



“Rather than putting aside the things we care about in order to compete with the rest of the world in a low-standards race to the bottom, we should help bring the rest of the world up to meet the high standards by which American businesses now operate.”

-Secretary of State John Kerry

Fact Sheet: Global Labor Programs

International Labor Rights

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor funds a range of innovative projects to advance labor rights and empower workers throughout the world. These projects further U.S. foreign policy goals related to human rights, democracy promotion, trade, and sustainable growth and also advance the bureau’s policy priorities to promote internationally recognized labor rights, with a particular focus on freedom of association and collective bargaining, and to support traditionally neglected groups, such as women, youth, migrants, and informal sector workers.

Our Work

DRL’s labor rights projects are implemented by international and non-governmental organizations in partnership with workers, employers, governments, and the private sector. The projects employ a range of strategies that include strengthening social dialogue mechanisms, educating and empowering workers to promote and defend their rights, and building the operational capacity and inclusivity of worker organizations.

Current Programs

As of August 2015, DRL manages labor-related programs in approximately 25 countries worldwide.

Program activities include establishing and strengthening migrant worker associations in Malaysia and Thailand; enhancing trade union capacity and social dialogue in the mining sector in Sub-Saharan Africa; reducing barriers to formalization and extending social protections to informal workers in Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and Tunisia; promoting labor rights for tea plantation workers in Bangladesh; building the skills and knowledge of women union leaders in Vietnam; strengthening the capacity of workers’ organizations to effectively organize, represent and advocate for workers’ rights in Central America; and working to increase investigations of and reduce impunity in cases of labor violence.

Programmatic Themes

- Promoting inclusive economic growth;
- Building the capacity of independent worker organizations;
- Promoting social dialogue to support participation of civil society in the political process and democratic governance;
- Improving labor standards in global supply chains;
- Improving access to justice, public services, or social protections, particularly for workers in the informal economy;
- Building effective and sustainable workplace mediation and conflict management systems;
- Increasing awareness among migrants of core labor rights in countries of origin and destination; and
- Educating workers and employers on effective collective bargaining techniques.

Please see www.grants.gov and www.grantsolutions.gov for open solicitations. In collaboration with the Bureau of Public Affairs