Annual meeting

December 7-10, 2021

Report

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April 2022

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1. Introduction to the report

The GoodElectronics Global Annual Meeting was held online from 7-10 December, 2021. The meeting discussed arising challenges in 2021 and prospective activities for the global electronics movement to focus on in response over the coming years. There was a particular focus on the global landscape of the electronics industry in terms of impacts on communities, workers and the environment, as well as on the impact of Covid-19 on workers' rights, with particular attention to the shrinking of civil space for electronics workers and accompanying organizations. A new project, *Promoting human rights and accountability along global battery supply chains* (2022-2024), was also introduced. The Annual Meeting was an opportunity to hear from members about their own activities and to discuss what strategies and tactics the Network Coordinator and Regional Coordinator roles should focus on over the next few years. Members also discussed their own ideas for strategies and tactics that the Network as a whole could use throughout the event. Due to ongoing challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Annual Meeting was held online over Zoom, with sessions spaced out and repeated to overcome time zone issues.

Across the sessions 5 key questions were explored along with a number of sub-themes, as outlined below:

Question 1 (meeting 1):

What are the key challenges faced by your organisation due to the pandemic and/or due to changes in the political landscape? (Covid-19 & shrinking civic space)

1. How are workers and organisations responding to these challenges?

2. How can we organise collectively as a Network to address these challenges?

Question 2 (meeting 2):

What approach is your organisation taking to addressing the issues in mining over the next 2-3 years and why are you taking this approach?

1. What do you think are the opportunities for our Network to work together on collective activities over the next 2-3 years?

2. Are there any important events or developments that our Network should consider?

Question 3 (meeting 2):

What approach is your organisation taking to addressing the issues in manufacturing over the next 2-3 years and why are you taking this approach?

1. What do you think are the opportunities for our Network to work together on collective activities over the next 2-3 years?

2. Are there any important events or developments that our Network should consider?

Question 4 (meeting 2):

What approach is your organisation taking to addressing the issues around circular economy and end of life over the next 2-3 years and why are you taking this approach?

1. What do you think are the opportunities for our Network to work together on collective activities over the next 2-3 years?

2. Are there any important events or developments that our Network should consider?

Question 5 (meeting 2):

What should the Network coordinators prioritise during 2022?

1. What actions should we plan?

2. How can we practice solidarity and collective action across the Network?

2. Overview of the industry, working conditions under/post Covid-19. The shrinking of civic space.

These sessions sought to understand, analyse, and interpret the current situation in relation to:

a) The impacts of Covid-19;

b) Overall issues for workers in the industry;

c) Closing of civic space for organisers and activists, and;

d) Current member activities

The new project promoting human rights and accountability along global battery supply chains (2022-2024) was also introduced in these sessions.

2.1. The impacts of Covid-19: Overall issues for workers in the industry

Covid-19 has exacerbated certain issues for workers and worker organisations, with wages declining or even being lost entirely since the pandemic began. Policies such as 'no work, no pay' have become prevalent in several countries, and especially in India. There has been an increase in contract work under more precarious conditions, with many companies using the pandemic as an excuse to lay off workers and replace permanent workers with contractors and other outsourced workers. This has been a particular challenge for workers in the mining industry who have been deeply affected in terms of their health and safety, lost wages, and increasing flexibilisation of work. Shipping shortages have led some companies to scale down production, causing job losses and reduced working hours. Alongside this, there have been rising living costs and new expenses for workers, such as for things like hand sanitizer and personal protective equipment (PPE), with many companies providing no PPE whatsoever. In some countries such as India and Taiwan, workers have experienced a reduction in their hours, lost access to overtime, and been unable to

return to work due to lockdowns, alongside limited or no support from governments. In other countries, hours have increased, with some workers even being locked into factories and not being allowed to leave[1].

Covid-19 has also posed challenges for the Network in terms of organising and there is a need to reach more members and to foster more active members in the coming years. This is also a challenge as there has been increasing investment by electronics companies in countries where workers' rights are not respected and many violations are seen, such as in India, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Mexico, and the Philippines[2]. In many of these countries the gap between minimum wage and assembly workers' wages are very narrow, and in India the risks of workers being replaced due to new technology in AI, automation, and robotics is high, highlighting the importance of building strong trade unions inside the factories so that workers can negotiate with companies for fair living wages and a just transition. However, many of the largest companies in the Electronics Manufacturing Services (EMS) industry have no union or only very low union density. The manufacturing of equipment for the installation of 5G infrastructure is an area where huge growth is expected but where there is currently low union density in many of the leading companies involved. Furthermore, union busting and bans on unionisation remain concerns in these areas.

Data collected by Electronics Watch (April 2020-August 2021) from monitoring partners in Indonesia, India, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam shows that many Covid clusters were first seen in Export Processing Zones (EPZs). Reports from the ground also highlighted management not taking swift action to shut down production, to quarantine sick workers, nor to appropriately disinfect areas in many factories - leading to increased risk of infection and death for workers in these factories. One factory in Thailand alone was linked to 6,939 Covid-19 infections due to work continuing for more than a month after the first outbreak occurred. In this case, migrant workers and local workers were separated into different sections, with migrant workers reporting discrimination in the way they were treated, including quarantine facilities, food, medical attention, and treatment by management. Lockdowns sometimes meant migrant workers were trapped in their workplaces, and even locked in dormitories in their place of work, unable to leave. This was a particular problem in Taiwan. Information in relation to infections in workplaces has also been contained by employers seeking to resist closing down factories meaning actual infections in factories are likely to be underrepresented. Whilst some countries such as the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, and Malaysia have made Covid-19 an occupational disease, placing a duty on employers to keep employees safe, this has not been effectively or adequately implemented[3].

Country reports:

- Ghana – Südwind reported on e-waste in Ghana

- India - CIVIDEP reported on the impact of Covid-19 on India's electronics sector

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[1] Recap of Day 1 by Dina, Lips, Indonesia - Day 1B (repeat session for members who could not get to Day 1) & Alejandro Gonzalez)
[2] Kan Matsuzaki - Day 1A GE Meeting
[3] Speaker 1 - Day 1A GE Meeting (around the 36 minute mark)

- Mexico – CEREAL reported on new processes of outsourcing as a result of a new labour law passed during the pandemic.

2.2. Closing of civic space for organisers and activists

These sessions explored challenges related to shrinking civic space and increased repression linked with authoritarian governments consolidating their power in many countries around the world. They also explored how workers and organisations are resisting this and finding innovative ways to continue their work and organising. Examples of shrinking civic space included companies using pandemic as an excuse not to negotiate with unions and to lay off workers suspected of organising. In some countries it has been difficult to obtain data on the Covid-19 situation within factories due to refusals from authorities. In China in particular, it has become harder to fathom the situation of workers. In the Philippines they have seen increasing repression against unions, including kidnappings, military harassment, and the detention and killing of union representatives and other activists. In Hong Kong, there has been repression of civil society and unions, with some organisations losing their NGO status and being disbanded by the authorities. In South Korea, freedom of assembly has been restricted, such as when the Chairman of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions was arrested for holding a rally. Elsewhere, discrimination and hatred of migrants, women, and people with sexually transmitted diseases have increased. In response, a coalition of civic groups is campaigning to enact an anti-discrimination law.

2.3. Current activities of members and allies

2.3.1. Mexico[4]

Cereal has been working on a report on precarious work in Mexico, covering Covid-19 and outsourcing of workers. The Cereal report is meant to support local organizations' lobby and advocacy activities in the context of key recent legislative developments in Mexico. Such developments include the labor law reform from 2019 (which aims to guarantee freedom of association and consolidate an effective and transparent Labor Justice System) and the entry into force of a new trade agreement between Mexico, Canada and the US (T-MEC). The T-MEC includes obligations for the States to guarantee the protection of workers' rights (in areas such as forced labor, discrimination and collective rights). The new labor legal framework is an important juncture in the electronics industry that bring a favorable legal and political scenario to push for changes with regards to freedom of association and collective rights. The report includes a focus on gender-based violence and harassment which is a priority advocacy target of GoodElectronics.

2.3.2. Philippines[5]

Covid-19 has seen workers in the electronics sector in the Philippines face the risk of Covid-19 transmission in the workplace since electronics work sites are prone to clusters of cases and even outbreaks due to poor ventilation. Workers have faced the loss of income due to Covid-19 illness,

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[4] CEREAL
[5] MWAP

mandatory quarantine or the temporary shutdown of factories by electronics companies who are affected by the lockdowns. There has also been disruption of the production process, which has affected jobs for electronic workers. There have also been issues in relation to collective bargaining with companies delaying and refusing negotiations and blaming this on the economic slowdown. In the Philippines, there are also general issues with work environments affecting electronic workers. For example, there has been a lack of social protection for workers who lost their income or jobs, and unequal access to vaccination for those living outside Metro Manila. It is only recently that many workers in electronics companies have been receiving vaccines because almost all electronics factories are found outside Metro Manila. This is despite the fact that electronics workers are considered essential workers and have continued working every day, even with minimal protection. The other situation for the workers in the Philippines is the repressive environment and ongoing attacks on trade unions in the Philippines that has affected the unions in electronics, particularly the Nexperia and Fuji electronics workforce and their representatives. A union leader from Fuji was assassinated on March 29, 2021. Unions in Nexperia and their members have been experiencing harassment from the police and military, even in their homes and in their community. Recently the government also issued guidelines that bars unvaccinated workers from working unless they get tested first with a 'no vaccine no work' policy. A campaign has been launched called 'protect our economic front liners' with a number of key demands for workers, including:

1. Free mass testing; effective contact tracing, and; speedy and safe vaccination for workers to protect workers from Covid-19;

2. Social protection to be paid for the duration of the pandemic so that workers who are forced to go into quarantine will still have their income protected, as well as for those who were temporarily laid off;

3. Wage subsidies of 100 pesos or two US dollars daily to augment the erosion of wages and combat price rises, as most electronics workers receive only 373 pesos or 7.5 US Dollars daily, compared with a living wage of around 20 US dollars a day for a family of five, and;

4. Compensation and benefits for workers who got Covid-19 by pushing the government to declare Covid-19 as an occupational disease.

Table 1: Outline of MWAP's activities

Category	Example/s
Protection	● Campaigned to stop the attacks on trade unions, especially in the electronics industry where there is only a very small portion of workers unionised;
Legal Change	● Held dialogues and wrote letters to the members of the Congress and Senate about bringing in social protection laws; ● Held dialogues with the Philippine Economic Zone authority to raise the concern of workers in economic zones, most of whom

	are electronics workers, and achieved vaccination for workers in some companies in these zones; ● Worked with the Institute for occupational health and safety development, and with the Employers' Compensation Commission to relax requirements for access to benefits and compensation of workers who got sick with Covid-19; ● Collaborated with other labour groups to oppose and lobby against the 'no vaccine no work' policy;
Collaboration/Capacity building	● Developed alliances with other unions and created broader alliances to push for wage increases and worked with NGOs to mainstream occupational health and safety; ● Developed a training module and conducted training on how to build workers health and safety committees in electronics companies in both non-unionised and unionised workplaces in a project supported by GoodElectronics; ● Building new contacts that can be leads for organising in electronic companies through community based networks that are demanding social protection from the government; ● Held online programmes including online or social media action to amplify campaigns; ● Continue to hold and support the physical action and mobilisations of affiliates
Solidarity	● Building solidarity among workers across the world, who were all affected by the pandemic, through maintaining and strengthening linkages with our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world through frequent exchange of information.

2.3.3. Democratic Republic of Congo[6]

DRC produces more than 70% of the world's cobalt which is used in battery production and for the ongoing renewable energy transition across the globe. DRC is also a big producer of copper, with more than 1.5 million tonnes produced annually. Tin is another mineral being produced that is vital for mobile technology. So in these three minerals, DRC is playing a major role in many electrical products. Since the pandemic started the state has taken measures to stop people moving from one city to another. But in the areas with major mining companies (and the cobalt capital of the world), whilst everything was closed, the mining workers were still working. They were also obliged to work in poor conditions during the lockdown without being able to see their

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[6] Afrewatch.

families due to restrictions on movement. For example, workers worked from 5am-1am with little opportunity for rest and a lack of access to good quality food. Many workers were fired or employed on insecure conditions by subcontractors offering poorer wages and conditions than direct employees. Many people went unpaid during the pandemic, lost their income, or became unemployed. In some areas mining completely stopped, with 200,000 people unable to work with no support from the state. The state focus was on saving companies but not on defending workers. Changes in ownership and weakened standards and compliance with regulations since the 2000s has seen workers mistreated during the pandemic, with workers being beaten and mistreated by their employers. The situation is particularly difficult for workers in DRC who are on low incomes and now face declining employment opportunities alongside many people looking for work, causing an impact on people's salaries. It is 'important for GoodElectronics to get involved in direct work in Congo because when you talk about electronics you should think about where people are getting these minerals and Congo is one of the countries in the world where you have big mining companies with huge negative impacts on communities'.

2.3.4. Electronics Watch

Electronics Watch (EW), an ally of GoodElectronics, was introduced. EW works with public buyers in the European Union and now also in Australia and seeks to protect the rights of workers along the supply chains where they are buying their products from. This is achieved by following up on contractual obligations when public buyers go into contracts with brands and companies to procure goods. EW also monitors for human rights and environmental due diligence along the supply chain through working with monitoring partners on the ground in countries where electronics production is going on. They are also now starting to monitor supply chains in the mining sector and in mining areas where extraction is being done, for example where materials are being extracted to make batteries which go into electric vehicles. The work of EW is worker driven, so monitoring is done with trained and experienced monitoring partners who are very well recognised workers' rights and human rights organisations. The work is an ongoing process of building trust and worker networks on the ground. The three main steps in which the EW is engaged are:

1. Public buyers become affiliates with EW.

2. Public buyers demand decent working conditions in their contracts.

3. Compliance is monitored through EW and improvements are worked on collaboratively.

There are now 313 public buyers affiliated with EW. Most of the public buyers are from the EU. The majority of EW monitoring takes place in Asia, but it is also in Eastern Europe and Africa and Latin America. All this seeks to remediate the violations seen in the supply chain, to bring reparations for workers who have been harmed, and to prevent future violations and harms in the supply chain.

2.3.5. CIVIDEP – Bangalore, India

CIVIDEP are involved in research and conducting training for workers, alongside undertaking advocacy around the global supply chains of the electronics and other sectors. They are primarily focused on the southern part of India in Bangalore, and focus on special economic zones where business activities are exempted from labour laws. Such exemptions have led to a flexible

workforce in this region and some companies operating with more than 85% of the workforce comprised of labour with very short term contracts. Women and interstate migrants have made up the majority of the workforce for the past few years and have been unlikely to raise concerns against management for fear of reprisal. These contract workers are really regular workers but receive minimum wage and no social security, which was the case even before the pandemic. The pandemic has also drastically reduced the income of many of these workers - with few economic opportunities outside of the factories for many of these workers. Many of these contract workers exhausted savings and had to incur debts, often relying on local moneylenders as the formal credit system offers prohibitive interest rates for personal loans due to a 'no work no pay' policy. After the first wave this meant this group of workers had no choice but to try and return immediately to work, but the job they had left was not always there when they returned after the lockdown. The pandemic has led to increased unemployment and demonstrated the job insecurity of contract workers in the special economic zones. This poses additional challenges for unions without more state intervention[7].

2.3.6. AMRC - Asia (based in Hong Kong)

The Asia Monitor Resource Centre offer training in capacity building and support to partners working in the electronics industry. In Hong Kong, many electronics brands have been making huge profits despite the impact of Covid-19 but workers producing for these brands have been heavily exploited. Workers have had varied levels of income support and many have had to cover the costs of additional expenses due to Covid. Workers who were unable to return due to lockdowns have had to continue to pay rent and expenses. Government has not provided sufficient support for workers and, worse, have carried out legal reforms that benefit companies by putting workers in more precarious positions. For example, in some countries companies have been allowed to lay off workers without compensation during the pandemic; some companies received pay holidays, and others increased working hours. Many factories in the region have only shut down their operations when there has been a serious outbreak. Covid-19 has also been spread due to a 'no work no pay' policy. It has also become more common in the electronics industry to recruit contract workers, who have been the first group of workers to be laid off as they do not tend to have union representation. Some companies are also looking to relocate their supply chain from China to other parts of Asia, especially South East and South Asia where governments have begun to relax labour laws. There has also been increased repression against organisations supporting workers in the electronic field with some NGO partners having bank accounts monitored by authorities and even banks themselves making it difficult to receive foreign funding. NGOs have also needed permission from the authorities to collaborate with other local and international NGOs. Monitoring mechanisms are not as comprehensive outside of European and American brands which is a challenge for civil society in Asia. The National Security Law was introduced in 2020 in Hong Kong and has led to more than 15 civil society groups being disbanded within one year. This includes many labour, youth, and regional organisations. Amnesty International have closed their regional office in Hong Kong and AMRC are also looking to relocate. As a result of these changes it is becoming harder for civil society organisations to monitor the labour conditions inside China and inside China's electronics manufacturing industry.

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[7] Gopi Parakuni

Resistance and reporting from the press has been important in allowing the international community to know what is happening.

2.3.7. SETEM Catalunya (Barcelona)

SETUM Catalunya produced training resources to generate awareness and active citizenship about issues in the electronic industry. They also offer training for workers and leaders in the industry to improve communication of issues[8].

2.4. Global battery supply chains

The GoodElectronics Coordinator introduced a newly funded project which will help to sustain and strengthen the Network. The project aims to promote that the energy transition includes a sustainable global battery value chain. The project is led by SOMO, and through them the Network will be included, and is funded by Bread for the World. The funding for this project ensures there for the continuation of a full-time GoodElectronics Regional Coordinator and a part-time GoodElectronics International Coordinator for the next three years. It also relates to other areas of the Network's work in terms of mining, manufacturing and end of life along the battery supply chain. It also offers an opportunity to expand the work of the Network into other sectors, such as the automotive sector, in addition to electronics and mining[9].

SOMO outlined the project and noted that the transition to renewable energy is going to be central to efforts to tackle climate change and global warming and that batteries will be at the core of this momentous transition. Battery production will scale up significantly in the coming years to meet the increased demand - particularly from the automotive industry. The rights of workers along the global battery value chain will also face increased pressure and risks as the business model underpinning the electric battery sector replicates the same patterns of exploitation and inequality that characterise the fossil fuel sector. For example, unequal distribution of economic benefits along the value chain. The core problem this project seeks to address is the unsustainable and unethical battery value chain that results in the energy transition being achieved on the back of exploitation, human rights abuses, and deepening inequality.

Project Aim:

To secure a sustainable and just energy transition

Objectives:

1. Empower unions and civil society groups to organise and protect workers' rights and improve labour conditions.

2. Strengthen regulatory and policy frameworks in the EU so that they contribute to stronger due diligence requirements in the battery supply chain.

Project approach:

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[8] Dina, Lips, Indonesia - (Day 1B (repeat session for members who could not get to Day 1)
[9] Alejandro Gonzalez - (Day 1B (repeat session for members who could not get to Day 1)

This project seeks to leverage the global demand for transition to renewable energy by making use of the current global attention on climate change, and a transition to renewable energy. There are massive volumes of batteries and minerals required - meaning this subject has the attention of global leaders. In order to leverage the international attention on battery supply chains, workers and advocates need to connect to each other as this will enable them to speak with a louder collective voice across the chain. To do this workers and advocates need to know how the entire supply chain works. So, this project aims to support workers in the battery supply chain to connect along the supply chain in order to secure better working conditions, including decent wages and freedom to organise.

Table 2: Outline of project approaches and activities for the global battery supply chains project

Approach	*Description*
Action oriented research	● First 2 years of the project. ● Mapping the supply chain (mostly based in China and Asia). What standards do they have to comply with? What are the relationships with non-Chinese actors? And how can they be held accountable? ● 'Follow the money research' and power analysis. What is the role of investors? Who are those investors? What public aid is contributed? Who is driving the price? Who is profiting? Who are the shareholders?
Knowledge building	● Empower GoodElectronics members. ● Strategising workshops and regional presentations. ● Coalitions with other organisations like IndustriALL and its member unions who are working to improve conditions in battery supply chains.
Outreach activities	● Work towards meaningful stakeholder engagement and improve human rights due diligence practises along the battery supply chain. ● Important industry alliances such as the Global Battery Alliance and the European Battery Alliance.
Policy advocacy	● Feeding into lobby and advocacy towards better regulatory frameworks and policy frameworks (EU focus). ● Improve the mandatory human rights to diligence framework on EU level and on an international level (UN Binding Treaty, trade policy instruments, battery regulation, etc.) ● GoodElectronics members targeting own governments

3. Network membership updates: Mining, manufacturing, and circular economy

These sessions were all about understanding the current situation, and hearing from members what they are doing on the issues of mining minerals (the start of the global electronics supply chain), manufacturing and workers' rights (across the supply chain), and recycling and circular economy initiatives (focused at the end of the supply chain). In each area, opportunities for the Network for collective activities over the next 2 to 3 years were considered in detail.

3.1. Mining

An introductory presentation outlined key issues in relation to the mining context in terms of supply chains. A discussion was held regarding what the Network strategy should be regarding the many issues in the mining part of the global electronic supply chain. As well as sharing the problems and challenges they faced, member organisations active in these areas shared what strategies they had been implementing to address these issues operationally.

3.1.1. Mining Presentation[10]

The presentation highlighted the well documented impacts of mining minerals for electronics on both people and planet with tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold some of the most frequently used minerals in terms of consumer electronics products. The electronic sector actually accounts for 6.5% of the global annual demand of gold. Tantalum is mainly used to produce capacitors and the telecommunications industries are some of the main consumers of these capacitors. Mining activities are predicted to soar as a result of the transition to low carbon technologies, such as electric vehicles and energy storage, particularly with any transition to electric vehicles. The expected result of which will also be rising demand for 'transition minerals' such as cobalt, lithium, nickel, graphite, manganese, and copper. Metal mining is one of the world's dirtiest industries - responsible for at least 10% of anthropogenic greenhouse emissions. The industry is linked to environmental destruction and freshwater contamination, as well as to serious human rights abuses, including the displacement of people. Predictions from the International Environment Agency show how the deployment of new and low carbon technologies, such as electric cars, offshore wind, and solar PV, will result in an incredible increase in demand. For example, when you compare an electric car and a conventional car there is an increasing need for minerals like copper, lead, nickel, manganese, cobalt and graphite. Much of this is due to the battery of the electric vehicle, but there are also minerals required for other parts of the car. In terms of power generation, offshore wind also boosts demand for copper. Increased mining has devastating impacts on communities and the environment.

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[10] Alejandro Gonzalez - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording

Many of these transitional minerals are highly concentrated in just a few countries. For example, the DRC dominates in terms of the production of cobalt, with around two thirds of global production. When it comes to nickel, the main production companies are located in Indonesia, with more than 30%, and then the Philippines and Russia. When it comes to graphite and rare earths China dominates production, whilst lithium production is found in Australia, Chile and China. With platinum, South Africa and Russia dominate. There are major concentrations, therefore, of the production of these minerals and this leads to geopolitical tensions, with competition between the US, Europe, China, and the rest of Asia. However, these geopolitical issues and concentrated production can also be used as leverage and as a strategy for workers and communities. As well as the concentration of where mining takes place, when it comes to processing and refining minerals, the concentration is even more staggering. Here, China has a clear dominance of the refining of many of these minerals. There are now a number of projects monitoring the situation. For example, the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre have set up a [transition minerals tracker](#), which tracks allegations against companies mining cobalt, copper manganese, nickel, and zinc which showed in one day 304 allegations made against 15 different companies. Another interesting project called [Environmental JusticeAtlas](#) has just released a map of the conflicts that are being caused with communities due to this soaring mineral demand in the Americas. So far they have documented more than 45 conflicts. There are a number of reports available about the impacts of mineral mining due to the energy transition.

There have been some emerging patterns and strategies that have been identified as being used by many civil society organisations, unions, communities, and activists to address these issues. This includes calls to reduce mineral demand in absolute terms through encouraging reuse, recycling more, and decreased consumption. But it also means thinking about the design of electronics. For example, thinking about designs that have a longer lifetime or are easier to recycle and to repair. This is important as mining always comes with some negative impacts to the environment as well as for communities, and the only way to really address the climate emergency is to reduce mineral and energy demand in absolute terms.

At the macro level, strategies involve calling for transformative societal changes, such as changing consumption and production patterns that go beyond the technological fix. There is also a strong movement calling for legally binding regulations to protect human rights and the environment, including indigenous communities and workers. There are also many movements calling for mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence, which are taking place in many countries, particularly in the European Union. Some organisations advocate more independent third-party verification, and of course the GoodElectronics network is also supporting the organising efforts of formal and informal miners who are calling for fair wages and the formalisation of health and safety. With this context in mind, the strategy discussion took place toward considering strategies to support workers across industries, across mining, electronics, automotive, mining, and energy sectors, and along the entire supply chain through the different steps of the value chain.

3.1.2. Current Organizational Approaches - Mining

These sessions asked participants active in the field to consider two key questions:

1. What approach is your organisation taking to addressing the issues that we see in mining over the next two to three years?

    - Why is this a good approach?

    - Why are you taking that approach rather than another approach?

2. What are the key opportunities for the Network to work together on collective activities over the next 2-3 years?

    - What are key policy developments?

    - What potential campaigns are there?

    - What are the organising opportunities?

3.1.2.1. Earthworks[11]

Earthworks have been working with communities that are adversely impacted by mining, oil and gas extraction for many years. One of their current campaigns aims to make 'green energy', clean, just and equitable. Part of that campaign involves engaging corporations and industry and highlighting their mineral sourcing policies and practises to try and prevent replication of what is currently taking place in mining. This approach will be used for the next 2-3 years. It also involves collaborating with allies, partners, and communities that are impacted by mining activities. They aim to centre the concerns of the community, of community partners, and their allies when engaging with corporations, and EV companies and battery manufacturers. Practically the campaign is broken down into 2 parts, with Corporate Engagement on one side, and it has a Coalition Coordinator. The Coalition Coordinator reaches out to specific communities, and keeps in touch with the different partners and allies on the ground and shares the information with the Corporate Engagement Coordinator who then advocates for these positions with corporate campaign targets. This approach has seen successes and will be continued for the next 2-3 years. For example, they have partnered with an indigenous group who were suffering the impacts of a nickel mining company which were suppliers of Tesla. The Indigenous group contacted Earthworks who were then able to connect the group with Tesla and bring them around the table for discussions - even though Tesla does not currently use Nickel in their cars, and these negotiations are ongoing. Currently Tesla have stopped using the minerals of Monaco as a result of these discussions[12]. This approach has made it possible to centre the needs of their community partners and allies and for them to share their experiences, where suitable, through corporate engagement.

In terms of opportunities for the network to work together these include:

    - Meetings/sharing details to share information about mining activities and energy transition work, such as through the mining and energy transition email discussion list.

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[11] Earthworks - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording

[12] Post-it note on Miro board – Day 2 (Main Session): Strategy Discussion, Mining - https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOeMOzkQ=/

- Take part in a coalition call which is used as an opportunity to keep in touch with what everyone else is doing.

- Engaging with any activities designed to ensure organisations are all on the same page, and potentially echoing the same language.

- Strengthening work on the end of life and circular economy and learning how to promote reuse and recycling along the value chain.

- Encouraging corporations to undertake supply chain mapping.

3.1.2.2. Thailand[13]

There are issues in relation to who owns mining rights, with Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) being problematic here - foreign companies can gain a kind of impunity from free trade agreements. When companies mine and/or process, if they are owned by TNCs or foreign owned, the FTAs or other treaties come into play. Current attention needs to be given to Gold mining in Thailand (Australian company Kingsgate involved) as despite the success of the community in getting the mines closed, the company can rely on trade agreements between Thailand and Australia. Now, the Thai government is considering allowing the mine to reopen.

3.1.2.3. Bread For All (BFA)

Will soon be merging with a larger organisation called HEKS/EPER, who are larger and will hopefully give them greater leverage. They have been working in the mining sector for 3 years, supporting organisations that are located in countries where mining and processing is an issue. Similarly to Earthworks, this is achieved via two different avenues. In particular, the focus is on supporting organisations that try to support communities or workers in mining and processing countries. This includes:

- Supporting work in Indonesia, the Philippines and others with a nickel industry;

- Being a long-standing partner of AFREWATCH for the DRC's cobalt mining sector, and;

- working with Electronics Watch, who are venturing into the monitoring of the mining and processing sector in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Bolivia, on various minerals that feed into the supply chain for batteries and energy storage.

BFA use reports from partners in the Global South to try to influence policy in Switzerland and in Europe. This has led to campaigns in Switzerland related to regulation and, there is currently a political movement for policies that try to promote the circular economy. This is becoming a salient issue, with it being recognised that the less that is mined, or the greater use of secondary minerals from secondary resources, the better it is. However, this poses other problems for artisanal and small miners in the DRC or even workers that are working in mines or in the processing industry. They are heavily impacted if all of these concerns suddenly become an issue. In terms of how to organise collectively BFA are keen to hear from the organisations that are operating in countries which are directly impacted by the mining sector or processing sector and

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[13] Post-it note on Miro board – Day 2 (Main Session): Strategy Discussion, Mining - https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOeMOzkQ=/

to listen to how to best collaborate. They are also keen to support the important work discussed in India.

3.1.2.4. CATAPA - Belgium

CATAPA been working in the area of mining for more than 50 years after being originally founded in Bolivia. They work together with local communities affected by multinational large-scale mining and recently became a member with GoodElectronics as a previous campaign called 'Fair ICT Flanders' is coming to an end. In this campaign they worked with local governments in Belgium to improve the way they buy electronics and developed guidelines and training on how the government could improve their procurement rules.

Their focus for at least the next two years will be a new campaign called 'Control, Alt Delete' which aims to challenge 'planned obsolescence' and improve laws and policy in this area. Recently CATAPA successfully organised two big actions with a lot of press attention and will be lobbying the European Parliament, the Belgian Parliament, and the Federal Government for change in this area. They will continue working together with local communities, especially in Latin America, with a focus on Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Peru. Previously, CATAPA have also been involved in monitoring projects in relation to tin mines in rural areas and research into labour conditions, how workers have been organising, and what can be improved. They found there were still many health and security issues, concerns about pay and conditions, and lack of protections against ill health. In another new project they will be focusing on lithium mines, which are quite symbolic of the green transition. Overall, the next few years will be based on trying to influence policymakers and awareness-raising and are open to hearing about potential collaborations.

3.1.2.5. Malaysia

An industrial union federation made up of 70 affiliated unions from the mining sector, sees daily serious accidents at mining sites which are reported on their website. Therefore their primary focus is on the health and safety of the workers for mining workers in developing countries where more than 2.2 million workers are estimated to work in the mining industry. They are especially focused on ILO Convention number 176, which is the health and safety mining convention. This involves heavily promoting this ILO Convention and supporting our unions to organise mining workers, especially in developing countries. Another focus is engaging with important stakeholders, such as through work with the steering committee of the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA). This involves engaging with multinational companies who are engaged with this network on how to extend their company's due diligence in the mining and manufacturing supply chain. Have also engaged in a project from this year called the 'Battery Supply Chain' project, which involves engaging with multinational companies in the battery supply chain on how to exercise due diligence in the supply chain to protect workers' rights and occupational health and safety. They are also looking at how to improve the due diligence process in this particular operation.

3.1.2.6. SOMO – The Netherlands[14]

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[14] Irene Schipper, SOMO – Malaysia - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording- 49:37

One of SOMO's main mining projects is called 'Re-sourcing' - funded by Horizon2020. This is a large European project involving a consortium of 12 organisations focused on responsible sourcing. It looks at what responsible sourcing is exactly and what needs to be done to achieve responsible sourcing, as well as what governments need to do, what companies need to do, and also what the role of civil society should be. Within this project, three 'roadmaps' are being developed for three different sectors. The roadmaps will include all the steps required to achieve responsible sourcing by the three sectors, and the sectors that are chosen are the renewable energy sector, the mobility sector such as electric cars, and also the electronics sector. These roadmaps cover - in the shorter term - up to 2030, but also have additional sections up until 2050. Each sector also has a focus on different minerals. So for the electronics sector, they focus on 3TG and Mica.

For the mobility sector, there are other minerals relevant, such as cobalt, lithium, graphite, and nickel. The renewable sector is focused on traditional minerals like copper, but also rare earth concentrates and quartz. The project and roadmap to responsible mineral sourcing involved looking at current gaps, and highlighting them all as there are currently many diverse standards for mining. So the project initially outlined an overview of the many standards and initiatives and regulations that are currently in existence. It shows that many standards address the mining phase, but often overlap and that an international overarching framework is missing. This indicates that there is a need for harmonisation or mutual recognition of the different schemes. The current standards do not address the increasing demand for raw materials so there also needs to be more attention to environmental sustainability and resource efficiency in the standards - as this is lacking.

Looking at the legislation on '3TG' minerals, the US legislation and European legislation shows that the European legislation needs to be adapted because it is not good enough to focus only on certain minerals, or only to focus on '3TG' and not to also focus on specific regions or certain companies. So adaptation of the current regulation is needed. Looking at the voluntary schemes that are out there, there are a lot of industry standards but a gap in these industry standards is that they actually do not provide sufficient protection for the mining workers at the mining level. To improve voluntary schemes, more transparency regarding the implementation of the voluntary schemes is needed and they also need to widen the scope of due diligence. Downstream companies and brand companies also have to take responsibility for issues back to the mining level. Mapping showed that there is now too much reliance on third party auditing as an enforcement mechanism. So more ongoing monitoring is needed that goes beyond audits and due diligence activities, as well as a great need to make the audit report reports public. Currently, there is a lot of auditing being done, but none of them are accessible to civil society or trade unions. The involvement of trade unions and CSOs in the governance of the audit processes is also really needed.

3.1.2.7. Inkrispena - Indonesia[15]

Inkrispena are a Research Centre for crisis and alternative development studies and advocacy and a Research Institute in Indonesia. They work on mining sector issues, and have particularly focused on nickel and metal minerals for the last three or four years. They target nickel because

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[15] Wasi Gedi - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 1:48:52

Chinese government-linked companies have aggressively built several projects extracting nickel in the central area of Eastern Indonesia in this time. This has been in areas that are far from the reach of national news publications informing the public in the National Capital and other densely populated provinces. As such, most people do not know about what is going on in these mining locations and industrial areas for processing mining products.

One issue that is very prominent in these locations is the issue of labour and a key area of concern is that work accidents are not officially recorded and the number of accidents is high, based on reports from the unions. A second major issue is racism, because in the mining areas, there are two types of citizenship (national and Chinese). In Indonesia, there has been a long history of racism between Indonesian and Chinese ethnicities and the issue of union busting is also a live one. In this context, the focus over the next few years will be working on monitoring and capacity building trade unions, and working together with the National Labour Confederations to try and help them to connect local unions with national federations. There will also be a focus on advocacy, education, and funding for mining workers unions in those locations. Whilst the issue of mass expulsions of populations in mining areas is rarely heard of in comparison to dam projects and urban renewal projects, land grabbing by local mining companies with national affiliations in the mining and plantation sectors does occur and may even be a common occurrence. However, displacement caused by the mining sector is often indirect. For example, if you consider the seepage of oil from oil pipes which can lead to the contamination of drinking water. This sort of thing can also happen in nickel areas and as well as contamination of drinking water it can cause damage to agricultural land, causing families to leave their homes and land in the search for safer conditions elsewhere. In contrast to direct displacement caused by large infrastructures projects, this form of indirect displacement is less visible and rarely leads to formal resettlement operations. Therefore, research on displacements and resettlements resulting from the mining industry is an important area of need. Another issue relates to the pandemic, when production actually increased. However, many workers were laid off which meant the burden of work on the remaining nickel processing workers was increased to cover the work of those who were laid off. This included strict implementations of shifts and working groups, with workers given no free time to rest with their family.

3.1.2.8. Mexico

An issue in the mining sector in Mexico relates to corruption and drug trafficking organisations. Many of the resources are located in rural indigenous areas. There are reports of drug cartels creating insecurity in these areas through killings to effectively clear the area of inhabitants by scaring them away. Mining companies, who are around 70-80% Canadian companies, can then more easily access resources in these areas and pay taxes as low as 5% on their profits to corrupt federal authorities. There are large deposits of Lithium in Chihuahua and other areas so it will be important to follow developments as these areas are explored. There are parallels here to the situation in DRC where there are huge levels of corruption and essentially warfare going on.

3.1.2.9. Global Advocacy Forum – Latin America

The 1st of three Global Advocacy Forum events is due to take place in June 2022 in Santiago, Chile. This event welcomes Latin American stakeholders for an open dialogue on awareness and context for a globally agreed definition of Responsible Sourcing. Participants will have the opportunity to

discuss pressing issues at the regional level and create an interface with global actors and EU sectoral roadmaps for creating a global level playing field.

3.2. Manufacturing Presentation[16]

Covid-19, political changes in Asia, as well as flexibilisation of production, and increasing subcontracting, are all ongoing challenges in the manufacturing sector. At the micro level, factories are subcontracting to smaller factories in order to keep more profits and to avoid giving the workers in these factories their entitled rights, such as suitable wages and protections against chemical substances. This is happening in many different production countries, such as in Indonesia, where they have outsourced production into homes, creating even more precarious working conditions for workers there. These processes are also being consolidated across the globe. Prior to Covid-19, working conditions were bad, but Covid-19 and the changing political situation, as well as increasing flexibilisation of production, are all making the situation worse. Covid has driven stagnant wages and even lower wages than required for basic subsistence in some cases.

Many electronic workers receive a lower wage than the minimum wage but now need to spend more on sanitation products, PPE, tests, and vaccinations for themselves due to Covid. The burden of children's education traditionally falls more heavily on women, who are having to bear the costs associated with moving to online learning, such as new smartphones. There have also been 'no work no pay' policies in manufacturing with a positive Covid test result or a lack of tests available meaning some workers have been unable to enter the premises of factories and have then been considered as 'not working'. In terms of freedom of association, even though unions are even more needed and more significant since the pandemic began, there is low union density and a trend towards lower and lower union density. The declining union density is related to the difficulty of organising, often due to the increasing use of contract workers. Many electronics manufacturing companies have a no union policy and are afraid of the existence of unions in their suppliers or within their own company. But companies are failing to make modifications to make social distancing practicable and failing to protect workers from getting infected by Covid-19. The pandemic has also been used as an opportunity to replace permanent workers with contracting and outsourcing likely to become an even more widespread problem in manufacturing sites. A lack of training is also a concern and all of these issues have been aggravated by limits on assembly which have been imposed by governments. It will be important to monitor manufacturing companies for the use of hazardous chemicals in the upcoming years.

3.2.1. Current Organizational Approaches - Manufacturing

These sessions asked participants active in the field to consider two key questions:

1. What approach is your organisation taking to addressing the issues in manufacturing over the next 2-3 years and why are you taking this approach?

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[16] Dina, LIPS, Indonesia - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 58:47

2. What are the key opportunities for the Network to work together on collective activities over the next 2-3 years?

- What are key policy developments?

- What potential campaigns are there?

- What are the organising opportunities?

3.2.1.1 Hong Kong – VR project[17]

A collaborative project using Virtual Reality (VR) illustrated the experience of a worker on the production line for Apple in Shenzhen, China. It demonstrated some of the repetitive work, and the discrimination faced by female workers who have moved from rural areas to work in the city. Being born outside of the city means these workers do not get the same benefits as people from the city. This project seeks to shine a light on these workers and their experiences, including around their daily lives. The VR allows people to make choices and to learn more about workers along the way. The VR shows different aspects of life and through the choices the user makes, including difficult decisions such as choosing to take on more voluntary work and having to do longer hours on Saturday and work on Sunday in order to have enough money. Or to decide for the VR worker to have more time to do things they love, but then they won't have enough money to get by. So throughout the VR journey, users get to understand more of the difficult choices that workers have to make, and why most of them are not voluntary choices as the factories might suggest, leading to workers working such long hours. People can also experience things they may not know about, such as workers having to wear wireless bras as they go into the Foxconn factory as they have to go through electronic surveillance machines to make sure they have no electronics on them as factory management are worried that workers will steal the secrets of the factory.

At the end of the VR journey users are taken back to the mock up store that looks like an Apple Store and are asked to take action, which is to sign a petition for the living wage. Currently, the campaign is targeting Samsung, Apple & Google but it could be extended further. So far the campaign has had a soft launch and the app is available for free on the Google Play store but is still waiting to get approved by the Apple store. There is also a web version but this doesn't reflect the experience quite as well. All of this is free for anyone to use and the Network were encouraged to use this experience in future events, or to share it with wider networks, to help boost the impact. The call to action can also be adjusted to meet differing campaign priorities within different organisations and to target different electronic companies, for anyone interested in using the VR experience in a campaign. People interested in hosting an event can also get assistance to do so. Although it is available online, the physical experience is more immersive. This can be mailed out to people, alongside headsets and a variety of useful materials.

The idea is that these events will create an opportunity to talk about the living wage with people who do not understand it, as well as building empathy and solidarity across borders. AMRC suggested potential opportunities for collaboration on this project as they have also created some

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[17] Han Yan Hong Kong - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 58:47

documentary footage of worker experiences, filmed by workers themselves[18]. Other potential areas for collaboration that were suggested included supporting workers who have become sick at work, helping to ensure suitable compensation for people exposed to occupational diseases and in the area of chemical poisoning, or environmental exposure in the workplace. This is important as many deaths are linked to disease rather than accidents at work, especially in relation to chemical exposure during the production process. Gender based violence in the workplace was another area that could be explored more in the manufacturing sector.

3.2.1.2. MWAP - Philippines[19]

In the next two to three years MWAP's primary programme will be organising the unorganised workers in the manufacturing sectors that are part of the Alliance. This is crucial as less than 10% of the workers in these sectors are organised in unions. Therefore, organising workers to build power to realise their demands for better wages, secure jobs, and safe and human working conditions will be essential. MWAP are planning to conduct training of organisers, as well as to undertake corporate research to enable them to develop a strategic target for organising and a strategic plan in organising in the face of the increasing complexity of global capital. For that it is vital to learn more about the companies and the industries they are organising within. As the pandemic continues, they will carry on the programme to mainstream OSH in the workplace and in their unions, and use their IT strategy to build more contacts and organise more workers. They have also been involved in workers summits, particularly for electronics and in mining and shipbuilding as a means to deepen understanding of the common issues faced by workers in these industries. They are also considering developing an industry standard to be used as a starting point to unite the workers along the industrial line.

Suggestions for opportunities for the Network to work together included:

- GE to organise an organising workshop series where members can share knowledge about their organising experiences, their strategies and the companies that they are organising in. As the Network has people organising in countries along the electronic supply chains, it could be useful for GE to organise an organising workshop.

- GE facilitating these meetings or workshops and developing a map of where and in which companies unions or worker organisation exists, as this would be helpful for MWAP's organising and campaigning strategies.

- GE to hold webinars on supply chains and the whole lifecycle of electronics from mining onwards.

- GE to support cascading activities of these webinars, to help disseminate the knowledge to union members on the ground involved in activities that produce knowledge and to provide resources on the just transition, especially in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and shift to renewable energy. This will also be particularly useful because this

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18 Unsure, AMRC- Hong Kong - - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 1:26:59
19 Julius - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 1:20:52

will impact workers as well as the products that are being produced and there is currently only a general understanding of these topics.

- GE could support local research on this topic and hold our international regional summit to discuss this topic.

- Programmes and activities promoting OSH in the electronic supply chain remain very important so it would be good to conduct regional activities about this, such as the sharing of how it has been used as a campaign or organising strategy - and supporting grassroots activities on OSH in the electronics sector.

Planned future activities this year, include:

- The National Electronics workers Summit;

- Electronics industry mapping through the corporate research workshop training;

- Holding a mining workers workshop depending on the Covid and security situation, and;

- The continuation of the OSH training module project.

3.2.1.4. CBBRC - The Philippines[20]

The 4 key areas for this independent institution focused on research and advocacy work for workers in the Philippines are:

- To research the effects of the pandemic on contractual workers, particularly those working in construction;

- To look at the situation of manufacturing workers in the electronics industry in the Special Economic Zones (including updating previous research before considering the situation inside the SEZs);

- Continuing the campaign to end labour flexibilisation or contractualisation and for the national minimum wage, and;

- Campaigning to support pro-labour rights leaders in the Philippine's national elections which are coming up in May 2022. The campaign period has already started. In line with that.

3.2.1.5. CTUHR – The Philippines[21]

A challenge in the Philippines, which is the second largest producer of nickel, which is a requirement for batteries for cell phones, vehicles, and when thinking about a just transition, is that awareness amongst mining workers of the issue of the environment is low. To overcome this, CTUHR have started workshops with mining workers which could be very important in terms of the struggle for climate justice. A major challenge in the Philippines is that it is now highly militarised, making it difficult to do research. The companies involved are highly protected because foreign company investments are highly favoured by the government. It would be useful

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[20] Frances Martinez - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 1:31:31
[21] Daisy Arago, CTUHR, The Philippines - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 1:43:07

for the Network to concentrate on strategies to overcome these difficulties when it comes to involving workers, and having workers lead on a just transition. This could involve GE facilitating a workshop for those involved in mining, perhaps as a webinar, to help workers build confidence amongst themselves, particularly in the context where they are scared as a result of being severely harassed. But it is vital to have workers involved in any discussion about a just transition because you cannot discuss and bring about the just transition unless and until the workers know about climate change. This is particularly important when trying to get the message across in terms of the energy transition, when in certain sectors many workers may lose their jobs - with implications for their families.

3.2.1.6. CIVIDEP - India[22]

Plans for the next 2-3 years will take place under two broad umbrella themes:

1. Labour rights

2. Corporate conduct

In India, the pandemic has also exacerbated many existing issues in the supply chain. In particular, there is increasing gender disparity in the sector. Whilst more women are being hired into the workplace, supervision on the shop floor is male dominated and there are limited avenues available to women to raise any grievances. As these workers are working in EPZs, the region gets exempted from various domestic and international labour laws and grievance redressal mechanisms are very poor. There is low density unionisation and an increasing proportion of contract workers and a growing expectation that forthcoming industrial relations policy will make the situation even worse for contract workers. So changing this will be a focus over the next few years and some of the possible solutions being looked at include collectivism and networking with unions separately, though there is some hesitancy. For this to be successful some bottom-up advocacy and pressure is needed. Research generating objective details from the sector will be important and two projects planned are looking into precarious working conditions of contract labourers in the sector. Other work includes educating and empowering workers through weekly study circles and networking with a variety of CSOs to try and facilitate and create networks to build the consensus among workers and to empower them. Opportunities collectively as a network might include a multi stakeholder initiative or multi stakeholder action towards facilitating freedom of association and collective bargaining, and working together towards creating pressure to ensure the 87 and 98 conventions are ratified in India.

3.2.1.7. Malaysia

US sanctions against forced labour have started to make the situation of manufacturing workers in Malaysia move in the right direction. Many oppressive laws have had to be amended, such as the Industrial Relations part, which was looked at last year. Next week, there will also be a debate on the Employment Act and our suggestions on which part of the Act that need to be amended have been put forward. The main issues put forward were related to the contract system, including the tripartite relationship and needing to abolish agents or agency workers as all work of a permanent nature should be permanent. These recommendations and relevant evidence has

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[22] Gokhul, CIVIDEP, India - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 1:35:49

been passed to the government, and meetings with the minister so far have seemed to be positive. This means Malaysia will be one of the countries where there will be no contract workers if it comes through, other than migrant workers on fixed term contracts. However, for migrant workers as well, this will also be direct employment, with no middlemen as third-party contracts for migrant workers have been stopped after a decade long fight. In terms of unionisation it hoped that within 3 months, by March 2022, the government will fulfil its assurances that they will remove all oppressive labour legislation against organising and unionising. This will mean that Malaysia moves from there being one union per industry to a multiplicity of trade unions and hopefully that the competition for trade unions and the quality of trade unions will improve. It will also remove barriers for workers in different industries to join any union. This openness will hopefully make it easier to organise workers in sectors which are largely unorganized and will be a big step if this comes in in March, when the bill is going to be presented to Parliament. At the moment, this looks good on paper, but on the other side of it, there are fewer people available to do this work compared to previous generations, with fewer takers for the work.

3.2.1.8. CEREAL[23]

Cereal focuses their work on Jalisco and in the border with the United States. The pandemic has hindered the workers' ability to meet and organize. Another obstacle for workers are the well-known Employer Protection Contracts (contratos de protection patronal), where workers don't really meet and don't have collective bargaining rights. Such contracts are meant to protect the employers rather than the workers. Workers' health has also been negatively affected by the pandemic. Most vulnerable workers such as women, sick and old people were dismissed or their salaries reduced. Companies didn't stopped operations during the pandemic. In some companies, workers' salaries were reduced to the minimum legal wage. Many workers extra benefits were suspended. In many cases workers under the employer protection agreements don't even know they are part of a union.

CEREAL has been giving workshops to workers on toxic exposure to chemicals. Workers are not organized and don't have the knowledge and information on hazards and on the necessary protection equipment. In solder, lead has been substituted with silver but there are not enough health protection measures and equipment. Many companies don't have OHS committees with representation from the workforce. And the authorities don't have the inspection capacity. The federal government hasn't invested in having more inspectors. In Jalisco there are only approximately 65-70 inspectors while there are more than 360,000 companies. This means that they can inspect companies only every 5 years. Furthermore, in practice companies often certify themselves. In CEREAL's workshops they focus on raising awareness on the responsibility of the State and of businesses with regard to the health and safety or workers as well as the role of unions.

David Faust added that in Mexico there is a very low unionization rate and from those workers that are unionized around 80 % are under employer protection contracts.

3.3. Circular Economy Issues & Initiatives

These sessions looked at end of life recycling and circular economy issues, before moving on to a strategy discussion.

3.3.1. Circular Economy Presentation[24]

The presentation introduced ideas in relation to 'end of life', 'recycling', and the 'circular economy', which all relate to the increasing amount of electronic waste and what to do with it. Worldwide, there were 53.6 million tonnes of electronic waste generated in 2019, which is equal in weight to 350 cruise ships. According to E-waste Monitor, which undertook a large study, just 17% of this waste was properly collected and recycled, leaving more than 80% which either ends up in the normal waste or in mixed waste with metal or plastic waste. Although this means they are partly recycled, many of the valid materials are lost, and other materials are not decontaminated. This means there is a huge loss of secondary raw materials. This report also sought to estimate how much e-waste was illegally exported, and estimated this at between 7% to 20%. However, it is difficult to estimate this because it is illegal to export this form of waste. Even though The Basel Convention bans the export of toxic waste from OECD to non-OECD countries, this electronic waste has still been exported, sometimes under the guise of being for second-hand reuse. It is then either traded again, if it is usable. But the most part, which is not usable, is dismantled, typically on informal recycling sites or electronic waste hubs. This is a difficult working environment for the recycling workers there who may get cuts from the glass or be exposed to toxic fumes when e-waste is dismantled. For example, people may burn plastic in order to get to the precious metals like copper. This is dangerous for their health and also for nearby water bodies. It also releases the toxic aerosol materials that are included in some electronic components.

The trajectory of e-waste is not restricted to movement from the Global North to Global South as there is also an intra-regional trade of e-waste. Reports from journalists from Ghana, Nigeria, India, and China show that the impacts of this trade are very diverse. The situation is also changing due to changing regulation. For example, China banned the import of waste in 2018 and has now become a net exporter of electronic waste to Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia. Trajectories are changing, but they are all ultimately driven by companies who want to increase profits. As a result, companies continue to be in a cycle of releasing new models. These models are difficult to repair and designed to have a short lifespan, which leads to the large amount of e-waste. In some areas, updates are not always available for a long time, and spare parts are difficult to obtain and expensive. This creates a market for continuing the export of e-waste and in shipping e-waste, as big profits can be made.

Alongside this, there is not enough international control, especially in the harbours, as there are not enough people to control all of the shipping containers. Combatting this illegal e-waste trafficking will mean more controls or more funding for controls in the harbours alongside increased recycling facilities everywhere in the world. It also needs to include the collection of electronic gadgets so that they are directed towards official recycling and then, in the long term, looking at reducing the amount of new electronic gadgets that are produced and are bought. This

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[24] Andreas Mueller, Sudwind - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 2:06:49

means starting again at the beginning of the design of the gadget and thinking about how to make companies produce long lasting products that are repairable, can be updated, and have spare parts available. If something is designed to be repairable or recyclable; - as well as creating less e-waste, there will be less new products overall, and with less new products, there is also less need for mining.

3.3.1.1. Restart Project - UK[25]

This London, UK based charity seeks to fix societal relationships with electronics by looking at consumption and helping people make the most of the products they already have. They also increasingly campaign on the 'right to repair', with a focus on legislation at both the UK and European levels. So their primary focus is on designing ways to require manufacturers to make products that are more repairable and with longer term support for things like spare parts, software, and security updates. 'Design for repairability' also translates into design for recyclability and better access for everyone, universally, to things like repair manuals as well as to the necessary components.

In 2021, perceptions are changing fast in support of this topic, with a UK poll finding over 80% of the population wanting the government to take direct action requiring manufacturers to make products that last longer and that are more repairable. More people are becoming aware about things such as premature or planned obsolescence, so Restart are therefore focusing efforts on pushing for EU-wide regulations. Already there have been some successes with new regulation on white goods, such as washing machines, fridges, and dishwashers and other items such as televisions requiring an improvement in the way products are designed and longer term support for these products. However, this legislation remains imperfect and has many limitations so an important strategy for the future is to raise the voices of repair cafes and other similar initiatives globally. Another issue with the current legislation is that it does not cover a lot of the electronics products being discussed. However, the Restart project have submitted draft legislation at the European level to establish repairability requirements for smartphones and tablets. There will be a push to complete this legislation by 2022 but there is also a risk that it will not come into effect for at least another two years after that. Whilst there is already pushback from industry, there is an awareness that products should be supported for a much longer time.

A key target issue that has not been sufficiently tackled yet is the role that software plays in enabling or blocking the longevity of products. This is a practice that Apple in particular has been caught implementing for years. Recently, companies have also started to prevent repair workers from reusing parts that might have been harvested from no longer functioning devices or using third party parts to perform a repair. There is also the potential risk that the process to decide how the 'right to repair' is established might lead to manufacturers having full control over the kind of repairs and the kind of parts that can be used. This could be a very wasteful approach and could in fact undermine the efforts of trying to get products repaired and/or designed for more repairability. There are also increasing concerns around battery replaceability in devices and how this is becoming increasingly complex, difficult, and inaccessible. The Restart Project have asked the EU to make user replaceable batteries the norm in all consumer products but it will be a challenge to make this happen. Another issue that is not currently in scope but is an opportunity

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[25] Ugo, Restart Project - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 2:14:36

for collaboration is light electrical vehicles (e.g. scooters, E bikes, etc.). Increasingly, such products use software locks designed to make it hard to reuse the product - even with another battery. This is a huge challenge given the multiplication of these new modes of transport, but also fertile ground to connect the work that GoodElectronics is going to be doing with the new focus on batteries. A potential strategy to push for changes in these areas is also to bring a coalition of voices together from across the world who are calling for more circular approaches and for the right to repair. This is already happening under the banner of repair.eu, with many organisations present already involved but others also welcome to join. Currently this is targeting European-based organisations but the coalition are also aware of emerging voices globally who are making the connection between unsustainable overconsumption due to the way products are made and the scarcity that this creates, particularly in the Global South, where many people might not have sufficient access to the products that they need. Often, this is due to the way products are manufactured. So an important strategy will be to bring these voices together. However, it will also be important to consider what happens if the consumption of products is slowed. For example, this will mean that products last longer and pressure may be reduced on mining and other negative impacts on the planet. Alongside this, there will likely be less opportunities for those that represent the rights of people manufacturing these products. As such a key challenge will be to come up with a joint position that puts people and planet at the centre, whilst also reflecting the needs for good working conditions for those that are making the products. This might include coming up with a way to reduce the impact whilst also producing better salaries and working conditions for everyone. So it would be useful for the network to have conversations about these features of producing less.

3.3.1.2. Austria

There are windows of opportunities in Europe nationally and at the EU level. For example, with the EU Circular Economy Strategy. At the national level in Austria NGOs are seeking to influence policy together with trade unions. So having networks is useful because of the connections between mining, end-of-life, and waste production, as well as recycling and how much new mining has to be done. So thanks to being part of a network it is possible to use the knowledge that is shared in these networks to influence the national or EU level policies.

3.3.1.3. Mexico

On opportunities for GE, CEREAL finds it important that the network raise awareness internationally about their local findings and experiences. They also find very valuable to hear from other organizations around the world on what works for them to organize and to support workers. Particularly they find important to learn about strategies on countries with repressive conditions.

3.3.2. Circular Economy Issues

Many countries around the world are experiencing increases in E-waste, which includes imported waste but also local E-waste. For example, recent studies have shown how much E-waste is actually being domestically generated in Africa and in Asia, for example. This relates to more people using the electronics and, like everywhere else, these electronics are ending up in the bin.

However, this highlights that the problem is that there are no recycling facilities and that when recycling is done with these dangerous metals the issues of burning and crushing remain a big problem. Consumption in the Global South is likely to keep increasing, so a Just Transition could be reflected in a balance between the reduction in over-consumption in the Global North, which may not necessarily lead to a reduction in manufacturing jobs in the short-term.

Journalists and researchers are reporting increasing levels of E-waste such as solar panels or batteries for solar energy and that the amount of E-waste is growing rapidly. This is going to become an important consideration due to the mobility transition in terms of electric vehicles and the energy transition more generally. This is on top of smartphones, TVs, refrigerators, and all these things. So the energy transition will influence this problem as we are already seeing first generation solar panels arriving on recycling sites. If the Network wants to tell this story and make a campaign about the energy transition, or the mobility transition, then this will be important to combat climate change. It is really important to think about what happens with all these renewable energy sources at the end of life.

4. Network strategy discussion: A focus on tactics

As it has been 4 years since the Network has met in person and globally, these meetings sought to bring people together to catch up, hear from each other, and to collectively develop ideas to strengthen collaboration across the Network and to feed into the Annual Plan for 2022. This included thinking about how the Network wants its staff Coordinators to focus their time in the next few years, what should be prioritised, and how the Coordinator can facilitate improved collective network organising, moving forward[26].

4.1. Funding Situation

Funding received as part of the Global Battery Supply Chains project has been secured for the next three years. Within this there is a budget to have a full-time Regional Coordinator and a new part-time International Coordinator, Camiel Donicie, who starts in this capacity at the beginning of 2022. As well as existing project commitments to the donor, there is still some space for the wider Network to set goals in terms of communication, advocacy, institutional strengthening, and synergy with allies and the Project. The funding received for the battery project allows for a limited budget for activities such as strategizing workshops, engaging relevant stakeholders, issuing public statements, letters, petitions to advocacy meetings, and for a face to face global meeting of GoodElectronics in 2023. However, larger scale activities will require additional fundraising.

4.2. Thanks to the Regional Coordinator

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[26] Alejandro Gonzalez - (Day 1B (repeat session for members who could not get to Day 1)

The Steering Committee gave thanks on behalf of the entire Network for the work the Regional Coordinator has done since taking on the role and wished her well for the future as she is moving to a period of study. Rochelle Porras from the Philippines has been hired as the new Regional Coordinator as of March 2022.

4.3. Suggestions for the Network to prioritise in 2022

In these sessions members of the Network were asked to consider key opportunities to organise and collectively use resources globally to support the Network's key areas of work outlined over the course of the conference. This included focusing on 2022 and thinking about:

1. What to prioritise;

2. Opportunities for actions and solidarity;

3. Key strategies, both internally and externally, and;

4. Anything to support the development of the 2022 Annual Plan.

Table 3 Outline of Suggestions for the Network in 2022

Suggestion	Theme	Comments & Suggestions
Workshops	Mining	As well as the full Network meetup, it was suggested that a sub-regional meetup in Africa, Asia, or Latin America focusing on the mining environment[27]. This would be useful to develop a clear position of how to work together towards a just transition. For example, it could also: ● Consider the context of switching to e-vehicles and issues in relation to batteries, recycling, dumping; ● Consider environmental impacts; ● Listen to the voices and research from the mining sector, and; - Map the sector to prepare suitable campaigns. ● Get involved in activities designed to ensure organisations are all on the same page and potentially echoing the same language. This could include meetings/sharing details to share information about mining activities and energy transition work (e.g. through the mining and energy transition list, coalition calls, etc.)[28]. ● GE could support a webinar focusing on the topic of a just transition in relation to mining. This could include thinking

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[27] Daisy Arago, CTUHR, the Phillipines - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 2:33:13

		about the environmental impact of mining, challenges of the climate crisis, and supply chain issues. It could also consider how to campaign in the context of highly repressive environments commonly associated with mining[29].
	Manufacturing	- GE could organise an organising workshop series where members can share knowledge about their organising experiences, their strategies, and the companies that they are organising in[30]. - Conduct regional activities promoting OSH, such as how it has been used as a campaign or organising strategy and supporting grassroots activities on OSH in the electronics sector[31]. - GE could facilitate a confidence building workshop/webinar for those involved in mining in areas where the risk of repression is high[32]. - Important to share successes at national/international levels in order to show that there are possible solutions and there are organisations upholding Human Rights successfully as this can be highly motivational[33].
	Battery Project	- Strategy workshops to create a clear vision on how to manage a just transition when it comes to reducing manufacturing and mining without losing jobs and whilst improving conditions[34]. - Important to convene people from across the supply chain and from different geographies[35]. - GE could hold webinars on supply chains and the whole lifecycle of electronics from mining onwards and support cascading activities of these webinars [36].

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[34] Alejandro Gonzalez - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 2:49:12

	Steering Committee	- It will be important to involve new people and organisations in the Steering Committee and consider overlap and synergies with other networks[37]. - Important to broaden scope of the network and have more organizations working in the mining sector, E-waste, Automotive, and battery production[38].
Training	Translated resources	Useful to translate GE resources into more languages of workers from the Global South as language can be a barrier[39].
Legislation/ Campaigns	End-of-Life producer responsibility	- Manufacturers should be responsible for products when they reach end of life. For example, companies that produce a product should dismantle and recycle the product. This could help to prevent dumping of precious or hazardous materials. So it would be useful to consider systems and compulsory legislation that could promote this and prevent companies from externalising the problem to boost their own profits[40]. - Many countries already have registrations for producer responsibility, such as for smartphones which telephone companies may be required to properly recycle. However, if previous report have found that only 20% of the product ends up being properly recycled and 80% is illegally recycled for secondary use, the problem is exported to developing countries where legislation may not be in place[41].
	Manufacturing responsibility	- Rather than extended producer responsibility, a bigger push could focus on issues at the pre-export stage. For example, a focus could be a push to require all products on the market to meet some basic standards and requirements. This could be more effective if end-of-life legislation is hard to implement[42]. - Important to monitor manufacturing companies for the use of 9 hazardous chemicals in the upcoming years, as Apple Dell and HP have committed to a Zero exposure programme covering such priority chemicals.[43].

[40] Bruno Pereira, EIEU, Malaysia - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 2:35:57
[41] Charles Hector, Malaysia - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 2:37:38
[42] Ugo , Restart Project - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 2:41:30

		• Support campaigns for workers who have become sick at work, helping to ensure suitable compensation for people exposed to occupational diseases and in the area of chemical poisoning, or environmental exposure in the workplace[44]. • Support campaigns to end labour flexibilisation or contractualisation and for the national minimum wage[45]. • Multi-stakeholder action towards facilitating freedom of association and collective bargaining (e.g. to ensure 87 and 98 conventions are ratified in India)[46].
	Mining	• Need to focus on human rights in the mining sector, particularly as mineral use for electric cars is going to be a major issue in the next 5 years[47]. • Important to focus on Occupational Health and Safety in mining[48]. • Scope of audits and due diligence needs to be widened to consider mining[49].
	Reducing Consumption	• Focus on reduce, reuse, recycle – to reduce overall mineral use in absolute terms. Also need to look at campaigns for transformation of consumption and production patterns that go beyond technological fixes[50].
Organising	Informal Workers	• Need to consider how to support NGOs to reach out to and organise informal workers. It would be useful to focus on the African continent, and especially Nigeria and Ghana, where the informal workforce is large. If organisations cannot reach informal workers, it is not possible to provide training on things like exercising their workers' rights, occupational health and safety training, etc.[51].

[51] Charles Hector, Malaysia - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 2:40:42

	Supply chain	- Need to support organizing efforts across the battery supply chain bringing together workers from different sectors, such as electronics, automotive, energy, and mining[52]. - Engage with multinational companies in the battery supply chain on how to exercise due diligence in the supply chain to protect workers' rights and occupational health and safety[53]. - Find ways to encourage corporations to undertake their own supply chain mapping[54]. - Need to bring together wide variety of perspectives, from different geographies, and diversity of opinion which is an enormous challenge[55].
	Mining	- GoodElectronics should get involved in direct work in Congo and areas where minerals are being mined and have the biggest impact on communities. - Need strategy to overcome low union density in mining areas. It is also challenging to organise in mining areas for other reasons. For example, in Mexico and DRC where corruption and violence levels are high it increases the risk of harm to people organizing in these areas and poses challenges for freedom of association[56].
	Network expansion	Need to expand the network with organisations focusing on mining, e-waste, and in the automotive industry[57].
	Relevant stakeholders	- Engage with relevant companies, industrial alliances, civil society groups, and trades unions[58]. - Useful to bring more organisations into the Battery Alliance
Research	Informal Workers	Network to look into and share positive examples of organisations working with informal workers around the world and also highlighting some of the important work done by informal workers. Often their work is criminalised or

		demonised, but it is important to consider the other side of the story for these workers[59].
	Mining	• Network should map out existing research and activities in relation to mining as there are many different initiatives already taking place and that have already taken place. Mapping should include people working on the ground and at the policy level, inside and outside of the network. It will be useful to see who is working on what, what already exists, and to consult with these organisations to see what role the Network can play and to identify any potential gaps. This will help to avoid duplication and maximise efficiency in resource use[60]. • Important to map mine ownership in order to understand suitable strategies of resistance in the face of trade policies that may be used against governments and communities[61]. • Need to encourage research and development on alternatives to certain minerals currently being used[62]. • Research on direct/indirect displacements and resettlements resulting from the mining industry is an important area of need[63].
	Manufacturing	• Called for support on research and grassroots organising Gender based violence in the workplace is an area that could be explored more in the manufacturing sector[64]. • GE to map where and in which companies unions or worker organisation exists[65]. • Look at the situation of manufacturing workers in the electronics industry in the Special Economic Zones[66].

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[59] Ugo , Restart Project - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 2:41:30
[60] Alejandro Gonzalez - Day 2A GMT20211209-064532_Recording 2:44:10

5. Conclusion

The GoodElectronics Global Annual Meeting brought together members from across the Network to discuss key challenges faced by member organizations and the workers they represent in relation to the pandemic and changes in the political landscape. There was a particular focus on the shrinking of civic space, issues in both mining and manufacturing, and thinking about the circular economy in terms of the production of electronic goods. Strategy planning and dynamic discussion took place on each of these areas considering how to support workers across industries, such as mining, electronics, automotive, and energy sectors, and along the entire supply chain. Across each of these areas challenges, successes, and potential opportunities were discussed and many contributions were made on what the Network should focus its attention on for the next 2-3 years (these are summarized above in Table 3). Throughout the event, ideas for strategies and tactics that the Network as a whole should use were discussed. The meeting also presented an opportunity to introduce a new project that will run from 2022-2024, that will promote human rights and accountability along the global battery supply chain.

Colophon

The GoodElectronics Network accommodates networks, organisations and individuals that are concerned about human rights, including labour rights, and sustainability issues in the global electronics supply chain, including but not limited to trade unions, grass roots organisations, campaigning and research organisations, academia, and activists. The Network has a strict civil society-only profile.