

# COMMUNICATING EVIDENCE: ONLINE TRIPARTITE TRAINING ON HOW TO COMMUNICATE EVIDENCE TO POLICYMAKERS

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## *Rationale*

The post-COVID era, in the light of the “*Future of Work*” challenges and “Building back Better”, present significant opportunities, while also constituting a threat to social justice, shared prosperity and decent work for all in many parts of the world. In this direction, the 2019 Centenary Declaration and the Global Call to Action (2021 ILC) have rightfully directed the spotlight towards “building better” using a human-centred approach to the future of decent work. These ambitious goals require constituents to develop their knowledge and expertise in key dimensions of the world of work associated with disruptive and ongoing challenges, including the environment, new technologies, gender inequalities, shifting patterns of globalization and multiple forms of inequalities, and post COVID-19 rebuilding.

The fundamental importance of capacity building, especially in enhancing knowledge of ILO’s research, is affirmed in several strategies – including the Strategic Plan 2022-25, the Knowledge Strategy 2018-21, and the ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development (2019). The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development goals (SDGs) also call for evidence-based policy making and increased capacity building in member countries.

It is in this pivotal context that the RESEARCH Department’s trainings on “Evidence-based Policy Making for Decent Work” aim to make a contribution. They epitomize a vital component of promoting ILO’s decent work, social justice and building better agenda.<sup>1</sup> The rationale for these trainings and the fundamental importance of capacity building, especially in enhancing knowledge about state-of-art ILO research, is today confirmed in the ILO’s research strategy – including the Strategic Plan 2022-25, the Knowledge Strategy 2018-21 and the ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development (2019)<sup>2</sup>. The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development goals (SDGs) also call for evidence based policymaking and increased capacity building in member

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<sup>1</sup> Capacity building is 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.335/INS/9). As mentioned in 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*”.

<sup>2</sup> The ILO’s Strategic Plan for 2022-25 calls for continuously increasing the capacity of its constituents in order for them to better understand and address the complex world of work issues, the importance of capacity building and training to ILO’s constituents (GB.340/PFA/1 (Rev.1), GB, 340th Session, ILO’s Strategic Plan for 2022-25. ILO’s Knowledge Strategy 2018-21 highlights the importance of capacity building to constituents. The first objective of the 2018-21 strategy is to “*strengthen policy-oriented and evidence-based research, taking into account the needs of ILO constituents, and informed policy dialogue*”.

countries.<sup>3</sup> The ILC resolution on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 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*”. 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. This was further enhanced in the Global Call to action for a human-centred recovery in 2021.

Moreover, the ILO’s Programme and Budget 2022-23 (Outcome A.2) refers to the Research Department’s role in providing cutting-edge, evidence-based interdisciplinary research and help constituents to “*strengthen its knowledge management function to improve knowledge-sharing among ILO staff, constituents and partners*”. It highlights the use “*global and regional reports, briefs and think pieces on the future of work tailored to the needs of constituents, including to inform policy advice and capacity development initiatives in Member States*” (page 52). The training activities aim to promote this agenda, among the others listed above, and also include dissemination of research and flagship reports.

We specifically choose to provide capacity building training on “communicating evidence” since it forms an essential component of evidence-based policy. It encompasses extracting evidence from the right person, at the right place and the right time, so as to eventually contribute to evidence-based policy making. However, these tasks can be futile without a good communication strategy or understanding the tools and instruments for good communication, which can block relevant evidence from reaching the right policy makers or even lead to outright rejection or oversight of the evidence. Good communication is critical to the way policymakers carry out their tasks. While considering communication strategies requires additional effort, we hope that the ILO training can help formalize the thinking processes and strategies, given that policymakers engage with it on a daily basis with their colleagues, superiors and other key stakeholders.

It is in this context that effectively communicating evidence to policy makers becomes crucial. Travel restrictions and lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic has increased the requirement for better communication using online digital tools. The ILO’s Programme and Budget 2022-23 on communication for increased uptake and impact of the knowledge base (Output A.3), highlights that “*effective and efficient dissemination, is vital to ensure that ILO constituents and other audiences have access to the knowledge and tools they need to implement a human-centred approach to the future of work*”.

There is a growing consensus among decision and policy makers that communicating high-quality formal research evidence and data into the decision-making process is essential to have effective and efficient policies. Communicating context-specific, accessible and timely data is a key element of the policy making process. Communication is critically useful for both agenda-setting and policy. Therefore, communicating evidence can provide critical insights to policymakers and equip them to curate smarter policies. That being said, understanding communication tools and methods as well as optimizing them for policy usage is complex and nuanced. The planned training will essentially break down these nuances into digestible sessions and enable participants to answer questions such as “*How to better communicate research evidence/ data in the policymaking process?*” and “*How to use communication tools to influence policymaking*”. In this process, we hope to impact the value of

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3 Within the decent work sustainable development discussions including the United Nations reform, there is a need to develop and build capacities of national constituents to engage in UNDAF and SDG (GB.335/INS/11), (GB.335/INS/10) GB.335/INS/11, GB, 335th Session, Decent work for sustainable development, 2019).

communication, awareness of relevant tools and instruments, and knowing how to develop a communication strategies.

### *Aim & Objectives*

The essence of this training is to provide effective communication tools, instruments and strategies to ILO's tripartite constituents by building their capacity to guide and influence policies. It hopes to equip them with the hard and soft skills required to effectively communicate evidence (research and data) to their intended audience.

The specific objectives of this training include:

- Understanding why communication is essential to the policy making processes;
- Building capacities of tripartite constituents in better designing effective messages to their audience;
- Highlighting the role of social partners in policy making through social dialogue;
- Developing a network of practitioners, policy researchers and policymakers to discuss and share lessons on the use of effective communication in promoting decent work;
- Drafting and presenting policy briefs.

### *Audience*

This training would target mid-level tripartite officials. This can include research officers, analysts, advisors, policy makers, statistical officers, among others. These individuals play a crucial role in providing information, analysis and recommendations to guide policymaking and advocacy strategies and support informed debate.

### *Methodology*

This training will provide an opportunity for the participants to learn and practice the skill of using communication tools and instruments which guide policymaking. In this process, they can prove mastery of their skills by meeting the predefined objectives at the end of each session. The training will focus on the learners' participation throughout the learning process. The course has been designed to take a learner-centered pedagogical approach while helping to build 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 will show 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 are the next steps).

Owing to the unique learning methods, the participants will be able to draft their communication strategies that would address a policy question in their respective countries or institutions and use ILO's communication tools and instruments in policymaking in existing social dialogue structures by the end of the course.

This training is developed by the ILO's Research Department and Communication Department and will use the digital learning tools of the ITCILO through the e-campus platform, including self-learning tools, webinars for online conferences and online interaction tools. The training is practical and allows participants to apply the skills learned during the training. This process leads to improved practices and performances both at the individual and organizational levels.

To enable a better appreciation of the above-mentioned goals, the Organizational Performance Assessment (OPA) framework will be used 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 participants, as well as the transferring of this knowledge to the work unit, organization or network.

### *Training Framework*

The e-learning training will be implemented over a period of 2 weeks and is structured around 6 content modules, with in-session activities and assignments that build to a written policy brief.

An equivalent of one day of learning is planned in each day and participants can work through it at their own pace but will be encouraged to participate live to make the most of the activities planned. Each day there will also be a live webinar with a specialist at ILO who will help concretize the concepts developed.

**Day 1:** Onboarding and presentation of the course and pre-course activities + Introduction to the ILO and Decent Work Agenda

**Day 2 Module 2:** Evidence-Based Policy Making for decent work

**Day 3 Module 3:** Communicating evidence

**Day 4 Module 4:** How to write effective messages

**Day 5 Module 5:** Presenting key messages

**Week 2:** Drafting policy briefs

### *Course Structure*

Prior to the course, participants will be requested to formulate their major learning goals and take a pre-course assessment. During the course, each of the five learning modules of the course has a fixed structure and includes the following components:

**1. Live Webinar, with the group and ILO trainer and/or invited speakers (sessions of approximately 180 min each)**

ILO experts will facilitate 180-minutes sessions on the topics of each module.

## **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 session 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-initiated or facilitated by the ILO/ITC trainers and tutors**

### *Evaluations*

A post-session evaluation will be conducted each week 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 online learning tools used on the ITCILO e-campus platform.

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 mentoring and coaching will be regularly 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*

The online portion of the course will be offered to 48 tripartite participants including workers, employers and governments from various countries at the global level (Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America). Additional ILO and UN staff could also be invited.

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