



DUTCH EMPLOYERS COOPERATION PROGRAMME

FROM CLASSROOM TO DIGITAL E-LEARNING PORTAL



EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS SHOW GREAT INTEREST IN
ONLINE COURSE ITCILO

THE HAGUE, 5 DECEMBER 2020 - It is well known that the world has been turned upside down by the outbreak of the corona pandemic. The pandemic affects everyone and every sector, regardless of education level, income level and continent. Many long-standing concepts need to be revised, including the education of adults. The ITCILO, the training centre of the International Labour Organisation, and DECP¹ have provided intensive online training to equip employer organisations. The interest was overwhelming. In this article, we look back on the course with a number of participants. We also list the most important reasons why it is interesting to follow this course. There is no question that we still have a lot to learn.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Employers' organisations often offer training courses and workshops to keep their members up to date on developments and to gain knowledge and skills in many areas – from employment law to competence development, member retention and social dialogue. Before the outbreak of the pandemic, these workshops and training sessions took place in meeting rooms and conference venues. The pandemic is forcing employers' organisations to switch to online training. This certainly also applies to employers' organisations in developing countries. DECP strengthens employers' organisations in emerging economies. Member retention and social dialogue play a central role in this. By offering online training, they increase their visibility and they can reach (future) members in remote locations.

TRANSITION

Switching from meeting in a classroom to online training is not easy. That is why DECP has offered its partners the opportunity to participate in an intensive online course developed by the ITCILO. The aim of the "Digitalizing Training Services" course was to help trainers facilitate the transition to online training. This course, which was held from 12 to 30 October, consisted of a variety of didactic methods. It included short instructional videos, cases and exercises, all of which were elaborated in an inviting digital environment, which could be followed by the participants regardless of time and place. About 70 participants have successfully completed the entire course. This is a very high number for an

¹ The foundation Dutch Employers' Cooperation Programme (DECP) is a public-private partnership established by Dutch employers and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2006 with the aim of strengthening the position of business member organisations in developing countries. Via DECP, Dutch employer organisations offer professional expertise to business member organisations in developing countries.

online course. This result was partly due to intensive individual coaching of the participants by the trainers. According to Jeanne Schmitt, Senior Programme Officer at International Training at ITCILO; "The 3 weeks course was very intensive – we looked at how organisations can digitalise their training services offer, at how to adapt the training design for blended or online courses and finally we explored a wide variety of methodologies and tools to deliver digital training. We received a lot of positive feedback from the participants about the quality of the content and the added value of the coaching process".

TIME AND PRIORITY

That guidance was also desperately needed because, as Jacob Mondedji, Human Resource Manager of the employers' organisation CNP-Togo points out: "My challenge was to make the time necessary to complete the training, given the responsibilities that come with my day-to-day work. I had to participate in several other online conferences." His experiences point to two developments that we must recognise: online courses are (sometimes) independent of time and space, which is welcomed because it offers flexibility. However, this also means that it is not always given priority during the day as following a course comes on top of the normal daily activities. That is an extra burden because the energy is already somewhat used up in the evening.



The second development that is emerging this year is a large and growing range of online webinars, conferences and training courses. Initially they were primarily focused on corona-related issues, but the range has become increasingly wider with relevant topics. This makes it difficult to choose. Mr.

Moneddji's colleague Tanguy Assogba adds a third element: "It is important to introduce colleagues to digital training methods." Indeed, it is well known that course and training participants bring "home" new ideas and insights, but their work environment has not followed that same course. Implementation and change are not self-evident.

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

The Netherlands has the highest internet penetration in the world. Internet connections are generally good and almost everyone has mobile hardware and the necessary software that make it possible to work digitally in many places without any problems. That is certainly not the case in many other countries.

"The things I've learned from the online course are deemed beneficial for the conduct of training services in ECOP. Due to the restrictions of face-to-face learning and the implementation of physical distancing measures, all the training programmes in our EBMO have shifted to online learning. The majority of our online activities are conducted via Zoom and LMS platforms."



MARVIN RENELLE ROLLO, Training and Development Associate. Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP)

Most employers' organisations in the countries with which DECP cooperates are usually sufficiently equipped. However, when people have to work from home some of the time, reliable internet connectivity cannot be assumed. Yves Arthur Wendlasida Zongo is a journalist and communications advisor at the CNPB employers' organisation in Burkina Faso. "Moving to digital training is imperative. This is beneficial not only for the organisation offering the training, but also for the recipients of the training. What made it difficult to take the ITCILO course was the internet connection that I could hardly rely on and that sometimes is simply

missing."

PRACTICAL INSIGHTS

Nevertheless, the participants will not be held back by the current limitations in the field of digital infrastructure. They recognise that the future is becoming increasingly digital and that they must go along with it. Yvonne Asare-Yebo, Senior Manager of Training & Administration at GEA, Ghana's employers' organisation, noted: "I was very excited about this course because it took place

at a time when the world of work was hit by the global pandemic, which was causing unprecedented disruptions to workplaces. This brings new challenges for employers' organisations. GEA had already started digitizing some training programs before the start of this course, giving me practical insights about the didactic methodologies and the different tools that can be used online. My course project focused on our Industrial Relations course, which I transformed from face-to-face to online. I have received a lot of feedback from my course instructors who helped me reshape the program."

ONLINE TEACHING STRUCTURE

That the ITCILO Digitalizing Training Services course is not only well appreciated but also leads to follow-up is indicated by Enkhjargal Enkhtaivan. She is Head of General Coordination of MONEF, Mongolia's employers' organisation: "Training online was new to my organisation and to me. Through this course, I gained knowledge and information about how to organise online training courses, what to pay attention to and what the advantages and disadvantages are. What I have learned in this course allows us to innovate our services to our members and organize online training and meetings. I worked on the question "How do you develop a strategic training plan for the organisation?" The result of this was the design of an online learning structure. I want to use this structure to launch our organisation's first online training program."

DEMANDING

Taking training and courses online is different from what everyone was used to. Both for employers' organisations themselves and for participants in ITCILO courses. But online courses will remain in the training landscape and we will have to get used to that. The interest in (partially) switching to digital knowledge transfer continues to exist and the course will therefore probably also be offered again in 2021. Jeanne Schmitt concludes; "Most people don't expect online learning to be more demanding than conventional training and workshops. The beauty of online training is that you can combine knowledge inputs, interactive and live exchanges with operational coaching, giving participants time to reflect, engage and apply what they learn. But some participants may underestimate the need to set aside time every day to do the course. I think that's a learning process in itself! "

Note: Earlier this year, DECP published "E-learning with impact, 10 golden rules to get started" ("Les cours en ligne ayant un impact, 10 règles d'or pour commencer"). An extensive description of didactic methodologies, with references to digitisation, can be found in the publication by the DECP and ITCILO "Guide on training methodology for EBMOs".

For further information, click one of the following hyperlinks:

[E-learning with impact, 10 golden rules](#)

[Guide on training methodology for EBMOs](#)

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