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T H E S I S

Assessing Organizational Capacity in Trade Unions

Building capacity to defend workers' rights in the Global South

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores the need for an organisational evaluation tool for the Trade Union Solidarity Center of Finland (SASK) in order to further assess the abilities and skills of its partner organisations in the global south and in developing countries. The aim is to provide SASK with an appropriate tool for evaluation, drawing on best practices from existing models worldwide. Keeping SASK's operating environment in mind when creating a tool was essential.

The subscriber Trade Union Solidarity Cener of Finalnd SASK is a trade union organization working worldwide to strengthen the position of trade unions and improve the conditions and human rights of workers. Strong unions play a key role in reducing poverty and creating a stabile civic society.

In addition to the research methods presented in the thesis, the theoretical framework consists of the principles of development cooperation, special features of SASK's working environment and the theory of organizational development.

The thesis study is being prepared and grounded in Nepal, where SASK is currently working on several projects with various trade unions and federations. The finished organisational assessment tool was tested in the local operating environment with several local partner organisations in Nepal.

Benchmarking and interviewing were important research methods for progressing the work. Existing material was utilized and used to gather the essential elements for SASK. Local actors, and in this case also the NGO expert in the Nepalese region, among others the Embassy of Finland, have a key role in building the knowledge base.

As a result of this thesis, SASK will be given a tool to assess the skills and competencies of its partners in areas relevant to trade union activities.

Keywords: organisational assessment, international, development, benchmarking, Nepal, organisational capacity, NGO, trade unions

TIIVISTELMÄ

Humanistinen ammattikorkeakoulu
Yhteisöpedagogi

Tekijä: Susanna Haapalainen
Opinnäytetyön nimi: Organisaatioiden kapasiteetin arvioiminen ammattiliittokentässä, valmiuksien kehittäminen työntekijöiden oikeuksien puolustamiseksi globaalissa etelässä
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Tässä opinnäytetyössä selvitetään tarvetta arviointityökalulle Suomen ammattiliittojen solidaarisuuskeskus SASKille, jotta sen kumppaniorganisaatioiden kykyjä ja taitoja voidaan arvioida entistä paremmin globaalissa etelässä ja kehittyvissä maissa. Tavoitteena on tarjota SASKille asianmukainen arviointityökalu, joka hyödyntää maailmalla olemassa olevien mallien parhaita käytäntöjä. SASKin toimintaympäristön huomioiminen työkalun luomisessa on oleellista.

Tilaaja Suomen Ammattiliittojen solidaarisuuskeskus SASK on kehitysyhteistyöjärjestö, joka pyrkii maailmanlaajuisesti vahvistamaan ammattiliittojen asemaa ja parantamaan työntekijöiden olosuhteita. Vahvat ammattiliitot ovat avainasemassa köyhyden vähentämisessä ja yhteiskunnallisen vakauden luomisessa.

Teoreettisen viitekehyksen muodostavat käytettävien tutkimusmenetelmien lisäksi kehitysyhteistyön periaatteet, SASKin toiminaypäristön erityispiirteet ja organisaatioiden kehittämisen merkitys.

Arviointityökalua valmistetiin ja testattiin Nepalissa, jossa SASK työskentelee parhaillaan useissa hankkeissa eri ammattiliittojen kanssa. Valmista arviointityökalua testattiin paikallisessa toimintaympäristössä useiden SASKin paikallisten kumppaniorganisaatioiden kanssa.

Benchmarking ja haastattelut ovat tärkeitä tutkimusmenetelmiä työn etenemisessä. Olemassa olevaa materiaalia hyödynnetään ja käytetään SASKin kannalta olennaisten elementtien keräämiseen. Paikallisilla toimijoilla ja tässä tapauksessa myös Nepalin alueen kansalaisjärjestöjen asiantuntijoilla, muun muassa Suomen suurlähetystöllä, on keskeinen rooli tietopohjan rakentamisessa.

Tämän opinnäytetyön tuloksena SASKille rakennetaan työkalu, jolla se voi arvioida paikallisten kumppaneidensa kykyä ja pätevyyttä ammattiliittotoiminnan kannalta merkityksellisillä aloilla.

Asiasanat: organisaation kehittäminen, kansainvälisyys, kehitysyhteistyö, benchmark, Nepali, järjestöjen toimintakyky, kansalaisjärjestöt, ammattiliitot

CONTENTS

Abbreviations and relevant concepts used in the Thesis

Abbreviatons	Explanation
Antuf	All Nepal Trade Union Federation
BWI	Building and Wood Worker's International
BWI NAC	Building and Wood Worker's International Nepal Affiliates Committee
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus
CSO	Civil Society Organization
Fingo	The Finnish Development NGO's umbrella organization
FM or MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Gefont	General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions
Global South	Countries specified in OECD and the UN Development Programme for which development aid can be directed.
GUF	Global Union Federation
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
JHL	Trade Union for the Public and Welface Sectors
JTUCC	Joint Trade Union Coordination Cenre
KEPA	The Finnish Service Centre for Development Cooperation, nowadays known as Fingo
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

NTUC	Nepal Trade Union Congress
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSI	Public Service International
SAK	The Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions
Sida	The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
(S)OCA	(SASK) Organizational Capacity Assessment
Tehy	The Union of Health and Social Care and Early Childhood Education and Care Professionals in Finland
TUAC	Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD
TUDEP	Trae Union Development Effectiveness Profile Tool
UN	United Nations
UN Women Nepal	United Nation agency working to boost gender equality and women's empowerment in Nepal
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNI NLC	UNI Global Union for service sector, Nepal Liaison Council
WWF	The World Wildlife Fund for Nature

1 INTRODUCTION

Developing organizational capacity is essential to the goal of gaining more knowledge and to serve the beneficiaries interests ever better. Well operating non-governmental organizations (NGO) and civil society organizations (CSO) play a key role in civil societies and democratic operations (Bhandari 2014). Democratic trade unions are also an essential part of free civil societies in all parts of the world, including the Global South. Global South is a term used to describe the countries specified by the OECD and the UN Development Programme for which development aid can be directed. The term is used to identify these lower-income countries.

At its best, the trade union movement gives power and voices to the workers. They ensure the rights of the workers and promote decent living wages. These themes can affect in overall global issues such as reducing poverty and child labor, as well as promoting equality and well-being. The fundamental rights of the workers are equivalent to fundamental human rights. According to the Trade Union Solidarity Center of Finland SASK, effectively operating unions are a part of social movement in increasing income and wealth. They also increase the overall stability and safety in the societies by creating trust and cooperation with governments and by participating in decision-making processes.

According to SASK, a sustainable way to reduce poverty and inequality in the Global South is to work towards decent work that brings living wage to the workers. Collective bargaining is a tool among social policies that will result in people having a part in the economic growth of their nations. Good social dialogue between the trade unions, employers and governments guarantee the involvement and participation of the people concerned. These processes require trust and respect, but also legal and institutional frameworks.

It is difficult to say in precise the number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in the development sector globally. Many organizations are purely focused on development work in foreign countries, often in Global South or developing countries. However, there are several other organizations as well whose main area of focus might be different, for example the trade union sector, but whose work is crucial in the overall development work done. In Nepal alone, there are estimated to be over 50 000 NGO's working in various sectors (Social Welfare Council 2019). As Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world, these grass-root organizations play a major role in supporting the development of a sustainable civil society.

This thesis explores the possibilities to support trade unions in the Global South in their organizational capacity assessment process, which could ultimately lead to capacity building. The project started as an idea to help the subscriber SASK to operate better with its' partner organizations and to increase the possibilities of local trade unions in the Global South to recognize their organizational capacities better. The process of assessing the capacities can help built the organizational effectiveness and will lead to stronger unions that have better capability to ensure the rights of the workers. The subscriber SASK had the idea of building an organizational capacity assessment tool for a while already and this thesis project was an opportunity to start the building process. SASK operates mostly with organizations and unions in the Global South and building the capacity of those partner organizations is one of its' key objectives. Thus, a self-assessment tool to help mapping partner organizations' competences was needed.

The working environment of the subscriber is multicultural, as is its' staff, and most operations are done in English. Hence, this thesis was also decided to be done in English to better serve the needs of the subscriber and to avoid any contents to be lost in translation. Materials used for benchmarking in this thesis were also in English and most of the actions that happened in Nepal, such as the workshop and most of the interviews, were also conducted in English. Major part of this thesis process was conducted in Nepal in co-operations with a few of SASK's partner organizations there. The piloting was done in an authentic environment in cooperation with the subscriber and the local partner organizations in Nepal. These actions took place right before the global COVID-19 pandemic.

A lot of materials for benchmarking and as a background research were received and gathered. The methods and materials mentioned in this thesis are the ones which best serve the final purpose, building an organizational capacity assessment tool for the subscriber.

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2 SUBSCRIBER OF THE THESIS

2.1 General information

The subscriber of this thesis is the Trade Union Solidarity Center of Finland SASK. SASK works to improve workers' rights and human rights in general in the Global South by supporting workers and trade unions. SASK is the only development cooperation organization in Finland improving workers' rights.

SASK was founded by a number of Finnish trade unions in 1986. Since then, SASK has been focused on increasing the interaction between the Global South and the Finnish civil society especially through the trade union movement. SASK supports and empowers the workers in the Global South by strengthening the local trade unions and building up their capacities. SASK's aim is to enforce global labor rights, promote decent work and initially eradicate extreme poverty and social inequality.

From a community educators' point of view, SASK provides an interesting working environment in terms of voluntary work, international operations, and NGO work in general. SASK has provided a platform for several HUMAK students for their thesis work before, as well.

SASK promotes the eradication of poverty and inequality by strengthening the trade union movement and the status of workers in the Global South. The work of SASK strengthens labor rights and contributes in decreasing of poverty and inequality in a sustainable manner. It is an integral part of the global agenda of trade union movement of Finland, too.

SASK sees that the most sustainable means to combat poverty and inequality in the world is decent work that provides living wage to the workers. In the Global South, trade unions are needed to defend the rights of the workers, both women and men. The sustainable way to decrease poverty among workers is through collective bargaining agreement and social policies that results in working people having a part in the economic growth and prosperity of their nations.

International Labor Organization (ILO) has defined the fundamental principles and rights for workers and those act as the basis of SASK's work, too. These fundamental rights include the right to organize and conclude collective agreements, as well as eradicating forced labor, child labor and discrimination (ILO 2021). SASK works for inequality and poverty reduction, and

for the right to all the workers to earn a living wage. The negotiating trade union movement and working life structures also support societies in the development of democracy and in improving of civil rights.

SASK's head office is in Helsinki, Finland. SASK also has regional representatives in Ecuador, India, Mozambique and Indonesia. SASK currently has about 40 projects underway on three different continents in ten different countries.

SASK partners with trade unions in the Global South, as well as international trade union organizations and research and training institutes. Finnish trade unions and central organizations are founders and member organizations of SASK in Finland. Representatives of member organizations are part of SASK's administration and decision-making system. At this stage, there are a total of 37 member organizations from all three federations.

The membership fees of the member organizations are part of SASK's annual funding. SASK also has private donors and support member communities. These are usually local trade union branches. The activities and projects are mainly funded from the development co-operation funds of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. About 74% of the funding comes from the government funding.

In development work, it often takes years to see the actual results of the work. Sometimes the results can be seen only after a decade after the projects have finished. Therefore, committed organizations and long-term work is crucial in gaining genuinely developing outcomes (Perkiö 2010). Hence, SASK operates in four-year terms and many projects take several phases to produce tangible results.

In Finland, part of SASK's domestic operations include activities focusing on raising the awareness of human rights in the world of work and working on global education of its' affiliates' members and other volunteers. Global education is one of the important elements of domestic operations, and about 400 volunteer activists are involved in SASK's operations. SASK educates union members through ambassador trainings, through which participants develop abilities to discuss global human rights issues in their own living environments and gain tools and ideas for improving human rights in working life.

The key beneficiaries and target groups of the programs include the working women and men employed in the sectors covered by SASK's projects in the project countries. The beneficiaries

also include workers in the informal economy who employ themselves and often occupy very vulnerable positions. These workers include domestic workers and volunteer health care workers. The beneficiaries also include the working people in the program countries who benefit from the changes in their societies such as labor law amendments and the enhancements of social security systems and pensions.

2.2 Context

The context where SASK operates is crucial to understand as there are mutable challenges affecting to the work of SASK. These themes have been recognized within SASK and introducing them shortly makes sense in this thesis, too. Trends and megatrends in Finland, in SASK's operating countries and globally affect the operations and thus the prerequisites for development work and trade union operations. All these themes are present in the environment of community educators, too, especially when worked in international context. The importance of each topic might vary depending on whether addressing NGO's or some other community educator operating environments. However, theme like equality is present pretty much in all the work done by community educators, no matter what the working environment is.

The Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs MFA had defined cross-cutting objectives of the Finnish development policy. These objectives also include themes listed below and support the decision to briefly address these themes in this thesis, too. As SASK gets most of its funding from MFA, these objectives are visible in their projects, too, and they are on the agenda of many other development organizations, as well.

2.2.1 Demographic change

Overall population of the world continues increasing but the growth varies depending on the region and countries. Rapid population growth is a challenge not just for sustainable development, but also achieving the goals in overall increasing of inequality. Rapid population growth brings many challenges such as unplanned urbanization, environmental concerns, fear of malnutrition and hunger, unsustainable economic growth, and many social injustice concerns.

In SASK's operating areas, for example in Asia and Africa, will be seeing an overall fast growth in population over the coming years (Canning, Sangeeta, Yazbeck 2015). At the same time, many developed countries like Finland face a different challenge with the age dependency ratio, as the population is aging (Statistics Finland 2021). This means that the amount of labour force

is decreasing and that will bring down the membership rates in many trade unions. This has a direct effect to the membership fees the unions pay for example to SASK.

This context is affecting SASK in many ways. Firstly, it brings the reality and challenges in the operating countries into another level and forces SASK to take these demographic changes into account while planning future operations. The different demographical changes lead to a different level of regional development. It also affects the placing and positioning of companies and jobs, as well as the global labour markets in general.

2.2.2 Climate crisis

The impacts of climate crisis can be devastating to the vulnerable workers and their families in the Global South. Global warming brings extreme weather conditions, such as heat, that will directly impact the workers for example in farming and agricultural industries by drying out the soil and reducing the available work hours during the day. It may also have impact on the crops and the quality of products and eventually the prices and profits (Nelson, Rosegrant, Palazzo, Gray etc. 2010).

Global trade union movement needs to be in the forefront of battling the climate crisis and increasing attention of governments and decision makers about workers' rights in changing environments. New energy sources and production methods might change the working life in many ways. Just transition is a policy framework created by the trade union movement to secure workers' rights as the economies shift to sustainable production, mainly by protecting biodiversity and combating climate crisis (Just Transition Centre 2017). Just transition is one of SASK's main contexts and many projects include goals related to it.

Climate crisis is also said to be a humanitarian crisis. It is increasingly recognized as human rights crisis and has huge impacts on individuals (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2021).

2.2.3 Shrinking civic space and violations of human rights

Respecting the human rights is a major goal in all SASK's operations and projects. Well-operating societies have good basis for social dialogue and trust between the operators and governmental support for the processes. Democratic participation processes are at the heart of ideal societies.

The trends are worrying, as SASK has seen increasing violations towards civic society and freedom of workers in many of its operating countries (ITUC Global Rights Index 2020). It does not only affect the basic democratic freedoms of people, but also the overall sustainable development and poverty eradication.

2.2.4 Inequality

Economic inequality between countries has decreased, but inequality within countries is growing almost everywhere (World Bank 2016). Reducing extreme poverty is one of SASK's main goals and it can be achieved by reducing inequality. SASK fights inequality in many fields and especially gender equality is one of the main tasks in almost every project.

Women are generally under-represented in trade unions and in decision-making bodies, as well as in labour force in general. According to SASK, women are more often employed in the non-formal sector and less likely to participate in trade union activities. In SASK's perspective it is important to ratify various ILO conventions in the project countries to enable a legislation that will ensure women a safe and equal working environment. Gender equality is also one of the MFA objectives for the Finnish development work. The aim of gender equality in MFA objectives is to ensure that all people can equally contribute to and benefit from the development of the societies (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2021).

2.2.5 The power of democratic trade unions

SASK believes that strong unions are a key factor in sustainable and democratic societies. Unions provide a voice to the workers and participate in the decision-making processes that are relevant to working people. Social dialogue between different actors has a major positive impact on the development of the societies. Trade unions are the largest membership-based organizations worldwide and they act not just a voice of the workers, but as a voice for social justice, too.

2.2.6 Digital globalization

Globalization is visible also through new technology and forms of work, such as platform work. It has a huge effect on global economy and as many operations are run by algorithms, human managed tasks are changing.

Change is not always necessary for the worse. Technological development can bring out new solutions to issues such as energy supplies, urbanization and climate change. At the same time there is a fear that new skills are needed, and this need might leave lots of people out of relevant work force and polarize the labour force.

SASK is especially keeping an eye on the vulnerable people in its' project countries and seeing how the future of work will affect them. Globalization may cause issues such as loss of control over the working conditions or increasing of the precarious employment. On the other hand, trade unions might gain more opportunities to influence global supply chains and global rights of the workers.

2.2.7 COVID-19

During the process of writing this thesis, the COVID-19 crisis hit the world. It has affected SASK's operations in all the project countries. The pandemic has exposed even more inequality and insecurity in many parts of the world. Number of workers are left without an income and with lack of proper social security systems the situation is saddening for many people and their families. The long-term impacts of the virus will be highly unequally divided (Adams-Prassi, Boneva, Colin, Rauh 2020).

It soon became very clear that the global pandemic situation would have many SASK operations at halt, as well. However, it did not stop the process of continuing to draft and modify the assessment tool since luckily the workshop and other Nepal-based methods were already finished by the time the virus caused a lockdown that ended up lasting around three months in spring 2020.

2.3   Special features of operations, Nepal

Nepal is one of the poorest, least developed, and most fragile countries in the world (UNCDAT 2020). The state of Nepal has succeeded in reducing extreme poverty in recent years, but inequality remains a major challenge for the country. In 2015, the country's parliament adopted a new constitution, which is an important step forward in the country's democratic development. This has improved, among other things, the position of women in political decision-making positions. According to UN Women Nepal, at the regional level, more than 14,000 women are elected representatives, but their actual decision-making capacity is still weak. In 2019, only four of the 25 ministers were women (Basnet, Karki, Dabadi 2019).

A new constitution was introduced in Nepal in 2015 and SASK has been involved in supporting its emergence. The local trade union movement, with the support of SASK, has been actively involved in the preparation and implementation of the Constitution. The trade union movement in Nepal is highly fragmented and divided under a number of different political fragments and central organizations.
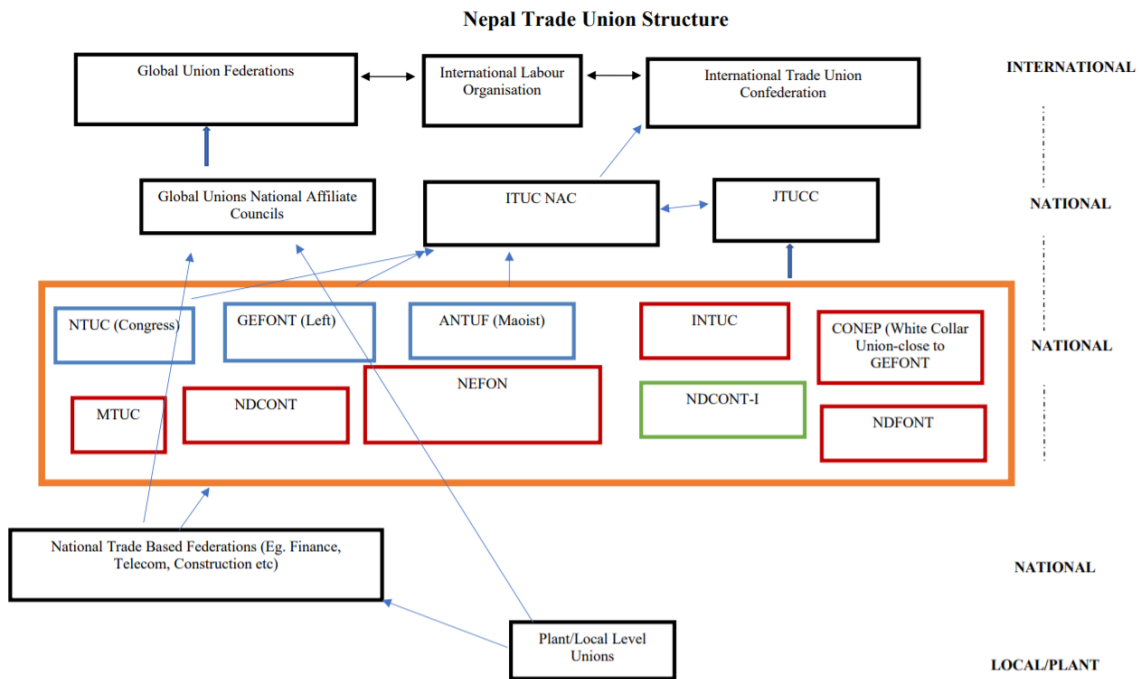
Picture 1. Nepal Trade Union Structure according to Manoranjan Pegu, SASK 2020.

It was significant for the progress of the Constitution that all Nepalese trade union organizations from different sides cooperated. A significant factor was seen when, with the encouragement and support of SASK, the largest Maoist central organization ANTUF, which supported the rebels, was involved in the discussion. SASK was actively encouraging ANTUF to end the violence and encouraged a peaceful policy to improve the status of workers. The chairperson of ANTUF stated that the Nepalese unions have received a significant support from SASK as they are establishing the democratic state (SASKtulokset 2021).

The new constitution was considered progressive in many ways from the workers point of view. It included many improvements such as removing the death penalty as one of the first countries in Asia (Nepal Law Comission 2018).

Picture 2. New Constitution of Nepal. Photo: Rupak Maharjan

The Finnish state's support to Nepal is about 12-14 million euros a year (Embassy of Finland, Kathmandu). In addition, support is channeled through various NGOs. The Finnish state's support is mainly focused on the availability of drinking water and sanitation, the development of education and the improvement of the situation of women and the vulnerable people (Embassy of Finland, Kathmandu). Finland is among the ten most recipients of development aid to Nepal, including Norway and Germany (Facts of Nepal, Nepal Ministry of Finance 2019). The general opinion of the Finnish population towards supporting development work and operations is pretty highly accepted. Nearly half (47%) of the Finns consider development work and cooperation as very important and 41% consider it as relatively important (Rahkonen & Kantola 2018). Such figures give a decent legitimacy for the development work the government is funding through various NGO's, too.

Globally SASK's work is based on partnerships. Often SASK's local project partners are grassroot actors, such as local trade unions or central organizations. Local unions have most updated information of the daily lives of workers in their sectors. Trade unions can advance the interests of the workers and sector in society at large. In addition to local partners, Finnish unions and member organizations of SASK are also involved in the projects.

Nepal was used as a pilot country in this thesis and SASK has many projects ongoing there. The output of the thesis was piloted with Nepalese project partners in Kathmandu in early 2020. SASK has four ongoing projects in Nepal in various fields. Local partner organizations are mostly local trade unions.

The first project addresses health care volunteers in Nepal and their terms of employment. Many workers, who are predominantly women, do not enjoy decent employment conditions or security. Finland's partner organizations are the Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sector (JHL) and the Trade Union of Health and Social care Professionals in Finland (Tehy), and the local partner is Public Services International PSI and its Nepalese affiliates.

The second project addresses the improvement of working conditions in the forestry sector, especially with regard to occupational safety. The objective is also to promote sustainable forestry and nature conservation work. SASK's member organizations involved are Loimu, the Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions SAK and WWF Finland as international partner are involved in the project. In Nepal, the partner is Building and Wood Workers' International BWI Nepalese Affiliates Committee, as well as several construction and forestry associations.

The objective of the third project is to improve the rights of migrant workers. The aim of the project is to promote the knowledge of migrant workers leaving Nepal, for example, for going to work on the construction sites of Qatar World Cup, about their rights and to support their return bac home. The project partners are The Finnish Construction Trade Union, as well as Building and Wood Workers' International BWI and Nepalese associations in the sector.

The fourth project seeks to improve Nepalese legislation to ensure better labor law and social security. The aim is also to improve the cooperation and operating conditions of local central organizations. The Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions SAK is the domestic supporter and JTUCC, the co-operation body of trade union central organizations, and the central organizations Gefont, NTUC and ANTUF are local actors.

2.4 The need for thesis

Organizational development and capacity assessment are vital in order to improve the effectiveness and capacity of CSOs. This thesis addresses the need of a specific organizational assessment tool for the subscriber, but the general need exists in the whole development NGO sector and perhaps wider in organizational sector, as well.

SASK operates with its' partner organizations in various projects concerning workers' rights. It is crucial to be able to measure and verify the actual results at the end of the program periods and at the final phases of each project. When assessing the capacities, the focus will be on determining the baseline for the partner organizations' competence and capacity; the work will be carried out in a participatory process using the self-assessment tool build during this thesis project. At the project level, this assessment process identifies the competence gaps in partner organizations, and competence development plans may then be drafted with the partner organizations according to assessment results.

SASK's local affiliates are very different and their capacity varies a lot. Some already have a long history of protecting the position of workers in their own country, but some of the partners are new and in their early stages. For SASK to truly evaluate the expertise and capabilities of its partners, as well as their development over the course of projects and programs, it needs a tool to gather up-to-date information on the partners' performance.

It is important for SASK to evaluate their partner's skills and abilities in areas that are relevant to trade union activities. These include the capacities to exist, operate, relate and mobilize, as well as develop and grow. Such core capacities were defined in other existing tools and these particular capacities were identified relevant in SASK's operations. SASK needs a tool that is at the same time comprehensive enough to provide enough information about partners, but also easy to use and simple. The assessment should not be too laborious and time-consuming and should not take longer than two days. The information must be able to be collected in a format that is easy to edit and where any change can be easily detected.

The need for the tool was brought with the need to assess on what stage the partner organizations are at, what types of needs they have to be able to plan sustainable capacity-building and to assess their development. Each organization is unique and has their own levels of operations and strategies that needed to be considered when building the tool.

There are dozens of different evaluation tools available to different organizations around the world, but none of them are fully suited to the trade union environment. The aim of this thesis is to create a tool that specifically serves SASK's field of expertise and takes into account the differences between the partners due to different cultural backgrounds and organizing field and is suitable for use both in Finland and in SASK project sites around the world.

The tool is piloted in a Nepalese environment with a local trade union. Piloting is used to gather experience as to whether the tool meets SASK's need and purpose and also serves the needs of local partners. The ready tool will be part of SASK's project work and will be used to assess the capabilities and level of expertise of partners. The results can be used to follow up possible actions, assess the need for further projects, gather experiences of success and learning, and validate the results of the project based on concrete data.

The evaluation and assessment projects can help the organizations think more comprehensively about their own capacity development in several areas. These areas could include advocacy, human rights, other global trends, management, communications, or gender issues. The assessment results shared within the organizations could also broaden the overall understanding about the capacity of the organization.

3 ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

3.1 Organizational capacity in theory

Organization's capacity is explained to mean its potential to perform and its ability to success-fully apply the resources and skill to achieve the goals and benefit the stakeholders (Horton, Alexaki, Bennet-lartey, Garde, Vernooy 2003). When talking about capacity development, it is meant to improve the performances and the resources. In other words, the organizational capacity is influenced by the capacity and internal environment, as well as the operational external environment.
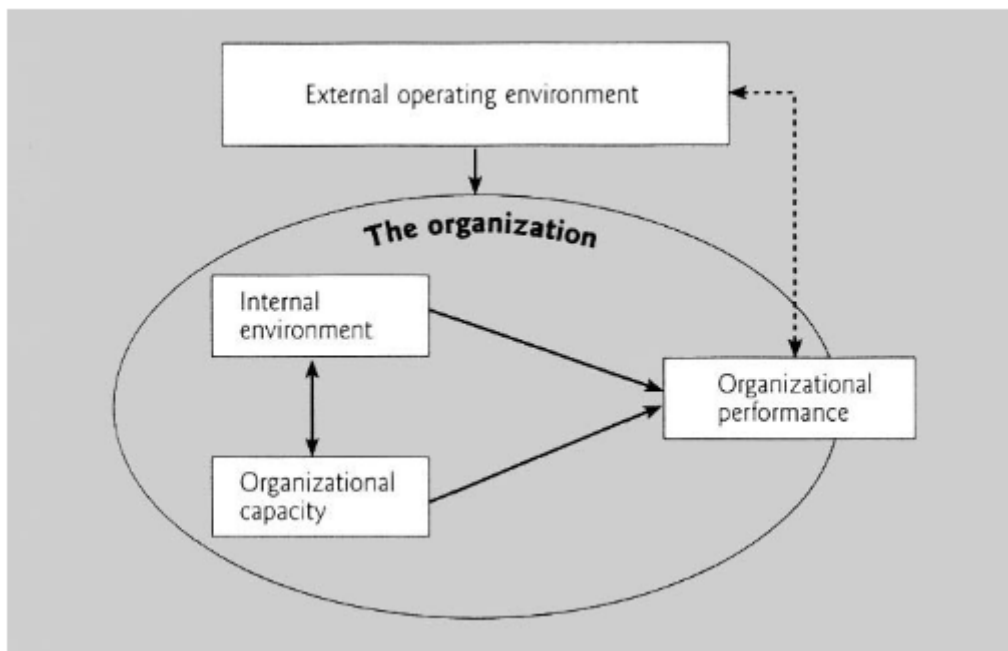
Picture 3. Factors that influence organizational capacity and performance (Horton, Alexaki, Bennet-lartey, Garde, Vernooy 2003)

Elements of the organizational assessment framework are identified and divided into four different categories according to Horton, Alexaki, Bennet-lartey, Garde and Vernooy. These key elements include

- relevance and organizational performance. It describes the organizations need to exist and ability to meet its goals and achieve its missions.
- organizational capacity, that refers to resources, knowledge and staff

- external operating environment. This refers to economic trends, cultural milieu, policies and administrations.
- internal environment, such as traditions, working methods, norms and values.

As presented later in chapter 3.3, similar core elements are identified in this thesis with SAKS's assessment tool and referable elements are found in the final tool and in the way it has been categorized. Ideally, organizational capacity assessment will lead to capacity development.

Global trade union movement is enjoying a growing recognition about the important role that they can play in development work worldwide. International Trade Union Confederation ITUC has stated, that this realization brings with it a moral duty for unions and other organizations to continuously improve the quality and effectiveness of their work (ITUC 2012).

In addition to statements made before in this chapter, organizational capacity can be seen as a function of many different factors that exist within an organization (KEPA 2009). Capacity refers to organizations effectiveness to manage its programmers and to achieve the stated goals. Different factors, such as individual capacities, ways of organizing, cultural norms and assets all play a key role in enabling the organization to work towards its missions.

The UNDP defines capacity assessment as the process through which organizations, societies and individuals strengthen and maintain the capacity to set and achieve their own development goals (UNDP 2008). In order this to happen, the organizations need to recognize and identify which areas of capacity already exist and which areas need further focus. This defines the purpose of capacity assessment.

Most organizational capacity assessment tools use participatory approaches to collect data on capacity-building to get a clear overall picture of the organization as a whole. Some organizational capacity assessment tools also use scoring systems to help visualize the stage of organization. These kind of quantitative measures and indicators might be relevant, and they are popularly used, but there are certain limitations using this kind of quantitative measures only. These methods might be unable to capture the relationships of different components, explain why something occurred or identifying shifts and nuances of change (Hailey & James 2003). Though the tool contents and measures might vary, it is often the whole assessment process that has a lot of impact in the overall capacity understanding within the organization (Informing Change 2017).

Organizational capacity in general is a complex issue. Strengthening capacity takes time and effort from the organizations and it often needs a long-term strategy. At its best, an assessment tool can help the organizations to measure their status quo but does not itself build any capacity for the organization. Evaluations and further strategies need to be taken into place further on based on the realizations and results of the assessment processes.

3.2 Capacity assessment in SASK

It is important for SASK to be able to assess the partners' capacity and abilities in those entities that are central to trade union activities. These include the capacities to exist, to operate, to relate and mobilize and to grow.

Non-governmental organizations and specially trade unions are major actors in strengthening the civil society all over the world. The development work done by the trade union movement plays a key role in improving the living and working conditions of people in target countries. In order for organizations in Finland and elsewhere to reach their full potential, their activities must be regularly evaluated, and their recourses assessed.

For such capacity assessment, a tool corresponding to the research problem was built in this thesis. At the same time, the tool must be comprehensive enough to provide enough information about the partners, but also easy to use and simple enough. The assessment should not be too detailed and time consuming and should take no more than two days to fill in. It must be possible to collect the information in a form that is easy to edit and from which any changes throughout the projects can be easily detected. The answer options should be simple, yes or no options, or otherwise pre-given options. The answers can also be given, for example, as percentages or descriptive figures. Project partners and local organizations can fill in the tool form independently and no separate facilitator is required to do so. It is, however, advisable that partners fill in the tool together with two or more persons to get a wider perspective to the answers.

The ultimate goal is for SASK to have a data base, for each project partner, that can be updated as the project progresses. SASK will also have information about the partners that are in a comparative form and can help evaluate their need for building more capacity in certain areas or to highlight their performance in areas where they perform above the average.

The outline of the tool was tested with Nepalese local partners. A day event was held in March 2020, where project partners provided feedback on the completion of the tool and its appropriateness. The final tool was modified based on the feedback received. In this way, local actors also experience involvement in development work and grassroot perspectives are more likely to be taken into account.

3.3 Core Capacities

SASK's organizational capacity assessment tool was to include four major core capacities, that are evaluated with the tool. These capacities reflect the basic operations and activities of the organizations, as well as their wider ability to operate in the ever-changing trade union environment and to respond to challenges of the working environment. The core capacities were defined based on SASK's strategy and relevant themes.

Core Capacity: To Exist

This capacity reflects the unions position as an organization and answers how their basic operating capacity is managed. The meaning is to find whether the union has the legitimacy and a presence that allows it to serve its members well. These may include in detail such tools as statutes, strategy, annual plans, membership base, general assembly, governing board, action planning and other decision-making structures.

Core Capacity: To Operate and Perform

In this section it is assessed whether the union has the organizational systems and structures to allow it to function effectively. It also oversees the resources the union has to operate and perform according to plans. These resources are necessary staff for human resources, activist recruitment and sufficient plans and strategies for that, youth and women engagement, financial management and structures, professional administrations and overall planning and monitoring. According to SASK's strategy, the role of represented minorities and plans to engage youth and women are in a key role, as one of the strategic goals is to act in decreasing inequality and to improve gender quality in all societies' structures.

Core Capacity: To Relate and Mobilise

The aim on this section is to assess whether the union invests in constructive, formal and informal dialogue and partnership with its stakeholders, and mobilizes the necessary human, financial and material resources in a planned and sustainable way. In this chapter the following themes are assessed: internal communications, decision making, communications and involvement of members, external relations, recognition of local experts, local structures, and the balance between internal and external funding.

Core Capacity: To Grow

As one core capacity, the unions' ability to grow is assessed. The key questions are whether the union is actively pursuing to do more and to do better to reach further. It is also asked whether the pursuits have been successful. Strong and well operating unions have the strength and legitimacy to negotiate on behalf of their members as well as act as a credible actor in the society. This chapter seeks to assess how the unions adapt and learn, how they tackle the changing environments and respond to challenges, how are different perspectives and opinions dealt with and how potential conflicts are dealt with, as well as how the reporting and monitoring of the actions and goals is handled.

4 RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods are usually divided into quantitative and qualitative methods (Ojasalo, Moilanen, Ritalahti 2009). Qualitative methods include for example group interviews and participatory observation. According to Ojasalo, Moilanen and Ritalahti, the purpose of qualitative research is to understand phenomena better and more comprehensively, and to obtain as much information as possible about a narrow subject.

In this thesis, three different research methods and data collection methods were used. These research methods were benchmarking, interviews and workshop and they are all defined as action research methods. The completed tool was piloted in a workshop in authentic environment with SASK's local partner organizations in Nepal.

The research problem is a question that, when answered, provides information on a focused topic. Problem setting refers to the formulation of the reflection that guides the conduct of research, as the goal of the research. The problem statement can be broken down into smaller sub-problems and it will eventually materialize into precise research questions (University of Jyväskylä 2009).

Picture 4. Research method phases visualized.

The defining of the research problem in this thesis was reasonably simple, as the assignment was very concrete. The research problem in this thesis is that the subscriber does not have an appropriate tool to assess the skills and abilities of its' local partner organisations or measure the development of their capacity throughout the various projects. Research question is defined as follows: What kind of information is relevant to collect in determining the organisational

capacity of SASK's local partners and what perspectives need to be taken into account when drafting such evaluation tool?

4.1 Action Research

The methods used in this thesis are so called *action research* methods. It is often characterized by participatory and collaborative research methods. The aim is to seek transformative change in the organization while simultaneously doing research and taking action. Action research is meant to provide solutions for practical problems and create new understanding and information about the phenomena (Ojasalo, Moilanen, Ritalahti 2009). Action research methods are very practical, and it is considered to be a qualitative research method.

The idea of action research is to change the way things are and not to settle with the status quo. The subject of action research can be some practical methods or actions within the organizations. Based on Kurt Lewin, who is considered to be the originator of action research (Adelman, 1993), there are five principles to action research:

1. It seeks solutions to concrete organizational and practical problems.
2. Progress steps: problem identification, action planning, outcome evaluation
3. It seeks to change the mindset of the participants.
4. Questioning an existing problem or situation.
5. Seeks to promote theoretical undestanding and to change practices.

The progress steps are often seen as cycles more than linear: the process might start over or some parts of the steps are repeated through the research process. Action research has been described to be the a natural process of the human mind as it has the need to find solutions to every day problems (McNiff 2016).

Action research is suitable for situations where existing actions are to be changed or modified and new practices are to be created (Ojasalo & Moilanen & Ritalahti 2009). The connection between the theoretical and practical sides of the research is highlighted in action research, as it was in this thesis, too. Action research is thought to be suitable for almost any possible sectors of research (Kuula 1999) and in this thesis it is creating the combining holistic theory base for all the qualitative research methods used.

4.2 Benchmarking

Benchmarking always involves comparison and interest in how others do and act. However, everything else is open and flexible (Hämäläinen & Kaartinen-Koutaniemi 2002). Benchmarking compares the activities and processes of one's own organization with those of another organization and seeks to introduce operating methods and practices that have already been found good elsewhere. Benchmarking is suitable as a method when the object of comparative development can be clearly defined (Ojasalo & Moilanen & Ritalahti 2009). This was the case in this thesis, when SASK had clearly defined the need for their organizational capacity assessment tool and there were clearly similar tools to learn from. Benchmarking as a method was relevant in the thesis since the topic was narrowed down to a specific issue and finding reference organizations was relatively easy. Benchmarking is an excellent way to utilize existing information and apply it to one's own organization and its operations as appropriate. Sharing and learning from good practices is an effective way to develop activities in general, especially in NGO sector.

The reference partner can be chosen based on their similar activities or actions. The reference partner or material does not necessarily have to be an actor in the same field if you want to compare individual processes or aspects. Benchmarking helps to identify weaknesses in the functioning of one's own organization and to develop new ideas and operating models aimed at development and improvement of performance (Karlöf, Lundgren, Edenfeldt, Tillman 2003).

Benchmarking can be carried out in a number of ways, including by examining existing material or by meeting with representatives of peer-reviewed organizations. In this thesis existing material was analyzed and taken into account when planning and building the organizational capacity assessment tool for SASK.

Benchmarking should take into account possible differences and the reasons behind those differences, as well. Differences in performance can be explained by many factors, such as the size of the organization, the operating environment, and the facilities and resources available.

The organizations and their materials that were used in this thesis for benchmarking were the Trade Union Development Effectiveness Profile Tool (TUDEP) by ITUC, Octagon by The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Sida and OCAT by The Finnish Service Centre for Development Cooperation KEPA. On the basis of these materials, good practices were assessed that fit the subscriber's needs and to solve the research problem.

The reference material was evaluated as relevant to SASK's operations. SASK's operating environment is unique and it is one of the few development organizations focusing on human rights issues in the world of work so no direct benchmark could be found in other similar organizations. However, similar operating tools of other organizations were available, the operating principles of which were examined in this thesis in the parts relevant to SASK's operations. Bringing a world of work perspective into SASK's own assessment tool was paramount.

The aim of this benchmarking process was to adopt best practices: identifying high-quality practices of others and applying them to SASK's organization. On the other hand, the aim was not to create new contacts to the organizations whose materials were assessed, but to seek comparative information.

The challenge of choosing to use a benchmarking method in this thesis was that there were many possible materials to evaluate and to learn from. Limiting the options to a few relevant ones took effort and there would have been more materials available. However, a decision needed to be made and the results based on the chosen materials are presented in this thesis. It would have been beneficial to experience some of the benchmarked targets in real life action, but theoretical learning and assessing the written material turned out to be a successful option, as well.

4.3 Interviews

As a data collection method, interviews were used in this thesis. The interviews used were so called contextualized interviews. This means that the interviews were conducted in real operating environments and were site-specific (Ojasalo, Moilanen, Ritalahti 2009).

In general, the structure of the interview method can vary quite a bit. The interviews can last from anything between twenty minutes to hours, depending on the structure and the need of the research. The role of the interviewee can also vary from a passive listener to an active participant (Ojasalo, Moilanen, Ritalahti 2009). All the interview situations were very interactive, and the materials gathered were quite wide, as often happens with qualitative research methods.

Interviews are also flexible way to do a qualitative research since the questions can be modified on site and according to conversation. In an interview the core aim is to get as much information of the topic as possible (Sarajärvi, Tuomi 2018). This in mind, the interview topic was introduced to the interviewees in advance. In order to succeed well in the interview and reach the

aim, it is recommended in general that the interviewees have the opportunity to get acquainted in the questions in advance. This preparation also includes a suitable time and location for the interview situation to be agreed on. From the ethical point of view, it is also recommended to inform the interviewees what topic the interview is about and why it is conducted.

As a research method, the interview is suitable for a wide range of situations and was found suitable for this thesis, as well. An interview is a method of data collection in which the researcher participates interactively in the production of the data (University of Jyväskylä 2020). Interview has pre-defined objectives and the format of the interview is chosen as needed. The structure can be tight or more open and flexible, or a thematic interview. In this work, a semi-structured, thematic interview was used. This method is suitable for situations where gathering information on a specific topic is wanted, but the interview situation is still free form.

The researcher should be well prepared for the interviews. The operation environment in this thesis was also relevant and affected to the preparation process, for example timing and overall cultural consideration. Since some interviews were done in English, it required some extra preparation as the language used was neither the mother tongue of the researcher or the interviewees. To take this aspect into consideration, the interviewees were given a proper information in advance to give them a possibility to prepare for the interview situation as well. In order to get a good quality information, this was crucial.

The type of interviews used were semi-structured thematic interviews. The questions were formed in advance, but the conversation flowed freely, and the order of the questions varied depending on the flow of the interview situation. Also, during the interview some questions turned out to be irrelevant in a form they were initially presented, and some new questions were formed during the interviews.

At their best, interviews are a quick and effective way to expand the data base of the thesis and to gather the necessary data for research work and analysis. Of course, the interviewees bring out their own point of view on the topic, but in this case, they are of great importance, as experiences directly from the operating environment and its proximity help to perceive the overall situation. The basis of an open interview is that there are no pre-given answer options and the interview situation is quite free-form and flexible (Ojasalo, Moilanen, Ritalahti 2009).

4.4 Workshop

Workshop as a method is a good platform to provide additional opportunities to collaborate between the attendees and researchers (Ahmed, Asraf 2018). According to Ahmed, Asraf this method allows more intense participant observation that can provide additional information compared to other traditional research methods. These social experiences are major part of the qualitative research method of workshops. Shared experiences and concrete ways of working to solve the research issue also meet the characteristics of action research.

Workshop piloting session was a method used to test a draft of the tool in an authentic environment with real partner organizations from different operating levels. Nepal was chosen as a place to do that, since travelling arrangements were relatively easy to make and interviews and meetings were possible to organize there. It was also convenient, since SASK's regional office is located close by in Delhi, India. There were also many helpful and favorable partner organizations in Nepal to operate and test the tool with.

By applying peer methods, the basis of this thesis was emphasized with placing the opinions of those concerned. When applying peer methods, the counterpart may be in a peer position as regards to their education, position, experience or life situation (Seppänen-Järvelä 2005). The process can be external or some type of networking, which was applied in this workshop. The aim was to create a situation of developmentative evaluation.

Capacity assessment tool has been a long-term project at SASK and the use of it will provide long term outcome and input for the development work of SASK. The unions SASK operates with are in very much various levels when it comes to resources and actions developed. Such tool will develop understanding between the organizations as well as help SASK to understand the differences in their project partner's operations. In a best-case scenario, the tool will not only help SASK to understand the operating level of its' partners but would help find useful strategical hints and gaps that might have not been addressed before. An authentic workshop piloting session was organized to help understand if that goal was reachable and to find other perspectives from the draft. It was also a major part of the action researched based approach used in this thesis.

Inclusion is a key part of the creation of this tool. There are dozens of SASK's partner organizations, so it is almost impossible to get much involved from all of them in the preparatory work. The workshop acted as the process to involve and participate the partner organizations in

piloting country Nepal. The involvement and contribution of organizations to the work gives the final tool a new kind of legitimacy and credibility and is an important part of the implementation of the tool.

In general, people are motivated to develop when they themselves feel involved in the process (Toimeksi 2021). In order to gather many opinions and suggestions, I decided that the workshop was an effective way to demonstrate this goal. The tool was already drafted, and operations that would best suit the participants motivation and SASK's interests were planned, while gathering as much relevant information and comments as possible. Methods in the workshop were both oral and written, as the participants got to hear brief presentation at the beginning and then work on smaller groups allowing all ideas to flourish. I acted as a facilitator of the session while noting down the observations and suggestions the smaller groups and individuals made to the tool draft.

My own role during the piloting workshop session switched between a presentator and facilitator. As a facilitator, it should be kept in mind to allow the process to flow on its own without affecting the content too much or evaluating, what ideas or notes are relevant. A neutral facilitator enables the participants to share their true ideas and knowledge (Kantojärvi 2012). Contextual aspects were also taken into consideration in this participatory workshop process. The facilitator represented a different cultural background than the other participants in the workshop and the working methods needed some slight adaptation to acknowledge the cultural aspects of the participants. Facilitator must be able to set up an environment where the participants feel safe and encouraged to present their genuine ideas and critique as well, even though it is not always culturally accepted or encouraged. Facilitation, at its best, challenges traditional hierarchies and the practices of expert organizations (Kantojärvi 2012).

Through the workshop participants get to experience the process of inclusion and feel their voices being heard. This kind of participatory working method creates the sense of working as a group and community. This sort of working method can create a better motivation towards the implementation of the tool as part of SASK's regular operations in the future.

As inclusion and participation are both important factors in these research methods, it should also be pointed out that as a researcher my points of views might be limited and grassroot experiences from the future users of the tools bring out notes that are highly useful for me as a

researcher. Bringing the draft to an authentic user environment gave the best possible data and comments for further development and modifications.

The workshop method was traditionally organized and put up in a simple form. In the workshop the participants were provided with all the material beforehand and it gave them the opportunity to go through it in their organizations. They were introduced the backgrounds and explained the need for the tool from SASK's point of view. After that, participants were divided into four groups based on the level of the organization they represented. They we given a chance to go through the questionnaire with the group and have a discussion. Facilitator was available in the discussion, but the groups were also given privacy to talk freely in their mother tongue. Finally, the groups presented their observations and notes they made about the tool so far and commented on each other's notes, as well.

The groups were given a list of questions to help them form their answers and opinions.

1. Have you previously used a tool like this, or do you already have one in your organization?
2. Who should fill in the questionnaire (leaders, staff etc.)?
3. Is it simple enough?
4. What do you need to fill in the form (eg. data management support, trainings, manual etc.)?
5. Is this useful?
6. Internal changes leading to external changes, do you see that happening?
7. Do you need specific changes for questions?
8. Does it need additional themes?
9. Is it exhaustive enough?

4.5 Research ethics

Research ethics refers to generally agreed rules in relation to the research subject, funders, commissioners and the general public (Vilkka 2017). Research ethics has been a part of this research process from the beginning. The principles of ethical research scientific practices have been applied in this thesis.

Initially, I clarified and verified that I am not prevented from engaging in this research work and that my impartiality has not been compromised through any affiliation. I concluded that I

have sufficient knowledge related to the topic and I was familiar with the research topic at the level required by good research practices. The topic of the work was limited to the theme of my studies. I had the necessary resources and the prerequisite to do this thesis and the research work around it. I also became acquainted with the general research ethical principles of universities of applied sciences.

4.6 Position of the researcher

As a researcher, I had to get acquainted with this role in the thesis process. It included the ethical aspects as well as other observations. It is important to locate one's own experience and relation to the research (Alasuutari 2015), as I did at the start of this thesis process. The pedagogical experiences through my community educator studies were useful and gave me the knowledge base to operate in a multicultural environment and to apply participatory pedagogical theories in my research methods.

Through the different research methods my role as a researcher needed to adapt according to the situation. It was important to acknowledge the possible fact that my personal cultural and historical backgrounds would affect not just my own subjective opinions, but also to the ways the interviewees and participants of the workshop might see the interactions. Thus it was constantly relevant to keep in mind to respect the working environment, challenge my personal assumptions and respect the individuals and their cultural approaches.

5 RESULTS

The research methods all played an important part of building the tool and provided me with various relevant information. At the next chapters I will present the key results from each research methods that were relevant in building the tool. Further analysis of the results is presented on chapter six.

5.1 Benchmarking

The organizations whose materials that were used in this thesis for benchmarking were the Trade Union Development Effectiveness Profile Tool (TUDEP) by ITUC, Octagon by The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Sida and OCAT by The Finnish Service Centre for Development Cooperation KEPA.

There were other similar tools available as well, but in this thesis it was decided to collect data and practices from these particular organizations, since they resembled SASK according to their working environments and had some elements that were relevant from SASK's point of view. All the assessed tools also included a baseline process and instruction material for support of the evaluation process.

ITUC: TUDEP

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) is the global voice of the world's working people (ITUC 2021). Its primary goal is to promote and defend workers' rights with international cooperation between labor unions. ITUC represents 200 million workers in 163 countries and territories and has 332 national affiliates (ITUC 2021).

ITUC had created a tool as a result of an in-house development process in 2011. Their tool is means as a learning tool to support trade union development actors. It was built for ITUC to help its' partners to reflect their working practices and values that guide their work. Its' purpose is to contribute to the work of trade union partners by measuring the progress of the use of the guidelines.

This tool required facilitation and excel -application to calculate the results and help to visualize them.

The tool covered and assessed various capacities and core elements, such as autonomy, partnership, transparency and sustainability. The elements that were useful in SASK's point of view were at least capacities in inclusiveness and equality, sustainability and autonomy.

This tool was assessed to have quite a complex outcome with some overlapping statements and difficulty in answering concretely. For this reason, it did not suit to SASK as it was, but helped to generate and overall picture of the global working environment and the background material was enlightening and gave more insight on the process in general.

Sida: Octagon

Sida is a government agency of Sweden for development cooperation. They work for sustainable development and help improve the conditions for people living in poverty through cooperation with civil society, multilateral organizations, public agencies and the private sector operators (Sida 2021). Sida operates on wider perspective than just within the trade union scheme.

The Octagon -tool was used to measure the strengths and weaknesses of the organizations using it and to identify necessary measures to improve capacity to act effectively towards strategic goals. The method itself was also providing some support for organizational and capacity development. As it was used by the government agency under the Swedish ministry of foreign affairs, it was also used to aid in the selection of potential partners. This might be relevant for SASK's needs, as well. SASK receives new project proposals and has processes for the evaluation of the new potential partners. This final tool could be helpful addition into that process.

The tool was not overly complicated to use, but most likely requires a facilitator. Even the instruction manual was quite detailed and not necessarily relevant for self-assessment. It also requires some computer-based tools to calculate and visualize the results. The answers were graded and given points according to relevance of the answers and the tool followed the same methodology through the end.

The tools structure was somewhat similar to the final tool of SASK's. The Octagon included the core elements of organizational base, organizations activities – output, organizations capacity development and organizations relations. The final SASK tool had these core elements and capacities outlined, as well, but with more detailed and relevant from SASK's strategical point of view. The questions were also written more detailed and with a relevance to SASK's working environment.

KEPA: OCAT

The Finnish Service Centre for Development Cooperation KEPA is the umbrella organization for Finnish civil society organization who work with development cooperation (Fingo 2021). Kepa is nowadays known as Fingo.

The main purpose of OCAT -tool was to assess the current capacity of the organizations and to identify the main capacity building needs. The aim was to build a detailed strategy or work plan to further develop the capacity based on the needs identified in the assessment process. It was found to be more client and order-based process rather than a systematic and annual or repetitive process that could be done more often within the organizations.

It was assessed that one purpose of this OCAT -tool was to help select the organizations where support can be directed. It was designed also for funding agencies to assess whether the potential support organizations have reached a certain minimum level of capacity. This is somewhat similar to the idea of SASK's, except SASK operates with partners and partner organizations and the basic idea differs from being a pure funding organization. This ideological difference is also a noticeable point in the process.

The assessment methodology required outside facilitator and was thus too complicated for SASK's needs. The tool uses a scoring system and requires a program to calculate the scores and results.

The key elements in the tool, which were also relevant to SASK, were governance and management practices, human recourses and financial resources. The tool overall was assessed a bit troublesome and rigid as it has a complicated scoring system. Some key elements were still useful as stated above.

The methodologies of all these three tools were somewhat different from what was the need of SASK. The structures varied and some were more focused on the capacities and some points were more organizational focused. The indicators made some of the processes quite time consuming and technical and thus none of these tools was ready-made for purposes of SASK. The tool needed to identify technical capacities, such as funds and administrative systems, as well as functional capacities like engaging with stakeholders. The benchmarking process of these tools was knowledge deepening and it gave many concrete adjustments to my final tool and the idea of the structure of the tool.

5.2 Interviews

Several interviews were conducted in Nepal with different people and groups relating to the thesis topic. Two of them were mainly relevant to this thesis. The interviews done with the SASK partner unions were useful as a general data collecting methods and as understanding the various operations the unions are working with. The two interview results presented here (interview questions: Appendix 4) are the ones used mainly to solve the research problem and to help finalize the outcome of this thesis and gather more knowledge base on the topic. As a qualitative research method was used in this thesis, the aim was to understand the contexts better and to give descriptions to the acute phenomena, such as the environmental aspects affecting the current operations of SASK in Nepal. In qualitative research, it is important that the people from whom information is collected are familiar with the topic and have a lot of experience in the matter (Sarajärvi, Tuomi 2018).

The analysis of the interview materials started with going through the interview material and combining the outcomes to theory base used. Saturation point describes the situation where enough interviews are done, and additional interviews no longer provide new information relevant to the development task (Ojasalo, Moilanen, Ritalahti 2009). That saturation point was surely reached, and all the relevant information was gathered concerning this development task.

In a general method of the interviews it was kept in mind to find similarities and also differences with the existing theory basis and to make generalizations based on the analysis. These generalizations helped to understand the context and to draft the tool. The interviews included similar aspects and questions and some parts were contextualized more specifically.

The interviews lasted between one and a half to two hours. The interviews were documented on a written form on site and transcribed later for their final form. Some further details were asked from the interviewees after the interview situations and I was provided some additional information related to the topics via email from the interviewees as a supplement material.

5.2.1. Interview 1

First interview was with SASK's regional representative from Delhi, India. He is the South Asian regional coordinator and oversees the projects in Nepal, as well. In addition, he is an experienced researcher with various papers and thesis published in journals and books on various topics related to trade unions, civil societies, and social justice. The aim of this interview

was to act as a widening perspective for my knowledge base and to help outline the needs of the content of the tool from the perspective of the local operating environment.

Though the interviewee is currently employed in SASK, his interview gave a different kind of perspective to the need of this tool and helped to understand the deeper strategic level to it. He was also well acquainted with the local partner organizations, so his input was relevant in understanding how to operate with the organizations in general. Later on, he also provided the contacts to Nepalese unions and helped to arrange and facilitate the workshop event.

As a result of the interview more knowledge was gained to help tie the contexts presented in chapter 2 to the result of this thesis, the assessment tool. This interview was more free-formed and instead of passively asking questions we had more of a discussion. As a dialogue and conversation, the aim was to understand the views of the interviewee better. Most likely this deeper semi-structure made it possible to deepen some topics, like the human rights approach in trade union contexts, instead of following a strict form. The theoretical contexts are visible in SASK's working environments, for example in Nepal, in a various way. It became clear throughout the interview to stress the importance of gender equality and human rights in the final tool to be drafted.

Based on this interview, the tool draft was modified to better serve the needs of different level organizations. We addressed the different strategical core contexts and relevant goals that are visible on SASK long term goals that can be defined in the partner level, as well. Such contexts were for example the gender equality issues. The interview questions used are visible on appendix 4.

5.2.2 Interview 2

For the second interview a senior specialist responsible for development cooperation at the embassy of Finland in Kathmandu was interviewed. This interview was conducted to help gain more knowledge on the operating environment and to get an overall understanding of the contexts presented on chapter 2. The interviewee was selected based on the experience and expertise on the topics but still a step further from the trade union and NGO sector. This decision was made to have a wider perspective of information and perhaps outside the box -views on the thesis topic.

The general goals of the Finnish development policy go hand in hand with the goals of SASK. The focus is on supporting developing countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality and on promoting sustainable development.

Development policy plays a key part of Finland's foreign and security policy. Development Corporation provides millions of people with the chance for a better life. The interviewee provided a lot of background information about the situation in Nepal and about the prerequisites for operations of NGOs.

The new constitution of Nepal has drastically changed the platform of Development Corporation in Nepal as well. According to my interviewee the democratic development in local level has improved with the new constitution for example by giving more decision-making platforms to women, but there are problems as well. The implementation of the new constitution is feared to lead to political unrest and inequality between population groups. There is a serious lack of competence at the local level and it complicates the implementation and governance off the programmes.

As a country, Finland's support to Nepal is focused on the access to clean drinking water and sanitation, developing the education system and improving the influence of women and other fragile groups that are in vulnerable position. In addition to SASK, there are several Finnish civil society organizations that are active in Nepal. The embassy is working close with these NGO's and their support to the local civil society organizations is very important.

A lot of background information about the migration situation in Nepal, as well as the gender issues and poverty, were given. Equality is not only about gender but about things like ethnicity, as well. Interviewee addressed the topic of the existing caste system that is formally said to be non-existent. All this information helped to understand the working environments of the local trade unions as well. As the organizational capacity assessment tool was drafted, it was important to take these features into account and draft the questions accordingly. As these specific features apply only to Nepal, it was necessary to keep in mind that there are other country specific conditions like these in all SASK's operating countries.

5.3 Workshop

Piloting the OCA tool took place in Kathmandu, Nepal, on March 7th 2020 (Appendix 3). Present were 15 attendees from different SASK affiliated organizations across Nepal and India. All participants received the tool draft and they went through them with their partner organizations and colleagues before the meeting took place. Organizations that had a representative present from different affiliated unions were Public Service International PSI, Building and Wood Worker's International Nepal Affiliates Committee BWI NAC, Global Union Nepal Liaison Council UNI NLC and Nepal Joint Trade Union Coordination Center JTUCC.

Picture 5. Piloting session of the OCA tool in Kathmandu, Nepal. Photo: Rupak Maharjan

All the participants had gone through the tool draft in beforehand. They received an introductory to the topic as well as to the draft of the tool. Appropriate amount of time was prepared to go through the tool question by question within smaller groups and to gather all the notes each group had in their mind. As the workshop method is and effective data collecting tool (Onrgreen, Levinsen) it also played a key role in engaging the stakeholders. As a networking event it also turned out to be a good opportunity for the local organizations to learn from each other too and share their organizational ideas and findings.

Workshop participants were divided into 4 group based on the operating level of their organization. The groups were named as Global Unions GUF's, GUF Affiliated Councils, Federations and Unions. The groups created analysis to point out weaknesses, strengths, opportunities and threats of the tool. Facilitator has many roles in workshops and they can either play the part of participant observer or more active research instrument to whom the attendees can share their ideas and perspectives (Ahmed, Asraf 2018). Here the facilitators had the role to enable all participants attendance and to create an encouraging environment for everyone to speak up. According to Ahmed, Asfar the participants feeling valued and heard share their views more enthusiastically.

Workshop was documented by photos and written notes that were further on transcribed as a comprehensive memo.

5.3.1. Summary from groups

Groups 1 and 2, global level

At the global level, the workshop participants considered the tool necessary for all different levels of organizations. It was found a necessary part of both SASK's work and the organizations' own development work. There was a lot of discussion in this group about who in the organizations fills out the survey and how it affects the content and views of the responses.

These groups also highlighted the needs for various strategic priorities, such as the elimination of child labor, the promotion of gender equality and sustainable development. This idea also sits well with the strategic goals of SASK, as well as with the concepts that define the overall work of SASK.

Groups 3 and 4, national level

These groups made a lot of technical comments regarding the layout of the questions and the answer options. For example, the answer options to questions 46-61 were clarified on the basis of the group's suggestions.

The groups also made the same point about how some of the issues address the union directly and a better term could be organization.

From the participants point of view, the tool should be simple but efficient enough. These factors were already seen on the draft. Answers should be yes/no type if possible and there should be other ready-made answer options, unless they are necessary.

From the local partners point of view, it would be important that they could fill in the tool themselves without an external facilitator.

5.3.2. Overall summary of the piloting session

It is noteworthy that no other organization yet has a similar assessment tool in place for this particular operating environment. The joint discussion was an exchange of views on whether organizations should be instructed in the responses so that they reflect as diverse a view of the state of the organization as possible, rather than single persons responses. We also assessed whether some of the issues are too complex to answer. As a general remark, it was also stated that the tool should be available in electronic form so that it can be easily completed, and the results can also be evaluated afterwards by local partner organizations. Such electronic form could be for example a survey done with existing applications already in use.

One concrete suggestion that came up in the workshop discussion was the need for some sort of instruction manual for filling in the questionnaire. The idea is, that the organizations can fill in thee tool themselves without an outside facilitator. Hence a short introduction and manual to help the process would be beneficial and was conducted on the basis of the feedback.

In addition, it should be noted that Nepal and the organizations involved in this piloting session represent the operating models and culture of only one country. SASK operates on three different continents, the organizational structure and capacity of its partners vary greatly depending on the operating environment and culture.

Another significant factor influencing the use of the tool is that the structures of GUF level organizations and local associations differ significantly. The functions also focus on very different tasks. For this reason, issues such as training and recruiting membership and activists, or negotiating collective bargaining, may be irrelevant to GUFs, while local level organizations may not have the same level of strategies and action plans, for example, for defending human rights as GUFs.

As a result of the piloting session, an instruction manual for the tool was created and drafted (Appendix 2) to help the organizations and unions to fill in the questionnaire and provide further background information about the concepts used in the tool. Providing such manual will hopefully give the unions and organizations the ability to fill in the questionnaire themselves, without the need for outside facilitator.

As an overall understanding I made throughout the piloting session was that the capacity assessment process requires three stages: preparation, assessment, and reflections. When the organizations and unions start using the assessment too, they need to prepare well in advance and identify the key persons to fill in the questionnaire and to do some research in advance on the topics that need addressing. The assessment itself is basically filling in the questionnaire and answering the questions on the tool. It would be advisable not to skip any questions. Lastly, a reflection should be made as a form of internal discussion to share the key findings and realizations based on the process. These stages could be presented when preparing the organizations to use the tool in the future.

5.4 Result: the assessment tool

The result of the thesis and the actual tool (Appendix 1) that was modified based on the feedback took its' form after the research methods presented above. The tool was built on a simple Word -basis and is thus easy to modify if needed. SASK will use it internally with its partners most likely through Surveypal -application, that is an easy to use platform for such surveys. The data is easily reported from the platform and answers can be compared to previous ones on Excel form.

The finalized tool consists of the core capacities recognized valuable to SASK's work and presented on chapter 3.3.

The tool and survey include open questions and pre-defined answer options. The questions are worded in a way that is familiar to the respondents. Knowledge of the target group was important at this point. The formation of the order of questions was also an important process. Questions must have a recognizable clear plot so that they are consistent and therefore easier to answer (Vilkka 2017). Even though some of the questions are without pre-defined answers, they can still be assessed by categorizing.

The instruction manual will be provided to the organizations to help them answer the questionnaire. This need came as a specific idea from the workshop attendees and their organizations. Since there will be no outside facilitator present when filling in the tool, such manual will bring further information about the individual questions and help the attendees to understand the context of the tool.

6 ANALYSIS

6.1 Analysis of the research methods

Qualitative research is an umbrella term for the research methods used in this thesis. Under this term there are several different kinds of research methods, such as the interviews. The research methods in this thesis were selected based on the need of the subscriber and the research problem presented earlier. These action research methods, that are also qualitative in nature, were chosen due to their ability of addressing practical issues. Traditional research methods are often more theoretical, and the participatory process might not play that big of a role. However, this does not mean that theory does not play a major part in action research methods, too.

Qualitative research has also been called as understanding research (Sarajärvi, Tuomi 2018). In this thesis, it referred to the aim to understand and explain the phenomena and needs behind organizational capacity assessment in trade unions in the Global South. This aspect of the research method can also be a critic against it. The researchers own aspects might affect the interpretations or the question settings. Thus, it is critical to keep in mind that the interviewer should stay neutral, though being active.

According to Ojasalo, Moilanen and Ritalahti (2009) the quality of the material is more significant than the quantity when analyzing the interview materials. It was proven true in this thesis, as well. Though the number of interviews performed was not significant, they were wide and versatile in their content and gave a lot of important information to the overall research. The overall content of the interviews was of good quality and they provided the research theme with fresh and informative perspectives. Throughout the process the objective of the thesis clarified, and the interviews did that, too. As a qualitative interview, the personal views and perspectives of the interviewees played a key role. In such interviews the researcher is interested in the personal views and the way the interviewees give meaning to the content (Hyvärinen, Nikander, Ruusuvuori 2010).

Benchmarking as a method was proven to play a significant role in the final process of forming the overall result, the tool. The benchmarking method used in this thesis was done by analyzing peer-organization's materials and finding the best practices. It is notable, that the best practices from other organizations might not have been the best for the subscribers needs due to variations in operating environments and special features of operations. For that reason, the benchmarking

was mostly focusing on the processes of the existing assessment tools more than the concrete content of the tools. The challenge with the benchmarking process was to find the relevant subjects for benchmarking and to outline their operations in theory, since during this thesis process it was not possible to observe any of the assessment processes in live. It was also critical to keep in mind not to copy, but to analyze the information and create something new.

Workshop was organized to increase the participatory process of building the assessment tool. Workshops are described as situations where people learn, acquire new knowledge and perform creative problem solving or innovate (Ørngreen, Levinsen 2017). Workshop in this thesis acted as a piloting session as well, where new innovations were created, and some draft models were tested. A concrete innovation of the workshop in addition to detailed comments on the tool was the idea of the instruction manual. The participatory process itself was a key element in this thesis and engaging the trade union staff and activists to the process of creating the tool will add to the legitimacy of it.

The disadvantages of the workshop process were the limited time and the language issues with the attendees. The workshop was organized in English and there were many skilled interpreters present to help cover some technical terms. Still it was a risk to recognize, that some things might be lost in translation.

6.2 Analysis of the results

The process of creating the tool for SASK was very wide and interesting. The base materials included various examples from different levels and from all kinds of organizations from grass root level and all the way to national NGO's from different countries and global environments.

With SASK operating in such a multi-levelled environment and various types of organizations, it was definitely a challenge to figure out one tool that would best serve the needs of SASK and its' partner organizations in national level, federations, individual unions, global unions and other possible organizations.

The operating environment and SASK's strategies possibly changing rapidly provided a huge challenge for drafting a tool, that would not be outdated before it even finished. SASK's strategy includes lot of theoretical contexts and goals such as sustainable development and reducing poverty. Bringing these global concepts down to grass-root level questions that are relevant to

SASK's operating partners was something to keep in mind. As where SASK or the GUF's might be able to write policies about UN's sustainable development goals, the local level unions are operating on a more concrete level and with more personal basis.

The research methods used played a key part in the project by providing a picture of the overall environment of SASK's work, keeping in mind this was only one of the many operating countries of SASK. This process can possibly serve other actors as well in addition to the subscriber. The societal and organisational operations in Nepal are interesting and with many Finnish NGO's working there, these approaches to workers' rights could bring them with additional information, too. It could also be beneficial to people working on organisational capacity building and assessment. The operating environments vary on the basis of the core objectives of the organizations, but some themes can be repeated outside the trade union organisations, too.

6.3 Ethical aspects

When considering ethics, it was also important to take into account the specificities of the work environment and the local culture in Nepal. It was important to act respectfully and in accordance with the local behavioral culture during the interview visits and when interacting with the local organizations. As the work was done around development work it was also important to ensure that none of the people or organizations presented in this thesis were shown in a disadvantaged position. Thus, the ethical principles of development communication were also taken into account during this thesis process. It was crucial to get acquainted with the ethical protocols of development work.

Whenever operating on an environment of development work, one must be very conscious about ethical principles of communications and actions. It is important that can we share the reality of our partner countries in a multifaceted way when working with vulnerable groups of people (Interpedia 2019). In this particular process I was very conscious about the possible stereotypes that might be unconsciously presented even in my results or conclusions. These stereotypes might have to do with the Finnish trade unions, the development work in general, the Nepalese organizations or the environment and people in general. The partner countries and organizations SASK operates with are not all just about poverty and battle. They picture painted is often one-sided and coloured with stereotypes, whether unconscious or consciously created.

To prevent this from happening, it was significant to avoid victimizing the people and organizations presented in this thesis. The participatory process around this thesis was planned to support the diversity of the voices that were being heard during this process.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

7.1 Future of the tool

SASK's OCA tool will go on living its' life at SASK and will be playing major part starting from the operating year 2022. It is included as a part in SASK's funding application for the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the years 2022-2025. Further usage of the tool in the actual working environment will show how it will eventually fit for the different levels. However, the basis been founded and already built, it will be relatively easy to make some technical changes in the tool if needed.

In the future SASK will be able to use the tool to get an overall picture of the operations of its' new partners and to see the development of the partner organizations during and after the projects. Since the tool will be application based, it is easy to use and possible to fill in without any specific technical requirements. Also modifying the tool at SASK office will be possible for the staff.

As a result, the tool created is not final and will probably never be. The basis of the project is however now been built with the assistance and cooperation of the partner organization in Nepal and the tool has found its' theory basis and form of existing. It will be up to SASK and the partner organizations to see how the tool starts to form and how actively it will be used throughout the project. It is one additional option in the tool kit of SASK and at its best, it will serve all the partner organizations, too.

Once the tool has been tested and used with more of SASK's partner organizations, it will be easy to point out future development needs. It can easily be modified according to needs and requests or changing strategies. SASK staff will be participated in the process of adopting the tool as part of annual actions. A joint session to present the tool will be organized for SASK staff and relevant personnel. Further development ideas are expected to arise during the adaptation progress and the tool will be flexible according to organizational needs.

The initial idea of the tool was to serve the needs of SASK. Gradually through the process and especially during the workshop it became clear, that it could widely benefit the local partner organizations, too. As a brave vision for the future and as a surprising additional outcome I believe the tool could be used as a part of the Finnish trade union movement, as well. We have

a lot to learn about the solidarity work within our own country and reflecting the local trade unions' actions could improve the capacity of local branches and national unions, too.

7.2 Visions and further development suggestions

SASK will be continuously developing its own technical programs and other applications that are in use. Some of them are outdated and some can't provide all the necessary data in a best possible form. The digital change is ongoing and constant, and the OCA tool will live side by side with the other technical systems as well.

It will be interesting to see if the OCA tool will be attached to some of the existing platforms or if it will even replace some of the other existing evaluation tools or processes.

As an interesting further research question found during my thesis process was the development of the organizations with support of SASK programmes. The actual results and beneficiaries are assessed and evaluated annually but it would be interesting to do a long term research on the organisational capacity of the partner organizations and to see, what factors have affected on the improvement of the capacity throughout the projects. This kind of proved increased capacity within the organizations would show the value of the systematic and strategic work that is done within SASK's projects. At its best, such encouraging results could improve the status of the local unions and bring more credibility to their work. It could also help SASK to assess the meaning of its partner organizations in the long-term goals such as reducing poverty and improving the quality of life of the working people.

Such effectiveness evaluation would be interesting in terms of assessing the benefit cost ratio. Further public research is needed to estimate the exact financial flows that go to Global South through trade unions and thus calculating the effectiveness is tricky. There are different estimations about the foreign private or public funds targeted to different operations, and for example just the private funds that go to sponsoring children in the developing countries exceed US3$ billion annually (Wydick, Glewwe, Rutledge 2013). Similar calculations about the trade union sector would be useful and help give more data about the effectiveness of their work.

Development work nowadays is mostly about working in partnership with the local actors and beneficiaries. One-sided development work is seen as history and societal benefits are wider

with genuine cooperation. The Finnish Development NGO's – Fingo alone has over 300 member organizations (Fingo 2021b). This indicates the scale of the whole development work and the number increases when other countries are counted, too. The whole sector is huge and the work that is done in the Global South has a major global effect. These organizations working in the development sector play a key role in reducing poverty, enhancing democracy, and promoting a decent life. These organizations need to be fully aware of the capacity they hold within themselves in order to take full advantage of their possibilities. Developing and assessing organizational capacity should be one of the key elements in all these organizations' annual agenda. At its best, the topic of this thesis and the materials used and produced could hold a benefit to the whole development sector as well as to the trade union sector, too.

As the whole global world is now living at the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been lots of adjustments made in the development work done by NGO's. On the other hand, organizing traditional operations and fundraising has been more complicated and yet solidarity and support is more needed than perhaps ever before. Organizational capacity assessment tools can at their best help organizations to recognize such risks and prepare for the possible external organizational environment changes. It will be seen how the pandemic will further change the operations at NGO's and development work sector. It is advisable to adjust the tool according to the operating environment if needed.

7.3 Thesis as a learning project

As it was time to start the thesis process, I had a clear vision in my mind that I wanted it to combine development work and have something to do with Nepal. My studies have been very internationally oriented, and I see the future of community educators as international, too. I was able to take few months off from my job to work on my thesis in Nepal and gather the necessary background materials. This possibility was like a dream come true to me since I was able to combine my interests in the benefit of the subscriber.

As a community educator international approach has always been my point of interest. Organisational development and especially NGO sector are my key interests and I have been working with the trade union sector for over a decade. This international approach and wider perspective to organisational work and development work were added to my previous knowledge and the

process in total has taught me a lot. The theory base and all the knowledge I gained about the development sector widened my expertise as an internationally oriented community educator and gave me additional skills to widen my understanding from the Finnish perspective to global scale.

The research methods used also taught me a lot. Action research as a process was new to me and combining the theory base of that topic was an interesting process. I got acquainted with several sources addressing the research methods used in this thesis. I recognize that I could have put more effort into presenting the connection between the results and the methods used in this thesis.

Analysing the process afterwards has given me a lot of new ideas. I would have probably done most things as I ended up doing them, but there are a few details I would have preferred to change in the process of doing the research. I could have benefited more from the interviews as well as the benchmarking. In an ideal situation I would have wished to experience and observe an authentic capacity assessment process in action from some of the organizations that I used for benchmarking. The workshop method was most fruitful in my perspective and provided additional value to this thesis, too.

This process has increased my professional competences and capacity to work as a community developer. I had an opportunity to experience the meaning of NGO's in the civil society from a different point of view and dive deeper into the multicultural organisational structure and development work. I found the confidence to act as a researcher to find the relevant information I needed to fulfil my assignment. Operating on foreign environment with different kind of working culture was some days out of my comfort zone but eventually taught me valuable lessons and definitely made me more patient. Overall, this thesis project as a learning process has been huge for me and I can say I am happy with the outcome, both the tool and the personal development I gained in the process. I have gradually come to realize the scale of the whole process and the meaning it could play in the development sector, too.

During this process I have made some crucial decisions and choices about the methods used and the language in which I decided to write this thesis. I understand that writing this thesis in English can seem controversial and this decision might be surprising to many. I acknowledge the criticism when it comes to choosing a foreign language over the official educational language, which in this case would have been either Finnish or Swedish. However, this decision

was made consciously and with the subscriber's working environment and the international context in mind. I believe that this decision can initially enhance the suitability and relevance of this thesis to the international sector and it could be used in different kinds of environments outside Finland, too.

Picture 6. The attendees of the workshop at JTUCC office in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Overall, I am very pleased with the process and the outcome. I was lucky to have gotten to work in Nepal during this thesis process and to network with the local union activists there. The process was unique and considering that the global pandemic was going on during much of the thesis process, it didn't affect the work too much. I am happy to continue my work at SASK after the thesis process, too, and to further develop the assessment tool to benefit SASK and the local partners working to improve workers' rights in the Global South.

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APPENDIES

Appendix 1.

SASK Organizational Capacity Assessment tool

SASKs Organizational Capacity Assesment Tool – SOCA

Core Capacities

1. TO EXIST
2. TO OPERATE AND PERFORM
3. TO RELATE AND MOBILISE
4. TO GROW

Section A: Contact and affiliation information

1. Name of the Union and abbreviation
2. Is the union registered?
   O Yes   O No
   a. Registration information (date and registration number)
3. National President / Chairperson
4. General Secretary
5. Union Address
6. Union telephone
7. Union email
8. National trade union federation affiliated to
9. Global trade union federation affiliated to
10. Other organisations union is affiliated to

Section B: Core capacity – to exist

11. Does your union have statutes/bylaws?
    O Yes   O No
    a. How would you describe the conspicuousness of the statutes among the members?
    b. Does the union have other guiding documents, such as strategic plan?
       O Yes   O No
    c. If yes, please list the other policy documents
12. How often is the General Assebly/Congress held?
13. Who can participate in the GA/Congress?
14. Do all the members have voting right in the GA/Congress?
    O Yes   O No
15. In which Assembly or meeting are the policies and priorities of the union decided?
16. Does your union have a mechanisms to ensure that the voices of the general members are heard and represented in the meetings?
    O Yes   O No
    a. If yes, how?
17. What are the decicion making structures in your union?
    O   Governing Board/Council
    O   Womens committee
    O   Youth committee
    O   Strategy Committee
    O   Gender Sensitization/Sexual Harrassement Committee
    O   Others, what?

18. How would you describe the position of the union's governing board?
    a. How often is it elected?
       O   Every year
       O   Every two years
       O   Every three years
       O   Every four years
       O   Every five years
       O   Other, how?

b. How many members are elected?

c. Are there any positions reserved for
   O Women
   O Youth
   O Dalits/Indigenous communities?

d. List the name, age and gender of the current members of the elected representatives

e. Are the members taking an active role in decision making?
   O Yes   O Mostly yes   O No

f. Are the members monitoring the activities/action plan?
   O Yes   O No

19. "I believe that the union has the capacity to apply the strategy and make a strategic plan."
    O   I strongly agree
    O   I somewhat agree
    O   I am uncertain/I dont't know
    O   I disagree
    O   I strongly disagree

20. Does your union have an annual plan?
    O Yes   O No
    a. Is it in line with the stategy?
       O Yes   O Mostly yes   O No
    b. Does it actually guide the priorities of the union?
       O Yes   O Mostly yes   O No

21. Are the board members of your union elected or nominated?
    O   Elected
    O   Nominated
    a. If nominated, how many positions are nominated and who nominates them?

22. Are elections held for regional and local structures?
    O   Yes   O No
    a. If yes, how often?
    b. Are the elctions held through secret ballot?
       O   Yes   O No

23. How would you describe the geographical coverage of your union (where are the members from)?
    O Geographical coverage is excellent, all areas are covered
    O Geographical coverage is good, our union covers most areas
    O Geographical coverage is average, some areas are not covered
    O Geographical coverage is not so good, our union mostly covers specific areas

Section C: Core capacity – to operate and perform

Union Structures

24. Who is responsile for the day-to-day functions in the union?

25. Are the elected representatives being payed?
    O Yes   O No
    a. If yes, in which positions?

26. What is the number of hired staff in the union?
    a. Central Office
    b. Provincial Office
    c. Local Office
    d. Total number of hired staff

27. How many members does the union have?
    a. How many percentage would you estimate this is out of the total potential?
    b. What is the number of union members who are permanent workers?
    c. What is the number of union members who are precarious workers?

28. How many activists/volunteers does the union have?

29. Does your union have a HR plan or guidelines concerning hired staff?
    O Yes   O No

a. Does the union have similar guidelines concernign activists/volunteers?
O Yes   O No

30. Does your union actively recruit new activists/volunteers?
O Yes   O No

a. Are they provided with relevant training for union activities?
O Yes   O No

b. Does your uninon have a system for volunteer recognition?
O Yes   O No

31. Does your union have a database of the activists/volunteers?
O Yes   O No

a. How well is the database utilized?

32. How would you describe youth involvment in the unions decision making?
O Youth is involved excellent and they are heard in the union decision making
O Youth in involved good and they have an opportunity to influence
O Youth is involved ok and they can organize activities
O Our union does not have a specific plan for youth involvement

33. Does your union have a national youth committee?
O Yes   O No

a. If yes, please select all relevant alternatives
O Youth committee has a seat at the board or other decision making bodies
O Youth committee has a seperate budget
O Youth committee has annual meetings/young workers assembly
O Committee/Union organi-

ses youth leadership programmes
O Committee/Union organises youth workers trainings
O Others, please list other activities of the youth committee

34. Does your union have a national womens committee?
O Yes   O No

a. If yes, please select all relevant alternatives
O Womens committee has a seat at the board or other decision making bodies
O Womens committee has a seperate budget
O Womens committee has annual meetings/female workers assembly
O Committee/Union organises women leadership programmes
O Committee/Union organises women workers trainings
O Others, please list other activities of the womens committee

35. How well would you describe that the unions volunteers/activists reflect the diversity of the communities and the total memeber base?
O Reflect very well
O Reflect okay
O Don't reflect that well

36. Does your union have local branches?
O Yes   O No

a. How many of them?

37. Does your union have regional offices?
O Yes   O No

a. How many of them

38. Does your union have an organisational chart to describe the organisational structure?
O Yes   O No

Financial stability

39. How many paying members does your union have?

40. What is the amount of membership fee?

    a. How often is it collected
      O Monthly O Annually

    b. How is it collected
      O Via bank (how many percentage?)
      O By cash (how many percentage?)
      O Mobile transfer (how many percentage?)
      O Other way, how (and how much)?

41. Does your union have physical offices?
O Yes O No

    a. If yes, who pays the rent of the office space/-s

42. Does your union own any facilities or properties?
O Yes O No

    a. If yes, what are the facilities you own?

43. Does your union have a separate bank account?
O Yes O No

44. Does your union have
O Fixed deposits
O Stocks
O Investment funds
O Other assets, what?

45. Does your union have/do:

    a. Financial Policy
      O Yes O No

    b. Annual Budget
      O Yes O No

    c. Financial Procedures
      O Yes O No

    d. Financial Reports
      O Yes O No

    e. Anti-corruption policy
      O Yes O No

    f. Bookkeeping
      O Yes O No

    g. Hired finance staff
      O Yes O No

    h. External Financial audit
      O Yes O No

46. How would you describe the unions ability to develop it's financial stuctures towards self-sufficiency (balance between internal and external support)?

47. Does the union have a systematic way to collect and record membership fees?
O Yes O No

48. What would you describe as the main sources of income for your union? Rate from 1-8 (1 being the most major source and 8 being the least major source. Mark 0 if union has no such support).

    a. ___ Membership fees
    b. ___ Investments
    c. ___ Government support
    d. ___ Private sector support
    e. ___ Support from global unions/unions from other countries
    f. ___ Project funding
    g. ___ Donors
    h. ___ Other, what

Union activities

49. Does your union effectively negotiate Collective Bargaining Agreements?
O Yes O No

    a. If yes, how many CBA's has the union negotiated?

    b. If yes, does the union monitor the implementation of the CBA's?
      O Yes O Mostly yes O No

50. What are the core activities of your union?

51. How many percentage of the activities are self-financed?

    a. How many percentage of the activities are project supported?

52. How many projects does your union currently have?

53. Please list other possible activities and events organised by your union.

54. How does the union monitor its results and activities?

    a. Does the union adjust its activities accordingly?

    O Yes   O Mostly yes   O No

55. How does the union report about its performance?

Section D: Core Capacity – to relate and mobilise

56. Are the union volunteers/activists/members/staff consulted by the union leaders in decision making?
O Yes   O Mostly yes   O No

57. Is information shared with the union volunteers/activists/members/staff by the union leaders?
O Yes   O Mostly yes   O No

    a. If yes, how often is the communication done?

58. Is there a person in the union specifically responsible for communications (external and internal)?
O Yes   O No

59. Does your union have a website?
O Yes   O No

    a. If yes, is it regurlary updated?
    O Yes   O No

    b. Are the contact details of elected representatives publicly available?
    O Yes   O No

60. How does the union communicate with its members? Choose all suitable aternatives.

    a. O Meetings
    b. O Workshops
    c. O Field visits
    d. O Workplace visits
    e. O One-on-one meetings
    f. O Email
    g. O Telephone
    h. O Website
    i. O Social media
    j. O Union news letters
    k. O Newspapers
    l. O Radio
    m. O Other, what

61. Does your union have a plan/strategy to handle its public image?
O Yes   O No

62. Does your union regurlarly communicate, consult and coordinate with

    a. Local authorities
    O Yes   O No

    b. Other local stakeholders
    O Yes   O No

    c. Other unions
    O Yes   O No

63. How would you describe members contribution to union activities?
O Contribution is excellent
O Contribution is good
O Contribution is average
O Contribution is poor
O Members dont contribute at all

64. How would you describe the balance between activities implemented with membership fees versus activities implemented with external funding?

65. How would you describe the sustainability of your unions services?

66. How would you describe the stakeholders/members satisfaction for the union activities?
O Satisfaction is high and we measure it regurlarly
O Satisfaction is good and we measure it regurlarly
O Satisfaction is good but we don't measure it regurlarly
O Satisfaction is low and we measure

it regurlarly
O Satisfaction is low and we don't measure it regurlarly

Section E: Core Capacity – to grow

67. How would you describe the unions ability to learn and adapt on changes in its external environment in order to improve its performance?
O Union has strong ability to adapt and learn and we have a strategy on how to handle the changing working environment
O Union has good ability to adapt and learn and we aknowledge the changes in the working environment
O Union has an average ability to adapt and learn but we stougle with the challenges of the changing working environment
O Union has a poor ability to adapt and learn and the changing working environment is burdening us

68. How would you describe the unions ability to deal with conflicts inside its own organisation?
O Excellent, we have a srategy on dealing with conflicts
O Good, we are able to deal with conflicts
O Average, we have survived conflicts
O Poor, we st*rougle* when we face conflicts

69. How would you describe your unions ability to
    a. Plan
       O Good   O Average   O Poor
    b. Monitor
       O Good   O Average   O Poor
    c. Evaluate
       O Good   O Average   O Poor
    d. Report on activities
       O Good   O Average   O Poor

70. Is the union staff trained regurlarly?
O Yes   O No

71. Does your union have expert staff in the following areas
    O Collective bargaining
    O Occupational health and safety
    O Project management
    O Other areas, what?

72. Does your union have the capacity to develop proposals and report to supporting organisations?
O Yes   O Mostly yes   O No

73. Does your union have the ability to provide legal advice and support for your members, if needed?
O Yes   O No
    a. Are these advice/services
       O Organised by your union or
       O Outsourced/requested from external experts?

Section F: Human rights

74. Are the staff and elected representatives educated about the basic Human rights related to labour market environment (e.g. the UN's Declaration of Human rights)?
O Yes   O No

75. Are the members/union activists educated about the basic Human rights related to labour market environment (e.g. the UN's Declaration of Human rights, ILO fundamental rights at work)?
O Yes   O No

76. Is your union actively promoting human rights in its work?
O Yes   O Mostly yes   O No

77. Is your union actively bringing forth the human rights issues when working with authorities such the government or employer organisations?
O Yes   O Mostly yes   O No

78. How are the human rights visible in your unions work?

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Appendix 2.

Users guide and instruction manual for SASK OCA Tool

Users guide to SASKs Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool

Introduction

This is an instruction manual on how to use SASK's Organizational Capacity Assessment tool. SASK works with a variety of partners at global, national, and local levels. During the projects, it is necessary to explore the capabilities of different partner organizations and the capacity to operate in different sectors. Among other things, economic and human rights issues, as well as the organizational capabilities of the organization in other areas relevant to trade union activities, are important aspects of SASKs operations.

This tool is also meant to provide information to all the partner organizations about the status of their own activities and organizational capacity. It can be used to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and identify sectors and issues that might need further focus within the organizations. This tool is meant to function as a basis of a dialogue with SASK and partner organizations and to get to know the basic organizational structures and developments better. It can also be useful in recognizing the areas in a need of further support as well as the areas in which organizations are doing well and might benefit from best practice sharing.

Also, the development of organization can be measured with this tool. Though the tool does not measure specific results of projects, it can be used to assess organizations development before, during and after the projects or programs.

In a nutshell, the tool can be used for:

- Measuring the capacity of organizations in different areas
- Measuring the development in these areas
- Data for SASK about its partners in all levels
- Strengthening the local partners' organizational capacities
- Sharing good practices
- Recognizing areas where further support and work is needed
- Basis of a dialogue with SASK and its partners
- Following the organization's development through different projects
- To initiate dialogue within the partner organizations

This tool has been created in co-operation with SASK's partner organizations in Nepal and tested in a pilot group evaluation seminar and group work in March 2020.

Structure of the tool

The tool has been divided in to four categories based on SASK's core capacities. The categories are

1. TO EXIST
2. TO OPERATE AND PERFORM
3. TO RELATE AND MOBILISE
4. TO GROW

The first category TO EXIST is meant to give an idea of unions/organizations membership base, autonomy, decision making bodies and guiding documents. In order to serve its members well the union needs to have legitimacy and strong basis for its existence.

The second category TO OPERATE AND PERFORM measures the unions organizational systems and capacities. The questions cover human resources, finance, administration, planning, monitoring and further union activities. These functions allow the union to perform and operate effectively.

In the third category TO RELATE AND MOBILISE the tool focuses on communications, relationships and resource mobilization. Ideal situation is that the union invests in internal and external dialogue with its stakeholders and mobilizes resources in a planned and sustainable way.

The fourth category TO GROW is supposed to give an idea of organizations capacity in pursuing to do more and better to reach further and become stronger.

In addition to these the last category is about human rights. Since SASK's works is strongly about promoting human rights in labor markets it is important for the partner organizations to recognize and assess this aspect of their work.

How to use the tool – step by step

Section A: Contact and affiliation information

Q 1-10. Fill in the asked information about contact persons and further information about organizational basics.

Section B: Core capacity – to exist

Q 11. Please describe how well the bylaws and statutes are known among your stakeholders. Is there a training or induction offered?

Q 12. Please state how often the GA/Congress is held.

Q 13. Please describe which member groups or stakeholders have the right to attend the General Assembly. Are there some groups left out?

Q 14. Please answer if all the members have voting right at the GA.

Q 15. Please answer in which meeting are priorities and policies, such as bylaws, of the union decided.

Q 16. Please describe the possible methods your organization has to ensure the voices of general member are heard in the meetings. Do they have the possibility to participate or select representatives? Is there a possibility for an online participation? Are the documents available for comments to anyone?

Q 17. Please select all the decision-making bodies of your union and if necessary, fill in more.

Q 18. Please answer the questions about union governing board.

Q 19. Please answer the question about unions capacity to apply its strategy according to your experience.

Q 20. Please answer the question about unions annual plan according to your experience.

Q 21. Please answer the questions about unions board member elections.

Q 22. Please answer the question about elections of local and regional structures of your union.

Q 23. Please answer the geographical coverage according to your experience.

Section C: Core capacity – to operate and perform

Q 24. Please fill in the position of the person (one or more) who is in responsible for the day-to-day functions of the union.

Q 25. Please answer the question about payed representatives.

Q 26. Please answer the question about hired staff in your organization.

Q 27. Please answer the question about members. The amounts can be estimates according to your knowledge.

Q 28. Please answer the question about active union members. This can be either according to your union's guidelines or your estimate. Active member means those who are elected and regularly involved in union activities. Your union might have a definition for activist. If so, answer according to that definition.

Q 29. Please answer the question about HR guidelines.

Q 30. Please answer the question about recruiting new volunteers.

Q 31. Please answer the question about activist database. Is it updated regularly? Do the staff know how to use it effectively?

Q 32. Please answer the question about involvement in decision making according to your experience.

Q 33. Please answer the question about youth committee.

Q 34. Please answer the question about women's committee.

Q 35. Please answer the question about diversity of volunteers/activists. Do they reflect different regions/gender/age/cast/ethnicity/sector etc.?

Q 36. Please answer the question about local branches.

Q 37. Please answer the question about regional offices.

Q 38. Please answer the question about organizational chart.

Q 39. Please answer the question about paying members.

Q 40. Please answer the question about membership fees.

Q 41. Please answer the question about offices.

Q 42. Please answer the question about facilities and properties.

Q 43. Please answer the question about bank account.

Q 44. Please answer the question about other financial issues.

Q 45. Please answer the question about financial guidelines and policies.

Q 46. Please answer the question about self-sufficiency according to your experience. Would you consider your union has a balance between internal and external support? Can the union support itself well?

Q 47. Please answer the question about membership fee records.

Q 48. Please answer the question about sources of income.

Q 49. Please answer the question about CBA's. These can be in national, local or company level.

Q 50. Please answer the question about core activities (organizing, interest promoting, capacity building, workers' rights, knowledge, negotiations, CBA's, development work, lobbying etc).

Q 51. Please answer the question about activities finances.

Q 52. Please answer the question about ongoing projects. These can be in co-operation with other unions, SASK, other global/national/local organizations or actors.

Q 53. Please answer the question about union activities. What activities and events are held regularly?

Q 54. Please answer the question about monitoring of results. Are there evaluations or assessments being made? Are the participants involved?

Q 55. Please answer the question about reporting.

Section D: Core Capacity – to relate and mobilize

Q 56. Please answer the question about decision making involvement.

Q 57. Please answer the question about information sharing.

Q 58. Please answer the question about information's officer. This person should preferably be one of the hired staff.

Q 59. Please answer the question about website.

Q 60. Please answer the question about communications and choose all the suitable alternatives.

Q 61. Please answer the question about public image handling.

Q 62. Please answer the question about consulting and communicating with other organizations.

Q 63. Please answer the question about members contribution. Are the events attended well? Are the members being active in giving initiatives to union decision makers?

Q 64. Please answer the question about event funding.

Q 65. Please answer the question about sustainability of unions services. Are they planned in long term? Do they aim to the growth and strengthening of the union?

Q 66. Please answer the question about stakeholder's satisfaction according to your experience.

Section E: Core Capacity – to grow

Q 67. Please answer the question about unions ability to adapt.

Q 68. Please answer the question about unions ability to deal with conflicts. The cause of such conflict could be internal or external (hr-issues, changing working environment, organizational issues, general labor market issues, financial conflicts etc.).

Q 69. Please answer the question about planning, monitoring, and evaluating union activities.

Q 70. Please answer the question about staff training. By staff we mean hired staff or/and elected representatives.

Q 71. Please answer the question about hired staff's expertise.

Q 72. Please answer the question about unions ability to develop proposals and reports.

Q 73. Please answer the question about legal services. Does your union have internal or external expertise to provide to members when needed?

Section F: Human rights

Q 74. Please answer the question about staff and elected representatives' education on human rights issues.

Q 75. Please answer the question about members education on human rights issues.

Q 76. Please answer the question about promoting human rights. This can be visible for example at the CBA's, in your unions training, in the lobbying strategies, guidelines and program plans.

Q 77. Please answer the question about bringing up the human rights issues when working with other organizations.

Q 78. Please answer the question about how human rights promoting is visible in your unions day-to-day activities.

Appendix 3.

Invitation sent to the workshop participants

SASK Organisational Capacity Assessment Tool - SOCA Tool testing with Nepalese Unions
Saturday March 7th Kathmandu, Nepal

Invitation to piloting session workshop
Your organization is invited to participate a workshop session to test a draft of SASK's new organisational capacity assessment too. You will find the tool attached to this invitation. The meeting will be held at the JTUCC Office.

10:00	Start of the day, introductions
	Manorajan Pegu, SASK & Susanna Haapalainen
11:00	SASK's need of OCA tool
	Manorajan Pegu, SASK
11:30	Introduction to SOCA tool draft and instructions for workshop
	Susanna Haapalainen
12:00	Coffee break
12:30	Continuing of the workshops
14:30	Comments and discussion about the SOCA tool draft and finalizing the day, lunch

Appendix 4.

Interview questions

Interview 1

1. How do you see the role of local organizations such as trade unions in improving the conditions of people and workers in general?
2. What are the current projects SASK has in Nepal and what kind of state are they at?
3. What are the prerequisites for NGO operations in Nepal?
4. How do you see the society in terms of promoting equality? What are the main concerns or improvements?
5. What is the overall organizational structure in Nepal and how does it differ from the Finnish union structure?
6. How do you feel the assessment tool would best serve the partner organizations?
7. Do you think such tool could benefit not only SASK, but the partner organizations as well? How?
8. What do you think are the global contexts, trends and strategic goals that need to be addressed in the assessment tool?
9. How could we organize a piloting session and which organizations should be invited to attend?

Interview 2

1. What are the main development goals in Nepal from the Finnish perspective?
2. What are the prerequisites for NGO operations in Nepal?
3. How has the new constitution changed the situation for
   a. International NGO's
   b. democratic development
   c. ordinary workers and people?
4. How do you see the society in terms of promoting equality? What are the main concerns or improvements?
5. How do you see the role of local organizations such as trade unions in improving the conditions of people and workers in general?