

June 27-Evening Meeting - NOTES - Women's Forum

Participants:

CGTP-Women's Federation - ISAT- Gender and Economy

Subject: Women, work and Health and Safety

Workplace health and safety issues - not priority with unions nor governments

"Unions want to talk about money-not health"

"Governments are only concerned with reproductive health".

Maria Bastides, in charge of a national plan for equality.

"We have to bring forth more documents of change"

The commission is making new regulations for women's issues on Health and Safety.

"The issue is education -- Companies have to be made aware there are obstacles for women.-Guidelines for women's rights are economic rights."

Focus should be on how informal sector contributes. For example; domestic workers, which most of the participants present at the Women's Forum employ, are not even considered "workers".

Note: We learned in Pinto Ricodo (IDPA project) San Martin area; Mothers' Clubs, a Peruvian institution is taken over as a political organisation.

President, of the Federation of Soup Kitchens:

As result of a ten year, Industry-Labour study women volunteers can celebrate a small but important victory; Health promoters (volunteers) are now recognised, for their work, by government. This recognition is in the form of a small honorarium.

Women, who comprise 75% of all workers, operate 15000 soup kitchen organisations in Peru, also provide superior health care and prenatal instruction.

These women, who are responsible for battling against poverty, are essentially "unpaid labour".

CGTP- "children don't sleep well, because of poor nutrition - children cannot learn well."

As the issue of child labour, the hazards of working at home are not addressed. Such as: Domestic workers - Also kids making fireworks and shampoos (using chemicals). "When you work at home you think there is no risk"

Women, who work in the fields, as in the Asparagus Industry for example, have many problems. Studies showed, 66 out of 100 workers had job-related accidents. There isn't the money to pay for medicines. Fifty-three out of 100 workers have fungus, and respiratory problems, due to work in cold conditions,

Massive headaches are frequent- Single mothers worry about kids who are left at home.

Women wake at 3-4am to prepare food for family, then go to work form 5;00am-7:00pm. There is no overtime paid.

Point of Interest: Asparagus which is nutritional food, is not sold locally, nor distributed amongst workers.

Note: CGTP proposed a Bill to "share family work"

Health issues in Soup Kitchen work:
Heavy work- causes injuries such as collapsed bladders and hernias.

Women who work in factories, making chains. Piece work which is based on length . Work in very poor lighting conditions.

Pregnancy in young women of 14-18 years indicates lack of proper sex education.

Pregnancy is not seen as a "condition", result in pregnant women working in toxic environment.

Zoila Alvarado- Telephone workers' union.

When the telephone company laid off 1000 employees, of which 500 were women. Only 8 women operators were left in the union. There wasn't a package offered.

Sisters won case against company, because their union supported the women employees.
"We fight in the street -- Our voice has to be very loud."

Women's participation was key in the 28-day strike that followed. Four nights in a row they slept in company doorway-did not let anyone in. After 4 days the men took over. Soup kitchens were established on the street.

"We shamed the company into recognizing rights"

Did not win 100 percent, but there is now respect and dialogue.

"Protests should have been done before privatization"