



Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy: Trade Union Strategies



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Course starts:
20 November 2017

Course ends:
01 December 2017

Deadline:
20 November 2017

Code:
A1510030

Venue:
Lomé, Togo

Contact:
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Language/s:
English - French

DESCRIPTION

This course aims to equip union representatives with the relevant knowledge and skills to support their unions' effort in tackling the barriers that impede the entry of workers into the economic and social mainstream. A key objective of the course will be to assist participants to develop a critical analysis of the challenges and opportunities of the transition to formality through application of ILO Recommendation 204. The main expected outcomes of this course are improvements in decent working and living conditions, including progress on wages/incomes and other terms of employment, increased productivity, healthier labour markets and fairer societies.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The course is intended for focal persons, organizers, educators, leaders of women's and youth committees, aged 45 years or under, belonging to national or industry-level unions, who are directly responsible for informal economy issues.

BACKGROUND

The regional course entitled "Transition from the Informal to the Formal economy" will contribute to the key expected changes to be achieved in the biennium in the field of informal economy namely:

- Improved and comprehensive national legal and policy frameworks that facilitate the transition to formality, guided by R204 - Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 104th Session (2015);
- Strengthened awareness and capacity of constituents to facilitate the transition to formality, drawing on an expanded knowledge base;
- Gender equality and the needs of vulnerable groups in the informal economy are addressed when facilitating the transition to formality.

The informal economy comprises around half of the global workforce and women and youth account for a disproportionate share of workers within the informal economy. This presents a major challenge to inclusive development and has a negative impact on sustainable enterprises, productive employment, and the attainment of decent work for all, government revenue and fair competition in national and international markets.

The majority of workers within the informal economy lack decent employment, social protection including social security coverage, fundamental principles and rights at work, voice, organization, representation and are often trapped in poverty. Hazardous working conditions are common in the informal economy, often leading to a high incidence of work-related accidents and diseases, incapacitation or death, which further plunge families deeper into poverty. Gender discrimination and the phenomenon of child labour in the informal economy are widespread, with agriculture being the most affected sector.

From a decent work perspective, transition to formality is cast within each of the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda namely: guaranteeing rights at work, creating decent and productive jobs, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue and tripartism. The intrinsic value is essentially in the integration and the interaction against the policy actions covered under each of them. A right-based approach that guarantees workers' access to the enabling rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining is a necessary precondition for realizing formality.

Against this backdrop, this regional course seeks to improve the technical competences of trade unionists to identify and address the underlying causes of informality and the barriers to entry into the economic and social mainstream. Participants will be encouraged to design policies and strategies that contribute to the incorporation of workers and economic units from the informal economy into the formal economy and to prevent informalization of formal employment and enterprises. Special attention will be devoted to a critical analysis of the challenges and opportunities of transitioning to formality through the application of suitable approaches, tested tools, good practices and above all the use of the ILO's Recommendation No. 204. The main expected outcomes of this training from a long term perspective are decent working conditions, better protection and improved wages/income for workers, increased productivity and economic return for economic units, healthier labour market and more sustainable and inclusive development, and fairer societies. A Workers' Guide focused on the Recommendation No. 204 (2015) will be pre-tested in the course.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

From a long-term perspective, the course aims at strengthening trade unions' capacity to develop policies and strategies to guide their actions in the implementation of ILO's Recommendation No. 204 and related instruments that can contribute to the transition from informal to the formal economy.

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this training course, participants will be able to:

- Describe the impact of globalization on the world of work and gain insights into ILO's standards-setting, ratification, implementation and supervision processes;
- Describe the social justice declaration and the declaration on fundamental principles and rights at work with a special focus on freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining with reference to workers in the informal economy;
- Define the informal economy and related concepts and explain the root causes of informality;
- Assess various strategies for addressing informality and identify key issues in terms of good practices, opportunities and challenges of formalization;
- Discuss and analyse Recommendation No. 204 concerning the transition from informal to formal economy;
- Identify innovative methods and strategies for organizing workers in the informal economy into trade unions and suggest actions and strategies for promoting gender equality and addressing discrimination in the informal economy;
- Discuss strategies and good practices for extending social protection, social dialogue and ensuring compliance in the informal economy;
- Prepare individual Action Plans as a key to strategies that will enable participants transfer the knowledge and skills gained to their unions aimed at achieving a multiplier effect and greater impact.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS

Over an intense two-week training and learning program, participants will have the opportunity to take advantage of a rich and flexible learning environment involving international experts working on the topics covered by this regional course. The course will allow participants to acquire an international perspective on informal economy issues through comparative analysis and experiences, and also provide a unique opportunity for networking among themselves and with the international experts. A new workers' guide to the Recommendation No. 204 will inform the training.

The course will comprise the following sessions:

- The ILO and the International Labour Standards System
- Fundamental principles and rights at work
- Freedom of association and collective bargaining as enabling rights of all working people
- Trade union action in the context of the ILO supervisory system
- An overview of the informal economy: concepts and typology
- Gender mainstreaming as strategy for empowering workers in the informal economy
- Young workers and informal economy
- ILO integrated framework for the transition to formality
- Sector-based approach to formalization: decent work for domestic workers
- Informal economy and public policies: special attention on minimum wages
- Introduction to Action Planning
- Recommendation No. 204 concerning the transition from the informal to the formal economy
- Convention No. 122 on employment policy and its importance in defining national strategies for formalization of the informal economy
- Recommendation No. 198 on employment relationship and its importance in defining national strategies for formalization of the informal economy: special attention on Global Supply Chains (GSCs)
- Governance of GSCs with focus on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MNEs) and informal economy
- Social dialogue: a tool for shaping the transition from informal to formal economy
- Informal economy and green jobs
- Social protection floors Recommendation No. 202: A vital tool for formalization
- Union policy measures, actions and strategies for practical application of Recommendations Nos. 204 and 202
- Innovative methods and strategies for organizing workers in the informal economy into trade unions, including collective agreements with local/federal/national Government authorities.
- Preparing a trade union campaign on formalization of the informal economy
- Conducting a trade union campaign on formalization of the informal economy
- Comprehensiveness of decent work from the perspective of training
- Developing individual action plans on promoting unionism, decent and productive work in the informal economy
- Final wrap-up: conclusions and recommendations

Pre-course orientation will be organized in order to get the participants acquainted with the main subjects, objectives and outputs of the course. More details will be provided in the confirmation letter to the participant.

METHODOLOGY

Active learning methods will be employed throughout the course, which will encourage the participants to take part in group discussions and to be fully involved in all aspects of training. The content of the program will be based on an exchange of best practices between the different regions in the field of reference, and promote the key knowledge and expertise of the participants.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

The course will be conducted in English and French. Participants are expected to fully involve themselves in discussions and other activities and so they must be able to fluently speak one of the two working languages of the course.

COURSE PREREQUISITE: COUNTRY REPORT

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

- Provides an overview of the informal economy, poverty and inequality situation in your country;
- List some key provisions of national policy and/or legislation concerning the protection of workers and economic units within the informal economy;
- Provides a description of union policies and strategies concerning the formalization of the informal economy;
- Describes some key initiatives for empowering workers (including women and young workers) and economic units within the informal economy;
- Provides an assessment on the organization of workers into trade unions and the exercise of collective bargaining rights in the informal economy;
- Provides a short description of the Decent Work Country Program (DWCP), and the National Action on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development as well as the involvement of representatives of trade unions/association of workers in informal economy in all these initiatives.

The country report should be sent by e-mail to the following address: actrav_turin@itcilo.org

DEVELOPMENT OF ACTION PLAN

Each participant will develop an Individual Action Plan outlining actions needed to reach specific goals and objectives tied to the trade unions' priorities in the field of informal economy. The Action Plan will be the basis for an impact assessment which will be undertaken at some point in the future post training.

EVALUATION

The course will be evaluated on a daily basis by gauging the activism of the participants and through debriefing sessions that be attended by resource persons at the end of each day. The daily reviews will permit re-focusing on areas of particular needs and interests to participants, and facilitate inputs from participants to inform the delivery of the course. At the end of the course, an evaluation form concerning pedagogical and organizational aspects of the course will be distributed, thus enabling participants to give their level satisfaction and opinion on the course, as well as providing trainers with helpful hints on how to better design future activities.