



## DECP ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Front cover: (top) AEB present in all regions of Burundi  
(bottom) Workers in the field, Camposol, Peru

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## BUSINESS DRIVEN RECOVERY

Preface by DECP's president

We may not give it much thought with the end of the pandemic in sight, but whereas 2021 was a recovery year for most advanced economies, emerging countries have continued struggling. The socio-economic impact of the crisis will be felt in low-income countries for years to come, as the Dutch Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation concluded at the end of 2021. The impact of global and local lockdowns, declining economic activity and the absence of social security nets have weighed heavily on the economies and societies in emerging countries.



Ingrid Thijssen, president of VNO-NCW and DECP

And now, at the beginning of 2022, the Russian-Ukrainian war has come on top of that. A war that has major consequences, first of all of course for the victims of the war, but also for entrepreneurs worldwide. And therefore also entrepreneurs in emerging countries. Large increases in energy and raw material prices for instance, or disruption of international supply chains, will also affect emerging countries.

Recovering businesses and jobs is therefore crucial for emerging countries in the coming years. We want to contribute to this from the Netherlands. Not only because our economy and the economies of emerging countries are internationally closely related. But mostly because increased poverty and job insecurity in emerging countries

affect us all. Ultimately, we want broad welfare for all.

The Dutch employers' organisation VNO-NCW has therefore lobbied during the pandemic that the Dutch development cooperation budget should be maintained at the same level. We also advocated using extra available resources in the context of COVID-19 for socio-economic security nets in emerging countries.

In addition to financial support from abroad, the recovery will mainly have to come from entrepreneurs in the emerging countries themselves. Entrepreneurs who see opportunities again now that the pandemic is on its way back. Entrepreneurs who

want to invest, innovate and grow. Entrepreneurs who will create jobs again and enable people to earn income.

Employers' organisations in emerging countries are there for these entrepreneurs. To make agreements with the government on behalf of the business community about a good business climate. To agree with trade unions on decent and safe working conditions. And to offer entrepreneurs information and services that stimulate entrepreneurship in a sustainable way.

DECP has been supporting these employers' organisations for 15 years with practical advice, coaching and training. Especially now, in the aftermath of the pandemic, that commitment is more than needed. With two clear focus themes – membership and social dialogue – DECP empowers employers' organisations in emerging countries to continue working on a favorable socio-economic business climate in order to stimulate business driven recovery.

*“We want broad welfare for all”*

In the coming years, DECP will continue stimulating strong employers' organisations in emerging countries. However, no longer as a stand-alone organisation. During 2021, a merger has been prepared with PUM Netherlands senior experts, a Dutch volunteer organisation that focuses on peer-to-peer expert support for SMEs in emerging countries.

As president of both organisations, I am confident that PUM and DECP will form a strong combination to promote entrepreneurship in emerging countries, both at the enterprise level and at the level of the business environment. So that emerging countries can return to the positive growth path that has been taken before the crisis, on the way to broad welfare for all.

Ingrid Thijssen

President DECP

### **FLASH SUMMITS PROVE TO BE AN EFFICIENT START OF THE YEAR**

The corona pandemic forced the whole world to have contact mainly online. Despite the drawbacks and many inconveniences, we have experienced that online contact also leads to more frequent encounters and to greater efficiency in some processes. The DECP management decided to start 2021 with flash summits. A concept that will be continued after the pandemic.

The main stakeholders of DECP, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the employers' organisation VNO-NCW, expect a clear annual plan from DECP. What will the country managers do and for what purpose? Naturally, partners have a decisive say in this. DECP defines the broad outlines of its services, but acts on the basis of concrete needs. Before the corona pandemic gripped the world, country managers travelled to their partners to discuss annual targets on the ground. Usually at the end of the previous year and in combination with other consulting and relationship management objectives.



Peter Bongaerts (director) and Martien Robertz (country manager Mongolia, Vietnam) chair one of the flash summits

As this was no longer possible, the concept of the flash summit was developed. Partners from a region - usually neighbouring countries - were invited for an online meeting with the DECP management and their country manager. These meetings were scheduled for approximately one and a half hours. DECP used the modern digital studio of employers' organisation VNO-NCW in The Hague with the support of its technicians.

During the meeting, Peter Bongaerts, director of DECP, welcomed the guests and outlined the main focus points of DECP's policy. It will come as no surprise that the emphasis of the efforts is on membership management and social dialogue development. After all, a healthy employers' organisation finds its raison d'être in a growing number of members. Members benefit from a favourable business environment when there is continuous coordination with trade unions and governments, leading to stability and, inter alia, a well-functioning labour market.

*“Emphasis on membership management and social dialogue”*

It is therefore along these pillars that the partners expressed their short-term needs for advice. Structural increase of visibility among members and potential members and an emphasis on skills development were part of this. Peter Bongaerts also took the opportunity to announce that DECP will further deepen its expertise in social dialogue towards specific sectors and value chains. To this end, a special working group was active in 2021. You can read more about this elsewhere in this report.

The flash summits were experienced as pleasant and efficient by both the partners and the DECP experts. It has therefore been decided to continue this formula. Even if the impact of the pandemic has been significantly reduced.



**flash summit 2021-2022**  
Africa, Asia, Latin America

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## SMALL EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS ARE MOVING FORWARD TOO

Encouraging the progress of Burundi's AEB

It would make a fun quiz to have people try to guess the biggest and smallest countries amongst the 22 DECP partner countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Even some of the DECP staff might be surprised by the answers.

Size-wise, both in landmass and population, Indonesia would probably be listed first. This is correct: with almost 2 million square km and 275 million inhabitants, it still beats populous Asian neighbours such as Pakistan and Bangladesh. For the smallest, I think most would assume it is Burundi. This is only partially correct, at least for size: Burundi covers only 28,000 square km, making it smaller than Belgium. Nevertheless, with 12 million citizens, its population is four times larger than that of the geographic giant Mongolia. However, looking at socio-economic criteria, such as GDP per capita and the UN Human Development Index, it once again comes in last, being the poorest in the DECP partner countries list, and also more in general one of the poorest in the world.



AEB trainings reach all the provinces of Burundi

With these features, being small and poor, landlocked, with limited natural resources, a neighbour of more “interesting” countries such as fast-growers (e.g. Rwanda and Kenya) and giants such as the DR Congo and Tanzania, Burundi tends to be a bit forgotten. It has no particular shining place in the international spotlights. On the contrary, it is rather associated with gloom and doom, due also to the political turmoil which has haunted the country for quite some years now.

But not for DECP: from the start of DECP's creation, Burundi has been chosen to be a partner and has remained so. In line with the country's image, maybe also a less



visible partner: AEB, the employers' organisation, is small (three staff members), with limited absorption capacity and working in very difficult circumstances. It has been active in a very small economy – where Heineken is by far the biggest employer and taxpayer – and working in a political climate which was even violent and dangerous in the previous decade.

In spite of these circumstances, AEB (Associations des Employeurs du Burundi) continued to persist and sustain itself, sometimes in a sort of survival modus, but now it is more active than ever. Time for spotlights on AEB.

Especially in 2021, and even starting in 2020, oddly enough in the Covid period, a clear turnaround had begun.

Most remarkable were the efforts and results in the field of membership, on which we will focus here. This does not mean that other activities, mainly in the field of social dialogue and advocacy are negligible. On the contrary, in spite of difficult circumstances, the trade union - employers relationship has remained stable and ongoing, and in this limited space to act freely, agreements which influence the shape of labour law are being attained. But yes, this field is less spectacular at this stage compared to the sheer membership work and evolution.

### *“AEB continued to persist and sustain itself”*

The registered membership levels have always been hovering around 120-130 company members. In 2021, it rose to 160. And we must further specify. Registered membership is one thing; paying membership is better. It always stood at about one third of registered membership. That proportion has remained more or less equal – which is already positive in the precarious Covid times – but the increase in the new registrations was also seen in total paying members: the number hence rose between 2019 and 2021 from 42 to 62. AEB has members from the informal economy i.e. Federation of Fishermen and Fish Traders of Rumonge Province which has 615 registered employers and over 15,000 employees.

These are the objective results of the remarkable efforts which AEB, with DECP support, undertook in 2021. They are part of a more systematic approach to membership acquisition and retention, which was initiated for the first time under the format of a membership plan.

First, there was better organisation of membership management. AEB also adopted the Customer Relations Management system, which DECP and ITCILO developed and had already deployed in most other DECP partner countries. AEB received training on the different modules and implemented the arduous work to register all its members and their main characteristics in the system, as well as that of their future targets for membership drives (about 200 so-called potential members). The system facilitates research, follow-up on the activities of AEB for each of the members, and contact with the CEO and company staff. Moreover, it allows AEB to identify paying versus non-paying members, check on payments, and urge members to pay using so-called love letters, which communicate what AEB did for each of them individually. This ensures that AEB does not miss out on a membership fee at the end of the year because

members simply do not know what exactly the employers' organisation has done for them throughout the year.

Second, AEB started this year with proper recruitment drives in the provinces. The tour touched upon four provinces. The objective was to diversity the membership, which up to now is mainly concentrated in the capital Bujumbura. And the mission was a success: more than 150 interested companies have attended these meetings, and more than 30 were recruited.

Thirdly, AEB started offering tangible services, which are useful and appreciated by individual companies, over and above the collective services provided via lobbying, advocacy and social dialogue. In that context, AEB started offering training in labour law, and succeeded in having some open trainings, as well as some specific (paid) company trainings. There are plans to do more of that.

And lastly, building upon previous efforts, AEB has maintained and expanded the regular, now bi-weekly, information bulletins (Lettre aux Employeurs) for members. It is still distributed by "moped" (in the past co-sponsored by DECP) to some of the more traditional members, but it is also already available via the website, where a members' portal has been opened.

The results were already mentioned, but also revenue-wise AEB is progressing. It still mainly counts on sponsorship and international projects, but has succeeded in achieving now more than 10% of its revenue via contributions and member fees.

In 2022, the way forward to create more membership will be intensified. A new DECP-AEB work programme is being designed and will again mainly focus on membership strengthening.

That is the key to further building the independence and the capacity of AEB to be the representative voice of business. We are building day by day, with patience, but also with determination.



By Arnout de Koster, DECP Country Manager

## ABOUT SOCIAL DIALOGUE ONCE AGAIN, AND AGAIN!

DECP sees social dialogue as the basis for a stable society, constructive consultation and a favourable business climate. Together with its partners, many years of experience has been gained in social dialogue development at national level. Now the time has come to also pay attention to social dialogue development in specific sectors. Issues are becoming more specific and the added value of employers' organisations for their members more concrete. In 2021, DECP devoted a lot of time and attention to developing a vision at this level. In doing so, use was made of knowledge and experience in Europe as well as in emerging countries. The first projects together with partners have started. We summarise our point of view for you here.

Social dialogue is a broad term. Social dialogue is about everything that has to do with work. It starts with two or more parties who look at an issue from a different perspective and want to find a solution together. The dialogue is a way of dealing with opposing or at least divergent interests. Social dialogue is often accompanied by highs and lows; the trick is to keep talking to each other precisely in the most difficult situations.

### *“Paying attention to social dialogue development in specific sectors”*

According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), social dialogue includes “any form of negotiation, consultation or exchange of information between representatives of governments, employers and workers on economic and social policy matters of mutual interest”. Social dialogue thus encompasses much more than negotiations about wage increases and working conditions. Important themes include productivity, safety, environment, competitiveness and the future of work.

#### **Bipartite or tripartite consultation**

Social dialogue requires structural and constructive consultation. It can be a consultation between two parties: employers and employees, or between three parties: employers, employees and government. Bipartite or tripartite, in other words. Some issues are best solved in a tripartite dialogue, others better in a bipartite dialogue. If the social partners reach an agreement together and present it to the government, it is difficult for the government to ignore it.

#### **National, sectoral and company level**

Social dialogue takes place at national, sectoral or company level.

- National level: partly tripartite, partly bipartite. The role of government is greatest at the national level. The dialogue covers issues such as employment, working conditions, safety and health.
- Sectoral level: usually bipartite. Not all issues can be resolved at the national level, and there are also specific issues that arise in specific sectors. In this case, a social dialogue at sectoral level is most appropriate. The parties involved resemble each other and face the same challenges; they are colleagues, but often also competitors. Themes at this level include export requirements and quality guarantees, but also increasingly themes focused on sustainable development and addressing risks (due

diligence) in value chains, such as living wages, working conditions, human rights, child labour and biodiversity.

- Company level: a bipartite dialogue between the employer and the employee representation or works council of a company. Topics include terms of employment, working conditions, training and education.

### Conditions for social dialogue

There are two conditions for a good social dialogue. The first is trade union freedom / freedom of association. Parties representing employers' and employees' organisations must be able to act autonomously and without coercion. They must have the scope to take decisions independently at company, sectoral or national level. If a country has no trade union freedom or freedom of association, no real social dialogue is possible. The second condition is a constructive attitude. The parties must really want to resolve the issue/conflict. This requires an attitude of mutual respect, equality and trust. The conflict may run high, but the partners will stay in contact and try to find a solution until they have reached an agreement. Forcing dialogue is not conducive to a constructive attitude.



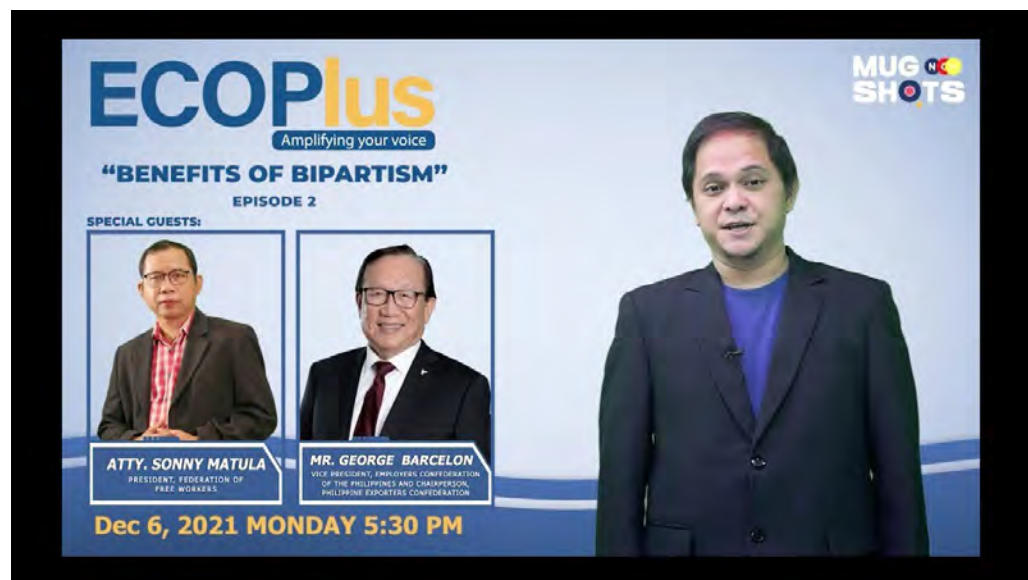
DECP recently published the brochure 'Strengthening the social dialogue. Customization per country and sector'

## ECOP PROGRESS ON MEMBERSHIP AND SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) is the officially recognised employers' organisation in the Philippines. The head office of the organisation is based in the central business district of Makati City at the National Capital Region, more commonly called Metro Manila, with some two area chapters, two regional chapters, and some nine provincial/city chapters. These chapters play a major role in ECOP's ability to be able to reach its membership and potential membership across the geographically challenging country. This article reports on the progress ECOP has made over the last years in membership management and sectoral social dialogue.



COVID19 has brought the organisation many new challenges with large parts of the economy being shut down in 2020 and 2021. ECOP needed to find ways in which to continue to engage with its membership in the accelerated unfolding of a digital environment. ECOP put forward a proposal to the DECP with the objective of conducting a series of strategic interventions that will ensure the retention of existing members and the recruitment of new ones especially among MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises) by strengthening ECOP's visibility across several traditional and social media platforms and through strong engagement with regional EBMOs (i.e., local chapters and chambers of commerce).



ECOP Plus: A successful series of broadcasts

One of the innovative and exciting ways that ECOP developed its work with the support of the DECP was to launch the ECOP digital channel called “ECOP Plus: Amplifying Your Voice”. The channel was launched in October and the four subjects covered in 2021 were 1) Introduction to ECOP, 2) Benefits of Bipartism, 3) Reform, Rebound, Recover, 4) *Kapatiran sa Industriya* (in English: *Partnership in the Industry*), a biennial awards program that recognises company best practices.

It was agreed that not only enhanced communication with its members was important for the development of ECOP but the need to develop social dialogue across the business community was also essential. The Philippines has enjoyed a robust relationship between employers and trade unions at a national level but it was felt that work could be done to strengthen the relationship at the sectoral level.

*“interventions that will ensure the retention of existing members and the recruitment of new ones”*

In order to take this work forward, ECOP arranged a number of online consultations with a wide range of sectors which felt that although they enjoy a relatively good relationship with their employees more work needed to be done, such as discussing challenges and opportunities at a sector level in the IT sector, tourism and hospitality and perhaps a few other sectors. After all, when employers and employee representatives discuss at sector level, subjects can be more specific and concrete. A consultation also took place with two of its three key trade union counterparts in the Philippines which set out some very clear ideas of how this work could be taken forward. ECOP and the key trade unions have already institutionalised a dialogue mechanism at the national level. One idea proposed was the establishment of a social-economic think tank centre that might help the bipartite partners come up with sound and evidence-based recommendations that will be presented to the government for tripartite social dialogue. This would be beneficial for specific sector interests as well.

ECOP has shown that it is ready to adapt to the challenges of the digital economy and enhance its engagement with its members and the business sectors it represents.



Jose Roland Moya. Director General ECOP

## CRM FOR EBMOs – THE TURNING POINT

The SuiteCRM is a database built with open-source technology, customisable and user-friendly. Back in 2012, the ITCILO, in partnership and with the constant support of DECP, decided to create a customised Customer Relationship Management system, based on the needs of EBMOs worldwide.

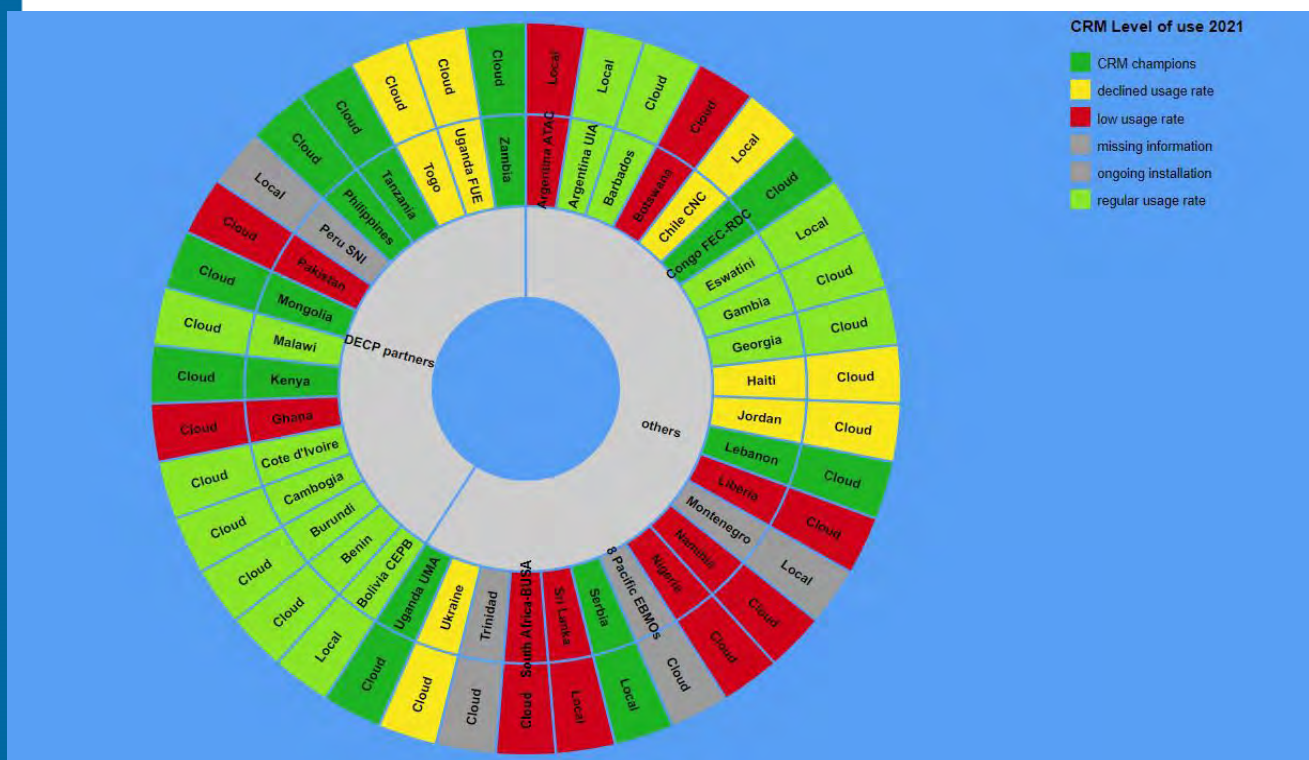
Barbara Maino, Programme Assistant at the ITCILO, reports.

“So far, we have come a long way hand in hand with a wide range of stakeholders, our sponsors; DECP, DI, NHO, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the ILO, our technical partner Opensymbol and the trainers and above all the CRM users in EBMOs worldwide!

Now is the time to analyse the results.

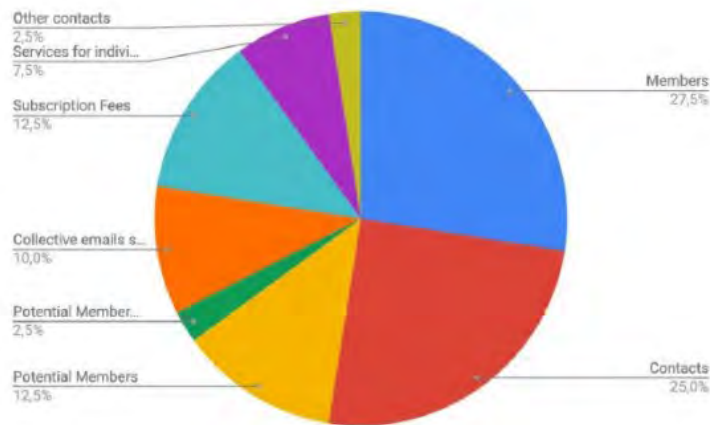
- **60+ installations** in all regions of the world
- **70% Cloud-hosted** installation
- **Seven language versions** (EN, FR, SP, Mongolian, Ukrainian, Georgian, Arabic)
- **55% successful installations** – 27% ongoing or relaunched installations - **18% not very successful**, mainly due to low Management commitment to the tool or general institutional capacity

The image below offers a detailed glance (APEX EBMOs):



The constant monitoring of the usage rate and modality confirmed the natural trend, which sees the Membership sections as the most used ones, followed by the Subscription Fees in 2021.

### Most used modules 2021

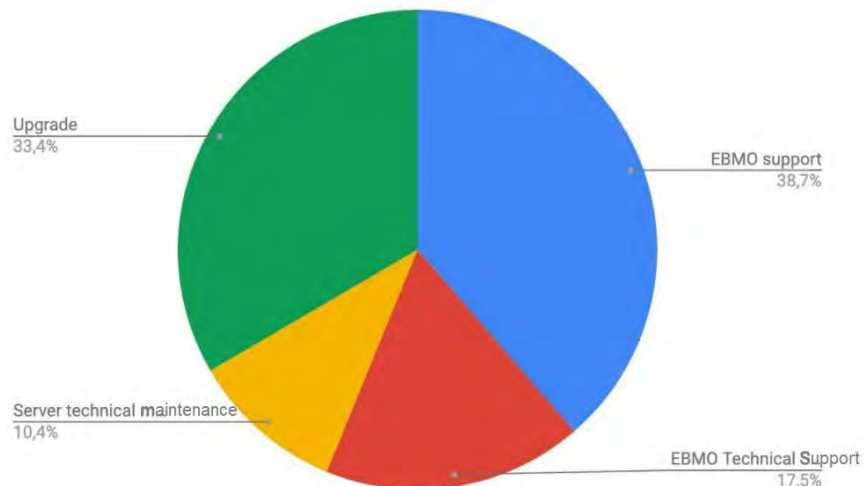


Source: Opensymbol

The limited use of the Services sections shows the need to understand the value of monitoring and reporting to members of the services provided better. In general, recording the services is part of a successful and efficient membership strategy, in particular for retaining and recruiting of new members.

We dedicate a significant portion of our efforts to the [helpdesk](#) in the CRM Team. Continuous contact with the CRM master users and quick support was the key to success in many installations. In 2021, we successfully implemented 112 helpdesk tickets:

### Helpdesk service 2021 112 tickets



Source: Opensymbol



In 2021, we revamped the [CRM Community of Practice](#), now a dynamic tool where participants can access readings, self-training, discussion forums and electronic tickets for assistance.

The screenshot displays the user interface of the CRM Community of Practice. At the top, the ITC eCampus logo is visible on the left, and user information (EN, BARBARA) is on the right. The breadcrumb trail indicates the user is in the 'CRM coordination, helpdesk and enhance...' course. The main heading is 'CRM COORDINATION, HELPDESK AND ENHANCEMENTS'. Below this, there are tabs for 'Course', 'People', 'Forum', and 'About'. The 'Course' tab is active, showing a list of resources. Each resource card includes a title, a 'NO REQUIREMENTS' button, and a right-pointing arrow. The resources listed are: News, Ticket: Helpdesk - Assistance - Asistencia, English resources, Ressources en français, Recursos en español, Mongolian resources, and Ukrainian resources. On the right side of the page, there are several widgets: 'Completion status' showing 1 of 4 (25%) completed activities with a 'VIEW DETAILS' button; 'Online users' showing 1 online user (Barbara Maino); 'Search forums' with a search box and 'GO' button; and a 'Calendar' for March 2022 with the 17th highlighted.

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the CRM for EBMOs proved to be a fundamental tool for EBMOs in supporting their members. The necessity to perform at a distance generally increased staff computer literacy and “allowed inactive users of CRM within the Secretariat to take a harder look into its advantages and exploit it in managing information and data” (ECOP Philippines).

The changes in the business environment and the world of work created new development opportunities for the CRM for EBMOs in the years to come; this is why we consider 2022 as a *Turning point*.

The programme for the present year includes a limited number of new installations (all in online modality) so that we can concentrate on planning the future evolution of the CRM for EBMOs, for which **Integration** is the keyword.



## **SOCIAL DIALOGUE AS A KEY ISSUE FOR THE ILO**

The International Labour Organisation, based in Geneva, is highly committed to contributing to processes of social dialogue all over the world. As an important stakeholder, the ILO is represented in the regular meetings of like-minded organisations including DECP. Ms Tugschimeg Sanchir of the ILO is an expert in this field. DECP recently asked her some questions about social dialogue.

### **1. What is your function at the ILO?**

“I work for the ILO’s Bureau for Employers’ Activities - ACT/EMP. My role involves managing several portfolios, including development cooperation policy, UN reforms and partnerships. I also manage the Asia and the Arab States Desk overseeing the implementation of ACT/EMP programmes, aiming to strengthen the capacity and value of the employer and business membership organisations (EBMOs) in these two regions. Another aspect of my work is developing knowledge on issues and challenges facing EBMOs and businesses in the transforming world of work.”

### **2. How do you experience the regular meetings of NIR, NHO, DI, DECP, ILO and ITCILO?**

“I have been involved in the work of the like-minded EBMOs network since 2009 in one way or another and find it a very useful platform for sharing information, exchanging experiences and learning from each other. While the ILO and ITCILO stand out in this group as international organisations, we are all united by the cause of contributing to the development of strong, representative and professional organisations serving the collective interests of business. Therefore, having a platform where we can coordinate, share and learn is very important. This helps to maximise the results, impact and resources at our disposal. Of course, every organisation has its priority countries, topics and strategies, and where our interests overlap, it is critical that we collaborate to maximise the impact. There are many examples of such coordination in all regions.

*“A very useful platform for sharing information, exchanging experiences and learning from each other”*

The like-minded group also serves as a useful platform to exchange views on emerging issues and challenges for your partners and beneficiaries and employers and their organisations in general. Transformative changes in the world of work and business, the impact of emerging trends, the effect of the current pandemic, social, economic and political shifts all affect business. In the interconnected world, business feels such an effect very quickly, and a like-minded group contributes to exchanging ideas, information and research for the benefit of our stakeholders and beneficiaries.”

### **3. What is your opinion with regard to the development of social dialogue in emerging countries in the near future?**

“The ILO was founded on and promoted the principle of social dialogue for more than a hundred years. Being an ILO member means that countries recognise and apply this principle in their labour market policy. While the maturity of the social dialogue



Tugschimeg Sanchir

depends very much on each country's history and tradition, there is growing evidence that developing and emerging economies have embraced the principle, especially in the last few decades.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, as devastating and disruptive as it was and still is, created momentum to really harness the potential of the social dialogue as a mechanism for shared and sustainable solutions to protect businesses and incomes, ensure safety and health at work and adjust workplace arrangements to preserve enterprises and jobs. We have seen developed and developing countries alike using dialogue to shape emergency and post-emergency

policy measures. The [ILO research](#) shows that 134 countries used peak level social dialogue as a part of their response at the beginning of the crisis. At the later stages of the pandemic, this trend seems to have seen a decline, but overall, it does demonstrate the value and potential of dialogue.

We can only hope that governments, employers' and workers' organisations will evaluate the dialogue experience during the pandemic and take forward the best practice as a regular strategy. A lot will depend on how social partners will invest in their capacity to maintain the level of active engagement. Complex challenges facing the recovery and growth compounded by calls to address inequality and sustainability will need dialogue-based solutions.

Looking to the future, we also have to be realistic about the remaining challenges such as governance and limitations to the independence of social partners in some countries; the large informal sector, often unrepresented in social dialogue; and capacity constraints of social partners. Emerging challenges to democratic governance also affect the national social dialogue architecture in some countries."

#### 4. What can be the role of above-mentioned organisations including the ILO?

"There are several things that the like-minded EBMOs can do to promote social dialogue:

1. Continue investing in the institutional capacity of EBMOs around the world and strengthen their ability to engage in evidence-based policy formulation, representativeness, independence, organisational sustainability and resilience. Well-coordinated efforts could result in strong, professional organisations capable of shaping an enabling environment and effectively and innovatively serving businesses. Building such organisations is one of the key roles of the Bureau for Employers Activities of the ILO.

2. Influence donor-governments to direct their development cooperation budgets for the ILO to strengthen social dialogue institutions and social partners. In recent years, we have seen a decline in such funding. If we are to solidify the achievements of the recent years demonstrated by social dialogue, such investments need to be enhanced. This is especially important because any other development outcome related to labour market policy is dependent on the strength and sustainability of its actors and policy-making mechanisms.
3. Generate and share knowledge and analysis on the value of and lessons learnt from the diverse social dialogue tradition and experience and its value and contribution to development.”

The DECP management thanks Ms Tugschimeg Sanchir for this extended interview.



ILO building in Geneva

## LET'S GIVE THE FLOOR TO A BOARD MEMBER

Five questions for Mr. Fried Kaanen

DECP has a tradition of giving a board member the opportunity to explain some aspects of his work in the annual report. This also allows partners to get to know the people behind the DECP experts who make their work possible and facilitate them. This year we asked Mr Fried Kaanen five questions. In daily life he is chairman of the Koninklijke Metaalunie (The Royal Employers' Organisation for the metal industry). In the DECP board he is treasurer and vice-president.

### What is your motivation for wanting to be a member of the DECP Board?

"As chairman of the employers' organisation of the SME companies in the metal sector in the Netherlands, I know how important social dialogue is. It is not possible to create suitable working conditions without social dialogue. These employment conditions are necessary to do justice to socio-economic developments. This applies in the Netherlands, but also in emerging countries. Ultimately, we do it for social welfare. That is the core of my motivation."



Fried Kaanen

### What were your experiences with DECP in 2021?

"2021 was the second year in which all COVID-19 measures still applied. In my relationship with DECP, that meant keeping in touch digitally. In addition to the digital board meetings, there were interim contacts with Peter Bongaerts."

**In the board you have the role of treasurer. Which issues require attention from a small foundation such as DECP?**

“In my role as supervisory treasurer, I pay attention to two things:

- Balance in expenditure. Do they contribute to effective spending in the countries in which they operate?
- Focus on the long term. In other words, helping to find the right funding so that the programs can also be carried out in the future.”

**How do you see the future of supporting employer organisations in emerging countries in the coming years?**

“The policy on supporting emerging countries is periodically reviewed. That is the issue at the moment. Supporting employers' organisations in emerging countries remains important. For countries, it is one of the pillars on the road to maturity and stability. We must modernise but not lose sight of the greater goal.”

**What role do you see for united Dutch employers' organisations to contribute to improving the business climate in the emerging world and why?**

“In my opinion, your policy should be approached centrally. That also applies here. Sector branches are too small and too one-sided. That is why I think this belongs to the central dome in the Malietoren (VNO-NCW offices in The Hague). In addition, it is a moral obligation to work from a highly developed country to improve the international business climate with countries that are developing.”

*“It is not possible to create suitable working conditions without social dialogue”*

Thank you very much Mr. Kaanen!

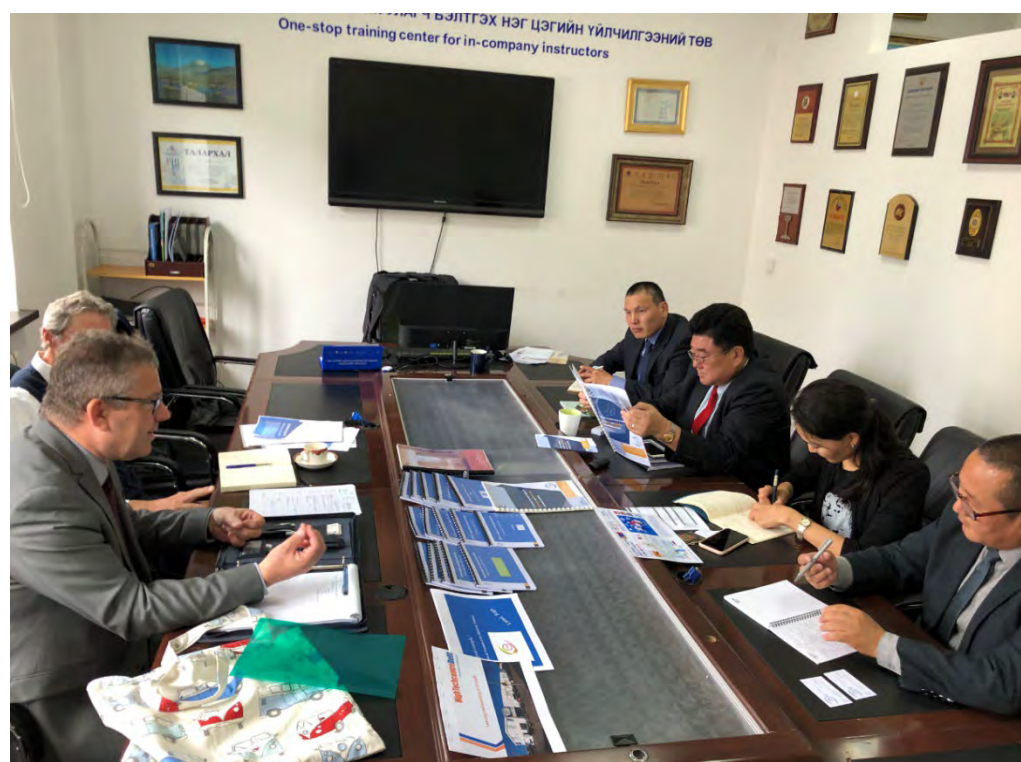


## EMPLOYERS IN MONGOLIA NARROW THE SKILLS GAP

DECP, together with employers' organisation MONEF, provided online workshops for participants from the larger industrial sectors to identify and develop missing professional qualifications.

In June 2021, DECP, together with MONEF, the Mongolian employers' organisation, organised three intensive three-hour workshops on the theme of skills development. This involved identifying and developing essential knowledge and skills necessary for the successful performance of positions.

The workshops were preceded by a process in order to respond as effectively as possible to the local Mongolian situation. Mongolia has a rich history. It became a democracy in 1990 and is a relatively small semi-presidential republic, sandwiched between the giants China and Russia. More than three million people live in Mongolia. Half of them live in the capital Ulaanbaatar. For the past 25 years, Mongolia has caught up in education and health care. More children are going to school and child mortality has fallen. Mongolia's economy has shown uninterrupted growth over the last decade. DECP supports MONEF to take a key position on behalf of the business community to identify and address so-called skills gaps with vocational education and government. To this end, MONEF established the OSSDC, the Occupation Standard and Skills Development Centre.



MONEF staff and DECP experts discuss skills policy at the MONEF office in Ulaanbaatar, (2019)

DECP has developed a method to support employers organisations such as MONEF with skills development. This resulted in a stronger collaboration of the national



employers' organisation with various sectoral employers' organisations. More than thirty representatives of important Mongolian sectors, such as mining, food processing and construction, took part in three well-organised online workshops to familiarise themselves with this method. With the help of a concrete action list, the participants apply the method to their own specific situation. During the workshop, participants discussed their challenges and progress.



The Construction sector in Mongolia is in need of qualified employees

The results are encouraging despite the current COVID-19 situation, which is also very difficult for MONEF. The parties participating in the workshops have made concrete agreements for a follow-up. One of these is that MONEF is now guided by VET Toolbox in giving concrete shape to the development of professional qualifications. VET Toolbox is a programme established by the European Union to implement skills development programs in emerging countries. DECP is partnering with VET Toolbox and could connect their in-depth expertise to MONEF's needs.

*“The participants apply the method to their own specific situation”*

Government, vocational education and business are also essential for a healthy economic situation in Mongolia. In 2022 and beyond, MONEF, can play a role in contributing to this.

## LIKE-MINDED ORGANISATIONS WORK TOGETHER AND LEARN FROM EACH OTHER

Interview with Ms Alessandra Cornale, NIR Sweden

It goes without saying that DECP is not the only organisation that makes an effort to contribute to improving the business climate in emerging countries. By regularly consulting with like-minded organisations, such as the Confederation of Danish Industry, NHO (Norway) and NIR from Sweden, agendas can be aligned. If cooperation is desired, these organisations know where to find each other. DECP discussed this with Ms Alessandra Cornale. She is Global Programme Director at the International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR).



# nkele bantu

### What exactly is NIR?

“NIR, the International Council of Swedish Industry is a non-profit private sector organisation with some of Sweden’s largest exporting multinationals as members as well as the Export Credit Agency (EKN) and Swedish Export Credit Cooperation (SEK). NIR was founded back in the 1960s as the Swedish industry’s council for foreign affairs.

Through NIR, Swedish businesses collaborate with other stakeholders with the common goal of promoting an enabling environment for conducting economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable business contributing to a sustainable and inclusive economic development. To reach this aim, we are running several development programmes and partnering with different stakeholders from the private and public sector, civil society, trade unions, and academia. We believe that the private sector is a strong force and contributor to work towards more sustainable societies, so our programmes always have a private sector focus.”

## What is your particular role and what are your fields of expertise?

“NIR’s role is to bring its members together to identify common sustainability and ESG-related challenges (Environmental, Social & Governance) and opportunities in emerging markets. NIR’s expertise is to capitalise on the knowledge of its members – Swedish businesses – and transform it into programmes that positively contribute to sustainable economic and inclusive development. NIR constitutes a bridge between business and development cooperation.”



## What does the partnership of NIR with the Democratic Republic of Congo (and Sodeico) consist of?

The partnership of NIR and Sodeico is implemented through NIR’s largest development programme, which is called **Swedish Workplace Programme**. It is a programme that specifically puts the human being at the centre of business. The Swedish Workplace Programme (SWP) is inspired by the Swedish tradition and model of labour market cooperation based on social dialogue and workplace cooperation. NIR implements the programme in partnership with the Swedish Industrial and Metalworkers’ Union (IF Metall). The aim of the programme is to contribute to decent work, sustainable business and inclusive economic growth in the markets where we operate by stimulating partnerships and dialogue between management and employees at the workplace.

The partnership with Sodeico goes back as far as 2012 when Sodeico was part of the predecessor to SWP – the Swedish Workplace HIV and AIDS Programme. When transitioning into the new programme, NIR decided to continue to work with the Democratic Republic of Congo as one of its targeted markets through a partnership approach with Sodeico.”

## What exactly is Nkelo Bantu and what is the role of NIR in it?

“Nkelo Bantu means ‘human resources’ or ‘human capital’ and is a platform created by Sodeico and NIR/SWP to provide a space for dialogue around issues such as skills development, sustainability, digitalization, leadership, diversity and inclusion and other topics related to the importance of human capital for the growth of business and society. One of the main challenges for companies in the DRC is to find skilled workforce, which Sodeico realized years ago working in the field of human resources.

After seeing the benefit of dialogue in the workplace through the SWHAP programme, the idea of the platform was born.



Alessandra Cornale

The target group is stakeholders in the labour market such as companies, trade unions, public actors and civil society. The platform provides an opportunity for these actors to discuss best practices, create new partnerships and work together to promote the importance of upskilling and empowering the Congolese workforce. A company's greatest asset is its employees, which is why it is important to adopt a human-centred agenda to run business in a sustainable way. Nkelo Bantu aims to contribute to that through awareness raising around these topics. NIR/SWP is thus an active funding partner in Nkelo Bantu, contributing to its activities strategically, financially and with human resources. We see the platform as an arena to promote inclusion, gender equality, human rights,

decent work and democracy. The private sector can play a crucial role in promoting these values and partnerships both internally and externally. They are crucial to putting policies into practice and joining forces to support development both within the company and the society."

#### Why did you ask DECP to collaborate in this event?

"We have been familiar with DECP for a few years through the Like-Minded network. Knowing the expertise of DECP in skills development and its long experience in leadership and social dialogue in Africa, we thought it would be a great compliment to other speakers and trainers. The participants of the event such as management and employees of multinationals and local public and private sector Congolese companies, decision makers, trade unionists, and other stakeholders are all actors that DECP is used to working closely with. Moreover, I was convinced that DECP's interventions would bring interesting perspectives to the event."

#### What has been the role of DECP? Has it offered added value to your partners, and in what way? To what extent is DECP complementary to NIR?

"The role of DECP has been to contribute to the Nkelo Bantu forum with two interventions. Jos van Erp held a keynote on transformational leadership during a panel session on the optimisation of productivity. Jos then participated in the panel together with representatives from Congolese business and discussed topics such as transparency, inclusivity, participatory decision-making, and employee motivation as pre-conditions for increased productivity. A master class on transformational

leadership added inspiration and further value to participants of the Nkelo Bantu forum, where participants' knowledge on situational leadership was strengthened.

DECP has deeper expertise when it comes to for example leadership and skills development than NIR, which makes it a good compliment to NIR whose expertise in these areas focuses more on general programme management experience and expertise. In addition to the Nkelo Bantu forum, DECP and Jos van Erp provided advice and guidance to Sodeico and NIR on how to set up ecosystems in skills development to promote better matching between employers' needs, upskilling of workforce and vocational education training systems."

### **RANDY MPONGO FOCUSES ON BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP IN THE DRC**

As a result of the participation of DECP in the Nkelo Bantu event, Mr Randy Mpongo, a French student with Congolese parents, decided to conduct a study on skills gaps in emerging countries. Coached by DECP and NIR experts, he was able to define a set of recommendations to Sodeico which allow it to encourage interaction between company decision makers and managers of VET schools and universities. Randy Mpongo: "This experience allowed me to develop my advisory skills. Now I have a network which can give me access to the DRC and make my dream come true: to contribute to the development of the DRC."



Randy Mpongo

### **In return, for what kind of expertise can DECP look to NIR?**

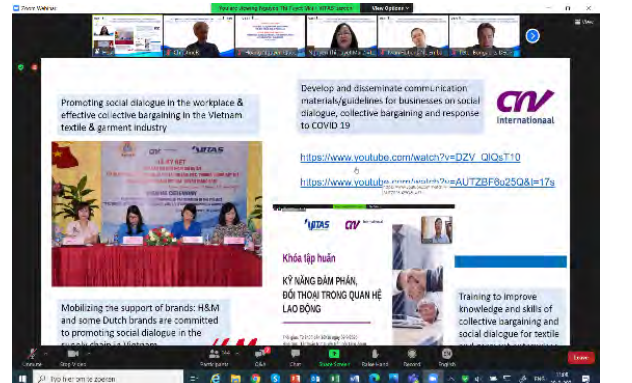
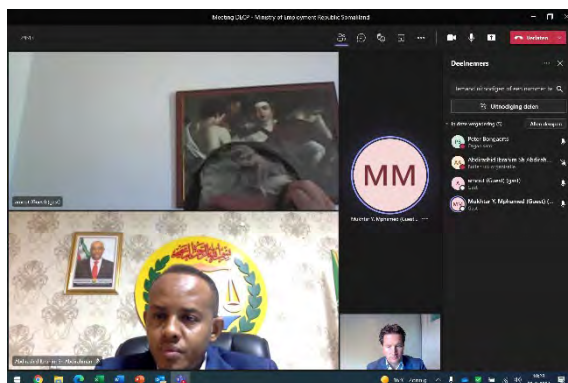
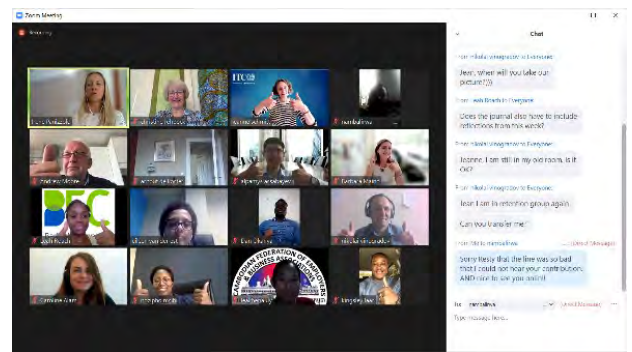
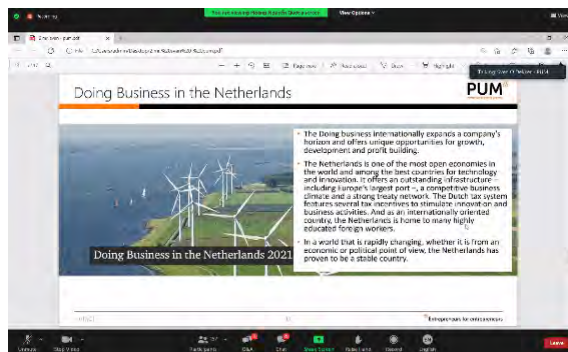
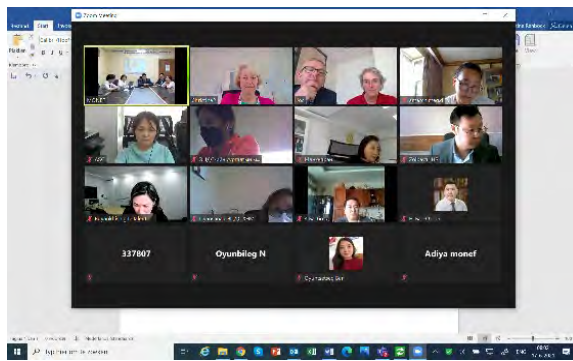
"Traditionally NIR's expertise is in running programmes focusing on improving business conditions in complex markets in partnership with employers' associations and trade unions. In recent times, NIR has deepened its expertise in workplace cooperation and social dialogue, sustainable bank management, innovation, and ESG – environmental, social and corporate governance."

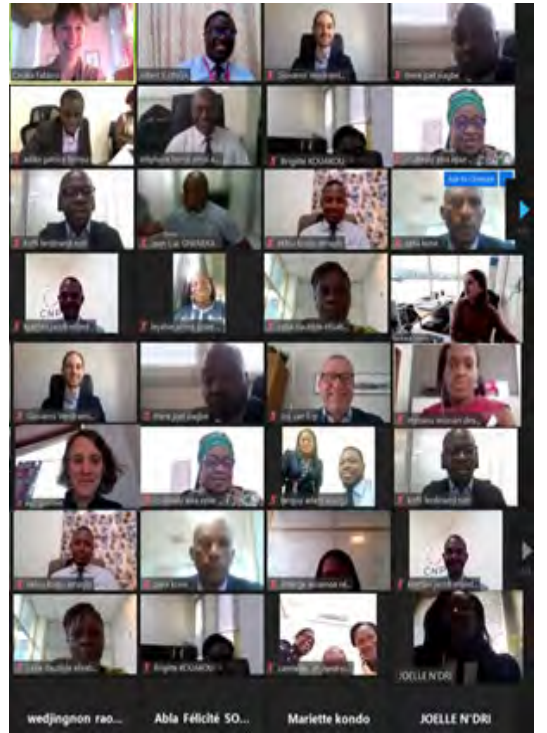
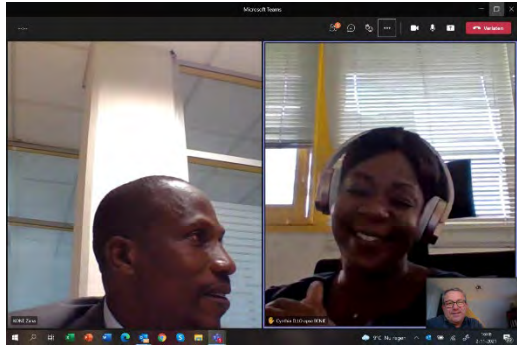
### **What do you think the 2022 edition will look like?**

"The 2022 Forum of Nkelo Bantu will be more targeted and focus on sustainability, trade union/ employer relations and women empowerment. It will be an opportunity to showcase achievements and experiences from Nkelo Bantu activities during the year, such as the Women Leadership Programme that was recently launched. The forum will contain interactive workshops and training sessions around these

topics. Sustainable business is an area that experience increased interest from public and private stakeholders in the DRC and will be explored further during the 2022 edition."

## 2021. ANOTHER YEAR ONLINE. IMPRESSIONS





## DECP PUBLICATIONS

DECP's core activity is to share its knowledge and experience of and with employers' organisations. This includes sharing the knowledge of the DECP experts as well as encouraging exchange of expertise and experiences between employers' organisations themselves. Consultations, workshops and training courses are good ways to do this. But publications are certainly part of that as well. DECP continued to be productive in this area in 2021.

### Membership strategies and policies

Membership is the alpha and omega of an EBMO (Employer and Business Member Organisation): high levels of membership bring representativeness, legitimacy and the resources to serve members well, while low levels of membership create a vicious circle for the EBMO which is difficult to escape. Accordingly, for all EBMOs, be they active at national or sectoral level, membership is an ongoing priority and concern. Together with the ITCILO/ACTEMP, DECP published a very complete manual in this area. 'Membership strategies and policies – A Manual for EBMOs' fills a resource gap by taking an original and highly practical approach to the topic of EBMO membership. This comprehensive guide is highly valued by staff members of employer organisations around the world and is available in English, French and Spanish.

<https://www.decp.nl/publications/manual-on-membership-strategies-and-policies-40059>



### Developing a strategy and roadmap for digitalisation

Digitalisation was already a long-term challenge and it was exacerbated by COVID, which had a direct effect on service delivery, especially training services and hence also a derived effect on employers organisations' income. DECP and NHO (Norway) agreed to provide guidance and practical support in the process of digitalisation in



general and on advisory services and training in particular. DECP asked 'sister' organisation PUM, Netherlands senior experts, to provide expertise on digitalisation. The document 'Developing a strategy and roadmap for digitalisation' is the result of consultations between Peter Bongaerts, managing director of DECP, Arnout de Koster, country manager East Africa at DECP, Magnus Ruderaas and Anna Häggblom, both Senior Advisors and Programme Managers at NHO and Harm Spoor, senior expert and coordinator of the Sector IT Business Consultancy at PUM. Anthony H(arm) Spoor is the author of this paper. The focus of the paper is on how employers' organisations can develop a global digital strategy and roadmap to guide and invest in digitalisation in the next few years. The information and knowledge presented in this paper can be complemented by coaching of the employers' organisations individually by an expert of PUM Netherlands senior experts, if required.

<https://www.decp.nl/publications/decp-pum-and-nho-develop-strategy-guide-on-digitalisation-for-employers-organisations-40323>



### Development of ecosystems. Better do it together

DECP strengthens employers' organisations in emerging countries with the aim of contributing to improving the business climate. Social and economic aspects go hand in hand. The emphasis is increasingly shifting from the national level to sectors and value chains. By working together in clusters – which are also called ecosystems when they have reached full maturity – all participants can benefit. But clusters do not come about by themselves. There must be a certain urgency and mutual trust. DECP applies, among other things, the method of social dialogue to bring parties together. In order to better understand the origin of such ecosystems, and in particular to answer the question of how employer organisations can contribute to the growth of such

powerful partnerships, DECP conducted an exploration of the most successful ecosystem in the Netherlands: the Brainport region.

<https://www.decp.nl/publications/development-of-ecosystems-better-do-it-together-40104>



### **Online and offline learning. How do you get the best out of both?**

The various opportunities of a future of blended online and offline learning and teaching were not missed by DECP, which recognised the value of incorporating both online and offline elements into its activities. With this insight in mind, DECP set out to discover more about the possibilities of blended learning, with the help of a team of six master's students from Maastricht University. DECP has been working for many years with the School of Business and Economics of Maastricht University. 'Learning & Development in Organisations' forms a successful master programme there, which is recognised worldwide officially as top level. After seven weeks of hard work, the student team discovered that the possibilities blended learning offers are endless, which inevitably adds a layer of complexity to what seemed like a simple question. Indeed, after conducting an extensive literature search on blended learning, the students were left with more questions than when they started. To enrich their perspective, the team enlisted the help of 27 experts from DECP's and their own network.

<https://www.decp.nl/publications/online-and-offline-learning-how-to-get-te-best-out-of-both-40048>

### **Strengthening the social dialogue. Customisation per country and per sector**

Every country is different. This is also true for any form of social dialogue. This is why DECP does not present a blueprint for the way in which social partners in countries and sectors should organise their social dialogue, but offers inspiration to explore the

possibilities for a dialogue and to get started with it. The focus is not so much on the content, but on the organisation and strengthening of the dialogue process and the negotiating skills of the participants in that process. In the early years, DECP mainly focused on social dialogue at national level, but in recent years the need for support focused on the dialogue at sectoral level has also increased. There are several reasons for this. The first is that the social dialogue at national level often requires deepening and concretisation at the sectoral level. Secondly, it is precisely the sectors that face major challenges, for example when it comes to increasing the sustainability of value chains and tackling risks such as child labour. Finally, a strong dialogue at sectoral level increases the legitimacy of the sector and the relevance of the sector organisation. For this reason, DECP now also focuses on advice and training aimed at sectoral consultation between trade unions and employers.

An extensive very enlightening brochure has recently been published in English, French and Spanish. We would like to recommend that you take note of these insights. Hard copies can be requested at [info@decp.nl](mailto:info@decp.nl).

<https://www.decp.nl/publications/strengthening-the-social-dialogue-customization-per-country-and-per-sector-43062>



In 2020, DECP published a guide ‘8 lessons learned from the pandemic’. This guide answers the question; ‘what can business member organisations learn from the pandemic and which actions should they undertake now and in the foreseeable future? This publication did not go unnoticed by VM magazine. VM is a Dutch magazine for professionals from associations, industry and professional organisations. The editors decided to devote a separate article to the insights developed by DECP.



## HOW MALAWI'S CEO'S EMBARKED ON AN EXCITING JOURNEY

An exciting journey through the landscape of business and politics against the backdrop of COVID-19 politics. Within 2 years of the establishment of the Board of Trustees of the Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM), the umbrella organisation of employers managed to become a serious player in Malawi's internal affairs. Subsequently, ECAM became a healthy and sustainable organisation.

With hindsight 2019 was the year in which ECAM went through its worst period ever. Yes, the organisation was seen as the representative of Malawi's business community, but income was dwindling and talks with government were usually not at ministers' level. What to do?

The key word in a strategic redesign that ECAM performed with the assistance of DECP was 'CEO'. Because no CEO's were involved in ECAM's work, ministers were not interested. And because CEO's did not know about ECAM, companies were less than eager to pay the membership fee.

*"Influence, what better word to trigger a CEO?"*

ECAM started to approach CEO's. The message they listened to: ECAM has a formal and legal position in Malawi's social dialogue as the representative of the business community. That basically means the right to be heard and to be influential. Influence, what better word to trigger a CEO?



Prior to the strategy session ECAM organised a members meeting on the theme: the world of work post-Covid. More than 60 members showed up.

The rest is history. Starting with 5 CEO's of leading companies the ECAM Board of Trustees soon became the party that the government turned to in order to address economic and social issues, especially when COVID-19 seemed to be a serious threat. Increased visibility and influence of ECAM led to more companies and their CEO wanting to join.

**Partners:**

**EMPLOYERS' CONSULTATIVE ASSOCIATION OF MALAWI**  
**ECAM** The Voice of Employers' in Malawi

**Decp**

**HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE AND 28TH ECAM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021**  
**DECEMBER, 3 (08:30AM - 12:30PM)**

**SUNBIRD NKOPOLA MANGOCHI**

**Keynote Speaker**  
**JANNES VAN DER VELDE**  
 Special Advisor, Dutch Employers Cooperation Programme-DECP, Netherlands

**Keynote Address on** "Why Social Dialogue is important at Enterprise Level"

**OTHER SPEAKERS & TOPICS**

- 1** Update on Malawi 2020 Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Country Profile.  
**MR. GOODLUCK KAYANGE**  
 Ministry of Labour- Occupational, Safety and Health (OSH) Commissioner
- 2** Update on the reform of the Workers Compensation Act and Establishment of the Workers' Compensation Fund  
**MR. ARTHUR NTANDIKA**  
 Ministry of Labour-Workers Compensation Commissioner

**FOR ENQUIRY AND REGISTRATION**  
 For more, call **Olivia Kulemeka** on **0995706495/ 0995189391** or email: **ecam@ecammw.com**

DECP's Jannes van der Velde addressed CEO's and government officials at ECAM's top level meeting. According to Van der Velde the big lesson from the Covid crisis is that business and government need each other more than ever

At a top level meeting at the end of 2021 Malawi's business leaders and Labour Minister Vera Kamtukule, responsible for social dialogue, met. They confirmed that government and business need each other. As a follow up in 2022 they will continue to improve social dialogue, they promised.

ECAM's future looks much brighter than before.

## CGECI IVORY COAST AND DECP GO HAND IN HAND

It was in June 2017 that the first contacts were established between the CGECI delegation and that of Dutch employers on the side-lines of the work of the International Labour Conference in Geneva. Since then, the two organisations have gradually built a cooperation focused particularly on social dialogue, skills development, and membership management for enhanced representativeness of employers' organisations. If this cooperation took on a sub-regional dimension, with the participation of employers from Burkina Faso, Benin and Togo, it was particularly illustrated by the tangible results of the CGECI.



Mr Edouard Ladouyou, head of the Human Capital and Social Relations Department, is the first contact person of DECP at the CGECI (Confédération Générale des Entreprises de Côte d'Ivoire). He highlights the developments of the last five years.

### About the employers' organisation CGECI

"The CGECI brings together 28 Professional Groups and 180 direct member companies, i.e., more than 3,500 companies of all sizes and from all sectors of activity. The contribution of CGECI members to the Ivorian economy is estimated at more than 18,000 billion FCFA in turnover (equivalent 27,5 billion EURO), more than 80% of contributions to state revenue and more than 300,000 jobs.

### The role played by the country in the region at the economic level and cooperation with employers in neighbouring countries

The Ivory Coast continues to be a powerhouse of the UEMOA zone (West African Economic and Monetary Union), of which it represented 39% of the GDP in 2019, according to the BCEAO (Central Bank of West African States). Indeed, despite the slowdown in economic growth observed in 2020 (2% against 6.2% in 2019) due to the health crisis, the Ivorian economy has shown resilience, as reflected in the 6.5% growth rate recorded in 2021. The year 2022 should confirm this recovery in view of the projections made by the Ivorian authorities: the growth rate is expected to reach 7.1%.

### *"Capacity building on the methodology for identifying skills needs and mobilising resources"*

The resilience of the Ivorian economy has been driven by a relatively diversified economy compared to other countries in the UEMOA zone. With its national investment plan for the period 2021-2025, Ivory Coast is part of a dynamic of structural change with particular emphasis on industrialisation, the development of the value chains of its agricultural products, and vigorous, inclusive and job-creating growth.

### About training and use of the CRM system

The CRM implementation process started with the training of 26 CGECI employees. This training took place in a series of 10 webinars organised by the ITCILO and supported by DECP, so that everyone had mastered the tool.

Thereafter, the deployment of the CRM was effective on 28 May 2021, followed by the presentation of the CRM to all employees on 23 June 2021 and to the board of directors.

Finally, an action plan for the implementation of CRM has been established; a training and exercise schedule has been designed to accelerate the adoption of the tool by the staff with the establishment of a Monitoring Committee and Rating.

### **The importance of professional branches as members for the CGECI**

Based on the observation that young people with certain skills have difficulty integrating into the professional world while at the same time companies are having difficulty finding people with certain skills, in 2017 the government undertook to carry out a diagnostic study of the vocational and technical training system. Based on this study, it would create a strategic reform plan to provide an adequate solution to the demand for training and sustainable socio-professional integration of an increasing number of young people and meet the needs of the labour market.



Edouard Ladouyou

This diagnostic study led to the signing of a framework partnership agreement between the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training, the Professional Organisations of Employers including the CGECI, and the Consular Chambers. The objective of the agreement is to professionalise the system around seven strategic axes, including one devoted to the school/company partnership, which aims to adapt training curricula to the needs of the economy. In this relationship, the 13 professional branches, led by professional branch committees led by the private sector, ensure the expression of business needs and therefore play a major role.

These committees as well as the

National Council of Professional Branches which supervise them have benefited from DECP's capacity building programme on the methodology for identifying skills needs and mobilising resources. CGECI is thankful for DECP's technical and financial support.

### **Technical support by DECP for the development of the training portfolio and the progress made by the CGECI training centre**

In the field of development of the training portfolio, the following results should be noted for 2021:

- 02 free webinars organised;
- 02 masterclasses carried out;
- 05 training seminars carried out;

- 133 participants took part in trainings, including 14 companies visited, 63 participants in seminars and masterclasses and 56 participants in free webinars;
- 28 participants come from 11 member companies with a financial contribution of 690,000 FCFA
- 35 participants come from 11 non-member companies of the CGECI with a financial contribution of 2,695,000 FCFA
- 23 companies expressed an intention to join CGECI as member and the list of potential members was shared with the CGECI member service; 70 end-of-training certificates were drawn up;
- 3,385,000 FCFA achieved as turnover from the marketing of five training seminars and two masterclasses.

### The DECP council for sectoral social dialogue

One of the pillars of DECP is the development of social dialogue which is embraced by the CGECI. All cooperation with DECP owes its effectiveness and relevance to the technical insight of experts like Arnout de Koster, a seasoned expert and former programme director of the ILO/Turin Centre on behalf of employers. He was able to guide our expectations and improve the content of training. In November 2021 a follow up training was organised by the DECP and the Dutch trade union CNV Internationaal in which both staff members of the CGECI, member companies and trade unions participated. This is next step towards further implementation at the sector level.

### Weekly messages

The linchpin of cooperation between DECP and West African Employers, including the CGECI, is Jos van Erp, DECP country manager for West African countries. He gave impetus to everything and maintains the dynamics of cooperation between the employers organisations and DECP as well as among the employers themselves. His short e-mail messages delivered to the West African networks at the beginning of each week help to cement this oh-so-useful relationship in terms of sharing experiences and supporting the development actions of employers.”





### CONTRIBUTING WITH MY TEAM TO DECP

Charlotte Nöthel, also called Lotti, is originally from Bonn, Germany. She has a background in educational sciences and experience with the didactic conception of online and offline learning and blended learning formats. As a student of the master programme “Learning & Development in Organisations” at Maastricht University, she was part of a team that worked out an assignment for DECP in the field of skills development. Lotti graduated in July and already had a challenging job lined up with an international company. Lotti looks back on her experiences with DECP.

“I decided to study in the Netherlands because Dutch universities are very internationally oriented, giving me the opportunity to meet students from different backgrounds and nationalities as well as to improve my English skills. In addition, the University of Maastricht follows a problem-based learning approach, which allowed me to engage in actual business cases and get in touch with companies and professionals from my field of study. I was enrolled in the one-year master’s programme ‘Learning and Development in Organisations’.



Lotti Nöthel

During the fourth of six periods, I participated in the project with DECP. The team assignment was an opportunity for us students to consult a company on a specific topic in the field of Learning and Development. We had about eight weeks to complete the project and ended up with a detailed, theoretically sound report and a practical toolkit, also taking into account best practices of well-known companies. Finally, we published an article to summarise our main findings.

The team I joined was asked by DECP to explore the concept of blended learning. The research question of the project was: Online and Offline Learning. How do you get the best out of both? Hence, our aim was to find out how online and offline learning can best be integrated in order to maximise learning effects. To do this, we thoroughly looked into scientific literature, but also conducted 23 interviews with professionals. In the end, we came up with seven concrete action steps that need to be taken into account in order to fully exploit the potential of blended learning.

I decided to work on the project with DECP because I was very interested in DECP as an organisation and especially in the fact that DECP promotes workplace learning in emerging countries. At the same time, the assignment dealt with a highly relevant

topic. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how important flexible and remote working is today. Therefore, learning opportunities for employees need to be adapted accordingly. Blended learning is a very comprehensive concept and offers numerous possibilities to integrate different learning approaches. Thus, it enables companies not only to design learning more flexibly, but also individually. Hence, this topic holds great significance in the field of learning and development and illustrated to me the future of learning in the workplace.

*“DECP promotes workplace learning in emerging countries”*

During this project, I have learned in many ways. For example, I gained further insights into blended learning and benefited from the experiences of professionals. Moreover, this project was a great opportunity to develop consulting skills, such as professional appearance and transparent communication. We also learned to collaborate intensively as a team, turning our differences into strengths in order to deliver high-quality results in just eight weeks. This project made me grow not only professionally but also personally through networking with many different people, including my fellow students, DECP staff and professionals from many different industries, countries and backgrounds.

I successfully graduated on 31 July 2021. I am currently working as a Learning Designer at Accenture. I enjoy my work a lot because I can continue exploring the topic of innovative workplace learning and I get to apply my didactic skills to different learning formats and industries. Working with DECP helped me a lot in the process of finding a job. The project made me realise that I wanted to work as a consultant in the field of Learning and Development, helping companies optimise their learning solutions. In addition, I learned how to tackle such a project, from defining the project scope to developing the final deliverables. My experience with DECP not only helped me during my job interview, but I often think back to the project in my daily work as a Learning Designer.

*“Blended learning offers numerous possibilities to integrate different learning approaches”*

I hope DECP continues to collaborate with Maastricht University, as I have benefited a lot from this project. I would like to thank DECP for trusting us and providing us with this valuable learning experience. A special thanks also goes to Jos van Erp, who supported us throughout the process and always provided valuable feedback. It was a pleasure working with DECP!”

## DIALOGUE TABLES LEAD TO JOINT DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR DEPARTMENT OF LA PAZ

Social partners, knowledge institutions and governments presented a plan for the economic and social recovery of the La Paz department in Bolivia. This plan concerns ten proposals, ranging from improving the infrastructure to setting up a technology park and the promotion of sustainable energy generation from water, sun and wind. The setting up of the plan was an initiative of the Federación de Empresarios privados de La Paz (FEPLP) with the financial support of DECP.

In September-November of 2021, the proposals were elaborated at seven tables - committees- on human capital, connections, clean energy, production development, diversification of the economy, as well as on general themes such as financing, healthcare and the business climate and on the 'orange economy'. The orange economy consists of the tourist, cultural, gastronomic sectors and the creative industry.

### Institutionalising the economic and social dialogue

Such is the satisfaction with this economic and social dialogue for the development of the La Paz department that the parties propose to institutionalise it and involve more public and private organisations. The results should be worked out in the planning of the department, municipalities and university and in the strategies of the private organisations. A point of attention is attracting public and private funding to implement the measures proposed by the tables.



“The work carried out and led by the FEPLP greatly exceeded the expectations”, says Ms Soraya Fernández, manager of the FEPLP. “It had not even been planned to hold a forum or achieve the signing of a pact to establish a work agenda to be executed in the 2022.”

### Improving infrastructure

Setting up a technology park and a university innovation hub should lead to better cooperation between entrepreneurs, governments and education. The north of the region in particular must be better served by better roads. Generating and exporting

renewable energy from hydropower, solar and wind can generate additional income for the department.

In general, governments need to do more to facilitate exports from the La Paz department, encourage consumption of local products and create a favourable business environment, thereby creating more jobs. The latter includes legal certainty, investment protection and reduced administrative burdens.

Finally, the parties argue in favour of stimulating the 'orange economy', with tourism as the driver of the cultural, gastronomic and other creative sectors. These are all sectors with great potential to increase GDP.

*“Governments need to create a favourable business environment”*

#### **Endorsement of 10 proposals**

The ten proposals are included in a statement endorsed by, among others, the governor of the department, the mayors of La Paz and El Alto, the president of the federation of entrepreneurs FEPLP, the affiliated trade associations and the regional trade union COD, the rector of the university UMSA and the chairman of the vocational training Infocal.

According to Fernández, the challenge for FEPLP now is to consolidate the dialogue platform. “The platform must be strengthened with the concurrence of major actors, to achieve unity in achieving the objectives.”



Fruit market in Bolivia

## WE CAN TRAVEL AGAIN!

The corona pandemic still has the world in its grip. But the impact seems to be diminishing. And we are learning to better deal with the risks and limitations. Therefore, the first trips of DECP country managers could be planned again at the end of 2021. It was a little awkward, but the enthusiasm overcame the hesitations. Let's hear from three DECP experts about their first adventures back in the field.

Jannes van der Velde travelled to Malawi with the aim of organising strategic meetings between the employers' organisation ECAM and the top of the business community and to accelerate the implementation of a CEO strategy. Jannes van der Velde: "We were able to make excellent preparations online, but the real work has to be done on the spot. You have to be able to look each other in the eye. It was a relief to be able to pack my bags again because the knowledge that DECP can transfer and that ECAM can use was in danger of sinking into a swamp. Working remotely is a very limited resource. COVID-19 is hardly a theme in Malawi.

### *"The magic of a cup of coffee"*

Everything ran smoothly. The only problem is waiting for another test result, because you cannot enter the plane without a Covid vaccination certificate and a negative Covid test. Advice: always come up with a plan B if you unexpectedly test positive and are unable to travel. What are you going to do? How will you use your time?



Jannes van der Velde

I was able to have in-depth conversations with various players within and around ECAM. For example, during a breakfast session organised by us, I received an invitation from a Malawian minister to continue the discussion the next day. It was a great opportunity to plead ECAM's case, and that would never have happened if I hadn't been physically present. We are moving towards a new balance in working between digital and on-site. Do not overestimate the possibilities of digital working. Physical presence offers psychological opportunities and improvisation possibilities that are not possible digitally. That is the magic of a cup of coffee or tea."

Peter Boorsma was happy to be able to go to Latin America again. In November he paid visits to Peru and Bolivia. Peter Boorsma: "In Peru, my goal was to encourage the Agap agricultural employers' organisation to participate in the social dialogue in Peru through talks, information, meetings and the offer of support from DECP. In Bolivia, together with a Dutch PUM expert, supporting the initiative of the regional entrepreneurs' organisations to strengthen the tourism ecosystem.

During a year and a half of pandemic, we managed to keep contacts in both Peru and Bolivia warm. It wasn't just about business stuff. We also sent each other messages with birthdays and holidays. Sometimes we organised a Zoom meeting, just to catch

up. In both countries, DECP has been able to fund some successful projects, such as a membership retention programme for the regional federations in Bolivia. That goes well for a while, but after a year you still get the impression that the distance is growing and the collaboration is functioning at 70%.

I was looking forward to traveling again, but the night before departure I had some restless sleep. Did I have all the necessary documents to enter the countries? Had I forgotten something? And what if I tested positive in Peru and couldn't travel on to Bolivia?



The restrictive measures were successful. The most annoying thing was that you always have to wear a mask in both Peru and Bolivia, even on the street. I understood that, by the way: these are countries with few IC beds. They try everything to prevent infections. It was also very nice to see the people from our partner organisations again after almost two years. It felt like coming home. And in the end, of course, it's about what you can achieve together. Both the board and many members of Agap now seem convinced that it is good to change course and seek dialogue with the unions. That is a drastic decision. That change in thinking only comes about when there is confidence that this is the right way. And helping to build that trust is not possible from behind a screen; you have to be able to smell each other, so to speak.

I believe that if this pandemic is ever over, we will continue to use the opportunities that online contact offers, but in addition to the on-site contact. It also depends on the nature of the contact. If you already know each other well, you can do more online. Technical matters can easily be discussed in a video call. But when it comes to things further down the Maslov pyramid – things that affect people's fears – then you have to stand side by side. Literally."

### *"During the pandemic we managed to keep the contacts warm"*

Dirk Joesse adds his experiences to those of Jannes and Peter. "I visited Suriname together with my colleague Jannes van der Velde. Suriname is not a primary partner country of DECP, but we do have a shared colonial past. Fortunately, there is a warm relationship between the two countries. We were invited for a short advisory process. I have worked in 35 countries in my career of more than 45 years. For DECP I am active as a trainer-advisor in the field of social dialogue in Vietnam, Indonesia, South East Asia and East Africa.

During the pandemic, I was happy that we could at least talk to and see each other via ZOOM or TEAMS. You get used to it, but you miss personal contact and informal conversations. In my work, a lot is about relationships and feeling. One of the goals of social dialogue is to teach people to work with different (appropriate) behaviour and

attitudes to achieve goals. For that you have to see each other. During the concrete preparation of my trip, which I thought was a gratifying moment, I forgot to pack basic things – like a toothbrush and toothpaste. The routine is out. But those are just minor inconveniences. We were received very warmly in Suriname. It's unbelievable how much we share with each other. It is heart-warming to know that there are people waiting for you after a long flight.”

*“There are people waiting for you after a long flight”*

Let's hope the impact of the pandemic on the collaboration between DECP and its partners fades soon. In the end, personal encounters are a big part of it.



Dirk Joose



DUTCH EMPLOYERS COOPERATION PROGRAMME



## SECTOR-LEVEL SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN INDONESIA

Broad social welfare – it's not just something we strive for in the Netherlands. Also in Indonesia, as a fast-growing and rapidly developing nation, the pursuit of broad social welfare is on the agenda. For labour relations, this means harmonious industrial relations between employers and trade unions. And these will not come by themselves, but require a common ground, long-term investment in each other and the will to come out better together.

With the knowledge and experience from the Dutch polder model, DECP has been investing for a number of years, together with the international department of the trade union CNV, in building social dialogue skills in Indonesia. DECP and CNV Internationaal are working with two social partners on the Indonesian side who see the importance of social dialogue for the future of their country and want to work on it: employers' organisation APINDO and trade union KSBSI.



*Training of trainers Social dialogue Garment sector Central Java October 2021*

Together, DECP, CNV, APINDO and KSBSI have been working for several years in the "Social Dialogue Indonesia" programme to improve the social dialogue in Indonesia. This started at the national and regional level with the training by Dutch experts (Dirk Joesse of DECP and Henk van Beers of CNV Internationaal) of Indonesian "social dialogue agents" on the principles of social dialogue, negotiation skills and dialogue techniques. The trained social dialogue agents in turn passed on the lessons to companies and employees ("train the trainers"), so that an oil spot effect was created and social dialogue skills were spread across the archipelago.

The palm oil sector in East Kalimantan and the garment sector in Central Java have also experienced this in 2021. Two training-of-trainers sessions were organised for both sectors, in order to lay a foundation for long-term social dialogue. With various introductions, teaching modules, practical trainings and role plays, this was given substance. Obviously, this was largely exploratory in nature and its fruits cannot be reaped immediately, but the seed has been planted. And what is promising is that



both sectors are interested in extending training-of-trainers programs for social dialogue starting in 2022. Management and participants expressed their enthusiasm about the practical use of social dialogue in the short term: dialogue between all stakeholders has started about the effects of important issues such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic with outcomes in favour of all involved.

*“APINDO and KSBSI work hard to spread the social dialogue belief”*

APINDO and KSBSI meanwhile continue to work hard to spread the ‘social dialogue belief’ and examples of its practical use in Indonesia. With, among other things, a comprehensive instruction book and a dedicated social dialogue website, an attempt is made to convince stakeholders in Indonesia of the added value of social dialogue. They are doing so because they are convinced of one thing: social dialogue contributes to broad social prosperity. And that is good for everyone.



## TOWARDS A NEW FUTURE

This annual report is about what it should be about: the support that DECP has given to employers' organisations in partner countries in 2021. It gives an impression of our work, with a strong focus on the themes of membership and social dialogue over the past year. This work has taken place online to a large extent, with accompanying limitations, but fortunately has been able to progress.

### *“Evaluate and merge”*

Less visible are two processes that took place in the second half of 2021 which are strongly decisive for DECP. The first is the independent evaluation of the programme and the second is the merger discussions with PUM Netherlands senior experts.

Evaluate and merge. That is like looking back and looking forward. And in the meantime, the store must remain open. That feeling is beautifully captured in a painting by MC Escher, where birds flying to the left (looking back) simultaneously fly to the right (looking forward) and merge into the harmony of now (the continuous operation).



In analogy with the 'two birds' by Escher (1938). "The Osprey" by ©Génol, 2021

First, let's take a look at the birds flying back, or the evaluation. The DECP programme is funded to a large extent by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One of the agreements with the Ministry is to have an independent evaluation carried out at the end of the 2018-2022 programme period to see how relevant, effective, unique, etc. the programme was. At the time of writing this annual report, the results of the evaluation are not yet known. But looking back, we can already say that a lot has happened at DECP since 2018.

We have made our work more measurable, for instance. In the first programme year 2018, we carried out a baseline assessment (on no less than 94 indicators concerning the strategy that focuses on capacity building of employers' organisations and social dialogue) in order to assess the initial situation of our partner organisations. After

that, we started monitoring a more limited set of 18 socio-economic indicators every year. The picture shows overall progress among employers' organisations in the 22 countries in which we work. The underlying results vary across countries, as the work is more unruly in one country than in another. But overall, we have definitely supported employers' organisations in their professionalisation process.

Looking back, we have also taken important new directions in recent years. We have built up relationships with employers' organisations in the West African region and are now running major support projects in these countries. In the first years of this programme period, the theme of skills development was further developed. And we quickly switched to online support in the difficult COVID years. In addition to advice and coaching, we have also started to financially support concrete projects to help employers' organisations with retaining members and developing social dialogue.



Peter Bongaerts, looking back and forward

The evaluation team has taken a broad approach, with a lot of desk research, interviews, research and a number of in-depth case studies. I'm curious about the results, which hopefully will show not only what's going well, but also where DECP can improve to operate in a more effective way. In the end, we want to offer the best support with the highest added value, because we continue to believe in the importance of strong employers' organisations as an influential voice for socio-economic policy in countries.

Now for the birds flying forward, or the merger. In the summer of 2021, we expressed the intention to explore with PUM Netherlands senior experts whether a merger could lead to a more impactful organisation. PUM is also a peer-to-peer support programme, but it focuses on expert support for SME entrepreneurs. The underlying idea for a merger is that support for (clusters of) entrepreneurs and support for

employers' organisations that are committed to the business environment can together accelerate entrepreneurship in emerging countries.

We have further developed this in a number of workshops and in five working groups in the second half of 2021, with a passage to the beginning of 2022. The exploration showed that PUM and DECP fit well together. Together we have a stronger proposition for private sector development than we do as separate organisations. Together with the positive results from the due diligence investigation at the end of

2021, there was a good basis for the merger decision, which was finally taken at the beginning of 2022.

*“Accelerate entrepreneurship in emerging countries”*

Merging means changing. For example, it will be a change for DECP to transform from a group of paid experts who have supported employers’ organisations over the years to a volunteer organisation. But merging also means creating opportunities, such as opportunities to accelerate entrepreneurial ecosystems in emerging countries in synergy between SME expertise and employer organisation expertise. After all, that’s what we are ultimately aiming for: more entrepreneurship in emerging countries as a driver for sustainable growth and decent jobs.

Coming from a solid past, with constructive recommendations resulting from the evaluation, we set course for the future: a future together with PUM. I am convinced that this will be a successful future and look forward to this strong and vibrant partnership.

Peter Bongaerts

Director

## ABOUT FACTS AND FIGURES

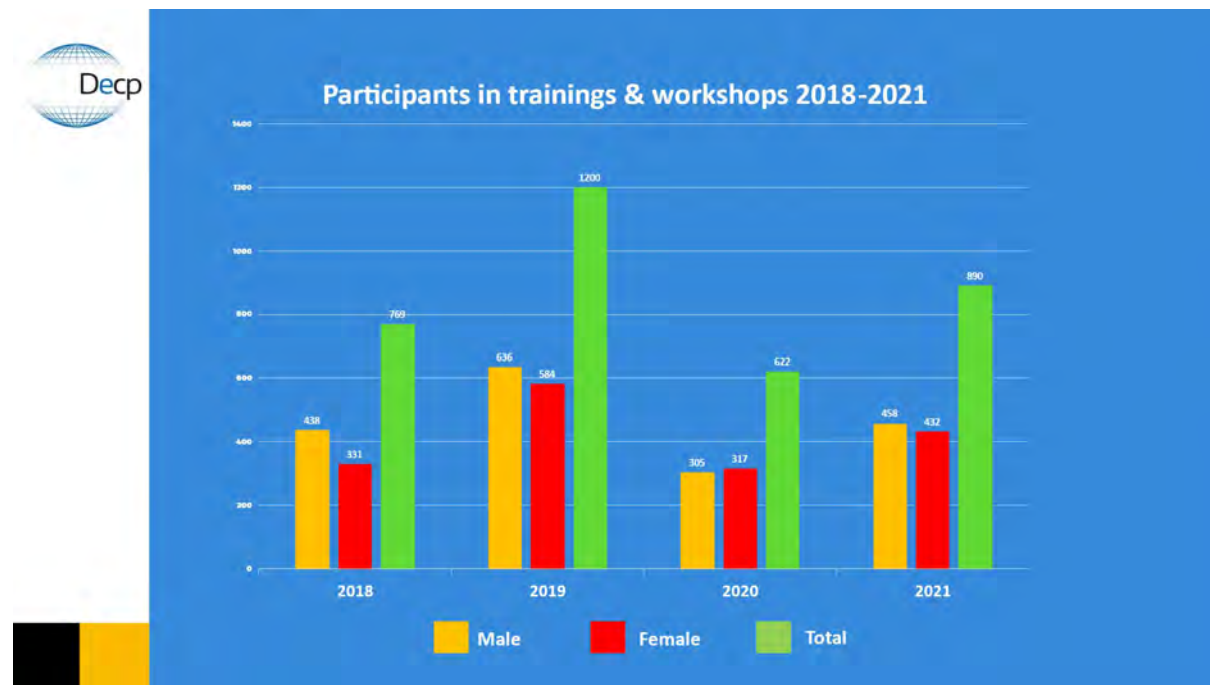
Although the pandemic has continued into 2021, contrary to what was expected at the end of 2020, DECP has succeeded in continuing its activities. After the initial decline in 2020, the number of activities in 2021 (124) is even higher than in 2019 (114). This, of course, has everything to do with the fact that most of the activities took place online. There is much less organisational pressure, the costs are lower and the threshold to participate is lower. On the other hand, the expected return from, for example, training courses, workshops and webinars is lower than from face-to-face activities. Above all, let us conclude that we have learned a lot together. For example, about a blended future and how to organise and manage it.

The number of training sessions and workshops was significantly lower than before the pandemic. In 2021 it was even lower than in 2020. Nevertheless, meaningful training courses of strategic value have once again taken place in the past year – for example, in the field of the installation and use of CRM, membership management of EBMOs and social dialogue. The strategic collaboration with ITCILO (the training centre of the International Labour Organisation ILO) has once again proven to be of great importance. As early as 2020, this DECP collaboration partner had already succeeded in transforming its entire range of training courses, which normally take place on campus in Turin or on site, into online training methodologies. Research has shown that the way ITCILO does this is highly appreciated by the participants, their colleagues and supervisors. That doesn't just refer to excellent trainings as such, but also to the lasting positive effect of the training efforts.



It is true that there is a certain amount of 'Zoom fatigue' that decreases attention and thus the learning effect. Let's reiterate here our hopes that we can provide and run a combination of online and face-to-face trainings in the near future. As it looks now - early 2022 - this seems to be the new reality from which we will all benefit.

Naturally, DECP has also financially supported several dozen projects in 2021. These projects all relate to membership management and social dialogue development. It goes without saying that DECP also supplements financial support with technical advice in these cases, albeit at a distance. After all, the nature of DECP is to provide knowledge and experience and to discuss and develop strategies together that suit the unique situation of the partner, not to finance projects as such. This form of support will therefore be phased out as technical support can increase. Of course, this development is in line with the decreasing impact of the pandemic and with it the possibility of meeting each other more often on site. As described elsewhere in this report, the first missions to various countries have taken place again. Several trips by DECP experts are also planned in the first quarter of 2022.



The number of participants also shows that DECP was able to recover well from the downturn in 2020. 2019 was a top year with 1200 participants. But that was not so surprising, because in that year, in particular, the activities in West Africa fully matured. However, in 2021 DECP and its partners far exceeded the total number of participants in 2018, then a total of 769 compared to 890 in 2021. The ratio between male and female participants has not changed much.

Let these facts and figures make it clear that DECP is always there for its partners. In good times and bad times. Together we are building the future!

## LIST OF COUNTRIES AND PARTNERS IN 2021

Country	Partner(s)
<b>Bangladesh</b>	Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF)
<b>Benin</b>	Conseil National du Patronat du Bénin (CNPB), CNP-Benin
<b>Bolivia</b>	Federación de Entidades Empresariales Privadas de Cochabamba (FEPC)
	Federación de Empresarios Privados de Chuquisaca (FEPCh)
	Federación de Empresarios Privados de Santa Cruz (FEPSC)
	Federación de Empresarios Privados de Tarija (FEPT)
	Federación de Empresarios Privados de La Paz (FEPLP)
	Federación de Empresarios Privados de Potosi (FEPP)
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	Conseil National du Patronat Burkinabè (CNPB)
<b>Burundi</b>	Association des Employeurs du Burundi (AEB)
<b>Cambodia</b>	Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA)
<b>Ghana</b>	Ghana Employers' Association (GEA)
<b>Colombia</b>	Asociación Nacional de Empresarios de Colombia (ANDI)
<b>Indonesia</b>	Indonesian Employers' Association (APINDO)
<b>Ivory Coast</b>	Confédération Générale des Entreprises de Côte d'Ivoire (CGECI)
<b>Kenya</b>	Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE)
<b>Malawi</b>	Employers' Consultative Association of Malawi (ECAM)
<b>Mongolia</b>	Mongolian Employers' Federation (MONEF)
<b>Pakistan</b>	Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP)
<b>Nepal</b>	Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI)
<b>Philippines</b>	Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP)
<b>Peru</b>	Sociedad Nacional de Industrias (SNI)
<b>Tanzania</b>	Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE)
<b>Togo</b>	Conseil National du Patronat du Togo (CNPT)
<b>Uganda</b>	Federation of Uganda Employers (FUE)
<b>Vietnam</b>	Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and Vietnam Women Entrepreneurs Council (VWEC)
<b>Zambia</b>	Zambia Federation of Employers (ZFE)

## ABOUT DECP

The Dutch Employers' Cooperation Programme (DECP) is an initiative of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and employers' organisation VNO-NCW. DECP strengthens employers' organisations in emerging countries so that they can improve the local business climate, by offering advice, workshops and networks and – since the COVID-19 pandemic – small-scale financial support for projects. A team of (Dutch) experts works together with employers' and entrepreneurial organisations in 22 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Join us at [www.DECP.nl](http://www.DECP.nl).



The DECP team



## THE DECP ORGANISATION

In December 2021 the DECP board consisted of:



**INGRID THIJSEN**  
President of VNO-NCW  
(Chairperson)



**FRIED KAAZEN**  
Vice-Chairman of Royal MKB Nederland  
(Vice-Chairman and treasurer)



**RAYMOND PUTS**  
Director General AWWN  
(Member)



MAXIME VERHAGEN

Chairperson of Bouwend Nederland  
(Member)



CEES OUDSHOORN

Director General of VNO-NCW  
(Member)

## THANK YOU

The DECP team thanks all the people and organisations who have contributed to the preparation of this report.

L'équipe DECP remercie toutes les personnes et organisations qui ont contribué à la préparation de ce rapport.

El equipo DECP agradece a las personas y organizaciones que han contribuido a la preparación de este informe.

Back cover: The world is getting digital, no matter where you are



### Visitors

Bezuidenhoutseweg 12, The Hague  
The Netherlands

### Postal address

P.O. Box 93002  
2509 AA The Hague

### Phone

(+31)(0)70 3490 186

### E-mail

[info@decp.nl](mailto:info@decp.nl)

### Website

[www.decp.nl](http://www.decp.nl)

