

Decisions for Life Launch

The Chancery

Lavelle road, Bangalore -560 001

June 9 – 10, 2009

UNITES Professionals is proud to announce the success of the Kick off Meeting for Decisions for Life Project on 9 – 10 June 2009, Bangalore, India.. This meeting was organised by UNITES Professionals in cooperation with ITUC, UNI, WageIndicator Foundation/ IIM –A.

The meeting comprised of representatives of each organisation along with UNI-ILC women committee members and the new DFL team.

DECISIONS FOR LIFE (DFL) focuses on Millennium Development Goals no 3 (MDG3): "Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women", and more specifically on MDG3.5: "Promoting formal employment and equal opportunities at the labour market", which is one of the four MDG3 priority areas identified in the Policy Rules on the MDG3 Fund.

DFL focuses on adolescents (defined as women aged 15-29) working or looking for work in eight large occupational groups in the service sector in 14 developing countries. The project's main objective is to raise awareness amongst these young adolescent female workers concerning future employment opportunities and career possibilities, family building, and the work-family balance.

9th June 2009

Welcome address was given by **Mr. Prithviraj Lekkad** (President, UNITES Professionals). He welcomed all the delegates including Mr. Christopher Ng (Regional Secretary, UNI-APRO) Ms. Veronica Fernandez Mendez (UNI Equal Opportunities Officer), Yoko Ogawa (Director, UNI - APRO), Ms. Khushi Mehta (Indian Institute of Management – Ahmedabad), Ms. Marieke Koning (Coordinator, ITUC Decisions for Life), Ms. Anjali Bedekkar (AISBISF), Mr. Milind Nadkarni (India Liaison Council), Mr. Thomas John (UNI – ILC) and Mr. JSR Prasad (National Director, UNIDOC). All the delegates were felicitated and joined in the ceremony of the Lighting of the Lamp. After this all the participants introduced themselves in a couple of lines.

A presentation was made on the project, its history and making, by **Ms Marieke Koning** (Coordinator, ITUC Decisions For Life). A discussion on the merits of the Online and Offline approach was made. Details of the same can be found on the website (<http://dfl.wageindicator.org>). At the end of the presentation, questions were posed. A crucial question by Ms Anjali Bedekkar was the basic one of whether women really have that 'choice'. As the meeting unfolded many new queries were discussed. A lot of brainstorming happened.

Khushi Mehta from IIM Ahmedabad (WageIndicator Foundation) made a presentation on the DFL website and tools. She started with discussing about Paycheck India and how they launched the project. Paycheck India (www.paycheck.in) is a research initiative at Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. Project is part of the international research initiative of [Wage Indicator](http://www.wageindicator.org) Foundation and University of Amsterdam, Netherlands. Paycheck India was launched in India in February 2005. Paycheck India is an internet based labour market research tool. This is meant to benefit both the employees and employers.

She discussed the Decisions for Life project as conceptualised by WageIndicator Foundation. After which, certain questions were posed regarding the questionnaire, its validity and reliability (cultural barriers faced). Yoko asked for a few comments, questions and suggestions.

Ms Marieke Koning discussed about the Trade union campaign and the idea behind it. She stressed upon the ways one can increase membership of women to give way to collective bargaining. She spoke of various conventions by the ILO relating to Maternity Protection, Workers with family responsibilities, equal remuneration, Discrimination etc. This discussion prodded many comments about recent reforms in Govt. schemes for maternity leave in India. The idea of the entire DFL project is to collect data from young women working in eight different urban sectors, form a network among them and train them in life skills. With the results of the survey, they plan to approach the govt. and raise eyebrows with current figures. With increased awareness, more women will be able to raise their voices. This in turn will make the work environment more conducive for women in wider settings. Thus providing more choices for women to make their own informed Decisions for Life.

After this Mr. Prithviraj Lekkad and Ms. Marieke Koning facilitated a group activity. The group was divided into 5 teams to discuss among them three points:

1. How and where will you reach young women in the service sector?
2. Issues/concerns young women have.
3. What Activities one can organise for them to improve their working conditions?

The discussion lasted about 1 hour. Teams made their presentation to all. Results of the discussion in particular will be summarised at the end of the report. Questions were addressed respectively to teams.

10th June, 2009

The next day started with a welcome by **Mr. Prithviraj**. **Ms. Yoko** gave a recap of the previous days milestones. After this, **Ms Marieke** explained the next few topics of discussion in the same teams. These are:

4. How will you launch the campaign?
5. Time frame.
6. How will you coordinate or prepare for the entire programme?

This discussion lasted the entire morning. Summary provided at the end. It was a very fruitful discussion with many creative inputs. Teams made attractive power point presentations and other charts. All in all, it was more structured and exhaustive. Questions and comments were posed to teams. A note of these presentations was made simultaneously by Ms Yoko Ogawa and Ms Khushi Mehta. A copy of this was handed to all participants.

After a break, each question was addressed and summarised. The answers, specific and feasible, were briefly presented. Attempt was made to keep the goals SMART (Simple, Measurable, accurate, Realistic and Time-bound). Further additions were made. Comments and questions were posed. There was a small closing ceremony and the panellists were felicitated. A rough Plan of Action was designed. Next meeting is in Ahmedabad in July. Overall the meeting gave a lot of room for expression and brainstorming.

Decision for Life Kick off Meeting Summary

Objectives

- Making informed choices.

- Empowerment of women.
- Decent work, decent life for women – Improved quality of life.

Target Group

- Eight occupational Groups.

How and Where

- Mapping, identifying places where women work and meet.
- Build trust, campaign team seen as trusted allies, building relationships (better the image of trade unions).
- Visiting cards, Offering tea/coffee.
- Short online and offline questionnaire.

Activities

- Information, materials: leaflets, newsletter, email- mailing lists, T-shirts, bookmarks, and pens.
- Workshops/ training: communication skills, women workers' rights, building a network.
- Events: 8th March International Women's Day.
- On the spot: company, shopping malls, student campuses.

Launch

- Press conference.
- Events in 8 cities at the same time.
- Presenting the face of the campaign.
- Panel.

Time frame

- Every three months: event, newsletter, training workshop.
- Launch of the campaign: July – September.
- Review and monitoring every quarter with project partners and campaign members.
- Etc.

Coordination

- National coordination Team.
- Campaign teams in each city (IIM-UNI).
- Newsletter information to other organisations: women coordinators of SEWA, INTUC, HMS, Women NGOs.
- Etc.

Achievements Planned

- 100,000 young women by June 2011.
- Informed.
- Trained.
- Organised.
- Unions formed.
- Collective agreements.
- Etc.