



Ulandssekretariatet
LO/FTF Council

6. The LO-FTF Council in Latin America

Regional Organisation

The LO/FTF Council established a regional office in Central America in 1997, when the organisation initiated support to union organisations in the region. Until 2005, the office was located in Guatemala City, and has been placed in Managua since then, where office facilities are shared with the Danish federation 3F. The LO/FTF Council has maintained limited office facilities in Guatemala City, which - due to well established relations with financial institutions and audit firms in Guatemala - continues to be the focal point for the financial administrative management of the activities of the LO/FTF Council in the countries of the region.

As the employees assist and supervise different national and regional components of the programme in Latin America and as they carry out activities of coordination with civil society organisations throughout the region, the office still is known as the Regional Office of the LO/FTF Council: *La Oficina Regional del Consejo Sindical Danés de la LO y FTF*.

The regional work team consists of four employees - being one social work unit, but based in different locations: One Regional Programme Coordinator/International Consultant and one programme assistant based in Nicaragua, one Regional Adviser based in El Salvador and Honduras, and one Regional Financial Adviser based in Guatemala. Despite the physical division of the office team, daily communication and coordination as well as frequent meetings are sine qua non prerequisites for the functioning of the office as one integrated regional LO/FTF unit.

The Regional Office of the LO/FTF Council is responsible for monitoring and supervising the programme activities, and from July 2010: Eight individual programme components supported by the LO/FTF Council in Latin America. The employees provide advisory and technical assistance to the management of specific components within the frame of the programme. They are responsible for the overall quality insurance and monitoring, i.e. for:

- provision of advisory assistance to project teams and partners upon request
- supervision of project implementation in the region, especially in relation to organisational and educational development in accordance with the project document
- assistance to project teams and partner organisations in ensuring that procedures for budgeting, accounting, and reporting are observed.

The regional advisors work in close collaboration and coordination with the colleagues based in HQ in Copenhagen – and under the authority of the Regional Programme Coordinator/International Consultant, who in turn refers to the Secretary General of the LO/FTF Council.

Problems, Partners & Priorities

The problems confronted by the populations at the labour markets in Latin America are similar and often comparable throughout the region, and will increasingly be integrated due to the processes of globalisation. As of today, populations are fighting to keep their current jobs, regardless of the conditions. Un- and underemployment are widespread - particularly affecting women, young, immigrant, and indigenous workers. A large part of the surplus labour force is comprised of a young population having little access to education and quality jobs. Women represent another vulnerable group within the workforce. Domestic and social responsibilities remain the domain of women, and

they are most likely to be employed low-paying jobs (e.g. the new industries) or in the informal economy. The majority of the working populations find employment and income in the informal economy, most of them categorized as poor and having no access to social security. Violations of labour rights are also common throughout the region, an important aspect characterizing conditions in the labour market and affecting millions of working people. ITUC and ILO continue to document that the formal as well as informal labour markets are characterized by frequent and to some extent systematic violations of basic rights. Likewise, lack of political transparency, widespread corruption, and lack of law enforcement are common features.

Objective, Target Group & Strategy of the regional programme in Latin America

The regional programme 'Dialogue and Social Responsibility in the Labour Market in Latin America' is expected to run until 2015. It provides support to union organisations in five countries of Latin America, aimed at strengthening the voice of workers' in their quest for a more sustainable socio-economic and political development through changed conditions in the labour markets. This is done by supporting eight components within the programme.

The programme support evolves around capacity building of the union organisations, enabling them to carry out effective advocacy and through social dialogue to influence a democratic development, to meet the challenges of human rights' violations at the labour market, and to become strong social actors within poverty reduction.

The *overall objective of the programme* is to ensure that:

By 2015, the trade union movement in Latin America has enhanced its capacity to advocate for workers rights on the labour market and will be able to influence the economic development at national and regional levels, thus, contributing to: democratisation of the society, improvement of the human rights' situation and poverty eradication

The *target group* includes men and women, most age groups, different ethnic groups, and lower income groups - a broad range of economically active workers in Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Bolivia.

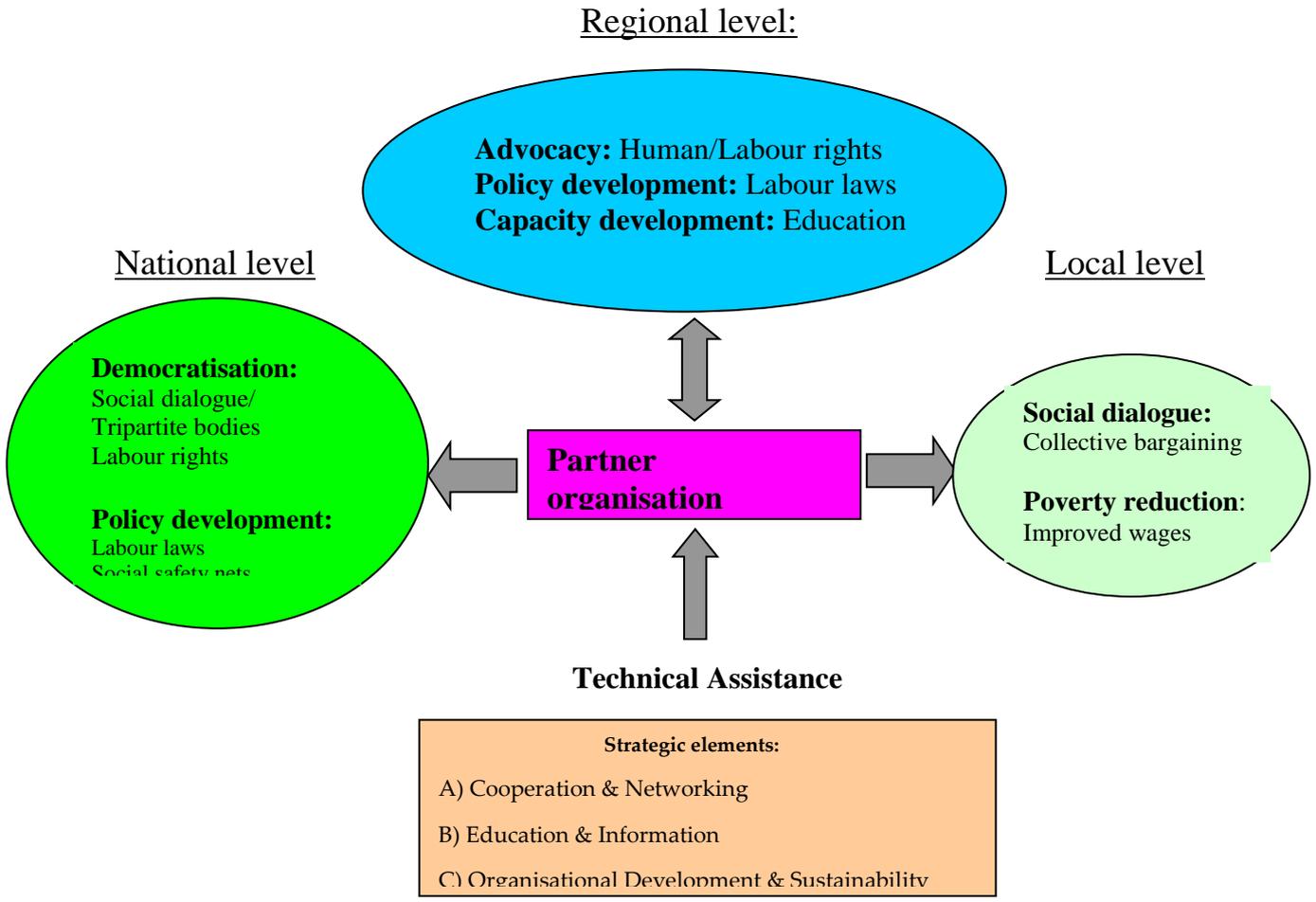
Two cross-cutting *strategic priority areas* are introduced in this programme to operationalise the work of the unions in their struggles to deepen democracy, defend human and workers' rights, and to combat poverty in the region. It has been decided to focus the support from the LO/FTF Council on the following two thematic issues:

- 1) To strengthen unions' claims and efforts to globalize *decent work* in the labour market
- 2) To support their advocacy for putting *good governance* into practice at national level

In order for the trade union movement to become a *change agent* for the development of a just and democratic society, capacity building for advocacy and participation is required. This includes dialogue, conflict resolution, negotiation, organisational and skills development. In short, the *overall strategy* for the LO/FTF Council's programme activities in Latin America, is:

To promote unity and improve the conditions for a strong and democratic trade union movement representing the interests of workers and developing its capacity to be a partner in national development

In practise, the strategy is implemented by delivering technical assistance to the partner organisations evolving around four well defined *strategic elements*. The partner organisations will also be supported with *advocacy, policy development and capacity development* from the regional and the sub regional levels. The capacity development enables the national partner organisation to engage at the local level and to improve conditions for the individual member, and through this gain strength and credibility. At the national level, the partner organisation will also develop the capacity to participate in the nation building endeavours and to contribute to social harmony. Please see figure below.



The two cross cutting themes, *decent work* and *good governance*, being the common denominators governing all activities within the programme, are adapted to the local socio-economic conditions within the individual countries and the organisational development and priorities of the partner organisation in question. But for all partnerships in the different local contexts, the driving force is one simple assumption: That strengthened capacity of the union organisations to enter into social dialogue and advocate for decent work and good governance constitutes an important means to develop *a sustainable labour market, growth and poverty eradication*.