Project No. 3-3

Region: Americas
Countries: Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Venezuela

Project:
Change is possible: Understanding and organizing workers in the informal economy

Project Description:
Extensive cooperation between ICTFU-ORIT and trade union federations is leading to informal economy workers in the Region joining trade unions. They are working together to address the magnitude of the informal economy and its impact on workers.

Obstacles to including workers in the informal economy involve:
- The belief that workers in the informal economy are less capable or have less experience, making their move to the formal economy unlikely;
- The self-fulfilling prophecy in some trade union circles that workers in the informal economy do not support the option of organizing into trade unions;
- Poor regional and national communication between groups pursuing the same goals;
- Social sectors that oppose membership in trade unions for fear of violation of rights and more basic problems facing trade union organization;
- Lack of understanding with other trade union groups which do not see the importance of the informal economy in Latin America.

With organization, the following results can be seen at the local and international levels:
- Inclusion of gender concerns in all activities around the informal economy;
- Groups of workers in the informal economy become associated with trade unions;
- Special trade union programmes to understand and address the particular features of the informal economy;
- Exchanges between the ILO, CINTERFOR, academic institutions, trade unions and NGOs to study and understand the informal economy;
- A global alliance with a few NGOs to mutually reinforce the impact of the initiatives taken to provide more assistance to workers in the informal economy.

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