

## *Executive Summary*

### **Evaluation**

#### *A trade union perspective*

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1 Trade unions have an abiding interest in development in that they seek to bring about sustainable improvements in working and living conditions of workers and their communities through protection and promotion of their economic and social rights. While their aims and objectives are congruent with those of other agents in development, their efforts often concentrate on fostering an enabling environment conducive to sustainable development rather than on interventions designed to affect economic and social parameters directly. This approach is manifest in preponderance of initiatives aimed at institutional and organizational development and capacity building, which, in turn, steers the evaluation process.

2 Trade union development co-operation activities are mainly centred on development of human resources. They range from training and education activities to action-oriented programmes designed to address clearly identified and prioritised concerns of the movement. The primary objective of all trade union project activities is to strengthen the institutions and structures through capacity building so that trade unionists in developing countries can effectively campaign on fundamental rights of workers and their communities.

3 Evaluation has become an integral part of all trade union co-operation initiatives due to a number of reasons. Prominent among them are a desire to verify effectiveness of a particular project in order to be able to enhance effect of future initiatives and the need to optimise use of available resources and account for them to funding agencies. Moreover, there is an imperative need to avoid wasteful duplication of effort and/or meaningless dispersion of scarce resources. Evaluation also affords a valuable opportunity for effective dialogue between among all stakeholders.

4 Trade union evaluators rely mainly on participatory monitoring and evaluation methods for information gathering and complement them with other means such as survey questionnaires, interviews, meetings etc. Qualitative as well as quantitative data are gathered for comparative analysis. Trade union evaluators are guided by commonly accepted criteria for project evaluation and make use of indicators to assess effectiveness of their development interventions.

5 Trade union approach to impact assessment is also influenced, *inter alia*, by considerations central to institutional and organizational development and capacity building within the movement. Impact assessment needs to take into account a host of factors affecting local partner: institutional independence, internal democracy, autonomy, equity, unity, sustainability etc. Impact assessment of trade union co-operation initiatives transcends mere verification of achievement of immediate objectives and takes a longer-term view of all possible effects on issues of particular concern to the movement.

6 In addition, trade union evaluators pay special attention to impact on a number of themes of particular relevance to the movement. Effect on gender balance is taken into account while probable impact on minority groups needs to be given special consideration in an ethnically diverse social context. Effects on relations with government, employers, other social partners –NGOs and community-based organizations – are looked into. Contribution to social cohesion, institutional linkages, networking etc is to be emphasized. Perverse or unintended adverse effects, if any, deserve consideration.

7 Trade unions face same or even greater challenges in impact assessment. Their initiatives, by nature, are deemed to bear fruit in the long term. Many exogenous factors complicate task of identifying and isolating effect of their initiatives in the long-term. Attribution of effects to a particular intervention proves difficult. Moreover, difficulty of establishing reliable baseline data often hampers analysis.

8 Ensuring long-term sustainability of successful initiatives is often a challenge. Evaluators need to pay special attention to a number of factors affecting long-term viability. The availability of adequate resources, commitment of local partner as well as that of all other stakeholders, possible changes in national policies and all other relevant factors are critically assessed in order to satisfy criteria for long-term sustainability.

9 Trade unionists need to ensure that the goal and objectives of their initiative remain relevant to target groups as well as other stakeholders. In view of possible policy shifts and developments, evaluators need to be particularly watchful about appropriateness and usefulness of continuing the initiative. Relevance as well as adequacy of initiative is of concern given complexity and scale of problem to be dealt with.

10 Conclusions and recommendations are of great importance, for they form the basis for future initiatives by trade unions and their funding partners. Evaluation reports become valuable tools of exchange of information between members of the international trade union family.

11 Evaluation in a trade union context is not very distinct from similar exercises carried out by other development agents. Owing to the nature of their interventions, trade unionists tend to look back on the outcomes from a slightly different perspective in order to focus on long-term impact. The success of intervention depends, not only on their immediate outcomes, but also on their contribution to the promotion of the values of the movement.

## Evaluation

### *A trade union perspective*

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#### ***Introduction***

Trade unionists have an abiding interest in development in that they seek to bring about sustainable improvements in working and living conditions of workers and their communities through protection and promotion of their economic and social rights. While their aims and objectives<sup>1</sup> are congruent with those of other agents in development, their efforts often concentrate on fostering an enabling environment conducive to sustainable development rather than on interventions designed to affect economic and social parameters directly<sup>2</sup>. There is increasing recognition of the role of trade unionists in international development and of the need for development agencies to work in partnership with them<sup>3</sup>. Trade unionists' approach to development is conditioned by the role they play in society and is, in essence, rights-based<sup>4,5</sup>. Their endeavours are directed at strengthening the systems and structures underpinning institutional arrangements that facilitate the process of promoting fundamental rights of working people. This approach is manifest in a multitude of initiatives aimed at institutional and organizational development and capacity building, which, in turn, has implications for evaluation. This short paper seeks to look at issues involved in assessing the effects of development initiatives from a trade unionist's viewpoint, identifies areas of special concern to the movement and stresses the importance of taking a long-term view of impact.

#### ***Nature of trade union development co-operation initiatives***

Development of human resources is considered an essential element in any development strategy – concept fully resonant with the values of the trade union movement. Training and education activities are regarded as the most appropriate and effective means of assisting trade union organisations. Education and training<sup>6</sup> play a vital role in consolidating the basis for future development of the movement, for there is a continuing need for educating

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<sup>1</sup> There is increasing recognition of the role of trade unions in development. See Implementing the OECD DAC Guidelines on poverty reduction, Report on a meeting with trade union experts held under the Labour/Management Programme, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> “Our overall aim of international development co-operation is to alleviate poverty and inequality. Trade unions strive to achieve this by improving the working and living conditions of workers and by developing democratic and independent organisations which represent their members at work and in civil society”. Guidelines for International Trade Union Development Co-operation, LO/FTF, Denmark, SASK, Finland, FNV, The Netherlands, LO-TCO, Sweden, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> “There are many opportunities for trade unions to work with DFID to carry forward our shared objectives...” Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, Foreword, Trade Unions and the DFID, April 2000.

<sup>4</sup> “Human rights should be respected – the right to a fair livelihood, adequate health, educational opportunity and access to water and energy”. Target 2015, DFID – TUC Publication 2002

<sup>5</sup> Rights-based approach to development, more specifically to poverty reduction, has gained recognition as a useful paradigm to focus attention on the need for empowerment of communities. See Lignes directrices du CAD pour la réduction de la pauvreté: Responsabilisation, renforcement des droits et gestion des affaires politiques fondée sur une dynamique de réduction de la pauvreté, OCDE 2001

<sup>6</sup> “Educational activities to mobilise members and develop specialist skills at all levels of the trade union organisations represent the largest part of development action”, Manual for Trade Union Development Projects, ICFTU, 1995.

members on human and trade union rights and on legislative developments affecting their working and living conditions. Many national trade union centres view trade union education as the primary objective of their development co-operation activities. There is, therefore, a preponderance of training and education programmes, including development of education and training material, aimed at improving the skills of trade union officials and equipping them with necessary knowledge. In addition, there is a series of action-oriented programmes designed to enhance the effectiveness of training and education programmes. Projects on organising and recruitment of members, integrating women and young workers into unions, improving health and safety systems at work and eliminating child labour and forced labour belong to this category. Initiatives seeking to improve the administrative, organisational and managerial skills and research capability of trade union officials are also common and provide valuable technical expertise for skills development within the movement. There are relatively few initiatives of socio-economic nature, directly aimed at improving the living standards of people and their communities in general carried out by trade union organisations, for trade unionists are of the view that their comparative advantages lie, not in direct development interventions, but in creating an enabling environment. However, trade unionists do recognise the value of successful endeavours in this domain and are keen to support them, where appropriate, as pilot initiatives.

### *Need for Evaluation*

Trade unions attach great importance to formal assessment of the extent to which objectives of their initiatives are fulfilled. In fact, in trade union circles, evaluation is no longer seen as an add-on but as an integral part of all development co-operation initiatives<sup>7</sup>. It is incorporated into the project document at the design stage and forms an essential element of it. For a variety of reasons, trade unions, like all other development agents, are keen to assess the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of their efforts and need to ensure that their objectives remain relevant and that benefits are sustained in the long-term. They are required to justify the allocation of scarce resources – financial, human and material- for a particular project among a number of alternative uses. Moreover, trade unions are often dependent on external funding for implementation of the majority of their projects. Consequently, they need to convince funding agencies that resources are put to good use<sup>8</sup>. The need to optimise use of available resources is of paramount importance to trade union organisations.

Moreover, there is an increasing desire to learn from experience. Evaluation provides a valuable opportunity for trade union organizations and their funding agencies to look back on the outcomes of their work in order to be able to enhance effects of their future interventions. Identification of problems and possible solutions enables organizers to improve on their methodologies, practices and procedures, and leads to a better understanding of international solidarity action and its limitations. Efficient use of scarce resources is just as important to trade unionists, as it is to any other development partner. Trade unionists need to avoid wasteful duplication of effort and/or meaningless dispersion of resources.

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<sup>7</sup> “Evaluation is an integral part of the planning and implementation. It is an effective management tool to obtain information for decision-making. Evaluation assists an organisation to develop and maintain perspective on its work by describing and measuring its progress, achievements, impact.” Op.cit. P57

<sup>8</sup> “...Account for better utilisation of resources; Op.cit. P57

There is also emphasis on the need for more openness or transparency<sup>9</sup> in the management of resources by trade union organizations, notably in the case of resources made available to them by external funding agencies. The need for proper accountability is becoming increasingly important in the context of scarcity of financial, human and material resources facing the movement.

Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation open up opportunities for effective communication between local partner organisations and funding agencies on the one hand, and among stakeholders in the Project on the other. The process of information gathering implies close co-operation between all those involved in the project, which, in turn, enhances cohesion within the trade union movement.

### ***Looking back on outcomes***

The primary purpose of evaluation is to gauge the extent to which objectives of project have been achieved. In general, trade unionists concur with the definition and criteria recommended by the OECD/DAC for evaluation<sup>10</sup> and have no difficulty in applying them when evaluating trade union development co-operation initiatives. In this regard, evaluation in a trade union context does not differ much from similar exercises carried out by other agencies. Terms of reference are usually included in the project document and adhered to in the evaluation process.

### ***Gathering information***

Broadly speaking, the trade union movement relies heavily on participatory monitoring and evaluation methods. Participatory methods of evaluation are deemed to be more in line with trade union approach to development and lend themselves to easy adaptation to a trade union context. They are perceived to be more democratic, transparent and accessible to all as they afford opportunities for all stakeholders to take part openly in the process. Moreover, participatory methods facilitate collective action and consensus building and are particularly suitable for gathering information on project activities from the point of view of participants. Efforts are made to involve as many stakeholders as possible in the process, with priority being given to primary beneficiaries. Collaborative nature of exercise is stressed and perceptions of prime beneficiaries and other stakeholders are given adequate weight when analysing data. It is customary to organise evaluation workshops to be attended by stakeholders. These are normally held in collaboration with local partner organisations in locations convenient for stakeholders. All participants are advised of details of programmes and arrangements are made well in advance. Workshop participants review the achievements of the project in relation to its objectives and add a qualitative and subjective dimension to the whole process, often complementing information obtained through other methods.

It is also common to conduct semi-structured informal interviews with a representative sample of prime beneficiaries during an evaluation mission. Although interviewing is less economical in terms of resource use and more time-consuming indeed than evaluation

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<sup>9</sup> Report of the ICFTU High Level Partnership Conference on Trade Union Development Co-operation, Brussels 19 November 2001, P2

<sup>10</sup> "Evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and objective as possible, of on-going or completed aid activities, their design, implementation and results. ", Glossary of key terms in Evaluation and Results based Management, OECD, 2002.

workshops, it presents several advantages. Participants tend to give a more candid and personal account of their involvement in the project and provide data that are more meaningful. It is more convenient for them, as they do not need to travel to attend interviews. It also gives the evaluators a very useful insight into the problem(s) that the project was designed to address at the local level.<sup>11</sup>

Questionnaires are also used to gather information on various aspects of project from participants, often, as a complement to other means of information gathering, especially when it is not practicable to organise interviews. Questionnaires are found to be more useful for gathering quantitative data for comparative analysis. In addition, meetings are held with representatives of NGOs and government agencies that took part in the project to gather information on their role in, and future commitment to, the Project.

### *Measuring achievements*

It is imperative that project objectives are defined in clear terms and that they should be translatable into measurable components so that their fulfilment can be easily verified. Moreover, great care is taken to examine whether they are consistent with the overall goal of the movement and whether they remain relevant to the prioritised needs. In reality, this entails considerable difficulties for trade unionists, for a great many of their initiatives are directed at improvement or enhancement of capacity or competencies within an organisation and the achievement of such objectives does not easily lend itself to easy measurement or to unambiguous interpretation.

It is not any easier to find appropriate standards or reference to measure efficiency of use of resources in a trade union context. Ideally, it should be possible to make comparisons with best practice. However, best practice varies considerably within the movement. The cost of carrying out a given health and safety education programme depends on a multitude of factors, some of which are specific to a country or region. The cost of translating an English Health and Safety Manual into Swahili in Kenya<sup>12</sup> by participants in a workshop turned out to be particularly high. However, considering the expertise involved and technical competence of participants it was not possible to establish with accuracy whether it could have been done more economically by other means.

The choice of indicators depends on the nature of project and is made at the outset in consultation and agreement with the local partner and funding agencies and the main stakeholders in the project. Trade union evaluators recognise the importance of indicators as useful tools that enable them to determine success or failure. Indicators need to convey relevant and meaningful information and should be suitable for use in evaluating a project of a similar nature<sup>13</sup>. In a project designed to recruit new members in a particular industry or sector, the growth or decline in membership since the launch of the project is obviously a

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<sup>11</sup> Interviews with health professionals during visits to local clinics and hospitals in Western Cape, South Africa in the course of the evaluation of the Training of Health Professionals in the Diagnosis of Occupationally related Diseases provided a good opportunity to the evaluator to acquaint himself with the situation at local level.

<sup>12</sup> Development of a Health and Safety Manual for Women Plantation Workers in Kenya was part of an initiative by the TUC funded by the then Overseas Development Administration (now Department for International Development) in 1996-98.

<sup>13</sup> Trade union evaluators find properties attributed to good indicators (SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound, SPICED: Subjective, Participatory, Interpretable and Communicable, Empowering and Diverse and disaggregated) useful.

useful indicator<sup>14</sup>. If the objective was to promote trade unionism in general through increased unionisation of employees, indicators could include those relating to recruitment in new industries or sectors or innovative methods of membership recruitment or establishing new categories of members. If the objective was to strengthen the role of unions in collective bargaining, increase in the number of recognition agreements could be a good indicator. In an initiative designed to improve the profile of the organisation (eg increased representation of women and/or young workers), it is necessary to choose indicators that disaggregate relevant data so that the evolution of various components since the launch of the initiative could be analysed.

Attribution of results to a particular initiative proves as difficult in the case of trade union development co-operation as in any other intervention<sup>15</sup>. Many exogenous factors complicate task of identifying and isolating effect of a particular intervention in the long-term. Growth in membership in a union could be the cumulative effect of a number of factors acting together. Analysis of past patterns and trends in membership growth in comparable sectors could yield valuable information. The level of employment and trends in the growth could also help explain the observed change since the launch of the project, as would many other factors affecting union membership. Nevertheless, there are considerable difficulties in gathering reliable baseline data. Consequently, use of sophisticated techniques for analysis of data is not warranted. Even when there is evidence of a causal link, it is often difficult to ascribe it to one particular intervention, as there are often a number of interventions by different external agencies. This is particularly true of training and education activities.

A substantial number of trade union development co-operation initiatives are designed to bring about sustainable qualitative improvements through training and education that are harder to measure in quantitative terms. While it is straightforward to count the number of officials who receive training, it is difficult to verify with accuracy whether they have acquired the knowledge and skills, as expected of them. In general, no exams or tests are held to assess individual achievements. It is even harder to measure the value added, for often training is provided in order to upgrade skills and/or update knowledge in areas of particular relevance to trade union officials. The AFRO Negotiating Skills for Women Trade Union Officials Project<sup>16</sup> is a case in point in this regard. The objective of the Project was to increase the number of female trade union negotiating officials in order to ensure that issues relating to women receive adequate attention in collective bargaining. At the outset, it was agreed that the number of women trade union officials trained under the Project would be one of the main indicators. However, following the Evaluation carried out of Stage I of the Project, it was felt that the number of trained women officials alone would not be sufficient for the purpose. It was, therefore, necessary to find out whether they actually took part in the negotiations in the post-training period. Moreover, it became necessary to find further information on their participation even when they did take part in the collective bargaining process. It was revealed in a subsequent evaluation, that, although the Project had indeed been successful in increasing the number of women trade union officials trained in negotiating skills, many of them had not been given the opportunity to play a useful role in

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<sup>14</sup> Growth in membership was an indicator used in evaluating the achievement of a project jointly carried out by the TUC and UNISON in co-operation with the National Educational Health and Allied Workers' Union in South Africa.

<sup>15</sup>“ The evaluation has to find something which by definition can never be known....” Poverty: Bridging the Gap, Guidance Notes, DFID, 2001, P164.

<sup>16</sup> A project launched by the TUC in collaboration with the ICFTU Regional Organisation for Africa in 1997-99 with financial support from the Department for International Development.

the discussions. In a project designed<sup>17</sup> to train health professionals in the diagnosis of occupationally related diseases, the number of cases identified by trainees in the post-training period was used as an indicator with considerable success<sup>18</sup>. It is often necessary to allow for a lapse of time before verification of fulfilment of some objectives. The same Project also envisaged a significant increase in the number of workers receiving compensation as a result of the diagnosis and expected to use it as an additional indicator. However, due to the inordinate delay in the processing of applications for compensation, it was not possible to gather sufficient data on the indicator at the time of the evaluation. Sometimes, it is exceedingly difficult to find appropriate indicators to measure success or failure in achieving project objectives. Following an initiative aimed at enhancing participation of women trade unionists in the decision-making structures of trade unions<sup>19</sup>, the difficulty of measuring the effectiveness became evident. There was discernible progress in the active participation of women trade unionists in the management structures in the trade unions in the participating counties. There were appreciable attitudinal changes among male trade unionists in favour of advancement of women trade union officials. There was evidence of meaningful measures for further advancement of women trade union officials. Nevertheless, determination of success or failure or effectiveness of the Project in terms of indicators proved difficult. Other trade union evaluators have encountered similar problems<sup>20</sup>.

### ***Areas of special concern in impact assessment***

Perhaps, evaluation in a trade union context differs from similar exercises by other agents in development, to some extent, in its approach to impact assessment<sup>21</sup>. Trade unionists tend to view impact assessment in a broader context, yet within the confines of a set of criteria specific to the movement. Trade unions face same or even greater challenges in impact assessment. That a trade union development co-operation initiative could have a host of effects – social, economic, political, cultural, technical, and environmental – is widely recognised. Nevertheless, it is not feasible to take all of them into account when evaluating a trade union project. Given the nature of trade union initiatives, the effects on some of them could be marginal, non-existent, or difficult to trace. Trade union approach to impact assessment is greatly influenced, *inter alia*, by a number of considerations central to institutional and organizational development and capacity building within the movement, on the one hand and a number of clearly identified concerns on the other. It is axiomatic in trade union circles that the success of development co-operation initiatives hinges, not only on the extent to which project objectives are achieved, but also on the contribution that project activities make to the promotion of the values of the trade union movement as a whole. It is important that projects have a positive impact on the issues that the movement has identified for special consideration<sup>22</sup>. In other words, impact assessment of trade union co-operation initiatives transcends mere verification of achievement of immediate objectives and is transposed onto a plane where their effects on a wider range of issues that reflect concerns of

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<sup>17</sup> A three-year project designed to train health professionals in the diagnosis of occupationally related diseases in Western Cape in South Africa initiated by the TUC in collaboration with the Industrial Health Research Group based in the University of Cape Town.

<sup>18</sup> See Evaluation Reports submitted to the DfID

<sup>19</sup> AFRO Women into Leadership Project (1995-97) – a TUC initiative funded by the ODA.

<sup>20</sup> Evaluation Report of the Project Co-operation between the Organizacao Dos Trabalhadores de Moçambique (OTM) and Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions, p 20.

<sup>21</sup> “Impact Assessment, simply defined, is the process of identifying future consequences of current or proposed action”, International Association for Impact Assessment. The IAIA definition aptly corresponds to trade union approach to impact assessment.

<sup>22</sup> See Decisions of the Congress, 17<sup>th</sup> World Congress of the ICFTU, Durban, 2000.

the movement are critically examined and put into perspective. It takes a longer-term view of all possible effects on issues of particular concern to the movement.

All trade union development co-operation initiatives in a sense aim at capacity building of organizations concerned, activities being directed at institutional and organisational development. Therefore, there is a need and a desire to look at the effects of any initiative on certain parameters considered to be vital for the movement from a long-term perspective. The international trade union movement has identified a number of issues of particular relevance to it to be given special attention in any development co-operation initiative<sup>23</sup>. It has long recognized the need for promotion of women's rights and for enhancement of their representation at all levels within the trade union movement. At the project design and appraisal stage, it is necessary to take into account gender perspective; that women have different and special needs; that they are a disadvantaged group in society; and that special efforts should be made to promote gender equality and empowerment of women. During evaluation, special attention needs to be paid to gender issue to verify whether any or all of these concerns have been addressed in the implementation of project and whether women have benefited from project activities.

The trade union movement strives hard to preserve its independence vis-à-vis governments, employers and other agents with which it interacts. It believes that independence is an essential element of its identity without which it cannot function effectively and expects trade union development co-operation initiatives to help preserve and reinforce institutional independence<sup>24</sup> of local partner organizations<sup>25</sup>. Moreover, project activities are expected to increase the involvement of members in the affairs of the union and strengthen internal democracy and representative nature of the organisation.

There is a growing recognition that trade unions need to operate beyond their traditional catchment areas in the formal sectors and to reach out to a large number of people eking out a living in the informal sector and the rural poor. In many parts of the developing world, workers in the informal sector and the rural poor have no effective channel through which they can have their voice heard or articulate their concerns or assert their economic and social rights. It is incumbent upon the trade union movement to lead the campaign for protection and promotion of core labour standards, not only in the formal sectors of the economy, but also in the unprotected informal sectors, especially in view of the rapid intensifying process of globalisation. This poses a significant challenge to trade unionists. It is hoped that development co-operation initiatives will strengthen the capacity of trade unions in developing countries to organise workers in the informal and rural sectors.

Self-reliance<sup>26</sup> is a virtue that the trade union movement seeks to promote. It is true that the majority of trade unions in the developing world are in need of financial and material assistance and do receive substantial amounts of funds from their counterparts in the

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<sup>23</sup> Priorities and Criteria for Project Selection, Manual for Trade Union Co-operation Project, ICFTU, 1995.

<sup>24</sup> "The objective of JILAF's activities is to assist in the development of democratic and independent labour movements..." Japan International Labour Foundation 2000

<sup>25</sup> The CFDT describes its international action as "...soutien au développement des syndicats démocratiques, indépendants, libres et modernes ...CFDT Website

<sup>26</sup> "One of the general guiding principles of all CTUC projects, programmes and activities is to promote and encourage self-reliance in the organization and delivery of trade union education and training." The Commonwealth Trade Union Council Annual Report, 1998-99, p8.

developed world<sup>27</sup>. Nevertheless, this is seen as a necessary, but transient step that should enable trade union organizations in the countries concerned to develop their potential for self-reliance. International solidarity action is perceived to be complementary to efforts made by local partner organisations to achieve self-reliance. Help for self-help is the principle underlining all international trade union solidarity action. While initiatives likely to lead to permanent dependency on external assistance are discouraged<sup>28</sup>, the need for continuity of international assistance is acknowledged.

The international trade union movement seeks to promote unity among trade unionists. Evaluators need to pay particular attention to possible adverse impact of development co-operation initiatives on the unity or the cohesion within the movement. In countries where there is a multitude of national centres, the choice of local partner(s) is made with caution without exacerbating existing rivalries. Evaluators need to be watchful about possible tension between rival centres or unions that project activities might have given rise to.

While it is recognised that not all initiatives could make a positive impact on the issues concerned, it is necessary to ensure that a given activity or programme has not had adverse effects on them. Impact assessment is as challenging to trade union evaluators as it is to any other partners in development.

Trade unionists like other development agents need to examine whether the objectives of their interventions remain relevant as circumstances change with the passage of time or in the wake of significant developments in society. A campaign on low wages may no longer be relevant following the introduction of a decent national minimum wage. On the other hand, a campaign for pay equity may remain just as relevant as more data become available on wage disparities between men and women. In a country with multiple national centres, an initiative to form an umbrella organisation representative of all trade unions ceases to be a priority after the government has introduced legislation forcing all registered unions to affiliate to an existing national centre. There could be circumstances where a re-focussing of priorities is warranted. The outbreak of HIV/AIDS has forced many trade union organisations in developing countries to re-examine their priorities in health and safety strategies at workplace in order to devote more resources for campaigning on the need for prevention of the pandemic and for combating discrimination against sufferers<sup>29</sup>. With the enactment of a number of laws on workers' rights in South Africa, the focus of attention has shifted from the need for more legislation to effective enforcement of existing labour laws. In some instances, evaluation may point to the need for further effective targeted interventions in a particular area. The evaluation of the Training of Health Professionals in the Diagnosis of Occupationally Related Diseases Project in Western Cape in South Africa strengthened the case for a more targeted intervention on Asbestos-Related Diseases in the Northern Province. Occasionally, even when the objectives of an initiative remain relevant, evaluators may recommend the termination of the project due to other reasons. For instance, it might be felt that given the magnitude of the problem to be dealt with, a trade union intervention on a limited scale would be totally inadequate and that an intervention by public authorities in the

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<sup>27</sup> An ICFTU Survey in 2002 estimated the annual average expenditure by co-operating funding partners at some 70m USD. The true figure is believed to be higher as some bilateral development co-operation initiatives are not reported to the ICFTU or to the International Trade Secretariats.

<sup>28</sup> "What should be avoided is the support for projects which do not show sufficient elements of achieving self-reliance or for those that are likely to create permanent dependence on the part of the recipient organisation on external aid", ICFTU, op. cit. p8

<sup>29</sup> See Declaration on HIV/AIDS adopted by COSATU Special Congress, August 1999.

country concerned should be more appropriate. The Health and Safety Education for Street Cleaners in Sri Lanka was not extended primarily due to the inadequacy of the initiative given the nature of the problem<sup>30</sup>. In essence, it is necessary to carefully examine whether the project objectives are still consistent with the needs and priorities of target groups and whether they remain relevant to those of the local partner organisation.

### *Ensuring long-term viability*

Sustainability is of great concern to trade union evaluators. It is also one of the most difficult criteria to meet in the case of trade union development co-operation initiatives. Long-term sustainability is dependent on a number of factors, the most crucial among which is the availability of resources to carry forward the work. Particular attention is usually paid to the long-term sustainability at the project appraisal stage. Many donor agencies are insistent on evidence of long-term viability when external assistance comes to an end. In fact, many an initiative worthy of pursuit is turned down at the appraisal stage on sustainability criteria. It is, indeed, an important test which determines whether a project has been successful or not in the long-term. During evaluation, it is imperative that prospects of long-term viability of project are examined in detail.

Many trade union centres in developing countries are poorly endowed with resources – financial, human and material. In fact, few national trade union centres have sufficient resources to carry out training and education programmes on their own. The withdrawal of external assistance often threatens the survival of a project. The ICFTU has, therefore, recommended a gradual approach to withdrawal of external assistance. Local partner organisations are expected to make some contribution to the project from the outset and it is expected that their contribution will increase progressively during the lifetime of the project while the external funding is being phased out. Ideally, the local partner organisation should be able to continue the project out of its resources. Evaluators should pay particular attention to verify progress towards self-sufficiency of the local partner organisation.

The long-term commitment of the local partner organisation is also a decisive factor affecting the sustainability. It is often taken for granted at the project appraisal stage and local ownership is encouraged at all stages. Nevertheless, it is important that the local partner reaffirms its commitment in the course of the implementation of the project. The commitment and enthusiasm for a project may have waned over the years due to a variety of reasons. The local partner organisation may not have the managerial and organisational capacity to carry on the work beyond the planned lifetime of the Project. The organisation of project activities often places considerable managerial and administrative burdens on small under-resourced trade union organisations in developing countries. The organisation may no longer be in a position to devote sufficient resources to the administration of the Project. Evaluators need to ascertain their capacity to carry forward project activities.

Project activities often bring together a number of stakeholders, notably civil society or community-based organisations and, in some instances, government agencies. The external funding agency often acts or is perceived as a catalyst in ensuring their close collaboration, leading to the success of the project. The long-term sustainability of the project requires all stakeholders to continue to work together when the external assistance comes to an end. It is

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<sup>30</sup> The Health and Safety Education for Municipal Street Cleaners in Sri Lanka Project was initiated by the TUC in 1998 with financial support from the Department for International Development. See Conclusions and Recommendations, Evaluation Report on the Project submitted to the DfID in 2000.

possible that relations between them have loosened or become strained. Institutional linkages and networking may not still be functioning properly and efficiently.

In general, trade union co-operation development initiatives do not have a major direct impact on the environment. Effects on the environment are, therefore, rarely an issue when assessing sustainability factors. Nevertheless, in some instances, positive effects on the environment could buttress the arguments for continuity of a particular initiative. The municipal authorities that took part in the Health and Safety Education for Street Cleaners Project in Sri Lanka were convinced of the positive impact of project activities on the environment, and therefore, on the community, were keen to support it. However, it is generally acknowledged that the nature of trade union initiatives is such that there are no discernible immediate effects on the environment. At best, their effects are marginal or negligible.

Consideration is given at project appraisal stage to see whether project objectives could be in conflict with local conditions – traditions and customs in particular. The long-term sustainability very much depends on local factors. In the evaluation of outcomes of initiatives for prevention of HIV/AIDS, the need for special attention to local traditions and customs has become evident. Projects aimed at empowering disadvantaged groups in society may encounter difficulties arising from prejudices and misconceptions deeply embedded in society. The extent to which cultural factors affect the long-term sustainability of a project depends very much on the nature of projects. Since the vast majority of trade union initiatives are directed at education and training activities in areas of particular relevance to the trade union movement, cultural factors do not normally have a disproportionately important impact on their long-term viability. Training and education activities are viewed as non-controversial activities, the benefits of which accrue to the whole community in the long-term.

It is also necessary to look at possible policy changes at national level in the country concerned, which might have some effect on the long-term sustainability<sup>31</sup>. Probable impact on ethnic minority groups is given special consideration in an ethnically diverse social context. Perverse or unintended adverse effects, if any, deserve consideration. Effects on relations with government, employers, other social partners etc - need to be looked into. Conclusions and recommendations are of great importance, for they form the basis for future initiatives by trade unions and their funding agencies. Reports of evaluation missions become valuable tools of exchange of information between members of the international trade union family.

### ***In conclusion....***

Trade unionists have always been conscious of the importance of supporting their colleagues. The rapidly intensifying globalisation process and its implications for workers have made

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<sup>31</sup> The South African Government had embarked on a programme of significant health service reforms when the Training of Health Professionals in the Diagnosis of Occupationally related Diseases Project was launched in 1996. Reforms concerned re-organisation of occupational health services and facilitated collaboration between stakeholders in the Project and the Provincial Department of Health in Western Cape.

them even more alert to the acute need for strengthening trade union institutions and structures so that their counterparts in the developing world can campaign effectively on protection and promotion of economic and social rights of millions of workers and their communities. Evaluation of the effects of their efforts has become an essential part of trade union project work and is assuming even greater importance as development co-operation activities intensify.

Trade unionists take a detailed look at outcomes of their development co-operation interventions in order to ensure that scarce resources are put to good use and that experience and expertise gained through such initiatives are used to enhance the effectiveness of future endeavours.

Trade union evaluators appreciate the criteria used by various partners in development in assessing the impact of their interventions and make good use of them. Due to the nature of their initiatives, there is often a shift of emphasis from evaluation of immediate effects to critical assessment of long-term impact.

#### **ABBREVIATIONS**

AFRO	Africa Regional Organisation
CAD	Comité d'Aide au Développement
CFDT	Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CTUC	Commonwealth Trade Union Council
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
JILAF	Japan International Labour Foundation
NEHAWU Africa)	National, Educational, Health and Allied Workers' Union (South
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
TUC	Trades Union Congress

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