

A Tribute to Dan Gallin by Barbro Budin, former Board member of WIEGO

It is with great sadness but also with enormous gratitude that I am joining many friends, colleagues, and comrades around the world to say goodbye to Dan.

Dan was one of those who marked an era and who continues to give strength and inspiration to all those who organise against all forms of exploitation and repression.

Few trade union leaders have the experience and vast cultural and political knowledge that Dan had and which he put entirely at the service of the labour movement. His impressive language skills made it possible for him to get close to workers and organisations and to learn about their conditions and struggles without any filters.

When Dan and Elaben met in the 80-ies, it became obvious for Dan how important SEWA was as an example of organizing in the informal economy and that SEWA's struggle for rights and recognition of workers in informal employment concerned millions of workers around the world.

It needed some discussions in the IUF Executive Committee (EC) before SEWA was accepted as an affiliate with its members in the bidi sector in 1985. Some of the EC members believed that informal economy was something of the past, but Dan made them look outside the borders of Europe and North America. The EC was also reminded by Dan and Ruth Köhn from the German Food Workers' Union, that it was not so long ago that cigar makers were home-based workers in Europe.

Dan took up the fight for the recognition of workers in informal employment in the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and at the ILO and supported SEWA all along in the whole process towards ILO Convention 177 on Homeworkers. Even when he was absent from the negotiations at the ILO, he used his connections to convince government representatives to vote in favour of the convention.

It is now 40 years ago that SEWA joined the IUF. WIEGO statisticians are since many years contributing to the ILO statistics program which has proven that workers in informal employment make up 61 % of the global workforce. They are no longer related to the past, but are in the center of today's developments, contributing to innovative organizing and negotiating models in a much more complex context than in traditional industry sectors.

Dan paved the way for fairer and more democratic representation of women within the IUF against a rather massive male dominance. It was obvious for him that women were crucial for unions to grow and to be truly representative. His engagement in WIEGO as a director of ORP also benefitted the IUF organizing strategies and probably vice versa.

Dan accompanied the domestic workers on their way to organize internationally, whether it was to give advice on how to act in the ILO to reach a Convention or how to build structures of an international organization. Dan was the guest of honor at the founding Congress of the

International Federation of Domestic Workers in 2013. They still look at Dan as their mentor and "sage".

For that and many other reasons, it was a great privilege to work with Dan. He was an extraordinary trade union leader who left us an extraordinary legacy to pass on to future generations.

His credo: grassroots organizing across borders for freedom, justice and equality is more relevant than ever today.

He will be sorely missed.

Thanks for everything, Dan