

A Brief Report of the Conference of Trade Union Educators in Nepal

“Strengthening Trade Unions through Sustained Trade Union Education”

19 – 20 September 2013, Pokhara, Nepal

SUMMARY

Three major trade unions (ANTUF, GEFONT and NTUC-I) in collaboration with ILO/ACTRAV Norway Project organized a national conference of trade union educators for developing trade union actions on regular trade union education in Nepal. Senior leaders of three trade unions – ANTUF, GEFONT and NTUC-I as well as CTA of the ILO/ACTRAV Norway Project, Geneva expressed their views in a short opening session. There were a total of 66 union educators (42 male and 24 female) (list of participants attached in the ANNEX – 1) who participated in the conference organized with the initiation of the TU Education Departments of the three unions. In the conference, the participants shared their experiences in organizing workers through trade union education, expressed their views and concerns for sustaining TU movement through trade union education programs and prepared action strategies and plans for trade union education in Nepal. There were 2 technical sessions, 2 experience sharing sessions and 2 group works in two day's conference. The conference concluded expressing a strong commitment of the group of TU educators on sustained trade union education at three levels on issues like Labour Laws, TU leadership, ILO and ILS, Social Security Rights, Collective Bargaining, Basics about Unionism (why union, members' roles and responsibilities, financing and managing union, organizing etc).



Glimpse of the Conference

CONFERENCE DETAILS

DAY -1 (19 September 2013)

Inaugural Session:

The inaugural session was chaired by Mr Ramjee Kunwar, Senior Vice President of NTUC-I and the session was moderated by Mr Bidur Karki, Secretary of TU Education Department of GEFONT. Mr. Baburam Gautam, Vice President of ANTUF made a welcome remark on behalf of all the three unions. Mr. Gautam emphasized on collaboration between unions on union education campaigns and activities.




In the inaugural session, the CTA of ILO/ACTRAV Norway Project, Mr. Magnus Berge spoke on behalf of ILO/Nepal office and Bureau of Workers Activities (ACTRAV) for the success of the conference and also highlighted on the objective of the project with its overview and coverage. “This is the only project within ILO that supports achieving the ILO outcome 10 (Workers have strong, independent and representative organizations)” he said.

Expressing his views, Mr Ramjee Kunwar, Senior Vice President of NTUC-I emphasized on the need of massive education campaigns at local level with special focus to informal economy workers. He also thanked ILO/ACTRAV for its continuous support to strengthen trade union movement in Nepal.

At the end of the inaugural session, a round table introduction of participants was conducted. The participants were from the sectors like – industry/production, service sector (hotel, tourism, and teachers) and informal sectors throughout the country.

Introduction of the conference objectives and programme:

After the opening session, Mr Narayan P. Bhattarai, NPC of ILO/ACTRAV Norway Project highlighted on the conference objectives and gave an overview of the two days’ programme schedule. He shared that the objective of the conference is to equip major trade unions with committed human resources for sustained trade union education. The conference produced the following three outputs:

-  A group of 60 TU Educators sensitized on the importance of trade union education
-  Strategies and action plans for sustained TU education policies and programs developed
-  Areas and issues of TU education for next two years, identified

Mr. Bhattarai also gave an overview of the two day’s programme schedule that included two technical sessions, two experience sharing sessions and two group works. A copy of the program is attached in the ANNEX – 2.

Session on sharing experiences of Trade Union Educators:

Session Chair and Moderator – Mr Narayan P. Bhattarai, NPM, ILO/ACTRAV Norway Project

Presentations 1. Mr. Rajan Timilsina – ANTUF,
2. Mr. Bidur Karki – GEFONT,
3. Mr. Lalit Shrestha – NTUC-I

The first presentation about the TU education within ANTUF was shared by the Trade Union Education Department Chief, Mr. Rajan Timilsina. He made his PP Presentation (A copy of his PP presentation is attached in the ANNEX – 3) with the following major points:

- ANTUF introduction and overview
- Formation of TU Education Committee/Department (7 Members in the committee) at national level
- Education departments formed and expanded to all affiliate unions
- Three monthly regular education programs at local level
- Booklets and education materials under publication
- ANTUF intends to expand education committees up to district level

The second presentation was made by Mr. Bidur Karki, Chief of the TU Education Department of GEFONT. He made a thorough PP presentation (copy attached in ANNEX – 4) giving detailed overview of GEFONT initiatives on TU Education. The followings are major points:

- TU education an integral part of all activities of GEFONT
- TU education focusing on and reinforcing the organizing activities
- Education department constituted in the constitution and organizing various trainings through various models like - TOT, TTM, Study Circle, Role Play
- The department has been producing and utilizing information technologies for TU education (handful of examples of education materials shared – see in the ANNEX-4)

The third presentation was made by Mr. Lalit Shrestha, Vice President of NTUC-I, giving an overview of TU education activities within NTUC-I. Mr. Shrestha highlighted on the current situation on TU education within NTUC-I with the following main points (copy of PP attached in ANNEX – 5):

- NTUC-I introduction and overview
- Education department constituted in the constitution with 9 members in the department
- Education department for educational planning and producing educational materials
- Organizing various educational activities like Basic Trade Union classes, leadership skill training, Gender awareness interactions etc.
- Resource constraints for reaching out to all districts and regions

Technical Session 1: Trade Union Education: Issues and Priorities

Session Chair – Mr Rajan Timilsina, Chief, ANTUF TU Education Department

Session Moderator – Mr. Genesh KC, Central Member, NTUC-I

Presenter – Mr. Bidur Karki, Secretary, TU Education Department of GEFONT

In the first technical session, Mr. Birur Karki from GEFONT made a presentation on Trade Union Education in Nepal. The presentation was made on behalf of the three major trade unions viz. ANTUF, GEFONT and NTUC-I (copy of his PP presentation in attached in ANNEX – 6). Major points/concerns and recommendations presented by Mr. Karki were:

- Union education is an integral part of trade union movement
- It is a core activity linked with organizing activities
- Education can take various forms – training, seminar, orientation, meeting and any other channels where people can learn anything together
- Context and need identification is key to successful union education
- Major challenges of TU education in Nepal (non-formalization of work/workers, resource constraints, unsystematic/traditional approach to education, lack of initiatives in retaining/mobilizing trained/educated people, etc.)
- Recommendations – (Educational planning, monitoring and evaluation; Education material production based on training need/target groups; Developing trainers on specific issues/topics based on the training need and effective mobilization; Introducing regular schooling and its expansion to sectors/regions etc.)

After his presentation, the floor was opened for further comments and suggestions. Some of the important comments raised from the floor were:

- ✚ The three unions should develop a joint TU education book for organizing union education programs
- ✚ Developing an organizing manual can re-enforce the TU education programs as well

After the comments and feedback from the floor, the chair summed up the session by highlighting the following points:

- Globalization is an important issue for looking at training need identification
- Education strategies and issues to be developed by category like Short term and Long term
- Emphasized on giving an example of cooperation amongst the three union in terms of TU education in Nepal

Group Work 1: Mapping of Issues and Target Groups for Trade Union Education

Before the group work, the facilitator made a small presentation (PP attached in ANNEX- 7) about the techniques and analysing the target groups by looking at their age, gender, education, position, number and other aspects. He suggested the participants to look training at three levels viz. Local, Regional/Sectorial and National and identify the issues for their training. The following responses were received through a meta-card exercise in three groups:

<u>Local level</u>	<u>Region/District level</u>	<u>National level</u>
(General Workers & New members)	(New Members, Plant level union leaders and members, District/Regional level leaders and members)	(District/Regional level leaders and members, National level leaders and members)
<u>Issues/Topics</u>	<u>Issues/Topics</u>	<u>Issues/Topics</u>
Basics about trade union (why a union, its importance, benefits, and functions) Fundamental rights of workers, Roles and responsibilities of members and union leaders towards union, Good examples of union works, Trade union politics, Social security	Labour laws, Collective Bargaining, Organizing skills, Union management and functions, Leadership development skills, Union formation and registration process, Social security, OHS, Gender Issues, Union structures and constitutions	Union policies, National and international labour market, Advocacy and lobbying skills, Planning and research techniques, Labour legislations, ILO and ILS, Impacts of globalization on labour market, Trade Union and politics and international TU movement, Industrial relations, Social Security

Out of these topics the most repeated topics were – **Basics about trade union (14 responses), Labour laws including social security (7 responses), Collective Bargaining (6 responses), Union management and functions (5 responses), Leadership development (3 responses)**

DAY -2 (20 September 2013)

Session on ACTRAV Norway Project since 2007:

In the first session on second day, NPM of ILO/ACTRAV Norway Project Mr. Narayan Bhattarai gave an overview of the activities carried out in support with the project since 2007 to till 2012. The activities focused on developing the capacity of national unions in terms of their representation in national fronts for policy discourse through Trainings/Education programs, Research & Documentation and Media advocacy. Some of the activities were organized by ILO for major unions while some of them were organized by individual unions largely by the three partner unions – ANTUF, GEFONT and NTUC-I. The PP presentation shared by Mr. Bhattarai is attached in the Annex – 8 which shows that 651 union leaders/organizers (418 male, 233 female) trained on various union issues directly organized by ILO/ACTRAV while 4,623 (2,298 male, 2,325 female) by the union themselves under the project's direct support.

In the second half of the same session, the Chief Technical Advisor of the Project Mr. Magnus Berge made a global overview of the project since 2007 that is in operation in 35 countries over the world. He also informed the donor's priority targets like Women and Youth for this support. He also informed the participants that the project is major thrust for obtaining one of the outcomes, out of 19 (outcome 10: Workers have strong, independent and representative organizations) of the ILO.

The project has secured funding for 2014/15 and there is likely to continue for 2016/17 for which ILO will have negotiations with the donors in the years to come.

Technical Session 2: Why Trade Union Education Policies and Programs?

Session Chair – Mr. Kedar Koirala, Deputy General Secretary, NTUC-I

Session Moderator –Mr Bidur Karki, Secretary, GEFONT TU Education Department

Presentation – Mr Ariel B. Castro, Senior Workers' Specialist, ILO/DWT/New Delhi

Mr Ariel B. Castro, Senior Workers' Specialist, ILO/DWT New Delhi made a presentation the second technical session on Union Education Policies and Programmes. Mr Castro presented the definition & scope, principles & priorities and strategies & resources of TU education. He categorized TU education in three groups.

1. Union Education – covering basics of unionism, functions of union in the first category
2. Workers' Education – covering workers efficiency in numeracy, literacy, skills and general education
3. Labour Studies – covering academics of labour policy as open and impartial study.

Mr. Castro presented and elaborated the points by giving examples of union education in modern era by using social networks and electronic media like mobiles, face book and twitters etc. He stress on the need of putting ratification and application of fundamental ILO conventions, C87 and C98 in all union educational activities. The PP shared by Mr. Castro is attached in the ANNEX – 9.

In the end, the session chair Mr Kedar Koirala thanked Mr Castro for his important presentation and expressed the commitment of Nepalese Trade Unions on sustaining TU education following the principles that he presented.

Group Work 2: Organizing through TU Education (Plan of Action)

In the last session, the participants were divided based on their union and were asked to make a year's work plan including – topics, methods & numbers for three level of participants (local, region/district and national). The following table summarizes their presentations:

By – ANTUF

	Topics	Methods/duration	Weight
Level – I (Local)	Basics of unionism – definition, importance, roles and responsibilities of members and leaders	Active Lectures, Interactions, Audio-visual aids, group works in one or two day programs	Covering 10,000 workers (6,000 male, 4,000 female) in 40 districts
Level – II (District/Region)	TU Leadership, CBA, Union management & operation, Social Security	Active Lectures, Audio-visual aids, group works, role play in three days	48 programs covering 1200 leaders/members in informal economy 25 in each programs (16 male and 9 female)
Level – III (National)	Labour Laws, ILO Conventions, Union's representation in national arenas, National and International TU movement	Active Lectures, Interactions, group works in three days	15 programs covering 500 leaders (300 male and 200 female)

By – GEFONT

	Topics	Methods	Weight
Level – I (Local)	Basics of unionism – what and why a union?, roles and responsibilities of members and leaders, good examples of TU work, social security	Active Lectures, Interactions, Audio-visual aids, group works	Covering 800 workers (400 male, 400 female) in 20 places
Level – II (District/Region)	CBA, Union management & operation, Social Security, Labour laws	Active Lectures, Interactions, Audio-visual aids, group works	12 programs covering 360 leaders/members 30 in each programs (18 male and 12 female)
Level – III (National)	Union Education Methods (TOT), Contemporary Labour Issues	Active Lectures, Interactions, Audio-visual aids, group works	2 programs covering 30 leaders (18 male and 12 female) in each

By – NTUC-I

	Topics	Methods	Weight
Level – I (Local)	Basics of unionism – definition, importance, roles and responsibilities of members and leaders, union structures	Active Lectures, Interactions, Audio-visual aids, group works	120 different programs covering 3,200 workers in different places
Level – II (District/Region)	TU Leadership-6, CBA - 30, Social Security -13	Active Lectures, Interactions, Audio-visual aids, group works	49 programs (25-30 participants each in different regions /sectors
Level – III (National)	Strategic Planning – 3 , Proposal & Report Writing - 2, TOT on union education - 2	Active Lectures, Interactions, Audio-visual aids, group works	7 programs covering 175 top level leaders

Closing Session:

A brief closing session was organized in the afternoon of the second day. The following persons made remarks in the closing session:

- 1. Mr Ramchandra Karki, ANTUF:** Speaking on behalf of the organizer union ANTUF, Mr Ramchandra Karki expressed that the implementation of the plans designed in this conference is a challenge ahead. However, he showed his commitment for implementing it in coordination with their union. He also thanked ILO/ACTRAV and all participating unions for their efforts and supports in organizing this conference.
- 2. Mr Keshab Dawadi, GEFONT:** In similar vein, Mr. Kesab Dawadi spoke on behalf of another organizer union, GEFONT. He was satisfied with the outcomes of the conference. He said “We did well during two days but we still have a lot more to do”. He stressed on the fact that education is for organizing and thus every education activities should yield the results in adding members to the union. He also noted that the cooperation amongst the three unions in organizing such an important event jointly is a good example of union cooperation.
- 3. Ms Kalpana Adhikari, NTUC-I:** Ms Kalpana Adhikari, speaking on behalf of another organizing union, NTUC-I expressed her satisfaction to have such a wonderful work-plan on TU education in hand. She said that we all educators should co-operate each other for resolving the short-coming for implementing these plans. She also expected continuation of such events in future and thanked ILO/ACTRAV for providing continuous support to Nepalese trade unions. In the end she shared a Nepali solidarity song with all.

4. **Mr Ariel B. Castro, Senior Workers' Specialist, DWT/New Delhi:** Mr Castro thanked all three unions and their Education Committee Coordinators/members for making this conference a success. He expressed that the plans prepared by each of you are major work areas for your future. ILO's support is just to guide you/your unions, but major efforts lies on you, your pro-activeness and your union's continued efforts in prioritizing union education. At the end, he thanked all the participants for their patience and efforts for making the conference a success.
5. **Mr Magnus Berge, Chief Technical Advisor, ILO/ACTRAV, Geneva:** Mr Berge also thanked all the participants for their efforts in making the conference a success. He was happy to learn the activeness of all the participants, their knowledgebase on union issues and the wonderful plans they have prepared. He said "I will be happy to hear sometime next year from you all about the success of implementing the plans that you have prepared". ILO/ACTRAV Norway project will support in all your endeavours in strengthening Nepalese Trade Union movement through all possible ways. He then declared the end of the two days' conference.

ANNEXES

1. List of Participants
2. Programme Schedule
3. ANTUF (Sharing experiences on TU Education)
4. GEFONT (Sharing experiences on TU Education)
5. NTUC-I (Sharing experiences on TU Education)
6. PP Presentation on "Trade Union Education in Nepal: Issues and Priorities" by Mr. Bidur Karki, Secretary TU Education Department of GEFONT
7. PP presentation on mapping target groups by Mr. Narayan P. Bhattarai, NPM, ILO/ACTRAV Norway Project in Nepal
8. PP Presentation on "Why TU Education Policies and Programs" by Mr Ariel B. Castro, Senior Specialist on Workers' Activities, ILO/DWT New Dehli
9. PP Presentation on "ACTRAV Norway Project during 2007 - 2012" by Mr Narayan P. Bhattarai, NPM, ILO/ACTRAV Norway Project in Nepal