ILO ACTRAV Regional Symposium – Asia Pacific

WORKERS' EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR TRADE UNION REVITALIZATION

16-18 August 2023 | Online

INTRODUCTION

Sixteen years after the last ACTRAV-led Global Symposium on Labour Education in 2007, many developments have transformed and continue to change the world of work. For example, technological development significantly influences production and work processes, requiring new skills and competencies. Many traditional skills and jobs have become obsolete, resulting in redundancies. For example, new and emerging jobs like digital labour platforms have provided job opportunities for many, but gaps in labour and regulatory policies are evident.

In addition, climate change, demographic shifts, industrialization 4.0, and the COVID-19 pandemic, among others, are driving transformations in the work of work, including in the Asia Pacific region.

These developments and workplace transformations require a re-thinking of strategies, including workers' education, to support trade unions fulfil their role in the pursuit of social justice and decent work for all in the current context and the future.

Workers' education remains a critical and essential tool for building worker's social consciousness, knowledge, skills and competencies. Workers' education must continue to serve as a vehicle for trade union capacity development, sure way to strengthen union activism and effective strategy to ensure that trade unions have the capacity, tools and resources to represent works at all levels of decision-making and influence labour polices and social change.

The Governing Body of the International Labour Organization (ILO), in its 347th session on the 13th and 23rd of March 2023, recommended the holding of the Global Workers' Symposium with the theme *"New Approaches to Workers' Education for Trade Union Revitalization,"* with the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) taking the lead.

The global symposium will bring together senior trade union leaders, academia and workers' education institutions, activists and cooperation partners in a three-day virtual format from 18 to 20 September 2023.

The event will promote and enhance workers' solidarity, as an anvil of social change, by exploring new and impactful ways of addressing the critical challenges of financing workers' education programmes. Thematic discussions will focus on collaboration, the use of union facilities, investment in membership organizing and in-house union digital infrastructure, and advocacy for public financial support for workers' education programmes. The symposium will also consider measures for the standardization of workers' education curricula to meet the training needs of 21st-century participants and to guarantee the effective management of labour education programmes.[1]

The Asia Pacific regional edition of the symposium will be a deep dive into the role of workers' education in addressing lingering decent work deficits in the region, such as rising informal employment, working poverty child labour, gender and economic inequalities, vulnerabilities stemming from gaps in social and employment protection, weaknesses in labour market institutions

[1] ILO 2023. Composition, agenda and programme of standing bodies and meeting. (Workers' Symposium: New approaches to workers' education for trade union revitalization (18-20 September 2023), Geneva, p.1

and insufficient social dialogue, etc. intensified by a confluence of economic, political and environmental challenges.

Through collective re-thinking, the regional symposium hopes to construct a technology-supported workers' education framework to assist union transitions towards revitalized workers' organizations, promote the fundamental principles and rights at work, build more robust trade union capacities to promote universal social protection through social dialogue and collective bargaining, including with labour market institutions and multilateral cooperation partners, and improve services delivery and outreach

OBJECTIVES

The three-day symposium aims to generate a collective analysis of the current state of workers' education in the Asia Pacific Region, recommend and adopt innovative strategies and solutions to the pressing and emerging needs of workers in the context of an ever-transforming world of work through workers' education, in contribution to the global strategy on workers education.

Specifically, the collaborative event aims to:

- discuss the functions of workers' education in trade union capacity development and its impact on trade union institutions and structures through real lessons, insights and experiences by trade unions themselves;
- determine the drivers of transformative developments in the world of work impacting workers' education strategies and approaches;
- explore innovative technologies, methodologies, approaches, and solutions towards an inclusive, accessible, and impactful capacity development programme for workers at the regional and national levels.
- examine the role of online learning and the impact of digital innovation and eLearning methodologies for trade unions
- discern and adopt practical and impactful WE strategies in the region.

CONTENT & STRUCTURE

The symposium will deep dive into the following thematic areas in workers' education to forge strategic and practicable recommendations making workers' education in step with developments in the world of work and responsive to the needs and priorities of workers and their organizations.

Day 1. The state of workers' education in the region

16 August 2022 | 9:30-11:30 AM CEST | Zoom

The session will analyse prevailing and future workplace conditions and contemporary transitions influencing the profound transformation in the world of work. It will look at the gaps and emerging needs and priorities of workers in the context of current and future challenges, which should be addressed through relevant workers' education programmes.

Furthermore, it will examine the gains in workers' education, such as improved behaviours and attitudes and enhanced trade union knowledge, skills, and tools that help unions deal with workplace challenges more efficiently and effectively.

Resource persons and participants will share experience-based lessons and insights to move forward with workers' education and capacity development in the region.

Day 2. The impact of workers' education on trade union institutions

17 August 2022 | 9:30-12:00 AM CEST | Zoom

The sessions will consider the indispensable role of workers' education in strengthening trade union activities and institutions, particularly in organizing and membership recruitment and expansion, collective bargaining and negotiations, representation and raising workers' voices in social dialogue mechanisms at the country, sub-regional, regional and global levels.

Furthermore, it will look at the drivers of transformative developments in the world of work, such as climate change, technological innovations, and demographic shifts, including the continuing attack against democracy and democratic structures and activities, deepening inequalities in gender and income, and emerging and new jobs, etc.

Resource persons will provide insights on how to innovate workers' education to counter current and future challenges on unions and the pursuit of social justice, decent work and a human-centred future of work.

Day 3. Contemporary methodologies and approaches on workers' education

18 August 2022 | 9:30-12:00 AM CEST | Zoom

The digital gap and compounding factors, including recurrent power outages, intermittent and high cost of internet connection, are constraints to effective and efficient online learning.

The day three sessions will explore practical solutions, maximization and utilization of worker-appropriate and technology-supported teaching and learning methodologies and approaches for trade union learners given the above difficulties.

The session will explore country experiences, perspectives and innovations in workers' education to meet workers' ever-changing capacity development needs. In addition, the session will discover the pedagogies, methodologies, solutions, partnerships with learning institutions and sustainability practices that make workers'' education available and accessible to all.

Furthermore, a dedicated session will focus on digital inclusion and workers' access to online education through the policies, practices, and offers of the Learning Innovation Programme of the ITCILO.

Note:
The event is a synchronous activity via Zoom. Participants need to register through the link below to receive the individualized Zoom links to participate in the symposium:
https://itcilo-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEvcOqtpj8jHtRLpMHwTTkcc0jER2eG8V1M

DOCUMENTATION AND ACCESS TO MATERIALS

ACTRAV create an information page on the ILO website, in due course, to serve as the repository for video recording of online synchronous discussions, including the resource person presentations and other relevant materials.