



Training : Improved Workplace Communication

OVERVIEW OF PARTNER AFRICA

Partner Africa is a leading not-for-profit social enterprise and a pioneer in the field of ethical and socially responsible business practice. We work in partnership to improve the livelihood of workers and producers and enhance access to global markets. Partner Africa has a skilled and passionate team of over 100 individuals with experience

of working across 42 African and Near East countries, providing ethical audits, training, trade development projects and consultancy services for international brands and retailers, local suppliers, producers and small holder farmers, as well as governments, NGOs and Trade organisations.

> Who we work for

- > Global Brands & Retailers
- > Non-Governmental Organisations
- > Donors & Development Agencies
- > Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives
- > Local Suppliers
- > Small-Holder Producers
- > Informal Sector

OVERVIEW OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

Partner Africa's training programmes are designed to increase capacity, and improve practical knowledge and management skills within companies aiming to enter or improve their presence in international markets.

A common challenge companies face in ethical trade is enabling workers within their supply chains to access an effective means of representation. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), the global standard for preventing and addressing the risk of adverse impacts on human rights linked to business activity, acknowledges the importance of giving workers' access to grievance procedures, the barriers to judicial mechanisms and the failings of most company-level mechanisms. It also sets out a set of principles that non-judicial, company-level grievance mechanisms should follow.

Improved Workplace Communication is a two-day course, meant for all types of

farms/plantations, horticultural packhouses and textile facilities, and uses experiences from leading ethical suppliers to illustrate mechanisms for improving communication in the workplace. The training supports organisations wanting to design a successful, scalable dispute mechanism that can improve workplace communication at the farm or factory level.

A DVD case study is used during the training, highlighting how the use of welfare committees can improve communication between the management and workers within the companies. The course also contains a complementary add-on to the second day, supporting the roll out of a 30 minute in house training session so that the trainees can provide an orientation to the welfare committee process for their colleagues during the month following the training. This enables the election process and set up of a committee to go smoothly.

There is also an optional pre- and post-

training assessment that has been designed to help participants understand the impact of the training sessions. The course also provides an option for follow up support visits by Partner Africa to monitor the progress of implementation.

The course uses interactive techniques, which involves active participation by participants, encouraging them to learn from one another and to draw on each other's own experiences, making the course content easier to relate to and remember.



"I have been in this organisation for the last 2½ years and I have seen the management improve in the way they communicate to us during the meetings and through memos posted on the notice boards"

A packhouse employee trained on IWPC

"It was exactly what the company needed. This is one course that should have been started long back. However, it is still ideal. Even managers gained a lot of insight on communication"

A manager from one farm in Zimbabwe.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is split into the following 6 main topics:

> Introduction to Workplace Communication

Communication: During this session participants will discuss communication and strategies of good communication between workers and management in the workplace, including, and if applicable, across cultures. At the end of the session participants will understand the importance of workplace communication and will become aware of possible ways of improving workplace communication.

> Workers' Committee: The Improved Workplace Communication DVD is played, followed by a group discussion around key topics, including tools to make the worker committees successful and the key ingredients for running an effective committee. Participants will learn to understand and appreciate worker committees, their roles and what makes them different from trade unions.

> Workers' Committee Roles and Responsibilities:

The session splits participants into two teams and gives each team a task. A nominated leader works with each team to complete the task before the other team. Participants then discuss the style of leadership and what could have made implementation easier. The roles of chair, secretary and members are then discussed and a participatory exercise is carried out where the trainees identify and assign various

roles so that participants can understand the structure and roles of each member in the committee.

> Election of Committee Representatives and Officials:

This session covers the various steps of the election process, including setting up an election body, procedures for nominations, organising an election and notification of winners. Participants split into two teams to respond to a questionnaire/quiz on the election procedures. This session ensures that the participants understand the election processes and the purpose of each process.

> Effective Running of Workers' Committees:

This session looks at the key ingredients for a committee to run effectively. This includes the need for transparency, trust, agenda formation and clear Terms of Reference for the committee.

> Action Planning: Many committees fail because, while issues may be discussed, no plan of action is taken. This session addresses the needs for action planning. A format for an action plan is developed for participants to use at each worker committee meeting. This format describes each decision made for each agenda item and the required action defined with the responsibility for implementation assigned to specific individuals, as well as provision for feedback on progress made.

> BUSINESS CASE



Suppliers seeking to implement a scalable dispute resolution mechanism to improve workplace communication will benefit from this training programme in the following ways:

- > Minimise the risk of worker related strikes
- > Reduce staff turnover and the risk of losing staff due to more favourable working conditions
- > Improve productivity and quality as a result of effective relationships between management and workers
- > Better able to meet buyers' expectations, thus assisting in ensuring that a supplier becomes a preferred supplier
- > Increased probability of new business opportunities
- > Enhancement of cordial working relationships between management and workers
- > Discussion and resolution of issues before they become major problems
- > Contribution of new and effective ideas from workers, helping in the decision making process
- > Creates a sense of belonging/ownership therefore no/reduced risk of sabotage

PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

Our training programmes have been designed to transform the traditional classroom setting into an interactive participatory approach.

Our participatory training methodology strengthens peer to peer learning, while considering literacy levels, language, backgrounds, cross cultural settings, tribal differences, factory/farm locations and worker situations. For these reasons, we invest in and assign local trainers who have the relevant local

knowledge and languages if needed. Partner Africa is also able to provide translators, so that migrant workers can also participate.

Some of the participatory approaches used in training include the use of energisers, ice breakers, role plays, case studies, leadership and team work (groups discussions), as well as situational activities where we use games and scenarios to help trainees to better understand a difficult situation.

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Audits > Email: audits@partnerafrica.org

Training > Email: training@partnerafrica.org

Consultancy > Email: consultancy@partnerafrica.org

General > Email: info@partnerafrica.org Tel: + 254 713 000 111 + 254 20 216 15 86