

BASF workers network implements VidaViva in Brazil

The BASF union network in Brazil decided to implement the VidaViva health program in all of the BASF facilities in the country. BASF is the largest chemical producer in Brazil. The Network choose Mapping as the first tool of the VidaViva program to be implemented at the shop floor.

The first train-the-trainer seminar of the BASF Union Network was held on June 08 and 09, 2010, in Sao Paulo. The seminar was run by educators of TIE/VidaViva and included in addition to BASF union leaders participants such as Fabio Lins, Network Coordinator of BASF, Latin America., Fritz Hofman, member of the Factory Commission in Germany and Donizete, Chairman of the 'Social Observatory' and member of the National Executive of the CUT. The Vida Viva program at BASF will start with participatory research or health mapping.

About 15 local union leaders have been trained to date. Seven factories have been identified to start the process. The network strategy is to implement participatory research simultaneously in the various workplaces so that you can compare the working conditions afterwards and promote effective negotiations for change on a national level. To be able to reach the workers, the network drew two deployment plans: (1) negotiate with the company to release workers to conduct mapping during work time and at the work place without management participation or (2) perform

the activity outside the work place, in case the negotiations with the company fail. The goal of participatory research (mapping) is to involve workers every step of the way. First in the actual research of working conditions, then in the development of proposals and strategies to change the reality in which they live in.

The representatives from the different factories of BASF in Brazil have set a goal of completing various worksite mappings by the end of the year. "We will implement this work with or without the consent of the company. The union network is highly organized and we will do everything possible to ensure the implementation of this important organization tool," said Fabio Lins, Network Coordinator of BASF, Latin America.

The second step of the VidaViva program within the BASF network will be the training of union leaders to implement an Audiovisual Education Tool (Raio) of VidaViva. A third step is to train them on a special course for health reps.

Future Prospects

VidaViva is also being developed in other countries, like Germany. The expectation is that it will be possible to implement health mapping also in the factories of BASF Germany, where the company is headquartered. If this can be realized, it will be an excellent opportunity to develop an alternative, workers oriented benchmark, comparing the working conditions in Brazil and Germany. It will be an opportunity to further strengthen relations between workers of the units from both countries.

