

Communicating Labour Rights

A training course for media professionals

29 October - 2 November 2007, Turin (Italy)

Course code A900822

Preamble

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the specialized agency of the United Nations mandated to promote social justice through drafting, promoting and monitoring international labour standards (ILS).

One of the reasons for the existence of the ILO is to keep citizens of member states aware of developments in the world of work. Journalists and other media workers thus have a leading contribution to make in promoting the ILO's goals of decent work, human rights and workers' rights.

Despite *de facto* or *de jure* restrictions on their work or freedom of expression, since the media shape public opinion and must be responsive to the concerns of individuals and society, they have a social responsibility to provide their audience with relevant stories, accurate reports and informed analysis. In return, user confidence plays a pivotal role in boosting sales and increasing the market share of media organizations.

Justification

The frequency of labour-related headlines in print, audiovisual and electronic media is evidence that the world of work is newsworthy. All around the globe, the media report on local, national and international events affecting the working lives of women and men.

However, due to budgetary and organizational constraints, many news organizations lack labour specialists among their staff correspondents, and many media workers have had no opportunity to acquire in-depth knowledge of workers' rights and related labour issues.

This accounts for distorted information and the missing link often perceived in media coverage between the moral outrage expressed by the public and the facts that caused it.

Labour-related Headlines from the Press

- "Miners Trapped; Rescue Efforts Desperate"
- "Workers Rally For Minimum Wage Hike"
- "Government Promises Social Security Reform"
- "Employer Reinstates Sacked New Mother"
- "Our Neighbours Take Our Jobs"
- "Locked Doors Prevent Workers' Escape"
- "Strike Called Despite Government Ban"
- "UN Body Applauds Government Action Against Discrimination"
- "23 Indefinitely Suspended for AIDS"

To bridge this gap, the ILO has designed a new 5-day training course calling the attention of journalists and other media workers to the direct relevance of international labour standards

(ILS) to accurate, responsible media reporting which can further understanding in the interests of human welfare. Public understanding can, in turn, strengthen the application of the system at local level so as to advance freedom of expression, freedom of association and respect for other fundamental principles and rights at work.

Course objectives

This course aims to equip media professionals with the knowledge and skills to use ILS and the work of the supervisory bodies in their reports, thereby raising public awareness of internationally recognized rights and their relevance to local labour and social issues.

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Determine when and how information on the ILS system can be referred to in their coverage of labour and social affairs;
- Prioritize the various elements of ILS in different journalistic contexts;
- Use ILO databases and documents to research stories on labour and social affairs.

Participants' profile

Journalists, correspondents, publicists, freelance reporters, editors, publishers, public relations professionals and press officers - working in all types of media (print, radio, television and the Internet) - of employer, worker, governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Candidates should be proficient in English, computer literate and experienced in using databases and the Internet for research.

Participants should have access to the Internet for the last phase of the course, which will be conducted online.

Course content

The course is divided into three compulsory phases:

1) Pre-course preparation:

Participants are required to select - from print, electronic or other media - at least two local news stories (of at least 400 words each) on labour or social affairs. These articles (or transcripts of radio or TV spots) should be submitted to the Centre via e-mail as scanned or text-processed documents at least two weeks before the start of the course, to be used as case studies.

2) Face-to-face instruction (5 days):

- Introduction to the ILO and its ILS system, with a special focus on its relevance to the world of work, and specifically to the work of communicators.
- The scope of ILS: their potential and relevance for media work.
- The link between freedom of expression, freedom of association, and the promotion of human and workers' rights.

- Introduction to the ILO's databases (ILOLEX, APPLIS and NATLEX), which will be used extensively during the course.
- How to incorporate ILS into journalism, with concrete case studies based on stories submitted by the participants before the course:
 - how to relate a story to an international labour standard, with a view to *promoting its application* locally;
 - how to relate a story to a *ratified* international labour standard;
 - how to report on *activities of the supervisory system* at national level.
- Sharing experience of labour and social reporting.
- The role and function of the ILO's Department of Communications (DCOMM).

Practical exercises will enable participants to: appraise the ILS component in different stories; appreciate the importance of substantive research on ILS; identify relevant source material; and appreciate the significance of the ILS system's periodicity in a journalistic context.

3) Online - via the Internet.

Using the knowledge and skills acquired in the first two phases, participants will be required to prepare a story within 3 months. It will be evaluated by course facilitators privately and then posted on the course's Web site. To further broaden their learning experience, participants are encouraged to share their work with their peers via the Web site.

Methodology

The course is tailored for newcomers to the ILO and its ILS system. Each component of the course will be evaluated by the participants. A certificate will be awarded after completing the three components of the course. Resource persons include a specialist in international labour standards and an active journalist experienced in using ILS.

Cost of participation

The cost of participation in this course includes tuition fees and optional subsistence.

Tuition fees = US\$ 1,810 and cover:

- tuition
- books and training materials
- course preparation, implementation and evaluation.

Subsistence = US\$ 1,075 and covers:

- full board and lodging at the Centre's campus
- laundry
- local study visits
- standard daily allowance to cover incidental expenses (12 euros a day)
- minor medical care and emergency medical insurance
- socio-cultural activities.

The total cost of participation (**USD 2,885**) does not include travel between home country and the course venue (Turin, Italy), passports, visas to enter Italy and airport taxes.

Payment should be made in advance by bank transfer to:

- International Training Centre of the ILO

- Account no. 9136496
- Bank: San Paolo IMI Ag. CIF/OIL 701
- IBAN: IT14 B010 2501 1911 3010 9136496 - BIC IBSPITTM
- Address: Viale Maestri del Lavoro 10, 10127 Turin, Italy

N.B. On the bank transfer form, kindly state your name and the course code.

Fellowships

Fellowships are available to qualified candidates.

Candidates from employers' organizations and workers' organizations to be granted a fellowship for this course will be selected by the Secretaries of the Employers' Group and of the Workers' Group of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office.

Applications

Applications to participate should be addressed to:

Manager, Standards and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Programme
International Training Centre of the ILO, Viale Maestri del Lavoro 10 - 10127 Turin, Italy
(Tel. +39 011 693 6626; Fax +39 011 693 6906; E-mail: normesturin@itcilo.org)

They should be supported by a curriculum vitae and a nomination letter from the sponsoring/funding institution.

As an organization dedicated to fundamental human rights and social justice, the ILO is taking a leading role in international efforts to promote gender equality. Therefore, women candidates are especially encouraged to apply.