



IFWEA IVA FIAET

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT 2012 – 2015

22ND GENERAL CONFERENCE, HOTEL JOSE ANTONIO, LIMA, PERU.

I wish to extend a warm welcome to the IFWEA President; Vice Presidents; Elected Members of the Executive Committee; Delegates of Member Organisations and Valued Guests to this 22nd IFWEA General Conference.

This year IFWEA is 68 years old. This is cause for celebration, and our aim is to do so at this conference. But we have not come here only to celebrate. Like most organisations with a history of several decades, IFWEA has been strong at some times and weak at other times. If you were to ask me how I would describe our organisation at this point in our history, I venture to say that we are becoming stronger, reflecting a slow but steady advance towards greater affiliate involvement, greater relevance of activities and organisational and financial stability over the last four years since our 21st General Conference in Cape Town in 2011.

This, of course depends on what you consider as the main elements of organisational strength. Let me attempt to demonstrate why I make this daring statement, even though I freely admit that IFWEA is very weak in some critical areas. The greatest weakness is that IFWEA has been losing membership steadily over a prolonged period, mostly because of disaffiliation due to defaulting on affiliation fees.

IFWEA has never been a wealthy organisation, and its welfare has always depended on the financial resources made available to it by its affiliates. This has been our main 'weather vane' for measuring our strength organisationally. Over the past two decades, the financial resources available to the overwhelming majority of our affiliate base have been in serious, continuous decline, a decline which shows no indication of alleviation.

In this report and the 2016 – 2019 strategic plan which flows from the assessment, I aim to demonstrate that although the numerical decline of affiliates is not something we should ignore, it is possible to become a stronger organisation despite a decline in numbers. A modest plan for organisational growth, even in these trying times when resources for workers education are very slender. is still possible if we aim to develop:

- A common Purpose;
- A common Strategy;
- Investing in our affiliates by improving their resource provision to their members and beneficiaries;
- Investment by our affiliates in improving IFWEA's resource capacity.

Continued progress in strengthening these four pillars to the best of our ability, will not only develop our existing affiliates, it will also situate IFWEA to attract the most desirable and resourceful affiliates and partners to increase our membership base.

My overall assessment of our 2012 – 2015 strategic plan, is that we have set ourselves very decisively on this path and are beginning to see progress in this regard.

REVIEW OF OUR PURPOSE

The purpose of IFWEA as reflected in its constitution is:

“To promote and advance the education of the public with respect to the democratic labour movement; and to promote the carrying out of free and voluntary educational work, according to the principles of solidarity and cooperation, justice and equality, and democracy and freedom.”

to conform with the South African Companies Act, our constitution is now being called a Memorandum of Incorporation. although, in the new MOI which the Secretariat is asking this General Conference to adopt, the word “purpose” has been replaced by the word “Object” and the word “organisation” with “company”, these are technical accommodations to allow IFWEA to function as a legal, regulated NGO within the Law of Companies the country.

Despite the change in terminology, the IFWEA purpose remains constant, the meaning has not changed through three rounds of legal ‘panelbeating’ to conform to regulations since the Secretariat was in Manchester in 2003. The direction remains clear.

According to our constitution, we should perform the above purpose and:

1. *Create conditions for the strengthening of co-operation between Members.*
2. *Promote the establishment and development of Member organisations and institutions; in particular in those countries where such educational institutions do not exist.*
3. *Represent the interests of IFWEA Member organisations and institutions, in relation to international and supranational bodies.*
4. *Ensure that IFWEA operates independently of governments, state institutions, political parties, and employer organisations.*
5. *Recognise the full autonomy of Member organisations and institutions, and advance the principle of regional sovereignty.*
6. *Promote collaborative relationships between IFWEA Member organisations and institutions, and between regional bodies.*
7. *Observe and promote – and seek to ensure that all Member organisations and institutions likewise observe and promote - good governance, transparency, integrity, and the highest standards of ethics.*
8. *Seek to facilitate the resolution of differences, or disputes between Member organisations and institutions, or within such bodies, and promote an institutional culture which involves acting at all times:*
 - 8.1 *In absolute good faith;*
 - 8.2 *In the best interests of the interested and affected parties; and*

8.3 *With integrity, and in support of best practice and good governance.*

These fine principles are what guides us, and what our performance needs to be measured up against. We develop our four yearly strategic objectives to sketch out our intent of how we will fulfil this purpose under the prevailing conditions within which we operate and the resources at our disposal.

Not all of these are within our sphere of influence. This is why, in the design of our plan, we set measurable outcomes which we project that we are able to achieve towards our overall purpose and within the guiding principles stated above. Every four years, at our General Conference, we have the opportunity to review these outcomes, and recalibrate our strategic objectives for the four years ahead.

REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN 2012 - 2015

As directed at the 2011 General Conference IFWEA had three strategic objectives for 2012 – 2015:

1. *Strengthen our international network of member organisations through exchanges and greater online communication.*
2. *Improve the educational and research capacity and services of our members in order to assist them in their role of strengthening democratic labour organisations in their countries and regions.*
3. *Contribute to the global knowledge community to improve labour's capacity to face 21st century challenges, with an emphasis on flexibility and capacity building to represent, organise and improve the conditions of informalised workers.*

The selection of these three, interrelated objectives allowed the Secretariat and Executive Committee to develop a range of activities directly related to the IFWEA purpose as outlined in the Constitution.

OBJECTIVE 1. STRENGTHEN IFWEA NETWORK OF MEMBER ORGANISATIONS.

In the 2012 – 2015 Strategic Plan, we focussed on developing activities which would:

- increase and strengthen member networks and collaborations;
- utilise online communication channels as a vehicle to facilitate networking, solidarity building and communication between IFWEA, its members, partners and the international labour movement.

As resources were slender, the Secretariat had to rely on its own discretionary funds from affiliation fees to produce outcomes. To maximise impact emphasis was placed on using the internet and social media to:

- Design and maintain an up-to-date IFWEA website and populate it with resources produced by affiliates and of interest to them;
- Produce regular e-bulletins highlighting the activities of our affiliates;
- develop the IFWEA facebook page and solicit online traffic to visits the page and request affiliates to use the site;

- solicit information from IFWEA affiliates to populate the IFWEA website and Facebook pages;
- target and improve education and labour news and information from the global labour movement and the movements of the countries our affiliates come from.

www.ifwea.org

The IFWEA website is well set up in terms of content, style and user accessibility. The website serves as a tool to centralise news from IFWEA Secretariat, member organisations' work, worker education project news and as well as global labour news. One gets an overall sense of IFWEA, the members, project activities and labour news. Since 2012, IFWEA project Pages have been added, highlighting the Online Labor Academy, the Study Circles project and the Youth Globalisation Awareness Programme. The IFWEA 22nd General Conference (GC) website is linked to the website.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/IFWEA>

During 2014, Facebook had 1.35 billion users, 72% of these are adults check Facebook once a month and 864 million users check in daily. Since many people use Facebook daily – the flow of information moves quickly.

IFWEA's Facebook presence has allowed us to have a forum where those with less search-time at their disposal can see some of the same content as on the website. It allows for cross-posting of links from all other media channels whether it is an article, video or audio clip. If IFWEA member organisations are on Facebook, it allows for direct posts between the members and interested associates, with immediate feedback. Facebook has allowed an expanded showcase of IFWEA member and project activity – for example you can see galleries of photographs on OLA, or YGAP or the Study Circles Project, one can also post pictures and feedback as activities are happening (live). The Secretariat actively searches for IFWEA members to showcase their activities on the IFWEA Page, and post items of common interest.

An example is YGAP. Delegates established private groups annually in 2012 - 2015 in preparation for the programme, information and exchange, and getting to know the IFWEA Secretariat team. OLA is used for YGAP course curricula and course engagement, but it is through facebook, because of the common level of utilisation, that delegates communicate during the programme and continue their community dialogue afterwards.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/IFWEA>

The You Tube channel contains the IFWEA video productions “Build Rights, Build Unions”. It also features the 3 part series on IFWEA's history and impact and showcases affiliates project work like the SEWA documentaries, and multimedia YGAP “Postcards from the South” productions.

The Study Circles video feature “The Power Lies Within Us” showcasing the participants and their activities from June to December 2014 is on the site. Other films and clips have also been posted there of interest to IFWEA members. It is a useful site for uploading videos and sharing with members, advertising them on IFWEA's other social media sites. The video series on IFWEA tried to include most regions and provide a visual understanding of IFWEA's objectives and operations.

E-bulletins www.mailchimp.com

The e-bulletins are electronic newsletters distributed to subscribers via email, posted on Facebook and the website. The e-bulletin offers a one-stop page where you can read the highlights of IFWEA member and project news and activity, labour news, campaigns, research and publication news, videos. The e-bulletin is delivered to 600+ subscribers. Currently the opening average is been 16%+. The e-bulletin is produced quarterly. The subscriber list should be updated, and we require our affiliates to send us their board member and trade union partners email addresses.

OBJECTIVE 2. IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH CAPACITY AND SERVICES OF OUR MEMBERS.

In the 2012 – 2015 Strategic Plan, the focus was on developing activities which would:

- develop strategic and effective partnerships to progress the work of IFWEA organisations and advance the social justice and labour rights agenda of their beneficiary trade unions and membership based organisations;
- improve education resources and capacities of selected IFWEA's organisations for the development of international collaboration and best practice in educational design and delivery;
- through our affiliates, develop the Online Labor Academy and expand its utilisation to labour service organisations, trade unions and membership organisations of the poor. These constituencies have not used online education previously, thereby bridging the digital divide between north and south and improving their education resources and capacities;
- assist IFWEA members in strengthening the regional element of the global labour education.

We raised income for three initiatives under this plan, via project funds for the Online Labour Academy (OLA) and The Workers' Education Platform for Socio-Economic Equality in Cape Town (IFWEA Study Circle for grassroots leadership development project) and course fees for the Youth Globalisation Awareness Programme (Y-GAP).

Online Labour Academy (OLA).

Project Title: Expanding Life Long Learning Opportunities Within The International Labour Movement.

This project began in January 2012 and ends in December 2015. It is funded by the Olof Palme Centre. It is a project to establish a global online workers education platform to encourage and develop online education for members of organisations through introducing and training IFWEA affiliates to design and deliver online courses.

In the first year of the project the online platform – the IFWEA Online Labour Academy (OLA) was designed by PLADES and four organisations from Asia, one from South Africa, 2 from Latin America and a Global Union, the ITF, were trained to use this platform to design and administer courses. Rutgers University, the ITF and the ABF Sweden actively participated in the discussions on the

development of the platform and continued to support its development through course development and providing expertise for improvements to the platform. In the second and third year various courses were delivered to local organisations and in 2015 participating affiliates evaluated the work done and made suggestions for the future development of OLA.

The participating OLA organisations gained experience in delivering online labour education courses and using a dedicated online platform. They also learned how to transfer these skills to trade union educators, and how to assess the outcomes and impacts of their education.

Project activities have built a core of OLA tutors familiar with online application in Africa; Latin America and Asia who are working together with each other and learning and improving their skills and knowledge base. All the organisations chosen in this initial phase have had national and/or regional reach or are trying to situate themselves to become better able to expand these activities regionally. Participating organisations have invested their own additional resources and activities to add value and participants to the project.

The project has also built relationships at an advanced level between a new layer of trade union tutors and these IFWEA labour education organizations, to provide education on key challenges facing worker organisations in this period, to manage the OLA Platform on their own, and to train other tutors. Tutors from these organizations now have the capacity to design their courses, upload to the OLA, register the participants and manage key elements of OLA.

The IFWEA Secretariat will continue to recruit additional affiliates to design and deliver global courses through OLA and the existing tutor network will continue engagement on platform development, curriculum development and online pedagogy. The intent is to include more IFWEA affiliates in the provision of education through OLA, especially those providing regional and global education.

Study Circles:

Project Title: A Workers Education Platform for Socio-Economic Equality in Cape Town

This project began in June 2013 and ends in December 2015 and is funded by the ABF and Olof Palme Centre. It is a project to establish study circles of members of trade unions and community based organisations through training and mentoring study circle facilitators and developing relevant materials for organisations to understand and promote socio-economic equality. Each year over 20 facilitators were trained and 10 study circles were formed. Through employing the democratic and participative study circle methodology, participants were able to share their experiences with each other and develop materials and education programmes to promote equal rights and socio-economic equality. IFWEA will sustain this process through continuing to train study circle facilitators and encourage affiliates to involve grassroots activists in study circles. The future plan is to expand the developing of participative learning methodology and train IFWEA affiliates educators to mentor grassroots study circle facilitators in other countries and regions of IFWEA.

Youth Globalisation Awareness Programme (YGAP)

YGAP is an exposure and exchange programme for young staff members, activists and volunteers of the Nordic labour movement. Participants attend a course on Globalisation, Work and Democratic Organisations developed and hosted by the IFWEA Secretariat in Cape Town, South Africa.

YGAP is an annual programme that takes place at the historic labour heritage site, Community House in Cape Town. Community House is home to labour movements, labour research organisations, a workers media organisation and the IFWEA Secretariat.

YGAP is an opportunity for young educators and activists to immerse themselves in the theoretical and practical experiences of work and activism in the South through attending a seminar programme designed by the IFWEA General Secretary, and exposure placements in organisations working and organising around issues relevant to labour and social movements.

Placement is in organisations which provide cultural and educational programmes for youth at risk; labour research, labour media, press freedom, labour organising, rural land access, climate change and gender equity.

YGAP is an IFWEA initiative supported and organised by Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (ABF) Sweden, Arbeidernes Opplysningsforbund (AOF) Norway and Työväen Sivistysliitto (TSL) Finland.

These activities, all initiated during the period under review, have built a good working relationship with the core IFWEA affiliates involved in the projects. Through them we are more active and have become more visible. The IFWEA Secretariat has been busier than it has been for over a decade.

However, not all IFWEA affiliates have been involved in the pilot phases of these projects. In the forthcoming four year period, we need to set expansion of affiliate involvement, and recruitment of new affiliates through OLA as a target.

OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE LABOUR'S CAPACITY TO FACE 21ST CENTURY CHALLENGES

This objective is inter-linked with the first two, being the development of educational and research materials for various online and face-to-face courses, workshops, research and publications which IFWEA affiliates deliver to their trade union beneficiaries.

Online Labor Academy¹

The Online Labour Academy develops the transfer of knowledge and expertise and thus builds partnership and improves the working relationships between IFWEA organisations and the trade unions they work with. Due to the service oriented, structural relationships of the participating IFWEA organisations and their trade unions, who are often their members as well as beneficiaries, IFWEA affiliates were directly able to build the capacity and knowledge of trade unions and membership based organisations, and their learners could utilise their capacity to act on the knowledge they gained. OLA tutors set assessment exercises designed to measure learners' knowledge and ability to apply their new knowledge in their organisations.

IFWEA organisations developed online education courses on specific topics covering a range of issues of current relevance to workers organisations in the formal and informal economy. They developed resources in their own languages and in consultation with their trade union beneficiaries.

¹ See Addendum 1 for a list of OLA courses delivered 2012 - 2015.

They invested or raised their own additional resources through their donor and trade union partners to carry out the education.

They shared their curricula and methods with IFWEA tutors from other countries and amended their courses to accommodate improvements and criticisms from fellow-educators and trade union learners. They learned how to work together and advise and help each other. They develop advisory support and troubleshooting teams – viz SEWA in India, which was assisted by CLASS Nepal, and LEF in Pakistan; PLADES in Peru, which assisted CENAC; and LRS which worked with WEA Zambia; LARRI Namibia and ITUC and UNI in Africa. Tutors also formed informal regional networks to discuss course delivery to other members in their unions. The Trade Union Leadership Programme of Rutgers, using the University's platform, offered an OLA course on Climate Change, viz. Changing Climates - Changing Perspectives in 2014 and 2015.

OLA continues to be used by the participating affiliates to deliver education for their constituencies. The OLA platform can now be extended to all affiliates who want to utilise it. The pilot organisations are able to provide support for curriculum development and technical utilisation of OLA.

With regard to curriculum development, In the next four years, we need to review our choice of educational topics. Facing flexibility and organising precarious work are now common cause in the labour movement. Exposure of conditions is being spearheaded by the global unions. Our role as educators is changing. We should focus now on knowledge dissemination of what unions are doing in this regard and providing analysis and education which informs their practises.

We also need to invest thought and resources into education aimed at building a common sense of purpose amongst IFWEA affiliates. We need to develop our own education which defines our own narrative as IFWEA, namely, what we see as the role of Worker Education in 21st C. We need to clarify and explicitly spell out the ethics and values underpinning our pedagogic practises, identify which movements carry these values, and if our trade union partners have lost them, re-introduce them through education. The Secretariat has already begun doing this in the YGAP programme, and the 2016 – 2019 strategic plan takes this further.

Media Education

As part of the OLA Study Circles of 2014, a 'Media and Advocacy Manual' was produced. This manual serves to introduce individuals and organisations to media tools for education and organising and how to produce that media.

Media education seminars have also been developed from 2012 to 2015 for YGAP, introducing participants to using media for solidarity education and guiding participants in the ethical considerations of using media tools in worker education.

Global Network

In partnership with SOLIDAR, several IFWEA member organisations participating in the Global Network of research, education and advocacy activities to build alliances amongst labour organisations in order to strengthen the 12 by 12 campaign for the ratification of ILO Convention 189, recognising protections for domestic work. IFWEA organisations also provided research and education on improving organisational and advocacy capacity for social protections for informal

economy workers, including the production of a toolkit and action guide, which are available on the Global Network website. Visit <http://www.theglobalnetwork.net>

Funding and activities on the SOLIDAR project ended in 2013. The GN was the primary project for funding regional seminars and meetings. However, despite a decade of GN activities, IFWEA did not really emerge stronger organisationally through this extended period of project activity.

Thus, although it is undoubtedly true that IFWEA has suffered by the lack of resources for regional activity, the incoming EC will need to interrogate whether the regions are the best “building blocks” of IFWEA for the future. IFWEA has now been stabilised and needs an organising model to grow. We will craft this model collectively in the next new four year phase, using the expansion of our existing programme activities as the foundation for growth.

AFFILIATE INVESTMENT IN IFWEA

Governance: The Executive Committee

The IFWEA Executive Committee represents the most active affiliates in IFWEA. Since the General Conference in 2011 there have been six Executive Committee (EC) meetings. IFWEA Executive Committee members attended the 100th anniversary of the ABF Sweden in June 2012. Executive members presented seminars on the education work of their organisations as part of the Jubilee seminar programme.

In January 2014 the EC appointed a smaller strategic committee to discuss recruitment of funds and members and to plan for the 22nd General Conference. This sub-committee met three times, with the last meeting taking place in Stockholm in September 2015.²

YGAP

The Nordic affiliates who raise funds and recruit youth leaders from their own organisations, and the trade unions and political organisations are making a very important contribution to the core income of the Secretariat. In combination with affiliation fees, YGAP makes a major contribution to Secretariat salaries.

Grant Funding

For the period 2016 – 2019, funding from the Olof Palme international Centre will change from project to core funding, giving IFWEA greater strategic control over the allocation of funds. We thank the Olof Palme Centre for selecting IFWEA as a strategic partner. The ABF Sweden has assisted the Secretariat in applying for this status, and deserves credit for consistently leading the way in demonstrating how an affiliate can obtain resources for IFWEA.

Affiliation Fees

In concluding the 2011 General Secretary’s report to the last conference, I said:

² All EC minutes are available on the affiliate pages of the IFWEA website once adopted.

“The trend of diminishing resources is halted. All defaulting affiliates are disaffiliated and IFWEA retains a smaller but committed membership of approximately 40 affiliates in good standing and eager to contribute a little extra in the future”

This prediction has proved to be accurate. At November 2015 IFWEA has 41 Affiliates as follows:

Category 1: 8
Category 2: 2
Category 3: 4
Category 4: 27

The Executive Committee has just approved three new applications to Category 4, all strategic organisations whom we have sought for greater programme involvement, one from Columbia and two from South Africa, bringing the number of affiliates up to 43.

Besides these 10 other organisations applied for affiliation during the period under review. Of these, the Executive Committee only accepted 5, as it was felt that the others were not in a position to participate and contribute either through resource sharing or through fees payment.

Currently, there are 4 affiliates defaulting for over two years arrears (2013 – 2014), of which 1 is a category 1; and 3 are category 4 members. At the 2011 General Conference there were 29 affiliates defaulting over 2 years. I can therefore state without fear of contradiction that our affiliation has stabilised and fees income has stabilised as well.

The IFWEA affiliation fees are a very important part of the budget. Fees been frozen since 2007, and currently stand at:

Category 1	\$ 4,299
Category 2	\$ 2,577
Category 3	\$ 1,290
Category 4	\$ 431
Associate Membership	\$ 100

I recommend that we retain the affiliation fees at these rates for another year (2016), after which we task the incoming executive committee to review the possibility of whether an increase to adjust to inflation is required.

I also recommend that we pursue a strategy of organisational growth through activity, and look to the next four years phase to drawing more members into active participation in one of IFWEA’s programme into activities. The strategic plan for 2016 - 2019 has been structured to facilitate this. In the new plan we spell out the vision and aim of IFWEA for the term. The three objectives in current plan under review remain, although the activities change to reflect a progression on outputs that have already been achieved. Last, but by no means least, we have added a fourth objective, viz:

“Identify, agree and practice a common set of values and ethics which informs IFWEA pedagogy and delivery of workers education.”

This brings me to the end of this review. Thanks are due to our donors for the period, to all the IFWEA organisations who paid their affiliation fees; put forward their leaders to sit on the Executive Committee; to those member organisations who have contributed to the Secretariat directly through solidarity contributions; and to those who have contributed through affiliation fees; through fundraising; through information dissemination, through project activities of the Global Network, the Online Labour Academy, the Study Circles Project, and the Youth Globalisation Awareness programme.

With to your contributions, we make global solidarity for workers’ education towards socio-economic equality a reality.

A luta continua!

Sahra Ryklief

December 2015