ONLINE   POLICY DESIGN

STORYTELLING FOR RESEARCH AND POLICY

16 NOVEMBER – 11 DECEMBER 2026
🕐 **4 WEEKS, 60 LEARNING HOURS**

Information Note

International Labour Organization

ITC International Training Centre

BACKGROUND

In an era defined by complexity, uncertainty, and rapid change, the ability to generate high-quality evidence is no longer sufficient. What matters just as much, if not more, is the ability to communicate that evidence effectively to those who shape policy. Across the world, governments, trade unions, employers' organizations, and international agencies are being called upon to respond quickly to interconnected challenges: inequality, informality, the climate crisis, disruptive technologies, the platform economy, demographic transitions, and political instability. The stakes are high, and the demand for solutions is urgent.

Yet despite the availability of research and data, the translation of that evidence into clear, persuasive, and timely messages remains a persistent bottleneck in policy processes. Policymakers often lack the time or technical capacity to engage with dense research outputs, and even the most robust evidence can be ignored if it is not communicated in a way that resonates with decision-makers' concerns, language, and political priorities.

This gap between evidence and action is not a technical failure, it is a communication challenge. Storytelling bridges that gap. Compelling storytelling does not mean simplifying or manipulating evidence. It means organizing facts into meaningful narratives that clarify relevance, trigger empathy, and motivate action. In the context of the ILO's tripartite model, where dialogue between governments, workers, and employers is central to shaping labour and social policies, the capacity to tell effective stories using data becomes even more critical.

This course responds directly to the needs expressed by ILO constituents. That evaluation underscored the need to strengthen the "last mile" of evidence use, by helping practitioners and institutions communicate their research more clearly and persuasively to drive meaningful policy dialogue and reform. By equipping participants with storytelling tools and strategies grounded in behavioural science, communication theory, and practical policy experience, this course enables a more human-centred and impactful use of evidence, at the service of social justice and inclusive policymaking.

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

SNAPSHOT OF THE COURSE

Storytelling for Research and Policy is an interactive, online training course designed to help professionals bridge the gap between evidence and policy. Grounded in real-world policy processes and informed by cutting-edge communication strategies, the course equips participants with the tools and techniques to transform complex research findings into compelling, credible, and actionable stories that resonate with policymakers, social partners, and the wider public.

Delivered over four weeks, the course combines live virtual sessions, practical exercises, self-paced learning, and peer exchange. Participants will gain hands-on experience in narrative framing, visualisation techniques, policy brief writing, and behavioural insights, skills that enhance the uptake of evidence in labour market and social policy debates.

This course is part of the broader Evidence-Based Policymaking (EBPM) training programme led by the ILO Research Department and ITCILO. It responds to a critical findings: while the ILO has successfully built research capacities among constituents, communication remains a weak link in the evidence-to-impact chain. This course directly addresses that gap.

Whether you are a government official drafting policy proposals, a trade unionist advocating for workers' rights, or an employers' representative influencing regulation, this course will help you tell better stories with your data, stories that get heard, shape debate, and support decent work outcomes.

CONTENTS

5. Translating Research into Policy Briefs and Presentations

- Writing for policymakers: clarity, structure, and style
- Transforming technical research into accessible language
- The policy brief as a storytelling instrument
- Crafting opening lines, hooks, and calls to action
- Presenting findings with confidence in high pressure policy settings

6. The Politics of Evidence and Strategic Influence

- Understanding the political economy of policymaking
- Navigating resistance, competing narratives, and misinformation
- Using stories ethically to build trust and legitimacy
- Case studies from ILO work: what worked, what did not, and why
- How storytelling strengthens social dialogue and tripartite engagement

Optional Enhancements

- Storytelling labs with peer feedback
- Short assignments turning participants' own data into policy messages
- Review of effective communication strategies used by governments, unions, and employer groups
- Examples from Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs), national reforms, and ILO flagship reports

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

This course equips participants with the skills to transform research and data into clear, credible, and persuasive stories that influence policy debates and decisions. By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

Communicate evidence clearly and confidently

- Translate complex research findings into accessible, policy relevant language.
- Explain data insights to non technical audiences without oversimplifying.
- Present evidence in ways that are compelling, structured, and easy to follow.

Build persuasive narratives using data

- Construct stories that connect evidence to people, problems, and policy solutions.
- Apply narrative frameworks to show why the evidence matters and what it means.
- Use behavioural insights to design messages that resonate with policymakers.

Tailor messages to specific audiences

- Identify the needs, priorities, and constraints of policymakers, social partners, and the public.

- Adapt tone, framing, and examples to maximize relevance and impact.

- Anticipate questions, objections, and competing narratives.

Use data visualisation effectively

- Choose the right visual tools to communicate trends, comparisons, or causal links.

- Design charts, graphs, and diagrams that reinforce rather than distract from the message.

- Avoid common visualisation mistakes that undermine credibility.

Develop high quality communication products

- Draft concise and persuasive policy briefs anchored in evidence.

- Craft powerful opening lines, key messages, and calls to action.

- Deliver short, convincing oral "evidence pitches" in policy discussions.

Engage strategically in the politics of policymaking

- Understand how evidence is used (and sometimes misused) in decision-making.

- Build trust and legitimacy by communicating transparently and ethically.

- Use storytelling to support social dialogue, negotiation, and consensus building.

Strengthen long term communication capacity

- Apply storytelling techniques to future research, advocacy, and policy work.

- Incorporate evidence storytelling into institutional communication strategies.

- Contribute to a culture of evidence informed policymaking within your organization.

This course empowers participants not just to share data, but to shape meaning, build trust, and influence decisions, turning evidence into action for decent work and social justice.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course will be delivered online through the ITCILO's e-Campus Platform from 16 November to 11 December, 2026. The course will be divided into six content modules, each accompanied by follow-up activities and assignments. It requires an overall commitment of 60 hours of active study/participation.

During the training, each of the 6 learning modules of the course has a fixed structure and includes the following components:

1. Online, with the group and ILO trainer and/or invited speakers (session of 120 min): ILO and ITCILO experts will facilitate a 2-hour session on the topics of each module. Each session will include a 60-minute frontal session on the contents, trends and concepts, followed by a 30-minute open discussion and a 30-minute specific application.

2. Individual self-learning, activities and assignments, as well as group activities: The main thematic sessions will be complemented by individual or group work on the same theme, to allow participants to collaborate, apply the tools and concepts they have learned and delve deeper into the practical issues of the decent work agenda. Specific case studies will be used to help participants practice using evidence for policy-making.

3. Forum discussions, self-facilitated or facilitated by the ILO and ITCILO trainers.

PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

WHO ATTENDS THIS COURSE

The course is intended for:

- Policymakers, government officials, and representatives from ministries in the fields of labour, employment, and the broader world of work.

- ILO and UN staff and development practitioners and consultants

- Representatives of Trade Unions and employers' organisations

- Public investment, employment and labour market policy advisers

- Policy analysts working for national and global think tanks, financial institutions, research departments and foundations

- Individuals interested in or actively contributing to the provision of information, analysis, and recommendations crucial for policymaking and advocacy.

METHODOLOGY

Built upon the Learning Pyramid model, participants will actively explore and engage in discussions to formulate a policy brief that reflects their learning and transfer the acquired knowledge to their professional roles. This comprehensive approach includes plenary sessions for widespread knowledge sharing, specialised sessions for in-depth learning, hands-on activities that emphasise best practices and tools, and promotes the building of an international community of practitioners, and a structured policy brief development process.

This is an online training, and through the E-Campus Platform, participants will use digital learning tools, including self-learning tools, webinars, and online interaction tools. The training will use a practical, work-based approach to evidence-based policy making and is designed to be built around everyday situations, using best practices/ case studies. This is not an academic or theoretical course. Throughout the training, participants will utilise both primary and secondary data and information sources, such as surveys, focus groups, and metadata analysis.

This training is organised in such a way as to give the participants the opportunity to learn and practice the skills and knowledge of evidence-based policymaking and to prove that they have mastered them by meeting the predefined objectives at the end of each session. It also focuses on the learners' participation throughout the learning process. The course takes a learner centred pedagogical approach while ensuring building institutional capacity in a holistic way.

The learners should be able to achieve the objectives in the minimum time and to transfer the learning to their jobs.

Each session will be organized as follows:

- Introduction: it shows the purpose, objectives, process, experiences of the participants and how the knowledge will be applied;

- Learning: structure and content, learning methods, skills and knowledge practice, progress monitoring, memory aids;

- Review: review or test learners to make sure the objectives have been achieved and to bring the session to a close (e.g. establish what the next steps are).

Through these different learning methods, by the end of the course participants will be able to draft a policy brief and be able to communicate it to their audience.

CERTIFICATION

At the end of the course, in order to evaluate the knowledge and skills learnt, participants will be required to submit an individual policy brief for review by the ILO/ITCILO specialists and trainers. Upon successful completion of this assignment, participants will receive an ITCILO Certificate of Achievement.

This course is part of the **Diploma in Evidence-Based Public Policy**, launched jointly by the ILO Research Department and the ITCILO's Employment Policy and Analysis Programme. The Diploma is designed as a progressive yet flexible learning journey that develops participants' capacity to turn evidence into action for decent work and social justice. It comprises five interconnected components, four courses (three mandatory and one elective) and a capstone project, that together build technical, analytical, and communication skills for designing, implementing, and advocating evidence-informed policies aligned with the ILO's mandate. Earning this Certificate represents the first step towards the Diploma in Evidence-Based Public Policy.

A post-course evaluation will be conducted to assess the individual learning outcomes. A final evaluation will be conducted to receive the feedback of the participants on the training methodology, content and the learning tools.

APPLICATION

Find the application form at https://oarf2.itcilo.org/DST/A9719102/en and apply before **11 November 2026**.

COST OF PARTICIPATION

The course is fee-paying. **Tuition: €1,125**.

ITCILO will offer a limited number of fellowships which may cover part of the tuition fee. If eligible, early applicants will be given priority. Please make sure to apply at earliest convenience before the above mentioned deadline.

The payment, cancellation and refunds policy of the ITCILO can be consulted on the following website: https://www.itcilo.org/applications-payments-cancellation

WITHDRAWAL, CANCELLATION POLICY, AND REFUNDS FOR OPEN COURSES

If an enrolled participant wishes or must withdraw from a course, they may choose to apply to a different course or be substituted by another candidate. The participant must notify the Centre, in writing, of their decision at least 14 days prior to the start date of the course. Cancellation of participation in regular courses will result in the following penalties:

- 14 days or more prior to the start date of the course: No penalty, 100% refund of amount paid less applicable bank charges
- 8 to 13 days prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 50% of course price, refund of residual amount paid (if any) less applicable bank charges
- 7 days or less prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 100% of course price.

INFO

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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