



Rethinking Value Chains Conference

17-18 October 2023

La Bergerie de Villarceaux, France

SUMMARY REPORT

Participants: Christophe Alliot and Alice Gissinger (Le Basic), Florence Palpacuer (University of Montpellier), Julie Maisonhaute (Commerce Équitable France), Kate Sullivan and Peter Pawlicki (Electronics Watch), Luise Schroter (Corporate Justice Coalition), Maelys Orellana (Action Aid France), Cara Flowers (Traffic), Claudia Neubauer (FPH), Alistair Smith and Anna Cooper (Banana Link), Olivier Roy and Adonis Febe (ReAct), Jorge Conesa (Fair Trade Advocacy Office)

SESSION 1: Reterritorialising value chains: an academic-activist dialogue

Alistair Smith (Banana Link) and Florence Palpacuer (Rethinking Global Value Chains)

The above-titled jointly organised workshop between the two networks RGVC (Rethinking Global Value Chains) and RVC (Rethinking Value Chains) was held on October 16th at FPH in Paris. The hybrid conference was attended in person by 15 representatives from civil society organisations and academic institutions, with another 30 participants online. More information can be found on the RGVC website: <https://rgvc.org/>

The following draft paper was shared and discussed: **'From deglobalization to reterritorialization: a critical Polanyian perspective on Global Value Chains (GVC's) and their countermovements'** by Clara ROUSSEY, Florence PALPACUER, Emmanuelle CHEYNS.

The Abstract is available [here](#). The full paper, commissioned by RVC, is currently available internally to members on request, and will be published in 2024)

DISCUSSION & IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP

Florence, Montpellier University – RVC organisations working locally have a 'territorial' perspective, working with various local actors, local food politics and policy, local institutions. It is an embedded approach to change that prioritises the protection of local chains from wider global shocks that have, and will, continue to disrupt value chains at all levels. The international-focused organisations have another approach, engaging with producers locally in the global south, and making that link visible to consumers in the North. The international actors focus often on advocacy and dialogue with national states, increasing their knowledge and political engagement on GVC issues to better protect local workers and the environment. The ReAct reterritorialisation approach is very innovative, through empowering local workers and their local territories and analysing the value chains (and their local territories) with the most leverage for impact.

Claudia, FPH - The donut theory (a visual framework developed by British economist Kate Raworth to analyse sustainable development based on social and planetary boundaries) is very relevant to our discussions. Public authorities - like Amsterdam, Brussels, Geneva – are working on a territorialised 'donut' via analysis of the local social floor. Left-wing cities are involved to develop plans for the ecological transition of the city. How does this cross over with our work?

Christophe, BASIC – How to develop our territorial strategy to target the right place in the chain? Covid highlighted the complete dependence on GVC's. Local authorities have a responsibility to ensure local food security, but it is the private actors that have the control. Only 2% of the total French alimentation system concerns public authority supply and the chains are not the same, so there is no spill-over impact when influencing public food supply chains. You can change public procurement on food, but this will never impact on the actions of supermarkets.

A local Director of Leclerc supermarket has power over at least a third of the produce on their shelves, they can make choices locally to promote local supply. The 'made in Brittany' campaign has resulted in almost 10% of supermarket products coming from Brittany suppliers, but the local value chain structure is too complicated to ensure 100% local supply. Supermarket legal teams on a national level forbid their local representatives to get involved in these discussions – we came up against this barrier regularly in cocoa.

Resilience and sustainability strategy cannot focus purely on local production, we need to maintain cooperation to balance the metabolism of chains, based on democratic processes and decisions. How can we reorientate private sector responsibility towards a territory? Need to re-construct the links between supply chains and the local territory.

Florence, Montpellier Uni – we should also focus on the role of the local citizens in making change. The local farmers are at the end of the chain, as well as the producers in the south. We need to make the solidarity link to de-silo the debate. React are working on that link through community organising and solidarity.

SPECIFIC ACTION POINTS FOR RVC

Florence, Montpellier Uni – Once the paper has been published, we could further develop this research by analysing the articulation between the diverse actors within the RVC collective, in particular those with similar values (such as Fairtrade, Organic and local agricultural movements), and focus our strategy on how to better support each other's struggles.

Jorge, FTAO - Continue to share RGVC academic papers with RVC members, and potentially organise webinars to share results of key research topics.

Cara, Traffic - Share the RGVC BASIC presentation with RVC members and use as an example to stimulate debate and strategy on how to overcome the typical binary approach to social and environmental issues (that are being siloed at international, and hence local, level with very negative effects).

Cara, Traffic - Include in future discussions the issue of territorialisation and indigenous issues, recognising and protecting local knowledge in value chains, sharing learning from local struggles, ensuring the respect of local cultural issues and ensure the de-colonization of supply chains

Kent, ReAct – The leverage public actors can have is important, we need to share experiences on this. ReAct will share information on historic actions with the Oregon state to promote local construction projects in wood rather than concrete. It involved struggles against the big private sector influences, and highlighted the role the state were able to play a role at local level.

Alistair – The RVC collective should discuss with BASIC the proposal to produce a note on territorial strategy, to inform the discussions and activities of RVC members

SESSION 2: Distribution of value in the electronic goods supply chain

Peter Pawlicki (Electronics Watch) - [Presentation slides available here](#)

The history – IBM in the 1960's made some of the key steps in electronic hardware development. They were doing everything, the design, manufacturing, assembly, operating systems – a vertically integrated industry from ideas to sale. There was a huge shift in the 1980's, towards horizontally organised industries where every company focuses on just one part, e.g., Microsoft on software, Apple on marketing, companies doing just micro-chips, sound cards etc – specialisation, with companies focusing on smaller and smaller tasks.

Production networks - Electronics is not best termed as a 'supply chain' – there are brand companies, with first tier and second tier suppliers (commonly Chinese), with some direct contract relationships but the links are not very clear and easy to map. The power structure is still organised by the brand company, but suppliers have more or less power, measured by the money they can make and the extent to which they define the standards. The price of products can change very quickly so companies also shift supply very quickly.

Geographies – companies have very different geographical structures, with different impacts on labour costs and their ability to keep them low. Some factories have more than 10,000 workers – in China there is at least 10 of these – as its cheaper to have everything in one place

Complex supply chains make it very difficult to assess the distribution of value along the chain – for apple smartphone 58% of value goes directly to Apple (see presentation slides for full breakdown of value and of profit margins along the chain). Even for the Fairphone 4, the supply chain is still very complex, with components produced in multiple factories.

Profit margins show the indication of value along the chain. Manufacturers have approx. 2% profit margins but are employing thousands of workers in the factories. Higher up the chains the actors have profit margins of 30% to 60%, e.g., chemical suppliers. It's not just the brand company that capture the value, but also other (mainly Asian) companies focused on marketing, engineers, technological innovation.

Manufacturing always has been based on low wages, back from days of Silicon Valley. In the 80s, worker coalitions were successful in striking and struggles for decent work. So successful that the industry moved out of silicon valley. And industry has been heavily anti-union ever since, and based on the mass exploitation of workers: 60 hours per week (which is even against labour laws in China); minimum wage; OHS issues related to toxic chemicals used in the process

DISCUSSION & IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP

Christophe, BASIC - Profit margins and value creation is a key issue. High profit margins are often linked to image capacity, Apple is totally different from the others due to their branding. We see the same difference in textiles, Nike and Adidas have 30% profit margins, but Zara more like 5%. Shareholders expect to maximise profit margins.

Peter, EW - Asian company focus is not so much on profit margins but on market share. The huge companies like Foxconn compensate their small margins with huge volumes. There is an economic upgrading for these companies and countries, but the social upgrading is less obvious – people are doing the same jobs in Taiwan and the US but wages and conditions are very different. Social upgrading is not keeping up in southern countries. Labour laws have been diluted by Foxconn pressure in India, so the full social potential of value capture is not seen by workers. Wages in the sector are approximately half a living wage, but there is no real discussion about it, except amongst

some public buyers. We lack other organisations working on these issues in this sector. We need a bigger push on living wage dialogue and impacts on costs along the chain.

Katy, EW - We have engaged in dialogue on living wages with brands, suppliers and global trade unions, but getting the brands to the table is almost impossible, so with the brands we have moved to broader issues to avoid directly discussing LW implementation. The industry association is reviewing their Code of Practice so we have been engaged to see if living wage could be integrated, and then therefore audited against – we have found out that the issue will not be included so we need to re-engage in dialogue and find another approach.

Alice, BASIC - **Distribution of value in the Mica Value chain** - The Responsible Mining Initiative requested BASIC to map the actors involved in the Mica chain, analyse the distribution of value in the chain and assess the extent to which the payment of living wages would be possible. We studied the two main origins of Mica - India and Madagascar.

The main aim of the study is to identify who has the leverage and profit capacity to fund a living wage along the chain. BASIC have presented 3 scenarios to explore options of improving remuneration for mica workers with accompanying information on the impact at different stages along the chain(s). In all scenarios, the impact on price is less than 0.01% - a key information to encourage industry players to take concrete action to redistribute value and pay decent wages to workers

The output of the study, and specific information on the potential redistribution of value, is shared via an open online platform: <https://micavaluechain.lebasic.com/>

SPECIFIC ACTION POINTS FOR RVC

- Collaborate with Electronics Watch to share strategy on living wages and explore how organisations working on living wages in diverse sectors can support each other to advance on this issue, including learning from the BASIC Mica study.

SESSION 3: Policy session on Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence

Luise Schroter (Corporate Justice Coalition) – Full presentation available on request

Luise, CJC – Advances on the UK due diligence law is limited in the current political context. In the next UK elections, expected for late 2024, a Labour party majority or coalition with small parties (such as LibDems and SNP) would work in our favour as Labour wants to assess the best way to prevent environmental harms, modern slavery and human and labour rights abuses in supply chains. LibDem and SNP MPs are supportive of a new law. UK businesses, including the British Retail Consortium, Tesco and Asos, and investors representing over £4.5 trillion in assets under management also support a new law.

CJC, together with 37 other civil society organisations, calls for a 'Business, Human Rights and Environment Act' modelled on the UK Bribery Act. This proposal goes beyond the EU CSDDD. Liability occurs based on a failure to prevent harm (a duty of result) rather than a failure to conduct due diligence (duty of process). The burden of proof is on the business to show that all reasonable steps were taken to prevent the harm from happening. This will force businesses to take their obligations seriously rather than as a mere box-ticking exercise.

Ideally, the new law will refer to all sectors, including finance and the public sector. But if the EU excludes the financial sector, there will be strong opposition for inclusion of the finance sector in a UK law.

CJC is working on a model law which includes feedback by legal experts, civil society and soon Global South consultation.

DISCUSSION & IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP

Luise, CJC - The education system mostly celebrates the non-binding UNGPs as a huge development. There is only very limited critical analysis. In fact, the UNGPs have hardly any impact to actual conditions – how can we promote more critical analysis on making due diligence effective?

Kent, React – The term ‘binding’ needs to be defined more clearly in CSO demands. Regulation needs to be adopted in national legislation and incorporated into international treaties.

Kate, EW - The key issue is how to assess impact based on the principle of remedy, shifting the power to the victims through legally enshrined rights. The legislation process and the enforcement mechanism are the most important parts of legislation, and is consistent for all industries.

Under the 2022 Norway Transparency Act, seventeen cases have been brought to court so far, but the Consumers Regulation Board decided that it was not obligatory for corporations to disclose information on their value chains, respecting the Competition Act. The Transparency Act therefore has no teeth or impact. NGO’s have minimal access to value chain information, and those companies that do share information request an NDA to be signed.

Maeyls, Action Aid – a legal hearing took place in mid-2023 between workers and LaPoste company. The union demanded access to the list of suppliers and we are waiting to see if the judge pushes the company to disclose the list, to enable the union to take action on undocumented workers, lack of contracts, subcontracting out employment and general non-decent working conditions along LaPoste supply chains.

Kent, ReAct – Protection of whistleblowers is a big issue. In the French CGT bank exposure case, over 300 people provided information, and in California several thousand, leading to a 2 billion USD fine for a US trade union who disclosed the information from workers on US banks. The impacts on whistleblowers depend on national legislation, it is important to be aware of this.

Jorge, FTAO – we need to better define our demands on stakeholder involvement in the development of legislation – what is legally required as a minimum engagement of stakeholders?

Luise – The CSDDD is weaker than the UNGP’s, so could undermine previous commitments by countries. There is no reversal of the burden of proof, so the burden is on the victims which makes accessing justice very difficult. You also need accessible civil liability and a regulator to supervise. Civil liability is not preventive but is an avenue for victims to get compensation. By comparison, a regulator can force a company to human rights and environmental due diligence to prevent harm but if a complaint is brought there, any fine goes back to the state so victims do not access the gains.

Maeyls – We are concerned about the reality of people having access to justice against companies. Two ActionAid reports have been published on the ongoing legal actions within the French law and our recommendations on feminist due diligence:

- <https://www.actionaid.fr/publications/responsabilite-sociale-des-entreprises/devoir-de-vigilance-tirons-les-lecons>

- <https://www.actionaid.fr/publications/devoir-de-vigilance-droits-des-femmes-nos-10-recommandations>

SPECIFIC ACTION POINTS FOR RVC

- Luise will share an update on the EU CSDDD negotiations for RVC members
- RVC should share information and news between RVC members on specific cases, such as the Norway Transparency Act, the La Poste transparency hearing, relevant reports from members etc
- Solidarity and support for the UK legislation from the organisations working on the EU initiative would be very useful, Mark from CJC is on the board of ECCJ but all additional support from RVC CSO members is very welcomed.
- Banana Link and other UK actors should get in touch with Luise with any suggestions for companies that she can contact that may support the stronger legislation proposal

SESSION 4: Trade union struggles along value chains

The banana sector in Ecuador, Maelys Orellana (Action Aid)

ActionAid are working in partnership with the Ecuadorian trade union ASTAC. Ecuador is the world's biggest banana exporting country in the world, bananas are the 2nd economic sector in Ecuador so provides significant national employment and income. The newly elected President, Noboa, is the son of the owner of the biggest national banana company Noboa. Many fiscal advantages are provided from the state to support the banana industry. ASTAC has struggled to gain official recognition from the Ecuadorian Labour Ministry for several years, and their case is still in progress.

Poor working conditions have led to the economic success of the industry, and resulted in the impoverishment of the working class in Ecuador, who have very few choices but to either rest in rural areas and work on the plantations, or move to the city. There is a high rate of sub-contracting in the industry, with companies regularly changing the employment structure to avoid their social responsibilities to workers.

Levels of socio-political instability and violence is continually increasing. On the 4th October four women leaders from ASTAC received death threats to them and their families via whatsapp from an unknown source. The union has put measures in place to protect these workers and have requested support to investigate the crime.

The local workers have also attempted strike actions recently after a situation where the company had not paid workers for three weeks, but they were repressed violently with armed men hired by the company to end the strike action (see information posted by ASTAC on social networks for more info)

The sugar cane sector in Cameroon, Adonis Febre (ReAct), Olivier Roy (ReAct).

Société Sucrière du Cameroun (SOSUCAM) is an agro-industrial company involved in the production and processing of sugar cane. It covers 35,000 hectares and is spread over 3 districts to the north of the city of Yaoundé. Its business strategy is based on the casualisation of labour. With a potential workforce of around 7,000 seasonal workers and fewer than 900 permanent workers in 2023, this monoculture agro-industry is 75% owned by the multinational SOMDIA, itself a subsidiary of the Castel Group, a consortium owned by the Frenchman Pierre Castel.

In 2022, ReAct Transnational investigated this beverage empire in Africa (Report FR <https://urlz.fr/jei3> Report EN <https://urlz.fr/oSur>)

In November 2023, the OnEstEnsemble Union of Seasonal Workers at SOSUCAM published a report (in French) denouncing the repeated work-related accidents on sugar cane plantations, and the failure of SOSUCAM to cover them <https://urlz.fr/oSux>

It has also been possible to document the trade union repression suffered by seasonal workers at SOSUCAM, and to publish it in the form of a report (in French) in May 2023: <https://urlz.fr/oTxx>

The work of the SOSUCAM seasonal workers' union is aimed at organising workers to better defend their rights. Above all, it was important to explain to the seasonal workers the urgent need to get organised.

Thanks to two non-violent strike actions in March and April 2022 mobilizing several thousand workers, the union obtained several improvements in conditions for workers. The recruitment of a full-time union organizer has resulted in 216 seasonal workers being recruited as members, and a further network of over 800 worker contacts. These initial results show that there is potential for more victories with SOSUCAM.

DISCUSSION & IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP

- ASTAC request support and solidarity from international actors. With ActionAid we have filled a legal case within the Free Trade Agreement on the labour rights violations. This cannot lead to sanctions but there are various stages of dialogue that will help put pressure on the industry. We are also looking into the option of applying the French Vigilance Law to develop a case – ActionAid will share information and any appeals for solidarity via the RVC member network
- Alistair, Banana Link - Aldi and Lidl are interested in working on wage issues in Ecuador, with the idea of bringing a case within the German due diligence law. We should discuss this further with ActionAid and see how we can link to their case within the French vigilance law.
- Banana Link is also working with agricultural unions in Cameroon, with a focus on health and safety training (in collaboration with Peter Hurst from the IUF/ILO), so will contact Adonis to make links during the next visit to Cameroon

SESSION 6: Local Fair Trade – the French case: opportunities and challenges

Julie Maisonhaute (Commerce Équitable France) - [Presentation slides available here](#)

The French law on social and solidarity economy, 2014 (see presentation for details) enables all actors – local or international - to have the same criteria when it comes to Fair Trade, which is not the case in other countries. Most FT labels have since already developed, or are developing, French FT products and projects. Not only the local Fair Trade market has grown, but also traditional South-North Fair Trade has profited from synergies.

The Fair Trade premium is still relevant - it supports services and goods that in the south are lacking because of weak states (e.g. schools...), but we decided to maintain a reduced premium for the North as it allowed cooperatives to work with and support local projects. We have also worked on the calculation of local reference minimum prices, and on competition law and the way to avoid legal risks when discussing prices.

The reterritorialization movement exists and will grow. The French consumers are very much aware of the challenge of low prices, and not surprised to see French Fair Trade.

DISCUSSION & IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP

Minimum reference prices - only Max Havelaar have developed minimum prices per commodity and per region, and only in the wheat sector. In general, there is no minimum price at label level, but there must be a contract that looks into production costs, and sets a price above it. The role of the label is to verify that the process is done correctly, but the methodology and defined price is not made public for competition reasons.

Criteria on workers' working conditions - Each label defines the conditions and requirements (within the limits and definitions of the law) and they control it via audits. Many actors are trying to find solutions to the workers' problematics through the premium (which is a legal requirement). We need to pose the same questions that are present in other sectors with regards to living wages, working conditions and trade union freedom

Similar policy developments at EU level - Other than France, the country in which the policy debate on local Fair Trade is more advanced is Belgium. There have been discussions and initiatives in Italy and Spain too. European Fair Trade has a different set of challenges and problems, as the risks may be higher due to the legislator differences among Member States, among other reasons.

SPECIFIC ACTION POINTS FOR RVC

- Further collaborate with the Commerce Equitable France on our shared priority issues; wages of agriculture workers in the EU; binding rules on the use of terms and labels (avoiding fair washing) ; transportation (a blind spot for Fair Trade)
- Discuss opportunities and leverage to improve criteria on - and implementation of the criteria - on working conditions

SESSION 7: Implementing responsible public procurement – Towards more equitable distribution in global value chains

Kate Sullivan (Electronics Watch) – [Presentation slides available here](#)

Electronic Watch use public procurement as a leverage to promote human rights, mainly on electronic hardware, but now moving also to minerals. Public procurement represents 14% of EU GDP, but 55% of public procurement in the EU only uses lower price as the purchasing criteria. The strongest public sector engagement is in the Nordic countries, on freedom of association, and in Australia and the UK on forced labour.

EW work in collaboration with CSO partners to implement the following main strategies; capacitating public buyers (EW members) on responsible procurement, including providing model contracts for public buyers; worker-driven monitoring through worker education and training on monitoring and reporting on risks and violations in public sector supply chains; Coordinating remediation by training monitoring partners, identifying risks in supply chains and supporting workers in remediation processes. Most labels and certifications are dependent on external social audits, so we complement it with a more effective worker-driven approach.

EW have direct engagement with Responsible Business Alliance (RBA) to promote structured industry engagement. Many companies use the same factories, so you can have strong leverage on the 4 or 5 factories in a specific part of the supply chain.

DISCUSSION & IDEAS FOR FOLLOW-UP

Increasing the visibility of inequity in global value chains – some public authorities want to act better, but here is no such thing as “Fair IT”. Differences between companies are on how transparent they are, how responsive they are when there is an issue. Organisations in the Global North, such as European public authorities and CSOs, need to bolster the work undertaken by NGOs working to strengthen the agency of workers in the Global South and their share of value in global supply chains. We need to find ways for CSOs and trade unions in the Global South to contribute to increased corporate and state accountability in production countries.

Shifting the narrative away from a compliance-based culture - where legal minimums (rather than ethical obligations) are the basis of policy and practice, among public authorities and private actors. Civil liability is complicated to apply in public authorities. Corporate Justice and trade unions in UK call for a public body that does the capacity building and has the potential to impose fines to public authorities not conducting due diligence.

How to counter the cooption of language amongst private actors? The challenge is to evaluate in which cases you want to keep the line open for negotiation with the private sector, and when do you go public with the strong shortcomings and accusations. The fact that MSIs are glowingly important in forums that were traditionally more critical with companies can be an issue, for example, the growing role of private sector in the SDG forums.

SPECIFIC ACTION POINTS FOR RVC

- Potential cooperation among EW and other RVC members to enable a bad cop / good cop approach in collaboration with other organizations. Use the leverage of other members of the collective to impose political pressure in elections and influence policy on the issues on which we advocate
- Members of the RVC collective could work with EW to help expand their approach to other sectors such as textile and food.
- Together we can better connect to public authorities, and also work together to encourage more solidarity links between trade unions in the north and in the south and strengthen local struggles.

SESSION 8: Redistribution of value – engaging with trade unions in producing countries to achieve living wages, Alistair Smith (*Banana Link*) - [Presentation slides available here](#)

DISCUSSION

Internalising social and environmental costs - wages is a good start as they are more quantifiable than other social and environmental impacts. Fairtrade calculates the Costs of Sustainable Production (CSP), but has only recently made advances on addressing the significant gaps between real and living wages and incomes at farm level.

In 2023 Aldi announced that they would benchmark their prices using the CSP method developed by Fairtrade, and any increase in real costs would be represented in buying prices. They abandoned the

annual tender for contracts based on lowest price offers and instead introduced negotiation techniques at both end of the chain. The Aldi wage data verification initiative with unions brought up many issues that auditing would not have discovered, for example the fact that companies were not including wage data from migrant workers in their salary matrix (whose wages are lower).

Carrefour asked BL in 2016 to provide a strategy to move to Fairtrade. 25th% of their total volume then became Fairtrade and consumers responded positively. But there is still no real French retail initiative to tackle the issue of CSP on a wide scale.

Company Risk Management is key, such as the example of Colombia which became the biggest supplier to the UK market about 15 years ago, due to our message to retailers about the relative lack of social risk in Colombia. The best place for companies to buy is to follow CSO advice on where there is least risk in terms of social conditions, including industrial relations. But there is a contrast in levels of organisation in different regions in Colombia, and prices are of course lower in non-unionised farms.

ACTIVITY IN GROUPS: HOW SHOULD RETAILERS TRANSFER VALUE TO WORKERS WHO ARE EARNING BELOW THE LIVING WAGE LEVEL? THREE CASE STUDIES FOR STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

See the full activity sheet and the feedback from each group [here](#)

DISCUSSION & IDEAS FOR FOLLOW UP

Alistair, BL – In the Ecuador situation, where companies are obliged to pay minimum wage due to the national minimum wage matching the LW level, the companies have changed contracts to flexibilise workers and pay less additional benefits, to keep the cost of workers to the company low.

Katie, EW - Distribution of value should always be through monthly wages rather than bonus, as once you raise wages it is irreversible. Public authority buyers provide an additional pressure to provide leverage, as bananas are in all canteens.

Julie, CEF – could we explore a European regulation that would tax on the border of the EU in cases of non-payment of minimum wages, or more ideally living wages, and transfer financial penalties back to producer countries ?

Jorge, FTAO – an option would be to develop an agreement between large retailers, NGOs, CSO to integrate LW into EU regulation, with public commitments to put such a regulation into place.

Alistair – Retailer groups are already organised to focus on LW (using the Anker LW calculation method), because of collective industry peer pressure based on public commitments made by retailers. The key issue is how to effectively involve trade unions in these processes - they often have the will power but not the resources, as funding for trade union capacity building is increasingly difficult to find.

SESSION 9: Future cooperation and activities

The RVC coordinating organisations are ReAct, Banana Link, FTAO. We have three main work streams; regulation on multi-nationals, redistribution of value; economic alternatives. We have two years of funding (until December 25) confirmed by the FPH, so we have the space to re-configure how we work.

1. Content – priority issues to be integrated in to RVC activities

- Connecting redistribution of value and agroecological transition
- Research on externalities (and not only redistribution) to help assess all the costs of GVC's
- Integrate work on transport into due diligence, see ITF example on worker driven due diligence
- Sharing strategy on non- unionised chains and how CSO's can better take action in non-unionised settings and promote local organisation
- Engagement with public buyers on public procurement
- Le Basic's work on territorial strategy and the complexity of local value chains – integrate into the RVC coffee and cocoa and in the matrix used by Montpellier University
- Fair washing by certification labels and companies
- Promoting reliable data (including trade union verification), e.g., working with Electronic watch, &Wider on their techniques working with monitoring partners and methods of independent data collection, to respond also to union demands and needs
- Mineral supply chains –connecting those working at mine level with those working higher up the chain
- Political leverage options to improve agricultural wages, particularly in FT Value chains
- Indigenous rights and knowledge, especially in our work on territorialisation

2. Actors & Membership

- Remobilise members (we have approx.25 organisations in total), in particular our trade union partners IndusrtiALL, ITF, IUF, ITUC
- Plan 2024-2025 activities in collaboration with trade union partners
- Reengage with CSOs working in the textile sector / CleanClothesCampaign
- Re-engage CSO's working on the environment to combine our responses and develop stronger alliances
- Follow-up with Traffic on potential membership, for expertise on indigenous issues
- Look for partners beyond the EU, and strengthen link with partners in other EU countries
- Consider including public authorities as members?

3. Ways of working

- Update the website – promote cross-fertilization through clearer links in the website, more articles, share old and new research, member publications etc. (and resolve hosting issue!)
- Rethink slogan: "Putting people & the environment first"; review & strengthen manifesto; update objectives and activity description to make more clear
- More emphasis on regular info-sharing (rather than webinars) – a newsletter via the RVC framaliste; systematically tagging in linkedin posts & create a RVC linkedin; regular smaller meetings on specific themes with key partners
- Better assess language needs for future exchanges and reconsider systematic interpretation of all the activities (see excel with languages per member)
- Use the collective to provide financial and strategic support to union and CSO activities.
- EW have resources to facilitate a space in November 2024 for dialogue with trade unions, so we could use this funding / space and integrate RVC
- Organise a follow-up meeting in Paris to develop future strategy for 2024-2025

For further information please contact the RVC coordination team :

**Banana Link - blink2005@wanadoo.fr / ReAct - marielle.benchehboune@reactransnational.org /
FTAO - conesa@fairtrade-advocacy.org**