

South Asia regional training on evidence-based policy making for decent work

10-13 April 2023

Concept Note

Background

The RESEARCH and DWT Delhi organized the South Asia online training on evidence-based policy making for decent work, 22-26 November 2021. This training is usually held as a face-to-face event in the region. Due to COVID-19 and the subsequent travel restrictions, the Research Department organized this training virtually, in cooperation with ITCILO.

A total of 36 tripartite participants from 7 countries from the South Asia region were selected to take part in the course. Most of the participants occupy mid- to senior-level positions in their countries and will become our active counterparts in the coming years (as ILC delegates, GB members, country-level representatives, etc.). The list of participants can be found in the Annex A.

As a follow up to the online phase, it was suggested to have a face-to-face training when travel restrictions were removed. This training phase will help participants apply the knowledge gained on the evidence-based policy making and draft policy brief on a topic selected by the participants.

Justification

In accordance with the ILO's Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008), the ILO seeks to "*help, wherever necessary, the institutional capacity of member States, as well as representative organizations of employers and workers, to facilitate meaningful and coherent social policy and sustainable development*". As a follow up, the Resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work (105th International Labour Conference 2016) calls for ILO to effectively assist its members through capacity building and training activities. Capacity development is a core element of the ILO's aim to achieve decent work and further social justice. It is defined by the ILO as a "*process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time*" (GB.317/POL/6). Capacity development is therefore

considered as an integral process where ILO constituents' priorities and needs guide the Office in its role as a supporter (GB.335/INS/9).

The ILC resolution on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work also calls on building capacity especially in enhancing research capacity (2017) and evokes the need to “*provide evidence-based and integrated capacity building and training for constituents*”. ILO’s Strategic plan 2018-21 also calls for continuously increasing the capacity of its constituents to enhance the ability of constituents to give value to their members and potential members, and have the capacity to engage in policy-based advocacy, so that they can make the maximum possible contribution to decent work outcomes (GB.335/INS/9). The fundamental importance of capacity building, especially in enhancing knowledge of state-of-art ILO research, is affirmed in several ILO strategies – including the Strategic Plan 2018-21, the Knowledge Strategy 2018-21, and the ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development. The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development goals (SDGs) also call for evidence-based policy making and increased capacity building in member countries. Additionally, the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (adopted the centenary ILC 2019) calls for “*Strengthening the capacities of all people to benefit from the opportunities of a changing world*” and for the need for ILO to strengthen the capacity of its tripartite constituents. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic and its short- and long-term implications further emphasize the need for greater institutional capacity development of employers, workers and governments. The crisis has highlighted gaps and vulnerabilities in societies which undermine the vision of social justice and decent work. In this light, capacity development becomes only more necessary by providing the constituents with tools and instruments for evidence-based policy making. ILO’s training can help to identify and strengthen institutional weakness in order to improve policies and protections and better equip societies for dealing with future crises.

The International Labour Conference (June 2021) unanimously adopted a Global Call to Action outlining measures to create a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and avoid the long-term scarring of economies and societies. The document calls for recovery that prioritizes the creation of decent jobs for all and addresses the inequalities caused by the crisis. The Global call to action document for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis also underlines the importance of capacity building in building back better. It points out to the need of “strengthening the capacity of employers’ and workers’ organizations to engage in national recovery strategies and to support their members in the recovery”.¹

The Programme and Budget 2022-23 refers to the capacity building and training activities especially within the Outcome A (“*generation, management and brokering of relevant, reliable and timely research and statistics, with particular attention to sectors and groups most affected by the pandemic, with a view to supporting constituents in the design and implementation of effective, evidence-based policies.*”) and Output A.1 “*tailored capacity development programmes to support ILO constituents in the production of SDG and other decent work*”

¹ ILO, 2021, Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

indicators". The Programme and Budget 2022-23 also underlines the objective of maintaining a high level of research and knowledge management to increase the quality of evidence used for policy making. This is essential for ILO to "*strengthen its global leadership role as a centre of evidence-based knowledge on the world of work and a key partner to shape a human-centred approach to recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis*".

Emerging evidence from member countries and constituents shows that there is a large gap in the capacity of the tripartite decision makers to generate and use evidence effectively, which hampers the use of evidence in practice. ILO's constituents are requesting support to bridge this gap in research and policy development skills. The training will provide assistance to constituents in both the use and generation of evidence from a variety of sources, including not only ILO evidence but also from national and local sources, including evidence generation through data and metadata analysis. Indeed, the Bali Declaration 2016 also underlined the necessity to support the constituents with relevant capacity building activities in order to contribute to the achievement of relevant policy priorities (APRM.16/D.6). Specifically, it requests "*building capacity of constituents to effectively contribute to decent work for sustainable and inclusive development through enhanced social dialogue and collective bargaining*" and "*strengthening capacity-building programmes for employers' and workers' organizations*".

The training will be organized by the ILO Research Department in cooperation with the DWT Delhi. It is timely given the need for better informed and effective evidence-based policies relating to decent work issues, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic creating an unprecedented impact on workers and enterprises around the world. In recent years, there has been a worldwide push to move towards coherent and evidence-based policy making. In this context, it is indeed fundamental for the ILO to provide its constituents with a training that allows them to effectively produce evidence-based policies for decent work. Participants would have enhanced capacities to contribute to their respective countries/organizations' policies while having an impact on how policies are planned and delivered. This contribution could happen either in a direct or indirect way, through their interaction with senior decision makers. The ILO Research Department is particularly well equipped to organize and deliver this training in cooperation with DWT Delhi, given its expertise in research and policy experience.

Aim & Objectives

The aim of this training is to build capacities of ILO's tripartite constituents using case studies, research papers, guidelines, publicly available online ILO data, other data and information sources for robust and comprehensive policy making for decent work t. As such the specific objectives of this training are to:

- Incorporate processes in order to help improve existing social dialogue mechanisms on tripartite and bipartite forms;

- Improve skills and knowledge of individuals and organizations to use a wide variety of evidence sources in a balanced way;
- Establish research and policy dialogues between social partners to promote the use of evidence in policy making and facilitate and enhance the bipartite/tripartite dialogue;
- Develop research and policy communities of practice with social partners and policy-makers for evidence-based policy making and share lessons on evidence use for promoting decent work.

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

- build skills and knowledge for evidence-based policy making, advocacy and service provisions for decent work;
- draft policy brief proposals for influencing policy, informing advocacy activities and services development;
- use skills and knowledge acquired in the training to build a culture of evidence-based policy making, advocacy and service provisions;
- build a robust evidence base for policy reconciling different perspectives, findings, and, conflicting evidence for advocacy and service provision purposes.

Audience

This training would be targeted to those mid to senior level tripartite officials who are involved in policymaking, policy analysis or advocacy. They could be research officers, analysts, advisors, policy makers, among others. These individuals play a crucial role in providing information, analysis and recommendations to guide policy-making and advocacy strategies and support informed debate.

Methodology

This training is developed by the ILO's Research Department in cooperation with DWT Delhi. The training is practical and allows participants to apply the skills learned during the course. This process leads to improved practices and performances both at the individual and organizational levels.

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 utilize both primary and secondary data and information sources, such as surveys, focus groups, and metadata analysis.

This training is organized 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. An integrated perspective will be used to address the three dimensions of capacity development whereby the transformation in learning that occurs at the individual level will affect, from a results chain perspective, the changes at organizational level. The learners should be able to achieve the objectives in the minimum time and to transfer the learning to their jobs. By doing so, participants can learn at their own pace and from each other. 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.

To enable a real appreciation of the above-mentioned achievements, they will be consolidated according to the Organizational Performance Assessment (OPA) framework, adapted to define learning and capacity development results. The framework will allow translating learning into concrete changes that have taken place at the level of skills, work behaviors and practices by individual participants, as well as the transfer to his/her own work unit, organization or network.

Course structure

This training is the second phase since the online phase was organized on 22-26 November 2021. It will be structured around 6 content modules with follow-up activities and assignments.

Prior to the course participants will be requested to formulate their major learning goals and take a pre-course assessment. The participants will also write a policy brief on a topic selected by them. During the training, each of the learning modules of the course has a fixed structure and includes the following components:

1. Face to face, with the group and ILO trainer and/or invited speakers

Two ILO experts will facilitate a 4 hour session on the topics of each module. Each session will include 90 minutes on the concepts and trends, followed by a 90-minutes specific topics (building back better with a human-centred recovery, youth employment, employment assessment, employment targeting).

2. Individual self-learning, activities and assignments, as well as group activities when possible

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 for participants to practice how to use evidence for policy making.

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

Selection Criteria



Evaluations

The individual policy briefs will be submitted for review by the ILO specialists and trainers and shared with the other participants.

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.

Upon completion of the course, participants will receive a certificate of participation.

Follow-up phase: after the completion of the training, participants will be asked to fill out a survey and a mentorship tool will be carried out for a period of one year, to check on how their new learning has contributed to improved practices both at the individual and organizational levels.

Working language

The training will be delivered in English.

Composition

This course will be offered to 20-30 tripartite participants including workers, employers and government officials from the 7 South Asian countries.

Contact

Naren PRASAD
Head of Education & Training
Research Department, ILO Geneva
prasadn@ilo.org