

Report on the exchange visit of NDAWU DWs to CIAWU – Malawi

20thMay- 24th May 2016

1.0 Introduction:

According to the studies, the population of Namibia is 2.5 million and among them they are 45,000 domestic workers, whereby the population Malawi is 17million and the population of Domestic workers is more than 50,000 workers.

Namibian Domestic and Allied Workers Union-NDAWU and Commercial Industrial Allied Workers Union –CIAWU of Malawi which is a multi-sectoral union are both affiliates of the International Domestic Workers Federation-IDWF.

The unions have the four year programme of support from Olaf Palme International Center –OPC, through IUF/IDWF.

Through the support, the unions are implementing the project towards IDWF goals of the five year strategic plan which are (i) Federation building, (ii) Capacity building (iii) campaign and Research (iv) Migrant DWs organizing and Advocacy (v) representation of Domestic workers.

Currently the unions have been able to do a number of activities such as planning the action plans for their unions, training domestic workers on issues related to domestic workers, awareness creation, campaign and advocacy on minimum wages and ratification of ILO C 189, as well as organizing and recruitment drive (NDAWU-1500 members and CIAWU 5500 members by May 2016.

2.0 Exchange Visit:

One of the IDWF activities between these two countries was to have the exchange visit. It involves DW leaders and organizers to visit CIAWU union in Malawi.

The objectives of the mission were as follows:

- To learn and share from each other about the organizational work in the unions.

- Capacity development of DW leaders in both NDAWU and CIAWU by seeing how to recruit DWs in the union and share skills and experience.
- To build strong network among leaders and organizers of the two unions so that they can work together towards building strong unions.
- Learn and list good practice and be shared to other affiliates.

3.0 Who were involved in the mission:

(i) NDAWU:- Nelie Dina Kahua, the General Secretary

-Else Ashipala, the organiser

-Lena Gertse, DW, organizer

(ii) CIAWU- Mary Dzinyemba , GS CIAWU

– Harriet- DWs incharge of DWs issues at CIAWU HQs

-Iness- DW and Organiser, Blanytre

-Josephine- DW and Organiser, Blanytre

-48DWs in all visited areas.

(iii) IDWF- Africa region: Vicky Kanyoka

4.0 Activities:

Day one: 21/05/2016.

CIAWU were six organizers and the General Secretary Mary Dzinyemba and from NDAWU were two organizers /DWs and the GS Nelie Kahua.

In the morning the introduction was done in the union board room and were all briefed about the visit and areas to be visited. This was done by GS. Mary Dzinyemba.

(a)Area 1: Limbi area- Kandjeza Primary school: In this area 15 domestic workers were met. Introduction was done by both parties. GS Mary Ndzyemba explained the objective of the mission to CIAWU DWs.

GS of NDAWU the brief history of NDAWU and the activities they are doing in Namibia.

Also were explained about the IDWF and its objectives for domestic workers in the world.

Domestic workers were asked to ask, comment and share about the unions, and challenges from each side.

(b) Mpingwe area 2: St. Kizito Boys school: 16 Domestic workers were met in this area.

Also the same process was done such as introduction, brief history of the unions and IDWF and about the project they are implementing together.

(c) Day 2: 22/05/2016- Zomba area: This is another district: An Academic city with a number of universities around. It is 60 km from Blantyre city.

(i) Meeting at Eagles Primary school.

Met the area organizer, Rickson and other 17 domestic workers.

First the introduction was done and Mary Dzinyemba the GS of CIAWU explained to the DWs the objectives of the mission.

IDWF coordinator Vicky Kanyoka brief about the IDWF, the structure, leadership, Objective of IDWF, the IDWF project of OPC and the expectation;

of IDWF after 5 years.

Nelie Kahua explained to the DWs about NDAWU, its leadership, activities they are doing, the success and challenges they are facing.

Ashipala from NDAWU also was very impressed how DWs organizers have recruited many DWs into the union.

Major issues commented during the visit in all meetings

1. CIAWU Malawi

(a) Challenges faced by DWs in Malawi:

- Most of the domestic workers have no employment contracts.
- Long working hours- more than 10 hrs
- Low wages/ No salary increase
- No public holidays, hence no overtime
- No transport allowance
- Fired without getting their benefits
- Corruption by the labor officers, they side the employers.
- Annual leave is not completed as they are sometimes called back to work and is not refunded.
- Cases procedure takes longer for someone to get his/her rights.

(b) Organizing/Recruitment drive- how do they do in Malawi?

Process:

(i).Organizing and Recruitment

- Identify DWs who are capable to organize
- Domestic workers are oriented for 6 months at CIAWU offices to learn issues related to DW, such as how to attend DWs ,communication skills, how to keep record.
- Organizers are given task and target to recruit 20 domestic workers per day per each organizer. They are given awareness materials like leaflets along.
- During the process if they agree, they pay MK200 entrance fee, and dues which is 100 MK (Malawi Kwacha).
- On Friday they bring the report to the office, and the names of the DWs recruited to get their receipts. The In charge issues the receipts and the organizers send the receipts back to the members.
- The payment is done monthly at the CIAWU office by the DWs organizers to a domestic worker in charge of DWs issues at the office (HQs) and is recorded.

- The recruitment is mainly done among themselves as they know each other. Example: In Zomba one organizer was trained by CIAWU but they are having three organizers more who are assisting him to organize and recruit more members. They had more than 154 unionized members.
- Also during the awareness creation the campaign against child domestic labor.
- *All organizers have union identity cards and uniforms when they recruit domestic workers*

(ii). Training:

This is a stage where the union leaders, organizers from the office will go and have meetings with the domestic workers and train them more on trade unionism, DWs rights, how to submit their issues to the union, and their responsibilities at their workplace.

(iii). Service:

The union –CIAWU make sure it provides adequate service to DWs once they report. This includes handling grievance handling, sending their issues to CMA, awareness creation of their rights etc.

Future plans:

- CIAWU intend to have an intensive survey to know the real population of DWs in the country as they are not convinced with the current data which is 45,000.
- CIAWU is mainstreaming the domestic workers sector in the union constitution. They will have structures from the district, regional and later at national where a domestic worker leader will be at the CIAWU national board. It will be done in the democratic process.

- To open an office in Zomba. Mzuzu, Blantyre and Lilongwe have full time organizers and are operational.
- To train Para-legal official to deal up with domestic workers issues.
- CIAWU DWs request that exchange visit extended to CIAWU DW's visit Namibia or Tanzania or Kenya for more learning experience

2. NDAWU-Namibia:

Challenges facing domestic workers in Namibia

- Though they have the minimum wage law enforcement is very poor by the Government.
- Employers still pay them low
- Salary increase is absent.
- Corruption of the labor officers by employers
- Cases take longer time for someone to get her/his rights.

3. Organizing and recruitment

Process:

- Door to door campaign
- The use of media to create awareness about the union and importance of joining it.
- Use the Namic cards which also is used to buy items in the Shoprite and is also like a bank card.
- Recruit at the bus stop where DWs wait or get out of the bus.

Future plans:

- To open offices in several areas.
- Pressurize the Government to enforce the minimum wage law.

4.0 Best Practice gathered during the visit

(a) Organizational work

- Team work among the union leaders is good, respect of each other (CIAWU).
- Division of labor among the organizers and union leaders.
- Volunteerism spirit/ sacrifice and trust build among the organizers. e.g. Collecting subscription fee and submitting to the CIAWU official (*witnessed Iness, the organizer submitting dues to Harriet on the 23/05/2016*)

(b) Communication

- Good communication skills among the organizers and domestic workers can help to recruit more members.

(c) Good planning

- Orientation of organizers to recruit
- Having a target group to recruit
- Record keeping of membership up to date (paid up and non paid up –CIAWU (paid up 5095 and non paid up 405).

(d) Tools for recruitment and organizing

- Namib-card is good to motivate the member and give trust but also to purchase items in the identified shops, as well as keep records of members.
- The use of union identity cards and wearing union t-shirts is good to build trust as go away by intruders who can take the advantage.

(e) Legal framework

- Having a specific law for domestic workers is a tool which empower DWs to fight for their rights- e.g. Namibia
- Mainstreaming DWs in the union constitution is the recognition of the sector.(multi sector union)

(f) Domestic workers

- Enthusiasm of domestic workers to know much about the union. One said '*we have suffered for a long time, living in a slavery life, now a union will speak for us.*' In Zomba meeting.
- Provision of good service to DWs attracted to join the union.

5.0 Common issues:

- Both union organizers and leaders in the mission showed the need to learn more from each other.
- The problems facing DWs in both countries are the same except they differ in income because of the economical and political difference and development.
- Both have not ratified ILO C 189.
- Organizing and recruitment drive of DWs is so dynamic one need to apply according to the situation. Has no formula differ from one country to another.

6.0 Future plans for NDAWU and CIAWU

- Strengthen collaboration by sharing information and experience as well as good practice.
- CIAWU –Malawi to visit NDAWU and learn more about Namic cards
- Develop guideline on recruitment drive

7.0 Other issues raised:

- Plans for June 16th 2016- IDWD-To launch the “My Fair Home campaign”. More will be briefed after getting some clarification from the IDWF. But in general they all agreed on that.
- All were reminded to pay IDWF affiliation fee 2015, and 2016.
- Reminded to implement the action plan well.

8.0 Conclusion:

The exchange visit was very interesting and educational one. *“We are very impressed with the teamwork and the sacrifice the organizers, leadership and the members make of giving the new members training on Saturday’s and Sundays. The other impressive method is the idea of giving the organizers a certain target to reach. It is a very impressive idea for a country with such a huge population and with so many problems. NDAWU is very impressed with the good practice of the I.D cards when going to the field and hope we will learn a lot from each*

other to recruit more members and NDAWU hopes to have an exchange program in future for CIAWU to visit Namibia.” What NDAWU team concluded?

- ***What CIAWU concluded*** “Overall the exchange visit was fruitful and beneficial to both parties as we all shared similar issues. So we feel comforted to know that our friends exist all over.

CIAWU DWs request that exchange visit extended to CIAWU DW's visit Namibia Tanzania or Kenya for more learning experience”.