

Mapping of the role of trade unions on Social Protection schemes

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Introduction

The Danish Trade Union Development Agency (DTDA) has since the early 2010s supported trade unions globally in promoting better national social protection mechanisms to benefit their members.

In recent years, the Covid-19 pandemic has in many developing countries put increasing pressure on domestic social protection schemes as social buffers and economic stabilisers that are meant to protect citizens from sliding into poverty through e.g., minimum social protection floors.

But few citizens and workers have access to adequate social protection. As a fundamental component of the Decent Work agenda, social protection is a key tool for reducing poverty, inequality, mitigating impacts of COVID-19, supporting education, promoting gender equality, formalising the informal economy, developing economies, and improving labour market framework conditions. But social protection has developed and expanded fast in recent years due to pandemics, extreme poverty, risks arising from climate changes and a lack of a just transition etc. Therefore, trade unions have increasingly prioritised higher coverage of social protection as a means to end the daily injustice that today leaves 75% of people in the world living with inadequate or no social protection.

To help its constituencies, the trade union movement has therefore accelerated its influence strategically in a number of ways: advocacy work and influencing policymakers to scale up social protection financing; negotiating terms of social protection in the context of bi- or tripartite dialogue; monitoring its progress; and, in some countries, administering social protection benefits and services. Social protection consists of policies and programmes targeting labour market interventions, social insurance, and assistance for parents of newborns, those injured at work, surviving relatives to deceased breadwinners, and retired, unemployed, disabled, and sick persons.

With its numerical muscle and leverage, the trade union movement has contributed to a change in mindset and showcased that it is possible to get the attention of decision makers and pave the way for wider consultations on issues relating to political commitment, coverage, informality, financing, taxation, crisis-responses to shock waves, etc.

This mapping does, however, not purport to a comprehensive and systematic account of social protection (it does not map out sub-regional portability of social security). The experiences and insights reflected in nine country cases nevertheless point to a wide range of strategic approaches and achievements by trade unions on how to influence national social protection policies. Similarly, the report outlines challenges and dilemmas that trade unions encounter when improving and expanding social protection schemes.

Below are nine case countries where trade unions have collaborated with DTDA over many years on social protection. The report findings are based on external consultants commissioned by DTDA to study the role of trade unions in national social protection schemes in the selected countries.

West Africa	East Africa	Asia
Benin	Burundi	Nepal
Ghana	Kenya	Pakistan
Sierra Leone	Malawi	
	Uganda	

This study also greatly benefited from suggestions obtained at the peer review and validation workshop held in Accra, Ghana in December 2023. We are greatly indebted to all peer-reviewers as well as resource persons from UMT (Morocco), ITUC-Africa, Peoples Pension Trust-PPT (Ghana) and ILO (Geneva).

Benin

Benin has decent legal and institutional arrangements for social protection. Trade unions in the West African country have advocated for the improvement and expansion of social protection schemes, and UNSTB has, among other things, established an internal secretariat in charge of social protection issues. In addition, Beninese trade unions are represented on the governing board of the National Social Security Fund (CNSS) that covers workers in formal private and semi-public sectors. It is financed by contributions from workers (3.6% of their earnings) and employers (6.4%).

Despite this, social protection coverage in Benin remains limited. Many laws are not fully implemented, and the coverage among informal economy operators is low. The UNSTB has evolved useful internal policy and institution to realise its social protection ambitions. UNSTB carries out policy advocacy and organises awareness raising campaigns and education on social protection and exercises their daily influence on the Mutual Social Pension Fund decision-making through its workers' representatives on the Board of Directors. Occasionally, the trade union movement undertakes campaigns, public marches, and sensitisation to raise awareness amongst members to understand the benefits of social protection. Here, alliances between trade unions internally and between unions and CSOs are important trade union strategies towards improving social protection. While trade unions in many years raised inadequate social protection of the informal economy, the mapping also recommended that trade unionists know the complexities and details of e.g., pension fund investment options, coverage, fiscal space, scheme models (e.g. RAWU vs. ARCH), actuarial data, procedures, and management to maximise their negotiations with government.

Ghana

Ghana has significant legal, policy, and institutional frameworks for social protection – among others, the Ghana National Social Protection Policy; the National Pensions Act; the National Pensions Regulatory Act; and a three-tier pension scheme. Still, social protection coverage is low due to a large informal economy with only 3% being members of the three-tier pension scheme.

Trade unions advocate and promote to expand social protection schemes, and TUC-Ghana and its affiliates have left a positive mark on the social protection architecture as a result of their political muscle and leverage. Today, trade unions are represented on the governing body of the tripartite National Pensions Regulatory Authority (NPRA) and by exercising deep social dialogue and negotiations that has contributed to a new basic national social security scheme with 1.6 million contributors and 227,000 pensioners in 2020 (the second tier had 2 million members of the mandatory occupational or workplace pension scheme, while third-tier registered 29 informal economy pension schemes). Similarly, trade unions sit on the Board of Trustees of the SSNIT and directly influence these institutions. In addition, TUC-Ghana has supported the informal workers' association (UNIWA) to establish a pension and social protection scheme covering informal economy operators (supported by Mondial FNV, FES and the DTDA). Although a victory for the trade unions movement and for informal economy workers, the pensions scheme only covers around 1,500 of UNIWA's members (less than 1%). Trade union have deep concerns about the reluctance of most informal economy trade union members to contribute to the scheme.

Organisationally, TUC-Ghana has internal structures and policies in place. Its Social and Economic Committee and Social Protection Department are responsible for implementing its objectives and monitoring the social security and pensions policies of TUC-Ghana.

The Ghanaian trade unions deliberately use lobbying and advocacy strategies to influence decision-makers to improve and expand social protection coverage. Recent pensions reforms that led to the establishment of the three-tier pensions system came about after pressure from trade unions. The strategy of TUC-Ghana is to study – and if needed - correct anomalies in the pension schemes through petitioning government (political bias, discrimination, financing etc.). Thereafter, trade unions campaigned against the inadequacy of pensions to sustain a respectable life at retirement. This led the Government to establish a presidential commission on pensions chaired by a retired trade unionist. This commission examines existing pensions arrangements and recommends sustainable pension schemes to ensure retirement income security for workers. Today, trade unions constantly monitor the implementation of the pensions scheme and advocate for improvements to the aspirations of their members.

Similarly, during the Covid-19 pandemic, trade unions advocated for the introduction of unemployment insurance schemes in Ghana for workers who lose their jobs in future pandemics and shocks have access to unemployment benefits and redeployment. The government has accepted this proposal and has established a committee that involves the TUC to fashion out modalities for the establishment of a National Unemployment Insurance Scheme.

The TUC-Ghana case illustrates how they are capable - through campaigns, coalitions and alliances on social protection and advocacy work – of influencing the government on important social protection issues. To overcome the coverage and financial shortcomings of national social protection, TUC-Ghana provides membership services such as registration/recruitment of members to the schemes, membership education and training to sensitise members on the benefits as workers and retirees. Some of the immediate strategic objectives for TUC-Ghana is to increase public financing (especially non-contributory and a universal pension scheme), reduce party-biases, establish an unemployment insurance scheme, increase memberships and more sensitisation programmes etc.

Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone shares many of the same characteristics as Ghana in the area of social protection: a fairly comprehensive legal framework and national legislation, involvement and representation of trade unions in the governance of social protection schemes, but also limited implementation and low coverage as a consequence of the sheer size of the informal economy.

The main social security scheme in Sierra Leone is the National Social Security Insurance Trust (NASSIT). NASSIT has around 225,000 members, which corresponds to 8.3% of Sierra Leone's workforce. It is a mandatory occupational social insurance scheme, funded by workers and employers who contribute 5% and 10%, respectively. Informal economy operators are required to contribute 15% of their earnings to the scheme to enrol. This prevents a majority of the country's workforce from accessing the scheme - especially migrant workers in Sierra Leone, who has no social security to fall back on.

SLLC has played a key role through its representation on the governing board of the NASSIT by two representatives, and the teachers unions also has one representative on the board, meaning that three out of 15 board members are trade union representatives (incl. other social protection programmes). SLLC actively uses this representation to promote the interest of workers in the country and to promote expansion of social protection coverage of informal economy, better enforcement with efficient delivery of payments, and compliance from public and private employers with social security laws.

In addition to NASSIT, SLLC is strategically pushing the interests of members in the development of the Sierra Leone Social Health Insurance Scheme (SLSHI) and review of the social security act where SLLC sit on the technical and steering committees. SLLC is also pushing for a new NASSIT court to penalise non-complying formal employers (both public and private). SLLC defends the negotiated social protection benefits from collective agreements that employers and government would like to reverse (i.e. end of service in addition to 10% to NASSIT).

The lobbying tactics have been implemented through two avenues i.e. with expert data from civil society organisations coalitions, and a second avenue with consultations with employers' federation and government in different for a. As a result, SLLC has made a footprint in most of Sierra Leone's social protection policies.

A key instrumental factor leading to the government prioritising vulnerable migrant workers was the pressure from SLLC who utilised its seats in a range of tripartite boards, commissions etc. to raise the need for re-thinking social protection. The pre-condition to this was a strategic move by SLLC 10 years ago to intensify their organising of workers in the informal economy (approx. ½ million) that today has provided a numerical muscle and leverage.

While bearing in mind its important representation on the board of NASSIT, SLLC does not have a written policy on social policy, nor do they internal capacity (ie. a department) designated to the issue. One of the shortcomings in Sierra Leone NASSIT is that informal economy workers find it too bureaucratic and ill-designed for them. This means that most social security is confined to formal workers in private and public sectors. Therefore, SLLC is shifting this trend by consultations with the Vehicle license Authority so commercial motor riders can contribute to the social security schemes at the point of registering for or renewing their licenses.

As a strategic means to encourage their members to contribute, SLLC carries out sensitisation campaigns, education, media initiatives to extend social protection to informal economy operators and training to make them understand the benefits from available schemes (particularly through the collaboration with DTDA).

Burundi

The trade union movement in Burundi (represented by COSYBU and SCB) plays a big role in shaping the country's social protection policies. Through strategic plans and active partnerships, the unions in Burundi have made significant contributions.

One notable achievement is the instrumental role trade unions played in sensitizing and contributing to the formulation of the Social Protection Code. This involvement underscores their commitment to the development and improvement of social protection mechanisms. Additionally, trade unions have focused on capacity building for their members in understanding and navigating the social protection system, enhancing the overall effectiveness of their advocacy efforts.

The impact of trade unions is evident in their representation in key bodies managing social protection issues, including the National Social Security Institute (INSS), the Social Protection Support Fund (FAPS), and the Civil Service Mutual (MFP). Their presence in these institutions ensures that the perspectives of workers are considered at various levels of governmental decision-making.

Furthermore, trade unions actively influenced the drafting of the new Social Security Code and Labour Code showcasing their contributions in shaping new legislative frameworks. The tangible impact of their

efforts is seen in the reduction of the contribution base, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the adaptability of social protection schemes to address unforeseen challenges.

In terms of achievements within social protection, progress has been made, including the creation of a structured private sector health insurance body, the development of community health mutual funds for the informal sector, and the establishment of a compulsory health insurance framework. The introduction of the Family Benefits Insurance System, an unemployment insurance system, and the gradual extension of social protection coverage to the entire population demonstrate the multifaceted impact of trade unions in enhancing social protection.

Trade unions in Burundi are actively advocating for the implementation of national social protection floors, aligning with international standards such as the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202). COSYBU-CSB are key players in this regard emphasizing their pivotal role in driving positive change within the social protection system.

However, challenges persist, particularly in the informal economy. This highlights an area for improvement and underscores the need for continued efforts to address obstacles hindering the full realisation of social protection. Trade unions in Burundi therefore remain at the forefront, advocating for innovative financing through the Social Protection Support Fund, the implantation and sensitisation of the Social Security Code, alignment of pension laws with regional standards, the establishment of a single social register, and the extension of social protection to workers in the informal economy.

Overall, trade unions in Burundi have made good strides in influencing and improving the social protection system. Their broad approach, from legislative engagement to active representation in key institutions, reflects a commitment to fostering positive change and ensuring the well-being of workers.

Kenya

In Kenya, social protection is undertaken through four pillars: social assistance, social insurance, social care services and labour market programmes. The social protection sector has seen considerable progress, with policies shifting towards universal programmes with a lifecycle approach.

COTU-K is represented on the boards of Kenya's two flagship social protection schemes, the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) and the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF). COTU-K has contributed to significantly in shaping policy and legislative framework on social protection in light of the Government's anti-union stance and a general mistrust between unions and government. Kenya invests relatively large sums on social protection (around 1.3% of GDP), but almost 90% of the population is not covered by any form of social assistance. This is largely attributed to the big size of the informal economy. It is against this background that COTU-K as a national trade union centre prioritises national social protection providers such as NHIF, NSSF and pension schemes directly.

Affiliated trade unions, however, have primarily addressed social protections in collective agreement (CBA) clauses. Several unions have thus succeeded in negotiating social protection provisions into local CBAs in companies to benefit specific workers e.g., benefits such as gratuity in addition to NSSF retirement and NHIF benefits, a provident fund scheme for employees, HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns with medical and insurance schemes etc.

Unfortunately, scepticism and anti-union stance from government officials in NSSF and NHIF have made it increasingly difficult to influence national social protection policies, although COTU-K has had certain success over the years in advocating for improvements and expansions. For instance, back in

2010, COTU-K already then advocated intensively for the recognition of social protection as a basic right to be included in the national constitution. COTU's efforts led to the adoption of the National Social Protection Policy in 2011, and later on reviews of the NSSF and NHIF acts as well as enactment of the Social Assistance Act in 2013. Likewise, it is much to COTU's credit that social partners, including workers and employers, are still represented in the governance of the various social protection institutions of Kenya despite government officials having curtailed the influence of the trade union movement. Tripartism has improved transparency, accountability, and democracy in the administration of social contributions and, at least in principle, raised the voice of ordinary workers in the area of social protection.

While the financial implications of the Covid-19 pandemic are still uncertain, the need for social protection has been unequivocally confirmed in Kenya. COTU-K has strategically advocated for and submitted proposals to expand social protection benefits to include an unemployment insurance fund with employers and the Government agreeing *in principle*. During the pandemic, COTU-K also signed a tripartite MoU with the Ministry of Labour and the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) to protect enterprises and workers from the adverse effects of Covid-19.

The large group of informal economy workers are a key concern to COTU-K that has lobbied government – with evidence-based data - to document the need for informal economy workers to improve their access NHIF and NSSF social benefits. COTU-K has run strategic campaigns targeting informal economy employers to remit their workers NHIF and NSSF deductions, while other unions have provided for social protection for informal economy workers in their strategic plans – or use shop stewards for sensitisation programmes on the importance of enrolling NSSF and NHIF. This has been done in a strategic alliance with both providers. To illustrate, NSSF launched Haba Haba in 2019 in a move to expand Social Security coverage to include members in the informal economy.

Nevertheless, union leaders find laws to be more favourable to government hence leaving on a small room to bargain and negotiate effectively. To change this, COTU (K) has run awareness raising and media campaigns to inform members (and employers) of available social protection opportunities and benefits while still supporting integration of benefits in collective bargaining agreements. Knowledge and attitude gaps on social protection among unions, government and employers are grave.

COTU-K has integrated the concept of social protection in its training and education curriculum to sensitize workers' representatives (especially for youth, women and disabled) and build internal capacity and continue the dialogue with stakeholders including non-state actors and county government.

Finally, COTU-K has put a sub-regional priority to ensure that East African Community (EAC) partner states harmonize and coordinate social security benefits to improve portability between countries.

Malawi

In Malawi, 21% of the population is covered by some form of social protection or social insurance (2016). There are two mandatory social security schemes: The National Pension Scheme and the Employment Injury Scheme. Trade unions, and especially MCTU, play a vital role in influencing how these schemes are implemented through tripartite and bipartite consultation and advocacy. Other social programmes prioritise social cash transfers, school feeding, public works, farm input subsidy and social security.

The National Pension Scheme is funded by formal economy employers and workers who contribute 10 and 5% percent, respectively. MCTU has actively influenced the operations of the scheme by, among other things, advocating for coverage extension to the self-employed or informal workers i.e. to increase

entitlement benefits with 80% after retirement. MCTU also takes an active role – in collaboration with the Reserve Bank of Malawi - in “naming and shaming” employers non-complying with the Pension Scheme. MCTU also campaigns to include workers in the agriculture sector (tea and coffee) where most employers put them on short contracts (sometimes up to 15 years) to avoid pension contributions.

The other mandatory social security scheme such as the Employment Insurance Scheme is poorly functioning, while the Workers Compensation Fund has never been established. This Fund is vital to establish for the scheme to become effective, and MCTU continuously calls the government to kick-start the Fund. MCTU has also been part of a task team that reviewed the Workers Compensation Act. Despite these efforts from MCTU, the insurance scheme is still not operationalised.

MCTU conducts research on social protection which they use proactively when engaging and influencing government and employers. Similarly, MCTU prioritises educating and raising public awareness on the need for social protection.

In addition to this, MCTU regularly pushes for the inclusion of social protection in Malawi’s legal framework. For instance, MCTU successfully advocated for the inclusion of social protection as a human right, and as an important part of the decent work agenda, in Malawi’s Vision 2063. In addition, MCTU is currently pushing for improvements to the National Pension Scheme currently under review. MCTU is proposing an increase in the lumpsum paid to retirees and an extension to allow self-employed and informal economy workers to have flexible payment systems as their incomes keep fluctuating. Here, MCTU and the employers’ organisation ECAM have synchronised their lobbying strategies to raise joint concerns about the financial implications of growing informalisation to pension schemes due to reduced contributions from formal employers/workers.

The Covid-19 pandemic for obvious reasons put a lot of pressure on Malawi’s social protection architecture, and vulnerable groups and workers in the informal economy were particularly hard hit. Consequently, MCTU called upon the government to urgently intervene to cushion the most vulnerable groups by putting in place a universal social protection scheme. In reaction, the government announced various interventions including a cash transfer of approximately 44 USD to a minimum of 172,000 vulnerable households for six months. Despite the good intentions, the implementation has been poor.

The findings from Malawi shows a dedicated and proactive stance in the area of social protection from the national trade union confederation, MCTU. While implementation remains slow and many workers are still not covered by any social protection scheme, MCTU’s work is commendable. It is clear that the government and employers consult with MCTU as task team members eg. reviewing workers compensation act and fund regulations to be more flexible and lower premiums (incl. the pension act) to accommodate informal economy workers, participating in reforming labour laws to prioritise social protection and informalisation, setting of national minimum wages in the tripartite labour advisory council etc.

As a result of a variety of strategic avenues, MCTU has succeeded with putting a pro-union footprint on many of Malawi’s labour and social security legislation. MCTU uses a combination of research, sensitisation of workers and ‘open day’ campaigns, press/media statements and conferences as well as exercising national bi- and tripartite social dialogue to advocacy for - and influence national social protection schemes and policies. In workplace levels, on the other hand, affiliated unions to MCTU use their rights to collective bargaining to negotiate social protection and pension clauses with private and public employers.

Uganda

In Uganda, the trade union movement has demonstrated significant results in terms of influencing national social protection policies. The most important social protection scheme is the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), which has around 1.4 million registered members. Among other things, the NSSF includes age benefit and survivor's benefit. DTDA's partner, NOTU, has left a positive mark on the NSSF while the NSSF Act was under review and amendment in 2021.

Due to the lobbying work of NOTU, the NSSF Act was amended to provide for midterm access to pensions savings (which has proved important as a cushion against economic shocks such as the Covid-19 pandemic) and, importantly, to integrate social protection issues for workers in the informal economy by introducing a voluntary membership scheme. Prior to the amendment of the Act, self-employed workers and informal economy operators did not have access to the NSSF, as one had to have formal employment in order to access the scheme. Nine out of ten Ugandans are working in the informal economy. Now, any worker regardless of his or her employment situation can contribute to the scheme. Lastly, the amendment of the Act also made it compulsory for all companies and organisations, irrespectively of size, to contribute to the NSSF.

NOTU worked deliberately and strategically to influence the Parliament and the President of Uganda during the review process of the NSSF. First, NOTU worked closely with the five workers members of parliament. Having five seats reserved for workers/trade unionists is a unique feature of the Ugandan political system which enables trade unions easier and more direct access to the decision-makers. NOTU deliberately use this network in parliament to promote their interests, also in the area of social protection. In addition to this strategy, NOTU also sought audience with the president to convince him not to liberalise the pensions sector. They managed to convince him not to liberalise the sector by outlining the risks associated with such a move. Instead, NOTU convinced the president that what was needed was an amendment of the NSSF Act, and consequently the process of updating the NSSF started.

According to NOTU, the pressure they put on government and the president forced them to allow mid-term access to pension saving and to introduce voluntary membership, and it has proved a major victory for the trade union movement in Uganda.

Nepal

The three main trade union confederations – GEFONT, NTUC, and ANTUF – work strategically to influence decision-makers through a joint approach to actively improve and expand social protection schemes. The approach takes departure in the following strategy:

- 1) The three unions meet and discuss internally to reach a common position on issues relating to social protection. According to the unions, it is of great importance to reach a common understanding of the social protection schemes, as it enables the unions to clearly visualise and anticipate the notion of social protection.
- 2) Reaching a common position then enables the three unions to embark on their joint campaign and policy advocacy work, in which they sensitise the public and their members and organise campaigns and events that promote social protection.
- 3) Subsequently, the three main trade unions engage in bi- and tripartite meetings with employers and government. The unions spent several years of meetings with the employers' organisation, FNCCI, to reach a common position on the legal framework guiding Nepal's social protection under the country's

Labour Act of 2017. Once an agreement was reached with the employers, the bipartite meetings were escalated to include the government.

4) Simultaneously with the tripartite meetings on the design of Nepal's social protection mechanisms, the unions engaged in stakeholder consultations. Importantly, the trade unions consulted with labour experts and with the ILO.

This strategic approach ultimately meant that GEFONT, NTUC, and ANTUF were able to leave a visible and positive mark on drafting of the Labour Act 2017 and the Contribution Based Social Security Act 2017. These two acts laid the foundation of establishing the Social Security Fund and the Social Security Regulations. The trade unions are represented on the governing board of the Fund and are thus always consulted on any social protection related issue.

The Labour Act stipulates that an employee must contribute 11% of his/her basic income, while an employer must contribute 20%. The majority of this funding goes towards old-age pension. Around 340,000 workers and 17,000 employers contribute to the social security scheme. In other words, most Nepali still do not access any social protection scheme. This can largely be attributed to the large size of the informal economy and a great number of self-employed people, neither of which groups get coverage from the scheme.

In their work to promote social protection, the three Nepali trade unions actively advocate for an active labour market policy. This, among other things, entails a focus on vocational skills training, assistance in the job searching process, support to entrepreneurs and independent workers. An active labour market policy also entails the right for employers to hire and fire. The unions have therefor pushed for increased social security. Consequently, the unions have recommended having a safety basket through a contributory scheme. This basket is designed to help workers to find a new job in the event that they lose the old one – or to offer them unemployment benefits. The government collects 1% tax for social security.

In conclusion, the three main Nepali trade union confederations has taken a strategic approach towards social protection and security. While the majority of the population remains uncovered, the unions can demonstrate significant results in setting up a social security fund which currently benefits almost 350,000 workers.

Pakistan

9% of the population in Pakistan is covered by at least one social protection benefit. 5.7% is covered by a contributory pension scheme. Like in all the other countries assessed in this study, there is a huge coverage gap in the informal economy of Pakistan. Almost three quarters of Pakistan's working population are working in the informal economy with no access to social protection.

PWF and its affiliates have persistently been pushing government, social protection institutions, and employers to improve the governance and service delivery of social protection schemes. PWF puts a lot of efforts into research. The trade union drafts policy papers in order to motivate and orient policy makers and the authorities to include the huge segments of uncovered workers under the social protection schemes. Other strategies include orientation and education of workers, lobbying and advocacy campaigns, and organisation of vulnerable groups of workers. PWF has been successful in many of their strategies to improve social protection service delivery, among other things in terms of registering vulnerable workers with social protection institutions.

PWF is member of various key committees, including the Federal Tripartite Consultative Committee and the Board of trustees of the Employees' Old-Age Institution (EOBI). PWF uses its leverage in these committees to promote and increase social protection coverage and to improve the service delivery.

PWF is able to demonstrate a number of significant results in the area of social protection. Often, these achievements are the result of an active policy advocacy strategy and the development of position papers of high quality. Among the results that PWF has contributed to are:

- Disability pension has been converted to survival pension and benefits extended to the survivals/dependents of disabled workers;
- Benefits to the dependents extended beyond the age of 18 years and for female child till the time of marriage;
- Service delivery and quality of medicine have improved.

However, the greatest achievement that PWF has contributed to is the case of the EOBI. EOBI provides old-age pension, invalidity pension, and survivors' grants for the insured workers and is funded through a contribution of 6% of the employee's wages – 5% is contributed by the employer; 1% by the employee. As mentioned above, PWF is represented on the board of the EOBI.

In 2010, labour issues were transferred from the central level to the provinces, and the EOBI had to be devolved to the provinces too. This had severe implications, especially in the poorest provinces that were unable to sustain the EOBI. As a result, migrant workers of Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were likely to lose their pensions. PWF fought to change this, as they believed that social protection is the prime responsibility of the state. They started working for the retention of the EOBI at the federal level by networking with civil society and mass media so that the issue could be voiced to the relevant authorities. In addition, they advocated workers' cause within the Federal Tripartite Consultative Committee, and they actively lobbied local and national members of parliament. Subsequently, PWF conducted seminars and symposia to orient and sensitise the authorities, and they utilised bipartite forums to develop common understanding to seek retention of the EOBI at the federal level.

As a result of these efforts, and with support of and collaboration with other partners, the Federal Government decided to retain the EOBI at the federal level. Due to this decision, the federal government has for the last two years enhanced old-age pension from PKR 3,500 to PKR 8,500 per month. While PWF cannot be credited as the sole reason for this improvement, there is no doubt that the policy advocacy work of PWF has contributed greatly to improving the service delivery in the area of old-age pensions in Pakistan.

Strategic avenues and initiatives

Below, a number of indicative strategies are outlined that national trade union centres used in the above cases to achieve better outcomes when negotiating national social protection floor(s).

A. Policy development within the trade union movement (internal):

1. Evidence-based costs and projections (data, statistics, facts, and figures to build up negotiation arguments);
2. External expert advice (i.e. from external resource persons);
3. Internal trade union policies and strategies adopted by union leadership (inclusion of contributions from informal economy workers, more public financing at the expense of others);

B. Build up capacity building in workers organisations (internal):

4. Action plan to build up your arguments, timing, sequencing and division of labour (eg. prioritized groups/topics such as "those who can pay", small amounts, as early as possible, prepare for national finance budget negotiations etc.)
5. Trade union network (within national trade union confederation);
6. Develop position papers for public launching;
7. Strengthen capacity of union negotiators;
8. Organise informal workers as a pre-condition for better negotiation outcomes (numerical muscle and political leverage);

C. Negotiations with key stakeholders and dealmakers (external):

9. Informal breakfast and round-table meetings with decision-makers, parliamentarians and other key stakeholders;
10. Tripartite study tours to like-minded countries;
11. Collaboration with national employers' organisations on joint positions and interests;
12. Negotiations with key ministries;
13. Lobbying avenues:
 - a. National constitutions and legislations
 - b. Heads of state and key ministers (incl. pressure on AU, EAC, ECOWAS, ILO, etc.)
 - c. Parliamentarians (e.g. committee members, former colleagues)
 - d. Bi-and tripartite boards, councils and commissions
 - e. Social protection/health care scheme (union) board members, management and staff
 - f. Memoranda of Understanding with local and central governments

D. Public Campaigning (external):

14. Media and press (strategies and compensation);
15. Unified position with alliances with civil society platforms and employers' organisations;
16. Awareness raising (ensure that trade union members are aware of their social protection rights), public campaigns, and sensitisation programmes (promotion);
17. Membership services (financial education – daily contributions, ID cards, registration, reclaim entitlements, digital training etc.);
18. Involve the UN System (and present union positions to Bretton Woods institutions like IMF).

Conclusion

The study has demonstrated a range of different ways that trade unions successfully influenced and attributed to improved national social protection schemes and policies.

A key influencing factor is how national trade union confederations are often represented on governing boards of national social protection schemes, such as old-age pension schemes. Through this (legal) representation, trade unions use their leverage in these boards to promote and increase social protection coverage and to improve service delivery to the benefits of their members.

In a number of countries, evidence showed how board representation ensured inclusion of workers' interests in social protection legislation and reforms. In the case of Ugandan parliament, five seats are reserved to workers representatives with the result that NOTU influenced the amendment of Uganda's NSSF in recent years to e.g., accept voluntary contributions from the informal economy.

Most countries have relatively good legal and policy frameworks for social protection, but trade unions vary their strategies to (socially) protect their members. While most trade unions prioritise national social protection schemes, the Kenyan trade union movement is an example that uses a two-track strategy to firstly lobby national protection schemes while parallel using local collective bargaining and agreements to increase employers' contributions. Another key role is how trade unions prioritise the role as watch dogs and publicly criticize short-comings in implementing and rolling-out social protection schemes due to low government income revenues and a dominating informal economy.

Another key strategic priority to most trade unions is to provide evidence-based research, data and statistical inputs from its national and sectoral unions. National trade union centres like PWF in Pakistan, MCTU in Malawi, and TUC-Ghana provide solid research to back up position papers, awareness raising campaigns, and policy advocacy work often leading to practical benefits to members.

As listed in the previous section, a range of different strategic steps and avenues appear to have been used by trade unions that other might try. However, it is key to underline that these strategies avenues and negotiation tools are not exhaustive but merely indicative to help achieve better outcomes in their efforts to influence national social protection schemes to provide their union members with higher social protection floor(s).