

GLU Research Group 2014: “Empowering workers’ rights and visibility in mega-sports events: A Manual of labour campaigns to secure workers’ rights”

Rationale

Sports events in today’s neoliberal globalization have embodied the full aspects of a commercialized sports spectacle. Beyond the lavish preparations, expensive pageantry and billion-dollar profits, the glitzy world of global sports events overshadowed the cultural heart of sports: the collective spirit of teams, fair play and friendly competition from different nations. Zirin (2014) in his book *“Brazil’s Dance With the Devil: The World Cup, the Olympics, and the Fight for Democracy”*, likened mega-sports events as “Trojan horses” due to the capitalist assaults on the people when a country hosts a global sports event. The implications are common across the host countries: massive demolitions, gentrification, urban poor cleansing and in Brazil, even changing criminal laws to suit the demands of mega-sports regulatory bodies.

Many have written about the social costs of spectacular sports events but few have spotlighted the human and labor costs in preparation for these events. A decade has passed when international trade unions and a few global civil society groups launched the “Play Fair” Campaign in the 2004 Olympics in Athens. The major objective of this campaign coalition is to unmask the dark side of global sports events where sportswear workers in developing countries work in low wage, sweatshop conditions, and denied of labor rights. From this on forward, the trade union and civil society campaign coalition on mega-sports events have continued onto the 2008 Beijing Olympics and 2010 Vancouver Olympics winning some promises from famous sportswear brand names to agree on corporate social responsibility. The framing of the sports event campaigns broadened to highlight for example the unsafe working conditions and low wages of construction workers while building massive structures for the 2010 South Africa World Cup. The campaign on workers’ rights for garment workers for sportswear in developing countries such as Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines came in full force during the 2012 London Olympics. . The campaign was the outcome of a research report by the Playfair alliance for the Playfair 2012 Olympics campaign entitled “Fair Games? Human rights of workers in Olympic 2012 supplier factories” (see Playfair website).

A decade hence, trade union and civil society campaigns for social and labor rights come in full circle in the eruption of social protests leading up to the 2014 Brazil World Cup. Now more than ever, there is an urgent need for social movements to critically engage the key players in mega-sports events such as the regulatory bodies (i.e. FIFA, IOC), governments of host countries/cities, media and corporations who benefit at the expense of workers’ rights. After labor exploitation scandals were exposed in the construction industry in Qatar and garment sportswear factories in Indonesia, Bangladesh, etc., there is a growing interest to

examine the past and current labor campaigns on sports events, gather lessons from campaign experiences, and propose avenues on how these can be strengthened for future campaigns. After ten years of experience in labour campaigns surrounding sports events, it is important to take stock of the knowledge and strategies through the years and offer methods in strengthening strategies for future campaigns.

Research objectives

1. Examine past and present labour campaign strategies in the construction and textile/garment industries around the major sports events;
2. Produce a manual that draws lessons from past campaigns and provide alternative analyses and strategies to strengthen future labour campaigns around mega-sports events; and
3. Disseminate the manual/toolkit in cooperation with global and local trade union movements.

Significance and research gap

Much of the media critique on global sports events have focused on the lavish lifestyles and bribery scandals of sports executives in international sports governing bodies. Studies on the social costs of hosting global sports events are fortunately being undertaken (see Cottle, 2011, "A legacy for Whom?). Most often than not, critiquing sports events can be alienating if not risky to go against society's sports pride. At the risk of being branded as 'killjoys' and 'naysayers', engaging critically the mega-sports events involve appreciating the importance of global sports and critiquing the context around these events.

The combined initiatives of international trade unions and international civil society groups under the Play Fair campaign produced quality reports namely: "Clearing the Hurdles: Steps in Improving Wages and Working Conditions in Global Sportswear Industry"; "Toying with Workers' Rights: A Report on Producing Merchandise for the London 2012 Olympic Games"; and "Fair Games?: Human Rights of Workers in Olympic 2012 supplier factories". Studies on South Africa, Brazil, Germany and the UK examined the stakeholders in global sports events such as FIFA/IOC and its corporate partners; the host nations, and role of trade unions in ensuring workers' rights in industries affected during these events.

Examining the campaign strategies of labour campaigns in the last ten years on a comprehensive level have not been undertaken despite the existence of in-depth analyses and research on strengthening labour campaigns around global sports events (see McGuire and Schwetz 2008, Cottle 2011, Sauviat, et.al. 2011). Among the reflections that initially emerged from the experience of global trade unions involved in the campaign has been the need for a coordinated campaign strategy at the national/local level trade unions around mega-sports

events. This research project intends to assemble the separate experiences and evaluations on labour's strategies for campaigns and mobilizations at different stages of their involvement in mega sports events.

This research aims to examine the experiences of labour campaigns on sports events in two industries namely textile/garments and construction. On both industries, organized labour has launched sports events campaigns since 2004 under the global campaign coalition of "Playfair". Through the years, the campaigns on the two industries have taken on a life of its own based on the different contexts upon which the industries were situated and the differing issues the workers on both industries have to confront. Based on the impact studies commissioned by the TUC (UK) and BWI (Geneva), different issues, lessons and campaign strategies were shaped and experienced in the last 10 years. The trade unions from the two industries organized campaigns on two different sports events namely the Olympics and the World Cup. The garment/textile unions targeted the IOC and the global sports brands corporations while the construction unions targeted FIFA and host country governments.

The labour campaign for workers in the textile/garment industries producing sportswear raised issues on wages and workers rights along the industry supply chains. In the construction industry, the labour campaign raised decent work conditions and workers' rights of local and migrant construction workers building the mega-complexes undertaken by host governments to comply with the strict requirements of FIFA. These connected but disparate labour campaigns on sports events produced innovative campaign strategies on different dimensions and levels: public awareness campaigns, negotiations for global framework agreements on decent work along the supply chains, organizing migrant workers, negotiations with host governments, public exposure of workers' rights violations, and many more. But a constant aspect in the labour campaigns was the importance of research that were conducted before and after the labour campaigns. This is the space and context upon which this research may find its relevance in examining the outcomes, lessons and dynamics of the experiences and strategies of sports events labour campaigns.

Research questions:

Among the findings of the impact studies on the campaigns from the two industries, one significant recommendation has surfaced. It was recommended that joint specialized researches need to be encouraged and to develop country-based projects tackling freedom of association and living wage issues. In analyzing the different experiences, lessons learned, and strategies from the past labour campaigns around mega-sports events, what are the areas of convergence between the differing campaign strategies from the two industries? How can a comprehensive campaign strategy around mega sports events be developed? From the differing experiences and strategies in the two industries, how can we draw global and local

campaign strategies that can encompass the issues, dimensions and contexts from both industries?

Around the specific labour campaigns on the two industries, particular research questions may be developed. For the textile industry, how can brand-based union network be enhanced and strengthened to secure workers' rights? How can a local or country-based campaign strategy ensure trade union engagement on different phases of the sports events? For the construction industry, how can the campaign-model that includes organizing and mobilization be replicated at the global level and from other industries?

Proposed content and structure of the manual

Drawing from past lessons in construction and textile around the South African FIFA World Cup (2010), the London Olympic Games (2012), The European Football Championship in the Ukraine (2012) as well as the FIFA World Cup in Brasil (2014), the group members will define area of action and propose strategies along the pre, during and post phases of the mega sports events. An overview of the political, economic and labour context shall provide the discussion on the key players on major sports events and a synthesis shall summarize the major lessons included in the manual.

In terms of chapters, the manual shall have the preliminary working outline of as follows:

1. Overview – context of mega-sports events and relevance for labour and workers
2. Strategies in the preparatory phase of the events – from the win of the bid until the start of the games, what needs to be done?
3. Strategies during global sports events
4. Strategies after the events – what next for labour campaigns?
5. Synthesis/Summary

Preliminary key areas of inquiry:¹

| Key areas | Research questions | Elements |
|--|--|---|
| 1. Trade union linkages with other social forces during the campaign | How did trade unions during their particular campaigns engage with other actors? | Links with other trade unions at the local to global levels; with other social movements, with regulatory bodies, government authorities, and with TNCs / brands and supply chains. |
| 2. Impact of campaigns on workers. | How did labour campaigns on sports events impact on the conditions of workers in the construction and textile/garments industries? | In terms of jobs, pay and conditions, on contractors, training, union recognition, organizing, mobilization... |
| 3. Lessons learned and legacy | What were the gains made, lessons learned and legacies left after the events and campaigns? | Gains and legacies on union strength, organization and campaign strategies. |
| 4. Building power for workers and international trade union movement | Was the international union movement in a stronger position after the global sports events? Or did the trade unions began from a position of strength? How can we build power from past experiences and not just repeat the struggles of the past? | Trade union (local and international) strength and leverage at the beginning, during and after the campaigns? |

Methodology

The research would involve primary and secondary data namely document/desktop research and interviews of key informants. The key informants are the people involved directly and indirectly in the past and current labour campaigns around sports events. The interviews can be done via Skype, email and telephone interviews if face-to-face interviews are not possible. The research team shall be composed of researchers/writers, coordinators and faculty supervisor/writer.

¹ Summary of notes from Steve Davies

1. Research phases, duration and timeline

The research project intend to complete within a fifteen-month period from June 2014- September 2015

| Research phase | Duration | Timeframe | Specific activities |
|---|------------|-----------------------|---|
| Data-gathering (document research, finalize questionnaire and interviews) | 2-3 months | June-September 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posting info materials: July 2014 for “lessons” from the past” but also throughout the year. Reviewing first draft on lessons: end of September 2014 |
| Writing and analyses | 3 months | October-December 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing first draft on overview: end of October |
| Collation and discussion of sections | 2 months | January-February 2015 | |
| First draft | 1 month | March 2015 | |
| Review | 2 months | April-May 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing first draft on strategies: end of April 2015 |
| Finalizing second draft | 1 month | June-July 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validation with partners for feedback and comments |
| Finalization of content / lay-out | | August 2015 | |
| Presentation, dissemination | | September 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With local/national trade unions and partners; and at October 2015 GLU/AARS |

2. Overview of chapters, authors and deadlines

| Chapters | Authors: Textile (tba) | Authors: Construction (tba) | Deadlines: first draft | Deadlines: second draft |
|---|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Overview – context of mega-sports events and relevance for labour and workers | | | September 2014 | End of October 2014 |
| Lessons from past events | | | End of August 2014 | End of October 2014 |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|------------|-----------|
| Strategies for preparatory phase | | | March 2015 | June 2015 |
| Strategies during events | | | March 2015 | June 2015 |
| Strategies post events | | | March 2015 | June 2015 |
| Synthesis/Summary | | | | |

3. Research Team members and partner trade unions

The number of writers in the research team and the trade union partners may still increase and soon to be finalized.

| Research Team | Tasks |
|---|---|
| Verna Dinah Q. Viajar (co-coordinator/writer) | Lead in the coordination of the research team members, write status reports of project, and follow through with project deadlines. Write and submit on the chosen topic within the agreed time frame. |
| Ramon Certeza (co-coordinator/writer) | |
| Luciole Sauviat (writer/adviser) | Advise the research team members and coordinators from the implementation and content of the research project. |
| Steve Davies (adviser/synthesis writer) | Advise the research team members and coordinators from the implementation and content of the research project. |
| Amar Kharate (writer) | Write and submit on the chosen topic within the agreed time frame. Comment and feedback other members' written reports. |
| Halele (writer) | " |
| Pop Kanye (writer) | " |
| Bulend Karadag (writer) | " |
| Helen Russel (writer) | " |
| Patricia Chong (writer) | " |

| Partner trade unions | Status of linkage |
|---|------------------------------|
| BWI (Geneva, Asia) | Consulted on the broad topic |
| IndustriAll (Geneva, Europe, Asia) | Consulted on the broad topic |
| UNITE | Target partner |
| CUT | Target partner |
| SENTRO (Philippines) | Target partner |
| ITUC | Target partner |
| NGOs involved in labour campaigns on sportsevents | Target partner |

References:

"Clearing the Hurdles: Steps in Improving Wages and Working Conditions in Global Sportswear Industry". 2008. Written by the Maquila Solidarity Network on behalf of the Play Fair 2008 Campaign.

Cottle, E. ed. 2011. *"South Africa's World Cup: A Legacy for Whom?"*. UKZN Press.

Cottle and Rombaldi. 2013. *Lessons from South Africa's FIFA World Cup, Brazil and its Legacy for Labour*.

Fair Games – Fair Play. 2010. Evaluation of the Building & Wood Workers International Campaign for Decent Work Towards and Beyond 2010.

"Fair Games?: Human Rights of Workers in Olympic 2012 supplier factories". 2012. Written by the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF).

Impact Study Playfair 2012 Project and Campaign. 2012. Conducted by Louise Marix Evans for the Trades Union Congress & Labour Behind the Label.

Playfair 2008 Campaign Statement for the Beijing Olympics.

Schwetz and McGuire. 2008. FIFA World Cup 2006 Germany: An Opportunity for Union Revitalization?. Global Labour University Working Papers, Paper No.5, November 2008.

Sauviat, L. and Berber, O. 2011. The Case of the London Olympics from a Migration Aspect. Global Labour University Research Group Discussion Paper No. 5, Jan. 2010. Available online: http://www.global-labour-university.org/fileadmin/Summer_School_2014/luciole-oezge-glu-publication-construction.pdf. Accessed on June 2014.

Sauviat, L. and Berber, O. 2011. "The London Olympics 2012: World class events? World class employment for a world working class? A case study of a major sports event, union revitalization and migrant organizing." Unpublished.

"Toying with Workers' Rights: A Report on Producing Merchandise for the London 2012 Olympic Games". 2012. Written by Labour Behind the Label, research conducted by SACOM on behalf of the Play Fair Campaign.