



Conclusions of the 1st Opening Workshop in UNI APRO

Singapore, 15-16 May 2015

Introduction:

Women represent 50% of the total existing labour force, but their participation in unions, especially in leadership or decision making positions is still very low. This situation applies particularly to young women who suffer discrimination twice: because of their gender and because of their age.

The lack of participation of women, particularly young women, results in women having little power to include and negotiate on those issues that directly affect them. It creates an imbalance between the magnitude of youth problems and the extent of trade union attention to them; and it results in the waste of one of the largest resources of the global workforce: women.

The Mentoring Program seeks to help revert this situation by preparing young women for leadership positions with their unions.

To work in a mentoring partnership means to create a long term working relationship between two colleagues: one with more experience in the international union scene, called a **Mentor** and a younger one, below the age of 35, the **Mentee**, who wants to learn from the experiences of her mentor and at the same time provide her with a younger, different approach. By providing them with a mentor who will help them develop the necessary skills, women and young women especially, will have greater chances to achieve this goal.

Through their shared experiences, more women will be inspired to join unions and pursue leadership positions, making the Program an inspiration for other women to join the unions thus providing a much needed gender balance in many male dominated unions

Objective of the program:

The first objective of the opening workshop as an activity was to launch the Mentoring Program.

In the opening workshop the first group of tandems (mentor-mentee) was conformed, the guidelines of the program were discussed, the roles of the mentor-mentee clarified and the participants were able to participate in an additional organizing workshop to strengthen their skills.

During the workshop, the tandems agreed to meet frequently in the manner they deem fit and they were informed of the need to draft periodic reports (2-4 months) to inform of the progress of the tandems.

Workshop conclusions

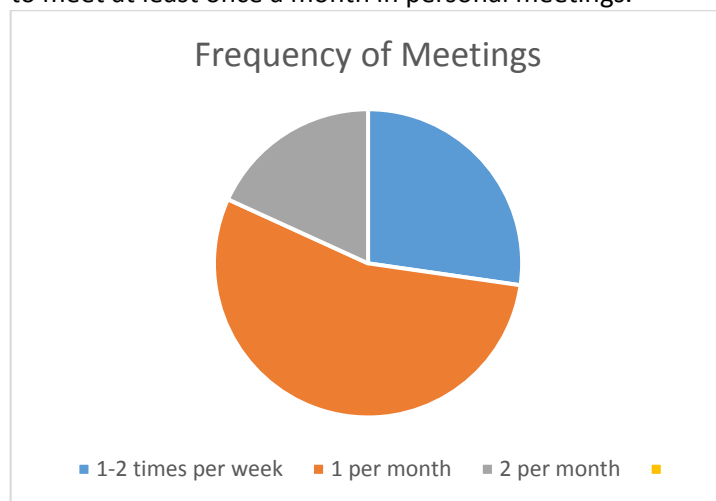
On the 15th and 16th of May, 2015, UNI Equal Opportunities and UNI Apro Women with the FES support, launched the first Workshop for the Mentoring Program in the Asia Pacific. The meeting, which took place in Singapore, had an attendance of 21 participants, conforming 10 tandems from 7 countries in Asia: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Philippines, which participated in the workshop. The participants represented 17 unions from different UNI sectors like: Finance, Care Services, Commerce, Postal, Telecommunications and Graphical.

The members of the tandems were chosen on the following basis:

- a) The women leaders acting as mentors were chosen by the National Liaison Councils of their countries. This allowed for a more democratic selection and a better representation of women leaders in unions across different services sectors.
- b) The young women participants or mentees, were chosen through the same procedure as the Mentors, by their National Liaison Council, based on their profile and their willingness to be fully engaged in the program.

This first activity, the opening workshop, in which tandems and guidelines have been established, is to be followed by a second activity. This activity will consist of the tandems meeting at **regular intervals and presenting their experiences to the UNI Equal Opportunities Department on a quarterly basis**. Their experiences will be recorded in a Consolidated Activity report as well as on the existing Mentoring Program webpage.

According to the information provided by the tandems, most of the participants have agreed to meet at least once a month in personal meetings.



In regards to the activities to be carried out, the participants to the workshop were asked to provide three possible goals they would like to attain in the short (6 months), medium (1 year) and long term (2 years). Amongst some of the activities are:

Short term:

- Presentation of the program within the unions.
- Participation in union meetings, women committees and workshops
- Introduction to union work
- Planning of activities

Mid-term:

- Organize union awareness programs
- Begin implementation of the Mentoring Program in the union
- Participation in union meetings
- Creation of gender equality offices
- Preparation for future leadership roles

Long term:

- Participate in organizing activities
- Inclusion of the Mentee at the negotiation table
- Present the Mentee as a candidate for union committees
- Create committees to tackle issues like domestic violence and women's health
- Creation of equality offices and preparation of equality officers
- Expansion of the Mentoring Program

Furthermore, the tandems have agreed ***to transmit and teach the same principle in their country and in their union as well as in others***, with the purpose of creating ***new tandems***.

The topics discussed in the workshop were:

1. The presentation of UNI Global Union, UNI Equal Opportunities and the UNI Apro region.

2. The campaigns carried out by UNI Equal Opportunities:

- Campaign "That's why!" aims to promote women in the international arena. It provides a platform for women leaders to share their experiences and help young women to join. In the same campaign there is a special section for the Mentoring Program where you can download all the documents of the program so they can be used by newly formed groups. www.uni-iwd.org

- Campaign "Break the circle of violence" aimed at raising awareness on the scourge of violence against women and the promotion of a resource center that features a set of policy tools and procedures to combat domestic violence and its impact on the workplace as well as workplace violence. www.breakingthecircle.org

- Campaign "40for40 " created to support the resolution adopted unanimously at the last UNI World Congress held in Nagasaki in 2010, whose commitment is to achieve at least 40 % representation of women in all decision-making structures of UNI Global Union by the next UNI World Congress to be held in December 2014 in Cape Town, South Africa.
www.uni40for40.org

- Campaign Equal Pay to raise awareness on that fact that women earn 23% less than men for work of equal value around the world and that in order to earn true equality and social justice, this gap must be closed. The campaign revolves around the causes, the ways in which this is manifested (remuneration vs. salary), and possible ways to help eradicate it.
www.uniequalpay.org

3. Clarification of the roles of Mentor/Mentee. This includes the guidelines which must be followed by the tandems during the implementation of the program and the terminology that will be used. Terminology varies from country to country, union to union, which is why the terminology needs to be decoded in order to understand that even in different terms we are talking about the same things.

4. Communication activity since *clear communication* and the exchange between mentors and mentees, is essential for a productive joint reflection that will help the gain of knowledge and mutual growth.

5. Training in organizing. As a part of the multiplying nature of the program, a training in organizing was carried out in order to give the participants the necessary tools to continue the implementation of the program within their own unions and region.

6. The participants also received information on the activities carried out by the other existing programs (Americas and Europe) in order to better understand the nature of the program and the possible activities to be carried out.

Obstacles/difficulties envisioned by the participants:

1. Time management for both mentor and mentee --- They will try to communicate by different means such as mobile phone, e-mail, Facebook, etc., with the aim to keep and follow their commitment.
2. Lack of supports from union leaders and/or colleagues at workplace --- Sincere and persistent communication to let them know that this is an excellent opportunity for them to be empowered, which will bring about benefits to the union and the company. Regular progress reports to the union and national liaison council are key.
3. Lack of supports from families --- Time management to ensure balancing work, union work and life is a necessary skill for leaders.
4. Lack of funds for planned activities --- Everyone has been nominated through each national liaison council, so we are currently working with the participants to talk with the leaders of national liaison councils to secure a small budget to implement the small-scale activities in the beginning. Be innovative and creative by sharing and learning from other good practices. Self-help efforts are also important, such as finding solidarity

partners, negotiating company's sponsorship, fund-raising or finding cost-effective ways to save the cost.

Compromise

The tandems agreed to present every 4 months an **activity report**. These reports will be consolidated by UNI EOD, who will then send a **consolidated report** highlighting the achievements, the experiences and the challenges faced by the tandems during that period of time.

You will find attached the form for the **activity report** to complete after the 4 months of activities. This report should be sent to veronica.fernandezmendez@uniglobalunion.org and marta.choa@uniglobalunion.org by September 15th 2015.

The consolidated report will not only be for information purposes, but it will also provide guidelines that can be adapted and used for further implementation of the program in the region.

The Opening Workshop was a big success for the Mentoring Program. The Asian participants were fully onboard with many great ideas and activities on how to implement the program in both their union and their sectors.



