

Mapping As Organizing: How Mapping Is Being Used As An Homeworker Organizing Tool

Working Paper: Mapping as Organizing

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FHWW aims to improve visibility, organization and representation of homeworkers and their organizations.

¹ Annie Delaney was a participant in the Mapping Program

ABSTRACT

Until recently, organizing in the informal sector has mainly been conducted by grassroots organizations and it appeared that trade unions largely ignored the plight of informal workers. Successful organizing has, however, occurred in the informal sector through homemaker mapping. Homemaker mapping refers to a vertical and horizontal mapping program based on principles of participation and education through action research. This paper explores homemaker mapping as a successful organizing strategy by examining primary documents from homemaker organizations. The paper starts with a discussion and definition of the informal sector and of homework, and then proceeds to examine the mapping process and its outcomes. It includes a detailed case study of the mapping experience in Chile to illustrate aspects of mapping as organizing. The paper concludes with an examination of the implications of mapping as an organizing strategy for trade unions and other organizations.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to document and discuss mapping as an emerging approach to organizing. Mapping is used by homemaker organisations to organize unprotected workers in the unregulated informal sector. Over the past twenty years there has been an exponential growth in the informal economy (Beneria, 2001; Beynon, Grimshaw, Rubery, & Ward, 2002; HWW, 2002b; ILO, 2002b). Its growth has been argued to be related to trade liberalization, globalization and competition, the deregulation and feminization of labour markets, the fragmentation of production processes and deindustrialization (Afshar & Barrientos, 1998; Baylina & Schier, 2002; White, 2004)

Informal work is conducted in the sector of the economy in which many of the world's poor work under the most exploitative and uncertain conditions. Workers who contribute to the informal economy are invisible to labour market regulators and the consumers of the products of their labour and are unacknowledged and unprotected by industrial laws (HWW, 2004; Prugl & Tinker, 1997; White, 2004)

Homeworkers are the most marginalized and one of the largest groups of workers in this sector, with an estimated 300 million workers worldwide (HomeNet, 2001a). Homework has been identified as work that is undertaken in the home by either independent own account workers or dependent subcontractors (Carr, Chen, & Tate, 2000). They are predominately women, located in various occupations including the assembly of electronic components or the manufacture of computer chips, garments, clerical homework, small scale packaging and assembling of consumables, hand knitting, embroidery, handicrafts, agricultural work and the supply of raw materials (Boris & Daniels, 1989; HWW, 2003a; White, 2004).

Successful organizing has occurred in the informal sector through homemaker mapping. Homemaker mapping refers to a vertical and horizontal mapping program based on principles of participation and education through action research. Mapping has been undertaken by existing unions, associations created to organize homeworkers engaged in informal employment and through new unions and partnerships or alliances between unions and NGOS (HWW, 2004).

This paper explores homemaker mapping as a successful organizing strategy by examining primary documents from homemaker organizations. The paper starts with a discussion and definition of the informal sector and of homework and an explanation of the methodology employed. The paper then outlines the mapping process and its outcomes. It includes a detailed case study of the mapping experience in Chile to illustrate aspects of mapping as organizing. The data used in the construction of the Chilean mapping case has not previously been publicly available. It stands as testimony of the successful organizing efforts of many of the poorest women workers. The lessons learned from this case are significant for unions and other organizations and are discussed in the final section of this paper.

INFORMAL WORK

A key characteristic of informal work is captured in the following ILO definition: ‘all remunerative work – both self employment and wage employment- that is not recognized, regulated, or protected by existing legal or regulatory frameworks and non remunerative work undertaken in an income-producing enterprise’ (ILO, 2002a). Informal work is sometimes discussed as the informal economy, which has been differentiated from other types of economies, such as the ‘formal economy’ (ILO, 2002a).

Informal work includes a multitude of occupations, such as street vending, the production and sale of handcrafts, the manual gathering of raw materials, various types of assembly work and industrial piece-work (HWW, 2003a). Some of these occupations have an interface with agricultural or other, basic survival activities generally attributed to the private realm (HWW, 2003a; ILO, 2002b; White, 2004). In addition, some workers in this sector are self-employed, while others are paid by merchants; intermediaries, or small scale producers (HWW, 2003a, 2004; Tate, 1994; White, 2004). Much of the work done in this sector is not considered to be work and is thus considered invisible (ILO, 2002a).

While the ‘invisibility’ of informal work renders it difficult to document, there is considerable evidence to suggest that it is increasing, permanent and largely feminized. A large component of the informal economy is home based work. The following section discusses issues specifically relating to home-based work. It is important to understand the specific characteristics of home based work (HBW) in order to discuss the organisation of homeworkers.

HOMEBASED WORK

Home based work is both an ancient form of labor (Boris & Daniels, 1989) and one which appears to be flourishing on a global scale (ILO, 2002b). The vulnerability of home based workers is the reason that organizing of these workers has become an imperative for grassroots organizations.

Homeworker organisations define all homeworkers as falling into two general categories. The first is dependent workers who work by a piece rate and usually produce for a subcontractor or middle person in a subcontract chain. The second category consists of independent or ‘own-account’ that produce goods for direct sale. A key rationale behind this preference is that homeworkers frequently switch between the two categories.²

An important discussion surfacing in the literature is that occupations or job types are inadequate as criteria to determine and define homework, and that more relevant indicators may be found in the conditions surrounding the work and the worker (HWW, 2003a; Prugl & Tinker, 1997). Underpayment is one injustice surrounding the work environment of the majority of homeworkers. However, homework is also “pervaded by occupational health and safety problems, overwork, insecurity, intimidation, fear, physical violence, fraud, non-payment, underpayment, withholding of payment and disempowerment” (Greig, 2002, p. 6).

Another crucial factor in understanding homework relates to gender, and more specifically, gender exploitation, since homeworkers are mostly women (Afshar & Barrientos, 1998; ILO, 2002b; Pearson, 2003). Feminist analysis of homework takes into account the relationship between women’s work and women’s relation to the family and kin (White, 2004), as well as the socially constructed identities and roles of women (White, 2004) which ‘tie them to the home’ (Prugl & Tinker, 1997). The increase in the incidence of homework is attributed both to the restructuring of production and the feminization of labour markets (Afshar & Barrientos, 1998; Baylina & Schier, 2002; Boris & Daniels, 1989) as well as the ongoing and increasing need for women to contribute to household incomes (Afshar & Barrientos, 1998; Baylina & Schier, 2002; Boris & Daniels, 1989). The predominance of women in homework therefore highlights the perpetuation of the ‘process of exploitation and the gender divide’ (Afshar & Barrientos, 1998, p. 5).

² For example an embroiderer may at times work for an employer producing goods for a contract chain and at other times make similar goods and sell them directly (Homeworkers World Wide. 2004).

UNIONS AND HOMEWORK

The organisation of workers is frequently represented as the domain of labour unions (Crouch, 1982; Webb & Webb, 1920) and has been defined in simple terms as “the degree to which the ... union is able to attract and retain members” (Fiorito, Jarley, & Delaney, 1995, p. p. 614). In recent years, the concept of organizing has been at the centre of union strategies aimed at reversing a trend of union decline through the greater involvement of union members in union activity (Carter & Cooper, 2002; Heery, Simms, Simpson, Delbridge, & Salmon, 2000). From this perspective, organizing is far more than recruitment, and includes the engagement and active participation of workers in union decision making, campaigns and reflective processes (Cregan, 2005; Crosby, 2005).

Unions, however, have found organising informal workers challenging. One reason for this is that there was an assumption that the informal economy was temporary. The informal economy has not diminished but is, in fact, increasing in both the developing and developed worlds (Carr & Chen, 2002; Gallin, 2002; ILO, 2002a). A second reason is that unions have directed their resources to organize workers that are located in discrete workplaces with a clear, secure employment relationship (ILO, 1999, 2001). The reasons for this are numerous and stem partly from the nature of informal work. That is, informal workers are heterogenous, geographically scattered, mobile and often invisible (ILO, 1999, 2001). Furthermore, labour laws in different countries create obstacles for unions to organise homeworkers.³ Moreover, the bureaucratic structures and rules of many unions prohibit the recruitment of the self employed (ILO, 1999). Homework by its very nature makes it difficult to fit workers into sectors by industry or into neat employment structures or categories. This poses an even greater challenge to organising efforts since the very nature of the work as some suggest exist as an anti union strategy by employers (Dangler, 1994).

A small number of unions around the world have responded to the challenge of organizing homeworkers by developing appropriate structures to enable the organizing. These include SIBTTA, a traditional union that incorporated the work of organizing homeworkers, SEWA a union that was established specifically to organize informal workers and the TCFUA, through a community and union collaboration.

The Embroiders Union in Madeira (SIBTTA) is an example of an established union of embroiderers in Madeira (from 1937) that began to recruit homeworkers in 1975⁴. They have achieved a number of significant social and employment rights for workers. For example, SIBTTA was instrumental in homeworkers receiving the right to pensions, sickness benefits, and unemployment benefits (Rowbothom, 1999).

The Self Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) is an example of a union that was established specifically to organize homeworkers, street vendors, paper pickers and refuse collectors amongst others. This union has set up credit services, training programs and a number of cooperatives for example housing and health (Baruah, 2004; Gallin, 2002; Rowbothom, 1999).

The TCFUA in its alliance with FairWear⁵ has been able to achieve legislative reform in Australia including the deeming of homeworkers as employees in order to ensure that they receive equal treatment and rights as workers. This union community collaboration has led to the introduction of mandatory codes of practice for retailers in the garment industry Rowbothom 1999. More recently, FairWear were very effective in pressuring federal government to maintain conditions and protect home based workers in the textile and clothing industry (FairWear, 2005; Rowbothom, 1999).

³ For example, in Canada the national labour law prohibits homeworkers being certified, to get around this limitation the union UNITE formed an associate membership Local 12 – called the HomeWorkers Association (HWA), through the International’s Associate membership program (CLC, 1998)

⁴ Sindicato do Trabalhadores da Industria de Bordadas, Tapeçarias, Texteis e Artesanato da RAM (the Embroiders’ Union in Madeira, Portugal)

⁵ FairWear is a coalition of church, community organizations and unions that work together to end exploitation of sweatshop and homeworkers in the garment industry in Australia and internationally.

The following section describes the methodology employed in the paper before examining the issue of homeworker organizations and their methods for organizing in more detail.

Methodology

The research process for this study evolved in consultation with members of the Federation of Homeworkers Worldwide (FHWW). Our research method is broadly qualitative and the data we use for analysis consists of primary documents sourced from homeworker organisations, including reports and meeting notes which relate to the years 2000-2005. This data is highly unique, since it is the result of the action-research method developed specifically by homeworker organisations, using researchers and trained homeworkers. This cycle of research and action relies on a highly inclusive model which aims to involve participants in personal and social change (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Silverman, 2000). Homeworkers' use of action research is validated within a feminist, post-structural frame, which valorizes practice (Calas & Smircich, 1996; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Kvale, 1996). However, it can also be understood within a phenomenological perspective, whereby meaning is sought in the lived *experience* of individuals (Morse & Richards, 2002). Homeworker research and findings affirm the social construction of valid knowledge and reality, whereby all "events and understandings are mediated and made real through interactional and material practices" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

The data used to discuss the general mapping concept was collected in two waves, involving 11,000 homeworkers in different countries. Within this larger data set, we focused on isolating specific information relating to the techniques used in organizing Chilean homeworkers. It should be noted that the researchers writing this paper were not involved in the action research process.

The techniques we employed in our analysis include the classic analytic strategies of coding or categorizing, making and recording reflections and seeking patterns or commonalities (Kvale, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morse & Richards, 2002). The use of a qualitative methodology is well suited to this study since our research area is relatively unexplored, and lends itself to a deep level exploration to penetrate the reality of homeworkers and to uncover meaning (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Our analysis led to the elaboration of a set of generalizations which may be "confronted" (Miles & Huberman, 1994) with the theoretical constructs relating to organizing or mobilizing, outlined in our review of the literature. Using the techniques described above we identify specific significant events relating to the process of organizing a group of Chilean homeworkers. This case then helps to illuminate the concept of homeworker mapping as a successful approach to organizing homeworkers.

HOMEWORKER MAPPING

Homeworker mapping was initiated by a number of homeworker organisations⁶. There are three key international homeworker organizations which have been involved in the mapping process. One of these no longer exists, while another is emerging. HomeNet was the first international organisation to represent homeworkers. It was a network formed in 1994 from an alliance between European women's groups and unions and later joined by counterparts in Asia, South Africa, Australia and Latin America (HomeNet, 2001). HomeNet was dissolved in 2002. Organizations that were previously members of HomeNet, as well as new organizations, continue to participate in the mapping program, often in collaboration with other organizations outside the mapping project. Homeworkers Worldwide (HWW) is the U.K center for the international movement of homebased workers. It was established in 1999 to support the International network (HomeNet) grassroots organizing (HWW 2000). Moreover, it was the organisation which secured funding to finance the mapping program. The Federation of Homeworkers Worldwide (FHWW) is a new International Homeworkers organization formally launched in 2005. The Federation of HWW is

⁶ There are many smaller homeworker organisations based in specific countries and regions which have made contributions to the mapping program and may not yet be members of the FHWW.

continuing the work of supporting grassroots organizing and advocacy of homeworkers and informal workers in collaboration with HWW UK.

In 2000, HomeWorkers Worldwide (HWW)⁷ secured funding to coordinate a homeworkers Mapping Program (MP). The aim of the program was to build on organizing strategies already identified and used by existing women's organizations and unions (HomeNet, 2000a). A further aim was to develop the homemaker network's capacity to support grassroots organizing and facilitate new homemaker organizations through examples of successful organizing experiences (HomeNet, 2000a). The international network envisaged that the MP would improve its capacity to advocate at the international level while at the same time strengthening and developing work at the grassroots level. (HomeNet, 2000b; HWW, 2000, 2001, 2004).

The MP was based on the use of a form of action research as a common framework for data collection, organizing and training. A key aim of the MP was to develop models for organizing. Simultaneously the MP was to provide a systematic and comprehensively documented, and evaluated, organizing approach (HomeNet, 2000b; HWW, 2000). A plan was developed to trial and document effective organizing approaches. This involved an initial pilot year, in which seven HomeNet member organizations from Chile, India, Mexico, Brazil, Bolivia, China and Thailand participated. The pilot year focused on developing 'mapping packs'⁸, evaluating the action research methodology, collecting data, providing training and confronting homemaker participation issues (HWW, 2002b). The second year focused on expanding participants to include new organizations in targeted regions of Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia to use the lessons and tools gained from the pilot year to initiate the mapping approach in these areas. The final year focus was on policy development. Continuous training and evaluation, meetings and exchanges were incorporated throughout the program. These processes enabled program participants to learn from and improve on their organizing responses. They also assisted in the development of the policy responses that could be utilised at local, regional and international levels (HWW, 2004).

In the context of homemaker organizing, the concept of mapping has been uniquely adapted by homemaker organisations to extend beyond the processes of identification⁹ to encompass organizing and organisation building processes. Thus, the term 'mapping' has acquired an extended meaning in this context. The following section provides greater detail on the mapping processes used by homeworkers and establishes 'mapping' as a short-hand term for homemaker organizing.

MAPPING AS A TOOL FOR ORGANIZING

An essential part of the mapping process is the use of a 'mapping pack'. The mapping pack provides guidelines on how to conduct mapping and how to organize homeworkers (HWW, 2002a) by providing examples of successful organizing approaches in both horizontal and vertical mapping contexts. The mapping pack contains two survey forms used to collect demographic and other data relating to the work of the homemaker. Horizontal mapping uses 'form 1' and vertical mapping uses 'form 2' and the two forms collect different data relating to horizontal and vertical mapping (HWW, 2001, 2002b, 2003b, 2004). These forms are the primary tools for data collection.

Photo packs have been developed to be used in combination with the mapping packs. These consist of photographic documentation of homeworkers engaged in home-based work. The photographs assist in identifying homeworkers, identifying the different types of work they engage in, as well as describing their conditions of work. Photographs are used as a discussion tool (HWW, 2003d, 2004).

The other crucial step in the mapping process relates to training¹⁰. Action research teams are established and training is conducted in key areas. Researchers and grassroots leaders receive training in

⁷ HomeWorkers Worldwide (HWW) is the U.K center for the international movement of homebased workers.

⁸ The 'mapping packs' consist of a range of organizing experiences and tools to be used in organising homeworkers, these include the survey forms one and two to be used for data collection..

⁹ Mapping usually refers only to processes of identification.

¹⁰ HWW (2002) documents refer to the need to develop a training pack.

order to conduct the research with the clear objective to build organization through their ongoing contact with homeworkers as they conduct the interviews and collect the relevant data (HWW, 2001, 2002b, 2003d, 2004).

The mapping process operates on two levels. Firstly, horizontal mapping aims to locate homeworkers, describe their work, identify the industry sectors of operation and the social context of the community or region where they are located. Secondly, vertical mapping aims to locate homework within the supply chain and to map out the layers of subcontracting (HWW, 2002a, 2003d, 2004). These are discussed in turn.

Horizontal Mapping

Horizontal mapping (HM) provides a systematic way to map or locate and document the nature of homework in new sectors or geographic areas. HM refers to the method used to document the identifying characteristics of the homemaker, their location and industry sector, by contacting individuals in their homes or communities. HM focuses on discussions and data gathering on demographic characteristics of homeworkers, their home situation, their work processes, their employment relationships, payment amounts and processes and the problems and issues that they face (HWW, 2002b, 2004). During HM, it is common practice to train a number of the newly identified homeworkers as part of the action research team, which assists in organization building.

Vertical Mapping

Vertical mapping (VM) describes a process to identify or map the chain of production between homeworkers, subcontractors, intermediaries, buyers and brand owners. VM identifies different points of production and profit, including their geographic location. In other words, VM uncovers all the links in a complete supply chain between firms, their suppliers of raw materials, their distributors and retail outlets, and their manufacturers, including homeworkers (HWW, 2003d, 2004)

As in horizontal mapping, the VM process is based on action-research developed in consultation with homeworkers, and can result in a greater understanding of homeworkers' working conditions and the structures and firms that support and contribute to perpetuating these (usually poor) working conditions inherent in homebased work.

In the following section we outline a mapping case study. This case illustrates the mapping process and highlights the outcomes and benefits to individual homeworkers and homemaker organisations. The case study focuses on specific aspects of the mapping process, and illustrates how the mapping packs and survey forms were utilized to suit the conditions in one particular country. It also illustrates how mapping led to the emergence of a number of new organizations.

CASE STUDY: CECAM¹¹ CHILE (THE TRAINING CENTRE FOR WORKING WOMEN)

CECAM was established in Chile to train women workers¹². After making links with HomeNet and later joining the mapping program, it shifted its focus from training women worker leaders to working exclusively with homeworkers (AnaClara, 2003b; CECAM, 2003; HomeNet, 2001b). Organizing of homeworkers began in housing estates in three districts of Santiago, Chile in 1999. Initially CECAM relied upon existing grassroots leaders to assist in locating homeworkers. Once they joined the HWW mapping program for the pilot year they utilised an action research methodology, incorporating a training and education program and established a research team to oversee the mapping. The Chilean mapping process can be summarized as consisting of six stages: making contact with homeworkers; organizing

¹¹ Centro de Capacitacion para la Mujer Trabajadora (CECAM)

¹² CECAM, established in 2003, was previously known as the organization 'Ana Clara' which had begun the work of organizing homeworkers and joined the mapping program. In this period 'Ana Clara' was dissolved and CECAM continued this work completing the mapping work.

meetings of homeworkers; forming research team formed; mapping in new areas; training and education and forming organizations. These are discussed in turn.

Contact with Homeworkers

CECAM began contacting homeworkers with the aim of shifting isolated women workers to becoming active participants of a social movement. They sought to develop this aim through the establishment of networks and by building awareness about unionism, housing, child labour and other issues (CECAM, 2003; HWW, 2003c). Door knocking was one of the first strategies used to reach homeworkers. Interviewers would ask women “Do you sew? Or do you make ... products at home?” They would then show a leaflet that explained homework and invite workers to meet with other homeworkers. During the pilot year CECAM used a survey form similar to form one of the horizontal mapping pack. Over the first year 12 groups of women had begun meeting.

Meetings

Meetings of homeworkers focused initially on identifying their hopes and difficulties. As a result of their participation in the meetings, the women came to identify as homeworkers. The meetings offered the women a forum to collectively analyze their situation and assist them to develop a positive attitude towards forming their own organization. Meetings began to take place across a number of regions. The first national meeting of homeworkers was held in Santiago in December 2000 with 110 women. At that meeting workers elected representatives and agreed to promote organization of unions in eight regions across Chile. The regional and national meetings contributed to action plans for the organizing work by providing homeworkers with the opportunity to discuss with researchers and government officials issues that related to women workers across a range of policy areas.

Formation of Research Teams

The research team consisted of students, homeworkers and others brought in to assist in organizing. The initial involvement of homeworkers shaped the mapping process, but their ongoing involvement was not sustainable since homeworkers could not devote all their time to interviewing other workers. Homeworkers requested that there be ongoing support and an organizer in each area to strengthen and support homeworker leaders and the action research process. The role of the organizer and the research team was regularly evaluated through weekly meetings and education seminars. Evaluations consisted of weekly reflections and regular appraisals of the work of the research team, conducted by members of the team.

Mapping in New Areas

CECAM reconnected with women worker leaders previously trained by Ana Clara to inquire where women doing homework could be located. CECAM then began door knocking or contacting people in the identified areas. Other methods used to find homeworkers included making links with formal trade unions in the garment and footwear industries and word of mouth. Interviews were conducted at women/homes, in small groups, in factory workshops and in the street or market place (CECAM, 2003). Interviewers used a set of photos and a leaflet explaining about homework to provide women with some context about homebased work. The photos, referred to as the photo pack, included pictures of homeworkers from various countries doing different types of work. As the work progressed CECAM produced their own photo pack of Chilean homeworkers. Interviewers commented that the photo pack and leaflet were important tools in reaching homeworkers. The photo pack assisted women to understand there were other women like them and provided a tool which did not depend upon literacy to be understood (CECAM, 2003). In addition, this process assisted interviewers to identify high levels of illiteracy and suggested the need for broader training and education.

The locating-contacting process was conducted using form one of the horizontal mapping pack, while at the same time conveying information about coming meetings in each area. A similar process was

undertaken for dependent homeworkers in the garment and footwear industries, using form two of the vertical mapping pack¹³.

Over 1000 homeworkers were visited in eight regions over an 18-month period across all industry sectors simultaneously. Workers in the subcontracting chain or own account workers such as those making handicrafts, food production, weaving etc were interviewed, the appropriate form one or two was completed, and they were then encouraged to attend the meeting in their area (CECAM, 2003; HWW, 2004).

Training

In the Chilean context, the adaptation of a popular education methodology to the mapping work became central to their organizing strategy¹⁴. Women that expressed interest at the interviews and meetings in participating in the organizing work were encouraged to participate in leadership training. Literacy workshops and primary school training were also established to better support and enable women to form their own organizations and to improve their working and living conditions.

The training and education conducted over the mapping project was divided into three areas: homebased worker training; organizer training and literacy training. These are discussed in turn.

Homeworker Training

Leaders or potential leaders were identified among homeworkers and encouraged to participate in short educational activities with the aim of forming homeworker unions or other associations. The training involved a cycle of seminars that dealt with economics, political analysis, labour and social rights. The training explained why unions and other organization structures could assist them to collectively bargain and improve their work conditions and engage in broader social policy. The women reached an understanding at personal and collective levels about the national and international context concerning homeworkers. This was an important aspect to enabling organization at the local level (CECAM, 2003) CECAM (2003) states that “the process of organization and education became intertwined...the process also aimed to promote thinking by the participants about their social identity,...woman and worker, gender and class” (CECAM, 2003, p. 35).

The training delivered according to the popular education methodology ensured that the homeworker’s experiences were central in the training sessions. This provided a positive environment for homeworkers to build their confidence and their capacity to identify as workers, therefore contributing to their understanding of broader economic and political issues. This facilitated the desire to organize to improve their lives economically and socially (CECAM, 2003).

Organizer Training

Training for organizers became necessary after some initial problems were identified, including an overly maternal approach to organizing and limited experience. Training on social movements in Latin America, such as the Cocoa Growers in Bolivia, People without Land Movement (known as MSN) in Brazil and the Indigenous Women of Chiapas in Mexico, provided examples to improve organizers understanding of organization. Training was conducted around the promotion of trade unions based on providing a broad perspective on the principles of trade unionism and individual and collective self-awareness and growth (CECAM, 2003). Organizers participated in this series of seminars with the workers and developed planning and evaluation strategies. These equipped organizers to conduct the training in the areas they were working (CECAM, 2003).

¹³ These are the survey forms which are part of the horizontal and vertical mapping packs.

¹⁴ The Popular Education Methodology focuses on collective learning and the learner as an active participant, and knowledge is built on what the learner already knows. Teacher – student roles are blurred. It aims to empower the poor, marginalized and challenge the attitudes and social structures that oppress people (Freire, 1996)

Literacy Training

The literacy training was seen as important to increase homeworkers' confidence and capacity building to establish and manage their own organizations. Training content related to the political and social context of homeworker's lives. It integrated both literacy and numeracy, facilitating the development of personal skills that improved womens' collective participation. On completion of the literacy course women sat exams and received a certificate from the Ministry of Education (CECAM, 2003).

Organising and forming organisations

All the activities involved in the mapping –meetings, discussions, training and learning- were aimed at encouraging homeworkers to participate in and even drive the organizing. This did not occur naturally. Homeworkers needed much support, confidence building and training to take the step from interviewee to organizer. Organizers were appointed to specific areas to support homeworkers to develop the grassroots groups. It took two years for some of the suburban groups of homeworkers to develop into a stable organization with support from an organizer and training on a range of issues. The work of building organization faced numerous set backs and went through various transformations. CECAM (2003) states that “While it is true that the mapping pack lays down guidelines for organizational work, in reality there are no recipes” , which suggests that while they were able to use existing mapping materials, they also needed to develop their own processes to suit their own circumstances. As the organizing work gained momentum, “organization among homeworkers began to become visible. (They) had visited over a thousand women [...] opened up new stages, always keeping organization, the work of the organizer and the ..education process as central elements’ (CECAM, 2003, p. 22).

With the assistance of an organizer, Seaweed collectors in the South of Chile conducted a vertical mapping process to locate other seaweed workers and build a local organization. The process of understanding the supply chain led to the identification of the multinational cosmetic and food companies that used their seaweed. The seaweed workers registered a union through which they negotiated improved payment, and eliminated the need to work through a middle person. This resulted in workers increasing their annual incomes threefold. The seaweed workers union used the process of identifying and mapping the supply chain to increase their capacity through training and support to manage the new work arrangements. This required them to negotiate directly with buyers, arrange their new work distribution process and collectively bargain for better prices (AnaClara, 2003a, 2003b; CECAM, 2003)

The mapping process undertaken by CECAM demonstrates that mapping is an organizing approach that relies on numerous parallel processes occurring simultaneously: making contact with homeworkers, conducting meetings, forming research teams, organizing and forming new organisations. Clearly, the mapping surveys and interviews are used to build organization amongst homeworkers. However, this Chilean case also demonstrates the crucial importance of training and of evaluating the organizing methods for successful outcomes. Ongoing training and education was effective on several levels: first, it trained organizers and homeworkers about broader economic and political contexts and work issues related to homework; second, it was critical in preparing homeworkers to understand the rationale for organizing; third, it helped homeworkers to find suitable ways to build their own organizations. Following from the Chilean mapping process, a national meeting of homeworkers in Santiago, led to the emergence of several new homeworker unions and CECAM has made close alliances with unions traditionally working with formal sector workers particularly in the garment and footwear industries (CECAM, 2003). The mapping work in Chile has led the way for mapping in other countries and the emergence of a strong regional network of homeworker organizations in Latin America including Brazil, Bolivia and Mexico. Furthermore, CECAM has played a lead role in the emergence of the new international homeworkers network, Federation of Homeworkers Worldwide, recognizing the importance of advocacy at the global level.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE MAPPING APPROACH FOR ORGANIZING

Mapping has resulted in systematic information being collated on homebased work and organizations concerned with homework in selected areas of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe. Over 11,000 homeworkers were surveyed and over 10,000 homeworkers are now part of newly formed organizations (HWW, 2004).

Homeworker organisation documents suggest that the participatory activities involved in the horizontal and vertical mapping processes result in both individual and collective outcomes. HM has resulted in the consciousness-raising or politicization of individual homeworkers (HWW, 2002b, 2004). It has also resulted in the emergence of local homeworker collectives. Moreover, documents suggest that in many countries, the HM process has provided the first experience of making contact with homeworkers, documenting the nature of homework, and revealing the sectors where homework is occurring. This information has increased the visibility of homeworkers and the informal sector (HWW, 2002b, 2004).

Findings from the HM and VM process have been used by homeworker groups to collectively negotiate improved living and working conditions through removal of intermediaries and other methods (HWW, 2002b, 2004). Data gathered by the HM and VM processes has also been used to lobby governments and other bodies to develop regulatory mechanisms, such as legislation, or codes of practice and campaigns. Thus mapping has had valuable results for homebased workers and their organizations.

The mapping approach applied by HWW has a number of lessons that can be applied by trade unions or any organisation for organizing. Mapping lends itself to identifying workers who are not located in a single workplace and it can potentially be applied to organize workers that share similar characteristics. Informal sector workers, for example, tend to be located at several workplaces and as a consequence are difficult for unions to identify and target for organizing. Given the steady rise of informal work unions should consider the use of tools such as horizontal mapping to first, identify who these workers are and second, to use this information to mobilize workers into collective organizations. Furthermore, vertical mapping can be applied to identify workers across the supply chain and can be used by workers and their representing organizations to collectively improve working conditions, either industrially and/or via legislative means. Furthermore, the action research methodology which has encompassed training and education of workers effectively empowers workers to help identify common interests and form collectives to address perceived injustices, and could provide a valuable tool for unions and other organizations to mobilize, organize and educate workers. In this case we see an adaptation of the popular education model, which includes training at all levels and a process of ongoing training and evaluation that results in successful organizing. Finally, the case study also reinforces the importance of networks between community, established unions and other groups. The expertise developed by CECAM was critical in supporting and empowering homeworkers to create new unions.

CONCLUSION

This paper sought to discuss the process of mapping used by a number of homeworker organisations to organize homeworkers. In particular, the paper focuses on the CECAM example of mapping in Chile – as one particular adaptation of the mapping model - to demonstrate the positive outcomes for homeworker organisations that have emerged from the action research methodology employed in mapping. What emerges are several lessons for trade unions and other grassroots organisations seeking to organize difficult to reach potential members. We urge future researchers, activists and unionists to take the challenge of applying this methodology to other groups of workers.

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