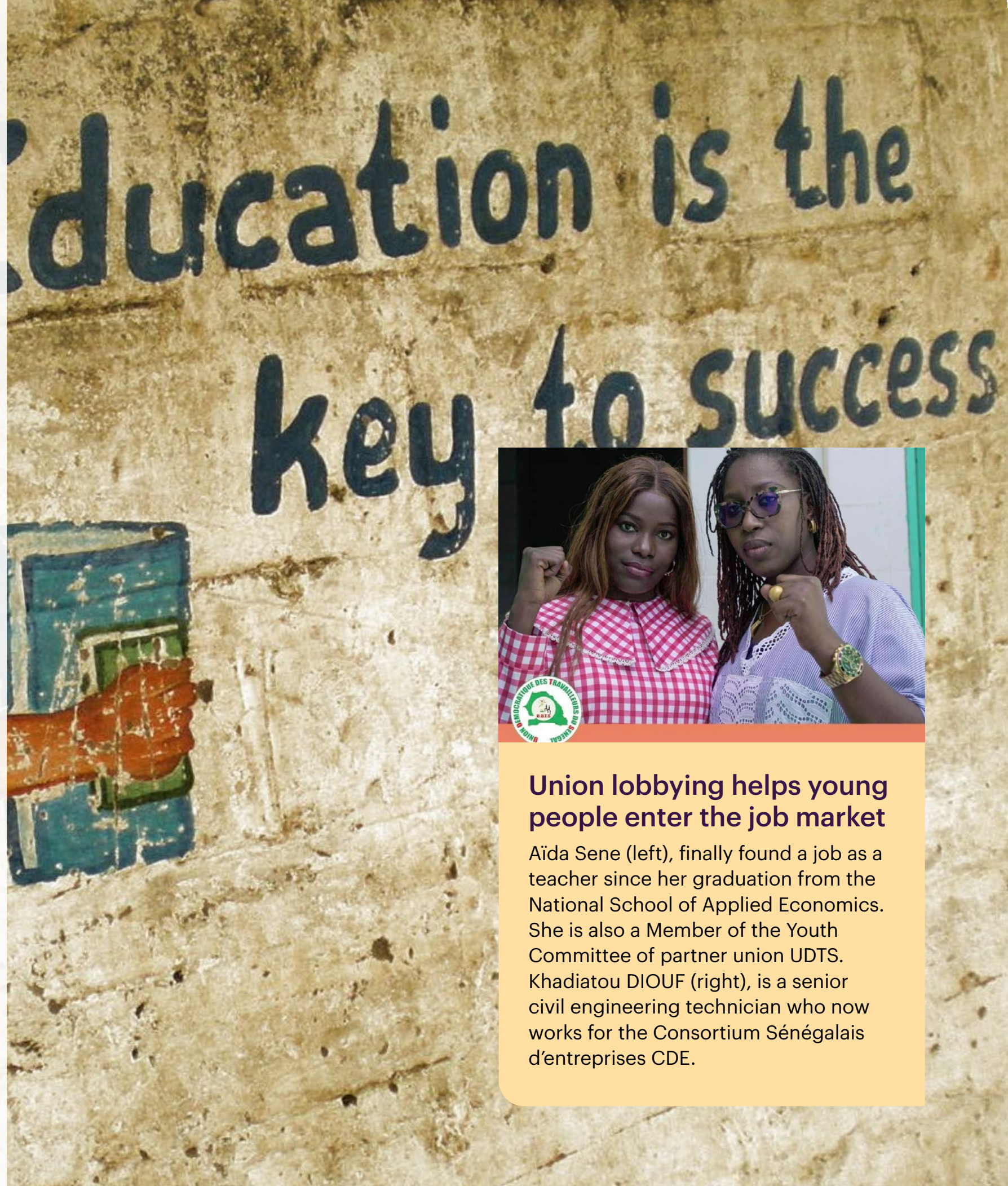
The vouchers pave the way for young people to tailor-made training opportunities, ensuring they are better prepared for employment, especially in national and multinational companies.



(i.e., Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnel, or CAP) and other Bachelor's degrees. It offers a promising horizon for young Senegalese, equipping them with the skills they need to thrive in the job market.

#### Better preparation for young people

The advocacy efforts prepared within the CNV International Programme have positively influenced the government, employers, and the Director General of the Fonds de Financement de la Formation Professionnelle et Technique (3FPT) to enable these vouchers. It has paved the way for more tailor-made training opportunities, which will ensure that more young people are better prepared for employment available with both national and multinational companies.



#### Union lobbying helps young people enter the job market

Aïda Sene (left), finally found a job as a teacher since her graduation from the National School of Applied Economics. She is also a Member of the Youth Committee of partner union UDTs. Khadiatou DIOUF (right), is a senior civil engineering technician who now works for the Consortium Sénégalais d'entreprises CDE.



## Story of Change in Bolivia

A small but significant stride towards fair payment

### Gaining a pay rise for sugarcane workers in Bolivia

Sugarcane workers in the Santa Cruz region have endured exploitation and the disregard of their rights for years. But with the 2023 Collective Bargaining Agreement, they gained not only a small pay rise, but also a sense of empowerment. Sugarcane cutters (Zafreiros) are paid per amount of sugarcane they cut.

“The negotiated pay raise from Bs 30 to Bs 31 for burned cane and from Bs 35 to Bs 36 for fresh cane might seem modest,” says trade union leader Hernán Anagua. It’s far from a living wage “but it’s a first significant stride towards fair compensation. It brings hope to the 7,000 workers our union represents and their entire community.”

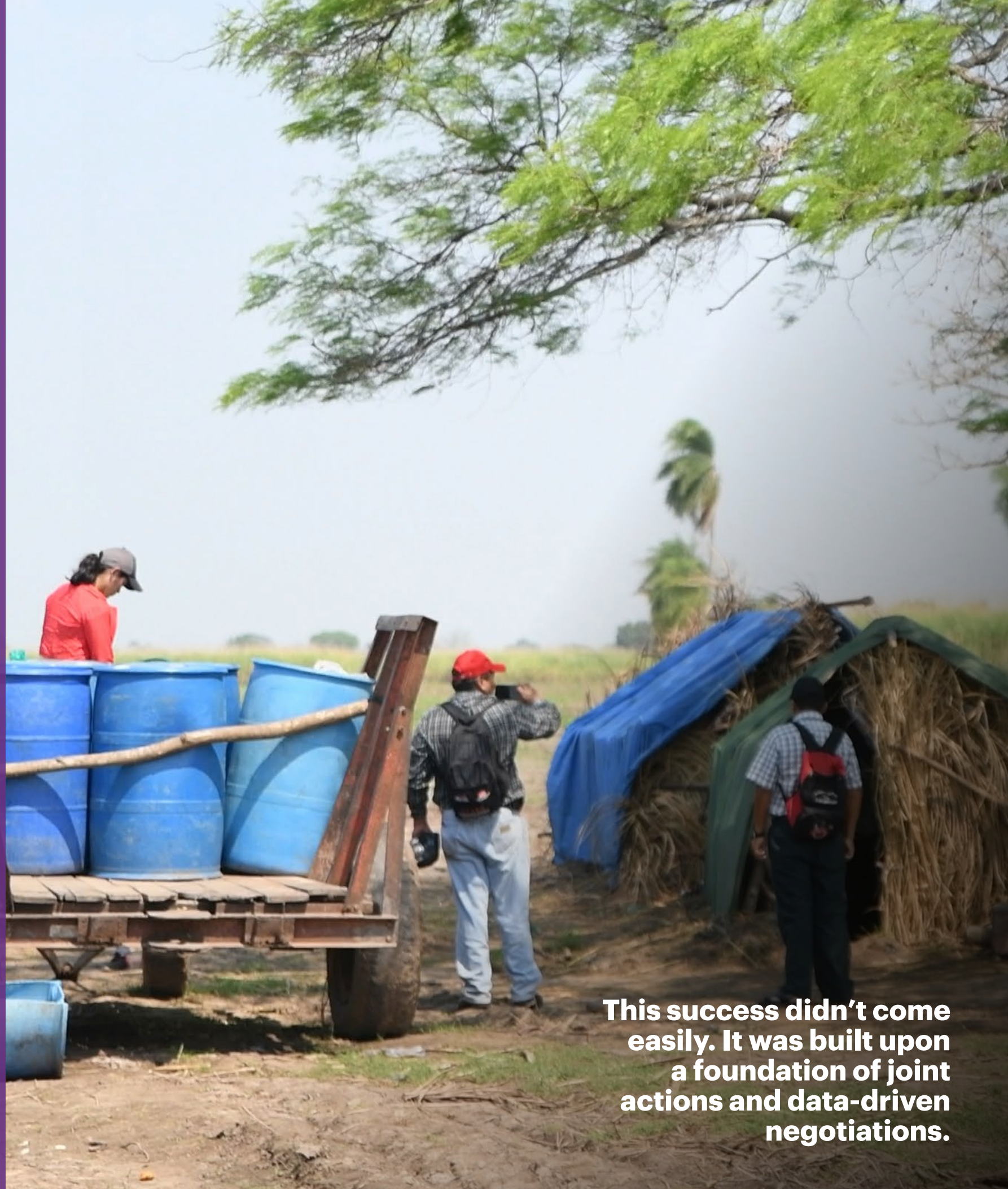
#### Foundations of Success: Unity and Data-Driven Negotiations

This success didn’t come easily. It was built upon a foundation of joint actions and data-driven negotiations. Supported by CNV Internationaal, the union conducted studies on the cost of living, which provided crucial evidence to bolster their demands at the negotiating

table with the company. With backing from local authorities and governmental departments, the implementation of the agreement was ensured, further cementing its significance.

#### Looking Ahead: Building on Achievements for a Brighter Future

The journey for sugarcane workers is far from over. We aim to replicate the successes of 2023 and further utilise resources like the Fair Work Monitor and the Economic Studies of the Sugar Sector to achieve even better outcomes. Empowering workers remains our goal. They deserve dignity and respect and we intend to forge onwards, towards a brighter future for all those toiling in the sugarcane fields of Santa Cruz.



**This success didn’t come easily. It was built upon a foundation of joint actions and data-driven negotiations.**



# Story of Change in Colombia

Transforming Labour Conditions at Cerrejón:

## Reducing the 'death shift': a game-changing agreement

In a recent development at Cerrejón, a prominent coal mining site in the north of Colombia, a groundbreaking agreement was reached between the company and the union. This agreement, aimed at reducing working hours and eliminating the hazardous 'death shift,' signifies a significant victory for the workers. For years, miners endured grueling schedules that jeopardised their health and safety and made a family life almost impossible.

The assistance provided by CNV Internationaal has proven instrumental in navigating the complexities of labour negotiations. With joint actions, the union was able to file complaints with the Ministry of Labour and prepare essential documents on wages, work hours, and salary composition. This collaborative effort laid the groundwork for the historic agreement that will see a new work schedule implemented by September 2024.

### Addressing Issues through Comprehensive Action

Proactive measures, reaching beyond the negotiation table, have been taken to address broader concerns at Cerrejón. International due diligence studies were conducted to shed light on work schedule concerns

and occupational health and safety. Additionally, a virtual labour clinic was organised to provide miners with a platform to seek guidance on labour-related matters, empowering them to assert their rights in the workplace.

### Positive Impact Beyond the Workplace

The ripple effects of this agreement extend far beyond the immediate workforce. Formerly displaced workers who had lost their jobs elsewhere at the PRODECO company, are now being rehired by Cerrejón. This not only restores employment opportunities, but also ensures that these workers benefit from improved working conditions and safety standards.

### Paving the Way for a Sustainable Future

Looking ahead, this agreement sets a powerful precedent for labour relations not only at Cerrejón mine, but across the entire mining sector. It demonstrates that with persistent trade union advocacy and support from organisations like CNV Internationaal, significant improvements in labour conditions are attainable. By prioritising workers' rights and fostering a collaborative environment, a healthier and more sustainable future is envisioned for everyone working in the industry.



In Colombia CNV Internationaal supports the Workers' Collective for a Just Transition in which various trade unions work together to increase their impact.

**This agreement sets a powerful precedent for labour relations not only at Cerrejón mine, but across the entire mining sector.**





# Story of Change in Guatemala

## The Establishment of the First Union in Palm Oil in Guatemala: A milestone achievement

A groundbreaking development allowed Guatemalan palm oil workers to achieve a significant milestone: A union has been established for the first time ever in the industry. This marks a pivotal moment not only for the workers directly involved, but for the entire industry. For years, workers in Guatemala's palm oil sector have faced immense challenges, from precarious working conditions to limited rights. The establishment of the SITRAREPSA union within the palm oil company REPSA represents a beacon of hope, signalling a shift towards fairer labour practices and greater respect for workers' rights.

### Far From Easy

"The journey to create this union has been far from easy," says Cesáreo Tiul, General Secretary of the new union. "It has required tireless dedication and unwavering courage from the workers, as well as support from civil society organisation CONDEG and CNV Internationaal. Despite considerable resistance and pushbacks, the determination of these workers has prevailed. At the end of 2023, all of the necessary documents were prepared for official registration. Finally, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024, we were able to submit them to Guatemala's Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, officially establishing the SITRAREPSA union."

### The Significance of the Union

The significance of this union within the palm oil sector cannot be overstated. Trade unions are the voice of the workers,

providing a powerful mechanism for collective bargaining and social dialogue. Most RESPA workers only speak Quechua and are not highly educated. Through unions, these workers can address grievances, negotiate fair wages, and ensure safe working conditions. Without unions, workers are often left vulnerable and voiceless, subject to exploitation and mistreatment. SITRAREPSA is committed to championing the rights and wellbeing of its members, advocating positive change.

### Looking Ahead

The establishment of SITRAREPSA is just the beginning. This union sets a precedent for the industry, demonstrating that workers' rights cannot be ignored. By complying with international standards and embracing freedom of association, companies like REPSA are paving the way for a more sustainable and equitable future. The hope is that other companies will follow suit, prioritizing the wellbeing of their workers and fostering a culture of respect and dignity within the palm oil sector.

### International Standards

Establishing the union means the company is now in compliance with the standards and guidelines set up by the ILO (International Labour Organisation) and RSPO regarding freedom of association. These organisations stipulate the fundamental rights for workers to organise and to be represented so they can advocate for their interests together.



## The Situation in Guatemala

Guatemala is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. About 80% of the population lives in poverty. Most working people have neither a contract nor any right to social security. Guatemala has now been a democracy for 25 years, and one which officially recognises freedom of association. However, in reality, it remains nearly impossible to be a member of the workers' movement. Trade union members face countless challenges and threats. As a result, only 0.2% of workers actually dare to join a union.



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# Story of Change in Peru

## Peruvian Mining Union Triumphs in Fight for Union Freedom: A Landmark Court Decision

In a landmark decision, a Peruvian court has rejected Glencore's appeal, mandating that its mining company, Volcan, cease its disruptive actions against freedom of association and collective bargaining. By October 28, the company, which operates the Andaychagua mine in Peru, must comply with the ruling that grants the Andaychagua mine union the right to negotiate collective bargaining agreements. This mine vital for extracting silver and zinc, key minerals for the global energy transition, now stands at the forefront of labour rights.



### The Struggle for Union Recognition

The union's journey began in 2021 when permanent employees at the Andaychagua mine bravely opened their union to colleagues employed through temporary agencies. They submitted a request to negotiate a new collective agreement, aiming for improved working conditions for both permanent and temporary workers. However, Volcan refused to negotiate, and Glencore, its parent company, actively opposed the union's efforts. The Peruvian government confirmed the union's right

to negotiate in January 2022. However, Volcan-Glencore has refused to enter into dialogue, prompting the union to initiate a 60 day strike at Christmastime 2022. During the strike, two miners were dismissed.

### A Broader Fight: The EU Complaint

In March 2022, CNV Internationaal, along with trade union organisations from Peru and Colombia, filed a complaint with the European Union. This complaint, the first ever filed with the EU's Single Entry Point, aimed to highlight the precarious working conditions in the mines that supply crucial minerals for the EU's energy needs. In May 2024, after two years, the EU finally discussed this complaint.

### Setting a Precedent

This court decision marks a significant victory for labour rights in the Peruvian mining sector. It not only empowers the miners at Andaychagua, but it also sets a precedent for outsourced workers in industries worldwide.

### Human Rights Concerns

Outsourced miners endure harsher working conditions, including extreme heat, poor ventilation, and insufficient protective equipment. They work in consecutive shifts of 14 or 21 days in remote areas, high in the Andes without decent dormitory accommodations. Their short-term, precarious contracts make union organisation extremely difficult.

### Urgent need for better ventilation and protective equipment

Trade union leader Alex Tinoco welcomes the court decision. "Workers face extreme pressure as they work thousands of meters deep in the mines. Temperatures can be as high as 40 degrees Celsius and ventilation is often poor. And all the while, we are using more and more toxic chemicals, "We hope this court decision will finally bring Volcan to the negotiation table to discuss a new collective bargaining agreement." There is an urgent need for better ventilation and protective equipment.



## Glencore's Accountability

Despite Glencore's public claims regarding commitment to international labour standards and human rights, the company used to shift the actual responsibility for labour conditions onto subcontractors. This practice undermines the enforcement of proper working conditions and labour rights for outsourced workers.





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