**EAPN DECENT WORK TASK FORCE**

***Towards a Living Wage Campaign***

*28 February 2014*

**Attending:** Loraine Mulligan (Chair, EAPN IE), Vito Telesca (EAPN IT), Greete Vesalu (EAPN EE), Dave Moxham (EAPN UK), Júlio Paiva (EAPN PT), Raluca Mănăilă (EAPN RO), Amana Ferro (EAPN Secretariat).

**Apologies:** PICUM, who is withdrawing from the Task Force because of lack of resources.

**Introduction session**

Minutes adopted. Agenda adopted

**The Concept and Feasibility Note**

Questionnaire Results

* Only Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and PICUM responded. Estonia promised to send something soon. FEANTSA wrote that they won’t do it.

Post-meeting update: responses were received from Estonia, Finland and Malta. Netherlands wrote to say they don’t have the capacity to do the Questionnaire.

* Difficult to launch a third appeal, maybe individual members to some specific countries?
* UK to do it as well, maybe in an adapted version, about the issues. Important to get France on board (SMIC), also Spain, one Nordic country, the Netherlands.

Discussion on Responses

* Important to come up with a definition of living wage, as a lot of people, EAPN members included, mix it up with minimum wage; take into account specificities – different definitions when approaching trade unions, employers, politicians etc.
* Role of trade unions is clearly emphasized by most respondents, but also quite a few say that they don’t have a history of cooperating with them.
* Many networks refer that the climate is not supportive of a discussion on wage increases, but this could be precisely the argument for doing it, as the statutory paths are closed;
* Methodology – most responses mention reference budgets…
* Rights-based approach – it is about a decent standard of living.
* Great difference between countries that do have a statutory minimum wage and those who don’t, in terms of how to calculate it (minimum wage plus, versus starting from scratch), who to approach, how, and who are we waging the struggle on behalf of.
* Some employers are already living wage employers de facto, they don’t need convincing, just recognition and publicising;

Discussion on the Concept Note

*Living Wage Concept*

* A living wage is a wage rate for a certain individual, it does not take into account household composition;
* One ay Governments could do it is thorough tax cuts for the low income bracket;
* Living wage – one that ensures enough for an individual to live a dignified life, or that ensures that he or she can support a family in dignity? Employers should grant equal pay for equal work, otherwise wages would discriminate between workers based on household composition or other factors, which have nothing to do with the work carried out;

*The Living Wage – Integrated approach*

* Very important to clarify that our target audience are employers, not the State (or the State only as employer, not as legislator), and it is not up to the employer to solve issues connected to household composition, but to pay a living wage for the individual.
* Although the label says “living wage employer”, accreditation should have some additional criteria, such as recognition of trade unions, no unpaid overtime or other of the sort; however, we should retain some flexibility in what each country will ask for;
* ***Dave to send the accreditation model in Scotland***
* ***Raluca to send the ILO Decent Work Agenda***
* ***Also use the EAPN 10 Principles on Quality Work***

*Issues to consider when approaching a living wage campaign*

* Structure comments: start with “What is the nature of the problem”, continue with “What kind of living wage campaign”, followed by “Wage bargaining”, “Attitude of employers”, “Political support”, “Methodology / Calculation”, “Building alliances / capacity issues”, and end with “How it will be monitored”;
* Point out that the living wage is complementary to, not undermining of, collective bargaining;
* Useful to give some examples of concrete actions under each subpoint – what is the general direction we want to go in, and what is happening in this and that country;
* Be mindful that this is not a silver bullet campaign, it can’t solve all issues, but has a very specific mandate, it does not aim to solve the full decent work agenda;
* Issue of the bogus self-employed, who are not dependents – what about their wages? This is also, indirectly, a procurement issue, with some EU limitations;
* First step of the campaign needs to be putting the concept out that – get it in people’s minds that it exists, what it is, why it is important, and get a debate running – but this might be more a point for the Campaign Guide than the Concept & Feasibility Note;
* Need to clarify that each country has to choose the approach that best fits with their national realities – we are just offering a set of tools, and everybody has to come up with their own approach;
* Second step of the campaign needs to be identifying/mapping what similar initiatives already exist in their countries – and we could provide some examples for some countries, but this Task Force can’t undertake such specific research across 30 European countries;
* Some ways to go about it: the US community model; using living wage as a comparator to minimum wage discussions; consumer approach – ethical consumption; the bargaining approach – incorporating the living wage; the supply chain model - procurement; the corporate social responsibility approach;
* Include a brief reference to the procurement rules & social clause recently voted by the European Parliament.
* Need to consider big multinationals, as well as small SMES – while SMEs might be more reluctant as they have less margin of maneuver, they will also have less employees paid under what is deeded as a living wage.
* ***Raluca to get more information on CSR and share with the group***
* ***Dave to share information about the recently EP-approved procurement law***
* Political support – any country could probably easily round up some MPs etc willing to support it, but, if these are rather fringe radicals, it would alienate the center and right of center politicians, who are actually the ones we try to convince;
* The campaign has to link up to whatever debates on wages are happening in your countries – need not to be prescriptive;
* ***Everybody to send some input for the political support part.***
* Methodology – outline some possibilities of calculating – reference budgets, academic studies, minimum wage plus, focus groups etc.
* The living wage is the same across the country, independent of the sector – as it has to do with human dignity, not with what job someone is doing;
* The process of mapping is the beginning of alliance-building;

**Other campaign materials**

1. Mapping of similar initiatives in one’s country and identifying potential partners in the process
2. Putting the concept out there – visibility

* Common webpage (Facebook, wordpress, free platform, EAPN website?)
* Common logo (preferably without words) and slogan (short and translatable)
* Targeted events and contacts
* 2-pager briefing to hand out – who we are, what we’re doing who’s endorsing us etc (template can be provided by the Secretariat, adaptable to national realities)

1. Developing own national campaign model – what particular debate would it link up to? What approach? What hooks? What methodology for deciding amount? What accreditation criteria for the “living wage employer” badge?
2. Identify existing employers which already satisfy the criteria, give them the badge, and publicise them as successes.
3. Attempt convincing other employers to join the ranks.

Discussion

* Building consensus and capacity building and a knowledge bank in the network is already a success and an indicator of achievement;
* Social enterprises, NGOs and trade unions are a great place to start - as employers who already ;

**Campaign Guide**

* Useful to include funding tips? It might put people off, thinking that it’s bigger job than they are able to handle;
* People get encouraged by victories – once the phone starts ringing with requests, people will be motivated to seek funding;
* The Campaign Guide will have fixed headings, indicating the steps to be followed by each country; under each heading, it should include all possible ideas and tips, and highlight what are the risks and limitations; it should provide options that people can choose from;

**Next steps**

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| **When?** | **CONCEPT & FEASIBILITY NOTE** | **CAMPAIGN GUIDE** | **CAMPAIGN TOOLS** |
| **17 March** | Amana sends Lorraine comments | Dave sends Amana a revised draft structure | Amana researches possibilities and creates tools as much as possible - website, logo etc |
| **1st April** | Loraine sends out a second version | Amana sends out a second version |
| **Easter** | Members send comments on both documents | |
| **1st June** | Loraine incorporates comments and sends out a final version (with Secretariat support from Amana) | Dave incorporates comments and sends out a final version (with Secretariat support from Amana) | Amana sends out a proposal & state of play for tools. |
| **12th June PM** | Brussels event on Decent Work, including the EAPN Quality of Work and Employment and the work of the Task Force, with TF members attending | | |
| **13th June** | Third (and final) meeting of the Task Force, to discuss / endorse the above | | |
| **3-4 October** | Meeting of EAPN’s EU Inclusion Strategies Group, where the results of the work of the task Force will be presented, discussed and (hopefully) endorsed. | | |

* The final meeting will focus on finalizing the two main documents, discussing in-depth the campaign tools, and preparing the presentation to the EU ISG.
* Who will present the products at the EU ISG meeting? Is there funding from someone from the Task Force to attend and present?
* Will we put the finalized tools on the public website or just on the Members’ Room?
* Is it possible that the EU ISG completely rejects the idea?