

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION
Bureau for Workers' Activities

**The role of trade unions in workers' education:
The key to trade union capacity building**

Background paper

International Workers' Symposium
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Preface

From the start of the union movement in the nineteenth century, the most important factor in creating and strengthening unions has been working people coming together to talk about their problems at work and devise solutions based on collective action. This tradition is carried on today by unionists all over the world as they discuss union-related issues in union meetings, congresses, conventions and workplaces. The International Workers' Symposium on the role of trade unions in workers' education is part of that tradition. It is an opportunity for unionists to talk about the problems facing the labour movement and consider how union education could help the movement confront its problems creatively as it heads through the twenty-first century.

Unions are faced with the effects of unfair globalization, attacks on their existence by supporters of neo-liberalism, rapidly changing technology in the workplace, undemocratic global governing bodies and expanding informal economies in which people try to make a living as best they can, as well as other challenges such as the worst forms of child labour and HIV/AIDS. Learning how to address these and other issues effectively is the key to the continuing health and growth of the labour movement. And the key to learning in the labour movement is effective union education. Improving the funding of union education, linking it to labour research and workplace issues, making it relevant to a broader spectrum of working people, updating its methodologies and training its practitioners will help the movement learn how to create the new knowledge it needs to face the challenges ahead.

The present paper is not intended to provide solutions to the problems facing unions and union education. Its aim is to provide an overview of the state of union education in the world today, in order to help participants of the Symposium in their discussions. It is based on the deliberations and conclusions of the labour educators who attended two meetings organized by the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) in preparation for the Symposium. Among other things, the paper underscores the need for long-term initiatives to make union education more effective, which might be directed at:

- creating a baseline of information on existing structures, programmes and personnel and identifying union education needs at all levels in the labour movement;
- promoting dialogue between all the partners involved in union education to improve the coordination of activities, focus resources more effectively and create needs-driven opportunities, especially for unions in developing countries;
- encouraging innovative pedagogical approaches, delivery instruments and partnerships which promote the creation of new educational programmes, curricula and course materials based on the needs and aspirations of workers and their unions;
- developing union education networks for knowledge sharing, capacity building and influencing social and economic policies;
- initiating union education activities to promote the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

These themes are addressed with the underlying assumption that all union education work should promote solidarity and action, which are the two key elements of unionism. The Symposium itself will reflect these elements as its participants devise new and effective ways in which union education can help improve the conditions of working people all over the world.

The present paper focuses on how union education can help the labour movement address issues such as lifelong learning and the informal economy and on how such education can be improved. It provides an overview of the current status of union education in the world, describes the backdrop needed to develop new pedagogical approaches and points to some of the issues which will need to be discussed if union education is to continue its historically crucial role in helping unionists learn to provide better protection to working people.

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Director a.i.,
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June 2007.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
ACTRAV	ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
AMRC	Asia Monitor Research Centre
APADEP	African Workers' Participation Development Programme
CAW	Canadian Auto Workers' Union
CISL	Italian Confederation of Workers' Trade Unions
CNM/CUT	National Metalworkers' Confederation, affiliated to the CUT
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CUT	Single Confederation of Workers of Brazil
DGB	German Confederation of Trade Unions
DITSELA	Development Institute for Training, Support and Education for Labour (South Africa)
ETUC	European Trade Union Confederation
ETUCO	European Trade Union College
ETUI-REHS	European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health and Safety
FEDUSA	Federation of Unions of South Africa
FNV	Netherlands Confederation of Trade Unions
GLU	Global Labour University
GMB	General, Municipal and Boilermakers' Union (United Kingdom)
GUF	Global Union federation
GURN	Global Union Research Network
HTUP	Harvard Trade Union Programme (United States)
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
ICFTU-AFRO	African Regional Organization of the ICFTU
ICFTU-APRO	Asia and Pacific Regional Organization of the ICFTU
ICFTU-ORIT	Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers of the ICFTU
ILO	International Labour Office/Organization

IILS	International Institute for Labour Studies
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
JIT learning	Just-in-time learning
LEARN	Labour Education and Research Network of the Philippines
NLC	National Labor College (United States)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OATUU	Organization of African Trade Union Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PANAF	Pan-African Workers' Education Programme
PEL	Paid educational leave
PFA	Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee of the ILO Governing Body
PIT-CNT	Workers' National Congress of Uruguay
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAK	Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions
SoliComm	Solidarity Communications System
SoliNet	Solidarity Network
TUAC	Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD
TUC	Trade Union Congress (United Kingdom)
TUTA	Trade Union Training Authority (Australia)
TUTF	Trade Union Trust Fund (Mauritius)
UALE	United Association for Labor Education (United States)
UAW	International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America
UTAL	University of Latin American Workers
WCL	World Confederation of Labour
WCL-BATU	Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists of the WCL
WCL-CLAT	Latin American Central of Workers of the WCL
WCL- DOAWTU	Democratic Organization of African Workers' Trade Unions of the WCL
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
WTO	World Trade Organization

1. Union education

1.1. Union education in the twenty-first century

It is through union education that working people learn to be unionists. Union education is the ongoing process by which workers learn how to represent their co-workers at the workplace and in society by developing unions which are effective in collective bargaining, recruiting new members and taking political action. Hundreds of thousands of workers take part in formal union education activities every year in union schools and workshops and millions more learn about unions informally at the workplace during union meetings and discussions and through lobbying campaigns, strikes and other activities. The goals of union education are determined by workers who discuss their experiences and then express themselves through their representative organizations as they struggle for better lives for themselves, their families and the members of their community. Union education has always been at the core of union action. Not surprisingly, there are many different approaches to educating union members around the world, as well as different goals and political orientations. While this makes it difficult to understand how union education is conducted, it provides testimony to the richness and vast reach of union education.

One of the difficulties is that most union education activities in the past hundred or so years have been conducted locally or nationally, to achieve local or national goals. This means that, with a few exceptions, there are very few international overviews on how union education is practised. Neither are there any clear ideas on how union education can be promoted at the international level as globalization proceeds. This makes it difficult to develop plans to support union education globally.

1.2. Defining union education

A crucial problem is the lack of a common vocabulary. Words used to describe a particular teaching method might mean something quite different once translated into another language or national experience. It might prove difficult to build a lexicon of terms, with synonyms which could be acceptable to national or regional educators. Nevertheless, there is common ground on some definitions, as discussed below.

Education involving workers can be divided into three categories. The first category is union education, which is educational activity conducted by unions for their purposes. It covers functional education (which refers to training members in the operations of their unions) and subject education (which takes general subjects such as economics and applies them to union issues such as fair globalization or enterprise analysis). The second category is workers' education, which refers to programmes aimed at the educational attainment of working people. It involves programmes related to literacy, numeracy, learning a second language and other general education activities. The third category is labour studies, which involves the open, impartial and critical study of labour in society, as practised by universities. The term "labour education" is often used to refer to union education and to labour studies when practised by union or university-based educators on the behalf of unions. Labour education is a branch of adult education and could benefit from innovations in the field of union education and labour studies.

Unions can be involved in the delivery of activities in all three categories. They can organize union education, for example, to train health and safety representatives. They can be involved in workers' education by conducting literacy programmes. They can

participate in labour studies to analyse, for instance, the sociological make-up of the working population of a country. And they can provide sponsorship to enable individuals to take courses.

It is important to recognize that unions can be involved in the whole continuum: from union education to workers' education to labour studies. The emphasis a union places on each will depend on the make-up of its membership, its goals, its resources, the economic structure of the country and, sometimes in developing countries, the priorities set by donors.

1.3. Primary characteristics of union education

Despite the wide range of approaches and programmes dictated by local circumstances, union education around the world shares certain primary characteristics. It is group oriented, as compared to the individual-centred approach of schools and universities. It is part of the political agenda of the union and is therefore not at all impartial in an academic sense. It is based absolutely on the experiences and needs of people in their workplaces. And participants are expected to take the knowledge they have gained and share it with their fellow workers. Far from being a weak version of the education provided by the public education system, union education is a vibrant, politically-oriented branch of adult education with its own pedagogical approaches, modes of delivery, courses, structures and actors.

Those actors include both organizations and individuals. The organizations include international confederations such as the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU), the Global Union federations, national federations of unions, sectoral unions, provincial and state organizations, local unions and the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV). Individuals include union leaders, staff and volunteers, as well as independent educators.

Labour educators are people working in union departments, university labour studies centres and educational organizations allied to the union movement. They can also be independent educators. What they have in common is that they practise union education, aimed at building the capacities of unions. They often find themselves in difficult positions as they are expected to follow the political directives of the organizations they work for while encouraging working people to build their critical capacities. They themselves may lack the training or education needed for particular aspects of the job as they face changing conditions in the workplace and new issues being raised by phenomena such as globalization. Just as workers need lifelong learning, labour educators need constantly to upgrade their skills in terms of pedagogy and modes of delivery.

1.4. Union education's twin challenges

Any discussion of international union education today must start with the recognition of two profoundly influential phenomena: the growing importance of lifelong learning and the existence of large informal economies in many countries, particularly in the developing world. How unions and labour educators respond to these two issues will greatly influence the development of union education as the twenty-first century unfolds.

1.4.1. Union education and lifelong learning

Especially since the introduction of the microcomputer into workplaces in the 1980s, the pace of technological change which many working people have to confront has been accelerating rapidly. One consequence, notably in economically advanced countries, has been an increase in the number of workers who manage information (data-entry clerks, for example) and who create new knowledge (such as computer program designers). In the 1990s, the advent of the Worldwide Web quickened further the rate of technological change and spurred even faster globalization as companies and workers around the world began to communicate more easily.

A result of this change has been a greater emphasis on continuing education throughout a worker's life. Despite the extended duration of primary, secondary and university education, the knowledge and skills acquired at these levels are not sufficient for a career spanning three or four decades. In many countries, it is no longer possible to train a worker in a single technology at the start of his or her working life and to expect that technology to remain substantially unchanged for years.

This has two consequences of particular importance to unions. First, workers employed in information-handling or knowledge-creation organizations are, out of necessity, demanding access to educational opportunities throughout their careers. Second, many workers are frustrated by the lack of opportunities provided by their employers. This creates a situation which unions can exploit to enhance their representation of members and their visibility as active players in technologically dominated economies and workplaces. Many unions are now giving greater priority to educational demands such as tuition rebates, paid educational leave, distance education programmes and access to national educational structures. They are arguing that lifelong education in rapidly changing workplaces is as much a right as health and safety provisions. Adequate lifelong education is increasingly becoming a major bargaining demand.

Nevertheless, it has to be remembered that, even if millions of workers are employed in rapidly changing, technology-based workplaces and are therefore in need of lifelong training, many millions more work in informal economies, often using no technology at all, and have their own crucial educational needs.

1.4.2. Union education in the informal economy

In many countries, especially in the developing world, the inability of governments and the private sector to create new jobs is forcing millions of people, especially women and young people, to find work as best they can outside formal structures. The informal economy, which covers many activities in the commerce, production and services sectors, has emerged as an instant solution to the problem of unemployment and underemployment. The result is precarious employment characterized by instability, low income, lack of social protection and absence of freedom of association and collective bargaining.

There are no quick, readily available answers as to how unions can help workers in the informal economy. But this situation opens an important opportunity to expand the role of union education in the labour movement. Workers involved in learning activities organized by unions could participate in the creation of the new knowledge needed to improve the situation. Workers in the informal economy themselves could devise effective approaches to strengthening the role of unions in the informal economy.

The key to addressing the needs of workers in the informal economy may lie in providing more education for union leaders, staff and members. Although it is not the role of labour educators to develop policies to tackle such serious issues as those facing workers in the informal economy, these educators have a clear and essential mandate to provide educational resources and opportunities so that union leaders and members can learn how to confront issues crucial to the labour movement.

2. Union education as practised internationally

As unions confront challenges such as those posed by the need for lifelong learning and the need to organize workers in the informal economy, they can draw on a rich history of union education. Internationally, the labour movement has some 100 years of experience based on the work of international union federations, such as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the World Confederation of Labour (WCL) and the WFTU and regional union federations such as the OATUU. With the unification of the ICFTU and the WCL in 2006 to create the ITUC and the commitment of the WFTU and the OATUU to labour education, an important new chapter in union education is opening.

In its constitution, adopted by the Founding Congress of the ITUC in Vienna in November 2006, the ITUC pledges to carry forward the struggle of generations of working women and men “for the emancipation of working people and a world in which the dignity and rights of all human beings are assured, and each is able to pursue their well-being and to realize their potential at work and in society”. In its constitution, the ITUC affirms its dedication to the effective pursuit of this struggle by recognizing its permanent responsibility “to be a countervailing force in the global economy, committed to securing a fair distribution of wealth and income within and between countries, protection of the environment, universal access to public goods and services, comprehensive social protection, lifelong learning and decent work opportunities for all”.

The ITUC constitution thus recognizes lifelong learning as a basic human right, not only for those employed in knowledge-based economies, but for all workers, wherever they are employed and whatever their employment. It is within this context of lifelong learning as a human right that union education is situated: it is simultaneously a way of building unionism and part of the struggle for decent education for all workers. Labour organizations are committed to both union education (education to build the effectiveness of unions) and workers’ education (which is more focused on the general education of working people). The term “labour education” is often used as a synonym for union education because it is considered education conducted by and for the labour movement and is used as such in the present paper.

The Programme of the ITUC, adopted by its Founding Congress, sets the essential policy directives and action plans for the Confederation’s approach to education. It establishes that it is the “responsibility of governments to guarantee the right to education” and that making “lifelong education a reality for all is the key to participation in the knowledge society”. It affirms that “vital public services, notably education, [...] must be excluded from negotiations on trade liberalisation, with governments retaining the right to regulate and to protect in the public interest”, and that issues such as child labour should be addressed through “universal public provision of free, compulsory, quality education”. It stresses that labour organizations need to develop “trade union education on HIV/AIDS” and that young people need “quality education and training”. By calling on the ITUC to address these and other issues through education, the 1,700 delegates attending the Founding Congress affirmed the labour movement’s historical commitment to promote education as an essential tool for social action.

The Programme of the ITUC is even more specific when it refers to union education. It proclaims that: “Trade union education is a vital instrument for building the capacity of trade unions and their members to enable them to improve and strengthen their organisations and to play a constructive, purposeful and creative role in their workplaces and societies.” The ITUC is called upon to “empower working women and men and

strengthen affiliates, particularly in developing countries, through international programmes of education”, which should “reflect the main lines of action of the ITUC and be an integral part of its strategy to address the current globalisation process”. The delegates were clear: union education which reflects the ITUC’s policies should be built into the Confederation’s action plans.

The Programme of the ITUC points out that the richness of the educational experiences of its two major founding bodies (the ICFTU and the WCL), as well as those of previously non-affiliated organizations, should provide inspiration to the new Confederation on how to pursue its objectives. Special mention is made in the Programme of the ICFTU’s 18th World Congress, held in Miyazaki, Japan, in 2004, and the 26th Congress of the WCL, held in Houffalize, Belgium, in 2005. The synergy created by the unification of the WCL and the ICFTU could represent the start of an important chapter in the development of union education. There is a recognition, however, of the need to build on past policy positions and action programmes, rather than start off with an empty slate.

2.1. The educational experiences of the ICFTU

The ICFTU first formally set its goals for union education at its 1952 Education Conference in Berlin, at which it stated:

... trade union education is not an end in itself, but one of the steps in the advance towards emancipation of mankind. The goal would be reached only when the broad masses of the workers and those representing them are in possession of all the knowledge and experience necessary to change the structures of society and to banish want and fear forever.¹

The statement clearly defines union education as the mass education of workers aimed at changing society for the better. Fifty-five years later, after millions of unionists have participated in union education, the principle that union education should be aimed at the mass of workers still stands. The major difference is that, today, union education is aimed not only at changing individual societies, but, because of globalization, the whole world. That is why the Programme of the ITUC commits the Confederation to using union education “as an integral part of its strategy to address the current globalisation process”.

However, union education, especially international union education, needs to be adequately funded. Starting in the early 1950s, the ICFTU created a number of funding programmes. These initiatives resulted in the creation in 1957 of the International Solidarity Fund which raised US\$12 million in its first seven years. The money was targeted especially at building the capacities of unions in developing countries. It was used for funding labour colleges and the ICFTU’s regional organizations, providing direct assistance to unions, covering expenses related to ICFTU representatives in the regions and helping the International Trade Secretariats (now the Global Union federations) with their parallel educational projects.

In 1967, in Montreal, the ICFTU organized the First World Conference on Education in the Labour Movement. The Second World Conference on Trade Union Education was held in 1994 in Elsinore, Denmark. The Education Policy adopted by the ICFTU at the second conference remained its guide until the creation of the ITUC in 2006 and still reflects the views of a large part of the international labour movement on the aims and

¹ Cited in: *ICFTU: Guidelines on planning and evaluation of trade union education* (Brussels, 1991), p. 5.

practices of union education. The policy outlined six major goals for union education. These were:

- building solidarity and democracy;
- developing strong and effective unions, especially in developing countries;
- influencing society;
- promoting equality;
- ensuring strategic approaches to the provision of union education;
- improving the practice of union and workers' education.

According to the policy, the key to realizing the goals of the labour movement was global trade union solidarity, and the key to developing such solidarity was trade union education, which "should contribute to a lifelong learning process of personal development, within the union and community, reinforcing democratic principles at all levels".

The Action Programme which accompanied the Education Policy set out a number of priorities for the ICFTU, including:

- building capacity and assisting unions in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
- developing participative methods and regionally adaptable educational material;
- exchanging information globally, including through the use of computer communication networks;
- integrating international issues into regional and local educational activities;
- conducting ongoing programme evaluation.

It is pointed out in the policy's preamble that, in implementing the policy, "proper consideration must be given to the different needs of unions operating under very different circumstances, in developing countries, in the newly industrialising countries, in Central and Eastern Europe and in the industrialised countries".

In 1996, the ICFTU's 16th World Congress decided to decentralize responsibility for project work and union education to the ICFTU's regional organizations; thus, the education department at the Confederation's headquarters in Brussels was disbanded. The responsibility for the planning and implementation of the ICFTU's union education activities was handed over to the ICFTU's three regional organizations: the African Regional Organization (ICFTU-AFRO), the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ICFTU-ORIT) and the Asia and Pacific Regional Organization (ICFTU-APRO). By 2006, 70 per cent of the voluntary contributions to the International Solidarity Fund was being channelled directly to the regional organizations.

The decentralization of the ICFTU's union education and development activities was accompanied by a recognition that the global cohesion of the organization needed to be maintained and that communication between headquarters and the regional organizations needed to be improved. Therefore, in 2003, the ICFTU established a Trade Union Development Cooperation and Education Unit. The individual engaged to run the unit's affairs was given the task of improving dialogue with donor organizations and making the

ICFTU more responsive to the technical reporting needs of donors. Support for the unit's work was reinforced in 2004 at the ICFTU's 18th World Congress, in Miyazaki, Japan, at which the Congress adopted a resolution welcoming the establishment of the unit and stressing "the need for the ICFTU headquarters to make renewed efforts to assume fully its worldwide responsibilities in respect of [union] development cooperation, and to ensure effective coordination with its regional organisations". An Action Programme included in the resolution called on the ICFTU and regional organizations, working together with global unions partners and affiliates:

- to provide for the better coordination and administration of programmes to develop union education, with particular emphasis on ensuring gender perspectives and the involvement of young people;
- to initiate a review of existing union educational materials, including those available through information technologies, so that priority needs are met and duplication avoided;
- to construct an operational partnership with the ILO and ACTRAV, ensuring maximum use of the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin;
- to work with ICFTU affiliates and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (TUAC-OECD) to influence the development policies of countries so that they reflect trade union objectives and include unions as partners in this development;
- to work with the Global Union federations to mobilize funding and possibly establish a foundation for administering ICFTU union development activities.

These goals and directives for action constituted the ICFTU's policy on union education as it headed into the unification process with the WCL in 2006.

2.2. The WCL and education

From its inception, the WCL maintained a strong tradition of union education, provided mainly through its three regional organizations: the Democratic Organization of African Workers' Trade Unions (WCL-DOAWTU), the Latin American Central of Workers (WCL-CLAT) and the Brotherhood of Asian Trade Unionists (WCL-BATU). At its 24th Congress, held in Bangkok in 1997, the WCL reaffirmed this commitment by authorizing the organization of a multi-year programme of union education aimed at asserting the WCL identity through the continuous dissemination of its values, principles and activities within all its affiliated organizations.

The programme was organized into two time periods: 1999–2001 and 2001–05. Evaluation workshops were conducted at the end of each period. The lessons learned during the programme were taken into consideration by the WCL during its discussions of union education and information at its 26th Congress, held in Houffalize, Belgium, in 2005, and are reflected in the outcome documents of the Congress, which, among other things, recognize that action should be taken:

- to make workers aware of their social rights, particularly freedom of association;
- to make workers more aware of the importance of international and regional cooperation and trade agreements;
- to conduct awareness-raising campaigns on trade union freedom;

-
- to improve communication with the WCL's grass-roots organizations using new technologies such as the Internet and electronic networks;
 - to facilitate the acquisition of information technologies by member organizations;
 - to develop information campaigns focusing on the living standards of the poor and vulnerable workers especially in sectors such as mines, tourism and agriculture.

These were the WCL's last discussions on the subject before it and the ICFTU headed into their 2006 unification process to form the ITUC.

2.3. The WFTU and education

The WFTU is a strong supporter of education for workers and, in particular, labour education for union members. At its 14th World Trade Union Congress, held in New Delhi in 2000, the WFTU called for more training, education and culture for all workers, to enable them "to gain access to any responsibility or position within their capabilities". The 420 delegates who attended the Congress called for the development of programmes for trade union education, the establishment of trade union educational centres, the organization of educational seminars and measures to update methods of work. At the 15th World Trade Union Congress, held in Havana in 2005, the WFTU reinforced its commitment to education by adopting a resolution which stated that the trade union and working class movement must focus its attention on education and on working class policy training.

The WFTU has paid particular attention to the educational needs of young people. The delegates at its 2000 Congress invited "trade unions to devote greater efforts to involve young people in all their activities and to promote united actions for the achievement of demands concerning education, training, decent work and their rights at work and in society". In one of the resolutions of the Congress, the WFTU requests governments to implement educational policies to make education at all levels accessible to young people and insists that governments and employers must create conditions to provide professional training for young workers during working hours.

The WFTU has also paid attention to how technological change can affect workers' rights and has called for greater efforts to promote education and training in that regard. The delegates attending the 14th World Trade Union Congress passed a resolution emphasizing the need to strengthen trade union action further in order:

- to secure the right to training and requalification and the right to receive this training during working hours;
- to secure the right of trade unions to be consulted on all matters of training, retraining and continuous education;
- to ensure the participation of trade union representatives in the implementation of all training programmes.

In 2008, the WFTU plans to create a Labour Education Institute linked to the training centres of some of its affiliates.

2.4. The OATUU and union education

The OATUU, formed in 1973, is a federation for trade union centres. It has a strong focus on labour education, as mandated by its constitution, according to which the organization should have a role in the “education of the masses and the training of managerial staff, as necessary conditions for genuine trade unionism for the consolidation of workers’ unity and the improvement of their gains”. The organization’s policies call for lifelong learning and affirm that education in society should be adapted to the social, economic, political, and cultural realities of Africa. The OATUU conducts numerous educational activities, including:

- Continuous or long-term activities – for example, its Human Resources Development and Capacity Building Programme, which was initiated in 1993, has been conducting two activities per year. Themes have included economic integration in Africa, the restructuring of African economies and conflict prevention. The organization also operates a long-term health and safety programme with a special emphasis on HIV/AIDS. Another major programme is the Pan-African Workers’ Education Programme (PANAF), which is based on workers’ self-education using study circles organized at workplaces.
- Short-term activities such as workshops – for example, a recent workshop concentrated on harnessing African trade union contributions to the political, social and economic initiatives of the African Union.
- The development of study manuals. Manuals have been produced on health and safety subjects to support the work of the PANAF study circles.
- Research activities – for example, the organization has produced research reports on the health and safety conditions of workers in a number of African countries.

2.5. Shared values and goals

Together, the action plans and policy directions adopted by the ICFTU, the WCL, the ITUC, the WFTU and the OATUU provide the backdrop for the international labour movement as it designs its union education programmes. These action plans and educational programmes are compatible because they share the same values and goals and are focused on the needs of working people and the development of strong unions. These values and goals, which are evident in the policy statements and action programmes adopted over the years, provide the philosophical base of international union education as its practitioners develop its strategies, programmes, pedagogical approaches and organizational structures. Some of these are set out below.

- Working people are not commodities to be bought and sold like goods on the global labour market, but are human beings with social, economic and political aspirations for their lives at work, at home and in society.
- Democratic political systems which promote respect for human rights, freedom of expression, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity and gender equality and which guarantee the rights of individuals of all sexual orientations and of all those with physical disabilities are best for building human-centred societies.
- All governmental bodies and employer entities, such as corporations, exist to serve the economic and social needs of people, not the reverse.
- Decent work is a basic human right which must be guaranteed to all.

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- Freedom to associate in independent unions and to bargain collectively with employers under legislative protection are basic rights that workers should be able to enjoy without interference.
 - Unions should be agents of social change aimed at improving the lives of their members and everybody in society.
 - Education, both at the start of life and lifelong, is a basic human right and must be respected, especially as globalization is changing employment patterns and as economies are increasingly based on information handling and knowledge creation.
 - Public education should be funded and organized by democratic governments and should not be subject to the privatization imperatives of international trade arrangements.

2.6. Union education and solidarity values

These values and goals, and others focused on enhancing the human condition, are at the core of a global union culture. It is clear that such a culture exists whenever unionists meet internationally. Despite differences in nationalities, cultures and languages, unionists at international meetings immediately feel a rapport and sense of community – a solidarity – that can only come from sharing common values and working together for unions and working people.

Union education can promote this sense of international solidarity and union culture in a number of ways. It can provide workers with the basic training needed to create and maintain economically viable and democratic labour organizations. It can create opportunities for reflection on the complicated issues facing labour organizations today. It can build political awareness as working people struggle to understand why their needs are subordinated to the needs of corporations and undemocratic global governing structures. It can provide working people with opportunities to see how their interests can be better served by collaborating with co-workers rather than relying exclusively on the good will of employers. It can promote gender equality and respect for cultural, linguistic, sexual and physical diversity. It can encourage young people to join and remain in unions as they struggle with precarious employment, frequently changing jobs and a lack of basic benefits such as health care and pension plans. It can help organize workers in informal economies into unions. It can help serve the lifelong learning needs of union members. And it can do much more to help develop the labour movement. Union education is an essential tool in the building of participative lifelong learning for union members, staff and leaders, as they create and strengthen unions.

The acceptance of union education as an essential tool for the development of labour unions is made clear whenever labour organizations come together at meetings, conventions or congresses to set their policies and design their action plans. Invariably, there are resolutions or suggested action programmes referring to the need for education, either directed to union members or the general public. It is these resolutions and programmes adopted by union members or representatives of affiliates which provide labour educators with their legitimacy to instruct, facilitate and act.

2.7. Supporting the educational initiatives of the ITUC, the WFTU and the OATUU

A primary principle of union education is that its basic programmes must be based on decisions made by workers and their representatives. In unions, the broad scope and

sometimes the specific operations of educational programmes must be authorized by members in union meetings, conventions or congresses. In labour organizations such as national or international confederations, the programmes must be determined by representatives of the affiliated bodies. For example, according to the Programme of the ITUC, adopted by the Founding Congress of the ITUC, “educational programmes should reflect the main lines of action of the ITUC”. This means that union education is not an academic pursuit aimed at the impartial study of a subject such as labour relations or economics; that is the role of university-based labour studies. Union education is not impartial. It is aimed resolutely at the strengthening of unions as they struggle for better working and living conditions for all working people. It is education for political and workplace action with its aims set by members or affiliates. It is up to labour educators to support the work of their organizations in pursuing those aims, for example by:

- planning broad-ranging educational programmes which reflect the requirements of members and their representatives;
- providing guidance on the basic functions of union operations;
- guiding the development of theories of education and action based on workplace experiences;
- devising pedagogical approaches which respect the prior workplace-based experience and learning of participants;
- creating educational materials and delivery systems;
- ensuring that unionists have access to training materials and information when they need it;
- organizing educational activities such as seminars and workshops;
- creating opportunities for lifelong learning.

Questions such as how these aims are being pursued, what subjects are being addressed, what role labour educators play in the process, how funding can be organized, what educational theories can be applied and other crucial issues are addressed in the remainder of the present paper.

What follows is based on the discussions and conclusions of two meetings of labour educators which preceded the International Workers’ Symposium on union education for which the present paper was prepared. Like the Symposium, the meetings were organized by ACTRAV and the Programme for Workers’ Activities based at the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, Italy. The first meeting was held in Turin in 2005 and was attended by ICFTU labour educators from all three of the Confederation’s regional structures. This was the first time since the ICFTU’s decentralization of labour education ten years earlier that educators had been brought together to discuss their work. The second meeting, also convened in Turin, was held in 2006 and was attended by labour educators from both the ICFTU and the WCL. Educators from both organizations worked together for the first time to help plan the educational initiatives of what would be known as the ITUC. The broad scope of the present paper, as well the specific topics it addresses, were discussed with international trade union organizers.

3. Making international union education more effective

Union education can be a vitally important element in the strategies developed by labour organizations as they confront the problems raised by expanding informal economies and the need for lifelong learning in knowledge-based economies. But, in order to be effective, especially at the international level, union education needs to renew itself in a number of areas and focus on long-term initiatives, which might be directed at:

- (1) Creating a baseline of information on existing structures, programmes and personnel and identifying union education needs at all levels in the labour movement.
- (2) Promoting dialogue between all the partners involved in union education to improve the coordination of activities, focus resources more effectively and create needs-driven opportunities, especially for unions in developing countries.
- (3) Encouraging innovative pedagogical approaches, delivery instruments and partnerships which promote the creation of new educational programmes, curricula and course materials based on the needs and aspirations of workers and their unions.
- (4) Developing union education networks for knowledge sharing, capacity building and influencing social and economic policies.
- (5) Initiating union education activities to promote the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

3.1. Creating a baseline of information on existing structures

Responding to the needs of labour educators working at the local, regional and international levels is key to the development of initiatives aimed at improving union education. Labour educators are in constant touch with union members and in a position to understand what is needed in order to implement the educational elements of the action programmes set by their organizations.

It is difficult, however, to respond adequately to the needs of the world's labour educators as there is no clear understanding of who they are, where they are working or what structures they are working within. The last global overview of union education was written in 1985.² Since then, union education has been constantly changing as it addresses new issues with updated practices. Government funding schemes for union education which were once generous in parts of the world have been drastically reduced or eliminated. And the labour movement itself has reduced funding as union memberships is dwindling and as the existence of unions is attacked, forcing unions to focus their finances on the absolute essentials such as collective bargaining and organizing. It is safe to say that, in the 22 years since the state of labour education in the world was last reviewed, things have changed. But it is unclear how or to what extent.

Obviously, then, the first step in any programme aimed at bolstering union education around the world must be to create a baseline of information. Only by doing so can labour organizations know how to respond to the needs of labour educators and be able to

² P. Hopkins, *Workers' Education: An international perspective* (Milton Keynes, United Kingdom, Open University Press, 1985).

evaluate the impact of new initiatives. The second essential step is to build systems which continuously keep information up to date. If such systems are not built, the same situation will prevail five or ten years from now.

Some recent regional overviews of the situation exist. For example, the (then) European Trade Union College (ETUCO) published in 2000 an overview of union education in 15 European countries. Overviews of other regions, specifically Africa, Latin America, North America, Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and Asia and the Pacific, need to be prepared.

A starting point from which to create the needed baseline of information would be to catalogue the existing structures and activities and compile a directory of who is practising union education. It is not possible to improve support for union education without knowing how it is being conducted or by whom. The existing structures are discussed below.

3.1.1. Education departments

Many labour organizations, especially those in economically advanced countries, have education units staffed by one or more labour educators. In the ITUC, labour education has been upgraded from being a unit activity to an activity directed by a Deputy Secretary-General with two people assigned to it. All the Global Union federations have units or people assigned to oversee labour education matters. Furthermore, both the WFTU and the OATUU have designated labour education officers.

Except for a few notable exceptions, union departments are almost exclusively aimed at providing or encouraging education on union functions such as shop steward training or local union accounting. Some larger departments may also conduct courses on subjects such as economics, aimed at increasing comprehension of the issues facing unions. Most union education departments have been placed under financial duress in the past few years as membership numbers stagnate or dwindle and, in some cases, government financing is reduced or eliminated.

While most large unions have education officers or units, political and financial support from senior officers can often be quite weak because of a lack of awareness of what labour education can do for the union. Consequently, staff turnover is high and operations are severely underfunded, which makes it difficult to organize events or produce material. Often, the only money available is from donors, which leads to donor-directed projects which might not always suit the needs of the organization.

Nevertheless, despite the financial stress of the past few years, many large labour organizations have maintained their education departments. The departments could be networked to enable them to share resources and to facilitate contact between their educators. Unfortunately, there is not even a partial list of the union education departments in the world.

3.1.2. Labour colleges

Labour colleges are organizations which support labour education in a country or region by conducting courses for union members. They are characterized by their focus on serving many unions (not just one) and are usually the project of a national confederation. They have a long history, starting from the folk schools in the Nordic countries and the labour college movements in the United Kingdom and the United States before the Second World War, which means that the structures which have been developed are varied and country specific. The courses they conduct range widely in duration and content, but are usually aimed at providing education on subjects not normally conducted by individual

unions (such as advanced courses in labour history, economics and political science). Most colleges attempt to provide a coherent curriculum of subjects which participants must study before graduating. Some, such as the Ghana Trade Union College, have residential facilities. Others, like the Labour College of Canada, rent out hotel rooms or university facilities.

The creation of regional labour colleges was an important strategy for the ICFTU when it first started to focus on labour education in developing countries. These colleges were centres which could be used for training unionists more systematically than was possible at the national level. College instructors could also use them as bases from which they could travel to different areas in the region to run short-term courses. The first college was the ICFTU Asian Trade Union College, which was established in 1952 in Calcutta (as the city was then known) and which later moved to New Delhi. The success of the college led to the creation of the ICFTU African Labour College in Uganda in 1958 and plans for a francophone college in Côte d'Ivoire. In Latin America, the Institute for Labour Studies was created in 1962 and, in 1966, the ICFTU-ORIT college was established in Mexico. Thousands of unionists were trained at an especially crucial point in the history of developing countries, as they broke away from colonialism or dictatorships and their unions worked towards legitimacy and organizational viability.

In 1990, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) founded the European Trade Union College (ETUCO) to provide union education for its affiliates. In 2005, the college became a department of the European Trade Union Institute for Research, Education and Health and Safety (ETUI-REHS). The role of the ETUI-REHS Education Department is to devise and deliver training programmes for ETUC as a whole and introduce a European dimension to trade union education. It provides training for trainers, officers and workplace representatives, produces training material, coordinates a variety of educational projects at the European level and provides advice for training activities which are organized at the national level.

Despite some long-term successes, such as the National Labor College (NLC) in the United States, the history of labour colleges is marked by financial difficulties and closures. The African Labour College was shut down by the Government of Uganda in 1968 and plans for a college in Côte d'Ivoire were cancelled. The Clyde Cameron College, which was established in Australia in 1977 under the auspices of a union-friendly Government, was closed after a right-wing party took power in 1996. The Sozialakademie, operated by Germany's central confederation, the German Confederation of Trade Unions (DGB), was closed in 1998. The National Training Education Centre in North London, operated by the Trade Union Congress (TUC) of the United Kingdom, was shut down in 2000.

Some labour colleges have been created relatively recently, using innovative structures which respond to the need to educate labour activists while not removing them from their workplaces for long periods of time. The labour college of Quebec, Canada (Collège FTQ-Fonds), for example, provides training for practising unionists in a cycle of short residential periods interspersed with personal research projects guided by tutors. The goal is for the college to "become a generator of knowledge, not just a transmission belt for the thinking of the leadership".

The number of labour colleges in existence is difficult to determine because there is no central listing. A preliminary list is presented in Appendix I to the present paper. Before discussing how to network the colleges to share best practices and materials and keep labour educators in touch with each other, a list of existing colleges should be compiled.

3.1.3. Union training centres

Some unions have their own training centres. These vary from small efforts to multi-million dollar operations such as the Walter and May Reuther UAW Family Education Center in the United States which has superb educational facilities and even an 18-hole golf course. In the United Kingdom, the General, Municipal and Boilermakers' Union (GMB) has a large training centre in Manchester. In Italy, the country's largest union, the Italian Confederation of Workers' Trade Unions (CISL), has a centre near Florence. In Japan, the National Telephone and Telecommunications Union operates a large labour education centre. In Finland, the Central Organization of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK) has a development centre. And in Latin America, there are a number of centres operated by unions including the Single Confederation of Workers (CUT), Força Sindical and the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) of Brazil; the General Confederation of Workers (CGT) of Argentina; the Confederation of Workers of Venezuela (CTV); and the Workers' National Congress of Uruguay (PIT-CNT).

3.1.4. Labour universities

Labour universities which are accredited to grant degrees are rare. One of the few is the National Labor College (NLC) in the United States which offers undergraduate degree courses to union members, primarily in the United States, but also in other countries. Applicants are admitted to the college on the basis of recognized prior learning, relevant university studies or an associate degree. An associate degree is a degree taken over one or two years at a community college. An example is the associate degree in labour studies provided by Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies in Trinidad and Tobago which was started as an ILO initiative. Cipriani graduates have been able to attend the NLC to earn a full Bachelor of Arts degree. The NLC also provides a Master's degree programme in conjunction with two American universities.

The University of Latin American Workers (UTAL) was established in 1977 by the Latin American Central of Workers of the WCL (WCL-CLAT). It acts as an instrument of university and technical training. It also works as a component of the training process that starts at trade union schools at the grass-roots level, at national centres and at four subregional institutes. Based in Caracas, it provides degrees recognized by Venezuela's educational structure.

The Mongolian Labour Institute was established by Mongolia's national confederation in 1993. In 1996, it was accredited to award Bachelor's and Master's degrees in labour economics and business administration.

3.1.5. The Global Labour University network

In 2002, the Global Labour University (GLU) network, initiated by ACTRAV, was set up as a project funded by the Government of Germany. Its aim is to build a network comprising universities, trade unions, foundations and the ILO to facilitate discourse, stimulate research and provide university-level qualification programmes on the political, economic and social dimensions of globalization for labour and trade union experts.

Through workshops, annual international conferences, guest lectures and an internship programme with trade unions, close involvement of the labour movement in programme delivery is achieved. A common electronic information platform enables global knowledge sharing and exchange between students and lecturers.

In 2004, the GLU network partnered with two universities in Germany – the University of Kassel and the Berlin School of Economics – to help create a Master's

degree programme on labour policies and globalization. The network is currently working with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa, to set up a Master's degree programme on labour development. In Brazil, the University of Campinas, the CUT and the Social Observatory Institute will launch a programme in 2008. More information on the Global Labour University can be found at <http://www.global-labour-university.org/>.

3.1.6. Organizer institutes

Beginning in the late 1980s, some national labour movements began to place new emphasis on organizing non-union workers and their members. This resulted in the establishment of a number of educational institutes dedicated to the training of union organizers. In 1989, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) in the United States established the organizing institute to recruit and train union organizers and assist unions as they develop their organizing departments. The institute recruits both union members and students and trains them in classroom sessions and field placements. At the end of the training course, 95 per cent of participants are hired full-time by various unions. In 1994, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) established a programme called Union Works "as an avenue for recruiting, training and supporting talented young people into unions". Some ten years later, the programme was consolidated with the Australian Trade Union Training Authority (TUTA) to create the Organizing Centre which provides a range of educational programmes, including training for organizers. In 1998, the TUC in the United Kingdom established a similar institute, the TUC Organizing Academy. The Academy is now working with Newcastle College to provide a full training programme for potential organizers.

3.1.7. Occasional instructor programmes

In developed countries, union organizations often supplement the staff of their education departments with occasional instructors, in other words, members who are given time off work to conduct educational activities. In developing countries, occasional instructors may be the primary providers of labour education.

In both developing and developed countries, occasional instructors are an important way of building linkages between unions and their members. The instructors are working members. They bring the issues of the workplace to the union and when they return to the workplace they bring the views of the union leadership to their co-workers.

3.1.8. Educational programmes

Unions conduct a broad range of educational programmes. Some of these programmes are very basic, aimed at introducing new activists to how unions work. Others are quite extensive, such as the one operated by UNISON, a public services union in the United Kingdom which starts at an introductory level and proceeds all the way to entry into the country's Open University (see Appendix II). To make understanding the situation even more difficult, union educational programmes are conducted in almost every language in the world.

Listing all the union education programmes in the world would be impossible and, in any case, not very productive. However, a catalogue of some of the larger, more innovative programmes might help build networks among the labour educators operating them. Furthermore, such a catalogue might help educators in developing countries find contacts as they look for ways to solve problems and find teaching materials.

3.1.9. Adjunct labour education

Education in the labour movement is not limited to formal events such as day long seminars or long courses. Other activities – which could be referred to as adjunct – provide members with informal education about their union or the labour movement. The people who organize them can be considered as practising union education. Their activities include editing union newspapers and creating and maintaining union web sites. Working on the Labourstart web site, for example, which provides links to news stories about labour, can be considered an educational activity. Union meetings and conferences can also be educational events. Being a delegate at a union's national convention is as much a learning experience as attending a week-long course. Some unions, such as the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) have recognized this by organizing educational activities at the start of their national conventions which not only teach member delegates about the workings of the convention, but also about the union itself. The same strategy was used in 2003 when a group of women unionists was brought together before the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference to discuss the workings of the Conference and the issues on its agenda. There are countless opportunities for practising union education if it is built into the operations of the organization sponsoring it.

3.1.10. Allied organizations

In addition to unions which provide education, there are organizations which, while not unions, are linked to the labour movement and provide labour education.

An example of this sort of organization is the Development Institute for Training, Support and Education for Labour (DITSELA), which was created in 1997 by two South African labour federations, COSATU and the Federation of Unions of South Africa (FEDUSA). It is the largest union education institute in Africa and provides education and union support while organizing educator conferences and research projects. DITSELA's largest funder is the South African Government.

A number of organizations around the world blend union education activities with labour research. These include:

- The Labour Education and Research Network (LEARN) in the Philippines, which works with labour federations, unions and other groups such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and cooperatives and provides basic union education, conducts training courses for labour educators and organizes workshops on labour-related issues.
- The Asia Monitor Research Centre (AMRC), based in Hong Kong, which provides information and advice, prepares publications and documentation, offers internships, conducts research and provides training, labour networking and related services to unions, pro-labour groups, NGOs, academics and researchers.
- The Centre for Labour Information Services and Training (CLIST) in Thailand, which addresses labour and social issues through education, advocacy and legal support for workers and campaigns on issues such as occupational health and safety, transnational corporations, gender equality and HIV/AIDS.

3.1.11. The ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV)

The ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (which operates under its French acronym: ACTRAV) coordinates activities of the International Labour Office related to workers and

their organizations. The Office is the secretariat of the International Labour Organization, which is the only tripartite United Nations agency, bringing together representatives of governments, employers and workers to shape jointly its policies and programmes.

ACTRAV's mandate is to strengthen representative, independent and democratic trade unions in all countries, enable unions to play their role effectively in protecting workers' rights and interests and promote the ratification and implementation of ILO Conventions. It works to promote the concept of decent work, which calls for social justice, fundamental rights at work, the defence and expansion of social protection, full employment and equality of treatment for all working people.

ACTRAV's central office in Geneva includes specialists who help guide the educational and other activities of the Bureau's staff in regions around the world. These specialists also act as resource people in educational activities. ACTRAV's central office also publishes *Labour Education*, a magazine which has been produced since the 1950s.

ACTRAV has regional specialists in workers' education stationed in Lima, Addis Ababa, Pretoria and Bangkok. These specialists are committed full-time to helping unions in developing countries build their capacities through the use of labour education. ACTRAV also has 15 regional specialists in workers' activities, who also promote labour education, working in the ILO's regional multidisciplinary teams.

ACTRAV's training branch is the Workers' Activities Programme located at the ILO's International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin, Italy. The Programme (which is informally known as ACTRAV-Turin) specializes in training related to the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. It organizes courses in eight strategic areas, covering:

- international labour standards, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up (in particular with regard to freedom of association and collective bargaining) and the use of the ILO supervisory system;
- employment policies and poverty reduction strategies;
- social protection and occupational safety and health with a focus on HIV/AIDS;
- social dialogue and collective bargaining and organizing;
- gender and the rights of women workers;
- training the trainers and training methodologies for face to face and distance education;
- application of information technologies to trade unions;
- sectoral programmes for Global Union federations.

Courses are conducted in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Arabic.

Approximately 200 participants a year attend ACTRAV-Turin's 12 month-long union education courses in Turin. Many other participants are involved in shorter term activities both in Turin and in the regions. Between 1997 and 2006, ACTRAV-Turin trained more than 10,000 unionists in almost 400 activities.

In addition to its 12 core residential courses operated in Turin and many activities in the field, ACTRAV-Turin conducts online activities. It uses its Solidarity Communications System (SoliComm) for conducting online sessions before and after residential courses and for conducting activities completely via computer communications. SoliComm includes a

web search engine which is aimed exclusively at union web sites. This allows labour educators and others to search for information in a much more focused way than if they were using a general search engine such as those provided by Google or Yahoo.

The ACTRAV Workers' Education Programme at the Turin Centre is the largest international union education programme in the world.

3.1.12. *University-based programmes*

A number of universities operate programmes which work in conjunction with unions to provide education.

The Harvard Trade Union Programme (HTUP), for example, is focused on training unionists internationally. The Programme has been operating since 1942 and currently conducts a six-week session for approximately 25 union leaders every year. The education it offers is comparable to the advanced education that Harvard University offers to executive level individuals in business and government. Participants must have experience as an officer or staff member of a local, regional or national union.

An example of a labour educators' organization based mainly in university labour studies centres is the United Association for Labor Education (UALE) in the United States. The association was created in 2000 by the merger of two organizations that had existed for many years. Its approximately 50 centres provide labour education to union members throughout the country. They work closely with national and international unions, state federations, central labour councils and local unions.

3.1.13. *Labour educators*

There are thousands of full-time and part-time labour educators in the world. They work in every country, in almost every language. In developing countries, they are underpaid, overworked union staff members or volunteers. Collectively, labour educators in the world are a powerful resource for the international labour movement. But no list of labour educators in the world exists. There is no international network of labour educators.

3.2. Promoting dialogue between partners

Improving the capabilities of unions, especially those in developing countries where 75 per cent of union members in the world live, is a fundamental goal of the international labour movement. For instance, the constitution of the ITUC commits the Confederation to "render practical support to strengthen the capacities and membership of national trade union movements, through the coordinated provision of international development assistance". The key to improving the capabilities of unions is education. In the Programme of the ITUC, the Confederation's Founding Congress "recognises that trade union education is a vital instrument for building the capacity of trade unions and their members to enable them to improve and strengthen their organisations and to play a constructive, purposeful and creative role in their workplaces and societies". In the Programme, the Congress calls on the ITUC "to empower working women and men and strengthen affiliates, particularly in developing countries, through international programmes of education".

The Programme quite clearly places union development within the context of union education. Union development refers to the improvement of a union's capabilities to represent its members, recruit new members, put the view of workers forward to governments and employers and maintain its organizational infrastructures. Union

development is placed within the context of union education because it is only by creating a body of trained and educated labour leaders, staff, local union activists and members that unions can hope to sustain their development without permanent dependence on outside assistance.

3.2.1. Funding union education

Of course, labour education cannot be conducted without cost. And since most labour organizations in developing countries work with severely restricted budgets, many educational programmes must, if they are to exist at all, be financed at least partially by outside bodies. The funds come from a variety of sources, including:

- at the international labour movement level, the ITUC (through its Solidarity Fund, which is based on voluntary contributions) and Global Unions;
- national labour confederations;
- large national unions;
- labour-related agencies such as the Solidarity Center in the United States and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) and Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Germany;
- governmental bodies and agencies.

The number of actors, the range of issues, the priorities and requirements of funders and the needs of unions in the developing world are all factors which contribute to a complex funding situation which has been debated extensively ever since funding for union development began in the 1950s. This debate has been centred on three basic issues: the need for funders to receive transparent and professional accounts of the funds they provide; the relationship between the priorities of the funders and the perceived needs in the regions; and the need to coordinate regional programmes in order to avoid duplication and maximize the effect of the funds spent on union development. These questions were at the core of the debates on union education and development at the ICFTU's 18th World Congress, held in Miyazaki, Japan, in 2004. The Action Programme adopted by the Congress as part of its resolution on trade union development cooperation and education included commitments:

- to implement a strategic plan for union development involving all actors and aimed at creating strong, independent unions with a priority focus on organizing and collective bargaining;
- to expand the possibilities for increasing the number of union development programmes by ensuring professional standards in project management and administration;
- to ensure proper coordination of projects and programmes within the Confederation;
- to coordinate activities between development partners by providing information about projects and examples of good practice;
- to guarantee adherence to the Confederation's policy on gender perspectives and the inclusion of young people's issues;
- to initiate a review of union education methodologies and materials to identify best practices, including those based on information technology (IT).

The use of information technology for union development and education has been a constant theme in the action programmes of labour organizations since the 1980s when microcomputers first appeared. The action programmes of the ICFTU and WCL and the labour educators responsible for implementing those plans call for efforts:

- to help unions acquire IT equipment and learn how to use it;
- to develop a database and network to help development partners share information;
- to create a network of labour educators similar to the existing network of labour researchers, the Global Union Research Network (GURN);
- to develop a database for global labour educators containing information about education departments, programmes and educators;
- to provide basic union education material about the international labour movement for distribution via the Internet;
- to complement traditional face-to-face union educational courses with distance education provided via the Internet.

3.2.2. Increasing available funds

Finding more money to fund educational programmes and activities is not a simple task, given the multiple interests and strategies of the many actors involved. But it needs to be done. The ITUC Founding Congress, in the Programme it adopted for the ITUC, called on the Confederation to mobilize increased resources for development cooperation. This reinforced a previous call, made by the ICFTU's 18th World Congress, in Miyazaki, Japan, on the "ICFTU, its regional organisations and affiliates and its Global Union partners to work together to mobilise increased resources for development cooperation, and to ensure that they are used effectively for the achievement of clearly defined objectives, as adopted at the 2nd ICFTU World Conference on Trade Union Education, namely strengthening solidarity, building strong and effective unions, influencing society, promoting equality and organising and recruiting".

The key to increasing the available resources, according to the Action Programme adopted in Miyazaki, is to build the framework of an agreed global strategy. Such a strategy has to involve a number of factors. For instance, it should increase the professional management of projects so they can meet their goals, make the administration of the projects transparent so that donors and other partners can see how the projects are managed and provide rigorous evaluation of the impacts of projects. The idea is that, if donors can see that projects are being administered transparently and producing significant results, they are more likely to increase their support. For this to happen however, the project managers need to be trained in the efficient operation of projects. Labour education is the key first step to increasing support from the donor community.

A second step is to build the capacity of the central organization to help coordinate the funding of projects and provide support for projects which are faced with increasingly stricter reporting requirements. This is why the ICFTU created its Trade Union Development and Education Unit in 2003. The demands on the unit were enormous, however, and the resources available to it were quite limited. For example, the unit was called upon to create a database of donors and projects, but, because of a lack of resources, it was not able to do so. It may be necessary, according to the Action Programme adopted in Miyazaki, to consider establishing "an institutional body, or foundation, for the specific purpose of administering ICFTU development cooperation activity".

A third strategy is to increase the funding for union development from affiliated organizations. The ITUC's Solidarity Fund is a voluntary mechanism by which affiliates can contribute to the health and strength of unions, especially in developing countries. According to the Programme adopted by the Founding Congress of the ITUC, the Solidarity Fund will protect trade unions and trade unionists suffering oppression and strengthen trade union organization, recruitment and membership. Appeals and discussions about the Fund are always reinforced by two commitments: the first, to spend any monies on the basis of well-defined goals with clear reporting on the outcomes of their uses. And the second, to ensure that the goals and activities of the Fund are formulated in accordance with the policy priorities established by the Confederation and not, as stated in the resolution on trade union development cooperation and education adopted in Miyazaki, "simply as a reflection of either trade union or other donor preferences". The resolution includes an appeal to all affiliates to contribute to the Fund.

Other, less traditional, sources of raising funds are being considered. There is a recognition that other civil society organizations are competing for money from governments and that unions are operating in an unfavourable political climate. One avenue, according to the Action Programme adopted in Miyazaki, is to seek complementarities with other education programmes. These partnerships must, however, always respect the independence and goals of the unions involved. Furthermore, the union argument must be constantly reinforced: according to the abovementioned resolution, "the representation of the views and interests of working people at the workplace can only be undertaken by freely constituted and democratic unions, and unions must ensure that donors recognise that reality".

The resolution also suggested that the Confederation should "explore the potential to access private funding where that would be in conformity with trade union principles and objectives". One variant of this idea is to seek support from labour-friendly investment funds. For example, the labour college of Quebec, Canada (Collège FTQ-Fonds) is funded by the Solidarity Fund which operates in the province. The fund is a labour-sponsored investment organization with CAN\$7 billion in assets. It began its educational programme with an extensive programme of economic education for workers, and then later, in 2000, began to support the college financially.

Another innovative idea is for unions to become more involved in broader worker education as part of government-funded initiatives to confront the growth of information and knowledge economies. The public services union UNISON in the United Kingdom is an example of this strategy. It has recognized that its members want access to education because they are employed in workplaces which demand lifelong learning. As a service to its members, and also as a way to engage members in the union, UNISON has created its Open College which provides union education, basic learning skills, special courses for women and access (based on prior learning recognition) to the country's Open University. UNISON has accessed funding the Government of the United Kingdom is supplying for general adult education as the country's economy becomes more information- and knowledge-based. The formula might be duplicable in other countries. This source of funding might prove more secure than the direct support for union education some governments supplied in the past. Those schemes were subject to abrupt cancellation when a political party less supportive of union education was elected. This was the case when a right-wing Government took over in Australia in 1996 and the country's innovative and highly effective TUTA had its budget slashed to almost nothing. The same sort of situation occurred in Canada and the Labour College of Canada had to suspend activities for a number of years before it could find alternate sources of funding. Although it is difficult to remove legislated support for programmes aimed at increasing the general education of workers, it is not impossible, as unions in the Nordic countries discovered when right-wing parties started taking power in the 1990s. Still, UNISON has produced a model which

allows a union to find funds while servicing the educational needs of its members. It could provide a model for other national labour movements.

One other method of increasing funds for union education is direct negotiations with employers. The Canadian Auto Workers' Union (CAW), for example, has negotiated an employer-paid, union-controlled, paid educational leave (PEL) fund. The union uses the money to pay for time off work and to cover the expenses involved in sending members to a four-week residential course. Other unions in Canada, such as the Canadian Postal Workers' Union, have negotiated their own PEL programmes.

These union-negotiated programmes differ from state-sponsored PEL. While the union programmes are aimed at one union, usually in a single sector, a state-sponsored PEL is applied to all workers in the country. A major impetus for the creation of state-sponsored PEL programmes is the ILO Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974 (No. 140). Countries which ratify the Convention are required to pass legislation which grants leave to workers for educational purposes for a specified period during working hours, with adequate financial entitlements. The Convention specifically mentions that PEL provisions can be used for union education. The Convention needs to be more widely adopted (only 32 countries have ratified). But even the act of lobbying for its adoption can prove valuable as it raises the issue of union and worker education. The Convention was used as an argument for PEL when the CAW negotiated its programme, even though Canada has not ratified the Convention. And, of course, there are substantial benefits if the Convention is ratified. UNISON and other unions in the United Kingdom were able to take advantage of the fact that the United Kingdom has ratified it. The Convention should be discussed more often in union educational activities and included in more action programmes.

There are other formulas for raising funds for union education that are more specific to national or regional circumstances. For example, in Europe, European Union funding can be used for training members of company works councils which include unionists. In Germany, some unions sell educational packages in competition with private firms. In Mauritius, the Government has established the Trade Union Trust Fund (TUTF) as a bipartite (government and union) fund which can be used for labour education and related activities. The fund is managed by a committee of seven government representatives and eight union leaders. It has been used for projects such as providing basic labour education, setting up computer laboratories and starting a labour school.

However, all these ideas for increasing funds for union education and workers' education (promoting PEL, seeking support from labour investment funds, accessing government funding for knowledge economy initiatives, building partnerships with civil society organizations, setting up bipartite funds and so on) can only be implemented successfully if the principles of sound project management, administrative transparency and rigorous evaluation are respected. That can only be accomplished if project managers are educated correctly. Union education – especially in project management – is the first crucial requirement to securing additional funding.

3.2.3. *Developing a global funding strategy*

The call for a coordinated approach to the funding of union development through labour education is a long-standing one. A number of conferences and meetings concerned with labour education have addressed the issue. For example, delegates at the ICFTU's 2nd World Conference on Trade Union Education in 1994 agreed to devote a large section of ICFTU Education Policy to ensuring a strategic approach to the delivery of labour education. The policy pointed out that millions of dollars were being spent every year on labour education with most of the money being channelled in an uncoordinated fashion directly to recipients instead of being organized centrally by the Confederation. This

situation still exists. The delegates argued that those funds should be used in a cohesive and coordinated way, according to agreed criteria. They established two primary criteria: first, that assistance should not result in dependency on the part of recipient organizations and, second, that assistance should not respond only to the needs of the donors. The ICFTU Education Policy included a number of strategies and initiatives which could be implemented to ensure better coordination of union development assistance. Some of these are set out below.

- Information on programmes at the national and international levels should be collected and disseminated to assist in planning for balanced cooperation.
- At the international level, a clearer division of tasks should be established based on the specific competencies of the Confederation and its regional organizations and other international labour bodies.
- Coordination strategies could be developed through more frequent meetings of labour educators working with the Confederation and other international labour organizations.
- There is a need for the creation of a database of educational programmes which are supported by international assistance funds. Information on the programmes could include data on objectives, topics, participant profiles, educators and resource people, plus available educational materials.
- An electronic network is needed to promote communication between organizations.
- A network of educators could be established so they could share information.

In all the policy statements that have addressed labour education and in the reports of meetings held by labour educators, there is a stated need to harmonize the requirements of the donors and the recipients. It is recognized that one of the methods for doing this is to provide all the partners with clear, up to date information on what programmes exist, what topics they cover and where they are implemented.

3.3. Promoting innovative pedagogical approaches and partnerships

3.3.1. *Pedagogical approaches to labour education*

The labour movement has been a world leader in the design and practice of action-based participatory pedagogy. Pedagogy is the art and science of constructing learning environments and practices: how, why and where people learn. In many ways, the movement is more advanced pedagogically than universities, which are still largely focused on lectures.

The lecture system, where a person stands at the head of the class and talks in order to pass on information or existing knowledge, was the pedagogy most prevalent in formal labour education when it first started. It was a reflection of how things were done in the public education system and was therefore thought of as “normal”. However, starting in the folk schools of the Nordic countries (especially Denmark) and Germany in the 1920s, more participatory styles of group learning were introduced. These were adopted in the United States by the influential Highlander Folk School operated by Myles Horton near the Appalachian coal fields. But, for the most part, labour education remained lecture-based.

3.3.2. Participatory active learning

The people power movements of the 1960s and 1970s, especially the women's movement, and the mass-worker union movements organized around the same time encouraged labour educators and others to reconsider lecture-based education and turn to more participatory styles of active learning. The development of this style of education was heavily influenced by the works of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, especially his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Freire attacked the notion that students were empty vessels to be filled with information and existing knowledge. Instead, they and the instructor should be seen as equal partners in the educational experience. His ideas about the relationship between the teacher and the students brought democracy into the classroom. This more democratic view of education was echoed strongly in the labour movement. And so there was born a movement towards recognition of the existing knowledge of students, participatory techniques in the classroom and a change in the role of the teacher from "instructor" to "facilitator". By the end of the 1980s, active learning methods and recognition of participant knowledge were accepted practices in labour education.

Not surprisingly, the country which adopted Freire's ideas most enthusiastically was his native Brazil. Labour education in the country before 1985, when democracy started to be introduced, was designed to ensure that working people acquiesced to government policy. The CUT – the largest union confederation in Brazil – changed this by incorporating the experience and knowledge of workers into programmes which were facilitated by labour educators. Workers were encouraged to think about their experiences and devise preliminary theories concerning their work. Labour educators then took these theories and formalized them so they could be presented back to the members in organized and coherent ways. Then the cycle began again. This process affirmed two inviolate principles of labour education: all education should be based on the actual needs and experiences of the workers; and workers have knowledge that they bring to the educational experience which must be recognized.

3.3.3. Organizing the organized

At about the same time – in the late 1980s – a new way of thinking about union activity was starting in the United States. It would have profound effects on how unions thought about themselves and labour education. It emphasized the ongoing organization of union members with the same energy that was being applied to the recruitment of new members and so was labelled "organizing the organized". It was contrasted to the servicing model where union representatives solved problems with little involvement by the members. As applied to labour education, it meant using every opportunity in the workplace to have educational discussions or events. A cycle, much like the CUT-designed process in Brazil, was created in which members, union leaders and staff share information about workplace experiences. They reflect on these experiences through discussions and analysis. The conclusions they reach provoke action. And then the cycle begins again. The whole idea is to bring labour education into the day-to-day activities of workers and their representatives.

3.3.4. Campaign-based union education

The more action-oriented vision of labour education was adopted by many labour organizations, which started using more opportunities to engage their members in activities which would prove educational. This manifested itself in 1994 in the Action Programme adopted by the delegates attending the ICFTU's 2nd World Conference on Trade Union Education, which pointed out that unions were increasingly linking their education work with the conduct of campaigns and organizing programmes. The text continued:

This campaign-based approach to education often yields more tangible results than more traditional approaches. It has resulted in increased levels of activity and involvement in trade union work, particularly with new members and members who had not previously been active in union affairs.

Linking education with campaigning gears the process towards practical activity – participants are expected to learn and to do at the same time. The synergy created by this takes education beyond the “classroom” and into the daily affairs of the union and society, at the same time ensuring that learning is based on the concrete as well as the theoretical.

This is a view which places labour education at the core of the union’s activities. Learning becomes action. Action becomes learning. Furthermore, this process of learning/action/learning can take place anywhere, especially workplaces. It is not confined within the walls of a classroom.

3.3.5. Just-in-time learning

This next stage could be just-in-time (JIT) learning. JIT learning is learning which takes place at the time it is needed. For example, a shop steward needs to learn about a chemical which has been brought into the workplace. Or a union president has been asked to help devise a joint union-employer plan to combat HIV/AIDS. Or a bargaining committee member has to learn how to read a company balance sheet. None of these people have the time to enrol on a course. They need JIT learning. What differentiates the JIT learning of unionists from other variants of learning performed, for example, in companies or universities, is that the unionists are learning to enhance the group power of the union. They are not learning for individual enlightenment. They are bringing new knowledge and information into the group learning process of their labour organizations. The possibilities for expanding JIT union learning have increased dramatically in the past few years by the introduction of the Internet.

In a way, JIT learning has always been part of labour education. Union activists confronted with a problem have always turned immediately to their co-workers or union for help in learning about a topic or finding information. What is different today is the range of delivery tools available and the relatively recent emphasis on lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning involves participation in formal educational activities such as taking courses throughout a lifetime. But it also involves learning on the job by taking advantage of quickly accessible educational resources at the time they are needed. This accessibility has been heightened because of the advent, around 1995, of the Internet. Now union activists engaged in a discussion on how to react to a problem or devise a new labour initiative can go to the Internet to learn about the topic and make their planning more effective. Even in developing countries, this is growing as a possibility as cell phones are used more often for accessing the Internet. This constant access to learning resources is a new way of thinking about workplace learning processes. It is also a new way of applying the “organizing the organized” concept which argues that all educational opportunities – such as union meetings or workplace discussions about employment issues – should be taken advantage of. Internet-based JIT learning could be the primary support system for enhancing those opportunities. However, because Internet-based JIT learning is new, there is still a lot of work to be done. For example, access to union-related information on the Internet can be prohibitively difficult because the information is scattered across many sites which are in turn situated within 100 million other sites. This is why ACTRAV has created SoliComm – a specialized, union-focused Internet search engine which gives priority placement to information from labour sources.

Because Internet-based JIT learning is new, little thought has gone into how union information and knowledge can be packaged for educational use on the Internet. Consideration will have to be given to issues such as what topics are to be included and

how the content is structured. For Internet-based JIT union education to be successful, a whole new pedagogical approach will be needed. And it will need to be developed in conjunction with the vast amount of informal learning which occurs in the workplace.

3.3.6. Solidarity learning

In addition to innovative uses of the Internet, a renewed approach to face-to-face union education will also need to take place, especially in countries grappling with the creation of information-handling and knowledge-creating economies or subeconomies. To be successful in these sorts of economies, the labour movement needs to move beyond participatory education, just as it moved from lecture-based activities in the 1970s and 1980s. It needs to develop union education focused on task-based cooperative and collaborative learning which, in the labour movement, is referred to as solidarity learning.

Solidarity learning is a process which places emphasis on group efforts among educational activity organizers and participants to build solidarity, leading to the development of new and useful knowledge. It occurs when a group works on a common product such as a document. It involves many of the principles and practices of participatory education with two additional crucial elements: the creation of *new knowledge* and the production of a *product which is useful* outside the classroom or online course. It is based on constructivist principles which maintain that knowledge in the world is created by people.

The goal of a solidarity learning activity is not only to share the knowledge that exists in a group, but to encourage the group to use its collective knowledge and efforts to create something new. But not only new. The product must also be useful outside the course. Group participants are much more motivated to search their existing knowledge base and work together to create something if they know the product they create will be used by other trade unions and their members. For example, a course on health and safety could lead to the creation of a new way of presenting trade union policy on HIV/AIDS, which could be transmitted to the national or international confederation for its use. A course on international labour standards could lead to the development of a new way to present information about the core ILO Conventions, which could be transmitted to the local ILO office. A course on local union accounting could produce a manual to be used in other courses. There are many possibilities. Educational activity organized in this fashion changes the dynamics of the course completely. No longer are participants engaged in what they might consider empty “only for the course” exercises. They are working to increase the total knowledge of the labour movement. Through the process they learn much more and the labour movement gains from their knowledge and work. The role of the instructor in all this is to facilitate, not guide or coordinate, the process. Solidarity learning reflects the sort of solidarity building and active learning which workers need to apply in the workplace as they build and strengthen their unions.

This is not to say that task-based and JIT solidarity learning will or should become the only approach to union education. On the contrary, it should be used as one of the strategies which union educators can apply. But it needs to be used; the labour movement cannot afford to miss opportunities to bring unionists together to learn and create new knowledge. These opportunities should be seized in order to generate the knowledge unionists need as they consider complex issues such as child labour, migration and globalization.

3.3.7. Mixing pedagogical approaches

Activities based broadly on the three pedagogical approaches described above (lecturing, participatory active learning and solidarity learning) do not necessarily exclude

other approaches. All three can be blended in different ways, depending on the subject matter which is being addressed, the goals of the educational activity, the time available and other factors particular to the group in question. For example, a one-day workshop to discuss the introduction of a new labour code could involve all three strategies. The instructor could start with a short lecture on the provisions in the new law which are most relevant to the workers attending the workshop. The participants could then carry out participatory active learning activities such as brainstorming and work in small groups to consider how the new code could affect them and their fellow workers. Finally, they could work together in solidarity to produce a document which could be used to lobby politicians for amendments to the legislation. The most appropriate blend of educational methodologies would be decided by the group.

3.3.8. Pedagogical approaches, methods and modes

Discussions about which pedagogical approach or blend of approaches to use are often unfocused because of confusion concerning the terminology used, the different methods used to implement those approaches and the modes of delivery.

Pedagogy comprises a set of value-based strategies, techniques and approaches to education. Current labour pedagogy places emphasis on participatory active learning activities. If JIT and solidarity learning were adopted more widely, such pedagogy would focus on providing constant access to information via the Internet and the group construction of new and useful products.

Pedagogy is implemented through a variety of methods. For example, a lecture-based pedagogical approach includes the use of whiteboards or PowerPoint presentations. In participative active learning, the major method used is discussion and task setting. In solidarity learning, the method used is the development of a common document or other product. The methods are instruments to be used in support of a broadly based educational methodology and are not ends in themselves.

A mode of delivery is related to the instruments used to apply the methodology. A lecture, for example, is delivered in a classroom – the mode, therefore, is classroom education. Distance education is not a pedagogy – it is a particular mode of delivering education. It could use several different pedagogical approaches such as online lecturing and solidarity learning and methods such as role playing.

Discussing these sorts of distinctions may seem overly detailed. But, as the labour movement discusses how to react to the need for lifelong learning, the growth of knowledge-based economies, the provision of educational opportunities to its members and the introduction of new modes of delivery such as distance education, its labour educators cannot afford to be imprecise in the use of the terminology they use to describe their craft. A greater concern is that, if labour educators are not clear in defining the vocabulary they use to describe what they do, they risk diluting the core principles of labour education as unions become more involved in knowledge-based economies and as more partnerships are developed with post-secondary educational institutions. Union education principles are based on group solidarity focused on action. These are not the principles of, for instance, university-based education.

3.3.9. Relations between universities and unions

Despite sharing the same root word – uni, meaning “one” – unions and most universities differ sharply in their approach to education. These differences can occasionally be harmonized to the benefit of each, but they nevertheless remain significant: while unions exist to build the collective power of working people (labour education

reflects that fact), universities exist to introduce individuals to the ways of thinking and the current conclusions of communities of scholars. Union education is group oriented, while university education is focused on the individual.

This tension has characterized the relationship between unions and universities from the very beginning of the labour movement. Universities were seen as the incubators of the ruling class. Professors were considered to be intellectuals with a significant amount of theoretical knowledge but very little practical experience. Consequently, for much of its history, the labour movement has kept itself detached from universities. The labour movements in the Nordic countries, for example, built their extensive labour education infrastructures without working with universities. In the United States, the labour movement vehemently rejected partnerships with universities from its inception.

Increasingly, however, labour organizations are working more closely with universities and university-based labour studies centres to provide access to advanced education for their members. The partnerships they are trying to build are based on the core trade union principle that workers have existing knowledge which must be recognized and used in the educational process. This reflects the fundamental principle of unionism that people learn through their experiences at work and what they learn can be used in creating and directing their unions.

One of the first partnerships between the labour movement and a university involved Ruskin College in the United Kingdom. Ruskin is an independent college founded in 1899 and is associated with Oxford University. Its purpose is to allow adults with no formal qualifications to enrol on a variety of courses, ranging from the most basic up to the Master's level. Candidates are accepted to the Master's programme either on the basis of a traditional undergraduate degree or on the basis of relevant paid or unpaid experience, including training or education courses, in organizations such as trade unions. One of Africa's most famous unionists, the Kenyan Tom Mboya, was educated at Ruskin from 1955 to 1956. No long residential periods are necessary to attend Ruskin; occasional three-day workshops are supported by continuing computer communication sessions. There are other institutes in the United Kingdom, such as Northern College, which grant unionists access to higher education based on prior experience. Another national institution, the Open University, allows individuals with no educational qualifications at all to start university studies and, if they wish, work all the way up to a Doctorate of Philosophy involving labour studies. The public services union UNISON in the United Kingdom has designed an educational programme which can culminate in a degree from the Open University.

In the United States, the first linkages between a union and post-secondary education came in the early 1970s. The international union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) approached local community colleges and asked them to allow its members to study for an associate degree (a two-year degree which can lead to a undergraduate degree). Entry into the degree programme was based on prior learning recognition. Today the UAW conducts apprenticeship training courses which provide credits which can contribute towards the attainment of an associate degree. Many UAW contracts have clauses stipulating tuition reimbursement.

In Canada, the educational activities of a number of labour organizations are recognized as university studies. The Labour College of Canada's four-week summer programme is one such example. Another is the Canadian Auto Workers' Union's paid educational leave course. Canada's version of an open university, Athabasca University, provides graduates of this and other union education programmes with credits which can contribute towards the attainment of a labour studies degree. The university is currently developing a system to give advanced credit for week-long and weekend union education courses (on steward training, collective bargaining and so forth). Entry into Athabasca's

degree in labour studies is based on prior learning recognition as well as formal education qualifications.

The ultimate models of university-based union education are universities which are completely owned and operated by labour organizations. The UTAL in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is an example of this sort of university. The NLC in the United States, which is associated with the AFL-CIO (the country's national confederation), is another. The NLC is an accredited university devoted solely to educating union members, leaders, activists and staff. It can provide a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Technical/Professional Studies. Because it is a labour university, it can define its curriculum according to the goals of the labour movement. And it can set its own entry requirements. Like UTAL and Athabasca University, it recognizes prior learning.

3.3.10. *Prior learning recognition*

As the entry procedures of the NLC, Athabasca University, Ruskin College and other universities demonstrate, the principle of prior learning recognition is an essential factor in any partnerships between trade unions and universities.

A key aspect of the NLC's Bachelor of Arts programme is its recognition of experiential learning, in other words, education received outside the traditional classroom. Students can earn college credits through prior experiential learning, which can be documented and evaluated through the college's educational planning course and portfolio process.

At Athabasca University, participants benefit from a prior learning assessment and recognition procedure, which involves preparing a portfolio detailing all prior learning related to labour studies and submitting it to the university for review. Participants entering the university's labour studies programme are eligible to receive up to 15 credits in this manner.

Major unions, such as the UAW in the United States and UNISON in the United Kingdom, have built their university partnerships only with universities which recognize prior learning.

The programmes provided by universities such as the NLC and unions such as UNISON, in addition to many others in the history of labour education, demonstrate quite clearly the labour movement's commitment to prior learning recognition. Recognizing the knowledge and experiences of workers is at the core of unionism and labour education. Any project describing itself as a union-university initiative which does not recognize prior learning does not fall within the historical mainstream or current practice of labour education.

Another characteristic, as well as prior learning recognition, shared by Ruskin College, Athabasca University and the NLC is a commitment to distance education via computer communications so that workers and union staff can study for a degree without long periods away from their workplaces.

3.3.11. *Distance education*

Union education is most effective when workers talk to workers and have access to information. But sometimes this is not possible, because the workers who need to talk are geographically scattered or unable to find common times to meet. In these cases, distance education via computer communications provides a support system which can enable the educational activity to occur. For example, members of union committees working for a

global multinational can rarely, if ever, meet because of the expenses involved and the problems related to removing them from the workplace to attend courses. Distance education via computer communications can help. Using computer conferences or forums established for their private use, they can follow educational programmes tailored specifically to their needs. Furthermore, they can participate at times which most conveniently fit into their schedules.

The NLC offers a degree course (Bachelor of Technical/Professional Studies) which can be completed totally online and requires no residential sessions. The college also uses computer communications to support its residential degree programmes.

Athabasca University works completely through distance education. Workers can study for a degree from home or the workplace at a pace they set themselves. In the early 1990s, the university joined forces with the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) to conduct the first accredited online labour studies courses using CUPE's computer conferencing system, known as the Solidarity Network (SoliNet). SoliNet organizers were the first to suggest the development of an international labour university based on the model developed with Athabasca University (with prior learning recognition and distance or residential education as a delivery mode). Athabasca University is currently working with unionists to develop a curriculum for an open labour university which would allow workers from around the world, whatever their educational qualifications, to work towards a degree. Workers would be given credit for their union work and experience and would participate in the educational programme without leaving their unions for long periods of time. The plan is to develop the programme in English, French and Spanish.

Another example of the use of distance education via computer communications is provided by the ACTRAV Programme for Workers' Activities at the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin. The programme has been conducting online courses aimed at unionists in developing countries. In a recent course, staff from 30 labour organizations in Africa, Palestine and the Caribbean were able to study online for the International Computer Driving Licence. The Licence is recognized worldwide as a certification that its holder is fully competent in the use of a personal computer and common computer applications and knows the essential concepts of IT. Research conducted during the course showed that the participants were able effectively to learn the subjects presented and perceived distance education as providing effective training. Furthermore, they developed a strong sense of community and solidarity during the course. While distance education should never be used to replace face-to-face labour education, it can prove very effective in a supporting role.

3.3.12. *Creating a more inclusive labour movement*

Inclusiveness is at the heart of the issue of unions adapting to the growth of the informal economy. Labour organizations have to learn to become more welcoming to informal workers, women, young people, the disabled, the elderly, immigrants and people of different cultures and races. There are two central strategies for working towards this goal.

The first is mainstreaming, which means involving people in all union activities. Young people, for instance, should not be set aside in isolated committees or other groupings, but be involved in all the meetings, conventions and educational activities of the union. Gender mainstreaming which not only involves women in union activities but increases their opportunities and ensures that gender issues are addressed effectively, is particularly important.

The second strategy is to provide opportunities for members of marginalized groups to participate as leaders in their organizations. This not only increases the attention paid to particular issues, but provides visible proof that the union is open to all people.

Labour education can play an important part in increasing the inclusiveness of unions by teaching people about their union, creating opportunities for group members to get together and discuss their issues, providing leadership training, producing educational material aimed at particular groups and more. It can be the first open door for people who want to join and build labour organizations.

3.3.13. Union staff training

A study prepared in 2002 of unions in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada showed that most unions do not invest in staff training programmes. It is safe to say that, if unions in economically advanced countries are not providing staff training, the situation is probably the same in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

In its Education Policy of 1994, the ICFTU pointed out that unions need a clear policy on education supported by an adequately resourced structure and trained educators. It stressed that investment in education and strategic skills training of union officials and staff is of prime importance.

Union staff members are often expected to learn on the job. The result is that many union staff members are inadequately trained in the basic functional aspects of the union and unable to respond to new challenges posed by phenomena such as globalization. The lack of staff training is especially serious for women staff members. Men usually enter union staff jobs after long periods of volunteer activity and so are aware of basic procedures and operations. Women, however, often cannot readily participate in volunteer activities because of family responsibilities and so as staff members they are often at a disadvantage. They do not benefit from long periods of pre-employment learning and often have no access to training programmes once they are hired. To make matters worse, there are fewer women among the staff of unions and consequently there are fewer opportunities to meet and be trained by co-workers experiencing similar problems.

Only large unions have human resource departments and therefore few unions have developed staff training policies. The result is that very few opportunities are provided for systematic training in subjects such as information technology and second language training. Staff members need not only initial training but lifelong education as well.

3.4. Developing educational networks

The need for labour educators to find and share information and maintain contacts with other educators has long been recognized by the labour movement. Up until now, attempts to build networks to encourage these activities have been local and national. Now, because of the growth of the Internet, opportunities exist to build international networks.

The importance of networks was emphasized by the ICFTU in 1994, at its 2nd World Conference on Trade Union Education in the Action Programme it adopted as part of its Education Policy calling for an electronic exchange of information on education programmes. Because of a lack of resources and the decentralization of labour education to the regions, the exchange was not implemented. Ten years later, in 2004, the ICFTU, at its 18th World Congress, renewed the call for a labour education network by passing a resolution asking the Confederation to “develop a universally accessible electronically-based information network to help overcome further the information deficit which

detracted from the effectiveness of trade union development cooperation”. But again, because of a lack of resources, no network was established. At a meeting in 2005, ICFTU labour educators from the Confederation’s three regional organizations noted a “lack of information sharing and exchange on labour education and insufficient facilitation of networking”. At about the same time, the WCL, at its 26th Congress, adopted a resolution in which it made a commitment to “build a strong grass-roots trade unionism that is capable of networking at the national, regional and interregional levels”. Although the need to build networks for labour education has been acknowledged as important, it has not yet been sufficiently met.

3.4.1. Regional and national networks

There are, however, some regional and national networks. An example from the developing world is the African Labour Educators’ Network, which is coordinated by the African Workers’ Participation Development Programme (APADEP) under the stewardship of the Workers’ College in Durban, South Africa. APADEP has been in existence for over 20 years and focuses on promoting effective and democratic participation of workers, their representatives and trade unions in decision-making at many levels (workplace, unions and communities). APADEP is funded by the international arm of the Netherlands Confederation of Trade Unions (FNV Mondiaal). It operates on the basis of occasional meetings, and not computer communications. The most active members in the network are full-time union educators from Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. There is also collaboration with French-speaking unions in Benin and Burkina Faso.

Another example is the educators’ network in Central and Eastern European countries which was established in 2002 by the European Trade Union College. The project has participants from Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia. Educators from labour organizations in these countries have been meeting twice a year to discuss common problems and work on solutions.

3.4.2. Online educational and research networks

International networking via computer communications is one of the most profound social movements in history. Millions of people are using online networks to build communities, share information and organize campaigns. They are using social networking facilities such as computer conferences (forums), email lists, shared web browser bookmarks, peer-to-peer file sharing and common picture depositories.

Some attempts at building international educational networks using computer communications are taking place. For example, the ACTRAV Workers Activities’ Programme in Turin encourages course participants to take part in online conferences before and after their course. They continue to participate in these conferences after they have returned to their countries. Furthermore, they are encouraged to join networks organized by international or national labour organizations such as the trade and labour standards network operated by the ITUC.

ACTRAV’s online activities use a computer communications facility called the Solidarity Communications System (SoliComm). SoliComm provides a union-specific web search engine which is focused exclusively on labour web sites. It also provides free email, conferencing and e-library facilities to unions in developing countries.

The ICFTU’s 18th World Congress, directed the Confederation to construct an operational partnership with the ILO and ACTRAV in the area of education for trade

unions in developing countries, including through maximizing the use of the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin. A year later, ICFTU labour educators met in Turin and called for enhanced networking through a computer communications network for information exchange and education. They called on the Centre to facilitate the setting up of the network and to provide technical support. They also suggested that a global labour education database should be created. In response to the educators and to the resolution on trade union development cooperation and education adopted at that Congress, the ACTRAV-Turin programme has created a labour education database. This database includes information on labour education programmes, organizations, labour educators, participants, resource material and more.

3.4.3. The Global Union Research Network

Labour educators must not only have access to labour education material, but must also be informed of research on the topics raised in their courses. Globalization, a shift to service economies in many countries, technological change and new management strategies have brought about complex developments which have adverse effects on workers in different countries and sectors. Part of the response to this situation must be to build better linkages between what unionists learn in their labour education experiences and labour-oriented or sponsored research.

A particularly important source of labour-related research, especially at the international level, is the Global Union Research Network (GURN), which was founded by the international trade union movement in 2004 to support trade unions as they confront the challenges of globalization. It is a cooperation project of the ITUC, the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD, the Global Union federations, the ILO's International Institute for Labour Studies (IILS) and ACTRAV, which acts as the network's facilitator. Currently, representatives of ITUC, TUAC and ACTRAV form the GURN steering committee.

GURN is addressing the need of trade unions for better knowledge management, international cooperation and dialogue with other civil society institutions to respond to the impact of globalization on workers. Given the high cross-border mobility of goods, capital and, increasingly, workers, many traditional trade union tasks need to be addressed not only at a national but also at an international level.

Trade unions need comprehensive information and data as well as qualified experts to engage successfully in these complex debates. The research network and its capacity-building activities are designed to help trade unions meet this challenge. GURN serves as a forum to identify the research and information needs of the trade unions. By pooling knowledge and resources, it allows unions to cooperate more effectively in developing new ideas and sharing existing information about the most relevant and pressing issues of the global labour agenda. Special support is provided to unions from developing countries and countries with economies in transition to strengthen their research capacities and to ensure that their views are reflected in globalization processes. Primary target groups for the project are trade union experts, labour-oriented researchers and universities and experts from labour-oriented NGOs.

GURN is currently focusing on the following topics:

- bilateral and regional trade agreements;
- corporate governance;
- OECD guidelines for multinational enterprises;

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- sustainable development;
 - wages and collective bargaining;
 - economic alternatives and poverty eradication;
 - Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and international financial institutions;
 - migration;
 - global trade union strategies (union renewal).

A number of union organizations and ACTRAV have made a commitment to research these topics and provide information packages on their findings. Workshops have been organized, at which developing countries were strongly represented. Moderated online discussions have been organized on the SoliComm system in cooperation with ACTRAV-Turin around some of these topics to enable an exchange of views and to facilitate the development of policy papers.

In cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) in Germany, GURN has created a database with the option to download labour-oriented research articles. This database currently comprises almost 300 policy and research papers by national centres, Global Union federations and the ILO. These papers are also available via the SoliComm search engine.

GURN is an important tool for JIT knowledge production and solidarity learning. It is targeting both trade unionists and labour-oriented researchers with a view to encouraging an exchange of views and to promote and disseminate the results of labour-friendly research. Research is seen as an important prerequisite for policy development as well as a foundation for negotiations and trade union education. Additional information about GURN can be found on the network's web site, at www.gurn.info.

3.5. Promoting the ILO's Decent Work Agenda

The ILO's Decent Work Agenda has provided a focus for international action and education related to the issues confronting working people around the world. Many organizations are working to promote it. For example, the first action mandated by the Founding Congress of the ITUC was to organize a day of action worldwide to call for immediate international action to formulate and implement an agenda for a new globalization, including the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

3.5.1. The Decent Work Agenda

The Decent Work Agenda promotes:

- opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income;
- security in the workplace and social protection for families;
- better prospects for personal development and social integration;
- freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and
- equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.

The Agenda's primary argument is that there is a need to devise social and economic systems which ensure basic security and employment while remaining capable of adapting to rapidly changing circumstances in a highly competitive global market. Decent work should be at the heart of global, national and local strategies for economic and social progress. It is central to efforts to reduce poverty and a means for achieving equitable, inclusive and sustainable development.

The ILO works to promote decent work through its efforts on employment, social protection, international labour standards, fundamental principles and rights at work and social dialogue.

Strengthening the ILO is a central strategy for changing the nature of globalization and is supported by all the international confederations, regional organizations and global unions. For example, at its 14th World Trade Union Congress, in 2000, the WFTU called for educational work aimed at strengthening the ILO and international labour standards. In its resolution on trade union education and professional training, the Congress underscored the need to relate demands and struggles to the observance of relevant international standards established by the ILO Conventions and, in that context, urged national and regional trade union organizations as well as the trade unions internationals to strengthen further their cooperation with ACTRAV.

The Programme of the ITUC "calls on the ITUC to promote and defend the role of the ILO in the setting and supervision of international standards defining trade union rights, including the right to cross-border solidarity action, and its leading role in the international system's shared responsibility to ensure their universal respect". One crucial goal in ensuring the respect of international standards, according to the Programme, is to work for the incorporation of a workers' rights clause into the statutes of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which would require all products and services traded between countries to be produced and distributed in compliance with core labour standards. Consequently, the ITUC calls on the WTO to cooperate more fully with the ILO and "establish a working group or standing working forum on trade, social development, and labour standards, with full ILO participation". The ILO core labour standards are:

- the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87);
- the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98);
- the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29);
- the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105);
- the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100);
- the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111);
- the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); and
- the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

For a number of years, the Workers' group of the ILO Governing Body has been concerned with the key question of developing within the ILO a capacity-building strategy based on labour education. The debate started in the late 1990s with a desire to improve the integration of institutions that play a role in education and research in Geneva, Turin and in the regional structures. The view is that the promotion of the different dimensions of decent work as a concept depends on the development of a global ILO strategy on capacity

building with a focus on how to develop research and education for the organizations the ILO serves.

The Governing Body of the ILO has defined capacity building as:

What the Organization does, within the framework of its institutional mandate, to strengthen the capacity of its constituents and partners to devise, plan, implement and consolidate an agreed decent work agenda at local, national, regional and global levels. What the Organization does, within this framework, must also, as far as means allow, seek to guarantee coherence among (economic, social, commercial, financial, etc.) development policies.³

Recently, the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee (PFA) of the ILO Governing Body discussed this issue with a focus on the future development of the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin. The Committee's report indicates that "the idea of establishing, within the ILO, a coherent strategy for developing and strengthening constituents' capacities, is the only real basis for understanding better the Centre's place and how it can be operationally integrated into the ILO's programme".⁴

In order to serve better its constituents and, in particular, workers' organizations, the ILO needs to develop a policy on capacity building and a more focused vision on institutional building. For labour organizations, institutional building means better organizing the educational structures and training capacities of unions and supporting the structures of labour organizations with their units and departments that cover a range of functions and services. Pursuing the Decent Work Agenda, which is at the core of the international labour movement's global strategy, could play a fundamental role in the development of sustainable labour structures.

In other words, a crucial element in promoting the ILO's Decent Work Agenda is support for the institutional building of workers' organizations. Labour educators are key actors in this strategy.

3.5.2. The role of union education in decent work actions

Labour educators could play a crucial role in helping organize efforts to support the Decent Work Agenda. A central strategy could be to adopt an "organize the organized" approach and take advantage of every opportunity possible to inform workers about the Decent Work Agenda and its objectives to improve the lives of working people across the world. This could provide a way to give impetus to international labour education, increase its profile among labour leaders and attract young people not only to participate in labour education, but to become educators themselves. Organizers of an educational campaign in support of the Decent Work Agenda would need to consider the ideas and strategies labour educators have developed in the past few years, some of which have been described in the present paper. They include:

- developing a catalogue of materials about decent work which can be supplied to labour educators and, if necessary, creating new, easy-to-read, material;

³ ILO: *ILO capacity-building strategy: The role of the International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin*, document GB.298/PFA/14/3 (Mar. 2007), para. 9.

⁴ *ibid.*, para. 2.

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- ensuring that all avenues of information dissemination, such as union newspapers and web sites, are provided with information about the campaign;
 - providing concise, easy-to-read material in many languages for distribution in union schools and during other labour education activities;
 - seeking funds, managed by trained unionist project managers, focused directly on the campaign;
 - supplementing face-to-face campaign activities with distance education;
 - organizing campaign-based initiatives for workers involved in informal economies;
 - working with allied organizations such as DITSELA and ACTRAV to support the campaign;
 - building coalitions with civil society organizations which respect the Decent Work Agenda and accept that it is the role of unions to represent working people.

These projects and programmes all meet the condition that labour education activities should serve the strategic lines established by international labour organizations. They also meet the need for labour education to be campaign-oriented and based on “organizing the organized” tactics.

4. Conclusion: Facing the challenges

The present paper has attempted to provide a broad overview of major trends and activities in union education in the early years of the twenty-first century. It has focused on discussing how to give impetus to union education and how the objectives set by labour organizations can be met. Two primary conclusions can be drawn: first, that union education, despite facing serious challenges, is confronting the future energetically and creatively. Second, if the labour movement is to improve union education across the world, it needs a better overview of the current state of such education.

The present paper has been prepared as a resource for stimulating and supporting discussion about the future of union education, especially in terms of how it is organized internationally. Some of the ideas which have been raised by union leaders, labour educators and conference delegates which could be explored further include:

- creating a computer database of union development programmes and funding to help promote a coordinated approach;
- using computer communications to allow labour educators to share information and resource material;
- training many more labour educators in training methodology;
- producing a directory of existing labour education departments;
- linking labour education more closely to research initiatives such as GURN;
- creating links to universities which recognize the prior learning of union members;
- involving more labour educators in campaigns promoting the ILO's Decent Work Agenda;
- organizing labour education events to promote international labour standards;
- campaigning to promote ILO Conventions No. 140 (paid educational leave) and No. 142 (human resources development) and Recommendation No. 95, which calls for lifelong learning;
- producing basic educational material on the international labour movement and its issues.

The ideas highlighted above, and others included in the paper, have been raised by union leaders, staff and members as ways of giving new impetus to labour education and making such education even more relevant to unions as they fight to improve the working and living conditions of their members. By discussing these and the other ideas which will be raised by participants at the Symposium, it will be possible to plan the way forward as the labour movement confronts such challenges as globalization, lifelong learning and union organizing in the informal economy.

Appendix I

Labour colleges (a partial listing)

Ghana Trade Union College (Ghana)
Labour College of Canada (Canada)
Labour College of Quebec (Collège FTQ-Fonds) (Canada)
Labour colleges in the provinces of Austria
Tom Mboya College (Kenya)
Workers' College (Durban, South Africa)
Labour Resource Centre and Research Centre (Windhoek, Namibia)
Mbeya Labour College (United Republic of Tanzania)
Barbados Workers' Union Labour College (Barbados)
Ong Teng Cheong Institute of Labour Studies (Singapore)
Ishmael Nedziwe College of Labour Studies (Zimbabwe)
Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (Bangladesh)
Ambekar Institute for Labour Studies (India)
Korea Labour and Society Institute (Republic of Korea)
Labour Education Foundation (Pakistan)
Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (Pakistan)
Taj Workers' Education Institute Society (Pakistan)
Information Centre for Labour Education (Taiwan, China)
Centre for Trade Union and Workers' Services (Egypt)
Iraqi Centre for Workers' Education (Iraq)
Lebanese Trade Union Training Centre (Lebanon)
Centre for Democracy and Workers' Services (Morocco)
Workers' Education and Training College (Bulgaria)
Labour Institute SRL (Republic of Moldova)
Trade Union Training and Vocational Development Centre (CEFOSAP) (Portugal)
Labour College (Greece)
National Centre for Social Promotion (CENPROS) (Mexico)
National Trade Union School (ENS) (Colombia)
Institute of Labour Education and Culture of the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (JTUC-RENGO) (Japan)
Academy of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) (India)
National Labor College (United States)

Appendix II

Case studies for the future of union education

Labour education as practised around the world involves a vast range of activities, objectives and structures. It is beyond the mandate of the present paper to review them all – an entire book would be needed just to outline the major initiatives. However, an indication of the richness and creativity of labour education can be gained by looking at two case studies: one in a developing country and one in an economically advanced country.

1. **Case study: Brazil's "Integrar programme"**

The Single Confederation of Workers of Brazil (CUT) is an example of a union in a developing country which is active in both union and worker education. Its "Integrar programme" provides union education for leaders and workers' education programmes for the unemployed.

The programme is an initiative started in 1995 by the National Metalworkers' Confederation of Brazil (CNM), which is affiliated to CUT, as a political resistance to neo-liberal policies. The CNM/CUT wanted actively to resist such policies by developing practical programmes to help the country's workers. It developed its Integrar programme as part of its overall political strategy and tied it to its union education programme. The programme was aimed at three distinct groups: union leaders, employed workers and unemployed workers. The part of the programme aimed at union leaders includes elementary and secondary education modules covering topics such as transformations in the world of work, union organization and active citizenship. Some 500 leaders a year are trained, some of which also complete an extension course in labour economics at the Faculty of Economics of Campinas University, in preparation for an undergraduate course at the same university. Prior learning recognition is not only accepted in this programme but is built into the process right from the start. The part of the programme for employed workers focuses on elementary and secondary education and training on company technological changes. The part for unemployed workers was created as part of the CNM/CUT's political strategy. It comprises modules on mathematics, reading and interpreting drawings, work and technology and other subjects. Unemployed workers can earn a certificate which helps them in their job searches. The CNM/CUT programme is an example of the vibrancy of the Brazilian movement as it used union and worker education to build democracy in the country after years of rule by fascist governments or military dictatorships. Access to a special government fund which could be used for union training was, however, restricted during the 1990s and funding for programmes became more difficult. Nevertheless, the Brazilian movement has produced models for union and worker education which could be applied in developing countries and pedagogical approaches, such as those based on the ideas of educator Paulo Freire, which have influenced the whole world.

The CNM/CUT is demonstrating how union and worker education can be part of the political struggle and economic achievement plans of a developing country.

2. **Case study: UNISON's Lifelong Learning Programme**

UNISON, a public service union in the United Kingdom, is using the provision of personal and career-oriented lifelong learning opportunities for its members as a way of building member loyalty and engagement and of recruiting new members. The union conducts courses such as "Return to Learn" for members who want to re-introduce themselves to educational activities and "Women's Lives" which looks at issues faced by women at work, at home and in the community. Through its Open College programme, the union is promoting entry-level academic courses and access to credit-granting programmes which can lead to a degree. The union has built partnerships with a large number of employers and educational providers, including the United Kingdom's Open University. The Open University is open to all learners, even those with no prior educational certification. UNISON is discovering that education can bring new activists into the union, increase loyalty to the union among existing activists and project a modern image to workers in the country's knowledge workplaces. The UNISON model and actions to promote ILO Convention No. 142 and Recommendation No. 195, which call for lifelong learning, could provide a way forward for how unions can confront the challenges raised by knowledge-based economies while serving the interests of their members.