



Australia Asia Worker Links inc

ABN: 82 920 590 967 Assn No: A1318

PO Box 264 Fitzroy Victoria 3065 Australia

Tel: 61 3 9663 7277 Email: aawl@aawl.org.au

final report

Indonesia & East Timor Union Training Project

March 2001

coordinated by

Australia Asia Worker Links
Australia Indonesia Union Support

union training union solidarity

1. The training project: March 2001

Many unions, one workers' movement

The Indonesia & East Timor Union Training Project was proposed by Muchtar Pakpahan, Chairperson of SBSI Indonesia, during his solidarity visit to Australia in May 2000. It was developed further in discussions with Dita Sari, Secretary of FNPBI Indonesia and Leigh Hubbard, Secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council.

Many officials and members of unions in different industrial sectors in Indonesia, East Timor and Australia have been involved in providing advice and assistance to this project. Australia Asia Worker Links in Melbourne and Australia Indonesia Union Support in Brisbane coordinated the project. Financial sponsorship for the project was obtained from the Victorian Trades Hall Council, Victorian unions, Queensland unions, the regional organisation Asia Pacific Workers Solidarity Links and AAWL.

2. Our partners in the region

National unions, regional unions, industry sectors

The Indonesia & East Timor Union Training Project ran from Monday 5 March to Wednesday 21 March 2001, in Brisbane and Melbourne.

The unions participating from Indonesia and East Timor were:

- SBSI Indonesia, Mining Sector (Training in Brisbane)
 - SBSI Indonesia, Education Sector (in Brisbane)
 - SBSI Indonesia, Education Sector (in Melbourne)
 - FNPBI Indonesia, Health Sector (in Melbourne)
 - SBJ Indonesia, Manufacturing sector (in Melbourne)
 - SBR Indonesia, Manufacturing Sector (in Melbourne)
 - NUET East Timor, Construction Sector (in Melbourne)
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3. The results of our work

Achieving our training & solidarity objectives

The Indonesia & East Timor Union Training Project was designed to give practical training to the Indonesian & East Timorese participants, while providing information and an opportunity to exchange ideas for the Australian unions supporting the project.

In informal discussion with the participants, with their hosts and with session coordinators and interpreters, it is clear that this project has been extremely valuable. The running of the project was very smooth and comfortable for the participants, and an enjoyable experience for all people involved. It seems clear that because the Australian unions were already experienced with the project, and because the Indonesian unions were clearer in their expectations, training and solidarity objectives were more defined, and training tasks were more comfortably achieved.

A very constant comment from all the Indonesian & East Timorese participants was how they felt right at home from the first day, in the way everyone was friendly and approachable, and in fact they felt very welcome as fellow unionists.

Having a wider mix of unions representing not just different sectors, but different political approaches, different stages of development and different countries, was a definite asset during the training, as it stimulated discussion, and allowed many different issues to be explored with union officials and workplace and solidarity activists.

The main difficulty for AAWL was a lack of resources leading up to and during the project. AAWL has overcome these difficulties by requiring its members to provide volunteer time and resources to ensure the success of the project.

While this was a necessity, it is considered an inadequate basis for future projects.

Formal evaluation

In sessions with the participants, the members of project team and AAWL Executive concluded that the following objectives of the project were very clearly fulfilled:

Training objectives:

- a) Learning about the structure, functioning and daily activities of Australian unions and Australian union councils, the role of union office staff, organisers and workplace representatives, the relationship between union officials and union members
- b) Sector-specific training on negotiating collective agreements
- c) The development of H&S training, risk analysis and workplace negotiation
- d) Training in communication and publicity, including union publications, members and delegates meetings and union conferences
- e) Campaigns training including press statements and dealing with the media
- f) Negotiation during disputes or with very hostile employers
- g) Discussions with unionists from companies that have operations in Indonesia

Solidarity objectives:

- a) Building networks and relationships with Australian unions and unionists, with a view to setting up joint programs and activities on a sector-specific basis

A number of social occasions as well as formal opportunities for discussion were held to allow for occasions to meet and talk with unionists and solidarity activists. These occasions were well attended and provided for some relaxing times, some important exchanges of views as well as the opportunities to propose new projects and future joint activities.

4. The Australian unions: solidarity at work

Many unions build our project

Australian unions have a long and proud tradition of international solidarity.

As the ability of each union to participate in different solidarity projects varies over time, there are different opportunities for unions to be providing a portion of financial cost, or to provide direct training resources and involving the participants in workplace visits and in meetings with members and officials.

A big thank you from AAWL goes to all the Australian unions that were involved in the project at all levels. They provided an example of international solidarity with every session.

Our thanks to:

ACTU, QCU, VTHC

AEU (Fed), CFMEU (Nat), IEU (NSW)

CFMEU Mining (Qld), NTEU (Qld), QIEU (Qld), QTU (Qld)

AEU (Vic), AMIEU (Vic), AMWU (Vic), ANF (Vic), CEPU Plumbers (Vic),

CEPU T&S (Vic), CFMEU Construction (Vic), HSUA No.1 (Vic),

LHMU (Vic), MUA (Vic), NTEU (Vic), RTBU (Vic), TCFUA (Vic), VIEU (Vic)

In addition to these 24 unions and union councils, we wish to thank:

APHEDA in East Timor,

the Health & Safety Training Unit at VTHC,

the Trade Union Training Authority at the ACTU,

and the Workers Occupational Health Centre at VTHC,

for their very generous and extremely important support for the project.

Every day, after their union training sessions, the participants were hosted by different organisations and committees. This helped to show them different aspects of activist work, it provided opportunities for some informal discussion on the history and politics of the labour movement, and helped develop important solidarity contacts for the future. We would like to thank all the activists involved.

5. Thanks to the activists

Supporting our comrades every day

Many people supported this project.

Particular thanks go to all the **interpreters**, to the **AAWL management** team, to the **Victorian Trades Hall Council**, to **Australia Indonesia Union Support** in Brisbane, to **Asia Pacific Workers Solidarity Links** office in Pakistan and the **Asian Cultural Forum on Development** in Bangkok.

And thank you to all the **hosts, union secretaries, session coordinators, transport support, project advice, project support, and administrative workers** who made sure every session was planned, and that every session happened, on time, every time.

Thank you for supporting the activities of AAWL

2 April 2001