

Development Policy Platform

1. Introduction

The deregulation of labour markets, the lack of decent jobs, particularly for young people and women, rising global migration, the growth of informal economies, climate change, and escalating geopolitical tensions are also posing challenges for Denmark. This means that Danish development policy has moved closer to foreign and trade policy as a strategic instrument to also serve Danish interests, security, and stability.

In this context, it is important to maintain and further develop Danish initiatives that focus on the labour market, both public and private, as key parameters for ensuring inclusive social change. First and foremost, support efforts that promote an organised labour market, with focus on creating decent jobs for the large youth generation and foster sustainable growth based on core Danish values. This includes social dialogue between labour market partners, contributing to decent work, a just green transition, and rights for all.

The development policy platform sets the framework for DTDA – the Danish Trade Union Development Agency – and is based on the priorities and positions reflected in the strategies of the Danish Trade Union Confederation (FH). In cooperation with the Danish trade union movement, DTDA contributes to delivering on development policy priorities in the labour market in the Global South. At the same time, these efforts ensure that the trade union movement’s political work to influence Danish development cooperation is grounded in concrete knowledge and practical experience of labour market challenges and actual conditions in partner countries.

DTDA makes a particular effort to maintain and strengthen the support of Danish unions and deepen their members’ engagement and knowledge of development cooperation. This is achieved, among other things, through the establishment of solidarity projects with direct support from Danish unions to unions in the Global South, campaigns, involvement in advisory work, exchange of experience, internship schemes for young people, etc.

This development policy platform provides a comprehensive description of DTDA’s approach to working for and with the Danish trade union movement’s engagement in development cooperation.

2. Vision and Values

DTDA is rooted in the Danish trade union movement and is based on its core values¹. Since its establishment in the late 19th century, the trade union movement has been built on solidarity, community, and the creation of opportunities and security for the individual.

Freedom and security are rooted in universal access to employment and a fair distribution of societal wealth. The trade union movement promotes a welfare society based on democracy, security, social justice, a clean environment, and opportunities for individual development. Through collective agreements and political regulation of the economy, it aims to develop the welfare state by increasing workers’ incomes and

¹ DTDA was established by LO and FTF on 1 April 1987. DTDA is governed by a board of 15 members appointed by FH. All major affiliated unions under FH are represented on the board. DTDA was created to channel support, on behalf of FH and its affiliated unions, to the development of trade union movements in developing countries. DTDA does not have individual members; however, the affiliated organisations under FH represent more than 1,300,000 members. Member anchorage is ensured through the general democratic structure of the Danish trade union movement.

strengthening their co-determination in society and in the workplace. Through collective agreements, the trade union movement ensures individual workers' rights and security in working life.

To provide opportunities for all, the trade union movement promotes the development of workplaces where employees are recognised as the most important resource, where vulnerable groups are included, and where responsibility is taken for occupational health and safety, including both physical and psychosocial working conditions. All people are different yet equal and should have equal rights and opportunities. No one should be discriminated against, whether directly or indirectly, on the basis of gender, age, disability, race, skin colour, religion, political belief, sexual orientation, or national, social, or ethnic origin. Equal pay must be ensured for equal work or work of equal value.

Individuals must have the right to influence their own working conditions, ensuring a healthy balance between working life and family life, and must also have opportunities to secure their wellbeing through continuous skills development and lifelong learning.

The trade union movement has a global responsibility. Solidarity extends to workers worldwide, with the ambition of contributing to securing political, social, and economic rights for all. The Danish trade union movement actively contributes to strengthening workers' rights across borders and supports the societal development of the Global South through initiatives such as socially balanced economic development, a just green transition, and access to international trade.

Denmark is part of the affluent world and must therefore take its share of responsibility for supporting people living in poverty and hardship—not least to contribute to a peaceful and just world.

3. Background

DTDA is the joint professional development organisation of the Danish trade union movement, operating based on its values, objectives, and networks.

DTDA contributes to promoting democratic and socially and economically just societies in developing countries by supporting the development of sustainable labour markets characterised by social dialogue, tripartite institutions, and strong, democratic trade unions.

Sustainable democratic societies are built on the ability to meet the basic needs of its citizens and provide opportunities for social mobility through education and employment. The countries that have progressed furthest in social development are those where public administration is transparent and based on democratic principles; where employers contribute to investment, employment, and management; and where democratic trade unions represent workers' interests.

No country can achieve sustainable development without a sustainable labour market, whether public or private. A sustainable labour market means that employers and trade unions can establish and uphold agreements that ensure both workers' living conditions and enterprise development. It also requires political will to develop a business sector that respects environmental and climate concerns, creates jobs, ensures access to relevant education (including vocational training), and provides social protection for all.

The establishment of such institutions cannot be imposed externally; it must take place within the societies concerned. DTDA supports the development of the democratic trade union movement as the comparatively weaker party, while also promoting dialogue with employers' organisations, ministries, and other labour market actors.

Globalisation has shifted the balance of power between capital and labour and is affecting labour market structures worldwide. Increased labour mobility through open markets and trade agreements places new demands on trade unions at all levels.

The Decent Work Agenda, together with ILO conventions, represents key opportunities for promoting sustainable labour markets globally.

4. The political framework for DTDA's development work

As illustrated in **figure 1**, DTDA's work is shaped by the intersection of:

- The values and development priorities of the Danish trade union movement (FH)
- Danish government's development policy
- International development strategies and frameworks (ILO, ITUC, EU, World Bank, etc.)
- National development strategies of partner countries and their strategies for poverty alleviation.
- Policies and strategies of local partner organisations

Figure 1: DTDA's framework for development efforts and implementation of programmes in the Global South:



The foundation of DTDA's rights-based development work lies in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Articles 23, 24, and 25), which relates directly to core concepts concerning workers' rights and working conditions supported by ILO's ten core conventions including:

- Freedom of association and collective bargaining (no. 87 and 98)
- Elimination of forced labour (no. 29 and 105)
- Prohibition of child labour (no. 138 and 182)
- Elimination of discrimination based on race, gender or sexual orientation (no. 100 and 111)
- The right to a safe and healthy work environment (no. 155 and 187)

During the 1990s, ILO developed the "Decent Work" concept, which incorporates the essence of the ILO's

core conventions and emphasises the importance of making “decent work” a strategic international objective.

Furthermore, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide an overall framework for all development organisations, including DTDA. Our primary focus is on six goals: 1 – No Poverty; 4 – Quality Education for All; 5 – Gender Equality; 8 – Decent Work and Sustainable Economic Growth; 10 – Reduced Inequalities; and 17 – Partnerships to Achieve the Goals. DTDA pursues these goals through a strategic partnership agreement with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 2022–2026, and through a labour market consortium consisting of DTDA, 3F, and the Confederation of Danish Industry.

The Danish Government’s strategy for development cooperation, “A Changing World – Partnerships in Development”, also provides an important platform for DTDA to operationalise its ambitions in the labour market. The strategy recognises the labour market as a key strategic area in development cooperation and labour market actors as agents of change. One of the strategy’s priority areas is “job creation, economic growth, trade, and investment”, which states that “Creation of decent jobs, where workers’ rights are respected, is and remains crucial for sustainable economic development, poverty reduction and political stability.” Furthermore, it notes that “Job creation is also a matter of decent jobs. Wages, workers’ rights and decent labour conditions are crucial to ensuring that growth is sustainable and inclusive. Denmark has experience with strong social dialogue, effective labour market partners, and a labour market that ensures both high employment and good working conditions. The Danish model must be more thoroughly integrated into our development efforts to ensure job creation – including for young people.”

Vocational education and training are specifically mentioned as a tool to secure young people’s access to jobs – preferably green jobs. In this context, the strategy for development cooperation emphasises strengthening cooperation between the education system, labour market actors, businesses and authorities in partner countries.

In addition, the Danish Government’s Africa Strategy, “Africa’s Century”, is an important platform for DTDA. Through the Africa Strategy, Denmark seeks to strengthen ties with Africa to ensure stability, trade agreements, and new alliances in a world facing increasing geopolitical challenges. At the same time, it addresses the need to create decent jobs for Africa’s rapidly growing population in the coming decades. Therefore, investment in vocational education and training is considered a key instrument to ensure that young people acquire skills for jobs in demand by the labour market. Efforts to improve and make vocational education more relevant should be carried out by strengthening cooperation between the education system, social partners, businesses and authorities in the partner countries.

4.1 Development objectives in the Global South

The overall development objective of the DTDA’s interventions in the Global South is: *“to eradicate poverty and support the development of a just and democratic society, by furthering sustainable growth and promoting the concept of the Decent Work Agenda”*, including:

- Promotion of decent jobs, a just transition to the green economy, and a sustainable labour market, both institutionally and economically;
- Development and strengthening labour legislation for the protection of workers and creation of social safety nets that are inclusive, sustainable and adapted to national conditions;
- Promotion of social dialogue in the labour market, tripartite structures and mechanisms and corporate social responsibility.
- Support to workers in the informal economy to organise and negotiate with authorities, as well as

providing vocational and other forms of training.

4.2 DTDA’s development strategy for the labour market in the Global South

Goal 8: To promote decent work and sustainable growth is the main objective for DTDA. The ILO concept of ‘decent work’ encompasses four priority areas:

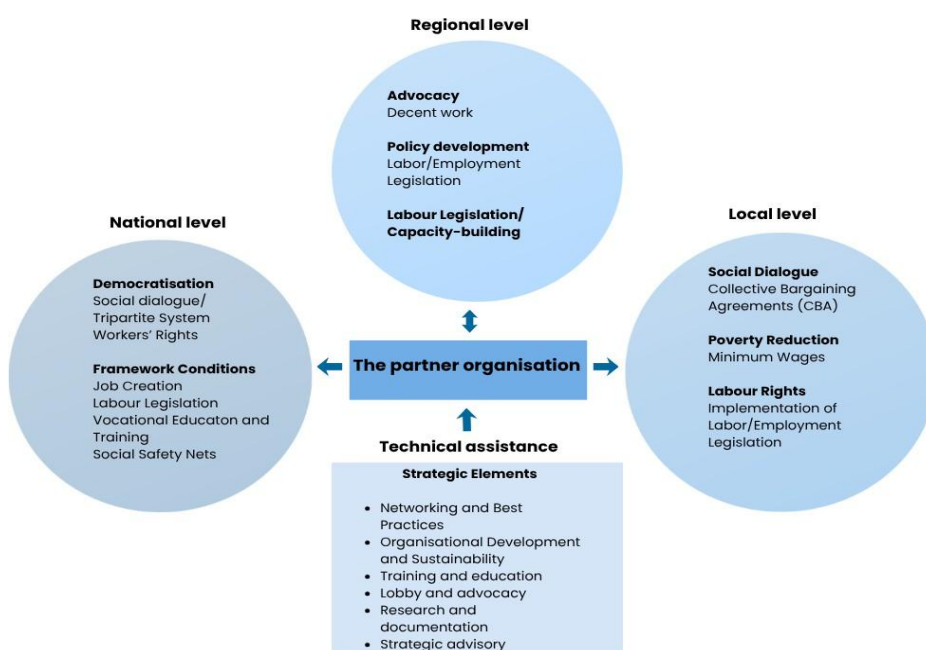
1. Creation of decent jobs
2. Protection of workers’ rights
3. Establishment of social safety nets
4. Promotion of social dialogue and tripartite cooperation

In the context of favourable framework conditions including an efficient public sector, functioning bipartite and tripartite forums, and labour market reforms, these four priority areas provide the foundation for developing sustainable labour markets, promoting sustainable growth, and achieving a just green transition. The overall Theory of Change (ToC) is illustrated below:



For trade unions in developing countries to act as agents of change, promote decent work, and develop sustainable labour markets, it is necessary to build capacity for these organisations across several areas. Accordingly, DTDA actively engages employers’ organisations in development work, both within Denmark and in partner countries.

DTDA’s strategic approach is centred on partner organisations and their capacity to act at the regional, national, and local levels. See figure 2:



4.3 Strategic elements

The foundation for collaboration between DTDA and our partners – the trade union organisations – is an equal partnership, in which the democratically elected leadership of the partner organisations identifies needs and development priorities.

DTDA works with six strategic elements, which form the core of its capacity building efforts for partner organisations. The methods are adapted to the specific needs of each partner to foster ownership and optimise effectiveness:

Networking & Exchange of Best Practices

To ensure that the voice of the trade union movement is heard, it is necessary to intensify cooperation and unified efforts. Support from DTDA may include opportunities for exchanging experiences between different trade union organisations, as well as opportunities for planning joint political initiatives, thereby creating national and regional platforms and resource bases for dialogue.

Organisational Development & Sustainability

Collaboration may include support for developing formal organisational structures. The focus is on facilitating the development of concepts, tools, and services for trade unions or organisations in both the formal and informal economy, where the most disadvantaged groups in society are found. A key element is to support and develop the administrative capacity, financial base, and leadership structures of partner organisations.

Training and Education

It is essential for trade unions that their elected representatives have a broad understanding of social and economic issues, enabling them to represent members and defend fundamental rights. Training and education of trade union representatives form a core methodological tool for the support provided by DTDA. Training is used strategically to develop internal democracy, strengthen organisational capacity, and establish more institutionally anchored education systems.

Advocacy and Lobbying

To enhance the visibility and recognition of trade unions as social partners, organisations need to develop the capacity to use a range of advocacy and lobbying tools effectively. Campaign strategies should be developed and employed to reach decision-makers, increase awareness of labour market issues, and generate public support through media and campaigns. DTDA supports partner organisations in developing the capacity and tools necessary to influence decision-making processes at all levels of society.

Research and Documentation

For the trade union movement to participate effectively in social dialogue and tripartite discussions, as well as to conduct effective lobbying and advocacy, organisations need access to well-documented data and information. DTDA supports partner organisations in building capacity and conducting research to establish a solid knowledge base for negotiations and tripartite dialogue. In addition, DTDA supports the establishment and consolidation of regional research networks, as well as connections to and membership of existing networks and institutions.

Strategic Advisory Services

DTDA provides strategic advice to partner organisations in developing policies and strategies. This includes access to an extensive network of experienced professionals from the Danish trade union movement and international trade union networks. Advisory support may include, but is not limited to, collective bargaining, conflict management, occupational health and safety, labour legislation, gender equality,

organisational development, CSR, adult education, and the organisation and capacity building of youth and youth unions.

4.4 Policies, strategies and tools

DTDA's core areas of intervention are:

- Organisational development, coordination efforts among trade unions, and network building
- Democracy and social dialogue, democratisation processes, and workers' rights
- Gender equality
- Poverty reduction and the informal economy – improving livelihoods and employment opportunities
- Advocacy and distribution policies, including alliances with civil society actors
- Green and just transition, including vocational education initiatives and job creation
- Occupational health and safety (physical and psychosocial working environment)
- Dispute resolution
- Youth organisation and capacity building of youth federations

DTDA always develops individual strategies in close collaboration with partner organisations. In this context, the experience, strategies, and tools that DTDA has developed through intensive cooperation with numerous partners are leveraged. These are applied across organisations and regions and are adapted to the specific conditions of each partner organisation. All strategies and tools are approved by DTDA's Board. They are systematically updated and revised based on experience and learning, and new ones are developed in response to emerging challenges.

4.5 DTDA's approach to collaboration with partner organisations

The Danish trade union movement is part of the international trade union movement, which provides DTDA with access to a unique global network of partner organisations across the world. National trade union centres and federations coordinate and cooperate through the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and global trade unions. They participate systematically in policy development and international decision-making processes. This unique network enables DTDA to engage in meaningful global cooperation, as the structures and partner organisations are already in place.

At the same time, Danish organisations represent a valuable resource base for DTDA's technical assistance to partner organisations when highly specialised inputs are required. This includes, among other things, the involvement of young trade union activists in advisory roles and in dialogue with young people in the Global South on labour organisation, promoting gender equality, and the capacity building of youth federations. This could also involve establishing an expert group to consolidate and share knowledge and experiences regarding employment-promoting initiatives that can be applied in the Global South.

As a basis for collaboration with new democratic trade unions, an assessment is conducted in the following areas:

- Whether the planned intervention in the country in question complies with the applicable guidelines of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the EU
- The country's democratic development, as well as the compliance with both trade union rights and human rights more broadly
- The role the country plays in the regional economy and its growth potential
- Economic development and the employment situation, both in the formal and informal economy
- The potential partner organisation's credibility, legitimacy, and commitment to democratic development and advocacy, as well as its capacity to utilise the technical assistance that DTDA can provide
- The capacity and needs of the partner organisation

- The partner organisation's international affiliations and potential membership in the international trade union movement
- The partner organisation's goals, values, and policies
- Risk assessment (due diligence) to evaluate risks and identify capacity-building needs

All partnerships are based on legally binding contracts, with clearly define responsibilities for both the partner and DTDA. These documents provide an overview of the partner's strategies and theories of change and define objectives as well as indicators within the results framework along with project implementation plan and budget.

DTDA has *overall responsibility for monitoring* and reporting on all activities undertaken. DTDA reports in accordance with the applicable administrative guidelines, whether the institutional donor is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the EU.

In dialogue with partners, an annual *sustainability analysis* is conducted to assess the status of the four dimensions of sustainability: *democratic, political, organisational, and financial sustainability*. Exit strategies should be considered in relation to these analyses, as the nature and scope of the collaboration evolves over time and as organisational capacity and various intervention strategies change accordingly. In addition, DTDA supports partners in developing their financial monitoring systems which is followed up during regular financial monitoring.

5. DTDA's role in Denmark

As the professional development organisation of the Danish trade union movement, DTDA serves as a centre for knowledge and information about trade unions and labour markets in developing countries.

On this basis, DTDA will continue to actively seek dialogue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the primary aim of strengthening the development and implementation of a socially and environmentally balanced growth and employment strategy, as a central element of Danish development policy.

In addition, DTDA manages the GLOBUS Fund (2023–2029), which aims to support collaboration between Danish educational institutions and partners in the Global South, fostering engagement with international development cooperation and the Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, DTDA involves young people from educational institutions, including vocational schools and FGU, in campaigns and events to share and communicate their experiences with development work.

By implementing campaigns and information efforts, DTDA work to raise awareness about working and living conditions of people in developing countries. The primary target groups of this work are members and shop stewards at Danish workplaces, as well as students at Danish vocational schools and academy profession programmes.

Through these efforts, DTDA seeks to foster a greater understanding of how globalisation affects our ability to create and maintain decent work, both in Denmark and in developing countries.

5.1 Development objectives for DTDA's operations in Denmark

The overall development objective of DTDA's work in Denmark is: "to strengthen the Danish trade union movement's capacity, knowledge, and engagement to influence Danish development policy" including:

- To strengthen the development and implementation of a socially balanced and just green growth and employment strategy (decent work), as a central element of Danish development policy
- To foster a greater understanding of development cooperation as an instrument for Danish

interests and security

- To build a professional and social network across borders, which also helps to engage young people with an international interest in trade union work in Denmark
- To ensure that the trade union movement can continue to implement labour market development and assistance as part of Danish development cooperation