

**Zimbabwe**  
**Program to Support and Strengthen the Capacity of the ZCTU**

September 27, 2002 – December 31, 2005

**Summary**

The proposed program's six main components are designed to strengthen ZCTU's ability to represent effectively Zimbabwe workers, and strengthen its role as a leader of civil society.

**What's the Ultimate Goal of this Program?**

To promote democratic participation and government accountability, and to increase broad-based equitable economic growth for all Zimbabweans.

**Evaluation Plan**

- ZCTU's six regional offices will be provided equipment, training and support, improving communications between and among leaders, staff, members and offices across regions.
- ZCTU and its affiliates will successfully counteract the challenges posed by the government-sponsored ZFTU and prevent the splintering of unions. They will also organize new workers, which will increase their membership and strengthen their structures and influence in civil society.
- ZCTU will have grass roots education and economic literacy manuals, which will serve as teaching materials in the regular education programs of the organization and its affiliates. Workers will become more active citizens and proponents of democratic and economic reform and revitalization of the Zimbabwe economy.
- ZCTU and its allies will initiate domestic and international workers' rights campaigns, using Internet and other technologies to maintain a constant exchange of communication and information between the leadership, affiliates, and allies within and outside of Zimbabwe.
- Aided by in-house economic and legal expertise, ZCTU will successfully develop and advocate for sound alternative policies for Zimbabwe's economic recovery and development.

**Activity:**

3.1: Equipping national and regional offices. National and regional offices will be equipped with information and communication equipment, including 10 computers, 6 Internet modems, 10 printers, 6 fax machines, and 6 photocopiers.

**Activity:**

3.2: Leadership workshops: Leadership training courses will be offered to executive officers and general council members of the ZCTU and leaders of affiliated unions.

**Starting Date and Narrative:** 09/09/04

The ZCTU conducted a 3-day staff and leadership workshop at the Flamboyant Hotel in Masvingo from 09/09/04 to 09/11/04. Forty members of the ZCTU's staff attended the workshop from all regions and the top leadership including the presidency and the secretary general. The purpose of the workshop was to familiarize the ZCTU staff and leadership with the model Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) that it developed to enable them to market it fully to the affiliate unions. The workshop would also be used to review progress, develop new strategies, and set new targets for the coming year.

The participants discussed provisions of the model CBA making suggestions for some improvements. They said the individual unions should now strongly fight for the inclusion of some provisions in the model in their industrial CBAs. They said of particular importance is the issue of paternity leave that is not covered by the national laws. They said the current laws are discriminatory in the sense that they fail to recognize the importance of having men supporting their spouses or partners during the birth process and the days immediately after the birth. The participants agreed that the ZCTU should lobby for the inclusion of the model CBA provisions in the national laws and not only in CBAs of its affiliates. They also agreed on the need for the ZCTU to adopt the model CBA to show its commitment to the welfare of workers in Zimbabwe starting with its own staff. A labor consultant, formerly the ZCTU legal advisor, then led the participants in a discussion of the new labor laws and how they have impacted on industrial relations in Zimbabwe. He also highlighted that he had taken part in drafting recommendations for further amendments to the labor laws that incorporate most of the provisions in the model CBA. The recommendations were submitted to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Labor, which is drafting the labor law amendments for presentation to the house.

The departmental heads of the ZCTU then gave reports of the activities and work they covered over the first six months of the year. The exercise was quite useful as it helped the heads to identify areas of overlap and areas of possible joint activities. The participants said there is need for closer cooperation of the federation's departments as they were operating almost independently of each other in most cases. The departmental heads said there is need for them to conduct a joint program to plan for the activities of the New Year to avoid duplication and increase teamwork at the federation. As a follow up to that, the secretariat held its own meeting before it met with the leadership to map the way forward.

The secretariat said there is need to consistently refer to the ZCTU's strategic plan in order to evaluate the federation's work in terms of achievements and failures. They agreed with the leadership that such an exercise it was long overdue, as it had never been carried out. They also agreed that there is need to apply the organization's policies uniformly and consistently especially in dealing with staff as the industrial relations at the federation should be a model for its affiliates and all other workplaces. The participants unanimously voted to have another joint workshop before the end of the year or early next year at which the strategic plan will be reviewed and matters of policy clarified as part of the planning process for the activities of 2005.

**Starting Date and Narrative:** 12/17/04

The ZCTU organized the launch of the Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA) on December 17, 2004 at ZIPAM in Darwendale, about 70 km west of Harare. A total of 151 participants took part in the launch out of an expected total of 160 delegates. Each territory of ZCIEA was represented by at least seven delegates; and the General Council and 6 regional officers and representatives from other departments including LEDRIZ represented the ZCTU. Of all the total delegates, 41 were women while 110 were men. The Consumer Council of Zimbabwe, Housing People of Zimbabwe, European Union-sponsored ZDCP, Women in Construction, ITDG, Poverty Reduction Forum (UNDP funded) and CTUC sent representatives to give solidarity messages. The office of the Governor for Mashonaland West, the province in which the launch was held, sent a representative to officially open the function and launch the chamber. The launch was organized as a culmination of the successful organizing of the informal economy by the ZCTU in a joint project with CTUC. The project was aimed at organizing workers in the rapidly growing informal sector and finding ways of mainstreaming its activities.

In November 2002 the ZCTU/CTUC project gathered 22 Trader Associations at ZIPAM where they formed the Apex body of the Informal Economy Associations. A working committee was elected which had the task of steering the business of the association up to the point of launching and inauguration. The committees also had the task of coming up with a constitution and modalities for setting up structures within the Apex Body of the Informal Economy Associations. This included coming up with a name for the associations, the vertical and horizontal structures and the finance and administrative policies. The proposals were adopted by the ZCIEA General Assembly, which also elected to have a coordinating and planning committee for the launch. The coordinating and planning committee was composed of ZCTU representatives and the ZCIEA working committee.

The ZCTU indicated that its intention is to ensure the mainstreaming of all informal economy activities. The organizing of the informal sector will also help in addressing issues of working conditions for workers in the informal sector as they agreed that some of form of harmony is needed to avoid the worst forms of exploitation. Apart from seeking the improvement of working conditions in the informal economy, the ZCTU will also lobby government to formulate policies that will recognize the informal sector as an important player in the Zimbabwean economy. These policies should enable the membership of ZCIEA to enjoy certain benefits that are currently confined to the formal sector. The ZCTU has always argued that economic policies in Zimbabwe are failing because, among other things, the government is developing policies concentrating on the shrinking formal sector and totally ignoring the rapidly growing informal economy. It is hoped that the ZCTU/ZCIEA partnership will yield positive results not only for the informal sector workers but also for the economy as a whole. The government has so far responded positively to the invitations to take part in the ZCTU/CTUC informal sector initiatives, which culminated in the launch of ZCIEA.

**Activity:**

3.2: Grassroots education campaigns: ZCTU and its affiliates will conduct 10 education campaigns among workers on the role of citizens and the necessity of expanding union membership to all sectors of society.

**Starting Date and Narrative: 06/07/04**

The ZCTU, held a 2-month grassroots educational and organizing campaign in all the six administrative regions from the beginning of June to the end of July 2004. A total of 220 organizers and activists in teams of 2-10 members each were involved the campaign that was aimed at raising awareness of union activities among non-members. Of the total number of organizers, 30 were women and 190 were men. The campaign was also aimed at organizing workers on a union-to-union basis throughout the country. The program was necessitated by the decline in membership at the national center

The organizing efforts resulted in the ZCTU's affiliates declaring a total of 10,913 new members. The ZCTU said its membership has been declining over the past few years partly because of the disaffiliation of four unions in September 2002 as well as the closure of numerous companies at the height of company invasions during the run-up to the 2002 presidential elections and the period of retribution after the elections. However, due to the organizing program supported by the Solidarity Center, the membership now stands at around 222,000. It was also noted that the organizing efforts were complimented by the activities of the other departments of the national center such as the educational programs aimed at developing shop stewards and training enterprise level trade union committees. The national center said the number could be higher as most unions have very poor membership record keeping as the majority keep manual registers that are normally scattered throughout the unions' regional and district offices. The conducting of the program by the center also helped in partly addressing the problem of under-declaration of membership by affiliates as they would be forced to declare all the new membership, which the center already had from the organizers' reports.

ZCTU affiliate unions generally have difficulties in visiting and organizing workers outside the major urban centers mainly due to limited financial resources. As a result, the ruling party aligned-Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU) has a stranglehold on areas outside urban centers where war veterans could easily threaten workers to join the ZFTU. Unions in the Hotel and Catering and Agricultural industries are the worst affected since work places in the holiday resort areas and farms are not easily accessible to ZCTU organizers who reside in urban areas. The ZFTU takes advantage of the volatile political situation to intimidate ZCTU members into joining the ZFTU that accuse them of being sympathetic to the opposition Movement For Democratic Change (MDC). The organizing campaign has thus gone a long way in helping most unions to access these areas and reclaim lost membership.

**Starting Date and Narrative: 08/11/04**

The Federation of Food and Allied Workers' Union of Zimbabwe (FFAWUZ) held two grassroots educational and organizing campaigns covering a total of 15 days. The campaigns were held in Matabeleland North Province, which covers areas like Victoria Falls, Hwange and Binga, and Mashonaland West Province, which covers Chinhoi, Kariba and Karoi. A team of 6 organizers conducted the program, which was held from 08/11/04 to 08/30/04. The program was aimed at organizing new members, handling grievances and disseminating information to workers at the grassroots level.

The union, which is a ZCTU affiliate, has difficulties in visiting and organizing workers outside the major urban centers partly due to limited financial resources. These areas are also politically volatile. The organizing team had a difficult time trying to explain that they were trade union representatives and not political activists attached to the opposition MDC as the ZCTU is generally viewed as an arm of the opposition party. As a result, the ruling party aligned-Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU) has a stranglehold on the areas where war veterans could easily threaten workers to join the ZFTU. The ZFTU takes advantage of the volatile political situation to intimidate ZCTU members into joining the ZFTU that accuse them of being sympathetic to the opposition Movement For Democratic Change (MDC). The FFAWUZ organizing team was lucky to escape without being beaten up as ruling party supporters especially at government-controlled enterprises such as the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) often subjected them to harassment and intimidation. Nevertheless, they managed to organize a total of 720 new members.

The team also initiated the setting up of trade union committees at some of the workplaces that had no workers' representatives. They also identified some new members who showed a keen interest in the work of the union for consideration in the shop stewards development program to ensure that they fully utilize them at their respective

workplaces. The team was also engaged in grievance handling as some of the workers were being underpaid as they had been put in the wrong grades. It is apparent that the union's inability to access and service its membership in most of these areas is resulting in employers exploiting the workers and trampling upon their rights. The workers themselves are also not aware of their rights and have no access to information pertaining to developments in their sector due to a break in communication with the union. The organizing campaigns thus went a long way in helping both the workers and the union to re-establish the communication links. The union has pledged to do its best to service the membership and ensure that the new ones are also given some basic trade union education in order for the union to have some form of representation at all the workplaces that the organizing team visited.

**Activity:**

**Exchange Program:** Facilitate the participation of Zimbabwean trade union leaders in regional and international training and consultation programs. Selected trade union leaders and ZCTU staff will participate in activities of regional organizations such as NALEDI of South Africa and The Labor Research Institute in Namibia. The leaders will also be sent for courses to the George Meany Center for Labor Studies, and participate at the annual conference of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Geneva.

**Starting Date and Narrative:** 11/26/04

Two educators of the ZCTU, the director of LEDRITZ and the Solidarity Centre Zimbabwe representative visited Durban November 26 – 29 to participate in a strategic planning meeting on the African Worker Participation Development Project (APADEP) and to assess the feasibility of emulating the Workers College in Zimbabwe.

The APADEP Project, initiated over twenty years ago, was developed to ensure that workers can effectively participate in representing themselves and their organizations at the workplace and beyond –into the community and national levels. It supported research that would feed into trade union education and policy.

The main purpose of the meeting was to encourage and develop a constructive form of collaboration and networking. It critically examined the proposal submitted by the Workers College to the FNV Mondial for the operations of the Southern Africa APADEP Program. The participants agreed that economic literacy is a key need and entrusted two resource persons (Dr Godfrey Kanyenze of Zimbabwe and Heribert Jauch of Namibia) to prepare the agenda and materials for a workshop that will be organized on the same theme in April 2005 in Namibia. The group also agreed that the proposal be discussed with SATULA for coordination and asked the coordinator to explore the possibilities of expanding the number of participating countries. Zambia was identified as a possible addition because of its capacity.

The Zimbabwe delegation had also an opportunity to visit the Southern Africa Clothing and Textiles Workers Union (SACTU) HIVAIDS Project and had discussions with key staff of the Project. Both sides agreed to share experiences and learning and to collaborate in fighting the pandemic.

The delegation also spent the 30<sup>th</sup> in Johannesburg and had discussions with DITSELA. The latter agreed to allocate three places for ZCTU trainees that want to pursue its advanced courses. The Solidarity Centre will cover the travel costs and DITSELA will meet the local costs for the trainees.

**Activity:**

3.2: Economic literacy workshops: Popular economic education program will include planning meetings with key union and CSO partners. Train-the-trainer workshops will be held for key educators, leaders and trade union members. Training of 20 trainers for the economic literacy program including the development of a trainers' manual suited to the developments in the Zimbabwean economy. ZCTU and the SC, working with trainers from various affiliates, will conduct 20 3-day workshops for rank-and-file trade union members at the factory and local levels; the workshops of 25 participants each will also seek to give the participants an understanding of the policies on regional and international integration under the current globalization drive.

**Starting Date and Narrative:** 07/07/04

The Labor and Economic Development Research Institute of Zimbabwe (LEDRI) conducted four 3-day and six 2-day economic literacy workshops in Harare and Masvingo. The workshops were attended by a total of 98 participants of which 65 were men and 33 were women. The purpose of the workshops was to help the leaders better understand the economic policies that affect labor at national, regional and international levels.

The participants learnt about the current state of the Zimbabwean economy and the causes of its continuous decline over the past 7 years. They learnt that the economy was collapsing mainly as a result of mismanagement by the Mugabe regime since 1997. The participants also learnt about the globalization drive that has seen a number of changes in the economic policies of many countries as they try to keep pace with global trends. The participants said the developing world and Zimbabwe in particular was not yet ready to compete with the developed countries as advocated under the globalization movement. They said as result, the developing world is going to lose out in the global village. The participants agreed that Zimbabwe needs to find alternative economic policies to help revamp the economy as it is currently in a freefall with no end in sight to the crisis. The participants said that there is need to reconvene the Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF) in order to provide labor with a formal platform at which to make its policy contributions. They recommended that the TNF should be reconstituted and given new working parameters with legally binding decisions. They said the current scenario whereby labor only makes recommendations to government that can be thrown out without any reason being given diminishes the importance of labor's participation in economic decision-making yet it is one of the worst affected by any economic policies adopted by the government.

It was highlighted to the participants that despite the general disapproval of globalization by developing countries' workers because of the threat it poses to their jobs, it would be difficult to successfully fight against it as it is being driven by some of the world's most powerful nations and institutions. They agreed that there is need for the labor movement to build awareness among its members and lobby for involvement in the formulation and implementation of the globalization-driven economic policies. The participants said they would use their newfound knowledge to help their counterparts better understand the issues at stake in the globalization movement. The knowledge will also help them to support the federation in any action that may be taken in lobbying government to adopt or reject any economic policies.

**Starting Date and Narrative:** 08/20/04

The ZCTU conducted three 5-day collective bargaining workshops at the Mutirikwi Lakeshore Lodges over the weekends of 08/16/04 to 08/20/04, 08/23/04 to 08/27/04 and 09/20/04 to 09/27/04. A total of 54 negotiators, 49 men and 5 women attended the workshops. The program was aimed at reviewing the existing collective bargaining practices with the view to develop new skills to enable the negotiators to adapt to the ever-changing socio-political and economic environment.

The participants noted that some of the negotiators have not been very effective due to the lack of adequate information such as the Poverty Datum Line (PDL) and other economic indicators as well as the performance of their companies and industries in general. The Zimbabwean economic and political environment has been highly volatile with very unstable economic indicators fuelled by a hyperinflation, giving rise to the need for continuous research and assessment by the negotiators. The participants agreed that there is need to make use of the information that is continuously updated by the Labor and Economic Research Institute of Zimbabwe (LEDRIZ) that was set up by the ZCTU in 2002. The use of material and expertise from the institute would go a long way in improving the quality of position papers that the union negotiators present at the collective bargaining table. The participants said some unions had already enlisted the services of LEDRIZ in the preparation of their position papers with relatively a good degree of success. They also recommended that the ZCTU, in conjunction with LEDRIZ should develop a mechanism of monitoring price levels and developing their own PDL, as it is generally believed that official government statistics are being doctored for political reasons. They said such a process would need to involve all stakeholders including government itself and would also help to raise the profile of the labor movement.

The participants also recognized that collective bargaining in Zimbabwe has taken a new twist with negotiators now required to deal with issues of mass retrenchments of union members. The retrenchments have become so frequent that the participants were taught about the retrenchment laws and how they can engage management in negotiating for retrenchment packages. The participants recommended that unions should negotiate for a minimum retrenchment package to be included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) even before any company in that particular industry contemplates retrenching workers. They also recommended that the ZCTU should lobby for the speedy ratification and incorporation of international provisions that affect labor apart from the ILO core conventions. They also recognized that the existence of qualitative information from LEDRIZ's extensive researches should also assist unions in negotiating for profit-sharing clauses in their CBAs. The participants said of fundamental importance is

5

the need for legal recognition of the agreements reached at the national collective bargaining forum: the Tripartite Negotiating Forum.

**What is the impact/outcome of the program activities in achieving the ultimate goal of this program?**

The grassroots educational and organizing campaign gave workers at the grassroots the opportunity to observe the broader picture of the work that is being done by the labor movement in fighting for their rights and increased democratic space. An additional 12,000 workers were organized, bringing the total since the beginning of the program to almost 60,000 new members. The increasing membership continues to consolidate the ZCTU's power base and underline its position, as the most representative labor movement in Zimbabwe in the face of challenges posed by the government-sponsored ZFTU.

The ZCTU leadership also had the opportunity to get training on HIV/AIDS during which they displayed a high level of seriousness and commitment to fight the pandemic. They said they would treat the issues of HIV/AIDS as trade union issues which deserve their full attention. Through the Health and Safety Department, the ZCTU is actually in the process of developing a comprehensive 5-year HIV/AIDS program. The program is to include a campaign to encourage workers to go for voluntary counseling and treatment (VCT) with the view to developing workplace-based counseling programs.

One of the most remarkable developments of the last half of the year was the launch of the Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA). The ZCTU, which signed a memorandum of understanding with the ZCEIA, initiated the organization of the informal economy with the view to have all its activities mainstreamed. The alliance between the two will give the ZCTU a broader base upon which it can engage the government in matters of equitable distribution of wealth as well as in the democratization process. The ZCTU leadership said it would explore the possibilities of having the ZCIEA affiliate to it, as that would strengthen the relationship between the two with the ZCIEA reporting to the national center. However, the affiliation of ZCIEA does require the approval of the ZCTU congress. In turn, the ZCTU would incorporate ZCIEA in all its activities including educational and training programs. The ZCTU has decided to organize the informal sector as it has been losing formal sector membership over the past few years due to retrenchments and company closures caused by the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy.

The technical staff supported under this program continued to provide essential information to the labor movement. LEDRIZ prepared a paper for the ZCTU on its expectations in the 2005 national budget. The government responded positively to the inputs, which were combined with other stakeholders' inputs as they sought to present a united front to the government. As a result of this, ZCTU pressure the government reduced income tax from the highest of 45% to 40%. All those earning Z\$12 million (US\$1,935) and below per year are now exempt from paying income tax. The ZCTU said the government could have done much better and will continue engaging it using the technical expertise provided by LEDRIZ. LEDRIZ also played a pivotal role in the training of negotiators who were given some of the basic information needed for effective collective bargaining. The hyper-inflationary environment prevailing in Zimbabwe has complicated the collective bargaining process hence the negotiators needed more technical advice and expertise to help them cope with the level of discussions with their employers.