Precarities in the labour market and role of trade unions

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From competition to solidarity: unionizing low wage immigrant workers

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The aim of this speech is to illustrate the results of our research into four different experiences of unionizing low wage/weak workers in different sectors:

• Agriculture
• Commerce and hospitality industry
• Logistics and transportation
“the classic stereotype of full-time permanent job, with fixed hours, and a defined-benefit pension on the completion of a largely predictable and secure career path with a single employer, however desirable it might appear, is an increasingly infrequent reality”.

Guy Rider, ILO General Director, Report to 102 International Labour Conference
Does history repeat itself?
We have to cope with a new complexity

Economic

Social

Political

Cultural
Union action includes all of them. Our major concern when dealing with such complexity is looking inadequate, as inadequacy deeply affects unionization.

We need strong unions in order to face the present challenges and make collective bargaining effective.
Counterpart

Employer (hiring formally) VS

............................. client

Few, big companies VS

.............. small, numerous companies

Stable, long-term companies VS

......... unstable, short living companies
Workers

Different degrees of mobility (some workers keep moving to get a job or find a better one)

Diversity in terms of origin, language, and customs

Different employment contracts

Schadenfreude
In order to occur and last
Collective bargaining
Must be
CONVENIENT
for all involved parts
Its benefits must be
• VISIBLE
• ENJOYABLE
for workers
Collective bargaining is convenient when

costs without agreement > agreement costs
agreement benefits > benefits without agreement

Does our COUNTERPART

Fear lack of agreement?

perceive the benefits of agreement?
Building collective identity

- From not caring or feeling like an outsider
- To informal membership
- To formal membership and appointing representatives
Our priority is the cultural dimension

Showing that union is useful to you now
Collective bargaining benefits visible and enjoyable

**VISIBLE** by communicating

- Objectives
- Processes
- Results

**ENJOYABLE** by providing

- service activities

  that allow people to enjoy the benefits of collective bargaining according to their interests, needs and preferences
Bargaining and Service Activities

- Direct, automatic
- Indirect, on demand
- Collective bargaining agreement
- Identification of problems and needs
- Information assistance control
- Recipients

Connection diagram:
- COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT → BENEFITS → SERVICE ACTIVITIES
- BENEFITS → recipients
- INDIRECT, ON DEMAND
- Identification of problems and needs
Communication

Making use of all available tools and media according to objectives, contents, recipients

BUT

Nothing can connect people as much as eye contact does