

ITF ORGANISING MANUAL

TRAINING

TRAINING

Learning from each other

I am a flight attendant at Jordanian Airlines. When I first got involved in the union, no-one else was ready to participate. The leader of my union recommended that I attend an ITF education seminar on “Training the Trainer”.

With the help and encouragement of my fellow participants, I gathered ideas about how to educate my co-workers about unions. One of the participants became my mentor and friend.

I was able to recruit a small group of my fellow flight attendants to assist me, and within a year we had won.

My education began with a one-to-one conversation followed by a seminar and then a mentor. I am now helping others in my union.

We need to take the education of our leaders and co-workers seriously. Every worker needs to have opportunities to increase skills, share ideas and learn from each other.

Sawsan Ibrahim

ITF affiliate, Jordan

Without training and education, workers will not know what a union is and how it can best function.

If we do not train workers, misinformation in the workplace will increase. Leaders may not grow in skills and experience. It will be harder to recruit additional leaders if we do not support our current leaders. We will have too few people who are skilled at doing the organising work. Making decisions and resolving conflicts become more difficult.

Through training and education, we can...

- * Exchange information, skills and perspectives.*
- * Develop and understand our organising plans together.*
- * Help recruit additional leaders.*
- * Build deeper relationships amongst workers.*

One of our benchmarks is for union training.

There are three key topics that workers may need training in:

- 1. The organising plan and how to get involved in organising*

2. *The union, including the union's history and vision*
3. *The company, the industry and the economy*

Training can be done in a variety of ways. It does not need to be in a classroom or at a meeting. Songs, quizzes, games, poems and even just interesting questions that help start conversations can be good educational tools. We will look at several different methods for training workers.

Most people learn through one-to-one, person-to-person relationships. These one-to-one relationships must be built on honesty and trust. Workers do not usually commit to the challenge of getting involved in a union based on written materials.

Education in small groups is part of strengthening our arbolitos (worker networks). Small group meetings can take place in workers' homes, cafés or other safe locations. The meetings should be fun and build the sense of the collective. They should be a safe place to share questions. The small groups can

either be informal and social or be run with an agenda (as in a study circle).

Mentoring supports the deep sharing of experience and knowledge. Mentors and mentees should meet regularly and might need a list of topics to cover. Both participants should be willing to challenge habits and assumptions and be open to new ideas. And both need to provide praise and support for each other. Clear, direct and honest feedback should be given with kindness.

Industry events are usually held away from the union office and without a union "label" in order to provide safe space for the workers before they are ready to publicly confront the employer. Possible venues include radio stations, industry training centres, hotels or conference rooms, a church or community facility, or a college or university. Topics are varied. There might be an interest in industry law, particularly as it affects workers, a comparison of conditions, or safety information

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about injuries and how to prevent them.

Surveys use the arbolitos (worker networks) communication structures to gather data of interest to workers. Possible topics might include (1) knowledge of the law or regulations covering working conditions or (2) information about specific conditions or problems (for example, the frequency of back injuries). We might collect

information about resources and needs for childcare. The survey can be from a college or university, a social group, a Facebook group, an NGO, an industry academy or training organisation, the ITF or a union. Include a request for workers' contact details. Promise to provide the final results to each worker participating in the survey.

Social events should be well organised and fun. You can either

Learning from each other

There are 80,000 seafarers in Turkey, with 40,000 of them waiting for a job. The work is casual, usually with six-month contracts. None of the Turkish seafarers were with the union.

It took eight years to develop the team that would organise the seafarers.

One place that seafarers get together is in their training courses. Eleven trainers were our nucleus. Officers are trained for two years, which was enough time for the trainers to develop deep relationships with them. Each trainer recruited approximately 150 officers who they kept in touch with over the eight-year

period by phone, email and during rest times. We shared friendship, politics and helped each other with problems. There was no status, no money and no elected positions for any of us. By the time we were ready, we had a group of about 800 trained seafaring officers ready to act.

Last year, we were able to negotiate 152 collective bargaining agreements, and we now have 800 members who pay fees.

We understand that not everyone has eight years. Our advice is to spend the time on educating and training. You need a committed team that deeply trusts each other.

ITF affiliate, Turkey

create your own events or tap into others' social events. They might involve sports, nightlife, dinner parties, fundraisers, or shopping. You will want to maximise opportunities for one-to-one, person-to-person contact with the workers. For example, you might go for drinks after you play soccer together or you might want to organise group transport for shopping. Make sure to follow up

Learning from each other

ITF-affiliated drivers' unions in West Africa are distributing music videos and cassettes to raise awareness of drivers' problems, such as long hours and police corruption. The music project promotes union messages to drivers. More drivers are now showing an interest in joining unions.

Germaine Ouedraogo

ITF education project co-ordinator

Who will we need to train?

Union Members
Especially those who have contact with or can relate to non-union or uninvolved workers

Non-union or uninvolved workers

Union leaders and staff

Training can help build links and trust between workers

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Planning a training programme

Who would participate?

Who would teach or lead? What facilitation training and support might they need?

How will you recruit participants?

What training methods would you use?

- One-to-one, person-to-person
- Small groups
- Mentoring
- Industry or educational events
- Surveys
- Social events
- Union events
- Other

Learning from each other

In Sweden, audio books have been produced to educate truckers about HIV/AIDS. This is an ideal format for reaching union members on the road.

ITF affiliate, Sweden

Learning from each other

We had a three-week strike at Air France of baggage handlers, check-in staff and all the ground staff. We have legal access to workplaces as long as we do not impede the work.

In France, we have one hour free to train workers in the workplace. The shop stewards contact the company to set the location and date, and then we post a notice regarding the topic and the location. We had lots and lots of these one-hour meetings to mobilise for the strike. We talked to workers in rest areas and lounges but not in front of passengers. We used this time to recruit members as well.

We had all three national union federations working together on the strike, with inter-union meetings, joint pamphlets and a joint strike date. We had 70 per cent of the staff stop working. We won the strike and there was more confidence and trust in the union afterwards.

Liliane Debeche

ITF affiliate, France

systematically with the new contacts that you make.

We can use union events to educate members about organising.

You might make a short announcement at a well-attended union event, asking if anyone knows anyone at the unorganised company. Or plan a five-day workshop to discuss organising strategies. Try to always include specific ideas of what union members can do to help.

** What do you think your benchmark for training should be?*

Our training benchmark is a measure of the percentage of non-union or uninvolved workers who have a basic understanding of the union.



The accompanying PowerPoint module on “Training” includes more thorough discussions of the topics raised and an activity which will help you create a training programme.

Learning from each other

We need to get out there and educate workers about what the union really does. It’s not enough to say we’re the union and leave it at that.

Tami Ray

ITF affiliate, Bermuda

Learning from each other

More than 3,000 seafarers attended an ITF seafarers expo at the Luneta Seafarers' Center in Manila, the heart of the Philippines' seafaring community.

Seafarers interacted with their unions, signed international ITF petitions, wrote messages about key workplace issues and participated in a range of other activities – free medical

check-ups, quizzes and raffles. They received information about the benefits of trade union membership and the employment terms and conditions on board vessels covered by the ITF.

It was a fantastic event, and one we will be replicating in other regions of the world.

Graham Young
ITF secretariat

Learning from each other

We have to educate our members about collective bargaining, their rights, union dues, everything.

We represent seafarers and fishers in Indonesia. Seafarers are always moving. The union goes to the manning agents and the shipping companies and we advertise a three-day course for the seafarers to attend while they are ashore. During this time they are visiting the manning agency and looking for work.

The union pays for the transportation and food and accommodation. We hold this training every three months. You must be a member to go. When you join our union, we have a form, it is like a contract with your name and contact details and your certification. It lists the members' responsibilities:

- * I will attend the three days of training and all other union education courses including the advanced courses*
- * I will pay my membership dues*
- * I will attend congress and the education and branch meetings that occur before congress and all other*

union education courses including the advanced courses

The union keeps a list of members who have and have not attended. We send out warning letters. If you are paying your union dues and you do not know about the union, you are unhappy. You will not be able to go to congress. We have one delegate for every 250 workers. Other members will laugh at you because you are not able to keep up with the discussions.

We now have 35,000 members with 5,000 of them in the fishing industry. We are the major labour supplying country for seafarers. There are companies that do not use our members and they have a problem; the workers will not have accident insurance for example.

We send our members, our educated members to the companies where they will get more pay. They all must attend the union training course before they can join a ship. The members' knowledge of the union is the most important.

Hanafi Rustandi

ITF affiliate, Indonesia