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By working with them to understand power relationships, by focusing on issues like health and safety, by strategic planning, and ultimately by organizing. A simple way to begin the process—and the discussion—is to have workers draw pictures. This activity:   * Helps workers visualize and analyze their workplace * Provides an opportunity for workers to express their opinions and point of view and allows organizers to get a basic understanding of a workplace or community * Encourages worker dialogue around broader issues (like organizing) * Is simple. It requires few resources (beyond a marker, paper, and some tape)   What are the ground rules for mapping and analyzing power relationships in a workplace, community, organization, supply chain?   * Create a “house floor plan” ► Map health and safety issues, e.g., physical hazards, chemical risks, risks due to lifting heavy loads, caring for sick children, caring for animals, strenuous and extended periods of physical movement, etc. ► Map worker needs, e.g., basic access, proper equipment, food, toilets, rest periods, time off, vacation, sick pay, social security ► Link those issues to whoever has power to control/change them * Expand map to larger community and look at hazards, links, power relationships, daily routines, etc. ► Build in links for organizers (Where can organizers meet them?) ► For example, a Thai seafood market is linked in with the wider community, other informal economy workers, food-processing facilities, sub-contracted facilities, subcontracted workers ► Think about the target ► For example, in Croatia, social divisions, geography, and physical infrastructure separate a poor working class community, a poorer war-refugee community, and an impoverished Roma (Gypsy) community. Ethnicity, class, and religion all separate them as well, though their needs and interests might be similar. * Next steps ► Define the workers you want to organize ► Use places that you know, examples you are familiar with ► Draw basic map (no points for artwork)   **EXERCISES** Map and report on in your country based on the following categories:   * Workplace hazards * Social / workplace needs * Power relationships (power over and power with) * Allies (e.g., other unions, legal services, associations, etc.)   **EXAMPLES RAISED BY PARTICIPANTS**   * Pakistan newspaper deliverers  ► Hazards: road hazards, difficult weather conditions, insufficient transportation (e.g., old bicycles) ► Social/Workplace needs: low commission, tough economic model (buy in cash, sell on credit), leftovers absorbed by seller. ► Power relations: top-down supply chain (owner > distributors > sellers); corrupt authorities want free papers; police fine motorcyclists; vendor/customers withhold payment * Tunisia soda bottling plant ► Map of bottling plant shows distribution of subcontract labor ► Issues: low pay, no job security ► Power relationship: the recent revolution brought the ability to unionize and formalize workplaces, and end sub-contract agreements ► Consequences: application of national labor law (which bans subcontracting), sector collective agreements, large increase in union membership * New Jersey (Newark) port union ► Map shows unionized stevedores and longshoremen, shipping containers, trucks, warehouses ► Truckers used to be unionized. Post deregulation, they areself-employed subcontractors, independent owner operators.  ► Very dangerous jobs, high level of immigrant labor.  ► Storage warehouses use undocumented, foreign workers hired by temporary agencies; the pay is very poor. The workers are transported by buses for which they have to pay. There is no health or safety precautions. The line speeds very quickly. No bathroom breaks. Disputes over payment of wages are frequent, with the buck passed between agencies and employers. ► Problems: poor living conditions, poor housing stock, overcrowded, segregated by language, police and immigration service raids, no time for family, no health insurance, environmental exposure, no access to fresh food. ► Allies: Change to Win, churches, mosques, religious organizations ► Different ethnicities are kept apart (Haitian, Russian, etc.) ► Power relationships: legal link – joint employer / single employer laws – to establish responsibility of an employer for the conditions at the end of the chain   This brings us to develop the “heavy-lift” work of developing an organizing strategy.  The South African communitarian concept of Ubuntu—“I am who I am because of who we are” or “We are who we are because of our community”—can be useful when thinking about the relationship between formal and informal workers. | |  | | http://www.solidaritycenter.org/images/1px_spacer.gif | | |
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