International Training Center of ILO

Workers’ Activities Programme
(ACTRAV-Turin)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A1-05066

Trade Union Training on
Employment Relations and Informal Economy
(Anglophone and Francophone Africa)
20 February to 2 March 2012 (2 weeks)
1. ABOUT THE PROGRAMME FOR WORKERS’ ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE OF THE ILO (ACTRAV-TURIN)

The Workers' Education Programme of the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) of the ILO is aimed at improving trade union capacities to represent and defend the interests of their members. The Programme for Workers’ Activities of the International Training Centre of the ILO (ACTRAV-Turin) is an integral part of this IL-/ACTRAV’s Workers’ Education Programme, and has a specific task of assisting trade unions in strengthening their training capacities through a series of training programmes provided at the Turin Centre, in the field and through distance/online education.

For more information on the ACTRAV-Turin Programme, please refer to Section 14 of this document.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE TRAINING COURSE

The training course on “Employment Relations and Informal Economy,” aims to develop the technical capacities of the trade union representatives to play an effective role in tripartite dialogue, collective bargaining and other decision-making processes at the national and enterprise level in the areas of decent employment policy promotion, labour relations and workers rights, especially within the ever-growing informal economy where there is widespread deplorable working conditions and vulnerability.

The course will provide an opportunity for the trade union representatives to learn and share experiences about the changing nature of employment in a crisis ridden economy, different employment relationships that are emerging in the labour market, ILO recommendations for national policy for protection of workers in diverse employment relationships and possible union strategies for regularizing employment relationships in law and practice for promoting decent work with a special focus towards the informal economy.

Through course activities, discussions and exchange of information, the participants will review developments in employment relations and analyze the effectiveness and shortcomings of existing labour relations systems, laws and practices in their countries with due regards to their applicability in the informal economy, keeping in view the ILO standards. This exercise is expected to contribute to the capacity of the trade unions to influence reforms in labour relations systems, organising strategies and extend social protection to the workers, especially to domestic, contract, casual and other workers in the informal economy.

Protection of workers’ rights under the labour laws, regulations and collective agreements are generally linked to the existence of an employment relationship between an employer and an employee. However, in recent years, the employers’ quest and desire for flexible employment has led to the emergence of diverse types of employment practices, including attempts to disguise the employment relationships in the supply chain through contractual or outsourcing arrangements that tend to deprive workers of the protection and benefits due to them under the labour law or collective bargaining agreements. This trend has been on the rise in most countries of Africa, especially in this era of economic liberalization and globalization, thereby causing a phenomenal surge in non-standard, atypical, irregular and precarious jobs being characterized by widespread decent work deficits.

The multiple crises which the world is facing including unacceptably high level of youth unemployment, stagnant levels of world investment in real economy, marginalization of job-creating small enterprises, and indecent levels of income and wealth concentration continue to create conditions to increase the gap
between the rich and the poor, formal and informal workers. This unfortunate trend will continue unless and until coordinated actions to promote Decent Work in national economies is pursued on sustainable basis by the governments, along with measures to promote respect for fundamental principles and rights at work.

The workers rights situation, especially within the informal economy in the African region presents a scenario where there is an increasing gap between the stated policies and the actual situation on the ground - especially in the areas of workers’ rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining, social protection and social dialogue. Trade unions have been pressing for reforms of labour and industrial relations systems for some time now. In particular, unions have been stressing on the need to address uncertainties in employer-employees relationships caused by irregular contractual arrangements to guarantee effective protection of workers in a manner appropriate to national law or practice, and consistent with relevant international labour standards.

The current debate in many African countries over the reforms of labour laws could be an opportunity to promote effective tripartite dialogue to strengthen labour relations systems and institutions that will guarantee the extension of protective labour law coverage to informal economy and EPZ workers. It gives a possibility to the trade unions to promote crucial labour law reforms to create conditions for decent employment, respect for workers rights to organise, bargaining collectively, dialogue and access adequate social protection services and facilities.

This course is therefore aimed at deepening the understanding of the trade union representatives on the forces shaping the world of work in this age of globalization, learn about changing the nature of labour markets, employment relationships, ILO Recommendation No. 198 on Employment Relationships (especially to counter the ill-effects of disguised contractual employment relationships) and the role that core ILO standards in general can play in promoting fundamental rights of all shades of workers, including those within the informal economy and EPZs. Participants will also learn about ILO’s Social Justice Declaration for a Fair Globalization, Global Jobs Pact – as a response to crisis and ILO policies in general for promoting democratic labour relations and Decent Work for all workers. The course will also discuss trade union strategies for organising and social protection for all and influencing labour law reforms.

3. DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES
   - This training course will strengthen the capacities of trade unions so as to enable them to influence employment relations in favour of workers and to promote their rights, especially within the informal economy where working conditions are precarious.

4. IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES
   Upon completion of the course, the participants will be able to:
   - Describe the social and economic impact of global economic crisis on employment, labour relations, workers and their trade unions;
   - Analyse the key features of their national labour relations systems (and labour law) that regulate employment relationships;
   - Appraise policies of their enterprises and managements in regard to employment, unions and labour relations and develop key union positions for collective bargaining;
Build understanding of the decent work concept and approach with special emphasis on the role of core ILO standards concerning freedom of association and collective bargaining for promotion of decent work;

Explain the ILO Recommendation No. 198 on Employment Relationships and evolve strategies for trade unions to promote reforms in labour relations systems for the protection of contract, casual and informal workers;

Prepare policies that reflects the felt needs of informal workers including women workers in the labour relations systems and trade union programmes and actions;

Formulate proposals and agenda on organising and the extension of social protection coverage to workers in the informal economy;

Prepare Action Plans for the implementation at the national or local level that is aimed at contributing to the technical and/or organisational strengthening of their trade unions in the areas of organising atypical workers, collective bargaining and/or reforms of labour relations systems.

5. COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS

The course will comprise the following sessions:

A) Globalization, Decent Work and the Labour Movement
The course will include a session on Globalisation, Financial Crisis and Decent Work – focusing on changes in the world of work, impact of the global crisis on labour relations, ILO responses (2008 Declaration of ILO on Social Justice for Fair Globalization and Global Jobs Pact) and challenges before the trade union movement. Participants are expected to actively join in the discussion on the impact of globalization and financial crisis on their economies, in particular on rights and interests of workers including women workers.

B) Review of Country Situations – each participant is required to prepare prior to the commencement of the course a 3 to 5 A4-size page a country report on the employment and industrial relations situation (focusing on forms of and working conditions in employment, trade union responses), labour legislation (its strengths and weaknesses), level of organisation/unionisation of workers within the informal economy and key challenges facing working people and trade unions in general. These reports will form the basis of country review group discussions. Guidelines for this country report are given in the course pre-requisites in section 9.

C) International Labour Standards (ILS), Freedom of Association (FOA) and Role of ILO and ACTRAV in supporting Unions’ efforts to promote FOA
The participants will be introduced to the ILO instruments and supervisory procedures concerning FOA and the Right to Collective Bargaining as well as ILO’s overall effort in protecting and promoting social justice in the era of globalization.

D) Labour rights and labour relations
This session will focus on labour rights, rise in precarious employment relationship since 1980s and developments in the labour market that necessitate the urgency of reforms in labour laws today.
E) Employment Relationships & labour law
This session will discuss changing nature of employment in the economy, flexible labour markets, diverse employment relationships and guidelines provided by ILO Recommendation 198 for national policy, law and practices to guarantee protection of all workers in an employment relationship (discussions will focus also on employment relations in informal economy and the need to promote Decent Work within this locale). The session will be followed by a group work on how the ILO Recommendation No. 198 can be followed-up at country level by trade unions with a view to promoting basic rights for workers who are facing flexible and unacceptable employment relationships.

F) International Framework Agreements and role of national trade unions
During this session, participants will discuss some exiting IFAs and suggest the role to be played by trade unions at national level in the enforcement of these agreements.

G) Social Protection Floor Initiatives
The concept of social protection for all will be examined. The session will be climaxed by a group work on trade union strategies and actions aimed at achieving universal social protection coverage to all shades workers, particularly those within the unprotected informal economy.

H) Extending trade unionism into the informal economy
During this session, participants will share ideas and exchange experiences about various methods including community-based unionism, multi-hat unionism, alliance-building (national and international networks) and enterprise-based unionism that have been used in the organization and unionization of informal economy workers into effective trade unions.

I) Preparation of follow up individual Action Plans
Each participant will prepare an Action Plan (a project proposal) to be submitted to his/her organisation upon he/she return home. The Action Plan should specify what he/she intends to do in the areas of organising focusing on informal economy workers, collective bargaining and reforms of labour relations systems, reflecting what they have learnt during this training programme. These plans will be used by the ITCILO and ACTRAV-Turin for future evaluations (impact assessment) and for follow-up activities.

J) Evaluation of the course:
Course activities will be reviewed on a daily and weekly basis and through an end-of-course evaluation.

6. PARTICIPANTS
This course is intended for trade union representatives from Africa. The nominating organisation is requested to nominate two suitable candidates, less than but not above 45 years of age and at least one of who has to be a woman. Participants must be either:
Office bearer/member of youth/women committee of national/industrial level union who is involved with organising, collective bargaining or in policy making bodies;

Trade union educator responsible for organising training programmes in the field of labour standards, employment relations, organising and collective bargaining rights;

From the two nominated participants only ONE participant will be selected by ACTRAV, keeping in view the course pre-requisites and the objectives.

The course will be conducted in English and French. Participants are expected to fully involve themselves in discussions and other activities and so they must be able to understand and speak in either English or French. However, advanced English and French writing skills are not a requirement.

7. METHODOLOGY

The learning methods used in the course will acknowledge the participants' level of competence and experience taking into account the proposition that they already have practical experience in the field of trade unionism, the informal economy, organising, negotiations and participating in the bipartite and tripartite fora. Active learning methods will be employed throughout the course, which will encourage the participants for group discussions and to be fully involved in all aspects of training.

8. SUPPORT MATERIAL

Training modules, handouts and booklets dealing with the subject will be distributed to participants.

9. COURSE PREREQUISITES

A. Country Report:

Each participant will be required to prepare beforehand and bring with her/him a country report (both a hard and a soft copy which can be e-mailed beforehand too). The report, no longer than 3 - 5 pages or in powerpoint format (7-10 slides), should include information on:

- Trends in the employment status since the mid-80s;
- Types of precarious employment and key problems facing precarious workers in your country;
- Key provisions of labour laws concerning workers’ rights and benefits, right to organise, right to recognition of the union, right to collective bargaining and right to strike; legal issues concerning precarious employment and contract workers;
- Trade union responses to precarious employment and the plight of informal economy workers;
- Situation regarding the ratification and implementation of ILO’s International Labour Standards - number of ILO conventions ratified.
- Description of national social dialogue structure, if any, in terms of composition, main functions, frequency of its meetings and respectability of its decisions.

The country report should be sent by e-mail to the following address: actrav_turin@itcilo.org or by fax (+39-011-693-6589)
**B) Resource Material**

The participants should collect documents and other sources of information concerning the following aspects of their countries and trade unions:

- National labour laws and regulations, in particular the ones recently adopted or amended by the country, concerning right to form unions, union registration, recognition and collective bargaining rights;
- Policy papers on the informal economy, domestic labour sector and poverty reduction strategy
- Campaign materials on labour law reforms, Freedom of Association (FOA) and/or collective bargaining; and
- Any other materials that may be of interest to the course.

10. DURATION AND STARTING DATE OF THE COURSE

The training course is scheduled for Turin, Italy and will consist of two weeks duration starting from 20 February to 2 March 2012.

11. VISA ARRANGEMENTS

It is essential that all the participants attending the above course ensure, prior to their departure, to obtain the Schengen Visa valid for the entire during of the course and accordingly days of travel.

Please note that in these days it often requires more than two weeks to obtain visa, and therefore you have to instruct your participant to take an immediate action for visa application once selection is made.

Failure to obtain the necessary visa will mean that the participant may not be able to take part in the course.

NB: If you have difficulties in obtaining the visa, please inform immediately Ms. Carola Rodia, Recruitment Office, ILO Turin Centre (Tel. +39-011-6936629, Fax +39-011-6936767, E-mail: c.rodia@itcilo.org).

12. REIMBURSEMENT

The cost of passport, vaccinations or inoculations and health documents, and the consular dues for the Schengen visa will **NOT** be reimbursable.

Airport taxes and domestic travel expenses (such costs as incurred from the town of residence to the international airport of departure) can **NOT** be reimbursed.

13. THE CENTRES' TRAINING RESOURCES AND RESIDENTIAL FACILITY

The training will be conducted by staff of the Centre, external collaborators with specialized expertise and staff of the ILO-Geneva. The Centre's resources include classrooms, a learning resources centre and library, a computer training laboratory and an interactive language laboratory. Located on the banks of the river Po, the Centre's campus provides a congenial environment in
which to study and live. The accommodation is provided in serviced bed/study rooms with private bathrooms. Other amenities on campus include a restaurant, cafeteria, bank, travel agency, post office and an infirmary.

14. BACKGROUND OF THE PROGRAMME FOR WORKERS’ ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE OF THE ILO

Training is one of the major functions of trade unions. Training their members and officials is essential to strengthening the organisation and improving their functions. Because of the involvement of trade unions in an increasing number of social and economic issues in recent years, it has become even more vital for unions to continue and expand their training activities for both their leaders and members.

Through the delivery of advanced training courses, the production of training material for residential and online education, advisory services and specific projects, the Programme for Workers’ Activities of the International Training Centre of the ILO is designed to respond to the changing training needs of workers’ organisations. The structure and the content of the Programme are aimed at responding to the main challenges imposed by globalization on the international labour movement.

The Programme’s activities are organised within five categories of training activities and services:

- The first consists of specialized residential training courses at the ILO Turin Centre which are conducted using active learning methods. Curricula are developed in line with the four ILO strategic objectives, equality and gender relations, training methodology for residential/on-line education and custom-made courses for the Global Union Federations (GUFs). The ILO’s major strategic objectives are: 1) Standards and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. 2) Employment 3) Social Protection and 4) Social Dialogue.

- A second category of activities includes follow-up seminars and training activities developed jointly with ACTRAV staff in the regions. In particular follow-up seminars are carried out in order to assess the contribution of the Programme for Workers’ Activities in achieving its development objectives in the area of training and also provide advanced training.

- A third category involves the development of online education for workers’ organisations.

- A fourth category is related to the training of ACTRAV staff.

- A fifth category concerns the delivery of services, mainly in the area of training assistance to labour organisations.

- In the past few years the design and delivery of training courses by ACTRAV-Turin have been conducted with a systematic and multi-disciplinary approach to gender mainstreaming, which is strongly endorsed by the Programme.

More information on the Programme for Workers’ Activities of the International Training Centre of the ILO (ACTRAV Turin) is available at the following Internet address:

http://actrav.itcilo.org/index_en.php

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