



Road Map

for Strengthening
and Transforming Trade
Unions in the Americas
2021 • 2025

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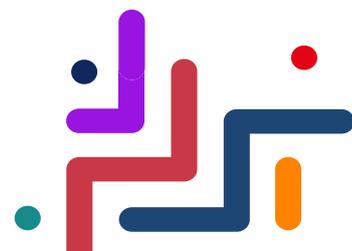
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Presentation

Ever since the foundation of the **Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (CSA/TUCA)**, strengthening and transforming trade union organizations in the region has been one of its main priorities. This implies developing the eight lines of action presented in this document and agreed upon at the Continental Conference held on November 26th and 27th, 2020.

This process aims to increase the trade union movement's power and improve workers' living and working conditions. To this end, ***"the trade union movement must serve as a model to shape the society we strive for. Democracy, participation, transparency, and representativeness are conditions for the movement's legitimacy and credibility among workers and society. CSA/TUCA works towards a modern, open, plural, democratic and participative trade union model that is based on equal treatment and opportunities for men and women, promoting dialogue and agreement, without discrimination, while engaging the population at large with the trade union movement"*** (III CSA/TUCA Congress, 2016).

We promote a socio-political labor movement that represents the diversity of the modern working class and promotes an organization based on clusters of activity, direct affiliation, and organization throughout a territory, thereby providing the working class with real power. At the same time, the fight to achieve a new hegemony must start from workers' capacity of transformation and mobilization, with women and young workers acting together. We have stressed that ***"the labor movement must defend the most vulnerable sectors of the working class, bring back activism, conquer better working conditions, and reaffirm its unity and solidarity. Therefore it is paramount that it adopts methods and technologies capable of enhancing and multiplying the labor movement's capability to act as a means of change and transformation"*** (Resolution of the III CSA/TUCA Congress, 2016).

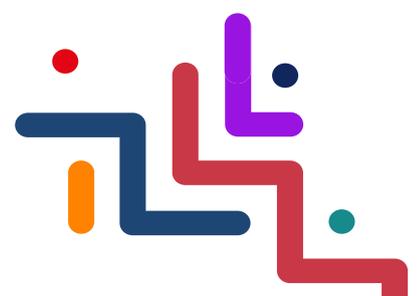
We have now moved to a new stage thanks to the results achieved during the Continental Conference, ***"Transforming and strengthening trade unions to represent and organize the working class as a whole,"*** where delegates of the affiliated federations debated, produced, and adopted this Road Map. Several subregional meetings were held in October and November of 2020 before the Continental Conference. Almost 300 delegates from affiliated federations and friendly organizations took part in these meetings. Therefore, the contents of this document result from our collective work and lay solid foundations to move ahead towards actions and measures that can lead to real, short, and medium-term impact.

Today's international and regional reality is exceptionally complex, despite recent improvements in some countries, which put an end to authoritarian and reactionary governments. The processes that weaken democracies and cause economic and social crises and their effects on employment, income, and labor relations are incredibly alarming.

However, we believe that such trends should not interfere with the current and future trade union self-reform efforts. Self-reform will only be viable if it stems from genuine union autonomy; therefore, we need to make sure that strengthened unions in a better operating position can face the limitations imposed by legal frameworks, conservative governments, and employers.

Having stronger trade unions and federations will make it possible to defend democracy in our region and the rights conquered, especially trade union freedom, the right to unionize, collective bargaining, and the right to strike. There will be no real democracy without these fundamental union rights.

Rafael Freire Neto
Secretary-General
TUCA





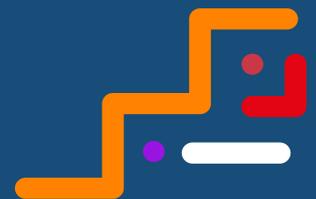
Overview of the economic, social, and labor situation of the continent

Workers in informal labor relations, income concentration, and social inequalities are distinct features of our societies. However, during the first and second decades of this century, the labor market and income distribution dynamics developed positively, thanks to processes that conceived economic growth through social inclusion in several countries in the region. This marked a turning point in the continent's political and financial landscape. However, this virtuous period has been interrupted during the past few years, leading to a marked economic slowdown and a substantial impact on employment and strategies to reduce poverty and social inequality in most countries.

Ultimately, most workers in the region continue to be employed in low-quality jobs and live in vulnerable conditions.

Informality and the lack of employers' compliance with minimum wage standards have a more substantial impact on women than men. Data shows that poverty rates among working women and persons of African descent are alarming. Gender, ethnic or racial inequality, poverty, and informality are directly interrelated. Women are overwhelmingly in charge of domestic work, limiting their chances of joining the labor market. Even when they manage to do it, they do so in highly vulnerable conditions.

The effects of the Covid-19 crisis



At the beginning of 2020, our countries were already experiencing an economic slowdown when they were hit by a health crisis that rapidly turned into an economic and social crisis even more severe than that of 2008.

The situation has since been marked by uncertainty due to the lack of political coordination, especially in countries

where neoliberal policies and fiscal austerity measures were implemented.

The crisis exposed the contradictions of a production, financial and social system that hinges on the social exclusion of millions of people who do not have access to health care, adequate sanitation, work, and income.

In contrast to previous crises, women's work was more at risk than men's, above all due to the impact caused by the slowdown of the service sector.

At the same time, a large proportion of frontline workers are women, especially in the health and social services sectors.

Furthermore, the increase in unpaid care work resulting from the crisis had to be shouldered mainly by women and girls.

Most self-employed people were out of work and had to rely entirely on the emergency measures adopted by their governments, where such measures had been implemented. In most cases, the actions that had been adopted implied a reduction of working hours and wages, contract suspensions, or increasing underemployment.

Self-employment and paid domestic work were the most severely affected.

Alongside the crisis, the growth of telecommuting, telework, and application-based work acquired a new dimension and challenged trade unions to rethink their traditional organization models.

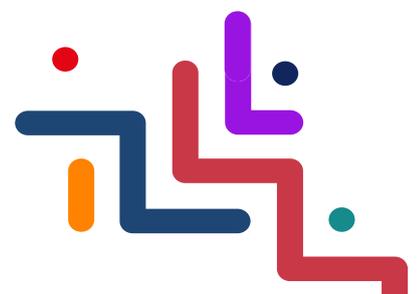
In our continent, outsourcing, hiring legal persons, or freelancers promote cracks in the forms of labor contracting, where rights are negotiated individually, stripping unions of their functions. On the other hand, the changes in the world economy led both to the appearance of a global working class and the creation of the necessary conditions for a trade union movement beyond national borders.

This creates new opportunities for internationalization of trade union action to establish a dialogue with civil society and join ranks with other social movements that focus on gender issues, human rights, and the environment while rejecting the hierarchic and subordinated forms that prevail in most unions.

These are all critical challenges to the trade union movement and are reflected in the Development Platform of the Americas (PLADA).

This is the strategy adopted by the regional trade union movement to overcome the neoliberal model by putting decent work, human rights, and democracy at the center.

PLADA is a living tool capable of interpreting reality, strengthening the labor movement's role, and positioning it as an agent of democracy.





Labor legislation and restrictions to forming trade unions and their work

Despite significant differences among the countries of the region regarding the ratification of the ILO labor conventions, several reports and studies of the academia and some international organizations show that the legal framework (constitutions, labor codes, labor legislation) of the countries in the Americas incorporate the fundamental rights and principles of the ILO covered by the eight fundamental conventions, including

(a) the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; (b) the elimination of all forms of forced or mandatory labor; (c) the effective abolition of child labor; and (d) the elimination of discrimination regarding employment and occupation.

In addition to such accomplishment, it should be acknowledged that the 1998 Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work states compliance with these conventions is mandatory for ILO members as they're subject to the Organization's constitution—even if one of the instruments has not yet been ratified.

No analysis of the implementation of the freedom of association in the region should refrain from pointing out that several provisions included in national legislations tend to impose severe limits on the right to make use of autonomy, collective bargaining, and strike.

Just as the labor policies currently in force are increasingly open to more flexibility and weaker controls of compliance with the standards regulating individual labor relations, when it comes to collective industrial relations, the same policies aim to establish a range of restrictions, such as:

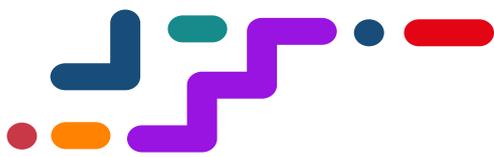
- **Interference with the creation of unions through excessive requirements or submission of recognition to arbitrary decisions of labor authorities;**
- **Limitation of collective bargaining by establishing bureaucratic procedures, eliminating specific content, or declaring it illegal;**
- **Several restrictions to strikes by controlling union mechanisms for calling a strike, associating them exclusively to the signing of collective bargaining agreements, banning strikes in specific sectors or making it easier to declare them illegal, etc.**

Several organizations have pointed out that there are profound gaps in compliance with labor standards, revealing the systematic weaknesses in the inspection and control of the legal systems and how this undermines the labor movement.

For trade unions in the region, the lack of compliance and the constant infringement of human and labor rights has become the single most important cause for concern.

Nevertheless, international labor standards have contributed to the development of labor legislation in the region, compliance with these laws, and their evolution.

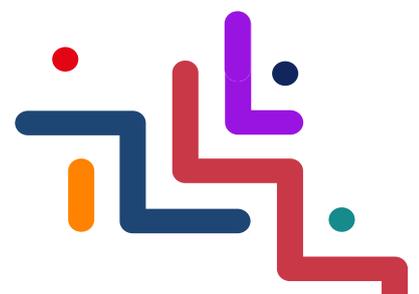
Ultimately, the continent is experiencing substantial violations of national and international labor standards within the context of the pandemic and its effects (as pointed out in a report published by ITUC, 2020). This leads to an increasing precariousness of labor contracts and failure to uphold the fundamental freedoms of workers as a result of non-existing or inefficient controls.



Synthesis of the main features and challenges facing trade union organizations in the Americas

There are considerable differences among the trade union organizations of the American continent. The following pages will present a synthesis of the description included in the background paper for the Continental Conference "Transforming and strengthening trade unions to represent and organize the entire working class" of

November 2020, and highlight the most critical challenges that had been mentioned by affiliated organizations and resulted in the preparation of a road map.





Unionization and the diversity of workers

The number of workers represented by national union organizations and federations is undoubtedly a critical aspect. Higher levels of worker organization are usually associated with better labor conditions, increased social dialogue, and enhanced democracies. Organizing and representing a broad group of workers is decisive to dispute the political power needed to transform economic and social development models.

There are few countries in the continent with relatively high unionization rates of about 25 % (besides Cuba, with more than 65 %). In another set of countries, unionization is at a medium level, between 9 % and 16 % of the working population. In all other countries, affiliation is quite low and concentrated in the public sector. In other words, the situation is quite complex in most parts of the continent, where low organization levels are a clear indicator of the political, social, and economic adversities in place to carry out trade union work and the difficulties union organizations face to evolve.

It has become clear that union organization is more robust in the public administration and the most important economic sectors, and within those, in the largest companies. Strong unions can be found in the public sector, especially in health care and education, as well as in financing, transport, mining, car production, and metalworking.

Regarding employment categories, public-sector employees have the most substantial representation, followed by social security-registered employees of the private sector who work in highly formalized industries with a strong presence of big companies.

Despite some significant improvements such as the organization of domestic workers in some countries, very little progress has been made in terms of forming or developing trade unions in sectors that are marked by precarious labor conditions, such as the maquila sector, rural activities, significant parts of the service and retail sectors, or digital platform-based activities that are run by transnational companies (passenger transport and delivery services of a variety of products). Small company and informal business employees and freelancers account for a significant proportion of the working class, and their unionization levels remain very low.



Unity of the trade union movement

Trade unions and federations have a wide range of differences regarding their number, dimensions, and characteristics. On average, countries have 3 to 4 union federations; one group has 1 or 2 federations, a large group of countries has 3 to 4 federations, and 7 to 10 federations can be found in some countries. The number of trade union federations is not directly associated with unionization levels; therefore, the number of workers with a union membership may increase and become stronger both under the umbrella of unified union federations and under the condition of several coexisting federations in a country.

The unity of the labor movement is a crucial aspect that encompasses a variety of realities. There are few countries where unity can be considered a significant strength.

In these, the federations develop a common agenda and share spaces of social dialogue and institutional representation, including experiences such as unified national federations and union plenaries and other forms of political coordination.

In many countries in the Americas where there are significant restrictions to union activities and reduced unionization rates, the union federations experienced several fallouts caused by diverging positions and conflicts that have evolved, making it challenging to create and maintain a level of unity that will result in the enhanced representation of the entire working class.

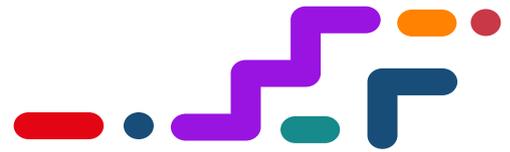
However, even under such circumstances, efforts have been made to achieve trade union unity; such efforts imply new opportunities to strengthen organized workers to enhance their social and political role.

In all cases, establishing alliances with other social and political movements has led to a new position of strength, which must be protected over time.

Efforts and difficulties to achieve unity can also be observed in the affiliation of international and continental federations and confederations. In some countries, the leading organizations are CSA/TUCA affiliates.

In contrast, in others, we observe the coexistence of federations belonging to different international and continental confederations, and there are fraternal federations, which are not affiliated to CSA/TUCA. In contrast, others are not part of any confederation at a continental and international level.

Participation of women and young workers



Although the participation of women at different levels of the trade union organizations has increased in most parts of the region, it is still far from perfect equality, above all in leading positions, institutional representation, and social dialogue. Most federations introduced regulatory arrangements that stipulate minimum participation of women in executive bodies of about 30 %.

However, a minority of federations continues without any regulation regarding the participation of women in executive bodies, and only a few have introduced statutory rules providing for gender equality in executive bodies.

Women in trade unions are still facing discrimination and other obstacles to participation under the same conditions and levels of legitimacy as men. The fact that women are entirely in charge of the care and household work is ultimately one of the leading causes of the lack of equality in exercising leadership and taking responsibility in trade union organizations.

Equal representation and participation of men and women will lead to changes regarding the ways trade union policies are conceived and strengthen the labor movement.

The organizations' statutes act to promote equal participation and representation in the unions' executive bodies. It guarantees unions without violence and harassment and strategies to organize workers who have not been unionized so far¹.

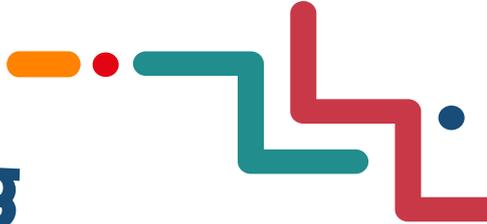
The rare presence of young workers in union organizations and, above all, in their executive bodies is a general feature in all countries. Trade union membership among young workers is very low. In some countries, it is almost inexistent due to the characteristics of young workers' participation in the labor market (temporary jobs, informality, high turnover, work through outsourced services or digital platforms), but also as a result of the enormous difficulties of trade unions to attract young workers.

Many trade union organizations of the region are marked by long tenure leadership and low turnover of their leaders. At the same time, new reference personalities tend to appear in situations associated with conflicts and divisions within the organizations. Statutory definitions or rules regarding the participation of young workers in the federations are non-existent (letting aside a few exceptions).

It should be noted that most federations affirm their political definition and strategy of promoting the participation of young workers in leadership positions, which is usually put into practice by setting up youth secretariats or committees.

¹ II Women's Conference, CSA/TUCA (2019).

Labor and political training



Without a doubt, trade union education is a crucial tool for strengthening the organizations and increasing the involvement of women, young workers, and the migrant population, among others. However, its development is still quite limited, with some valuable experiences in some countries.

At the same time, most unions and federations face severe external and internal difficulties to promote and put

into practice actions in political training.

National federations and international confederations play a fundamental role as players with a capacity to build training spaces and programs, draw on positive experiences, promote exchange between countries, obtain logistic and economic support from other organizations, grant continuity, and favor permanent updating among other training-related activities.

Trade unions and communication



Good communication of trade unions with society is vital for strengthening unions and federations, to address a widespread perception in our societies that associates the labor movement with "problems" and "conflicts."

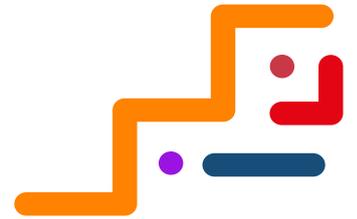
Therefore communication is a fundamental tool to build up and sustain the legitimacy of trade unions as social and political players, whose actions focus on improving living conditions and protecting democracy, even if it means that they have to deal with challenging situations.

Communication within the organizations is equally important to ensure that their internal procedures are democratic, consistent, and solid. Transparency and accountability are principles of a regional union culture, which must be continuously defended and reinforced to empower the organizations' actions. To that end, it will be necessary to develop specific tools and activities.

However, the reality on the continent shows: The vast majority of unions and federations either lack communication strategies or have only limited systems, unions and federations are among the social and political players, which hardly make use of information and communication technologies, and they continue to carry out activities, which are both old-fashioned and with little impact.

Only a few unions and federations have updated, well-structured and attractive websites, making it possible to know their characteristics, organizational structure, and activities. In many cases, it is difficult to access the organizations' statutes, congress resolutions, action plans, proceedings of the executive bodies, declarations or claims, and to find out about the conflicts they faced and other actions they carried out. The situation regarding the use of social media is quite similar.

Synthesis of the problems and challenges identified



Union federations identified the following main problems: existing organization models are not suitable for the new conditions of the labor market, as they are unable to represent the interests of workers in particularly vulnerable conditions, do not offer appropriate answers to the current reduction of differences between branches of activity, do not provide an efficiently coordinated approach to global production chains, are unable to attract workers outside production facilities or who do not have a clearly defined employer, and generally do not adapt to the use of new information and communication technologies, a fact that can be associated, among other reasons, with the generation gap separating leaders and young workers.

In addition, some federations in the region mentioned the absence of renewal and fragmentation among the main difficulties on the path to organizational change.

The chart below sums up the problems the organizations identified with a focus on the necessary changes in some aspects of trade union culture, which will result in the definition of political priorities for strengthening and transforming labor organizations.

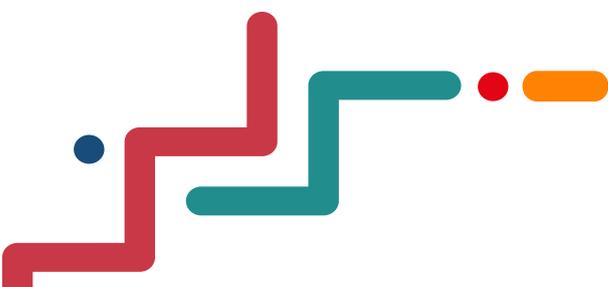




Table 1

Organizing problems, cultural changes, political challenges

Organisational problems	Cultural changes	Political challenges
Low union membership and density make it difficult to build the necessary power for an effective dialogue with governments and employers.	Need to consider and integrate others collectives apart from the currently affiliated working class.	Strengthening of union autonomy from companies and governments, but also from political parties.
Concentration of union organizations in the public sector, some branches of the private sector and big companies.	Need to accept new leaderships, which would allow for generational change.	Deepening of the strategy of a socio-political labour movement that promotes more democratic societies with social justice and would be free of discrimination.
Weak trade union management (few persons in charge of a number of responsibilities and tasks).	Effective participation of women and sharing power in the labour movement.	Strengthening of union unity and cooperation with other social movements.
Structures with little turnover and renewal.	Membership promotion and generation based on improved political education and increased activism.	High-impact actions and initiatives in line with the current reality of workers.
Federations and confederations provide limited technical support to grass-roots structures.	Reduction of union fragmentation and dissipation of resources.	In-depth development of trade union education and training to create solid foundations for the management of union policies.
Lack of resources due to low membership and unpaid membership dues.	Priority to transparency and accountability as basic aspects of any union organization.	Eradication of patriarchal practices en the unions and achieving gender equality.
Limited communication strategies and tools.	Need for increased independence of unions functioning (constituton, activity, strike regulation, collective bargaining) from limitations imposed by the legal framework of some countries.	Making room for new leaderships and generational renewal.
		Establishment of communication and transparency as true political priorities.



Lines of action of the Road Map for Strengthening and Transforming Trade Unions in the Americas, 2021-2025

As has been pointed out in the Presentation, strengthening and transforming the trade union organizations of the region's workers has been one of CSA/TUCA's priority lines of action since its foundation. It implies pursuing the eight lines of action agreed upon at the Continental Conference, including all the dimensions and specific actions it defined, which will be presented in this document.

The current road map is a tool for action to push the growth, legitimacy, political, social, and economic power of unions and federations. It must consider our countries' diverging times and dynamics to plan and implement short- and medium-term actions that will enable the accumulation of good, concrete and visible results for union organizations and the working class.

1 Strengthening existing union organizations



Trade union autonomy is the first critical aspect to be considered to make real progress towards strengthening workers' organizations, which will have to develop more effective strategies to overcome the restrictions imposed by legislation, governments, and anti-union policies. To this effect, the genuine representation of workers' interests based on actual participation and the best possible organization is critical.

Furthermore, self-funding will be crucial for the consolidation of the organizations' Independence from companies and governments.

Therefore, the planning, administration, and sustainability of the union organizations' resource management will be a priority issue. The road map's first line of action summarizes and prioritizes several aspects, which will be dealt with as part of all lines of action.

Democratic dynamics of trade unions, including the regular election and change of their leaders, transparent decision-making procedures and the development of permanent information and consulting mechanisms (through assemblies and other means of participation), regular

accountability (regarding the actions, their results, and the sources and use of funds) are essential aspects of this process.

Such practices require improved communication strategies, both within the organizations, with the affiliated workers, and externally, by disseminating demands and proposals and participating in the political, social, and economic reality of the countries and the continent.

Transparency and democracy within the organizations will strengthen them internally and enhance their legitimacy and political and social standing.

Actions in the area of communication include, above all, the publication and dissemination of statutes, action plans, results of negotiations, funding, public communications, and press releases, as well as analysis and reflections regarding the reality of the countries, among other materials.

Another step of the region's labor movement towards its effective strengthening and growth consists of adopting new forms of organization, structure, and representation in line with what workers consider most suitable, including increased participation of women and young workers. In many cases, this will require statutory reforms to broaden the scope of trade union representation. Furthermore, new forms of social dialogue must be promoted, and collective bargaining must be extended to include groups lacking representation so far.

Labor and political training should adopt a continuous and cross-cutting approach; therefore, it will be part of all lines of action included in this road map, and it will be a line of its own. Political training is crucial for changing the organizing model. It will enable the inclusion of all groups, increase affiliation and improve the capacity to make proposals for the dispute with neoliberalism, contributing to building a fairer, more fraternal, and democratic society and a more sustainable development model.

Priority actions

Strategies to break with the restrictions the legislative and political model imposes in many countries (union autonomy)

Regular accountability

Regular elections and renewal of leaders

Transparent decision-making processes

Maintaining information and consulting mechanisms based on meetings, congresses, and plebiscites, among others

Publication of states, plans, and activities

Unification of existing unions in trade unions organized by clusters, general sectors, or production chains





Adaptation of union activities to our times
(union culture) to strengthen autonomy

Extending the forms of organization, structure, and representation in line with what workers consider most suitable, which would include increased participation of women and young workers

Enhancing communication, consulting, and disseminating strategies

Statutory reforms to extend the unions' scope of representation

Promotion of new forms of social dialogue and extension of collective bargaining to include sectors without representation so far

Labor and political training as continuous activities

Example Union organization in global production chains

Ever since its foundation in March 2008, the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (CSA/TUCA) has defined its actions to address transnational companies as a crucial challenge, either from the perspective of focusing on the organization and defending the workers of the region, who are directly dependent on such companies, in order to ensure the respect of their fundamental rights at work, or as part of its struggle against corporate power as expressed, among others, by the changes implemented in the structure and organization of the world of labor worldwide, a model that represents an assault on inclusion, equality and social justice.

The challenge has been present in the past 10 years, in which CSA/TUCA and its affiliates were making progress in the implementation of two plans of action, which combined actions in the areas of training, organisation, research, incidence, reporting and coordination with the help of different resources and means.



2 Growth embracing the diversity of the working class

The integration and participation of all workers in their diversity and plurality is a priority to strengthen and transform trade union organizations. It is necessary to move forward towards unions and organizations with a more comprehensive scope, new spaces, and various forms for the participation of workers and their groups.

To this effect, the organizational structure

must be examined, existing experiences must be followed up, and new forms of organization must be built to broaden the basis of representation by integrating sectors that have away from unions.

The enormous challenge this process implies is to grow and enhance unions by integrating those who find themselves in highly precarious situations due to the

conditions imposed by companies and the economic system they belong to.

As mentioned before, among such conditions, informality is predominant, as it entails a significant range of vulnerabilities. Informality means working without rights nor social protection, where wages and working conditions are arbitrarily imposed without any room for dialogue or collective bargaining. Within this context, union organizations need to be fast enhancing their capacity to integrate informal paid workers because they work under certain employment relationships, making them part of the working class, with the same needs and demands regarding their individual and collective rights.

Furthermore, progress must be made towards the integration of workers whose employment relationships are hidden or "disguised" by contracts and ties that pretend to consider workers as companies or entrepreneurs with the sole purpose of stripping them of their rights and class identities. Such practices like "home-based work" have been standard in our continent for decades. We are now facing the latest trends towards deregulation adopted by the transnational companies running digital applications and platforms worldwide: delivery persons and drivers, designers and programmers, ICT and engineering professionals (and numerous other occupations) find themselves in hidden employment relationships that infringe their rights. Therefore, it will be necessary to explore the existing experiences and create alternatives to integrate the vast numbers of self-employed workers and freelancers into such organizations.

Unions and grassroots organizations know their territories and clusters. They have a better understanding of the new and more complex realities of productive activities. They are in a condition to identify appropriate ways of integrating informal, outsourced, temporary, and self-employed workers.

Therefore, it is essential to workers that unions that belong to similar fields, that are in the same clusters or that are part of the same production chain can work collaboratively and strengthen their unity to integrate the different existing working conditions and circumstances under the union priorities. And, of course, it will be necessary to enhance union bodies on the ground and the cross-cutting, subject-related areas of the organizations.

The same applies to rural workers, whose rights have always been postponed and whose organizations have been consistently weakened, despite the relevance of rural activities for our economies. Meanwhile, migrant workers, who had to leave their homes due to economic, social, environmental, and political crises, often being persecuted and running severe risks, need labor organizations to be genuine open spaces to develop their citizenship and conquer their own rights. LGBTI+ persons are yet another population, which has been heavily penalized and left without protection; their recognition as workers and the integration of their realities and demands must be a priority for unions.

Affiliation mechanisms alone cannot resolve the challenges mentioned above; more comprehensive strategies will be necessary to





attract workers in various situations with different interests and needs. Being part of a union can also result from getting to know an open space for guidance, companionship, and training, but also from taking an interest in defending human rights and activism in some specific or cross-cutting area of the world of labor, with gender equality as one of the most outstanding issues.

Unions growth could be summarized in two main options: broadening the organizational structure or growing within the existing framework.

This will depend on the specific features of the different union organizations in the continent.

In any case, capacity-building and generating the strength needed to represent the diversity of workers will always be the most crucial aspect.

There are several examples in the region in which union federations managed to integrate non-traditional sectors, such as autonomous organizations or organizations of informal workers, despite the difficulties and

shortcomings of each case, in what can be seen as concrete answers to the challenges faced.

To meet the diversity and integrate everyone, trade unions, federations, and confederations are—and should be—frontline players in the quest for universal social protection; therefore, the unions' fight will always include a relevant perspective for society.

Dialogue and negotiation are fundamental objectives and tools alike for each labor movement and reflect the region's reality.

At the same time, they are spaces where to take up and achieve improvements in such non-traditional dimensions of the world of labor, which may have drawn little attention in the context of employment relations, despite their relevance for a diverse, plural working class.

Continuous political training reflecting the diversity of the working class, which should be integrated and represented, will be essential. Therefore, training activities need to be carried out, focusing on various workers' populations and groups.

Priority actions

Promotion and strengthening of union organization in a way that adapts best to the different realities of the continent, to truly empower the working class by taking into account its diversity

- Organization according to branches of activity, general sectors, and production chains
- Direct membership of workers and groups of workers
- Territory-based organization on different levels

Integration of workers in a variety of situations

- Informal situations in all forms
- Self-employment
- Digital platforms and applications
- Global production chains
- Outsourcing and subcontracting

Inclusion of different groups of workers

- Working women
- Migrants
- Young workers
- Rural workers

Developing labor and political training as continuous activities

Example A house for working women and men

The union house must act as a basic service for the grassroots of the working class as a whole and should be open to all citizens. From this perspective it should provide legal advice, engage in permanent communication covering the reality of workers and union demands and actions, and provide labour and political training (socio-political trade unionism, what is a union, how to build it).

The house should make comprehensive, diverse proposals.

It should act as a space for political debates, community and other group meetings and collective activities; it should also provide access to cultural, sports and recreational activities; and it should be able to offer child care services, if required.

3 Towards gender equality

Gender equality is one of the main objectives of CSA/TUCA's member unions and federations.

Despite the progress made in many organizations in the continent, significant deficits remain, both in terms of participation and contents and general validity of the organizations' definitions and actions.

To reverse the historical inequalities between women and men, particularly in the world of labor, it is necessary to move towards equality in the leadership and representation of union organizations.



The first line of action on gender emerges from current circumstances and the agreements made during CSA/TUCA congresses, the results of the 2019 Women's Conference, and the resolutions regarding the self-reform adopted during the Continental Conference: the need to move ahead towards equality (50%) in the different statutory bodies of the unions, above all governing bodies, and promote the objective from the grassroots bodies and spaces.

This measure should be part of a general strategy to bring more working women into the unions while prioritizing the forms of membership and participation the unions consider appropriate. Such conditions should promote shared responsibility in care work to enable the participation of women in the union, and it should imply fighting against discrimination, harassment, and gender violence in the unions and federations.

Organizations should encourage the participation of our sisters in social dialogue and collective bargaining forums at all times as they make a significant and influential contribution

to the strengthening and transformation of unions.

This is directly associated with gender quota and the steps towards equality in leadership and representation of trade unions.

Women's agenda and their fight against the disadvantages and all forms of discrimination they have to face in the world of work should be taken up as a union priority. This agenda includes several aspects, ranging from the elimination of the obstacles barring women from the labor market, income gaps and "glass ceilings"(professional career barriers), to the fight for shared responsibility of men and women, care policies and services, and the adoption of protocols that guarantee the protection of victims during the process of filing a report against discrimination, harassment and/or gender violence.

In this dimension, labor and political training play a key role. More women should be trained for union activities and leadership positions, and a gender perspective should be introduced to all areas and matters for working women and men.

Priority actions

Quota arrangements regarding women's participation in the administrative and decision-making bodies of the unions and federations

Participation of our sisters in social dialogue and collective bargaining forums

Shared care responsibilities to facilitate trade union participation of women

Agenda including the interests and demands of women concerning the discriminations they have to face

Struggle against discrimination, harassment, and gender violence in the unions and federations

Adoption of protocols that guarantee the protection of victims during the process of filing a report against discrimination, harassment, and/or gender violence

Continuous labor and political training

Example Gender parity in trade union leadership

The cases of those national union federations should be highlighted, which established a 50% minimum participation of women in the top executive bodies (executive council or alike). This requires a sustained process to increase the participation of women in the unions, the development of permanent labor and political training and the creation of real, concrete conditions for the participation of women in different union activities.

The parity of men and women in representation and participation is a process, which will bring about a conceptual change regarding the approach to union policy and, as a result, will strengthen the labour movement.

4 Increasing the participation of young workers

Key elements of this dimension are the importance and the value of cross-generational equality at work, in education, and social protection, as well as the notion of participation and engagement of young workers at various levels and in numerous spaces of union activity.

Progress in terms of the participation of young workers in the unions and federations has been scarce. So far, there are no general dynamics of integration and prioritization of young workers in the region's organizations.

The process initiated by CSA/TUCA, primarily through the Working Youth Committee of the Americas (CJTA), and the reflection and exchange among member federations provide some ideas to move on.

Priority must be assigned to the participation of young workers in executive bodies; this will not only create concrete spaces and send out clear messages, but it will also contribute to the inevitable cross-generational change

and the knowledge and exchange of experiences regarding fight and organization, which in turn will strengthen the organizations' capability to understand the realities and interests workers of different generations have to face. Step by step, more young workers must join the forums for social dialogue and collective bargaining.

Unions' plans and actions should consider these issues such as labor integration, first employment, and connecting education and work, and access to housing, maternity, and paternity, among others, as a priority.

Even though unions face some minor or even significant difficulties, they have the necessary tools to work on these issues. However, they are not part of their priorities compared with other urgencies and demands, which are part of the complex reality of our countries. In some countries, the joint struggle of unions and students movements has become an important precedent.



How students choose to participate is quite different from how unions, which were created basically by adults.

Therefore, it is essential to create the spaces young workers need to develop their dynamics.

More specifically, their familiarity with information and communications technologies offers young workers an opportunity to fulfill a more leading role.

Providing the trade union youth with space where they can make their specific contribution to the movement's general

fight is a way to put the unions' updated methods of organization and representation to work.

Of course, this should not be seen as the only path or tool because the participation of young workers will also take place at the workplace and in in-person union forums.

Continuous trade union training providing the political and technical tools for union activity regarding the new global and local tendencies workers have to confront will be an essential line of action towards transforming trade unions and representing the entire working class.

Priority actions

Participation of young workers in executive bodies

An agenda that matters to young workers
(employment, education, housing, maternity/paternity, etc.)

Participation of young workers in social dialogue and collective bargaining

New tools to communicate with young workers (ICTs)

Different new spaces for participation

Cross-generational exchange of experience

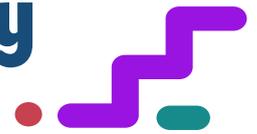
Continuous labor and political training

Example Young workers in trade union leadership

The election of young workers to the executive bodies of unions and federations is an example that should be promoted and followed. With regard to the region, statutory changes creating vicepresidencies, which must be occupied by young workers, deserve special attention.

As a result, new experiences have been made, which are turning into real strengths of the union organisations, such as cross-generational representation in social dialogue and collective bargaining.

5 Redesigning communication and strengthening the identity of the working class



The restoration and strengthening of the identity of the working class is another priority to enhance and transform trade unions. Connecting the entire trade union communication structure of the Americas is a powerful tool to achieve this goal. It plays a decisive role in the dispute with the hegemonic model, and its discourse and actions are detrimental to the working class and attack their organizations.

As part of a continent-wide communication campaign to strengthen workers' identity, actions will take place across the continent, in the subregions, and at a national level. The campaign's effectiveness will depend on the engagement and participation of all federations and unions.

To improve the communicating capacity of unions and federations both within the organizations and beyond, it will be necessary to do detailed planning, including activities, deadlines, and resources. Some of the specific actions should include developing, improving, and maintaining web pages to provide extensive, transparent, and easy-to-operate access to an organization's relevant and updated information, covering everything from statutes, structure, and funding to demands and conflicts and ongoing negotiations.

This will be a direct contribution to improving the image, legitimacy political standing of the unions.

At present, social media are a significant challenge for organizations; access is relatively easy, and their use entails both opportunities and threats. In our times, the promotion of socio-political trade unionism requires proper and responsible use of social media to fight fake news and hate speech and send out clear messages from and to the working class.

The integration of workers, who find themselves in precarious situations, such as migrants or LGBTI+ persons, among other groups, require the implementation of communication strategies based on the use of specific tools for different realities and groups, so communication can take place in the workplace, the unions, and social movements, in virtual media, and in every space, where it may strengthen the identity of the working class and its diversity in the organizations.

Labor and political training should also provide training in communication strategies and actions and include the traditions and history of the labor movement while adapting to the new realities and devices.

Priority actions

Continent-wide communication campaign about the identity of workers (including actions across the continent, in the subregions, and at a national level)

Communication strategies (communicative planning)

Training in communication for trade unionists

Attractive, updated, and adequately used web pages

Adequately used social media

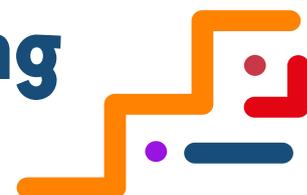
Continuous labor and political training

Example CSA-TV Noticias (TUCA-TV News)

CSA-TV Noticias was created in 2020 as a weekly news program from the perspective of the labor movement, in order to show the political, social and economic reality of the Americas and to provide information representing the working class of our region. CSA-TV has been conceived as a channel for information, debates and dissemination of the social and labor agenda, as well as an opportunity to contribute to a new model of society with more democracy, rights and decent work. It represents the voice of 55 million workers and 48 member member federations in the Americas.

Programmes include reports, interviews, editorials and opinions from all countries of the continent. It is transmitted through various media with a scope of millions of people all over the Americas and around the globe: Youtube and Facebook of CSA/TUCA; UCL (a chain covering the continent from Canada to Chile, with over 30 million subscriptions; and the Rede TVT network in Sao Paulo (with over 500.000 subscriptions).

6 Broadening and deepening trade union education



The ongoing political training of more organized workers and everyone who wishes to belong to and participate in the organizations is yet another essential component of the strategy to strengthen and transform the trade union organizations of the continent.

This road map's dimensions and proposals can be effectively addressed in the short and medium-term if the organizations undertake comprehensive, solid, and sustained political training projects.

CSA/TUCA is currently going through updating and strengthening its political training, with the Conference on Trade Union Education and Training of March 2021 as a milestone.

Training is a process that requires planning, step-by-step realization, and the availability of options, which call the attention of new union members and those brothers and sisters who have been union members for a long time.

Methods must be developed, tools and materials will have to be updated and adapted to allow for the participation of active union members and others who have distanced themselves from the unions or find themselves in a vulnerable employment situation.

Continuity is an essential feature of the training of union representatives that should not be underestimated. Even in times of crisis and lack of funds, priority

must be given to political training, above all to women, young workers, and different working-class groups to make sure that they take part, disseminate and replicate the training projects whenever they can.

Socio-political training for trade union organizations and action must be up to date. We cannot ignore the current trends and expressions of employment deregulation, transformations in production and the world of labor, the effects of the successive crisis, and the impact of authoritarian and reactionary regimes.

On the other hand, we cannot ignore or miss the opportunities provided by global action, broad alliances with other social movements, communication facilities, and improved knowledge of different realities.

The process of continuous training needs to cover an array of subject areas, including programmatic, economic, political, social, and environmental issues that range from global questions to particular aspects of specific sectors and territories. Training should be based on the workers' concerns, needs, and reflections, who will be taking part.

Priority actions

Updating of CSA/TUCA's labor and political training

Training of representatives as a continuous action and process of the unions

Socio-political training for trade union organizations and action must be up to date

Effective participation of young workers and women

Planning of a concrete training agenda

Coverage of an array of subject areas, including programmatic, economic, political, social, and environmental issues that range from global questions to particular aspects of specific sectors and territories

Example CSA/TUCA Conference on Trade Union Education and Training, 2021

The process leading up to the conference and the agreements made during the conference made it possible to:

- Analyse the challenges of life-long comprehensive training and education and professional training as tools for the dispute in the world of labour and in the areas of ideology, politics and culture;
- Follow up the transformations of the world of labour and the labour movement towards a change of the organising model, which would allow for an increasing inclusion, in order to raise membership and improve the capacity to present proposals as part of the dispute with neoliberalism and with regard to the current production processes;
- Make progress towards drafting a proposal and strategy for a systematic union training and education by levels that should be inclusive, coordinated and unified for the Americas and contribute to building a fairer, more fraternal and democratic society along with a sustainable development model.





7 Sustained work towards trade union unity and social alliance-building

The quest for unity among the organizations representing the working class's genuine interests is CSA/TUCA's absolute priority. Emphasis will be put on progress in relevant priority areas, with few concrete issues or aspects that will enable the working class to achieve some victories. At the same time, it will be essential to support social alliances and build spaces, which focus on coordinating and defining unified positions regarding shared interests of sections of the working class and society. This proposal is based on the assumption that allegiance to the working class must always be supported from a perspective of unity, which will offer a real possibility to achieve better living conditions for everyone. As the unity of the labor movement will progress and become visible both nationally internationally, membership of unions and federations will increase.

The unity of the labor movement is a challenge all federations have to address because putting it into practice is as crucial as its continuity. Unity must be promoted in specific contexts and based on a comprehensive approach that will allow different strategies and environments. The point of departure or consolidation, depending on each case, will be a general agreement on the unity of workers and their organizations based on shared principles (defense of democracy, social integration, fight against poverty, decent work, and social protection, among others).

As part of this process, the unity of the working class will be strengthened based on the unity of action to make sure that the agreement generates visible implications

for the working class and society as a whole. Such unity of action will therefore be built following concrete agreements on specific priorities and strategies. Its starting point will be an agenda resulting from a minimum consensus that will generate robustness based on specific, real achievements for the working class and social organizations. At the same time, this will allow for sharing risks and problems and improve the chances to revert the difficulties. The actions, which have been agreed upon and implemented in unity, certainly contribute to broadening the labor movement, letting it grow, enhancing its tools for the fight, and increasing its power to make a real impact.

The path towards trade union unity is also marked by several organizational challenges, as advancing towards unity will need at least some level of structure that the organizations must plan and agree upon.

Drawing on the experience of the unions and the knowledge CSA/TUCA has accumulated during this process, it is recommended to strengthen the unity of the trade union movement starting from spaces for coordination and collaboration at different levels of union organizations and their lines of action and subject priorities. It is also suggested—and in some cases, it has been put into practice—to set up permanent spaces: for coordination among national leaderships (plenaries of the national councils or similar), for sector-specific coordination and unification (economic activity, general sector, or production chain), for connecting executive bodies at different levels (states,

provinces, municipalities), and hosting regular inter-union and inter-movement activities with broad participation, to produce unified demands and proposals. Once again, it should be emphasized that spaces for social dialogue and collective bargaining are essential for a comprehensive representation of the working class.

From a cross-cutting perspective, unity must be built along with content-specific and program-oriented lines, creating other spaces where specific objectives and concrete activities on cross-cutting issues can be connected (gender, youth, racial equality, migration, disabled persons, cross-generational relations, LGBTI).

At the international level, unity-building through direct support for federations and unions should have priority. Concrete actions referring to the regional or global levels include the mapping of global production chains, linking their union organizations in different countries, and the organization of vulnerable migrant workers, including the fight against trafficking and forced labor. Regarding national and international sector-specific action, CSA/TUCA will continue its collaborative work with global unions in the region and consolidate its presence in several priority countries and areas to ensure social dialogue and coordination with the national federations.

Building alliances with other movements and social players is a dimension that is directly associated with the unity of trade unions. From the perspective of strengthening and transforming the labor movement, socio-political trade unionism as promoted by CSA/TUCA must be backed up by alliances with progressive and

democratic movements and players of the region. Therefore, the "Continental Day for Democracy and against Neoliberalism" was a relevant experience for CSA/TUCA, as it is a space for collaboration between the labor movement, rural organizations, feminists, environmentalists, human rights organizations, and others defending democracy and regional integration, with whom we share a history of struggle and resistance, and with whom we defined a common agenda to confront neoliberalism and defend democracy and the integration of our peoples. There are numerous other examples and spaces for initiatives of this kind in the continent, both historical and contemporary. The labor movement could and should be a part of broadening its horizon of struggle.

In turn, such alliance-building will help unions gain access to networks, groups, and key persons, who are part of the realities and communities to which the working class belongs. Such connections may also help broaden the range of interests and agendas the unions wish to represent and, therefore, expand their power to represent segments of society, which have hardly any representation.

The aim is to create and address class-based workers associations and other forms of a working-class organization to detect specific groups working on labor-related issues to identify possibilities to establish associations if such associations have not yet been found or lack representation through existing entities. Such broad alliances between union entities, urban and rural people's movements, student's movements, young people, women, black people, LGBTI+ and human rights, as well as other civil-society organizations, provide genuine





opportunities to consolidate allies based on the demands regarding the diversity of the working class.

Broad and diverse continuous labor and

political training are essential to building unity, strengthening class unity and identity to a shared understanding of reality, development of actions, and participation in social dialogue forums.

Priority actions

Continuous coordination of federations and unions at the executive level (national plenaries and committees)

Coordination and unification at sector levels (economic activity, general sector, or production chain)

Multi-level collaboration (states, provinces, municipalities)

Joint work in subject- and cross-cutting areas (gender, youth, racial equality, migration, disabled persons, cross-generational relations, LGBTI)

Specific joint activities with unified demands and proposals

Joint institutional representation in social-dialogue and collective-bargaining forums

Alliances with other social movements (continuous, regular, ad hoc)

Continuous labor and political training

Example National Trade Union Committee for Sustainable Development of the Dominican Republic

In the Dominican Republic CSA/TUCA´s first National Trade Union Committee for Sustainable Development uniting the country´s affiliated federations (CASC, CNTD, and CNUS) was inaugurated on September 6, 2019. The committee was set up as a space to promote the unity of CSA/TUCA, its affiliated federations and the nationwide implementation of CSA/TUCA´s action plan, resolutions and programs. Without doubt, this initiative strengthens the unity of the working class at a national and regional level.

The committee is in charge of setting the agenda for the discussion and implementation of priority issues in contact with the CSA/TUCA Secretariat. These issues include, among others: PLADA, SDG, gender equality and equity, strengthening the participation of young workers, trade union self-reform, ILO conventions, migration, fight against racism, fight against child labour, environment, defense of democracy, trade union training, global production chains, and transnational companies.

It is made up of a representation of 3 (three) leaders of the centrals, at least 1 must be a woman. It meets at least once a month.

8 CSA/TUCA's role and the road map for strengthening and transforming trade unions



CSA/TUCA promotes a type of socio-political trade unionism that represents the diversity of today's working class, its organization by branches of activity, direct membership, and territory-based organization as elements, which will provide workers with real power in any context and any reality. CSA/TUCA orients its actions towards a modern union model that is open, plural, democratic and participatory, and provides equal treatment and opportunities to men and women. It is generally accepted that CSA/TUCA should continue to act as the "power plant" of alternative thinking within the labor movement of the Americas by contributing a strategic, transformation-oriented vision and project, which is capable of stimulating its affiliates to engage with progressive political initiatives and a perspective to overcome the conservative projects.

Considering this background, we suggest prioritizing and supporting all processes of unity-building at a national level, above all the national committees of CSA/TUCA. In addition, regional and global international representation is also important to CSA/TUCA, which will increase legitimacy, strengthening, and more achievements for member organizations and workers in general.

As part of its lines of work, the CSA/TUCA supports the formulation of strategies and planning, as it prepares analysis, research, and technical assistance for national committees, federations, and unions and contributes and shares in the monitoring and evaluation of the actions taken.

Strengthening the "Labor Observatory of the Americas" and making sure that it turns increasingly into a reference of the political vision and analysis of the unions will be a challenge to this line of work of the CSA/TUCA.

Communication is a crucial dimension, where CSA/TUCA wants to contribute directly with the affiliates, among others things, through planning, concrete implementation, and the evaluation of results. Once again, labor and political training must be highlighted, in this case above all, as a priority action of the CSA/TUCA to support and accompany member organizations.

The role of CSA/TUCA, as defined by the federations in this particular moment, is to move ahead towards operational planning and the implementation of concrete actions to strengthen and transform the unions in the region and contribute to raising and managing the funds to do so.

This Road Map 2021-2025 was adopted by CSA/TUCA at its Continental Conference "Transforming and strengthening trade unions to represent and organize the entire working class" as a tool for all federations to plan, implement and follow up this process, which is decisive for the future of our union organizations across the American continent.



Priority actions

Support the formulation of strategies and planning towards strengthening and transforming the unions

Stimulate and accompany the processes towards trade union unity at a national level: the creation of national union committees by the CSA/TUCA

Strengthen the Labor Observatory of the Americas: information, analysis, research, and technical assistance for union action

Support for the monitoring and the evaluation of plans and actions

Communication and dissemination from the trade union perspective of the Americas

International (regional and global) representation

Negotiate economic support for the implementation of the Road Map

Continuous labor and political training

Example CSA/TUCA Labor Observatory of the Americas

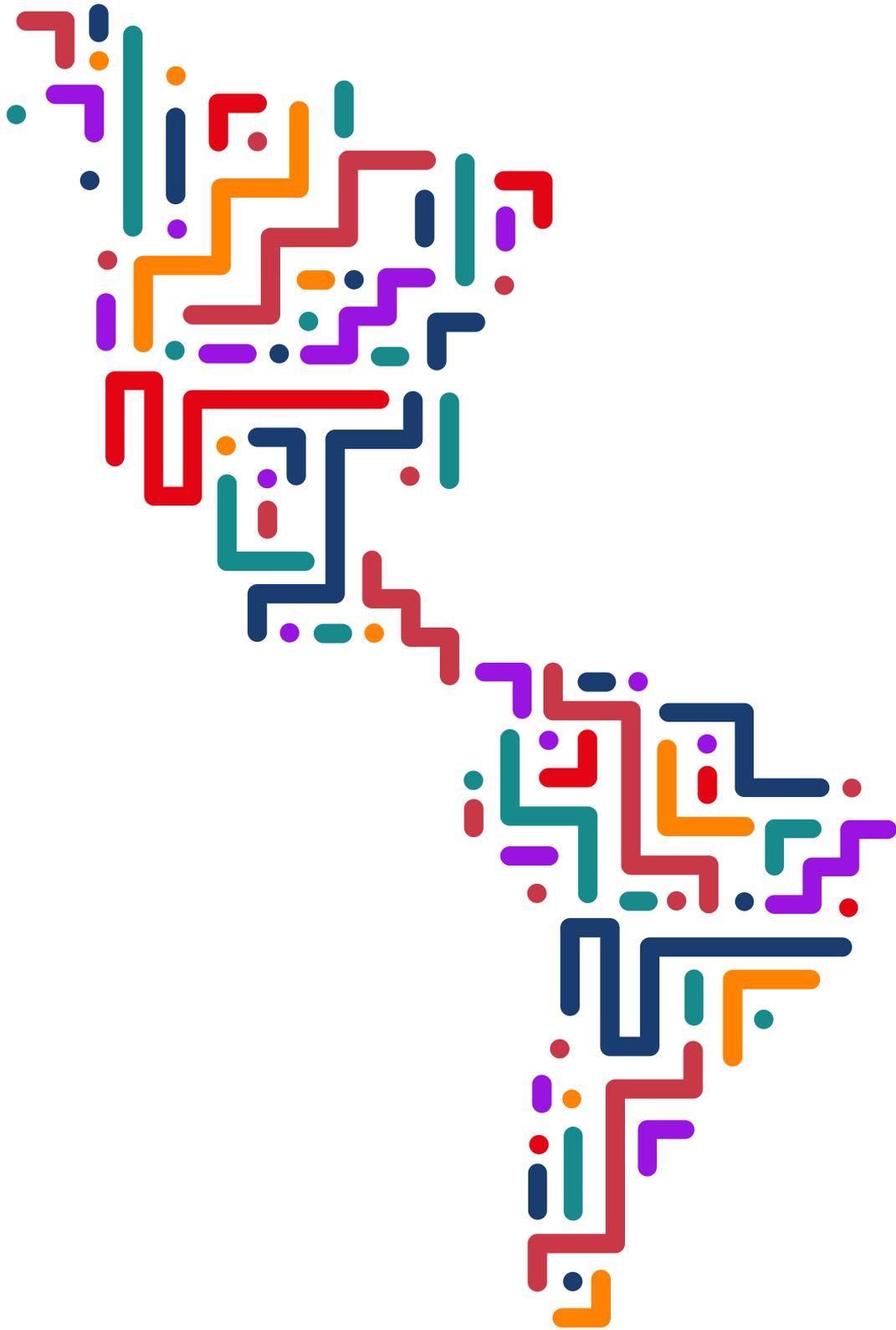
A tool for information and research, which produces knowledge, analysis and political drafting for trade union action towards strengthening the affiliated federations and the entire working class. This platform contributes to presenting the voice of the region's workers, as it reflects their struggles, demands and proposals.

The Observatory provides:

- Special reports, which offer in-depth analysis of a number of issues regarding the world of labor: collective bargaining, work in informal conditions, gender, social security, conduct of transnational companies, among others.
- Newsletters informing about general tendencies with an impact on the world of labour.
- Country fact sheets outlining the social, economic and labour situation of the countries of the region as well as union proposals for each country.
- Systematisation of data related to public policies in the countries of the region.
- Collection, systematisation and analysis of union actions across the continent.

The workers and their organisations are the main players of the Observatory; they create, process and make use of the information and research studies for the plans and actions of their unions: the Labour Observatory of the Americas belongs to all of us.





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