GLOBAL WORKERS' ACADEMY ON ADDRESSING TRANSITIONS

TRADE UNION RESPONSES AND STRATEGIES

7 – 30 APRIL 2026
🕐 **4 WEEKS**

Information Note

International Labour Organization

ITC
International Training Centre

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Artificial intelligence (AI), the digital transition, the transition to formality, and the green and just transition are rapidly transforming labour markets and intensifying uncertainties. These four (quad) interconnected transitions are redefining employment relationships, transforming work organisation, labour market dynamics, skills requirements, and industrial relations. They affect the quality and quantity of jobs while placing pressure on wages, rights, social protection systems, collective bargaining structures, and trade union strategies. For workers and their organisations, this moment demands proactive action, anticipation, adaptation, and innovation to secure workers' rights and avoid being left behind.

Since 2024, ACTRAV has convened the annual Global Workers' Academy (GWA) on Addressing Transitions, the only global learning platform addressing all four transitions in an integrated approach. This integrated approach has empowered workers' organisations to better understand disruptions, leverage innovations, and develop holistic strategies to defend workers' rights amidst growing uncertainties. Building on the strong uptake and concrete strategies developed during the 2024 and 2025 editions, the Academy to be held in 2026 places a deliberate spotlight on AI, centring AI and its governance, impacts, and translating learning into concrete union tools for bargaining, policy influence, and workplace action. The Academy deliberately tackles AI as the central thread that interconnects all transitions instead of treating AI as a standalone transition. The Academy examines how AI intersects with, accelerates, or reshapes the specific transition under study to promote trade union holistic and integrated solutions.

The focus on artificial intelligence is timely and urgent. AI and algorithmic management are no longer a digital labour platform issue or a gig economy issue but are permeating traditional sectors and public services. These technologies are challenging labour relations and the role of workers' organisations, exposing workers to misclassification, income instability, and introducing new OSH and often complex risks to the pursuit of decent work. At the same time, they are creating new opportunities for workers and their organizations to innovate and strengthen their influence in emerging governance debates.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has significantly advanced its work on AI through the AI Observatory knowledge hub launched in 2024 and the Global Policy Tracker on Digital Labour Platforms launched in 2025. Recent ILO research in 2025 on AI and digitalisation in occupational safety and health highlights a dual reality: while automation and smart systems can reduce hazards and improve practices, they also introduce new, complex, and sometimes hidden risks that unions must be equipped to address.

Against this backdrop, the 2026 Global Workers' Academy arrives at a decisive moment to tackle AI and its intersections with the three transitions. The Academy coincides with the ILO's 114th International Labour Conference, where discussions on standard-setting on Decent Work in the Platform Economy will take place.

For workers' organisations, this is a historic opportunity to shape global rights frameworks on digitalisation and AI to champion algorithmic transparency, enforcement mechanisms, decent work principles, data rights, social justice and just transition.

Building on the achievements of the 2024 and 2025 editions, the 2026 Academy aims to strengthen the capacity of workers' organisations to act, adapt, anticipate, and innovate, influencing national policy, bargaining for worker-centred AI, and mobilising around forthcoming global standards. It calls on trade unions to seize synergies and opportunities between AI, digitalisation, transition to formality, and the green and just transition, supporting the wider ACTRAV vision of "Trade Unions in Transformation". Using a competence-based, multi-modal learning approach, the Academy will be delivered online over four weeks, from 7 to 30 April 2026, followed by a post-ILC webinar to translate ILC outcomes into concrete union action plans.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the training are to:

i.   Enhance workers' organisations' knowledge, tools, and strategic capacities to address the challenges posed by the four transitions, spotlighting artificial intelligence to act, adapt, anticipate, innovate, navigate the transitions and influence policy at all levels;

ii. Equip workers' organisations to strategically use the relevant International Labour Standards to shape the global AI and platform work governance;

iii. Identify what is at stake for the 2026 ILO-ILC discussions on the standard setting on Decent Work in the Platform Economy;

iv. Identify the strategic interconnections of AI with concurrent transitions, namely: digital, transition to formality, and green transition, leveraging synergies and opportunities, and co-creation of holistic, integrated, and solution-oriented trade union approaches;

v.   Facilitate peer exchange and replication of concrete national and sectoral experiences, negotiated approaches and successes, keeping the emphasis on actionable strategies;

vi. Strengthen workers' competencies, namely: transformational, transversal, and transferable; and allowing them to enable workers to develop and implement impactful and holistic trade union development strategies, policies, education and training, and social dialogue and collective bargaining strategies that promote transparent and worker-centred AI and decent work; and,

vii. Strengthen the ACTRAV alumni network and collaboration among workers' organisations to collectively address challenges posed by AI and other transitions, and champion alignment with just transition principles and decent work standards.

PEDAGOGICAL OUTCOMES

The pedagogical outcomes will include:

i.   Increased knowledge base and tools for engagement and influence ahead of the 2026 ILC and in national processes;

ii. Enhanced skills to articulate the interconnectedness of AI with other transitions supported by a competency-based approach;

iii. Robust and transformative trade union development strategy that integrates worker and human-centred AI strategies and policy frameworks;

iv. Increased agency and responsibility to act, adapt, and innovate; and

v.   Knowledge sharing of best practices and possible replication targeting all groups of workers.

ACADEMY STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The Academy applies a modular approach, resulting in concrete trade union-oriented outputs such as bargaining tools, governance checklists, workplace strategies, and advocacy actions, among others. Artificial Intelligence is the central thread that interconnects all transitions and modules. Instead of treating AI as a standalone theme, each module will examine how AI intersects with, accelerates, or reshapes the specific transition under study. Participants will be introduced to the Quad Journal that will be used across the four modules to progressively build into their Trade Union Roadmaps.

Course Orientation: Participants will meet the training team and gain an overview of the course, online platform, and digital learning tools.

Module 1: Artificial Intelligence

This module aims to strengthen artificial intelligence literacy, including algorithmic management, among workers and their organizations by equipping them with the knowledge, capacities, and practical understanding needed to navigate, question, and negotiate AI systems from a worker-centred and rights-based perspective. It equips unions to critically engage with AI adoption and reinforces their bargaining position in shaping fair and transparent AI governance frameworks. Key topics to be covered include:

i.   Practical understanding of AI, algorithms, and algorithmic management and their impacts, risks, gender implications, skills demand, reskilling implications, including sector-specific AI trends and opportunities for workers and their organisations.

ii. Strategic use of International Labour Standards (ILS) to reinforce social dialogue and strengthen AI-related collective bargaining agendas, securing responsible AI governance frameworks, data protection, and knowledge governance to address the ethical and operational implications of AI in the workplace.

iii. The role of trade unions in shaping governance of AI and platform work in line with the 2026 ILO-ILC discussions on the standard setting on Decent Work in the Platform Economy, and to mobilise national-level actions and follow up.

iv. Successful, illustrative, and innovative trade union-led AI initiatives to strengthen representations of various categories of workers, and the competencies required for trade union transformation in the AI era.

Module 2: Digital Transition

This module looks at the full digital transition beyond AI. It examines how digital transition continues to impact rights and skills needs, including transforming trade union-digital organising models. Through this module, unions strengthen their capacity to anticipate changes, drive worker-centred digital innovations, and champion decent work in an increasingly digital world. The module outputs include concrete, negotiated national/sectoral bargaining practices and trade union-led digital models clearly linked to successful global trade union actions. Key topics to be covered include:

i.   Understanding the digital transition—including emerging technologies, trends, gender dynamics, and their implications for all workers and trade unions.

ii. Examining how digitalisation and AI intersect, shaping labour rights, skills need, and spotlighting OSH challenges that require proactive union action.

iii. Leveraging digital tools for trade union power, strengthening organising, collective bargaining, representation, and service delivery, including practical checklists for trade unions.

iv. Scaling up successful global and sectoral union digital initiatives, digital worker representation models, and building the competencies unions need to act, adapt, and innovate in the AI-driven digital era.

Module 3:   Transition To Formality

This module focuses on how AI and the digital transition are facilitating informality but also reshaping pathways to formality. Focus will be made on platform workers and emerging categories of work across sectors. This includes understanding risks, opportunities, and entry points for trade unions to advance worker-led formalisation processes, taking a cue from trade union-led innovations around the globe.

Key topics to be covered include:
i.   A workers' perspective on AI and digital transition and informality, and pathways to transition to formality across different sectors.
ii. Advancing worker-led formalisation using the ILO Recommendation No. 204, the 2025 ILC outcomes on transition to formality, and anticipating how the 2026 ILC finalisation of the Platform Work Convention will support transitions to formality and identifying how workers' organisations can position themselves to leverage these ILO tools.
iii. Trade union-led innovations - scaling up successful global and sectoral trade union-based initiatives and models to secure a worker-centred formalisation of the informal economy linking cases, standards, organising, and policy influencing strategies.

Module 4:   The Green And Just Transition

This module focuses AI, digitalisation, climate, green, and just transition. It positions just transition not only as a climate issue but as a bargaining strategy. By strengthening solidarity, collective bargaining, and innovative strategies, this module equips workers' organisations to lead the transitions toward a green, just, and worker-centred future of work. Module outputs include green and digital transition workplace actions, a model clause package for workplace green collective bargaining, and NDC influence strategies and trade union roadmaps.

Key topics to be covered include:
i.   Linking AI, digitalisation, and green transition, and applying just transition principles to workplace green technological changes, ensuring social dialogue, decent work, and equitable distribution of benefits of AI for workers.
ii. Green collective bargaining and social dialogue for a just transition and lessons for trade unions to adapt, anticipate, and innovate.
iii. Concrete national, sector experiences, innovations, and social dialogue on Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and follow-ups for action.
iv. Participants developing a trade union roadmap consolidating the Quad Journal inputs, that leverages AI and interconnected transitions to address a workplace or national challenge—proposing solutions grounded in worker-centred approaches, social dialogue, social justice, and just transition principles.

The Follow-Up Webinar To The 2026 ILC

The follow-up interactive webinar to the 2026 ILC discussion and outcomes will take place in the third quarter of 2026, targeting the successful online participants. This approach aims to sustain learning, drive change and impact, translation of the high-level discussions and integration of the outcomes into participants' local contexts and trade union strategies, deeper trade union networking, provision of additional resources and support from ILO-ACTRAV, and sustainable impact for the workers' organisations as they engage with artificial intelligence, digital transition, and platform work. Through this webinar, participants will have the opportunity to maintain momentum and drive meaningful change within their organizations, updating their Roadmaps for national implementation and advocacy.

METHODOLOGIES

Interactive Online Learning: This four-week online course combines individual learning tracks with group interaction through virtual classrooms. Participants will use the ITCILO eCampus digital learning environment to foster interaction, consensus-building, shared learning, and co-creation of solutions. All modules, materials, and tools are accessible on computers, tablets, or smartphones. Knowledge checks through short quizzes will support ongoing skill development.

Expert-Led Sessions: ILO ACTRAV specialists, thematic experts, and ITUC resource persons will deliver weekly 2-hour webinars featuring real-time problem-solving, practical scenarios, and updated guidance on relevant frameworks and transitions.

Flexible and Accessible Learning: The programme blends synchronous learning (self-paced) to accommodate participants' work and union responsibilities and asynchronous learning (live collaborative activities) using modern digital learning tools. The course will draw from relevant experiences, current practices, insights, and lessons from the participants.

The Quad Journal (recurring learning tool across all modules): Participants will maintain a Quad Journal throughout the Academy as a structured, recurring learning instrument. The Journal entries consolidating the participant's progressive analysis will be used to develop the final Roadmap in the final week (final assignment).

Interaction, Assessment, and Support: Weekly peer-review activities to foster interaction in which participants are required to read the responses posted by their peers and comment on at least one other participant's responses and provide positive feedback. The training team and tutors will support participants in interacting with each other and assisting everyone in completing all essential course requirements, such as weekly reflections, assignments, and group projects. The training team will guide the participants in determining and shaping practical 'application of learning' plans and strategies for implementation at the country or enterprise level. The standard ITCILO end-of-course evaluation will be applied.

COUNTRIES COVERED AND TARGET PARTICIPANTS

This Academy prioritizes inclusivity and diversity, ensuring that trade union leaders and representatives from all backgrounds are equipped to tackle the challenges of the future of work. Trade union leaders and representatives from Young Workers' and Women's structures with the following profiles will be invited to participate:

i.   Experience in legal support or organizing experience for workers in the platform and informal economies;
ii. Experience in digital, AI, transition to formality, and green and just transitions, including engagements in social dialogue, collective bargaining, and research and policy analysis;
iii. Alumni of the 2024 and 2025 ITCILO–ACTRAV Global Workers' Academy on Addressing Transitions;
iv. Workers' representatives preparing to participate in the 2026 International Labour Conference (ILC).

To ensure gender parity, workers' organizations will are invited to recommend two equally qualified candidates, at least one of whom must be a woman with equal qualifications and experience in this area.

Nominated participants must:

i. Have the trade union role and responsibility that can make the best use of the training opportunity;
ii. Have the ability to apply the knowledge and skills gained by taking part in the training, in their trade union role and setting;
iii. Be willing to share their knowledge and skills with other trade union representatives and organizations;
iv. Have the time and resources (access to the internet) to undertake the training; and,
v. Have (basic) IT technical skills to enable them to successfully train online.

ITCILO-ACTRAV expects trade union organizations to fully support selected participants in completing course activities and requirements. Organizations are also expected to extend support for the implementing post-training application of learning plans.

APPLICATION OF LEARNING AND POST-TRAINING FOLLOW-UP

Post-training, ACTRAV-ITCILO will organize webinars at regular intervals to provide continuing education to the course participants. These webinars will also serve as an opportunity to sustain conversations, follow up on participants' application of learning, knowledge, and sharing of current events, and strengthen regional union networking. Regular sharing of relevant ILO publications, such as policy briefs and newsletters, will supplement the post-training component. In addition, ACTRAV-ITCILO may send short surveys to participating organizations to ensure that any gains or improvements secured by workers' organizations are captured and shared in similar ACTRAV training interventions.

INFO

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