Project: Expanding Trade Unions to Increase Representation

Donors: The Programme has been supported by the Netherlands Partnership Programme the ILO and smaller contributions from United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

Project Description: In Ghana, Malawi, and Tanzania, the ILO has partnered with national trade union bodies to include informal workers and build capacity of unions and workers. Workshops in Tanzania and Ghana focused on integrating informal workers’ representation into trade union structures, through discussions and group debates. These results and conclusions emerged:

- Trade Union Congress of Tanzania (TUCTA) influenced amendments on laws regarding the expansion of social security to informal workers
- TUCTA is now represented on National Social Security Fund decision-making bodies
- Needs and expectations of participants should be communicated from the outset to minimize confusion over roles, responsibilities, and benefits of change
- Women’s roles are usually minimal and/or minimized at the outset, but steady efforts for organization yield results
  - A local beauticians’ association gained affiliation with the Ghana Trades Union Congress

In Malawi, efforts were focused on building women’s representation because 90% of tobacco is tended by small and informal contract workers, the majority of whom are women. Tobacco is Malawi’s chief export crop.

- Literate trainers were trained to organize women of all educational levels
- After being trained and organized, the tobacco sector was incorporated into the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions
  - Illiterate tobacco farmers gained bargaining power with tobacco companies
- Tobacco farmers are now a significant component of national and tripartite bodies.

Contact Details:
Mohammed Mwamadzingo
mwamadzingo@ilo.org or pretoria@ilo.org
PO Box 40254
Arcadia 0007
Pretoria South Africa