

Brief Report

*Launching of the Project «Decision for Life»
Praia Grande, Brazil, October 4-6, 2009*

1- Opening

Veronica Fernandez Mendez, UNI Equal Opportunities Officer, welcomed all delegates and congratulates them for their support, communication and a great teamwork. The work performed by the Brazilian Network is great; all of you have the power to change the point of view of women in Latin America.

Rosangela da Silva, Coordinator of The UNI Americas Women's Network in Brazil thanked all the participants for the teamwork, especially the collaboration of the Commerce Sector women who made possible the use of the vacation facilities (Colonia de Feiras). The event wouldn't have been possible without the contribution of each one of you. The union movement is action, said Rosangela, every organization, even with its political differences, has played an important role, all of you have cooperated and provided the necessary collaboration in order to make this possible. The launching of the workshop of Decisions for Life is important for young workers in Brazil because you are great leaders, and during these two days you will get vital information to improving their quality of life.

Briceida Gonzalez, Regional Director of Equal Opportunity Department at UNI Americas highlighted the wonderful collaboration and teamwork demonstrated by all members of the Brazilian Network, which made feasible this workshop. She asked the delegates to stay in constant communication with UNI Regional Office in order to continue doing a joint work successfully, as well as sending their news, ideas, and concerns.

✓ Introducing the participants:

The group exercise was intended to make that the participants could meet each other. The activity was based on a conversation of a couple for 5 minutes, afterward; they should proceed to introduce one to another to the rest of the group.

✓ Survey of expectations and presentation of the program:

Sister Deise Recoaro of CONTRAFI-CUT made a presentation of the program and urged the delegates to express their ideas about what they were expecting to receive / obtain at this workshop. They highlighted some ideas as: the importance of establishing a specific action plan guiding them to make changes in the reality of working women, to bring this project to the bases of the union organization in order to strengthening and improving the quality of lives of other young women through training and promoting gender equality.

2- Presentation of Project "Decisions for Life", by Paulo Roberto do Valle DIEESE

Mr. Paulo provided updated information about several activities that DIEESE was developing with the union movement in Brazil in order to organize and take action for young women workers in the service sector. DIEESE (Trade union Inter-Department

of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies - Brazil) is working in partnership with WageIndicator Foundation to develop researches; they also have a Web site: www.meusalariomulher.org.br, which is constantly updated with information relating to employment opportunities and career, ways to balance family, professional and personal life as well as other relevant information.

DIEESE also produces and distributes printed materials explaining the project. In addition, they inform to the national trade unions about the part of the work they do, the way they work and the objectives, from their point of view, they expect to achieve. Attached is a PPT presentation to amplify the speech of Mr. Paulo do Valle.

Sister Vera Gebrin submitted the results of research on gender studies carried out by DIEESE; one highlight was the gathering of information on collective agreements in several categories / sectors and groups in order to identify gender articles and conditions of employment of women; the results should assist the union movement in collective bargaining of their organizations.

- ✓ Questions/answer Time.
- ✓ Activity to "Wakeup".

3- Presentation: "Gender Relations in the World of Labour", by Professor Angela Araujo of UNICAMP.

Professor Araujo made a comprehensive explanation on gender issue and its relationship to the world of labour, she also provided statistical information. Attached is a PPT presentation that expands the speech of Professor Araujo.

- ✓ Questions/answer Period.

4- Afternoon Session.

- ✓ Workgroup Nº 1 "Cá entre Nós" phrase in Portuguese that means a friendly conversation between partners, and aims to bring out the thoughts of the participants to produce a correlation between their lives and the presentation of Professor Araujo. The participants were divided into groups of 8 members each, and were asked to answer the question: What is the impact of the content of the presentation of Professor Araujo in their life?
- ✓ Presentation of the workgroup
 - ❖ Answers Group Nº 1-Conclusions:
 - 1- It is necessary to provide training to women so they can achieve more versatile functions and to ensure the promotion of skills in business, thus they can access to the decision making-positions.
 - 2- Women also have to work the gender issue on the awareness of male counterpart.
 - 3- Women must make a cultural revolution by raising awareness that leads to the renovation of society, giving place to new values, new models, new paradigms, in to sustainable way.
 - ❖ Answers Group Nº 2-Conclusions:
 - 1- There has been a gender gap among workers since ancient time. The difference in values (profits) is not equally distributed for men and women.
 - 2- Woman has to work even more than the man, in order to demonstrate her competence, nevertheless, she still continues getting less remuneration than the man.

3- Young people are also experiencing precarious job conditions, not only as students or as an employee, while normally this will be his/her first job.

❖ Answers Group N° 3-Conclusions: This group produced a debate on the concept of gender / sex and the importance of understanding the differences, they concluded that:

- 1- It is necessary to strive for equality without losing femininity,
- 2- Implement policies: the work positions are associated to power and money, therefore it is necessary to strengthen women's leadership through training in areas such as collective bargaining, to enable partners to perform better in oratory.
- 3- Understand that capitalism is a perverse model that reproduces inequalities.

❖ Answers Group N° 4-Conclusions:

- ✓ We are 52% in the labor market, why should we occupy lower-level post? Usually with lower wages than men and doing the same job? It is necessary to change our thoughts, that "*women are unfortunate*". Women can do everything they propose to do.
- ✓ It is necessary to train women, providing them information on their rights. Making changes of concepts deep-rooted at home and the culture of trade unions. We should demand from our union officers the design and implementation of innovative programs of training for women so that they can access to leadership positions.
- ✓ On the politics subject, we should demand more respect from our male counterparts, as well as their collaboration to liberate and be liberated.
- ✓ A film was showed aiming to discuss gender issues as violence against women, mobbing, sexual harassment, and discrimination by race, gender, and many others.

Tuesday 6.

5- Morning Session

- ✓ Comments/Remarks on the movie

The participants analyzed the film that was showed last night, most women concluded that the movie was extremely violent, and contained scenes that demeaned the women. However, the aim of this film was to raise a debate so that the participants could accept the reality of life, frequently cruel, that is why they had to build transformations.

- ✓ Workgroup N° 2: "Recognizing the scenario "

This time the groups were asked to identify and classify in three categories the problems and demands of young workers: life, work and politics. The groups met to discuss the issue and then make their presentations.

6- Continues previous session

- ✓ Presentation of the Workgroups conclusions:

Based on the three categories identified in earlier work, and making use of cards, each group presented the analysis on what they believe are the main problems faced by young workers. The following were their conclusions.

❖ Group N° 1 – Conclusions:

- Life: Women worker should work double and triple journeys, and have fewer career opportunities than their male counterparts. They also face conflict between personal life, work and family. The lack of public policies to support the family also affects the life of women workers. The family is the foundation of our life, important things like education and concepts of life in general come from it.
- Policy: It is urgent to unlink politics issues of the education. Religious institutions are more sensitive and open to the needs of people. The communities should talk with youth, in one way or another, about politic issues. Music may be a way to reach young people (e.g. hip-hop, samba, rock, funk dances).
- Work: The age of globalization has brought precarious jobs, eliminated worker rights, basic health care, and instability in work place. In addition, young people also face discrimination of race, class, gender or sexual orientation.

❖ Group N° 2 – Conclusions:

- Life: Personal and family lives are closely related. Financial issues - salary remuneration. The lack of money, most of the time generates conflict at home, even though it is true that wealth can not purchase happiness, money is useful to pay bills at home. The marital relationship has a direct influence on family life; if the couple is constantly fighting, the children will reproduce this violent behavior, the violence deteriorates the family structure.
- Politics: Generally, the party divisions are cause of conflict. The discrepancies of religious doctrines are the beginning of wars, religion does not cause wars, and nevertheless religious leaders do so with their distorted doctrines. The 7 Deadly Sins, corporate greed has caused more conflicts.
- Work: Mobbing and sexual harassment. Health problems. Young workers must meet abusive goals set by employers.

❖ Group N° 3 – Conclusions:

- Life: Lack of public policies to support the family. The need to harmonize the time for family care, work and personal life. Young people should work double and triple labor journey.
- Politics: Religious divisions. It is extremely necessary to find out ways to attract young people, for instance music. It is also important to unlink politic of education, we have to restructure and rescue youth by providing them more training.
- Work: Young workers constantly face sexual harassment and mobbing. Precarious job, exclusion of worker rights and minimum health care. They also face discrimination of race, sexual orientation and class.

❖ Group N° 4 – Conclusions:

- Life: Despite the lack of jobs, a woman always tries to maintain family harmony. Women always will seek time to take care of the family. Nevertheless, a woman needs time for herself, the workload often makes woman invisible since she will prioritize family issues.
- Politics: Lack of public policies that provide family support. Lack of time. Individualism.
- Work: Mobbing. Increasing of overall workload and receiving less pay. Women also face difficulties to access in decision-making positions.

- ❖ Group N° 5 – Conclusions:
 - Life: Lack of youth participation in the decisions of family and the opportunity to express their point of views. Equal opportunity for all the members of the family. Youth needs independence and also wants to choose their way of life.
 - Politics: indifference to political issues, but this is an evidence of "a poor culture". Youth need opportunities mainly in the trade unions, young people seek to be inserted in the labor market, to have access to the decision-making positions, and however, generally youth have no opportunities because someone else does not leave the space available for them. Lack of recognition, young people has not knowledge the historical struggles, thus they lose their idealism.
 - Work: Inclusion of youth in the labor market, informal job is putting pressure on youth. Power position, these spaces are a significant, from there young people can achieved opportunities. Young people face mobbing and suffer psychological pressure.
- ✓ Workgroups 3: ¡We go to the Struggle!

Based on the three characteristics defined in previous work, groups were asked to recreate the possible actions that trade unions could perform, and what would be their limitations.

7- Afternoon Session

- ✓ Presentation of the workgroups

Participants produced a dramatization to recreate the problems they face in labor, family life and politics. The groups had to define strategies to solve the difficulties, they also had to detail how, when and where they would the strategies be developed.

- ✓ Continues previous session
- ✓ Launch of the new "UNI Equal Opportunities Toolkit".

Veronica Fernandez Mendez introduced the new manual which will help women understand the legal instruments of ILO and the core labor standard concerning gender and equal opportunities.

Illustration of the campaigns: the delegates were brought to UNI website, specifically to the campaigns launched during the last year. Veronica advised them to use these instruments/tools as model, and also to using the material provided in each one of them.

- ✓ Celebration of World Day of Decent Work Campaign

Participants were enthusiastic. They also were part of the celebration of this important campaign and they also were illustrated about organization mobilizations around the world.

- ✓ Evaluation of UNI Office.

The delegates defined a **personal commitment** to reproduce the Decision for Life Project to help other women workers. They also designed the best way to fulfill this commitment which should be linked to "organizing more women into trade unions". All of them proposed a written commitment, which would be monitored from UNI Americas Regional Office in Panama. This process will be helpful to closely supervise the development of the project and then provide the results in numbers.



Some highlighted: Hold meetings with the Commission for Women (6 members) of the Trade Union Federations in order to introduce this issue on the agenda of the next national congress (more than 200 women). Hold meeting with small groups of women to introduce the project. Hold debates inside of the trade union. Coordinate actions with Youth Secretariat in order to organize a campaign focused on young women workers. Strengthen women's networks through the presentation of the project. Organize regional meetings to publicize the project.

✓ Closing.

Veronica, Rosangela and Briceida thanked once again to all the participants for their solidarity, collaboration, and good disposition of teamwork. Women were encouraged to make use of new tools: practical guide for delegates, and UNI campaign guideline, so that they could gain knowledge of how to organizing more women into unions. Finally they reaffirmed the importance of maintaining communication with the UNI office, in this way we may take a follow up: about the development of the project and also to address concerns they might have.