

WELCOME TO THIS NEW EDITION OF THE WORLD ORGANIZATION OF WORKERS NEWSLETTER

The purpose of the newsletter is to inform about actions and activities in the WOW and inspire each other from one continent to another.

We hope you will enjoy this Newsletter!

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Brothers and Sisters of WOW;

It is hard to know what to write in a moment like this. Many of you are familiar with the hardship of economic turmoil and the uncertainty of poor health. Corrupt governments and oppressive employers cause suffering, but they, too, are familiar to us. None of us, though, are familiar with the sinister wrath of a pandemic such as this. Fear of contagion, social isolation and economic devastation have become a global experience. Sickness and death are increasing everywhere, and it is becoming clear that this will be with us for some time. And when the virus has finally run its course, the true impact of its economic destruction and the lingering mental health challenges will continue to remind us for many years. The outlook leaves us feeling anxious and unhappy.

I say these things to be honest about the current situation. But the story does not end there. While it is true that the world is suffering, it is also true that in the midst of suffering the very best of humanity emerges. Around the world we are witnessing people helping others in need. Frontline workers in health services, the food supply chain and throughout the transportation industry risk their own safety in service to others. Many countries have seen partisan politics set aside in favour of collaboration and dialogue. The frantic pace of modern life has been reduced to essential activities, and the temporary quiet is reminding everyone of what is really important in life; our families and our communities. This gives us reason for hope even in these dark days.

WOW is spread across the entire globe, but we, too, are family. In these troubled times we can all take some comfort in our solidarity. There has never been a time when we have been so united by a common experience. We are, indeed, all in this together. And we will get through this together. WOW is currently working on an assistance program for those members who are most in need of help at this time. More information on this program will be available very soon.

We all have numerous burdens; caring for ourselves and our loved ones as well as the work we do on behalf of workers. Our workers have never needed support and protection as they need it now. For those who continue to work, they must be kept safe with the provision of new safety protocols and protective gear. For those who have lost their employment or way of living they must receive support for their living essentials and perhaps a new source of income. It is possible to preserve the dignity of every worker – this is our highest calling.

I am confident of our collective resilience. The world shows signs of fatigue even in these early days of the battle, but I believe that when we finally claim victory over this virus we will look back and see that our strength grew with time, and

our determination never wavered. As winter turns to spring and as new growth comes up through ashes we, too, will find blessings and provision after this crisis. Now and until that time comes, I wish you all sustained health and endurance.

In Solidarity,

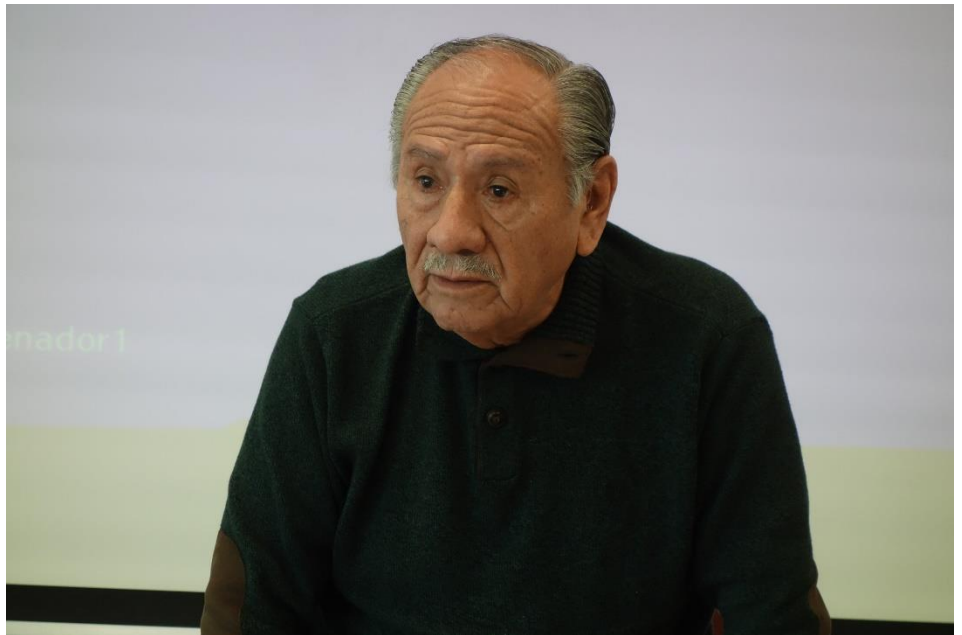
Wayne Prins

COVID-19

Time to be more human than ever

The "coronavirus" pandemic that has been unleashed with extreme violence on all continents, with thousands of deaths that threatens to increase, needs to be faced with acts of solidarity, the first duty of the human being. The material and political measures that are being taken by those who have the delicate task of protecting health and life in towns and cities, in countries, on continents, are not enough.

Whatever the color of our skin, our creed, our social and economic status, we are obliged to show solidarity with those who, more or less, suffer the attacks of such a terrible evil. Let us keep in mind that solidarity is a virtue of the human person, who, being smarter than other living beings, must put this into practice. This means feeling united



with our fellow men. Materialism is not most important. Greater and more important is the mystique and spirituality of advice, of recommendation, of timely and permanent warning. It means

keeping in mind that we not only live for ourselves, but also for others, the humble, the forgotten, the neglected.

Roberto Mejía Alarcón, President Felatraccs, President ANP-Peru

Let's win the biggest challenge of our lives!

The public health crisis that has been shaking the world since the end of 2019 has worried us all about the catastrophic effects it has caused across the globe - in some places more than others - leaving everyone anxious and concerned about family, friends, with co-workers and even with strangers to whom we are not insensitive.

The pandemic still progresses dramatically, potentiating the global impact and all of us, individually or in our organizations, face the enormous challenge of winning this battle, for the sake of humanity, justice and solidarity.

The priority is, of course, health, but we cannot ignore the enormous challenge to states and communities (which we want to preserve) from adding to the effect of the pandemic, namely the economic and social effects (employment, economy and even territorial cohesion) in a comparable situation with what happened during the great conflicts.

With all agents in serious difficulties, it is also up to the Trade Unions to avoid further inequality and poverty in an active participation in the search for solutions as social partners, using all the political instruments to defend jobs and hiring, which needs to be counted on with everyone on a serious global and international level.

Particularly at the continental level, European policies must meet the needs for the good of all citizens and the European project itself. The European Union (if it wants to) has objective conditions to play, in the world, the central role of recovery from this crisis! It has dimension, credibility and resources ... the signs are uncertain, but we all have to contribute to the final success.

Always in solidarity! We will win!!!

Afonso Henrique Cardoso, Directors Board President of SINERGIA Portugal

Europe

Health and safety at work: How does the management approach this issue and what is the importance of good leadership?



Strong leaders who use good management skills have a positive impact on a company in a number of ways, such as increasing turnover, improving the morale and empowering employees to be more productive. Management and managers need to lead (and guide) by

example and create a positive working environment for employees to perform at their best capacity. The result of this is more and better health and safety at work.

This was the topic of a two-day seminar which took place in Larnaca, Cyprus. From 29 – 31 January 2020

around 60 trade union leaders from 13 EU countries discussed what influence leadership has on the wellbeing of workers. The seminar, organized by Krifa (Denmark), the World Organization of Workers (WOW) in cooperation with the European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA) and supported by the European Commission showed that trust is key. Trust between the different hierarchical levels and trust in the abilities of the employees.

Anastassios Yiannaki, Director of Department of Labour Inspection (Cyprus) and George Florides, President of the Cyprus Safety and Health Association focused on the strategies towards and existing structures in Cyprus when it comes to health and safety. Cyprus is doing a lot, but still there is much to do. Certainly when it comes to implementation and control-systems.

Dr. George Scroubelos, Health & Safety Consultant and Chairman of the Health & Safety Committee of the European Federation of National Maintenance Societies (Cyprus) mainly focused on the Leadership Challenges in the 4.0 era. Communication is key. This will lead to trust.

To further show the importance of trust Kris de Meester, First Adviser and Manager Health and Safety Affairs and International Industrial Relations Federation of Enterprises in Belgium stated that better health and safety starts with the actual work (content/type). Results will be better with a committed management. Often it is not the actual top or the actual employees that are unwilling. It is the middle-management that often obstructs the changes. Not always because they want to, but more so because they are in a position where they are responsible to the higher management and the employees.

There is, however, a large difference between countries and what is understood with health and safety. The example of Krifa, as presented by Søren Fibiger Olesen, President Krifa shows that in the Danish context health and safety is more than just mental and physical. It focuses more on a total well-being (Maslow's hierarchy of needs). As such a leader has an enormous impact on people's lives. Leadership affects a person's job satisfaction and joy for life. As a result Krifa, as a worker's union, wants to focus on the quality of leadership.

Ib Hørup, Consultant at Positive Leadership and Board Member of Krifa (Denmark) further elaborated on this in his contribution titled "How to create well-being through Positive Leadership interventions". The program Positive Leadership consists namely of networking and coaching of leaders in Danish organizations, based on Positive Psychology and appreciative enquiries. The firm believe is that although improving well-being in organizations is a mutual responsibility in which both leaders and employees must be involved, the leadership responsibility is to create the cultural framework for that to happen.

In order to create healthy and stress-free work places manager need to create a healthy workplace environment, stated Diomides Diomidous, Expert Employment Labour and Social Policies, Director Workin Human Power: HR Development & Training Consultants (Cyprus). A happy, satisfied and healthy employee is a productive employee.

Dr. Cleo Varianou Mikellidou, Research Fellow and Health & Safety Consultant at the Centre of Excellence in Risk and Decision Science (CeRiDeS) and connected to the European University Cyprus (Cyprus) in her contribution primarily focused on the aging population and the health and safety issues related to that. By getting older, individuals might face new hazards related to OSH and the performance and

abilities of the worker is affected by age factor.

A description of the health and safety structure and regulations in Greece was given by Mr. Panagiotis Golfis, International and European Affairs Consultant to the Greek Institute of Labour - INE and Director of International and European Relations - DAKE. The structures in Greece are in place, but because of the economic landscape implementation lags behind.

A good and practical example was presented by Mr. Gerald Silbernagl, President White Collar Workers Works Council Mondi Neusiedler (Austria) when he showed how safety and health is approached in the industrial paper company Mondi Neusiedler. Within the company health and safety is an intrinsic part of company-culture. As a result of their good work the company was awarded the Austrian Health Certificate.

Health and safety is a priority for good company-operation. Whereas in many countries health and safety is mostly about physical and mental conditions in other countries this is more about a total package of wellbeing. Trade unions should take this to heart when dealing with companies and employees. Because knowing the phase a company or an employee is in contributes to a better approach by the unions.

Engagement today: Why do workers organize themselves and why should they?

What are the reasons for workers to organize themselves today? How do we reach them as a union? What could be done better? What tools do we need and have as trade unionists to keep people involved? During a two-day seminar in Trogir, Croatia, which took place from 26-28 February more than thirty trade unionists from 10 different countries discussed the current situation and possible future strategies to grow as a movement. Grow in number of members, in relevance, and level of influence.

The seminar was organised by the World Organization of Workers (WOW) in cooperation with the European Centre for Workers' Questions (EZA) and supported by the European Commission.

The seminar was opened by the president of the Croatian trade union Republički sindikat radnika, Ivan Majdak. He stressed the importance of the topic, despite the fact that the trade union movement is well-developed in Croatia. Currently there are five trade union centres of which three are representative and negotiate CLA's.

In his contribution 'Trade unions at a turning point' Davorko Vidović, Advisor for work policy and employment Croatian Chamber of Economy gave a historical overview of the relation employer and employee in Croatia and the region. A number of reasons often mentioned why membership is falling are neoliberalism; deindustrialization; the fact that corporate management is



taking over the role of unions; that trade unions are not flexible and attractive enough to name just a few. Trade unions should give answers to these questions. They should do this by being proactive and possibly cooperative (partner with other like-minded organizations; do not have to be unions necessarily). Vidović was certain that trade unions will not disappear, because of their vertical integration (government and employers) as well as their horizontal integration (basis of workers). Trade unions are in the perfect position to search for solutions.

Markus Hiesberger, Regional secretary GPA-djp in his presentation titled 'Only together we are strong' described the labour-market, the legal system, and how workers' representation works in Austria. The GPA-djp negotiates approx. 180 collective agreements of a total of 500. These are usually valid for 12 months. And around 95% of

employees in Austria is covered by a CLA. At company-level too there is representation on different levels. This very much for issues at the particular workplace. The system in Austria is such that workers are represented on different levels (national and company level).

In 'New generation – finding and attracting young union members' Chantal van Binsbergen and Frederick Pellis, Trade union consultants the Dutch CNV Vakmensen, presented the initiative 'Try the union'. Through this program they offer free membership for students till the age of 23 years and juridical advise, salary checks, discount on health insurance, tax service. To get into touch with these young people they visit schools to explain what the trade union is doing. The principle problems found during these school visits were the lack of awareness about labour rights; the image of the trade union; anxiety (feelings of power

imbalance); complexity; and lack of trust. What is most important is appropriate communication directed to the new generations. For this trust is key.

Gerald Silbernagl, President White Collar Workers Works Council Mondi Neusiedler in Austria focused on the importance of being a trade union member. Despite the fact that in Austria it is not a necessity to be a member of a union when wanting to be a part of a Works Council, it is

essential for promoting the union and to get all the advice and support.

Hrvoje Butković, Senior Research Associate, Department for European Integration, Institute for Development and International Relations discussed the 'Trade union movement in Croatia: Current situation and development perspectives'. Butković stated that the main reason for young people in Croatia (and the region) not to join a union is the fact that they are in a

precarious position. They do not want to 'upset' their employers. This is problematic. What can be seen in Croatia (as elsewhere) is that many of the young people are working with non-standard contracts. Making them very vulnerable. Trade unions should focus more on non-standard workers. Together with more visibility this would be really beneficial for the trade union movement. Trade unions should focus less on direct democracy.

Latin America

2019: These are not the hazards of the job



2019 has been a year of profound paradoxes. Alongside the marked prominence of investigative journalism, journalists have confronted – in the street and in the networks – clear attempts to silence them. It has been a year of reevaluation of the sense of journalism among the people and of a daring attack of groups of political, economic and religious power.

A mosaic-portrait of this year should contain the faces of the IDL Reporters team, Paola Ugaz and the journalists of the provinces who must be mentioned by name and surname and on whom we have to put spotlights. The profound orphanhood in which they face aggressions,

complaints and threats is deeply linked to the precarious work in which journalism is exercised where there is more vocation than means to earn a living. The working conditions of journalists consist of a safety component. Which journalist is in the economic capacity to face a judicial process? The economic factor becomes a suppressor. There is no company behind it that takes over the legal defense. Only the professional association becomes supportive in devastating situations. We should not continue to normalize the fact that a correspondent in regions is still linked to the environment with the euphemism of “collaborator” or “content provider.”

Although physical aggression and verbal attack has been prevalent this 2019, the complaints continue in an upward curve, reaffirming the trend of the last decade. And it is not only the possibility of effective jail, it is also about civil repairs costing millions that would result in economic ruin and media extinction. The requirement of 100 millions of dollars to journalists Edmundo Cruz and Oscar Castilla de Ojo Público (already dismissed) or that of one million soles to the newspaper La República, evidences the spirit of the complainants.

The biased debate of a law text on the allocation of official advertising was one of the focuses of the regional media this year. The way out of the distribution problem – if the problem exists – is not to focus the hiring on the so-called media centers that operate mostly from the capital of the Republic. The model becomes inapplicable in the most remote areas of the country where state advertising is usually the main source of subsistence for concessioned journalistic spaces and small media.

The persistent social conflict, especially in the south of the country and in Lima, has evidenced the level of vulnerability that colleagues have when covering this type of event. Stigmatization from the side of manifestations and hostile attitude of police officers. Physical aggressions, obstacles in the covering, are not and should not be assumed as hazards of the job. The aggressions go from less to more and if we tolerate a slap in the camera or a push of those guarding order, the history can lead to rubber bullets to the face and loss of vision, as has happened in previous years.

Cyberbullying has been another obstacle – especially – for women journalists. A land with confusing regulation and platforms like Facebook that have the control to raise or lower the finger to a troll. A fertile space for personal and family harassment.

It has been a troubled year, but one in which the citizens have valued the need for journalism that investigates, reveals and rebels. Journalism is about fighting against powers that prefer silence. The bill to be paid is high: murder, physical aggression, harassment, bullying, discredit and even economic ruin. The only balm is the solidarity that we can and must lavish without meanness.

Zuliana Lainez, General Secretary ANP-Peru

Asia

Workers' Rights in most difficult times



Writing this article at this very moment is indeed difficult. But somehow, this has given a better prospective in terms of addressing the crisis and the preparedness that should be done by the workers and all the stakeholders.

We have been often reminded by the World Organisation of Workers (WOW) on the approaches and strategies by being positive, constructive and proactive. And this should be taken seriously to respond to everyday realities.

How can we talk about workers' rights when we have to first and foremost preserve human lives? Unfortunately, while under enhanced community lockdown or quarantine, there is

almost no work to talk about. Fundamentally, we say that to have human dignity, people should have a decent work. And workers' rights are human rights. But if humanity is facing a crisis that's putting their lives at risks and therefore have to stay home and practically leaving their jobs to secure their lives and take care of their families, what else will be their choice?

The majority will suffer from "No work, No pay" especially the daily earners and the most vulnerable workers in the informal sector. We can mention here for example the transport sector which was forbidden to work in order to prevent or totally stop people's movement from one place to another. Also, the market vendors who were asked to stay home to implement social distancing in market places.

Maybe some will be working from home but how do we tackle the terms and working conditions? This may be applicable for those work that can be performed with the use of the modern technology through the internet. But for those in the manufacturing companies, this is impossible with the absence of the heavy equipment necessary in the productivity line. And if home work can be applied, can the so-called Collective Bargaining Agreement still apply and that can employees still receive the benefits as provided for under these special arrangements?

If we have to talk about workers' rights, let us first examine the front liners. We can refer immediately to the medical professionals like doctors, nurses, care givers, hospital personnel and staffs, laboratory specialists and pharmacists. They are the new heroes who are doing the unprecedented sacrifices in this battle against the COVID 19.

What are the workers' rights that we can put forward for them and how can these be addressed right now? They have been ignored for a long time with long working hours, low wages, hazardous working environment, absence of comprehensive social protection and many more unfair labor practices.



Those workers/employees in the essential services like in the supermarkets, in banks and those in the military who are tasked to guard the outposts and to ensure the peace and order, can they possibly be given the ample attention that they truly deserve?

There are many workers/employees who are doing the most dangerous and the hardest jobs that were not afforded the necessary attention they deserve for a long time. Some of them were not even allowed to form unions by their employers and are mostly hired on contractual basis.

It has been in the ILO platform, to provide social protection to workers. But many member-states were reluctant to ratify and implement. The government should have prioritized this need that will enable workers' access to social security even more than the job security.

The employers' group find this measure as additional costs that will decrease their profits. They even take measures and policies in the hiring process whereby they preferred those that will prevent them from contributing much to social protection fund.

When these are all over, there should be a global discussion on the "Real Future of Work" and there should be an end to debates that will only take care of the economic progress for the very few but a Social Development for All, a focus on "Humanity".

There should be a spread in the coverage of the needed attention to all forms of employment, whether formal or informal. More skills must be introduced to make people productive in different field of work. In that case, whatever happens, they can find ways and means to make a living for themselves and their families. This should involve enhanced knowledge in the production of goods and services that are essential in every human being.

This global discussion must include all the other factors that should be taken-into account. There cannot be blind eyes, deaf ears and inaction from all stakeholders. Anyway, we have only one world to live and share together.

Necie M. Lucero, CDWP Secretary General and WOW-Asia President (Philippines)

New members

Republički sindikat radnika and Sindicatul Liber "Terapia" join WOW

The Republički sindikat radnika (Republican Workers' Union – RSR) of Croatia and the Sindicatul Liber "Terapia" (Free Trade Union "Terapia") recently joined the WOW as members.

The Republički sindikat radnika – RSR is an independent trade union representing workers in telecommunication, security, banks and financial institutions, state ministries, and public and state agencies in Croatia. It has six branch offices throughout the country and is registered and recognized by the Ministry of Labour.

The Sindicatul Liber "Terapia" is a company trade union for workers in the sector of chemistry and petrochemistry. All members are employees of T.C. TERAPIA S.C. and T.C. TERAPIA DISTRIBUȚIE Ltd. Both companies have their Headquarters in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Sindicatul Liber "Terapia" was one of the founding organizations of the setting up of the Federation of Free Trade Unions from Chemistry and Petrochemistry (April 1990) and then in June of the same year to the creation of the National Trade Union Confederation CNS 'CARTEL ALFA'.

The WOW warmly welcomes both organizations in our midst and we hope for a fruitful cooperation.

Agenda For Upcoming Events

Date	Event	Location
16/03/2020 - 18/03/2020	WOW-Asia Congress (Postponed)	Bangkok, Thailand
03/04/2020 - 03/04/2020	BOFOS Congress (Postponed)	Belgrade, Serbia
18/05/2020 - 18/05/2020	WOW-Europe Board-meeting (Postponed)	Copenhagen, Denmark
25/05/2020 - 05/06/2020	109th Session ILO International Labour Conference (Cancelled)	Geneva, Switzerland
01/07/2020 - 05/07/2020	BOFOSIJADA	Banja Vrucica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

When your organization has any contributions for the newsletter please feel free to contact Bjørn van Heusden (bavaheusden@wownetwork.be).