

MAKING  
UNIONS  
STRONGER

FORTALECIENDO  
A LOS  
SINDICATOS

CONSOLIDER  
LA FORCE  
SYNDICALE

جعل  
النقابات  
أقوى



ITF RESOURCE PACK FOR BUILDING  
UNIONS THROUGH GENDER WORK

KIT DE RECURSOS ITF PARA EL  
FORTALECIMIENTO DE LOS  
SINDICATOS MEDIANTE LA  
LABOR DE GÉNERO

UN DOSSIER DE L'ITF SUR  
LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DE LA FORCE  
SYNDICALE À TRAVERS DES ACTIONS  
AXÉES SUR LE GENRE

حزمة مصادر اتحاد النقل الدولي  
لبناء النقابات  
من خلال عمل الجنسين



# MAKING UNIONS STRONGER



ITF RESOURCE PACK FOR  
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THROUGH GENDER WORK



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### BOOKLET (MICROSOFT WORD FORMAT)

The target group for this pack is not just women – it is women and men who want to strengthen their union by carrying out gender work. The booklet can be used on its own as a resource material, however, you may get the best use from it if you select questions and materials in it to stimulate debate and draw up conclusions for your own union's decision-making bodies to discuss.

Each section poses questions that you will be able to use in group work. Some pages, such as the Mini-Audit (Section 4) are ideal for photocopying and handing out for everyone to complete – the results can then be shared.

### PRESENTATION (POWERPOINT FORMAT)

The PowerPoint presentation follows the same format as the document – but you may wish to use only some of the slides. Please note the presentation can be amended for your own use.

## OTHER HELP

These materials are all downloadable from the ITF website [www.itfglobal.org](http://www.itfglobal.org); should you have any questions, queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

## ITF CONTACT DETAILS

International Transport Workers' Federation  
49-60 Borough Road  
London SE1 1DR  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7403 2733  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7357 7871  
Email: [women@itf.org.uk](mailto:women@itf.org.uk)  
Website: [www.itfglobal.org](http://www.itfglobal.org)

Alison McGarry: ITF Women Transport Workers' Coordinator

### ABOUT THIS PACK

Your union is a member of the International Transport Workers' Federation – a global union organisation with member unions in 148 countries worldwide.

The ITF and its member unions are facing enormous challenges in today's globalised transport industry. Privatisation, deregulation and commercialisation have resulted in job losses and reduced trade union membership. But at the same time, the transport industry is growing, with areas of new employment that are often unregulated and casualised. Many of these jobs are done by women (often young women) and many are not in areas of traditional transport union organising.

It is the role of the trade unions to protect the rights and interests of those workers. At the same time, unions that do this work well will build their strength and membership.

This resource pack is aimed to help ITF unions to actively organise women. It is for:

- Union post-holders and employees
- Union educators
- Women's Committee members
- Union activists undertaking gender work

The guidance is made up of different sections. Each section contains some questions and real examples, which are designed to help you analyse your union's situation, develop proposals and build a strong strategy for growth that is right for your local situation.

Also in the pack is a PowerPoint presentation, which you can use to develop discussions in your union.

# 1 WHO IS IN YOUR UNION AND WORKPLACES?



Unions need to know who their members are, men and women, in order to properly focus their policies. They need to know what numbers there are of each sex, what jobs they do, how old they are, and what their union involvement is. They also need to know about potential new members in the workplace.

From the data that the ITF has gathered, we can see that over a quarter of a million women belong to the ITF – and they make up between 13 and 17 per cent of the membership. According to ITF figures, women’s membership in transport unions is growing – but men’s is falling. The largest numbers of women are in aviation and road transport. Mostly these women do not travel for their jobs – with the important exception of cabin crew. We also know that women’s active participation in ITF unions tends to be at the level of the workplace. At the same time, some unions have made important changes by introducing high-level women representatives on union executives.

This information helps the ITF to focus its work correctly to ensure we are addressing the right questions. It is information all ITF unions need to have if they want to strengthen their organisations.

Some trade union organisations have carried out gender audits or gender impact analyses. This means assessing women’s and men’s participation and representation in the union, the allocation of resources between the sexes (finance, access to information and training, use of time), and relative benefits for women and men. The reasons behind the existing representation and resource allocation, and opportunities for change, are then identified.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



- Who is in your union and in the workplaces you organise?
- Can you analyse information about their sex, age, job, and union involvement?
- Read “How they did it”, overleaf. What are your proposals about changing the way you store membership information?
- How many women do you have at different decision-making levels?
- How would your union benefit from carrying out a gender audit or gender impact analysis?
- What other proposals would you make to improve?
- Draw up a suggested programme for change.



### WHAT THEY DID ...

Here are some real examples of ITF unions that changed the way they contact members, use membership information and get bargaining data. Would this kind of work help you? How could you do it?

#### BURKINA FASO

The ITF's aviation affiliate in Burkina, SUMAC, has established women's networks in the companies where it organises. This has helped the union to better understand women's workplace issues. One of the changes it has noticed is a stronger direct relationship with its membership. "This project is really helpful not only in making our women activists more aware of the future problems but also to help them to resolve the problems they are facing at present. Now, whenever a woman encounters a problem at work and cannot find a solution, she tries to get in touch with us directly so that we can see together how to solve it," said Joceyline Zoungrana from SUMAC. "Even the union's General Secretary is called upon to help to solve the problem."

#### FRANCE

The FGTE-CFDT in France decided to monitor and survey the Federation's women membership in preparation for a March 2004 Conference "Actu-elles" where the union discussed proposals for new structures and activities. The union found that 48 per cent of the membership in aviation and 10 per cent of its road transport membership were women, with high percentages of women being found in a small group of motorway attendants. In the survey, which was carried out in the aviation sector, 62 per cent reported that they had good contact with local union representatives. 27 per cent had good knowledge about the union, but 63 per cent admitted to knowing only a little. Over half were not interested in taking part in trade union education; lack of time was given as the main reason for this. Over one-third of those interviewed were interested in standing for workplace positions. Commenting on the experience, Liliane Debêche of the FGTE-CFDT said "it was a useful exercise that allowed us to get a realistic view of our membership and to look at building new structures accordingly."

#### CANADA

The CAW in Canada runs its own internal database called "State of the Union". This database is a record of collective bargaining provisions won across the country. Because the database is accessible to union organisers over the internet, they can update it regularly and the union can analyse what provisions are being won, for whom. It can also measure progress for and the status of women in the union. As a result, the CAW – whose women count for 32 per cent of its members – can monitor the number of bargaining agreements with a series of gender-related provisions including Child Care, Adoption Leave, Family Leave, Parental Top-Up and Maternity Top-Up. It can also tell how many agreements include human rights language on issues including anti-harassment, anti-discrimination, and same-sex rights.

### WHAT THEY SAY

"Women's issues need to be promoted and supported at branch level before they can be escalated to national office. As women membership numbers within the industry are extremely minimal, including in union branches – some have no women workers – winning support for an issue can be difficult. Further, raising women's issues to a branch executive that is predominantly and in some cases solely male can be a barrier for several reasons, including embarrassment or because the issue is not taken seriously." Ruth Blakeley, Rail and Maritime Transport Union, New Zealand.

# 2

# STRONG UNIONS NEED WOMEN



Women workers are entering the transport industry in increasing numbers – but the industry and its unions remain male-dominated. Women can find it difficult to participate in trade unions. An ILO/ICFTU survey found that the most common reason for women not to join unions was that they did not understand how trade unions could help them. Another reason was that women did not have time to participate because of family responsibilities.

## WHY DO WOMEN FIND IT HARD TO PARTICIPATE IN TRADE UNIONS?

### STYLE OF MEETINGS

Meetings can be confrontational and aggressive. Sexist language is sometimes used. This can have an alienating impact on women. Women and men communicate in different ways; men may tend to dominate or interrupt, while women struggle to make their voices heard.

### PRACTICAL BARRIERS

When meetings are scheduled outside working hours, particularly at night, it discourages women's participation. In most cases, childcare is not provided. Or, women workers go to a meeting and find that issues concerning them are not discussed – so they are discouraged from attending further meetings.

### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING DOMINATED BY MEN

Important issues for women workers may not be on the bargaining agenda; this might lead women workers to question the benefits of being in a union in the first place.

## BARRIERS WHICH RESTRICT WOMEN'S ACCESS TO LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Some barriers are: the mainly male culture of unions, the disproportionate family responsibilities of many women, stereotyped expectations about their roles, and women's lack of confidence in their own abilities.

## WHAT THEY SAY

“Unions which do not fight for the rights of their women members will face both a threat to their membership and to working conditions and pay for all workers. It's our job to make sure that this does not happen. Unions need women, and women need unions.” Alison McGarry, ITF Women's Transport Workers' Coordinator.

“Getting women into the collective bargaining process and persuading male negotiators to place issues affecting women on the agenda, remain major stumbling blocks to women trade unionists all over the world.” Diana Holland, Assistant General Secretary for Equalities and Organising, UNITE, UK and Chair, ITF Women's Committee.

MIGHT THESE ISSUES APPLY TO YOUR UNION? HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR WOMEN MEMBERS ABOUT IT?

### STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN TRANSPORT UNIONS

Women workers themselves have been at the forefront of challenging the dominant male culture of many trade unions. They have built the democratic and active involvement of women members at all levels of trade union life. The ITF supports a two-staged approach to bringing about these kinds of changes. Both of these elements are essential to build strong unions. The first is building women's or equality structures, the second is gender mainstreaming.

#### I. BUILDING WOMEN'S STRUCTURES

Many transport unions have established internal structures to promote gender equality. These differ from union to union. In some, a women's committee, which might be elected by a women's conference, has been set up. Some have appointed women's officers and/or set up women's departments.

Women's structures can:

- Prepare women for posts of union responsibility
- Build awareness, confidence and organisational skills
- Propose campaigns, educational programmes and materials for women
- Lobby for legislative changes addressing women's needs
- Collect, record and discuss information on women's issues
- Formulate strategies for collective bargaining and union action

#### WHAT THEY SAY

"Organising the Women's Committee with a strong structure resulted in numerous activities such as ongoing meetings and training sessions, attending regional conferences, and celebrating the ITF campaign on March 8th." Huwaida, airport worker, General Trade Union of Workers in Air Transport and Tourism, Jordan.

"Women have not been well-represented at most of our union seminars and thus lack exposure and experience in our decision-making bodies. We fully support the ITF policy that 30 per cent of delegates to seminars must be women." Railway worker, Zambia.

"It was very difficult for our male trade unionists to organise meetings with young women who started to join our union. They arranged everything and the women were just guests at the meeting. So the young women regarded the union as a place to make complaints – not as an organisation which could change things." Railway worker, Japan.

## 2. GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The ITF believes that gender mainstreaming is useful when accompanied by women's structures. It involves changing decision-making processes in all areas of an organisation's policy, along with work to take into account the existence of inequalities between the sexes. Women and men jointly accept responsibility for changing gender relations.

Gender mainstreaming must:

- Identify and address ways that existing policies and decision-making reflect and reinforce inequalities
- Ensure that all union policies and activities take discrimination into account and promote gender equality
- Ensure a fair distribution of measures and benefits

### GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND GLOBALISATION

Some women activists have been critical of gender mainstreaming because it has been used as an argument to abolish women's structures, without replacing them with effective mechanisms. But true gender mainstreaming is a good tool for gender equality. This is very important when unions face big changes because of restructuring and globalisation.

When this happens, unions are under pressure. Sometimes the changes that occur affect women in particular ways. Unless women trade unionists are alert to this, the gender element is often forgotten. With gender mainstreaming, however, the ways that men and women are affected by change must be measured and taken into account from the beginning.

Sometimes the changes mean there are new kinds of workers to bring into unions. Gender mainstreaming can help transport union leaderships to broaden their perspectives and look at these potential trade unionists. Chapter 3 looks at organising new kinds of workers.

### WHAT THEY SAY

“Especially in the developing countries, globalisation is affecting us very adversely. We have mergers, we have restructuring, and we have the spin-off effect of employees being laid off. Women are affected, as they are the first to lose jobs.”

Jacqueline Smart, Junior Vice President CCWU, Guyana.

“All the new business sectors employ a lot of women so the very idea of ensuring equal pay and proper rights and benefits for women gets very complicated. Globalisation has meant that women have entered the job market in large numbers – but their employment conditions are completely unregulated in the areas where this expansion has taken place.” Rocio Blanco, CC.OO Spain.

“People always make remarks when women are contesting males by saying ‘we don't want tokens here’. Women are not tokens but leaders as well.” Veronica Mesatywa, South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union and ITF Africa Regional Chairperson.

“Even where there are high numbers of women in the union, there can still be a lack of progress by active women. Others may not feel confident to stand for leadership positions. Work is needed on changing the attitudes and behaviours of both men and women. Once women have joined the union, ongoing basic education about the role of the union is vital.”

“Several unions have implemented proactive strategies to improve women's representation. These include: quotas; changing union constitutions so women members are included and have equal rights; and designating a women's representative position within the union. Regular union meetings for women workers can also help to encourage the involvement of women in the union as well as to promote union activities.” Participant at the ITF women railway workers' meeting, December 2008.

### WHAT THEY DID

“The ITF itself has a Vice-President’s position reserved for a woman, five reserved seats on its Executive Board, provisions in the Constitution on Congress delegations, and a 30 per cent target for women’s participation in all education activities.” Alison McGarry, ITF Women’s Transport Workers’ Coordinator.

There are many different arguments for and against different kinds of structures for women in trade unions. Other unions’ experiences hold useful lessons.

#### INDIA

The Cochin Port Staff Association has both an elected women’s structure and a 20 per cent reservation for women’s representation in decision-making bodies. A quarter of the union’s members – who work in cleaning, service and service staff, administration and operational port work – are women. Two out of eight executive members are women; one-third of the delegates at the union’s last assembly were women. Recently, the All-India Ports and Docks Federation, which brings together port unions from all over the country, formed a national women’s committee, with active women members.

Nishi Kapahi of the ITF’s regional office in Delhi said: “Both India’s port sector and its railway sector unions now have effective national women’s committees – this was achieved because the measures were both backed by women trade unionists and supported by the unions’ leaderships.”

#### GREAT BRITAIN

UNITE the union has a rule that women must be represented on national, regional and district committees in proportion to the number of women in the union as a whole. “The revolution in women’s representation followed recognition by the General Executive Committee that efforts to secure full representation of the UNITE’s 176,000 women members by voluntary means had not been fully successful” said Diana Holland, Assistant General Secretary for Equalities and Organising, UNITE, UK and Chair, ITF Women’s Committee.

#### GERMANY

The Verkehrsgewerkschaft GDBA has women’s groups across all its regions, which meet on an ad hoc basis.

They feed into a federal women’s group that organises discussions, builds connections with other trade unions and carries out other work focusing on women. There is also a network for information distribution.

#### GUINEA

The Guinean transport union Fédération Nationale des Transports et Marins Pêcheurs de Guinée has a women’s committee composed of 13 members. The women’s committee has established sub-committees that are responsible for keeping women informed, tackling problems that hinder their participation in the union and looking into social problems. They help persuade women of the benefits of joining a union. As a result women now form a substantial proportion of the membership at all levels. For example, the secretary-general of the union is a woman as is the assistant general secretary of the union’s youth committee. In addition, the assistant secretary-general of the union’s railway section and the administrative secretary of the union’s fishing sector are also both women. This strong female representation has meant that the union is in a good position to take on cases of sex discrimination in the workplace and to lobby government on issues of concern to women. One of the union’s recent successes is reflected in the government’s agreement to provide women with maternity rights.

#### KENYA

Up until 2002, the Kenya Dock Workers’ Union’s elected officials – general secretary, assistant general secretary, national chairman, vice-chairman, national treasurer and assistant treasurer – were all male and there were only two active women appointees. However, this changed in 2002, when one place on the union elected positions was reserved for women.

To ensure that women participate as fully as possible, the union provides them with as many opportunities to interact as possible, for example, at forums away from the workplace or abroad. In addition, the union promotes capacity building to help women move into leadership roles. As a result there has been a rise in the number of women in more influential positions in the union.

#### NEW ZEALAND

The Rail and Maritime Union promotes women in the union’s magazine through a regular feature on a woman in a particular workplace. Representatives may

also receive support from the national office to attend conferences, seminars and educational courses focusing on women. The union has an equal opportunities policy when it comes to employment.

Though currently a male dominated union at membership, executive, and union workforce level, women members number between six and nine per cent, 12 per cent at national executive level – one of eight positions – and 33 per cent of the paid workforce – three of nine positions.

**PAKISTAN**

Atia Saleem is the first elected women president of the Pakistan Transport Workers’ Federation (PTWF), the culmination of 15 years of active participation in the federation. The PTWF reserves 20 per cent of its executive committee seats for women. A women’s wing is also working actively and its members have the power to share in all decision-making processes of the PTWF. In addition, the PTWF has also put in place strategies to find out more about organising women and to provide them with the opportunity to discuss their problems.

**GENDER MAINSTREAMING - ITF RESEARCH PROJECT**

Between 2003 and 2006, the ITF focused resources on finding out about the different impact of globalisation on men and women transport workers. One of the findings of this research was that privatisation has impacted differently on women and men in the railway industry. This research was not straightforward, because of lack of data in railway unions. However, the information we did find is now being used in a project that the ITF is supporting to help rail unions deal with changes proposed by the World Bank. This is an example of gender mainstreaming.

**WOMEN AND DECISION-MAKING**

Only a small number of women hold top posts in unions around the world.

Some unions have adopted measures aimed at increasing women’s participation. This has taken different forms.

In some unions there are reserved seats on decision-making bodies.

In some cases, unions have targets or quotas.

Achieving proportional representation has been another strategy.

In the ITF, surveys have shown that the situation is improving. Out of a total of 155 unions that responded to questionnaires, the measures below were reported:

SURVEY	
Measure	NO. OF UNIONS REPORTING THIS MEASURE
Policies to provide for equality	75
Structural measures (gender/women’s coordinator, women’s wing, etc)	54
Women at executive level	52
Women workplace representatives	19
Women in education, campaigning	14
Women involved in negotiations	13

### WOMEN AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Very few trade unions involve women in collective bargaining. Since collective bargaining is at the heart of all trade union activity, the needs and concerns of union members should be included. However, the main problems faced by women are often ignored in collective bargaining. The lack of women officers and organisers, and of women shop stewards, makes this situation worse.

#### WHAT THEY DID

##### ARGENTINA

In response to a rise in active women's membership the Argentinian ship officers' union Centro de Capitanes de Ultramar y Oficiales de la Marina Mercante recently developed collective bargaining proposals to cover maternity and breastfeeding "These are innovative provisions in our sector" said member Laura Guzman.

#### WHAT THEY SAY

"Across ITF unions, there are only a handful of women general secretaries and presidents, and with the exception of unions in the aviation industry, women rarely represent their unions at international level. Transport is a very male-dominated industry – so the obstacles are bigger in the beginning. This situation will only change with major efforts at decision-making levels, and the introduction of targets and systems to guarantee women's representation, including reserved seats and guaranteed proportionality." Alison McGarry, ITF Women's Transport Workers' Coordinator.

"Non-governmental organisations have learned that they need to place women at the head of their struggles. But only we, the trade unions, are searching daily for solutions to the problems of working women. From our point of view, all the problems that affect working women are trade union problems." Alicia Castro, AAA, ITF Vice-President.

The Asociación Argentina de Aeronavegantes (AAA) has benefited from a favourable organising environment thanks to renationalisation in 2008. Since then, the union has been able to enforce the right for women employees to work for short periods of time away from home so that they can look after their young children. Although this was part of the union's agreement before renationalisation, the private owner failed to comply. The union has also achieved a "no standby" rule for mothers of young children. Women can choose to be on duty for morning or afternoon flights until their child is two years old.

This success is attributed to a strong union presence at airports, with staff always available to deal with workers' problems at any time of day as well as a commitment to mutual cooperation, based on confidence and goodwill.

##### AUSTRALIA

The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) has been very involved in the fight for better conditions for women workers. Most of the MUA's agreements have maternity leave clauses in them. Under a new scheme women will be able to take government-paid leave, as well as the entitlements outlined in their agreement with their employer. In the MUA, the bargaining position has been that there is no settlement until there is an agreement on this key issue.

##### INDIA

Women members of the road passenger transport union, Maharashtra State Transport Kamgar Shanghatna, have been encouraged to become more active in the struggle to improve their working conditions at their employer. They have been facing a lack of facilities, including toilets, and were frequently the target of sexual harassment by passengers as well as male colleagues. However, following an education programme aimed at women, which sought to raise awareness of women's rights, violence and harassment, health and safety, legal issues and HIV and AIDS, women became more vocal. Through the union, they demanded that management look into their problems. After four years of lobbying, the managing director and president of the corporation agreed to establish a state level committee of women road transport workers. The committee has visited various depots, workshops and offices, where it has been dealing with the practical problems faced by the women workers.

## JAPAN

In Japan, the Japan Confederation of Railway Workers' Unions (JRU) won an extra year's leave for child care, bringing the amount of leave allowed to two years. Although there are many facilities on the railways for women only, the union is also demanding that these be improved. The JRU frequently deals with cases of sexual harassment against women employees carried out by members of the public.

## NEW ZEALAND

Merchant Service Guild Industrial Union of Workers Inc produced material explaining the many forms of sexual harassment and advertising the union's ability to provide discreet, fast advice and assistance on this issue. As a result there was an increase in female membership. Many sexual harassment clauses in the union's collective bargaining agreements, negotiated in the 1980s, have developed into general harassment clauses benefiting both male and female employees.

In addition, the union promotes work-life balance principles. This has led to improvements, such as "worker-chosen" hours of work.

The union recently took up the case of a woman seafarer, who almost lost her job because her doctor advised her to cease work by the 28th week of her pregnancy. Her employer was able to use the poor wording of maternity rights law as justification for terminating her employment. The union, however, successfully prevented the employer from dismissing the woman by persuading him that his eagerness to take advantage of the law would result in the loss of a valuable asset to the company. The employer capitulated and is now holding the position open.

The union is calling for an amendment to the parental leave provisions outlined in the collective bargaining agreement (CBAs) and in all other CBAs in order to prevent this situation arising in the future. The matter highlighted how poorly written maternity laws could not easily apply to seafaring jobs or similar employment.

## SOUTH AFRICA

In 2008 the South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union (Satawu) together with the United Transport and Allied Trade Union (Utatu) won an improvement in maternity pay at Transnet, South Africa's national transport company. The existing

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



- What kind of meetings do you have in your union? Are they easy for new members to participate in?
- How could the format and timing of meetings improve? Are there any practical barriers?
- How do issues get raised for inclusion in collective bargaining? Can women be better involved in this?
- Do you have structures to deal with these issues, eg as elected posts, women's conferences or committees? If so, are these effective?
- What proposals can you make to improve the way your women's structures function?
- Do you have a strategy to encourage women's leadership?
- What proposals would you make to improve?
- How could a gender mainstreaming perspective improve equality in your organisation?



benefit for employees – three months' pay at 33 per cent of their monthly pensionable salary – was increased to the equivalent of two months' full pay, which employees could spread over any period of between two and six months. This meant a doubling of company's payment. The increase was written into the 2008 wage agreement reached between Transnet management and labour.

In 2009, the biggest collective bargaining issue emerged as a demand for compensation for lost overtime while on maternity leave. At Transnet, as soon as a worker in a "risky" job declares herself to be pregnant, she is removed from the position. Because many of the jobs that are regarded as risky are operational jobs where overtime makes up a considerable portion of pay, many pregnant women delay declaring themselves pregnant for as long as possible. Many deliberately hide their pregnancy. The union is fighting to see women compensated for loss of overtime so that they declare pregnancy promptly.

As well as collective bargaining issues, Satawu and Utatu also established a pregnancy and maternity task team in Transnet to look at other questions. Representatives were drawn from management and trade unions across all five Transnet divisions, with 90 per cent of them women.

### GREAT BRITAIN

The British union Unite has published a guide to family rights at work, which contains guidance on legal rights and negotiating good policies. It is already making a difference. For example, in one company two women had been given the wrong information about their maternity leave rights by the company's personnel department. Using the guide, they were able to ensure that they got their full entitlement. The company apologised and amended its procedures. The branch also recruited 15 new women members by promoting the booklet in workplaces.

### UNITED STATES

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union ran a campaign to help nearly 600 warehouse workers in Lancaster, California. It was sparked, in part, by a conflict arising because management was wanting employees to remain at work after their official end time and continue working mandatory overtime. The requirement to work later than the official end of shifts was introduced with very little notice. As a

result, parents were unable to pick up their children after school or from childcare providers. The issue was a key point of conflict that motivated workers to form a union and affiliate to the ILWU. The workers are now negotiating a contract with their employer and anticipate that the problem will be addressed in their new contract.

### ZAMBIA

The Railway Workers' Union of Zambia has achieved a number of key gains for women, such as flexible working hours for both shift- and non-shift workers and maternity rights, including three months' maternity leave on full pay. The union's work to challenge sexual discrimination in the union as well as in the railway industry has also improved the situation for women.

## WHAT THEY SAY

"If encouraging participation of women in the union is the objective, then there is no substitute for having women union officials as opposed to 'women's officers'. Women officials, through the leadership role they hold in representing the interests of the male and female membership, are the best vehicle for gaining male support for women's issues and for advertising the union's 'availability' to women workers." Helen McAra, General Secretary, New Zealand Merchant Service Guild Industrial Union of Workers Inc.

## WOMEN TRANSPORT WORKERS AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Women transport workers around the world share many experiences and problems. By coming together, women can learn from each other, seek common solutions and build collective action.

The ITF has its own structures – a constitutionally recognised women’s committee, conference and network.

The ITF also has a 30 per cent target for women’s participation in ITF education events.

## ITF WOMEN’S NETWORK

The main purpose of this network is to share and exchange information. Each ITF union is asked to nominate a contact person for the network. Their first job is to work for women in their union, which could include promoting women’s structures, organising and recruiting more women members, and developing policies and strategies aimed at addressing the issues women members face.

The contact person is given the task of reporting to country level structures (women’s coordinators, ITF country coordinators and coordinating committees) as well as liaising with the ITF regional offices or women’s department. Contact people have an important job because they are best placed to tell whether the ITF’s work is useful for women members and to give feedback if changes are needed.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



- “Unions which do not fight for the rights of their women members will face both a threat to their membership and to working conditions and salaries for all workers” Do you agree? Do you need to persuade men in your unions that this is the case?
- How can the ITF Women’s Network help to strengthen women’s participation in your trade union?
- What can women in your union do to strengthen international solidarity?

### WHAT THEY DID ...

Women's networks within unions and between unions in the same country have been effective.

#### GUATEMALA

For 8 March 2006, the women's network of the ITF's aviation affiliate in Guatemala – USTAC – organised an equal opportunities workshop for transport workers, to attract new members and promote the participation of women in the union.

#### TANZANIA

The seafarers', dockers' and transport workers' unions in Tanzania regularly use their network. For 8th March 2006 they organised a joint mass rally in Zanzibar, and planned a workshop. The Dock Workers' Union of Tanzania distributed campaign materials to encourage active participation of women in union activities at branch level, and branch seminars for women leaders. The Tanzania Seamen's Union (Zanzibar) addressed non-unionised women seafarers. To improve union capacity on organising and recruitment of women members, the Communication and Transport Workers' Union of Zanzibar carried out visits to workplaces.

#### WEST AFRICA

The ITF, with the support of the Dutch trade union donor FNV, ran a programme in Africa, aimed at building networks. This project, which concluded in 2005, was highly successful and had some especially good results in the Francophone region of West Africa. The ITF's African region Women's Education Programme reached exceptional levels of success in all three African sub-regions where it ran – Southern Africa, East Africa and Francophone West Africa. At an evaluation seminar participants said the project not only achieved its objectives, but also developed women's self confidence, built sub-regional solidarity and an international perspective, improved communications between the unions, built women's structures within unions and encouraged participation in ITF work, including sectoral campaigning work. In Francophone West Africa, ITF Women's national coordinating committees were set up and met monthly in Benin, Burkina Faso, Congo Brazzaville, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea-Conakry, Niger and Togo. Women's coordination at national level was so good that it encouraged the leaderships of transport unions at country level to improve cooperation. Finally, and most

importantly, self-sufficient sub-regional coordination was established.

Twenty-nine unions in Francophone West Africa now have functioning contact people. Women now lead two trade union federations, in the Congo Brazzaville and in Guinea. In the Ivory Coast, the national ITF women's coordinating committee is well enough established to be regularly contacted by the Ministry for the Family for advice.

More information about the successes of this project throughout Africa is available from the Secretariat. Similar projects are running now in Latin America and the Caribbean as well as in the Asia-Pacific region.

#### JAPAN

The Japan Confederation of Railway Workers' Unions, takes part in the activities of the Women's Council, the contract and temporary workers' network as well as Women against War.

#### PAKISTAN

The Pakistan Transport Workers' Federation organises joint events on gender issues, such as a training programme held in conjunction with the Pakistan Labour Federation, the World Asian Worker's Organization and the International Labour Organization.

#### TOGO

The port workers' union, Syndicat des Travailleurs du Port Autonome de Lomé, is involved in a Togo-wide network of women in ITF unions coordinated by ITF-TOGO. The women meet every month to look at women's issues and share experiences of the difficulties they have in the workplace.

GREAT BRITAIN

The Unite union has established an organising campaign at the low cost airline Easyjet, whose workforce consists of 65 per cent women. Apart from joint working between two Unite departments, the civil air transport and the women, race and equalities sections, the union also links into European membership organisations in Germany and France, including the ITF; those working for Easyjet in those countries were being employed on UK contracts.

ZAMBIA

The Railway Workers Union of Zambia works in tandem with other unions such as the Airways Union of Zambia and the Road Transport Union of Zambia. The unions have held joint workshops on capacity building, the role of women and women in leadership positions. It has also run gender sensitisation programmes and HIV/AIDS training with other unions.

WHAT THEY SAY

“Unions need to go to every sector to organise women in the workplace. Workshops involving small groups should provide women with education, so that they have greater trust in the union, gain confidence in themselves and build strength by knowing about their rights.” Rami Tissawak, cabin crew committee member, General Union of Air Transport and Tourism in Jordan and member of the young workers’ steering committee.

“We are very fortunate at the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) that our officials support women’s issues so strongly,” she says. “I have seen them on many occasions argue maternity leave with bosses in companies that don’t even have any women working for them. They will one day and it’s important that all our claims are in all of the time.” Mich-Elle Myers, MUA National Women’s Liaison Officer.

“It is important to organise women because of the technological advancement that has taken place. In the past there used to be very few women in the industry and they were mainly confined to ‘women’s’ jobs. But now we are seeing more women taking up jobs that were predominantly for men. As a result, women need to be more organised in order for them to campaign to defend their interests so that they do not face disadvantage.” Getrude Chikuta, Railway Workers’ Union of Zambia.



# 3

## ORGANISING NEW KINDS OF WORKERS



### TRANSPORT UNIONS ARE CHANGING

The ITF's 40th Congress debate focused on the impact of globalisation on women transport workers. Globalisation has meant that public sector transport jobs have been lost. Global companies are taking over new areas of activity. Deregulation and cost cutting – prerequisites for globalisation – have downgraded transport sector working conditions. In the globalised economy, jobs that can be moved from higher wage economies to countries where workers cost less are vulnerable.

The impact of globalisation can be different for women and men – this leads to the effect known as the “feminisation of poverty.”

- Women are more likely to lose their jobs first.
- They are more likely to be doing part-time or non-permanent jobs, or to be involved in the informal economy. Areas such as catering or cleaning, where women work, have been outsourced.
- Maternity provisions, childcare facilities and equal opportunities programmes in the regulated public sector are being lost
- Increased competitive pressures in the workplace make it more difficult to combine work and family

#### MORE WOMEN IN THE TRANSPORT WORKPLACE

At the same time, there are more women in the transport workplace than ever before. Globalisation demands effective supply chain management and depends on distribution centres to store and assemble goods, on transnational company alliances to deliver cheap goods and passenger services, on call centres to take bookings and on express delivery services to get goods to consumers. Many of the new workers in these areas are women – working eg on computers,

on the telephone, in warehouses and driving delivery vans. Many are young women. It is vital that these workers are organised in effective unions that deliver improvements for them.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



- Have your union-organised workplaces been affected by globalisation? Has this meant specific changes for women workers?
- What is your average member like – her/his age, gender, work issues? Is this the profile of most of the people in the industry you want to organise now?
- Are there informal economy workers or casual workers employed in areas where your members also work? How many are women?
- What kind of transport union is needed to represent these workers?
- Does your union need to change, to reflect these needs? If so, how?

### A FOCUS ON ORGANISING

In many countries across the world, unions have been debating a new focus on the organising model of trade unionism – as opposed to the servicing model. This has also been called “new unionism”.

#### IN AN ORGANISING UNION:

- the members are the union
- members pay a subscription to become actively involved – they understand the importance of working together
- members are trained and encouraged to work collectively to campaign on workplace issues and for improvements
- the union is proactive – it gives members the power to take up and resolve issues themselves and non-members are recruited around these issues
- paid officials and activists provide support and advice to help members win in the workplace
- an organising union is member-led – everyone plays their part in ensuring the union is active in every workplace
- the union cannot be separated from the workplace as members and management understand that the workers are the union.

#### IN A SERVICING UNION:

- members see the union as a third party
- they pay a subscription for which they receive services from a representative or paid official
- members aren't involved in the union and only see the union as the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff – workplace insurance
- very few people do union work and reps “sell” the union to non-members on the cheap benefits they'll receive – for example, wills, travel insurance, legal advice and representation
- the union is reactive to people's problems – communication comes from paid officials and not from members
- the union is seen as an organisation that exists outside and separate from the workplace.

### WHAT THEY SAY

“It has become clear that if we want a world where work is decent we must have strong trade unions that are able to represent all workers. This means unions must not only fight to retain benefits and jobs for their existing members – who are diminishing in number – but they must enter the battle to represent other groups who may be low-paid, or informal sector workers, contract workers, outsourced company workers, and others. Many of these workers are women.” David Cockroft, ITF General Secretary.

DOES YOUR UNION NEED TO  
BECOME MORE FOCUSED ON  
BEING AN ORGANISING  
UNION?

## TIPS FOR ORGANISING

The ITF's 2006 Congress Theme is "Organising Globally, Fighting for Our Rights." ITF unions will be encouraged to organise new members – and key to these recruiting measures will be women. Here are some tips for organising women in the workplace:

### 1. DON'T WORK ALL ALONE

Find out who can help you to carry out your job in helping to organise women. If you have women activists in your workplaces, talk to them on a regular basis. Find women members who may be interested in becoming union representatives. Also, try to identify women members who can help in other ways (by referring problems to you, to recruit their colleagues, to act as a leaflet distributor, etc).

### 2. HOLD REGULAR MEETINGS OF WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES

These meetings are essential as they give you time to talk about the following (let your union officers know when you are meeting as he/she will want to attend some of them, and may have issues for you to discuss);

- Issues that affect women members
- How to go about recruiting new women members
- Future issues to bring up in meetings with management.

### 3. KEEP YOUR NOTICEBOARD UP TO DATE

A noticeboard is a place where women workers can pick up a lot of information about the union. Make sure there are noticeboards in areas where women workers will see them. Change the information every few weeks and use your board to keep women members and non-members informed about what you are doing and how you can be contacted.

### 4. TALK TO WOMEN WORKERS

Find time to talk to women workers about their working lives. Are there issues that need to be picked up and dealt with quickly? Do women workers know you as an approachable person who can be contacted when they need to talk about an issue? Do you talk to non-members about the importance of them being in the membership?

### 5. APPROACH NEW WOMEN WORKERS WHEN THEY START – OR WHEN THEY ARE TRAINING

Discuss with your union how you can ensure that this happens – some union agreements allow for unions to attend induction or training courses; some unions go into training colleges to talk about union work. Use workplace contacts to ensure new workers are approached.

### 6. IDENTIFY AND RECRUIT NON-MEMBERS – ESPECIALLY WOMEN

Every non-member weakens the unions' ability to convince employers of their point of view. Discuss with your union how you can identify non-members and how you can recruit them. Remember to think about kinds of work that are not traditionally organised and where women may be working. New challenges and unfamiliar issues can arise in such workplaces, and unions need to be prepared to address those challenges.

### 7. BUILD EFFECTIVE LINKS WITH OTHER UNIONS

Before embarking on organising a non-union workplace, find ways of engaging with other unions – perhaps other ITF affiliates – to ensure support and avoid damaging competition





### WHAT THEY DID: ITF STUDY ON INFORMAL WORK

These examples of non-traditional women workers in transport were found in a recent study by Chris Bonner and demonstrate some of the difficulties that unions can face in dealing with their issues.

#### GHANA

In Ghana, small households within fishing communities make up the institutional base of the small scale fishing industry. Usually fishing boats and gear belong to one prominent fisherman who just assembles other family members or hired hands on to the boat as crew, with rights to a clearly defined share of the catch. Women normally act as shore collectors, processors and sellers of the fish catch. The industry is characterised by a lack of clear cut household production structures<sup>1</sup>.

#### INDIA

In the Kandla port in India, there are 1500 daily-employed casual workers, a third of them women. They are mostly migrant workers from the states of Rajasthan and Orissa. They go home during the agricultural season and return for the rest of the year where they may work in the port or on construction sites. At the port they clean the wharves and handle light cargo. They work longer hours than the port's 150 regular women port workers (who represent a third of the regular workforce of 450) but their earnings and benefits do not approach those of their regular counterparts, even though they are legally entitled to the same rates. Port workers are governed by a five-yearly wage revision settlement and conditions of service agreement, but these agreements are not extended to casual workers, who, according to the Port Trust, undertake only light work<sup>2</sup>.

The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is a trade union registered in 1972 in India. It is an organisation of 700,000 poor, self-employed women workers who earn a living through their own labour or small businesses. SEWA's main goals are to organise women workers to obtain work security, income security, food security and social security (at least health care, child care and shelter). SEWA combines three movements: the labour movement, the cooperative movement and the women's movement. But it is also a movement of self-employed workers with women as the leaders. SEWA organises both rural and urban workers.

#### TOGO

The port workers' union, Syndicat des Travailleurs du Port Autonome de Lomé, has a committee which is responsible for organising the informal sector generally and in particular the women in that sector. To achieve its objectives, the union took a number of steps. These included: organising a sensitisation programme and establishing a recruitment campaign across ports to reach out to new members, particularly women and young people.

1 Ghartey, Nana and D W Dorkenoo, 2002. Unionizing Informal Workers in Ghana, in *Organising Informal Workers: What role for trade unions*, Labour Education 2002/2, Number 127, ILO, Geneva

2 ITF, 2005. Extracts from, *A Living Wage? in Transport Women*, 2005

8. PUBLICISE YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

When you've achieved something on behalf of your women members, let the world know about it. Nothing will help you and the union more than a good news story.

9. TRAIN AND USE WOMEN ORGANISERS

Union experience is showing that using women organisers brings benefits – because whilst men are good at organising other men, many women can be good at organising both sexes! Find out what training you can access for women organisers, and discuss with your union using resources for this important purpose.

10. COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL.

Make sure your women members are the most informed in the whole of your union! They need to know about the services your union offers, and what the union is negotiating on their behalf. Publish short and simple news-sheets and if you have them, make sure that the union website and magazine feature issues important to women.

WHAT THEY DID

Unions in the Caribbean region launched a project to organise women, as part of the FNV-funded ITF Education Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean. The project specifically targeted women providing small-scale transport with their own vehicles. As a result, new members joined. "A lot of emphasis has been placed on organising women", commented Ann Anderson, who coordinated the project. "Unions now have, or are trying to have women's structures in place as part of this drive."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



■ Some unions in transport and other sectors have changed their vision of the typical unionised workplace and have concentrated in different areas of employment – such as call centres. They have devoted budget provision to organising. They have trained women organisers – often young people – to recruit new members. They have investigated the kinds of issues that their new members prioritise, such as low wages, and overcome suspicion of trade unions by working in the community. Some have recognised that having an older male leadership can be off-putting to potential young women members.

■ What are the obstacles for your union in strengthening and growing in membership? How can these be overcome?

WHAT THEY SAY

"The only way for us to fight off further restrictions of workers' rights is to recruit new members and strengthen unions." Erika Albers, Transnet, Germany.



# 4

# ORGANISING MINI-AUDIT



Add up the number of ticks your union scores in the right hand column. In which of the six areas are your weaknesses? Identify some priorities. Repeat the exercise later, to see if improvements have been made.

## HAVE YOU:

- |  | TICK (✓)                 |
|--|--------------------------|
| <b>1. COLLECTED AND STORED MEMBERSHIP DATA?</b>  |                          |
| ■ How many women and men   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ How old are they   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ What are their jobs  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>2. DOCUMENTED WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE UNION?</b>   |                          |
| ■ How many women participate in union activities, compared to men  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ How many shop stewards and safety representatives are women/men  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ How many union post-holders and how many elected officers are women/men  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Monitored what collective bargaining gains are made that benefit women   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>3. CREATED STRUCTURES REPRESENTING WOMEN?</b>   |                          |
| ■ Hold women's meetings and forums   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Women's Desk, elected Equality/Women's Committee, Women's Officers   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Constitutional recognition of women's organisation within the union  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Reserved seats on decision-making bodies   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>4. INCLUDED WOMEN AT ALL LEVELS OF UNION ACTIVITY?</b>  |                          |
| ■ Included gender issues in union education for both sexes   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Included access to education for women activists   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Considered gender aspects when planning campaigns  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Consulted women and included them in collective bargaining processes   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>5. REGULARLY REVIEWED YOUR PROCEDURES AND STRUCTURES?</b>   |                          |
| ■ Ensured the trade union is a family-friendly environment   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Ensured meetings are easy for new members to participate in  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Reviewed all parts of the structure (in bigger unions, across the industrial sectors) - some parts of the union may be doing better than others! | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Developed a gender equality policy or strategy, with monitoring  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>6. ASSESSED THE SITUATION FOR YOUR UNION IN ADDRESSING TODAY'S INDUSTRY?</b>  |                          |
| ■ Examined workplaces and identified potential young and women members   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Reviewed organising budget and human resources   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Used women and young people as organisers  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ■ Reviewed union's own priorities to reflect changing membership   | <input type="checkbox"/> |

WHAT'S YOUR SCORE? \_\_\_\_\_



# 5

## EQUAL BUT DIFFERENT



### WHAT IS GENDER SENSITIVITY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

“Working on a ship is hard, dirty work; it’s not woman’s work.”

“A man isn’t as good at housework as a woman.”

Both men and women can have stereotyped attitudes. These attitudes can have a negative impact on the lives of people all over the world, affecting what they aspire to, what kinds of jobs they do, how much money they earn, how they are treated in the workplace and what role they play in the home and in society.

These attitudes don’t just affect women, they also affect men – they reinforce stereotypes about what both men and women can and should do, narrowing down both sexes’ options at work and in the home.

Gender sensitivity is an idea that was developed to help break down the barriers created by stereotyped attitudes so that people are judged on their own merits and skills rather than on what sex they are. It focuses on educating people – both men and women – to challenge and look beyond stereotypes, to have an open-minded approach.

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “GENDER” AND “SEX”?

The word “gender” is used when it describes characteristics that society gives to women and men. The word “sex” is used to describe the biological characteristics of males and females (see p. 26 :Are You Talking About Gender or Sex , for examples). Gender is something that is socially constructed and learned – it can vary from culture to culture, from one generation to another and over time as society

changes. Gender roles are the kinds of behaviours and relationships that are expected for a person, depending on their sex.

### WHAT IS GENDER SENSITIVE LANGUAGE AND WHY SHOULD WE USE IT?

The way people use language is related to their social reality. If language only refers to men and eliminates women from language, it means that gender inequality can more easily be maintained.

Words are important and the way we use language has consequences. If we think that women and men should be treated equally, we should also think about how the language we use reflects that belief.

### AVOIDING THE USE OF GENDERED NOUNS

Gendered nouns are commonly used in many languages – for example, postman or air stewardess. It’s important to be aware of how we use these words when we speak and when we write. Using words in that way can imply that you are making assumptions about the roles of men and women. It is better to use alternatives. Below are some commonly used gendered nouns that transport workers might use and their gender-neutral alternatives:

gendered noun	gender-neutral noun
air steward, air stewardess	cabin crew
seaman	seafarer
fisherman	fisher
postman	postal worker

- What gendered nouns do you use?
- What gender-neutral nouns could you use instead?

### ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT GENDER OR SEX?

When you speak or write something, think about what you are referring to. Are you talking about someone's biological characteristics? Or are you talking about society's view of a person's role? If you are talking or writing about biology, you should use the words "male" or "female." If you are talking or writing about someone's social role or behaviour you should use the words "woman" or "man."

Ask yourself:

- What does it mean to be male?
- What does it mean to be a man?
- What does it mean to be female?
- What does it mean to be a woman?

For example, to be male means to have XY chromosomes; to be a man means being the breadwinner; to be female means to have XX chromosomes; to be a woman means being a housewife. The difference between the two is that biological characteristics are necessary and remain the same, but characteristics that are constructed by society are not and can shift. For example, what it meant to be a woman in India in the 18th century could be quite different from what it means to be a woman in India today and from what it means to be a woman in the US – gender characteristics vary over time and between cultures.

- Think of some other examples showing what makes someone male and female and what makes them a man and a woman.

Think about:

- whether you need to mention someone's sex. For example, if you talk about a "female truck driver", would you also talk about a "male truck driver" – if it's not relevant to the point you are trying to make, then don't mention their sex.
- the way you describe people. For example, if you describe a trade unionist who happens to be a woman as an attractive slim mother of four, would you also mention that a trade unionist who happens to be a man is a tall handsome father of three? Unless gender and issues that are related to gender are relevant to the point you are making, don't mention them.
- whether or not you use stereotypes when it comes to talking about the jobs people do. This can involve referring to a "female pilot", "female docker" or "male cabin crew", for example.
- whether or not you have used "he," "him," "his," or "himself" when you are talking about people who may also be female.

Remember, as society is constantly changing, so are the roles and status of women and men. When talking about women and men, we should remember that, in general, women have the same potential and limitations as men.

Now try these exercises:

- Think about your local transport where you live or near where you live. Imagine a bus driver working in your neighbourhood. Draw the bus driver and the vehicle and the scenery in the background. Try to draw the bus driver very accurately, including clothing and hats. After you've finished your picture, write down the name of the bus driver and your own name.
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Outline your reasons.
  - "Women can be as good truck drivers as men."
  - "Women are careful and good at detailed work."
  - "Women are not good at technology."
  - "Men make better pilots than women because they are better with technical things."
  - "Women cannot be good dockers because they are not physically strong enough."
  - "If a job is too hard and dirty for a woman, then it's

also too hard and dirty for a man.”

- “If there were enough role models for women, there would be more women pilots.”
- “Women can be as successful as men if they are given proper training and education opportunities.”
- “Women do not make good trade unionists because they are not assertive enough.”

Now discuss your replies.

The decision about a person’s ability to do a job well should not be based on their sex. Nowadays there are few jobs that require especially hard physical labour. There is no physical reason why women cannot be as good as men at, for example, flying an aircraft or driving a truck. In fact, women can now also do strenuous jobs like dock work and trucking, thanks to improvements in technology which are making it easier for them to lift heavy loads.

There is also no reason to believe that certain jobs should only be carried out by women, for example, child-rearing. Why should men be deprived of the opportunity to do this task and other tasks that are typically seen as “women’s jobs”?

■ Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Outline your reasons.

- “Women are better suited to taking care of children.”
- “Men do not have and are unable to develop the sensitivity that is needed to bring up children.”
- “More and more men are taking good care of children.”
- “Women are better able to take care of children because they carry babies for nine months before they are born.”
- “Women have natural maternal instincts.”
- “As more and more women are taking jobs outside the home, it will become increasingly necessary for men to help in the home.”
- “Men can take care of babies just as well as women.”
- “Women are brought up to be less assertive in the workplace, that’s why they can’t be leaders.”
- “Men are more competitive than women that’s why they should take on more important roles.”
- “Women need a supportive environment to help them develop assertiveness and confidence in the workplace.”

Now discuss your replies.

Most women – though not all – are childbearers and breastfeeders and that is where natural parenting ends. Many women gain skills early on in their lives when they look after brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, for example. In many cases, they have been trained to take on this role. But it’s not accurate to say that women are better at caring for children than men; in fact, if boys were given the chance to look after young children, they would gain similar skills. When men participate in childcare, they are able to develop sensitivity, gentleness and patience and they can also enjoy being a father.

Similarly, girls who are not usually brought up to be assertive and competitive can develop these skills if they are encouraged through a supportive environment. Unions and employers can develop strategies to help women participate more fully, for example, by providing women-only spaces or chairing meetings so that women are encouraged to speak.

Discuss:

- the different roles that most women carry out
- the inequality between working women and men in transport
- the barriers to equality between men and women in your country
- the inequalities between men and women in your union
- pay and working conditions of women in transport
- women and access to senior positions in your union
- women’s workload in the home and at work
- the changing roles of women and men in society
- the idea of men and boys sharing responsibilities in the home with women and girls
- ways of encouraging women to participate more fully in the union.





# 6

## REFERENCE MATERIAL



Here, we reproduce two items – the Global Unions Organising Leaflet text, which is designed for you to adapt for your own purposes, and the PSI Gender Mainstreaming Policy, which may be useful if your union is considering looking more closely at this issue.

Other valuable resources are available on the Internet – a couple are outlined on this page. The ITF website [www.itfglobal.org](http://www.itfglobal.org) will also feature an electronic version of the guide, with your contributions, ideas and examples of how to use these materials and how to stimulate discussion.

### WEBSITE RESOURCES

ILO: Promoting Gender Equality – a Resource Kit for Trade Unions

[www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/eo/tu/tu\\_toc.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/gems/eo/tu/tu_toc.htm)

Campaign Kit, Global Unions' 3 Year Organising Campaign

[www.icftu.org/www/pdf/u4w-campaignkit-en.pdf](http://www.icftu.org/www/pdf/u4w-campaignkit-en.pdf)

Public Services International

[www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org)

## ORGANISING WOMEN INTO TRADE UNIONS

### HOW CAN YOU ORGANISE MORE WOMEN INTO YOUR UNION?

WOMEN NEED TO KNOW HOW UNIONS CAN HELP THEM AND THE BEST WAY IS THROUGH PERSONAL CONTACT WITH A WOMAN UNIONIST.

A RECENT TRADE UNION SURVEY SHOWS THAT MANY WOMEN ARE OFTEN NOT CLEAR HOW JOINING A TRADE UNION CAN HELP THEM – OR INDEED JUST WHAT THE ROLE OF A TRADE UNION IS.

#### SO WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Get the union discussed at the workplace, by taking up issues that matter to women workers.
- Hold discussion or study groups to find out what issues are important; carry out research or conduct surveys.
- Identify an issue that has a good chance of getting solved and consider how to start a union campaign to address the issue.

#### KEEPING IN TOUCH:

Think how best to reach your target group, through information sheets or simple leaflets like this one. If unions are not well known, you can consider trying a more informal approach with a lunch time meeting, a children's clothes sale, or an issue of interest, such as women's health.

- Make sure you follow up on your contacts and remember that it is important to discuss what unions can do for women workers, not only with the poten-

tial women recruits but also with women and men in the union, with spouses and the local community.

- Make sure your union sends out frequent press releases or regular information sheets on the various activities of the union.
- Make sure that the union information material demonstrates ways in which trade unions can benefit women workers.

### CREATING A CLIMATE OF CONFIDENCE AND TRUST

- Make sure that your union provides clear information to all its members about how its leaders are elected, including:
  - How to nominate union members for leadership posts;
  - When and where the elections will take place;
  - What were the results of the elections.

Make sure that your union provides regular information about the union finances, including:

- the amount of membership dues received;
- how the income is shared between the union branch and the national union;
- how the income is spent and accounted for.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING IN A UNION FOR A WOMAN WORKER?

Unionised workers:

- Earn more money than non-unionised workers in the same job;
- Have more job protection than workers without unions;
- Enjoy better benefits, such as health benefits; pensions; paid maternity leave; parental leave; flexible working time;
- Gain recognition of the rights of equity-seeking groups (eg youth, migrants, ethnic minorities, older workers, lesbian and gay workers and workers with disabilities).

### WHAT CAN UNIONS DO TO HELP WOMEN WORKERS?

- Provide protection against arbitrary management decisions;
- Negotiate pay and employment equity plans to improve wages and access to jobs for women and equity-seeking groups;
- Negotiate protection against discrimination and harassment of workers on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and disability;
- Provide educational and training opportunities for members;
- Provide the opportunity for collective action on issues of community concern.

### JOINING A TRADE UNION – WHAT WILL IT MEAN FOR WOMEN?

WOMEN WORKERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO JOIN A TRADE UNION ON AN EQUAL BASIS WITH MEN. A STRONG TRADE UNION CAN PROTECT AND PROMOTE WOMEN'S RIGHTS BUT IT CAN ONLY DO SO IF THE WOMEN MEMBERS ARE WELL ORGANISED AND ACTIVE. IF A WOMAN JOINS A TRADE UNION, HERE ARE SOME OF HER RIGHTS.

- Be invited to meetings of the union, which should be arranged at times which are also convenient to women;
- Express her own point of view;
- Be consulted about her pay and working conditions before her union holds negotiations with her employer on her behalf;
- Know who is her union representative and how to contact her or him;
- Take part in the election of union representatives;
- Be represented by the union if she has a complaint, or if she is in trouble with her employer;
- Take part in discussions about the policies of the union;
- Take part in trade union education and training programmes.

### HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE IN YOUR UNION'S WORK?

You can do the following:

- Put forward the views of women workers more forcefully in discussions with management;
- Take up cases of unfair treatment from employers;
- Take part in negotiations for better pay and better working conditions, particularly for the lower paid workers who are often women;

Identify and put an end to policies and practices in areas such as training and job evaluations, which discriminate against women;

- Negotiate with employers for improved maternity protection and child care facilities;
- Promote improvements in health and safety conditions at work;
- Take up cases of sexual harassment at work;

Learn about workers' rights and women's rights so you can better defend your colleagues;

- Work with other organisations to promote women's rights in the community.

### WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Contact your local union representative today!  
(Your details here)

Produced by Global Unions with the support of the International Labour Organisation (ILO-GENPROM)

### PUBLIC SERVICES INTERNATIONAL POLICY ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING

#### WHAT IS GENDER MAINSTREAMING?

The concept of gender mainstreaming was adopted as a new strategy by the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995. Within the European Union, the principle of gender mainstreaming was first described in the Fourth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities in 1995, when it was stated that: "gender relations should be taken into account in every policy measure, from the planning stage to the performance review." The gender mainstreaming principle was further reinforced in the 1996 Amsterdam Treaty when all member states in the European Union pledged to apply the principle.

Women in all societies suffer from discrimination in the political, economic and social spheres. Gender means the socially and culturally defined roles of men and women. Because gender roles are defined by social and cultural practices, they can be changed.

Gender mainstreaming consists of the re-organisation of decision-making processes in all areas of an organisation's policy and work to take into account the existence of unequal gender relations. The goal of gender mainstreaming is to ensure that all policies and activities of an organisation take into account direct and indirect discrimination and promote equality of treatment and opportunities between men and women and the equitable distribution of measures and benefits.

Gender equality is a fundamental human right. Gender equality is a central policy objective of the PSI and its affiliates worldwide. It is integral to the achievement of quality public services.

PSI and its affiliates are committed to achieving:

- The provision of public services which benefit women and men equally
- The adoption of policies and practices which promote equality of opportunity and treatment between men and women among public service employees
- The adoption of policies and programmes of action by PSI and its affiliates which are based on principles of gender equality

PSI recognises that gender mainstreaming is an

important tool which, coupled with other measures, can assist in achieving the long-term goal of gender equality.

#### HOW DOES GENDER MAINSTREAMING WORK IN PRACTICE?

Gender mainstreaming consists of two main aspects:

- The identification of ways in which existing policies and decision-making processes within any organisation are reflecting and reinforcing existing inequalities between men and women
- The development of policies and practices to overcome these inequalities

#### WHAT CHANGES WITH GENDER MAINSTREAMING?

When gender equality becomes a central policy objective of an organisation, many common assumptions are given a new perspective. PSI and its affiliates are committed to implementing the following gender mainstreaming policy, which replaces the traditional women's policy: (continues overleaf)

PERSPECTIVE OF A  
TRADITIONAL WOMEN'S POLICY

Women are responsible for solving women's problems

Women have specific problems

Women have specific problems

Women approach decision-making centres as petitioners to seek support for their concepts

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

The responsibility for gender mainstreaming lies in the first instance with the PSI leadership and requires their active commitment. Whereas previously women have normally concerned themselves with "women's issues", in gender mainstreaming both women and men are responsible.

TOOLS FOR GENDER IMPACT ANALYSIS

The PSI will review all its decisions to take into consideration their impact on gender relations and to ensure they actively promote change.

POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

PSI is committed to integrating a gender impact analysis into all relevant existing and new policies and programmes. Decision-makers drawing up new policies and programmes will be guided by the following considerations:

- How many men and women are affected by this measure and how many women and men participate in it?
- How are resources allocated between the sexes (finances, access to information and training, use of time?)
- What are the relevant benefits of specific measures

PERSPECTIVE OF A  
GENDER MAINSTREAMING POLICY

Women and men jointly accept responsibility for changing gender relations

Socially determined circumstances place women in unfavourable situations

Women's specific interests are a reflection of their living conditions (such as intense cohabitation with young children). Men would have the same interests if they shared the same living conditions

Decision-making centres take account of gender mainstreaming as a central objective. Women are consulted as experts on specific aspects of women's lives. Initiatives by women themselves are warmly welcomed as experts on specific aspects of women's lives. Initiatives by women themselves are warmly welcomed as a vital component of achieving gender equality

for men and women?

- What are the causes of existing representation and resource allocation?
- What are the possibilities for change and how can it be achieved?

PSI AND REGIONAL BUDGETS

PSI is committed to achieving gender equality in its decision-making structures, in its activities and in its own staffing. PSI will provide training opportunities on gender impact analysis to its staff and affiliates.

Decision-makers will be responsible for:

- Monitoring and reporting of participation of women in PSI Constitutional bodies and advisory groups;
- Ensuring 50% participation of women in all PSI-sponsored events
- Establishing transparent and gender-sensitive selection processes for the recruitment of PSI staff.

However, the single most effective means of testing the impact of any given measure is to analyse the extent to which the organisation is being mobilised to change inequities in relationships between men and women.

### HOW DOES GENDER MAINSTREAMING RELATE TO OTHER GENDER POLICY STRATEGIES?

PSI considers that gender mainstreaming supplements existing measures but does not replace them. Specific measures to empower women will be needed for the foreseeable future until gender relations are no longer organised on a discriminatory basis.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S INDEPENDENT STRUCTURES AND AUTONOMOUS PRACTICE

PSI remains committed to developing and resourcing women's independent structures. The actual experiences of women in the affiliated organisations are vital to achieve gender equality in practice. Within PSI, women will continue to exchange their views and articulate their interests.

### PSI ENDORSEMENT AND ACTIVE PROMOTION OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING PRINCIPLES

The PSI Executive Board meeting in Seoul on 29-31 October 2001 endorsed the above policy and called upon all PSI affiliates to submit this statement to their own decision-making bodies for discussion and adoption.

Public Services International, 2001, [www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org)







International Transport Workers' Federation  
ITF House, 49-60 Borough Road, London SE1 1DR  
Tel: +44 20 7403 2733 Fax: +44 20 7357 7871 E: [women@itf.org.uk](mailto:women@itf.org.uk) [www.itfglobal.org](http://www.itfglobal.org)



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# MAKING UNIONS STRONGER



ITF RESOURCE PACK FOR  
BUILDING UNIONS  
THROUGH GENDER WORK



## WHO IS THIS BRIEFING FOR?

- This briefing is for ITF unions who wish to actively organise women
- It can be used by
  - Union officials (men and women)
  - Union education officers
  - Members of women's committees
  - Unions undertaking gender work

## WHAT IS THE ITF?

- A global federation of transport workers' unions
- Over 600 unions in 148 countries with 4.5 million members
- Eight industrial sections and five world regions
- Aims: Campaigning, Information, Representation

## WHO IS IN THE ITF?

- ITF Women Members
  - Over a quarter of a million women belong to the ITF.
  - They make up between 13 and 17 per cent of members
  - The largest numbers are in aviation and road transport
  - Most are in non-mobile jobs
- This information can be used to target the right groups in the ITF's work

## CASE STUDIES

- Read “WHAT THEY DID” on page 4 in the briefing pack
  - Unions make contact in Burkina Faso
  - Surveying the membership in France
  - State of the Union - Canada



## WHO IS IN YOUR UNION?

- Discuss the following questions:
  - How do you store information about members?
  - Can you analyse information about their sex, job and union's role?
  - What proposals would you make about changing the way you store this information?
  - How many women do you have at decision-making levels in the union?
  - Have you ever carried out a gender audit?
  - What proposals could you make to improve?

## STRONG UNIONS NEED WOMEN

“Unions which do not fight for the rights of women members will face both a threat to their membership and to working conditions and pay for all workers. It’s our job to make sure that does happen. Unions need women, and women need unions.”

Discuss this statement by the ITF. Do you agree?

## STRONG UNIONS NEED WOMEN

- Which of these obstacles prevent women from becoming members of your union?
  - Lack of information about how unions can help them
  - No time due to family responsibilities
  - Perception that the union works only for men
    - Style of meeting
    - Practical barriers
    - Collective bargaining dominated by men
    - Barriers restrict access to leadership

## ESTABLISHING A WOMEN'S STRUCTURE

- Could women's or equality structures help you with any of the following?
  - Collecting, recording and discussing information on issues affecting women
  - Formulating strategies for collective bargaining and action
  - Encouraging women to join and participate
  - Preparing women for responsibility
  - Building awareness, confidence and organisational skills of women
  - Designing educational materials for women
  - Lobbying for legislative changes

## STRONG UNIONS NEED WOMEN

- Read “WHAT THEY DID” on pages 8 and 10. Which path do you need to take?
  - Creating structures in India
  - Using proportionality in Great Britain
  - Positive Action at the International Level – ITUC
  - Gender mainstreaming – ITF Research Project
  - Collective Bargaining in Argentina
  - Gender Mainstreaming in the PSI

## WOMEN AND DECISION-MAKING

- Only a small number of top posts are held by women in unions around the world

“This will not change without targets and systems to guarantee women’s representation” - do you agree?

## WOMEN AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- Very few trade unions involve women in collective bargaining
- The lack of women officers, organisers and shop stewards makes this situation worse
- Is this a problem for your union?

## STRONG UNIONS NEED WOMEN

- Discuss these questions and make proposals for change.
  - What kinds of meeting do you have in your union? Are they easy for new members?
  - How do issues get raised in collective bargaining? Can women be better involved?
  - Do you have a women's committee or elected post to cover these issues?
  - Do you have a strategy to encourage women's leadership?



## NETWORKING FOR WOMEN

- Read “WHAT THEY DID” on page 14. What kind of networking could help you?
  - Guatemala
  - Tanzania
  - West African women’s network

## INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

“Women transport workers around the world share experiences and problems; they can seek common solutions”

- How can the ITF Women’s Network help to strengthen women’s participation in your trade union?
- How can your union help to strengthen the ITF Women’s Network?

## ORGANISING DIFFERENT WORKPLACES

- Discuss the points below.
  - The effects of globalisation can be different for women than for men
  - There are more women working in transport than there have ever been
  - Many new jobs are done by young women
  - Some unions have changed their vision of the typical unionised workplace, and allocated budget to organising.

## ORGANISING DIFFERENT WORKPLACES

- “The only way for us to fight off further restrictions of workers’ rights is to recruit new members and strengthen unions”
- Read pages 14 and 15
  - Does your union need to concentrate more on organising women?
  - What are the obstacles for your union in strengthening and growing in membership? How can these be overcome?

# ORGANISING DIFFERENT WORKPLACES

- Discuss:
  - Has globalisation meant specific changes for women workers in your sector?
  - What is your average member like? What is his/her age, gender or employment relationship? Is this the same profile as most of the people who work in the industry now? Will this continue?
  - What kind of transport union is needed to represent tomorrow's workers?

## INFORMAL WORKPLACES

- Read page 17
  - What are the challenges for organising informal workers in transport?
  - How can these be addressed?

## USE THE MINI AUDIT

- Fill out the check list on page 23. Has your union
  - Collected and stored membership data by sex, age and job type?
  - Documented women's involvement in the union?
  - Created structures representing women?
  - Included women at all levels of union activity?
  - Regularly reviewed your procedures and structures?
  - Assessed the situation for your union in addressing today's industry?
- What changes may your union need to make?
- Commit to making and monitoring improvements

## EQUAL BUT DIFFERENT

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
Outline your reasons.

- “Women can be as good truck drivers as men.”
- “Women are careful and good at detailed work.”
- “Women are not good at technology.”
- “Men make better pilots than women because they are better with technical things.”
- “Women cannot be good dockers because they are not physically strong enough.”
- “If a job is too hard and dirty for a woman, then it’s also too hard and dirty for a man.”
- “If there were enough role models for women, there would be more women pilots.”
- “Women can be as successful as men if they are given proper training and education opportunities.”
- “Women do not make good trade unionists because they are not assertive enough.”



# EQUAL BUT DIFFERENT

## Discuss:

- The different roles that most women carry out
- The inequality between working women and men in transport
- The barriers to equality between men and women in your country
- The inequalities between men and women in your union
- Pay and working conditions of women in transport
- Women and access to senior positions in your union
- Women's workload in the home and at work
- The changing roles of women and men in society
- The idea of men and boys sharing responsibilities in the home with women and girls
- Ways of encouraging women to participate more fully in the union.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Discuss the changes you believe you may need to make
- Design a strategic plan for action:
  - Who will you need to carry out your plan?
  - What resources will you need?
  - Set a timetable and deadlines for your plan
  - Ask the ITF for help
  - Share your successes with others - via the ITF Women's Network



MAKING UNIONS STRONGER

