



Call for Expression of Interest

Consultant

Study on women and gender issues in trade unions in the Cambodian garment industry

Background

While international and local attention has been cast on working conditions and on fundamental rights at work, less attention has been given to address garment workers' social and health needs and specially those of young women at an age where they have or will soon have children.

The economic crisis has also considerably increased the vulnerability of garment workers and the inroads made in poverty alleviation in Cambodia have been negatively affected. The new gender and social protection component of ILO Better Factories Cambodia programme is expected to help mitigate these vulnerabilities and provide opportunities for garment workers and their families to cope with the crisis while creating new paths for better employment.

An additional 2-year Better Factories Cambodia programme component on social protection and gender will strengthen the programme's capacity to address and integrate social protection and gender elements more holistically and in practical terms will lead to improvements in the working conditions and economic opportunities of women workers.

In particular, the programme activities aim at improving the well-being and health of women workers and enhancing gender responsive workplace policies. Promotion of women's participation in workplace level decision making is an important part and a prerequisite for improving the situation of women garment workers and making the sector more responsive to the gender equality deficits that currently characterize the sector.

Women's participation

In recent years, both international observers and women members in trade unions have highlighted the importance of the role of women in trade unions. ILO together with ICFTU and the International Trade Secretariats conducted a survey of good practices to increase the proportion of female membership in the late 1990s. The survey found a variety of factors to explain why women's representation as union members and leaders is low. Lack of understanding of how unions can help them, fear of reprisals from employers, conflicting family demands, and male dominated culture were some of the main findings of the survey.

Yet, in many countries statistics do not exist and very little is known about the actual role played by women in unions. A 2008 ILO paper¹ examined women's participation in social dialogue institutions at the national level, showing that women account for 14.68% of the total membership in social dialogue institutions such as government, workers and employers, and that Asia had the lowest scores of all regions (11.21%). However, little detailed information is available for Cambodia.

Attempting to fill this gap, the ILO-BFC Project is commissioning a study on women and gender issues in the Cambodian garment industry trade unions. The study will give BFC a baseline on women's membership and representation as leaders in trade unions in the garment sector, which will help to assess the impact of project interventions at the end of the project's life. The study will also present the existing strategies for mainstreaming gender equality concerns into trade union practices.

¹ Women's participation in social dialogue institutions at the national level, paper no. 16

Objective

1. The main objectives of the research are: a) to provide a baseline on the numbers of women members and leaders in Cambodian garment industry enterprise level trade unions; and b) to examine the factors that lead to under-representation of women in trade union structures, detail good practices for gender mainstreaming, and provide recommendations for improving this situation
2. The results of the research will influence the focus areas, strategies and methodology to be used for the work of the BFC project on gender and social protection on improving women's position and mainstreaming of gender equality concerns in social dialogue in the Cambodian garment sector. In other words, the main purpose of the research is to present recommendations and clear suggestions for action on why and how to improve women's participation in trade unions in the garment industry, what methodology to be used and how existing strategies can be replicated and/or improved.

Methodology

The research will be based on 1) a review of available information (studies, reports, meeting reports, minutes of meetings, etc) on women and gender issues in trade unions in Cambodia; 2) interviews and focused group discussions with male and female trade union leaders and members from a representative number of trade unions (both enterprise level and federations) in the garment sector; 3) interviews with stakeholders such as ILO and other international agencies working on industrial relations and workers' organizing in Cambodia. The BFC project office will assist the external collaborator in accessing contact details of relevant trade unions and individuals.

Report outline

The objective of the first part of the report should be to present a brief background on women workers and trade union organizations in Cambodia. Specifically, this section should introduce common statistical information and research findings about female labour force participation by economic sector, women's working conditions, the national legal framework for women workers and for trade unions, and political and economic factors influencing trade unionism in Cambodia. This background information is of critical importance in assessing the findings of the survey presented in the second part of the report.

The second part should present the findings of the survey conducted among at least 25 unionists, of whom at least 15 (but no more than 20) should be women. This section should explain the scope and methodology of the survey, as well as providing basic background information about the organizations whose leaders or members participated in the survey. The section should present data on women's participation and representation as leaders and members of trade union organizations. Attention should also be paid to the causes for women's low representation in union leadership, and strategies or good practices to improve women's participation.

The third part of the report should give information on the mechanisms and structures for promoting gender equality within trade union organizations. It should provide an overview of the current roles, responsibilities and organizational locations of such structures, and their strengths and weaknesses as detailed by survey respondents.

The fourth and final part of the report should present the conclusions and recommendations that emerge from the survey and the desk review.

The report will be between 20-35 pages in length (times new roman 12 point, 1.5 space).

Deliverables

1. Conduct a desk review of available information on the current status concerning and successful strategies for improving female participation and gender equality issues in trade unions in Cambodia, with focus on the garment sector.
2. Conduct interviews and focused group discussions among trade union leaders and members on these issues.
3. Draft a report on the findings and recommendations on how the gender and social protection component of ILO BFC can assist in increasing women's participation in trade unions at both enterprise and federation level.
4. Prepare a Powerpoint presentation about the findings and present the findings to BFC during a meeting.

Collaborator's tasks

- Assign a project Manager as the single point of contact for the purpose of this collaboration.
- Coordinate the activities
- Ensure the quality of the product to be delivered

ILO Better Factories Cambodia's tasks

- Assign a task manager as the single point of contact for the purpose of this collaboration
- Provide *the collaborator* with the necessary contact information and access to BFC networks as necessary to perform the work.
- Ensure timely review and provide comments when needed by *the collaborator*

Tentative timeline

- June 2010: hire a consultant
- July 2010: Submit a draft questionnaire/survey and focus group questions about women's participation and gender issues in trade unions, and a list of individuals targeted for interviews for approval
- July-August 2010: Conduct a survey among trade unions on women's participation and gender issues and conduct focused group discussions and interviews with all relevant stakeholders on the issue, and submit a draft report to BFC
- August 2010: Submit the final report (taking into account ILO comments) and present it to BFC

Deadline

Please send your letter expressing your interest, estimated budget and short description to Ms Ngan Touch Sophorn at: sophorn@ilo.org before **June 18th 2009 at 17h.**