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# Participatory Action-Oriented Training

Ton That Khai  
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ILO DWT for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific  
Supported by the ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral Programme

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# Preface

The ILO has been working to promote Decent Work of all workers. The improvement of occupational safety and health in grassroot workplaces including small and medium-sized enterprises, the informal economy and agriculture are the big challenges for us. To explore these issues and prepare for responding appropriately, the development of a practical, easy-to-apply methodology for improving the working conditions is necessary.

Participatory action-oriented training is a practical method to support workplace initiatives based on self-help voluntary actions. It also helps local people carry out immediate improvements in occupational safety and health and their working conditions by using locally available resources. This manual provides participants with experiences and analytical skills for the formulation of practical improvement with particular focus on enabling the action at workplace level. The manual explains clearly the useful tools used in the participatory, action-oriented training such as action checklists, practical low-cost solutions and group work. The manual also shows ways to organize and conduct the participatory, action-oriented training workshops.

This manual is written by Ton That Khai, Specialist on occupational safety and health, ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT) for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific, Tsuyoshi Kawakami, Specialist on occupational safety and health, ILO SafeWork, Geneva and Kazutaka Kogi, Senior Advisor of Institute for Science of Labour. The three authors have been working together in the development and application of the participatory training methodology. Such training workshops have been conducted in many countries in Asia, Central Asia and Africa since 1998 for different target groups such as small enterprises, homeworkers, farmers and health care workers.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral Programme for the financial contribution towards the creation of this manual. My thanks should also go to the staff members of the Can Tho Department of Health especially Can Tho Center for Occupational Health and Environment (ECHO), the Can Tho Medical College (CMC), the Bureau for Safe Work, Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam, Mr Nguyen Van Theu, National project coordinator, ILO Country Office for Viet Nam and Mr Teerasak Siriratanothai, ILO DWT for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific, the secretarial assistance.

I am hoping that many people will benefit from this manual and widen their collaborative actions.

Bill Salter  
Director  
ILO DWT for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific

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## Abbreviations

APPLE	Asbestos Precautionary Programmes by Local Empowerment
ECHO	Center for Occupational Health and Environment
ILO	International Labour Organization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAOT	Participatory Action-Oriented Training
PIACT	International Programme for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment
POSITIVE	Participation-Oriented Safety Improvement by Trade Union Initiative
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SIC	Small, Inexpensive and Clever
TOT	Training of Trainers
WARM	Work Adjustment for Recycling and Managing Waste
WIND	Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development
WIPE	Work Improvement for Protection of Environment
WISCON	Work Improvement in Small Construction Sites
WISE	Work Improvement in Small Enterprises
WISE-R	More Work Improvement in Small Enterprises
WISH	Work Improvement for Safe Home



# Participatory Action-Oriented Training

CHAPTER

1





- I. Why a participatory approach is needed**
- II. History**
- III. Participatory action-oriented training: new trends in supporting voluntary improvement actions**
  1. Identify priorities
  2. Find practical solutions and ideas
  3. Use local materials and skills
  4. Rely on improvements through self-help approaches
- IV. Ways to promote voluntary improvement actions**
  1. Support for local initiatives
  2. Accepting multi-faceted improvement actions
  3. Completing the improvements by making step-by-step progress
- V. Principles of PAOT programme**
  1. Build on local practices
  2. Focus on achievements
  3. Link working conditions with other management goals
  4. Use learning by doing
  5. Encourage exchange of experiences
  6. Promote people's involvement
- VI. Common features of the PAOT programme**
  1. Solutions-oriented approach
  2. Bottom-up approach
  3. Positive approach
  4. Step-wise approach
  5. Multi-faceted and practical approach
- VII. Framework for sustaining the PAOT programme**
  1. Networking
  2. Practical training materials
  3. Achievements workshop

## I. Why a participatory approach is needed

The informal economy and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) contribute actively to national socio-economic development. However, the rapid increase in the enormous numbers of SMEs and the informal economy in many developing countries raises a growing concern about the safety and health risks at workplaces. Many countries still lack expertise and resources to provide adequate supervision on occupational safety and health (OSH) at all workplaces, and SMEs are also under increasing pressure to deal with the competitive business world.

Accidents at work are continuously on the rise, reaching 270 million each year in the last few years. According to the latest ILO projections for 2008, there were altogether 2.38 million work-related deaths annually. As we know, occupational accidents not only cause casualties but also losses for workers and employers and disrupted production. These factors can damage the environment and more broadly affect the community. The poorest, the least protected, the least informed, and the least trained are the most affected. Women, children, disabled workers, migrant workers, workers in the rural and informal economies and ethnic minority groups are often involved.

SMEs need practical and easy-to-apply methods in order to identify their own problems and take the necessary actions to make improvements. We recognize that local wisdom always exists in the local community; full use of local wisdom can encourage local people to develop innumerable creative ideas. Reliance on the practical nature of actions undertaken by local people is an aim of the participatory approach, where contributions from the informal economy and SMEs are crucial parts of the outputs.

These practical, participatory approaches relying on the wisdom of local people recognize the importance of national and international laws in OSH, provide a powerful tool to implement the requirements by the law, and realize Decent Work. This is why the government, workers' and employers' organizations in different parts of the world have widely applied the participatory approaches and have integrated these approaches to their national OSH policies and programmes. They have used the participatory approaches to meet the legal requirements in a progressive manner, promote active participation of employers and workers in the decision-making and realize the workers' rights to enjoy safe and healthy workplaces.

Therefore a participatory approach seems appropriate to the needs of SMEs where the promotion of voluntary participation of employers and workers plays a vital role toward the simultaneous improvement in both productivity and working conditions.

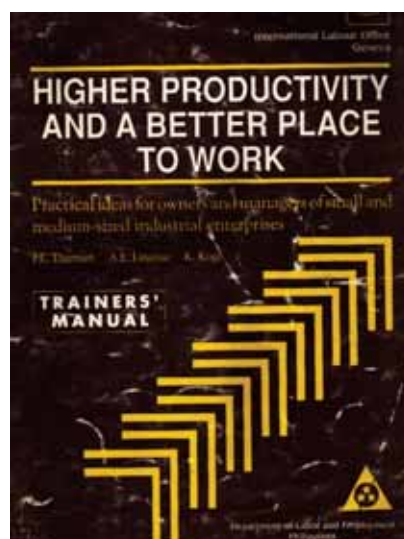
In short, there are three main reasons for adopting a participatory approach in the informal economy and SMEs:

- Multiple workplace problems;
- Need for practicable solutions; and
- Full use of local wisdom.

## II. History

The main focus of experts in participatory ergonomics is to look for appropriate means to help SMEs increase their productivity as well as improve their workplaces. Based on the opinions of J.E. Thurman, A.E. Louzine and K. Kogi, SMEs need practical and easy-to-apply methods in order to identify their own problems and take the necessary actions to make improvements. Therefore, the participatory ergonomics approach, in which the promotion of voluntary participation of employers and workers plays a vital role toward the joint improvements in both productivity and working conditions, would seem appropriate to the needs of SMEs.

The International Programme for the Improvement of Working Conditions and Environment (PIACT), launched in 1976 with the assistance of the ILO, is one such initiative. Experiences from this programme prove that, if the training workshop is participative and makes full use of voluntary actions, the SMEs can make various concrete improvements. In other words, if appropriate and direct support is given to SMEs, many improvements can be made by means of self-help actions using existing local resources. Based on the positive impacts of the PIACT programme, a practical training manual, “Higher productivity and a better place to work” was published in 1988 by J. Thurman, A. Louzine and K. Kogi.



In 1982, a pilot training programme based on the participatory action-oriented approach was launched with the collaboration of the ILO/PIACT activities. This programme presented a systematic approach to the simultaneous improvements in working conditions and productivity in small scale enterprises which were faced with various difficulties in competing with the market. This approach was designed to encourage and assist SMEs to take low-cost, voluntary measures which improved working conditions and at the same time increased productivity. These pilot courses were successfully conducted in India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Argentina, demonstrating that SMEs taking this approach can carry out substantial improvements which have clear benefits for both employers and workers. Since then, the participatory action-oriented approach to help small and medium-sized enterprises has been widely applied in Asia. The WISE (Work Improvement in Small Enterprises) programme is a typical example. WISE was first named in the Philippines (1994) and became very popular in many countries in Asia and Latin America. The ILO specialists in safety, health and working conditions, K. Kogi, T. Itani, W. Salter and T. Kawakami, provided a great deal of technical assistance for these developments.

In parallel with WISE, the participatory action-oriented programme (PAOT) to support trade union initiatives in improving safety and health was developed by K. Kogi and T. Kawakami under the Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF). This training programme, primarily based on the principles of WISE and named POSITIVE (Participation-Oriented Safety Improvement by Trade Union Initiatives), was first provided to trade unions in Pakistan. Nowadays the POSITIVE programme is conducted within trade unions in Bangladesh, China, Mongolia, Nepal, the Philippines, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Thailand, Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.



A training programme for farmers was first developed in Can Tho province of Viet Nam in 1992 by T. T. Khai and T. Kawakami with financial support from the Toyota Foundation and technical assistance from the Institute for Science of Labour, Kawasaki, Japan. Based on the success of the pilot courses conducted in the Southern and Northern provinces of Viet Nam (1994 - 95) and in the ethnic minorities in the mountainous region of Viet Nam (1996), this programme was established as a complete training package and named WIND (Work Improvement in Neighborhood Development). The WIND programme was also tested and applied successfully in the Philippines (1998 - 99) and Thailand (1999). Since then the ILO has adopted the WIND programme into the Decent Work agenda and has spread the WIND programme to 18 countries in Asia, Central Asia, Latin America and Africa.



*WIND manual showing good examples of agriculture in the Philippines and Viet Nam (1998).*



*WIND manual, Asian version, developed in 2005.*

The Center for Occupational Health and Environment, Can Tho Department of Health, Viet Nam, has widely applied the principles of the participatory action-oriented approach as an appropriate way to motivate the voluntary initiatives of local people. For example, a training programme to strengthen the capacity of health care services in rural health centres was carried out in Can Tho province, based on the participatory action-oriented approaches (1997 - 2000). Since then, many improvements in both treatment and prevention have been developed by local health staff.

A similar training programme was also applied to help teachers in a rural elementary school in Long My district, Can Tho province, with the aim of improving their working conditions in kindergartens and elementary schools (1998 - 99).

During the period 1998 to 2004, with financial support from a German non-governmental organization (NGO), the Center for Occupational Health and Environment, Can Tho Department of Health, Viet Nam, conducted 17 Training of Trainers (TOT) training workshops. The workshops assisted practitioners and local experts in 63 provinces in Viet Nam to understand the concepts of the participatory action-oriented approach. As a result of these training workshops, many PAOT activities have been created, with a range of aims including improving the quality of life in rural communities, improving hygiene in restaurants, improving the working environment in government offices, preventing accidents and injuries in children, and preventing dengue hemorrhagic fever in the community.

By responding to the immediate day-to-day needs of local people, PAOT has been increasingly used as a practical method to improve people's living, working, health and economic conditions.

### III. Participatory action-oriented training: new trends in supporting voluntary improvement actions

The approach that PAOT aims to address is quite simple: enhance the voluntary participation of local people instead of adopting solutions from the outside. The PAOT programme helps local people take immediate improvement actions by mobilizing available local resources.

#### 1. Identify priorities

PAOT enables participants to look at good examples and prioritise the points to be improved in order to resolve them. This individual self-assessment is quite different from the normal community appraisal in which experts collect priorities from the community and select the dominant ones. In some cases the priorities defined by the experts do not always relate to the main concerns of the participants. As a result, the training makes little impact on the community. The lesson we should learn is that priorities from outside trainers may not be the priorities of those in the community.



*Action checklist exercise can define priorities and orient practical measures for the improvement actions (Senegal, Africa).*



Based on the practical training tools of PAOT, such as the action checklist, participants can define their own priorities and take steps towards practical measures for their improvements. PAOT therefore takes a different approach. Starting with people's strengths rather than their weaknesses, PAOT introduces practical tools to empower them. Participants are encouraged to look at their basic, multiple needs and to find their own priorities. As a result, they take immediate actions which produce visible results. And then, these initial small actions will grow in a step-wise manner.

## 2. Find practical solutions and ideas

PAOT helps participants to find practical solutions and ideas that can be carried out by local people rather than to look for external assistance. In reality, there are many low-cost ways to improve working and living conditions using locally available materials and resources. PAOT has experienced that the more problems are highlighted, the more the community takes on these problems. A focus on problems does not provide any guidelines for improvements, however practical solutions do make sense to the community. It should be noted that PAOT assists people to find practical solutions in the community and to gradually apply them to their work and lives. PAOT encourages people to look at good practices, but still leaves the decision of application to people themselves. PAOT does not provide financial support for people to accomplish their improvement actions, instead it encourages them to first apply locally available resources.

A solution-oriented approach is a strong message that PAOT would like to address to researchers, specialists and practitioners. In the past, much scientific research has focused on the analysis of problems, making clear the facts. However, people need immediate, practical solutions. Many specialists nowadays increasingly recognize that problem-based research needs to shift to solution-oriented research in which practical solutions are found to problems. If we just concentrate on problems and constraints rather than look at possible actions and initiatives, we cannot arrive at workable solutions.

The PAOT approach respects the full practical scientific methods which aim to identify people's needs and to help them find workable measures for solutions. It is important to start with local situations and to help people look at strengthening existing practices first, then assist them to identify their priorities for action and their methods to solve problems using their own initiatives.

## 3. Use local materials and skills

Actions can be taken immediately if materials and skills are available, however, complex and sophisticated solutions sometimes discourage people's engagement. PAOT places a stress on the full use of local materials and skills to motivate the participation of the community in making changes.

It is important to know how to make use of available local resources instead of waiting for outside help, looking for financial support or protracting the training. People can start with small improvement actions which are simple and not expensive. By using locally available materials and skills, expenditure for improvements can be reduced and community power strengthened. Cooperation among the community creates favorable conditions to spread practical solutions and local good ideas to other people and workplaces.



*Improve the local light at a garment factory.*

#### 4. Rely on improvements through self-help approaches

Attention must be paid on the nature of each improvement carried out by local people. It is easy to recognize the power of people's self-effort and the capacity of voluntary actions. Indeed, it is often difficult to invest sufficient financial resources, time and effort to start any improvement action. PAOT encourages people to focus on simple, low-cost and easy-to-implement solutions as their preliminary actions. In addition, the improvement actions will be accelerated when they are performed with willingness rather than forced.

PAOT supports the self-help nature of the improvements and it recognizes that showing a strong linkage between improvements and benefits will strengthen people's initiatives. It is essential to use practical participatory training tools and methods that can stimulate and sustain the self-help initiatives of local people.

## IV. Ways to promote voluntary improvement actions

The PAOT programme is normally organized in such a way that it provides concrete guidance to the participants. In particular, the learning-by-doing process is extremely important. The full use of local available skills and resources should be equally emphasized in the implementation of immediate improvements. It is always useful to point out that solutions should be multi-faceted and practical. Therefore the training programme should lead to practical actions in order to facilitate the motivation of voluntary improvement actions of the community. The following principles are the keys to success.

### 1. Support for local initiatives

Exploiting local initiatives is a practical way of motivating people to take action. PAOT reveals that local wisdoms always exist in the community; empowering them by clearly



explaining their benefits, we can encourage people to start a change in creative ways. In fact, small and practical solutions are more convincing and the PAOT programme always looks for available achievements in the community and formulates them as training inputs.

The advantage of PAOT is its reliance on the practical nature of the solutions and actions. In fact, one small and substantial achievement is more convincing to the community than a good lecture from specialists. In view of this point, PAOT looks for existing good practices in the community and gradually enriches the technical training input to fulfill the needs of the local people.



*A simple rotating device to reduce the lifting of heavy material.*

There are always difficulties in our daily work and lives, however creative ideas which make work more efficient can be found everywhere. Improvements to make a better workplace still exist when people are devoted to and are passionate about their work. Indeed, people need freedom to develop their improvement actions using their own ideas and experiences, and PAOT matches exactly this simple demand. This is why PAOT is widely welcomed and recognized by farmers, workers, managers, health officers, as well as specialists.

In short, practical solutions always exist in the community and the workplace, but they are not listed in textbooks and reference materials. Facilitators in charge of the PAOT programme need to visit actual workplaces and spend sufficient time to collect local practical solutions. They will then revise and sort these into different training themes or topics suited to the needs of the community.

## 2. Accepting multi-faceted improvement actions

The PAOT program realizes that local solutions vary depending on the levels of education, knowledge, skill or economic circumstances; therefore there is neither a perfect solution or idea nor a typical model. It is difficult to standardize, to measure, to qualify or to compare the value of a solution reached by people. PAOT provides a chance for people to solve their own problems from multifaceted viewpoints. It is understandable that the PAOT program attempts to design people's own checklist based on their different experiences at work. By practicing regular checklist exercises, people will be reminded of the potential for making innumerable improvement actions.

We should remember that PAOT guides us to identify and to support the creativity and self-help initiatives of the community and not to point out their weaknesses. People are very innovative. When our supportive measures are appropriate and positively stimulate their creativity, we will learn a lot from their initiatives and achievements instead of just teaching them.

It is our responsibility if the community does not take actions and always expects help and solutions from us. This situation can occur if we dominate them with our ideas and solutions and ask them to follow.

PAOT gives us a positive concept, that is, **multi-faceted solutions**. Through the action checklist, which will be explained in detail in another theme of this manual, PAOT helps us to solve problems from multi-faceted viewpoints.

As we all know in real work and life, there are some complex technical issues for which the community might need the intervention of technicians or specialists. However, there are many problems which can be solved instantly by the community.

- *If we focus on only one or two complex issues and take pains to encourage people to find their own solutions to these, we will surely find it very difficult to invite their participation because these issues might not be their priority.*
- *Or, if we only introduce one or two solutions to solve the problem to the community and ask people to apply them, we will be faced with a series of requests from the community, for example providing materials, techniques, financial support.*

Instead of narrowing the choices for the community, PAOT provides a multi-faceted approach to broaden their views. The simple, the easier or the most urgent items will be tackled first without any help from outsiders. Based on this preliminary achievement, people will then look for more complex improvement actions or problems. From then on, they will surely contribute more time and more financial input, and sometimes they will ask more experienced people for technical assistance in finding solutions. In this case, people still exercise their overall initiative in solving the problem even though they ask for technical advice from the specialist.

### 3. Completing the improvements by making step-by-step progress

The PAOT program believes that new actions built on the practical experiences of previous actions must always be better. By trying to do some small, simple and low-cost actions first and gradually improve them, people forget the limitations in their work and financial circumstances and will take positive ideas to look for practical solutions.

The improvement action will certainly be completed if local people are interested in making gradual and continuous changes. PAOT always encourages people to take immediate action even though the action may not be perfect. Group work in the PAOT program clearly reflects the collaborative atmosphere. In fact, solutions are more practical if participants have the same occupation or direction. Individual attitudes change, indeed, can be realized through the support of group work. Frequent organization of small group work to find practical solutions is the main force behind community-based actions.



*The improvement process of a “home” for tools in a farmer’s house.*

The success of the Work Improvement in Neighborhood Development (WIND) programme proves that even the poorest farmers participating in this program are able to implement simple, low-cost improvements with minimum available materials and resources. The keys to the success of the WIND programme are respect for and appreciation of local good examples as well as gender equality. We usually invite farmer couples (wives and husbands) to participate in the WIND workshops. This idea creates a strong sense of responsibility for both men and women while making any change on their own farm or in their family.

PAOT pays attention to the realistic aspects of the community in order to facilitate voluntary participation. In fact, people need time, effort and finance to start some improvement actions. If the proposed actions are costly or time consuming, people will hesitate to be involved. This hesitation can be understood for various reasons.

- When people begin a change, they want to have a perfect or a complete example. This ambition often unintentionally delays people’s initial actions and may even block their self-help initiatives.
- However, some people are more practical. They start with small improvements, even though these actions might not be perfect.

PAOT supports people’s step-wise actions aimed at gradually upgrading their improvements. Rather than insisting on ways to find a complete solution PAOT encourages them to try some small, simple and low-cost actions first and gradually improve them. In this way, people will forget their limitations and take a positive stance to look for practical solutions.

## V. Principles of PAOT programme

### 1. Build on local practices



*“Home” for tool made by local materials.*

*Focus on simple improvements which are commonly used in our workplaces instead of looking for outsiders’ examples. This is actually some practical advice given at the start of the PAOT programme. In order to accelerate the implementation of improvements, select available local solutions which have already been applied successfully in the workplaces. This is a practical, less challenging and easier way to access positive results. We all know that the easiest way to make a change is to apply existing improvements which are suitable for our conditions.*

There is always an excuse that improvements cannot be made due to the lack of advanced technologies or equipment. If we make a small effort to look around our workplace or in the community with a fresh and positive view, we will surely find many good examples which have been made at low-cost.

Local good examples demonstrate a concrete and convincing lesson to those who hesitate or refuse to implement preliminary actions. Indeed, the collection of local good practices at the workplace is one of the main tasks of PAOT facilitators. We can find many good examples and available solutions in any community and any workplace. These local good practices clearly tell people that, within the limited conditions, actions are still performed and solutions are achieved in a practical manner. No-one can deny that good examples created by local people would be considered as usual or familiar.

“Build on local practices” is a practical and realistic approach. This approach is flexible and helps everyone use their capability for concrete actions instead of studying textbook models. By spending more effort on collecting good examples in the community, we can develop a wonderful tool to promote the improvements of many people who are in similar conditions or circumstances.

### 2. Focus on achievements

Choose good examples and valuable achievements from the workplace and community. Praise and learn from their achievements and do not criticize mistakes or small deficits. This improves the communication and dialogue between managers and staff members and helps to get them involved.

Focusing on existing achievements from the community encourages further improvement actions. It is a fact that all people like to be praised by visitors. In contrast, they will be offended when criticized or insulted. We should note that all people recognize their problems before someone else mentions them. It is sensitive and of no value if we point out people's weak points. They will certainly not actively participate in your programme, and in some cases they will be reluctant to ask for your help. Praising their previous achievements will motivate people to take further actions.

It is often true that a small achievement performed by the community can be more convincing to local people than many well-arranged theories of outside specialists. We should forget about criticizing people or discouraging them. Instead, we should look at the present situation positively and try to encourage the community to start some improvement actions. We can introduce them to solutions created by those who are in similar situations. The community will understand what they should do and what changes they should make.

Focusing on good points instead of weak ones will bring a positive and creative view. We should look at apparent and simple solutions. A small but visible achievement will stimulate positive changes in other people.

### 3. Link working conditions with other management goals

We appreciate that work provides us with an income, a sense of achievement, and cooperation. Work is indispensable to everybody. People's lives are a series of working days. Solutions to everyday production-related problems are also improvements in working conditions. Better quality products are produced in better working conditions. The idea that investment in better working conditions poses only additional costs and does not increase efficiency or generate income is untrue. On the contrary, improving safety and health is the quickest way to reach your production goals.

We usually talk about the quality of products but often forget the initial input and effort to reach this goal. The beautiful slogan in a community health centre, "All for our patients, all for health" cannot be convincing to their patients if the medical doctors and nurses are working in a messy and uncomfortable work environment.

We can apply the same idea to our family life and find a strong link between efficiency and improvement. We will see many benefits from this principle and be surprised at their positive impact.



*Simple local exhaust ventilation in a mechanical factory.*



## 4. Use learning by doing

Many training courses start with knowledge transfer and then proceed to attitude and practice. However, when applying this traditional style of education to field training, we often face a wide gap (sometimes even infinite) between knowledge and practice. In other words, training participants need time to transform their knowledge into actions. This period of time can be long or short, depending on each person, however in some cases can last for a lifetime. This means that some trainees have already the knowledge but cannot apply it, due to their difficulties in transforming knowledge into action. For example, everybody knows that smoking is harmful to health but many people still smoke.

To fill this gap, PAOT does not follow the long process of normal education but adopts a shorter way. This is the “learning-by-doing” approach. *Take some actions first and assess the results. If they are good, continue to study, understand them more clearly, and take the next possible actions.* This approach is different from imitation. Imitation is an action which can only be applied in a similar situation. However, the “learning-by-doing” principle needs more creative and specific ideas. The “learning-by-doing” approach can help us to break technical and organizational barriers and sustain our improvement actions.



*Organize group work to identify the priorities in a PAOT workshop conducted in Senegal.*

When we visit the community, they may ask for technical help or for training activities. Some training courses are actually necessary, however it is also true that there are some courses for which it is not worth spending money and time. Instead of concentrating on upgrading knowledge in the community by conducting training courses, encourage them to undertake some small trials suited to their needs. This simple idea will create many more solutions.

*No one can understand your work better than yourself. Take a fresh look at your workplace, think of and try ways to improve your current situation.*

The community can create marvelous ideas when they begin concrete actions followed by group work. Although their knowledge and skills may be limited, their initiative and innovation to find better solutions will continue to grow. Flexibility is important for local people. We should not fix any technical framework that may limit their ideas.

PAOT helps us to become familiar with the learning-by-doing approach through activities such as applying an action checklist practice, organizing group work to share experiences, identifying priorities, building up action plans and estimating the time for each improvement.

## 5. Encourage exchange of experiences

Exchanging successful experiences is useful for multiplying improvement actions. Exchanging experiences can stimulate the self-reliance and enthusiasm of the community. This helps to reinforce actions and to increase the feeling that the content of the training programme belongs to them.

Discussing and sharing good solutions from many places, and visiting one another regularly, will provide broader views and wiser solutions. It is necessary to encourage support group discussions and to provide incentives for these groups to continue to work together. In group discussions, not only will there be an exchange of the final outputs of improvements, there will also be discussions on the steps to implement the improvements, such as decision making, techniques, skills and necessary materials for the improvements.



*Exchange of experiences through an achievements workshop organized in Can Tho, Viet Nam.*

Encouraging the exchange of experiences will develop friendships and collaboration among colleagues and neighbors and build amicable teams, at the same time providing incentives for group work. It is known that the success of some people will motivate and stimulate the actions of others who are in similar situations.

Organizing various achievement workshops to share success stories in life and work, as well as to praise good examples in lifestyle, are practical ways to motivate communities to make further improvement actions and to continuously moving toward better solutions.

## 6. Promote people's involvement

Communities understand their conditions best through their everyday work experiences, so the communities should be left to solve their own problems. Encouraging the participation of the community is an important task. Their ideas and advice are invaluable. When their small actions are appreciated, people will become more confident to make further improvements.



*A mini-WIND workshop conducted by a volunteer farmer in the community.*



Proposed actions usually depend on people's knowledge, motivation and goodwill. By looking down on or distrusting the ideas of the community, we will surely fail to promote community participation. To avoid this failure, PAOT helps us understand different community perspectives in a flexible way.

## VI. Common features of the PAOT programme

### 1. Solutions-oriented approach

Nowadays, many training programmes apply the Centred Learning method in which participants are the centre of activity. Participants search for knowledge, then consider and understand the concepts themselves, in short, playing the roles of questioners and problem solvers. This method breaks the old style of passive recipient or trainer directed in which the trainer is the centre of all training activities such as transfer of knowledge and coverage of content. This is an outline of the active training method. This method not only helps participants search for knowledge but also focuses on the changes to their attitude and practice.

PAOT applies the Centred Learning method in the process of sharing good practices. However, a clear difference between PAOT and other action training methods is the focus on the practical actions of participants instead of gaining knowledge. In PAOT, there are no lectures. Trainers or facilitators only show local good examples and ideas to stimulate the participants' own thinking. Therefore participants do not need to spend much time on techniques, principles, definitions or reasons. These will be found from textbooks, manuals or specialists. On the contrary, PAOT uses the training method in which local good ideas and solutions are highly supported to stimulate participants to actively discover their own solutions.



*This practical solution is very useful to encourage the self-efforts of participants attending PAOT workshop.*

To adopt this method, PAOT offers the following hypothesis:

- *PAOT supposes that participants already have the technical knowledge related to this issue through their daily life experiences, training experiences or relevant information. PAOT therefore skips the process of transferring technical knowledge during the training process.*
- *PAOT supposes that all participants will absorb many practical good examples throughout the technical sessions of the PAOT training programme.*

Facilitators simply recommend that participants apply these practical solutions appropriately to their conditions. They will first practice the checklist exercise and then use their available knowledge to identify priority actions and find practical solutions.

Like other training methods, PAOT still has some limitations. It cannot be applied to guide children or to instruct in new technologies, such as information technology, biotechnology, electrical technology. However, PAOT is very powerful in sharing existing local good examples and encouraging the voluntary participation of the community.

## 2. Bottom-up approach

Practical low-cost good solutions form the backbone of the PAOT technical content. It is difficult to find these practical solutions in libraries, books and reference materials. In the PAOT programme, facilitators or trainers usually go to great lengths to collect practical solutions by walking through the community and formulating the training input. Remember

that each unit, each family or each community has their own characteristics, therefore the technical content should not be similar. It should match the need and level of the participants.



*A line-sowing device developed by local farmers. It differs between regions. The photo above is the line sowing method used in the south of Viet Nam however the system in the photo below is commonly used in Africa.*

PAOT is a method of training where simple and low-cost good solutions are highly appreciated. Trainers or facilitators therefore do not have to explain a lot, rather they facilitate the participants to find their own solution.

### 3. Positive approach

As mentioned in the previous chapters, PAOT focuses on positive points or good achievements. Therefore PAOT trainers need to be positive in order to recognize or find as many good points as possible in the workplaces or in the community.

PAOT encourages facilitators to observe good examples and look for appropriate ways to further improve existing conditions. To help people find solutions but not to criticize their weaknesses is the main task of the facilitators. In the PAOT programme, we always use the words “points to be improved” when people are discussing solutions instead of “problems” or “bad points”. By using this participatory manner, we can facilitate participants to come up with their own solutions. The action checklist is a practical tool to help participants prioritize their points to be improved and lead to practical solutions.



*Work is done at elbow height.  
A good example in Cambodia.*

In contrast to PAOT, traditional training methods tend to focus on people’s weak points or difficulties in order to provide training activities or support. In this way, trainers, even those well-intended, tend to dominate the training input and often find it difficult to motivate participants to show their initiatives towards practical solutions. This method unintentionally dampens the creativity of the participants so that they wait for outsiders’ ideas instead of finding the solutions themselves.

### 4. Step-wise approach

PAOT looks for small, practical, step-by-step solutions which provide visible benefits and which can be accepted by the community, despite these solutions not always being 100 per cent completed.

Instead of looking at weak or negative points, PAOT trainers (or facilitators) always pay attention to positive and strong points, even the simple and small ones, then encourage the community to step up with their improvement actions. Follow-up activities to provide support to the community for these step-wise solutions are always important. Based on this approach, local people therefore continue to look for their points to be improved and try to improve them step-by-step.

Evaluation and monitoring by trainers are always considered important processes in traditional training. In contrast, PAOT pays more attention to participant’s own actions,

provides practical support measures for improvement actions, and assists participants to learn from their achievements.

## 5. Multi-faceted and practical approach

PAOT training has a wide scope and tries to look at multiple aspects of community work and life rather than focus on a single factor or specific problem. The impact of limiting the training to one specific problem or solution might be that taking action might be difficult in some communities. A multi-faceted approach helps participants to flexibly identify their priority actions and to be free to create their own solutions. PAOT assists people to take a fresh look at their multiple needs and supports their initiatives.



*Easy to distinguish*



*Good examples in Vietnamese farmers' houses.*

## VII. Framework for sustaining the PAOT programme

The PAOT methodology mainly focuses on the motivation of people to take continuous actions by using available local resources and skills. Remember that all actions are voluntary without any contribution from outside expertise or financial support. The training course



based on the PAOT approach very much depends on the self-reliance of participants, therefore a mechanism to motivate participants should be considered in advance of starting any implementation.

## 1. Networking

The PAOT approach relies very much on building the capacity of teams in which the corner stone to sustain the programme is the development of a local network to assess the improvement actions of the community and to conduct follow-up activities. We believe that the establishment of a line of connection from the national (or provincial) level through to the grassroots (workplace or community) level is essential. This mechanism offers a concrete and responsible management framework to maintain the improvement actions of local people. There are several ways to create the network, however it would be necessary to develop at least two different teams as follows:

- **PAOT core trainers (facilitators):** This is the main taskforce of the PAOT programme. Core trainers act as a focal point to maintain and spread the PAOT programme by collaborating with local governments, agencies and associations. PAOT core trainers should be carefully recruited from the potential practitioners at national or provincial levels. A comprehensive training workshop would then be conducted with the aims of:

- Providing concrete knowledge on PAOT principles and PAOT training tools;
- Understanding the main roles of PAOT core trainers;
- Empowering teamwork skills;
- Exchanging follow-up activities and technical support; and
- Encouraging the development of intervention-based research activities or the practical application of PAOT approaches in different social health related issues.

- **PAOT coordinators (or PAOT volunteers):** These are the grassroots manpower who work voluntarily under the supervision of the PAOT core trainers. The PAOT coordinators are usually developed under the active guidance of entrepreneurs, heads of local agencies or local government, women's associations, farmers' associations and charity organizations. They act as local counterparts to formulate the grassroots teams, to conduct simple PAOT training workshops (mini PAOT) at the workplace, to support the improvement actions of the community and to organize regular follow-up activities. They also provide a reporting mechanism.

- The mini PAOT is different from the normal PAOT workshop. (Refer to Chapter 7 for more details). The mini PAOT lasts for around one hour and is delivered directly at the workplace for approximately 7-8 members under the facilitation of PAOT coordinators. PAOT coordinators use simple training tools such as the action checklist, photo sheets and group discussions to conduct the mini PAOT.

PAOT coordinators need to attend a training workshop conducted in the local area in which PAOT core trainers play the role of resources persons. The aims of the workshop are to:



*A WISE volunteer explains to workers how to use the action checklist during the process of a MINI WISE training workshop.*

- Transfer the PAOT technical inputs;
- Build team work skills and sharing tasks;
- Clarify the procedures for conducting a mini PAOT workshop at the workplace;
- Maintain productive follow-up activities; and
- Develop appropriate record systems to feed back the improvement actions of the community.

## 2. Practical training materials

These training materials are necessary to enable PAOT coordinators to conduct the mini PAOT in workplaces. We provide the PAOT coordinators with simple and practical training tools, typical examples of which are the action checklist and photos showing good practices. There are several ways to share good examples with the community, for example with a data projector or video player, however these materials are not available at all workplaces as they are dependent on electricity and technical devices. The practical way is to make it simple and ready to use at any workplace and in any conditions.

- ***Photo sheets booklet showing local best practices:*** Based on the network of PAOT facilitators, all best practices collected in the community and clearly demonstrating local initiatives and ideas are sorted in an appropriate manner. The photo sheets booklet provides a simple training tool kit for the PAOT volunteers to share among participants during a mini



*A WIND farmer volunteer organizes a mini-WIND workshop in the community.*

PAOT workshop at the workplace. This practical training material can be appropriate to any workplace and provide local people with practical and simple measures on how to start preliminary improvement actions.

- **Action checklist:** The action checklist is a powerful training tool of the PAOT methodology. The checklist serves as a self-assessment tool where participants walk through the workplace to conduct the checklist exercise (this is discussed in more detail in the next paragraph).

- **Workplace recording checklist:** The action checklist should be used as a routine assessment tool instead of a training tool. The local community can apply the action checklist as a daily self assessment by taking notes on the proposed actions to be done in a

**16. Use mobile storage racks or wheeled stand for storing and moving materials, tools and products.**



*A sample of photos book.*





particular period as well as recording the achievements. Therefore, the action checklist can be designed in a practical way to facilitate the assessment and to accelerate the self-recording process for the improvement actions. These simple notes act as a reminder to the local people before they consider any other improvement action.

- **Follow-up poster:** This practical design is very useful when local people need to show their own commitment to actions planned and achievements to be reached within a particular period. All check items are arranged on one sheet; this poster facilitates the assessment of improvements actions and simplifies the taking of notes. At first glance, everybody, especially outsiders or the evaluation team, can easily identify the number of improvement actions as well as the number of proposed actions to be taken at the workplace. A yellow color mark on the small circle denotes the proposed action and a red color denotes the achievements.



*Follow up poster designed specifically for farmers and homeworkers.*



*Follow up poster designed specifically for heads of technical sections in the factory.*

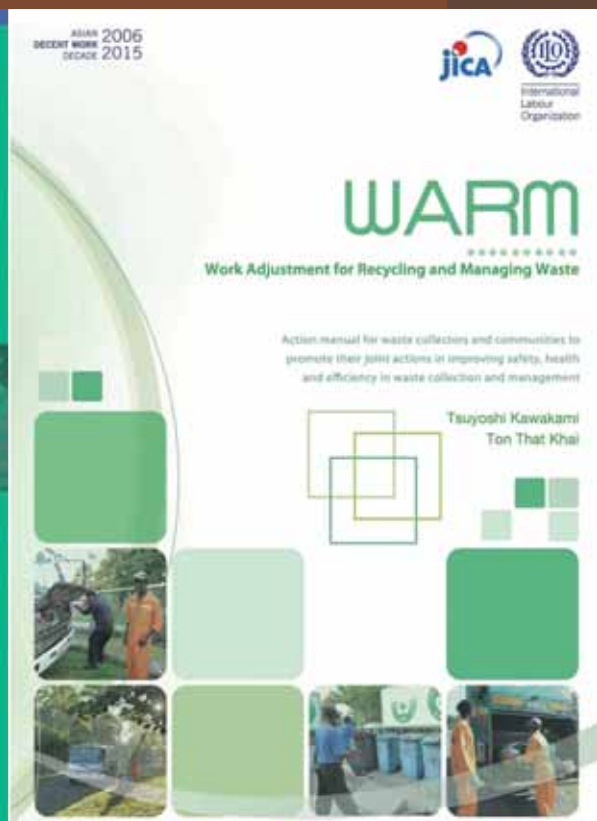
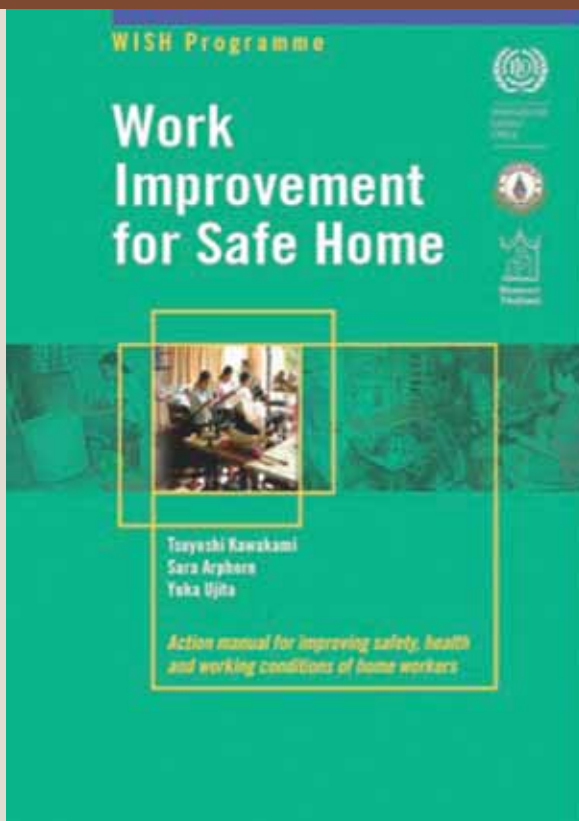
### 3. Achievements workshop

This workshop is very useful in maintaining the PAOT programme. There are many ways to conduct the achievements workshop, such as a simple photos contest, SIC contest (Simple Inexpensive and Clever) or achievements contest. (Refer to the Chapter 6 for more details). Participants attending the PAOT workshop and outsiders can be motivated if they have an opportunity to learn from many practical improvements made by their colleagues or in their neighborhoods. (Refer to Chapter 6 for more details).

# Practical application of PAOT

## CHAPTER

# 2



- I. **WISE training programme, a typical example of PAOT**
- II. **WIND training programme for farmers**
- III. **WISH training programme for homeworkers**
- IV. **WISCON training programme for small construction sites**
- V. **POSITIVE training programme to improve OSH by trade union initiatives**
- VI. **WISE-R programme**
- VII. **WARM training programme to improve OSH for waste collectors**
- VIII. **WIPE and APPLE programmes**
- IX. **PAOT application for preventing pandemic and avian influenza at the workplace**
- X. **Green programme**
- XI. **Conclusions**

PAOT has been widely applied to different occupations and settings as a practical tool to improve OSH and working condition. This chapter describes how actual PAOT programmes have been used. We explain the WISE programme designed for small enterprises as a typical example. In addition, the chapter overviews how PAOT has been applied to improve various workplaces and decrease OSH risks.

## I. WISE training programme, a typical example of PAOT

SMEs provide many people with employment opportunities and are playing an increasingly important role in the socio-economic development of many countries. Improving OSH in SMEs prevents accidents and diseases and creates productive and efficient work environments. Owners and workers in SMEs urgently need practical and easy-to-apply methods to support their improvement efforts.



*Materials handling*



*Work station*



*Machine safety*



*Physical environment*

*There are many simple, low-cost methods to improve safety, health and productivity which Chinese small enterprises can easily apply.*



The ILO's WISE (Work Improvement in Small Enterprises) training programme is designed specifically to improve the safety and health of SMEs and has introduced practical, low-cost methods to owners and workers in SMEs. There are many practical, low-cost ways to improve safety, health and productivity that SMEs can easily implement by using locally available materials. Participatory action training tools, such as the WISE action checklist and illustrations of good examples are used to assist participating SMEs to find practical, low-cost solutions that can be implemented immediately by their own initiatives.



*Key steps of the WISE training: An action checklist exercise (left) and group work (right).*

The WISE programme trains owners and workers in SMEs in the PAOT training methodologies, such as workplace visits with the checklist exercise and group discussions among the participating SMEs. WISE trainers show participants many photos of good OSH examples developed in local enterprises and facilitate participants' own discussions to find practical solutions. Participatory training tools, such as illustrated action checklists and good example photo sheets, assist participating SMEs to know their safety and health risks and find low-cost solutions. Participatory steps are stressed throughout the training to increase participants' "sense of ownership" in the improvement of safety, health and productivity.

**III – WORK STATION**

**15- Adjust working height for each worker at elbow-height or slightly lower than elbow-height.**

Do you propose action?  
 No       Yes        
 Priority  
 Remarks:.....



**16- Use platforms for small workers and work item holders for tall workers.**

Do you propose action?  
 No       Yes        
 Priority  
 Remarks:.....



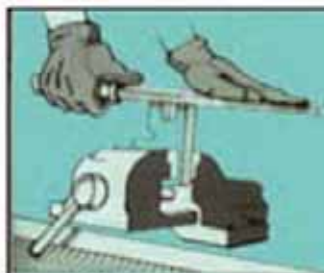
**17- Put frequently used tools, controls and materials within easy reach of workers.**

Do you propose action?  
 No       Yes        
 Priority  
 Remarks:.....



**18- Use jigs, clamps, vices or other fixtures to hold items while work is done.**

Do you propose action?  
 No       Yes        
 Priority  
 Remarks:.....



*Part of WISE action checklist with illustrations. The WISE action checklist is designed as a practical tool to help small enterprises.*

**II. WIND training programme for farmers**

Other PAOT programmes also apply participatory methodologies. It is striking that the PAOT methodologies established in WISE can be widely applicable to many different occupations and workplaces in different countries.



The WIND (Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development) programme is designed for farmers. The programme consists of five technical areas similar to WISE. The WIND programme started in Vi Thanh City, Hau Giang Province located in the Mekong Delta area of Viet Nam. In the 1990's, there was a collaborative project between Vi Thanh Hospital School of Viet Nam and the Institute for Science of Labour, Kawasaki, Japan to improve the health and safety of farmers. The project largely applied human ergology study methodologies and promoted real life and work studies, and identified realistic health and safety needs of local farmers to improve the quality of their working lives. The findings from the project provided practical ideas to develop the WIND training programme and tools.



*WIND farmer volunteers training their neighbouring farmers by using photo sheets showing good examples*

Can Tho developed innovative WIND farmer volunteer systems to disseminate the WIND training to many grassroots farmers. They trained farmer representatives as WIND farmer volunteers, namely basic OSH volunteers. To support the trained WIND farmer volunteers, practical training tools, including photo sheets showing good examples and simple planning sheets, were developed. WIND farmer volunteers trained many neighbouring farmers using these training tools.

## *Government support systems to WIND farmer volunteers in Viet Nam*



*WIND farmer volunteer systems in Viet Nam (cited from the WIND book)*

The WIND training was integrated into the 1st National OSH Programme of Viet Nam as a practical method of extending adequate OSH protection to many farmers. Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) worked together with Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), farmers' union and women's union and developed technical support committees for WIND farmer volunteers at the provincial level. The five agency collaboration enabled the establishment of stable provincial systems to continue the WIND training at grassroots level.

The WIND training programme was transferred to countries neighbouring Viet Nam, including Cambodia, India, Lao PDR, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, the Philippines and Thailand. WIND spread further to countries beyond Asia, including Senegal in Western Africa, Costa Rica in Central America, and Krygystan in Central Asia. Practical activities initiated in a rural village in Viet Nam are now having a greater impact on improving the quality of working lives in different parts of the world. The PAOT methodologies created on the real work and life style of local farmers have made this spread possible.



*WIND training in Senegal, Africa.*

### III. WISH training programme for homeworkers

The WISH (Work Improvement for Safe Home) training programme was designed to assist home-based workers who manufacture goods in their homes. These workers belong to the informal economy and seldom receive government OSH services to improve OSH. The WISH programme was developed during the ILO’s Informal Economy and Poverty Reduction Project which covered Cambodia, Mongolia, and Thailand.

The WISH training programme further simplified the technical content of the WISE programme to enable immediate application in home workplaces. The WISH training manual includes a 30-item action checklist and includes many coloured illustrations showing good practices in home workplaces. It is often best to carry out the WISH training in home workplaces rather than in other formal training venues. Participating homeworkers feel more comfortable attending such training, and more importantly, they do need to skip their work. Most of them receive



*Workers’ and employers’ organizations and developmental NGOs, as well the government, worked together to train homeworkers on OSH by using the WISH programme (cited from the WIND book).*

### Extending WISH training: Training Cambodian trainers to use good example photo sheets



*Cambodian WISH trainers training homeworkers in their workplace using photo sheets.*

their income based on the products they have finished, so that it is difficult for them to attend a long training workshop held far from their own workplaces.



*Bamboo basket weaver started using a simple seating arrangement to improve her working posture after attending a WISH training course.*



*Mongolian homeworkers producing furniture improved their work layout to maximise their limited work space for safety and efficiency.*



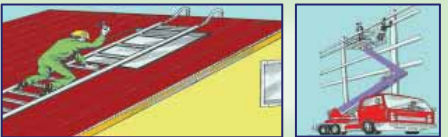

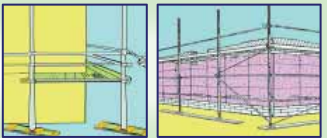
Cambodia has spread the WISH training to many home workplaces by mobilizing workers' and employers' organizations, developmental NGOs and the government. These people's organizations have close contact with grassroots workplaces, such as home workplaces, and are able to reach and train in a number of home workplaces. Local WISH trainers have used photo sheets as a practical training tool and have carried out many WISH training workshops in different home workplaces.

The government (the Department of Occupational Safety and Health, Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training) served as a facilitator to exchange experiences from different organizations and promote follow-up action. Many participating homeworkers implemented improvements using locally available, low-cost materials.

## IV. WISCON training programme for small construction sites

Small construction sites, such as those building small houses, shops or apartments, are another important target of the PAOT methodologies. Compared to large-scale construction sites, small construction sites seldom receive inspection and government services to improve OSH. They often lack OSH information and do not have safety officers or relevant safety personnel. Workers on small construction sites are often inexperienced migrant workers from rural provinces and have never received safety instructions.



<b>III. WORK AT HEIGHT</b>		
<p><b>11. Evenly distribute materials over scaffolds to avoid overloading.</b></p>		<p>Do you propose action?  <input type="checkbox"/> No   <input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> Priority                      Remarks:                      .....</p>
<p><b>12. Secure ladders at or near the top even if only used for a short time.</b></p>		<p>Do you propose action?  <input type="checkbox"/> No   <input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> Priority                      Remarks:                      .....</p>
<p><b>13. Use safety lines for the roof work and the work at height.</b></p>		<p>Do you propose action?  <input type="checkbox"/> No   <input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> Priority                      Remarks:                      .....</p>
<p><b>14. Secure the scaffold to the building in enough places to prevent scaffold collapse.</b></p>		<p>Do you propose action?  <input type="checkbox"/> No   <input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> Priority                      Remarks:                      .....</p>
<p><b>15. Mount all the uprights of the scaffold on proper base plates.</b></p>		<p>Do you propose action?  <input type="checkbox"/> No   <input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> Priority                      Remarks:                      .....</p>

*Example of the WISCON checklist.*

The Work Improvement in Small Construction Sites (WISCON) programme was first developed in Thailand within the framework of the ILO/Korea Partnership Programme support. The WISCON project team visited several small construction sites which were mostly housing projects. The team interviewed the workers and site managers about their OSH needs, and walked around the sites to identify the OSH improvement points. Similar studies were also carried out on small construction sites in Cambodia and Lao PDR. These field experiences and findings produced a 42-item WISCON checklist. Construction sites have specific OSH risks which differ from those at manufacturing workplaces. The WISCON programme includes “work at height” in addition to the WISE technical areas.



*Cambodian trade union leader carrying out the on-site WISCON training to help farmer construction workers.*

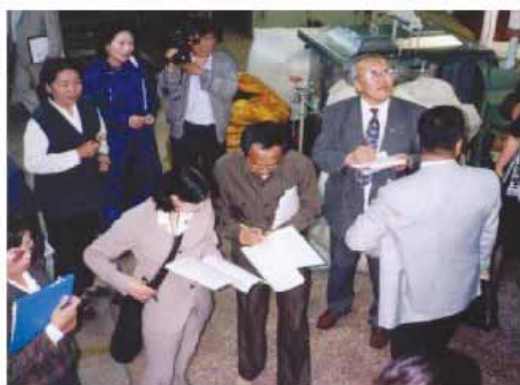


Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Thailand and Viet Nam have actively applied the WISCON training programme. It is noteworthy that trade unions in Cambodia and Mongolia actively applied the programme through their trade union networks. Trade union leaders in Cambodia visited many small construction sites to help unorganized (mostly farmers) construction workers to improve OSH through the WISCON training.

## V. POSITIVE training programme to improve OSH by trade union initiatives

POSITIVE (Participation-Oriented Safety Improvement by Trade Union Initiative) programme, a joint initiative of the Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF) and Institute for Science Labour (ISL) of Japan, is a PAOT programme designed specifically for the needs of workers and trade unions. This programme consists of materials handling, workstations, physical environment, and welfare facilities, and aims to strengthen the self-help initiatives of workers to improve OSH. Trained workers can identify OSH improvement needs and propose practical improvement points to their employers.

POSITIVE is the first PAOT programme to add “environment protection” to the training. This was done in response to the trade union request in Pakistan. The unions thought that workers could contribute to environmental protection through joint improvements in OSH and the environment. Items to reduce the use of chemicals, promote recycling of waste materials through separate collection, and decrease the use of water, were added to the POSITIVE checklist for environmental protection.



*Worker participants identifying improvement points through the checklist application (left) and discussing improvements in a group (right).*

The spread of the POSITIVE programme was remarkable. Trade unions in Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam trained their POSITIVE trainers with support from JILAF and ISL and extended the training to many trade union members at the workplace level. These trade union OSH activities largely contributed to activating trade union networks and unionizing more workers. Trained workers and union members increased their bargaining power with their employers through their practical OSH knowledge and improvement ideas. Often, employers were also happy to accept the workers' practical improvement ideas. The POSITIVE training programme has contributed to strengthening constructive social dialogue between workers and managers through their joint OSH improvements.

## VI. WISE-R programme

WISE-R (More Work Improvement in Small Enterprises) is designed to expand the WISE training programme to address not only the physical work environment, but also the broader day-to-day challenges that both employers and workers face in their workplaces. WISE-R consists of six technical modules which apply the participatory training methodologies. They are: (1) Understanding Productivity; (2) Managing and Motivating Workers; (3) Designing and Managing Working Time; (4) Managing Wages and Benefits; (5) Family-friendly Measures; and (6) Create a Respectful Workplace.

These six technical modules in WISE-R cover: productivity and work efficiency; work organization; work-related stress; working time; wages and incomes; maternity protection; work-family issues; sexual harassment; and violence at work in an integrated manner. These are the key “working and employment conditions” issues that women and men face in the workplace in order to balance their work life with their family, social and community lives.

WISE-R has been increasingly applied in the countries which have already experienced WISE and which required further steps to address the broader OSH and have working conditions issues. Mongolian Employers' Federation (MONEF) is a typical example. MONEF had trained their own in-house WISE trainers and carried out many WISE training courses to help employers in SMEs. As a next step, MONEF carried out a TOT workshop on the WISE-R programme in August 2010. Referring to practical business experiences and existing good practices in Mongolia, participating employer trainers discussed and identified the practical ideas to jointly improve productivity, work-related stress, working time, wages, maternity protection and other important issues. After the TOT, MONEF trainers integrated the technical areas of WISE-R into their WISE training services for their member SMEs.



WISE-R applying participatory training methodologies. Participating Mongolian employers are discussing emerging working conditions issues addressed in WISE-R (left) and presenting proposals for improvements (right).

## VII. WARM training programme to improve OSH for waste collectors

Waste collection work is a foundation for cleaning and protecting the environment and also for promoting waste recycling. However, workers engaged in waste collection face many OSH risks such as carrying heavy waste materials, handling hazardous waste, and traffic accidents. The WARM (Work Adjustment for Recycling and Managing Waste) programme was developed in 2009 in Fiji and was aimed at the joint improvements in OSH for waste collectors and waste management systems. The ILO and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) worked together to develop the programme within the framework of JICA’s 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) Project in Fiji.

The WARM programme consists of four technical areas: (1) safe waste handling and community cooperation; (2) safety of waste collection trucks; (3) work environment and personal protective equipment; and (4) welfare facilities and work organization. The programme also has a 44-item checklist to address key OSH points in waste collection work. The joint ILO-JICA team visited waste collection workplaces, carefully observed their work and selected these points for action.

- 1- Store waste properly.  
Do you propose action ?  
 No  Yes  Priority  
Remarks:.....
2. Place waste at waist level of collectors.  
Do you propose action ?  
 No  Yes  Priority  
Remarks:.....
3. Use safe waste containers of appropriate size.  
Do you propose action ?  
 No  Yes  Priority  
Remarks:.....
4. Attach grips or holders to all waste containers.  
Do you propose action ?  
 No  Yes  Priority  
Remarks:.....



Example of the WARM checklist.

The first WARM training was held in Lautoka City in Fiji in 2009. In addition to waste collection workers and their managers, representatives of the community and the city government participated in the training. The training was intended to provide an opportunity for both waste collectors and the community to discuss the improvement of waste collection systems in terms of safety and efficiency. The participants from the community realized that they could further contribute to improving OSH and efficiency of waste collection systems by changing the way they submitted their household waste.



*Collaborative discussion between waste collectors and representatives of the community. Workplace visit with the checklist application (left) and group discussions (right).*

The ILO is promoting its Green Jobs Initiative to promote employment in economic sectors to reduce their environmental impact. Waste collection work is an important part of the Green Jobs Initiative and the WARM programme should serve as a practical tool for this purpose. Now JICA is planning to extend their cooperation scheme in environmental protection to other Pacific Island countries and to integrate OSH for waste collectors into their programme through the application of the WARM training programme.

## VIII. WIPE and APPLE programmes

The WIPE (Work Improvement for Protection of Environment) programme aims to promote environmental protection through workplace actions. The programme is a collaboration between the Center for Occupational Health and Environment (ECHO) in Can Tho City, Viet Nam, the Tokyo OSH Centre and the Institute for Science of Labour, Kawasaki, Japan. The WIPE programme uses PAOT





methods and promotes simple, low-cost improvements to protect the environment. SMEs and many farmers in Can Tho have actively applied the WIPE programme and implemented many practical improvements, such as the reduced use of hazardous substances, collection of waste materials for recycling, and conserving electricity.

The same project team also developed the APPLE (Asbestos Precautionary Programme by Local Empowerment) programme to reduce environmental and health hazards caused by asbestos. Asbestos, widely known as an agent causing cancer, is still widely used in many developing countries in the region as a construction material. By using the PAOT methodologies, the APPLE programme has improved the awareness of workers and employers in asbestos companies and promoted practical improvement actions towards the elimination of health hazards caused by asbestos.



## IX. PAOT application for preventing pandemic and avian influenza at the workplace

Using the PAOT methodologies, the ILO developed two training programmes to prevent pandemic and avian influenza at the workplace. The ILO pandemic influenza manual targeted SMEs and assisted them in promoting simple measures to prevent influenza infection, such as improved personal hygiene practices, social distancing or workplace layout changes. The manual consists of five technical areas associated with an illustrated 23-item checklist. The five technical areas are: (1) collect updated information; (2) develop a company preparedness plan; (3) reduce contact at the workplace; (4) promote personal hygiene habits; and (5) support sick workers and their families.





This manual served as a practical tool to assist SMEs in Thailand and other Asian countries during the H1N1 pandemic in 2009. The ILO's tripartite channels with workers and employers as well as the government were fully utilised to extend the influenza prevention training to many SMEs. Some trainers in influenza in large-scale enterprises actively supported SMEs and provided practical training.

The ILO also developed a PAOT-style training manual to prevent avian influenza in poultry farmers and workers. The manual consists of five technical areas: (1) collect avian influenza information to protect your health; (2) handle your poultry safely; (3) use safe methods of poultry slaughtering; (4) practical hygienic disposal methods and waste management; and (5) report disease swiftly. With the initiative of the Thai Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, this training programme was widely applied to train poultry farmers in different provinces in Thailand.

## X. Green programme

The Green Programme aims to encourage farmers to protect the environment through practical actions in their agricultural work. The programme is a result of collaboration between the Community Health Development Research Center, Can Tho Medical College and Thoi Hung Commune with the financial support of the Toyota Motor Corporation fund. The Green Programme applies the PAOT methods and promotes the 3R principles (reuse, reduce, recycle) and safe handling of waste to protect the environment through their agricultural work. Many simple and low-cost improvements, such as the separation of waste, the reduction of combustible materials and hazardous chemicals, and the reuse of discarded products for a clean environment, have been created in the participating rural communities.



## XI. Conclusions

It is striking to see that the PAOT methodologies have been widely applied to address the practical OSH needs of different grassroots workplaces. Thanks to its action-oriented approach, all the PAOT-related training programmes have mobilized workers, farmers and business owners to take practical improvement actions. The PAOT methodologies have paved the ways to assist real grassroots workplaces in addressing their OSH and related needs in an innovative and feasible manner and have provided practical tools.

# Action checklist

CHAPTER

3



**I. Structure of the action checklist**

1. What is the action checklist?
2. The structure of an action checklist
3. How to use the action checklist
4. How many forms of action checklist

**II. Action checklist is an essential training tool of PAOT**

1. Action checklist promotes participation
2. Action checklist broadens the scope of participants
3. Action checklist cultivates positive thinking
4. Action checklist is a widely applicable training tool

**III. Action checklist exercise is the first part of PAOT training**

1. To convince the participants that this is not “just another course”
2. To emphasize the practical orientation of the course activities
3. To show participants that their knowledge and experience are respected by the trainers
4. To provide a common source of examples
5. To introduce the main subjects covered by the course
6. To give a start to group work and participant involvement
7. To promote the use of a practical training tool with many applications

**IV. How to organize an action checklist exercise**

1. Choose a place for the action checklist exercise
2. Time necessary to complete an action checklist exercise
3. The orientation and briefing

# I. Structure of the action checklist

## 1. What is the action checklist?

The action checklist is a practical training tool of the PAOT programme. It assists participants to find good points and improvement points based on their own judgment and thinking. During the PAOT workshops, the checklist exercise is the first training activity. The content of the checklist should be specifically designed to help participants broaden their views and to make it easy for them to assess the improvement points at the workplace.

The action checklist is considered to be a list of feasible, simple and low-cost improvement actions which could be widely applied in the community or in local workplaces. The action checklist is a training tool which builds on the experiences and knowledge of participants toward a workable solution. In short, the action checklist is understood as a list of solutions or practical actions rather than a list of problems needing to be resolved. Participants who take part into the checklist exercise are asked to learn from existing good examples at the checklist venue rather than to give an evaluation of them.

**WISE PROGRAMME**  
(WORK IMPROVEMENTS IN SMALL ENTERPRISES)

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**WORKPLACE CHECKLIST**


**HOW TO USE THE CHECKLIST**

- 1- Define the work area to be checked. In the case of a small enterprise, the whole production area can be checked. In the case of a larger enterprise, particular work areas can be defined for separate checking.
- 2- Read through the checklist and spend a few minutes walking around the work area before starting to check.
- 3- Read each item carefully. Look for a way to apply the measure. If necessary ask some questions to the manager or workers. If the measure has been applied or it is not needed, mark NO under "Do you propose action?". If you think the measure is worthwhile, mark YES. Use the space under REMARKS to put a description of your suggestion or its location.
- 4- After you have gone through the whole items, look again at the items you have marked YES. Choose a few items where the benefits seem likely to be the most important. Mark PRIORITY for these items.
- 5- Before finishing, make sure that for each item you have marked NO or YES, and that for some items marked YES you have marked PRIORITY.

**MATERIALS STORAGE AND HANDLING**


- 1- Clear and mark transport routes.

Do you propose action?  
 No     Yes     Priority  
 Remarks: .....



- 2- Make the surface of transport routes even, not slippery and without obstacles.

Do you propose action?  
 No     Yes     Priority  
 Remarks: .....



## 2. The structure of an action checklist

The action checklist consists of many check items or **checkpoints**. The number of checkpoints varies depending on the purpose of the training. Trainers or participants can reduce or add extra checkpoints as necessary depending on the particular training topic, however there should be around 30 to 40 checkpoints for application by the participants.

**Structure of a checkpoint:** A checkpoint is composed of four main parts as follows:

- **Check item:** Describe a simple and inexpensive improvement action that can be achieved within a short period of time. The check item should always use action phrases and be written in a clear and easy to understand manner. Avoid showing an order or instruction that directs people to follow, and the use of long sentences or negative actions.

Illustrations to clarify the improvement action are normally enclosed with the check items.

- **Question:** Do you propose action?
- **Answer:** There are three possibilities: Yes, No and Priority.
- **Remarks:** Notes or subjective comments of participants.

## ***II- WORK STATION DESIGN***

**11- Place frequently used materials, tools and controls within easy reach.**

Do you propose action?  
 No    Yes    Priority

Remarks:.....  
 .....



**12- Provide "home" for tools.**

Do you propose action?  
 No    Yes    Priority

Remarks:.....  
 .....



**13- Adjust the working height for each worker at elbow level or slightly below it.**

Do you propose action?  
 No    Yes    Priority

Remarks:.....  
 .....



**14- Provide sitting workers with good adjustable chairs with a backrest.**

Do you propose action?  
 No    Yes    Priority

Remarks:.....  
 .....



### 3. How to use the action checklist

Before starting the checklist exercise, participants are asked to read the check items carefully. The facilitator must make sure that they clearly understand the content of each checkpoint, the place where these actions can be applied and to whom they should ask questions to ensure better realization of the working conditions.

Checking is based on a person's own judgment, subjective remarks about the real actions and solutions at the workplace. Hence participants should walk through the workplace and



directly observe the actual actions taken by the local community. Be aware that some participants might already be familiar with the checklist venue, however if they come and take a fresh look at the workplace, they will most certainly find new points and ideas as the improvement efforts of people continuously change.

The following two situations can happen:

1. If you feel satisfied with this action and you do not propose any other suggestions or ideas, mark **NO**. “**NO**” means that existing conditions are satisfactory or good.

**7. Adjust work height at elbow level or slightly lower.**

Do you propose action?

No  Yes  Priority

Remarks \_\_\_\_\_



2. If you are not satisfied and you need to correct or modify some points, mark **YES**. “**YES**” means that there are points to be improved and you propose action for improvements.

**7. Adjust work height at elbow level or slightly lower.**

Do you propose action?

No  Yes  Priority

Remarks \_\_\_\_\_



**Additionally:** Among the **YES** items, mark **PRIORITY** to select those requiring urgent action. You should be careful when you mark **PRIORITY** to avoid too many priorities! If you have too many urgent things to do, you will be unable to decide what to do first.

**7. Adjust work height at elbow level or slightly lower.**

Do you propose action?

No  Yes  Priority

Remarks \_\_\_\_\_



In the **Remarks**, you can make notes as follows:

- Write good examples you have found at the workplace.
- Write actions needed to be improved.

## 4. How many forms of action checklist

- Simple form:

*Provide stable chairs or benches with a sturdy backrest.*  
 Do you propose action?  
 No  Yes  Priority  
 Remarks: .....

This form is simple and practical. It is suitable for participants who know how to generalize or to give reasons.


- Form with illustrations:

*Action checklist*

**II- WORK STATIONS AND TOOLS**


9. Put frequently used tools, switches and materials within easy reach of farmers.

Do you propose action?  
 No  Yes  Priority  
 Remarks: .....



10. Provide a home for each tool.

Do you propose action?  
 No  Yes  Priority  
 Remarks: .....



A clear and easy to understand illustration is inserted into each checkpoint to assist in understanding the check item.

- Form with photos:

**19- Recycle the human and animal excreta by utilizing appropriate biomass technology.**

Do you propose action?  
 No  Yes  Priority  
 Remarks: .....



**III. WASTE COLLECTION**

**A. SAFE WASTE COLLECTION**

20- Place waste containers in convenient place and within easy reach.




Do you propose action?  
 No  Yes  Priority  
 Remarks: .....



Instead of using illustrations, some authors use pictures to demonstrate the actions. This form of the action checklist is more convincing to farmers if the pictures used clearly show improvement points.

- Form with illustrations and pictures:

**Checkpoint 45**

For participants who are not able to read and write, the “check item” is inserted with illustrations and pictures to make it easier for them to understand the content.

- Follow-up form:



This form is useful for following up the improvement actions taken by one unit or one family. After completing one improvement action, the responsible person marks a red sign on the blank circle of this follow-up poster. There are four blank circles for one checkpoint, meaning that within one check item, people can gradually perform at least four improvement actions.

At a quick glance, visitors or facilitators can easily recognize the number of improvement actions made by one unit or family. This follow-up poster will therefore simplify the workplace visit and empower the responsibility of local people.

## II. Action checklist is an essential training tool of PAOT

### 1. Action checklist promotes participation

*Tool for training rather than for making an evaluation.*

As we have already mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the action checklist assists participants identify good points and improvement points at the workplace. In the case of good points, they will naturally learn and apply them. On the contrary, if they find some points that need to be improved, instead of criticizing the weaknesses, participants are encouraged to find practical solutions for improvements appropriate to the local situation.



This principle is quite different to an evaluation due to its positive point of view. Experiences obtained from this exercise enrich the sense of participation among participants, as learning and sharing are commonly supporting during the checklist exercise. Participants therefore feel more confident in furthering their improvement actions based on their own creative ideas.

### *Increasing knowledge.*



*Action checklist exercise.*

Based on the workshop design, participants attending the PAOT course have to complete the action checklist exercise before participating in any technical session. Some among them will be surprised to learn that the field visit is organized at the beginning of the PAOT workshop instead of the usual lectures. However after being exposed to the reality, they realize that this exercise is quite useful to broaden their view on different aspects of the working conditions. The knowledge gained from the checklist exercise comes from the self-effort of participants, not from the

trainers, hence they feel more confident in proposing new ideas and creating new practical solutions.

## 2. Action checklist broadens the scope of participants



*Action checklist exercise in the farmer house.*

The action checklist is composed of different checkpoints that describe simple and achievable improvement actions. Based on this practical guideline, participants are free to identify which actions at the checklist venue are good or need to be improved. This subjective remark varies depending on the background and experiences of participants or the practical judgment of each participant. Participants should not limit their scope to only one or two technical points but should broaden their views in a positive manner

before making a decision. In that way, participants can identify many possible good practices in the field within only a few moments.

## 3. Action checklist cultivates positive thinking

The action checklist is not a complete list of good practices or practical solutions that have

been applied in various workplaces. On the contrary, each checkpoint describes only one useful action, and the checkpoint may need to be changed or modified in some parts in order to reflect the actual situation. During the checklist exercise, participants are requested to go beyond the checklist description and are free to add some extra checkpoints. The positive and practical nature of the checklist design helps participants increase their practical experiences while implementing available improvements.

#### 4. Action checklist is a widely applicable training tool

The action checklist offers participants an open guideline on how to achieve improvement actions. The wide application of this practical training tool to identify good points at any workplace is an advantage. Let's try a checklist exercise with our colleagues. Spend some moments with them visiting the workplace or looking around the work environment. With the checklist in hand, we will certainly be able to identify many good examples from the work area, and at the same time, find practical solutions for the points needing to be improved.

Within this specific structure, the action checklist has recently been applied in different domains like agriculture, industry, health care, rural development, social, environmental protection, food hygiene, and so on.

**Action checklist**

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**I. SAFE WASTE HANDLING AND COMMUNITY COOPERATION**

1. Have a safe and convenient place to store waste.

Do you propose action?  
 No  Yes  Priority

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



2. Place waste at waist level of collectors.

Do you propose action?  
 No  Yes  Priority

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



3. Use safe waste containers of appropriate size.

Do you propose action?  
 No  Yes  Priority

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



4. Attach grips or handles to all waste containers.

Do you propose action?  
 No  Yes  Priority

Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_




---

*WARM checklist to improve OSH for waste collectors.*



### III. Action checklist exercise is the first part of PAOT training

Some participants attending the PAOT workshop wonder why the action checklist exercise is organized before other training activities, or what might happen if we skipped the action checklist exercise. As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the action checklist exercise assists participants to gain practical experiences through their self-help initiatives. As a result, this training component is indispensable in the PAOT course. Why do we need to arrange the action checklist exercise before any training activities? The following reasons answer this question.

#### 1. To convince the participants that this is not “just another course”

PAOT is a training method that focuses on practical local solutions. Organizing the action checklist exercise before other training content will establish a close relationship between participants and local workplaces.



*Action checklist exercise during a WIND training workshop conducted in Mboro, Senegal.*

Without being influenced by lectures, participants will generate a fresh look that is less dependent on the trainer’s ideas; this action will help them easily identify potential improvement actions in the community.

#### 2. To emphasize the practical orientation of the course activities

The whole content of the PAOT programme is to introduce and share good and available solutions at local workplaces. This immediate exercise will create good impressions on the participants about the new training method. Participants will be drawn to discovering new things and begin to understand this new manner of knowledge transfer. In this way, participants will be immediately convinced at the beginning of the course.

### 3. To show participants that their knowledge and experience are respected by the trainers

Prior to arriving at the action checklist venue, participants have never received any idea or lecture from the trainers. Their comments and solutions during the practice will reflect exactly their own experience and knowledge. Participants will feel proud and more confident when trainers pay attention to their ideas and solutions.

### 4. To provide a common source of examples

Normally when we organize a checklist exercise, all participants have to observe only one workplace venue. Therefore, they will be able to share and learn good examples and information from a common source. When organizing two different places, it is impossible for participants to share practical solutions and ideas with each other as different workplaces present different problems and solutions.

### 5. To introduce the main subjects covered by the course

During the action checklist exercise, trainers intentionally introduce the entire content of the training course to the participants. As mentioned in the previous part, the action checklist is a list of practical solutions related to the content of the training course. The practical application of the action checklist presents the whole training content to the participants and allows them to be exposed to the training purposes in advance.

### 6. To give a start to group work and participant involvement



*WIND training in Mboro, Senegal.*

At the action checklist venue, participants will become acquainted with one another. They introduce themselves and discuss issues together. This is the best way to encourage participation at the beginning of the course.

## 7. To promote the use of a practical training tool with many applications

The action checklist is a practical training tool which promotes the positive ideas of participants. Everybody can design their own action checklist and then apply it in order to improve their working conditions.

In conclusion, in a conventional training course the trainer usually starts their lectures using the following procedures:

- Introduce the main content of the lesson to participants;
- Present the objectives;
- Create an opportunity for participants to know each other (ice breaker period); and
- Promote the full cooperation of participants during the course.

In contrast, in PAOT, by only conducting the action checklist exercise, all the above-mentioned tasks are almost completed in the one exercise.

## IV. How to organize an action checklist exercise

*A well-designed action checklist helps participants to create positive ideas for improvements.*

*A well-organized action checklist exercise also helps participants to broaden their views on multiple aspects and to prioritize the improvement actions in a systematic manner.*

The action checklist exercise is the first part of the PAOT programme. During this exercise, participants are exposed to the actual workplace; they learn from local conditions by using their own experiences and knowledge. With the guidance of the action checklist, participants will develop practical improvement ideas. Although some participants might be familiar with this workplace, the exercise will help them identify action points in a logical and systematic manner.

### 1. Choose a place for the action checklist exercise

It is necessary to prepare a place to conduct the action checklist before running the course. Experience shows us that we should not wait until the beginning of the course to complete this task. The first session of the training activity is extremely important for the trainers, therefore the action checklist venue should be planned well in advance, at least one day before the commencement of the course. The following are suggested ideas for selecting an appropriate venue for the checklist exercise:

- **Close to the seminar venue**

The time needed to complete the action checklist exercise is limited to around one hour, hence it should be organized in the most convenient place for everybody to travel to. If participants have to spend a lot of time traveling, they will be tired and will not concentrate fully on the content of the next technical sessions.



*Action checklist exercise conducted in Vientiane, Lao PDR.*

When it is difficult to find a nearby place for the action checklist exercise, we should provide transportation to save the travel time.

It is more convenient for both trainers and participants if we choose a nearby place for the checklist exercise or select the seminar venue near the action checklist area, and allows us to save on the cost of organizing the checklist exercise.

- **Offer all necessary checkpoints**

Practicing the action checklist is a process of individual assessment to provide subjective remarks about the real actions at the workplace, based on the suggested guideline from the action checklist. Therefore we should consider whether all the technical checkpoints at the action checklist venue are included. If many listed items are missing at the checklist venue, participants will not be able to complete their tasks and this deficiency will affect the group discussions in the following technical sessions of the PAOT programme.

- **Have enough identifiable good examples and points to be improved**

The selection of an appropriate place for the action checklist exercise is a challenge for the PAOT trainers or organizers. It is better to look for a workplace where participants can find both good points and points to be improved in all technical areas.

- Where the action checklist venue is too good or where this is a typical model for a study visit, participants may find it difficult to propose improvement points. Some participants may become discouraged if the workplace surpasses their own standards. This situation will hamper the creative ideas of participants.
- If the action checklist venue shows only points to be improved and it is difficult to find good practices, participants may not obtain any benefit from this exercise. This situation will disappoint the participants and they will not appreciate the whole training programme.

- **Have an appropriate sized workplace where participants can observe all necessary points**

We should not stretch the limit of an action checklist exercise. All necessary tasks should be completed within a clear time frame excluding the traveling time. The selection of a large workplace might affect the observation of participants. Most of them will leave out some parts of the action checklist, and these missing points will disadvantage them during the

group discussions in the following technical sessions.

## 2. Time necessary to complete an action checklist exercise

One hour is the maximum time for an action checklist exercise, though the necessary time for the action checklist exercise can be a little shorter or longer depending on the local conditions as well as the training purpose. We must carefully select the appropriate length of time for this special session and clearly inform all participants of the time limit. Do not allow the participants to become bored and lose concentration due to the lack of a timekeeper.

## 3. The orientation and briefing

Before starting the action checklist exercise, the following orientation should be provided to all participants:

- Gather all participants and clearly introduce the action checklist venue. If possible, brief the participants on the sections or areas where they should walk through for the assessment and provide guidance on how to reach them.
- Participants need to clearly understand the instructions on how to use the action checklist. We have to make sure that everybody knows how to check and how to fill in all check items, especially YES, NO, PRIORITY, REMARKS. (Refer to the paragraph “How to use the action checklist”).
- Some participants may not clearly understand the check items. The facilitator should explain briefly or ask someone to read slowly all the check items to give them a better understanding.
- Upon arriving at the action checklist venue, it is necessary to invite the participants to walk around the workplace and to try and recognize some important points before taking notes.
- Encourage the participants to work independently and to try and look for good practices. If necessary, ask for more information from the owner or local staff members.
- Advise participants not to criticize any negative points at the workplace, however motivate them to find practical ideas on how to improve these weak points appropriate to the local conditions.
- Inform the participants that the results of the action checklist will be used for subsequent group discussions in the training course.

*Invite participants to read all the check items slowly to give them a better understanding.*





# Practical low-cost solutions

CHAPTER

4



**I. Value of practical low-cost solutions in PAOT programme****II. How to select practical, low-cost, good examples**

1. Should be simple
2. Should be real
3. Must be clear
4. Should be at low cost

**III. Taking photos and the choice of good photos**

1. Photos showing good examples
2. Photos showing negative points or failure lessons
3. Photos showing mixed messages between positive and negative points

**IV. Photos of good examples and the transmission of PAOT message**

1. Before taking a photo, be sure that we know its exact “message”
2. Directly look for good solutions in the community and take photos
3. How many photos are needed

**V. Technical sessions design**

1. Principles
2. Main tasks
3. Structure of a technical session
4. Presentation of technical session

## I. Value of practical low-cost solutions in PAOT programme

The PAOT programme depends largely on practical low-cost solutions; they play the main role in initiating the self-effort of participants. It is firmly acknowledged that the best way to motivate local people to take positive actions is to share good practices made under similar workplace conditions. By looking at good examples from other people who are in the same economic circumstances, participants will be stimulated toward real improvement actions. However it is necessary to introduce several possible good practices in order to help them identify their own priority actions.

Therefore the main task of PAOT facilitators is to collect practical low-cost solutions.

Learning from typical local good examples is a practical way to encourage participants to initiate their improvement actions; moreover, learning from typical good examples also provides the participants with the necessary information on the quality of the solutions, the details of the techniques and skills, and the use of materials and cost.

## II. How to select practical, low-cost, good examples

By focusing on local good solutions instead of weaknesses or failures, we will gradually establish a positive attitude in the participants. However, how do we select suitable low-cost good examples in order to encourage the initiatives of participants? How do we identify which solutions are the most practical and low-cost among those we have already collected? How long do we need to complete one technical session? Photos are always attractive, however participants will become bored if too many of the same solutions are shown. Here are some hints to answer these points mentioned previously.

### 1. Should be simple. Simplicity facilitates participatory actions.



*Use red color on the switches to make it clear what operation is intended.*

Simple solutions will certainly stimulate positive action in everyone. Nowadays, in order to attract more buyers, the operation of most domestic electric appliances is simplified as much as possible to reduce the complexity of the instructions. If two items of equal value are presented, we are certain that many people will select the more simple one.

The POAT programme always looks for simple good practices at the local workplace. Simple solutions or guidelines will motivate people to take immediate actions.

The simpler the solutions, the more they stimulate the participants' creativity and then their work conditions will be much improved.

## 2. Should be real



*Mark the transport route.*

Local low-cost good practices are a really powerful training tool of the PAOT programme. Many facilitators believe that we just only show photos of good examples to the participants and that is enough to motivate the participation of the community. Be smart to understand that local good practices are normally quite familiar to local people; they know their conditions better than us! If we are not sure about the location of the solution or if we try to create our own solutions which do not exist in the local context, just for the purpose of giving the right message, we may be faced with participants who are reluctant to cooperate. Even if only one unrealistic good practice is shown, participants may have doubts about all the remaining good practices in our technical content. In the PAOT programme, we should focus on actual local good

practices and clearly state the origin of these smart ideas as well as the reasons why we use them.

## 3. Must be clear

We all know that clear photographs and illustrations provide powerful messages and do not need much explanation. In order to get people concentrating on the message, we need to choose clear photos or illustrations. The clearer the pictures, the easier it is for people to be convinced. For this reason, when we choose photos or illustrations, we should pay attention to their backgrounds. If the photos include many unrelated items, people will be confused or will misunderstand which message we want to share with them. Too many details in the pictures will make it difficult for participants to recognize good points. Some hints below are useful for the PAOT facilitators:



*A "home" for tools.*

- Focus only on the message we would like to emphasize. If possible, use the crop tool in MS Office to cut unnecessary items in the photos.
- Avoid taking photos of the faces of people if they are not willing to be shown in public.

Where we need to show the right postures or get people into the photo, it is better to take photos from behind. Maintaining privacy and confidentiality are the keys to the success of getting more participation from participants.

- We are not professional photographers, however if we find good practices in the workplace, try to make them as clear as possible. If the photos are too dark or unclear and cannot explain the messages, it is better to leave them out.
- Illustrations are the best way to transfer messages, however they should be a simple drawing with very little background details. Avoid minor negative points in the illustrations that might become topics for criticism among participants. The most important recommendation is to respect the cultures and local customs of people.

#### 4. Should be at low-cost

Why are low-cost solutions the most attractive to local people? We may have collected many local good practices, however low-cost good solutions are always the best choice for the PAOT technical input. If we look at the low-cost good solution carefully, we can find great efforts of the local people to make it simple, effective, practical and make full use of available local materials. Low-cost good solutions always demonstrate the combination of wisdom and practical ideas from the local people. Hence, low-cost good solutions are the



*A pushing car made from locally available materials.*

best ways to stimulate the initiatives of local people, whether they come from high or low economical circumstances.

In short, practical, low-cost and good solutions contribute actively to the main content of the PAOT input. These solutions motivate participants toward improvement actions and show everyone that they are able to apply them easily. Then, practical low-cost good solutions are readily accepted by the community.

### III. Taking photos and the choice of good photos

Remember that in the PAOT programme, photos play the main role. The entire training programme depends very much on photos showing low-cost good examples from the workplace. Therefore the collection of photos showing good examples is necessary to make our training input more attractive to the participants. On the contrary, if we select the wrong photos showing negative aspects, it might damage our great efforts.

PAOT pays a lot of attention to good practices that have been widely applied in workplaces. Hence, taking photos and choosing good photos are key tasks of PAOT facilitators. When



taking photos, we should ask permission from people and explain our purpose. There are several types of photos that need to be taken in the work areas.

## 1. Photos showing good examples

Good practices that have been widely applied in different workplaces are the best choice for photos. In fact, these good examples, which have already been tested in reality and have generally been accepted by the community, are more convincing to the participants. We should remember that low-cost good practices developed by the self-effort of the community are treasures in the PAOT programme. These valuable good practices should be photographed as they are without any additional arrangement of the photographer.



*Multilevel shelves for agricultural tools at a farmer's house.*



*Simple local exhaust ventilation to absorb metal dust at a mechanical factory.*

The success stories of each good solution should be clearly mentioned during the presentation of the technical input, so that participants have the chance to assess and compare them with their own conditions. Good practices taken in the community and matching our topic are highly convincing and satisfy the basic need of the participants; therefore they should be classified in a special folder and inserted appropriately in our technical content. We should try to collect as many examples of these good practices as possible to improve our training materials and to share them with our colleagues and friends to encourage the dissemination of this positive approach.

## 2. Photos showing negative points or failure lessons

Negative or inefficient examples are frequently found in workplaces and the community. The PAOT programme does not recommend that facilitators collect them for several reasons, as follows:

- Negative examples always come to a dead end and do not demonstrate any practical idea to people;
- Negative examples are far from reaching practical actions;
- Negative examples always mean criticism without any hints for improvement actions; and
- Negative examples discourage people.

Therefore negative examples are rarely used in the PAOT programme. Where negative or weak examples are collected, PAOT recommends that we keep them until we can identify that some progress has been made on these special examples. By showing before and after photos, we can use them as a case study in order to demonstrate the progress of the improvement actions.



*Packing area in an aluminum utensils factory: before and after the improvement.*

### 3. Photos showing mixed messages between positive and negative points

When taking a photo, we sometimes find positive and negative points mixed together and it is quite difficult to split them. Should we use them for training input?



*This photo shows a clear passage leading to the rice field that allows for two-way traffic. However it seems that this passage is not wide enough with many obstacles (bicycle parks at the road-side, rice stubble and a plastic tank across the road) the vehicle seems to be parked instead of moving on the road, the motor cyclist and his passenger do not wear helmets...*

Let us analyze the disadvantages of using the above photo in training:

- Normally, participants tend to focus on weak points instead of strong ones, therefore the negative message becomes more prominent. This photo unintentionally interrupts the positive thinking of participants.
- This photo creates a bad impression for participants while taking an action. Consequently, they will not try their best in the improvements, feel satisfied with the present situation and sometimes hesitate to go further.
- When photos show both negative and positive aspects, trainers must work hard to give their own specific explanations. These ideas will limit the creativity of participants.

Due to these disadvantages, the PAOT programme rarely uses these examples in training. They are useful only during a review of the entire sessions or during brainstorming exercises.

## IV. Photos of good examples and the transmission of PAOT message

### 1. Before taking a photo, be sure that we know its exact “message”

Photos of practical low-cost examples provide the participants with a positive view on how to solve problems based on their own initiatives. During the delivery of the workshop, trainers must be sure of the transmission of the message. Our main tasks will be as follows:

- **Try to discover good points and potential improvement solutions** Analyze with the group possible good points in each photo, even though they may be small. This preliminary task is very helpful for the facilitators in order to classify good example photos into folders and to transfer the exact message to the participants. During the group work activity, potential improvement points in the good example photos are easily identified through the contribution of the group.
- **Get a clear idea about the advantages and limitations of good example photos** Each improvement, action or solution always has its own limitations. Facilitators should identify what is the limitation of an action; this effort is useful for them to decide what exact message should be transferred and what key details should be included.



## 2. Directly look for good solutions in the community and take photos



It is much more efficient when facilitators take good example photos themselves instead of asking for the assistance of colleagues or photographers. Good example photos in the PAOT programme are not necessarily outstanding photographs; anybody can take photos. Remember that only the facilitators can fully understand the value of an improvement, therefore they can identify which details are necessary for the photos, while the photographers might pay more attention to the technical aspects. It

would be a pity if we found a very good practice but the person who took the photo could not express all of its values.

## 3. How many photos are needed

Each good example photo describes an effective solution or good practice in the workplace; it is difficult to set a limitation on the number. One practical low-cost good solution is a local treasure; we should spend all our effort to exploit all of its advantages. However, during the presentation in the technical session, we should not confuse participants by showing too many good example photos. Select only three to four photos for each rule and omit the rest, even though they may be good.

On the contrary, it is quite hard to complete the training input if we do not have enough photos showing good examples related to the theme we would like to present. To solve this problem, we should not miss any chance to take pictures during the field visits.

- If you are hesitating, take all and analyze them later;
- If we find that there are so many good practices in the workplace, however our memory stick is full or our battery is nearly empty, take shots of the best ones and make notes of the rest. We can come back to take pictures later if it is necessary; and
- Prepare well for the field visit, especially the quality of the camera, memory stick and batteries. This useful action will help us to look back immediately which photos could be used, which photos did not come out properly and whether any shot should be taken again.

In short, during the field visit, we should not miss any chance to take photos. Without practical local low-cost solutions, our training input cannot be completed.



## V. Technical session design

Presentation of the technical content is the main activity of the PAOT programme. Proper arrangement of practical low-cost good solutions matched with the technical sessions and the rehearsal of the presentations are key tasks of PAOT facilitators.

### 1. Principles

- **Orientation toward solutions rather than problems**

This is the main concept to start with before designing the technical session. It is recommended that only practical solutions are included in the technical input as this is an appropriate way to motivate participants to take implementation actions. From the beginning of the technical presentation, we must create a positive and creative atmosphere with practical solutions collected at the workplace. In contrast, if we focus on problems we may be faced with technical characteristics, and this training will then become the usual conventional technical training.

- **Showing good examples, not worst cases or problems that exist**

The success of the PAOT programme is due to the spread of practical good examples in the workplace. We may have several solutions, however we should focus only on the photos that will potentially motivate people. The effectiveness of the training depends on the selection of good example photos and the arrangement of photos into practical rules or principles that meet the needs of participants.

It is better to forget the failures or worst cases, even if they are only just a song or a skit. Although the worst cases can give us some useful lessons, they show the participants so many disadvantages that it is better to remove them from the technical sessions.

### 2. Main tasks

- **Select the most appropriate themes**

- Practical and reflect the urgent needs of participants; and
- Link working conditions with other aspects of life.

- **Form improvement guidelines**

Improvement guidelines are the backbone of the technical content in PAOT. Participants will remember practical advice from the improvement guidelines followed by good examples, therefore guidelines should be well designed in short sentences and easy to understand. We cannot just sit at our desks and keep creating several improvement guidelines for the technical sessions of the PAOT programme. Based on our experience, improvement guidelines are created from the practical good examples that we have already collected.



The formation of improvement guidelines in PAOT follows these basic steps:

- Step 1: Gather the PAOT core trainers into groups and look back on all the good examples we have collected.
- Step 2: Sort good example photos with the same theme into groups and give a title to these photos.
- Step 3: Use the voting method to create an improvement guideline for each title. General discussion is a useful way to reach consensus in all groups.
- Step 4: Formulate the guidelines which are composed of several improvement actions matched with the message we would like to transfer.

**I. MATERIALS STORAGE AND HANDLING**

**1. Better organized handling and storage of materials.**

- Clear and mark transport routes.
- Place materials on special storage
- Use multilevel racks

Principle

**2. Shorter transport and handling operations.**

- The more you use it, the closer it should be.
- Use mobile racks and containers.
- Use push carts and hand trucks.

Rule

**3. More efficient lifting operations.**

- Don't lift loads higher than necessary.
- Move materials at working height.
- Use mechanical lifting devices for more efficient and safer lifting.

*Principles and rules in one technical session of the WISE programme*

**1. Better organized handling and storage of materials.**

Principle

**1. Improve the transport routes.**

Rule

- 1. Clear the transport routes.
- 2. Make the surface of transport routes even, not slippery and without obstacles.
- 3. Provide ramps with small inclination instead of stairways within the workplace.

**1. Place materials on special storage.**

Solution

- 1. Avoid placing materials on the floor but on a special storage.
- 1. Use multilevel racks
- 1. Save space by introducing multi-level shelves or racks near the work area.

*A sample of principles, rules and solutions in one technical session of the WIND programme.*

- **Insert good solutions**

Based on the improvement guidelines, insert appropriate practical low-cost solutions into each guideline that transfer a similar message. Avoid showing negative or unfamiliar examples to participants.

Our main task is to share good solutions with the participants instead of giving lessons or comments on the weak points. Where the photos clearly explain the solutions, it is recommended not to use the footnotes that follow the solutions.



*A sample of one solution and local good example photos in the WIND programme.*

- **Use PowerPoint slides effectively**

Rules, illustrations and photos shown in PowerPoint slides should be clear and easy to understand. It is highly recommended that we use clear language and large letters in the slides. Too many details will unintentionally bore and tire participants. Nowadays, multimedia or data projectors are widely used. This equipment makes our work more simple and effective.



*A mini-WIND workshop.*

Where there is no electricity (remote areas), we can develop a photo-sheets booklet with large photos and hold them up in front of participants.

### 3. Structure of a technical session

In the PAOT programme, each presentation in the technical session is designed to be a maximum of 20 minutes. The following topics will be: group work (20 minutes), group presentation and general discussion (20 minutes). The total duration of each technical session will be around one hour.

The longer the presentation lasts, the more we see that participants are bored and distracted. Our main task is to structure a technical session within only 20 minutes.

Each technical session normally consists of two to three improvement guidelines. Each

guideline is composed of three to four improvement actions, and each action is composed of three to five solutions. However, you can add or reduce the number of improvement actions depending on the number of solutions.

In conclusion, following the one-day to two-day workshops, the facilitator of PAOT should arrange around two to five technical sessions.

#### 4. Presentation of technical session

Technical sessions are the main content of PAOT workshops. They introduce the participants to practical ways to solve problems based on available low-cost good solutions collected at workplaces. Facilitators of the PAOT programme should know how to encourage participants to move toward making improvements instead of making them aware of the content of the technical session. Therefore the presentation style in a technical session is particularly important.

- **Concise**

Pictures form almost the entire content of the technical session, which is a strong point of the PAOT method. Even though the presentation may be interesting to participants, facilitators should not lengthen the presentation. The limit for each technical input is 20 minutes.

- **Sharing good solutions**

It is better to share solutions with participants instead of lecturing to them. Facilitators should only assist and encourage participants by looking at good points in the photos. Avoid pointing out any weak points in the photos and building the discussion on the risk factors. The addition of technical points is not necessary since this is not a training course designed to transfer technical aspects. Be positive and try to summarize practical ideas provided by the participants.

- **Encouraging everyone's participation**

It is recommended that PAOT facilitators be participative and cooperative when presenting the training so that participants feel more comfortable about explaining their ideas. This training course completely relies on participants' actions, not on those of the trainers or facilitators. As a result, facilitators should:

- Help participants to enrich their knowledge on simple low-cost solutions and create their own initiatives for the future improvement actions, not guide them to solve the problems;
- Enable the experiences of participants to identify priority problems and effective solutions by using locally available materials and skills; and
- Not force our opinion on the questions arising from the participants. Instead, encourage other members to answer those questions and lead them to a practical discussion.

This method allows participants to feel they are the centre of the class. Their ideas are important and everyone joins together to solve problems. Interference by the trainers will immediately limit the participants' co-operation and affect their creative ideas. In contrast, warm and friendly attitudes will open the participants' hearts and encourage them to talk about their ideas. We should not show that we are important by using many complicated words. Make a clear presentation and be ready to cooperate with people with suitable perspectives and behaviors.



# Group work

CHAPTER

# 5





**I. Small group work**

1. Benefits of group work
2. Facilitating productive group discussions

**II. Teamwork and commitment****III. Implementation of improvements**

1. Principles in implementation of improvements
2. Strategies for change

*Step 1: Develop a step-wise solution*

*Step 2: Make sure your ideas will work*

*Step 3: Mobilize the support of your colleagues and community*

*Step 4: Make improvements which will last*

*Step 5: Manage the change*

**IV. Conclusions**

## I. Small group work

### 1. Benefits of group work

Group work is a core method used in any type of the PAOT training programme. Group work consists of group discussion and presentation. PAOT training uses small groups, each limited to around five to eight people; six to seven is ideal. The small number of group members is the first key to active group discussions. In large groups, shy participants may not join in discussions. If the group is too small, participants may not be able to find good solutions. Small group discussion can reduce the hesitancy or shyness of participating workers, farmers, and employers and help them speak about their experiences and ideas actively. They can also learn from each other's experiences and help each other find practical solutions.

Group work, as an active learning method, fosters a teamwork mindset among the participants and increases mutual cooperation in consensus building and preparing their presentations. Through productive group work experiences, participants maintain and further develop their cooperation in implementing improvements after attending the PAOT training.

In view of these benefits, group work is essential for the PAOT training. Group work is normally conducted after each technical presentation. The PAOT trainer has to give clear and easy-to-understand discussion topics so that everybody can join in the discussion. The trainer also needs to encourage all group members to speak about their suggestions for practical solutions in the group sessions. Sometimes, some participants may be too shy to speak and may keep quiet. On the contrary, some participants are too talkative and may almost dominate the discussion. To prevent these situations, the PAOT trainers may need to gently remind the group that everybody should speak and respect each other's views.

The PAOT trainers need to pay careful attention to room layout to ensure successful group work. Members of each group need to share a sense of equal participation. There should be no leaders or followers in group work. To ensure this, the PAOT trainer has to prepare a round table with enough chairs for each discussion group. The room for group work should be sufficiently bright, comfortable and pleasant. Everybody should be able to see the presentations clearly, and the PAOT trainers should be able to see everybody's face clearly.

In the PAOT programme, many group discussions are based on previous workplace visits with the checklist application. In every technical session, PAOT trainers usually propose discussing two questions.

They are:

- 1. From the results of the checklist exercise, please identify three good points; and**
- 2. Also identify three points that need improvements and your ideas on how to improve them.**

Participants may have many ideas in terms of good points as well as improvement ideas. However, the PAOT trainers encourage them to focus on three points. This approach might be new to some participants. The trainers tell them that this is an exercise to prioritize practical actions for improvements. If there are too many points for improvements, it will be difficult to implement them. This exercise is also good for consensus building among the participants. They can choose three most important ideas for practical solutions from the many examples.

## 2. Facilitating productive group discussions

Here are some more ideas and tips for the successful implementation of group work in the PAOT training:

### 2-1. Prioritize actions from many ideas

Prioritizing three points for improvements is an important challenge in the group work. Each group member may have different ideas. Defining three good examples and three points to be improved at the workplace where they applied the checklist helps participants manage this issue in a systematic way.

Let's review the action checklist:

- The items marked “NO” means good examples which participants can learn from.
- The items marked “YES” and “PRIORITY” mean the points which need to be improved.

During the group work, each participant checks their items marked NO and PRIORITY, chooses one good example as well as one point needing to be improved, and presents these to the group. Each group collects the ideas of all members, reaches a consensus in opinions and finalizes three good examples and three points to be improved.

These practical procedures help participants learn how to find good solutions and examples in the community and to reach consensus. The discussion topics (questions) are simple. Participants usually enjoy productive discussions for these consensus building procedures. These positive experiences in discussions will be useful for promoting collaborative activities with their neighbouring workers or farmers for joint improvements after they go back to their workplaces.

### 2-2. Good solutions come from different opinions

PAOT stresses the “participatory approach” as the key concept in all the activities, including group work. It is important to tell the participants that workers and employers have the best ideas for solutions in their own factories. Farmers know the best solutions for their own farms and rice fields. A good solution comes from a range of ideas from many people. One person's ideas and views are limited. Multiple views from different group members provide

a rich source of better solutions in the limited time for discussion. More importantly, active dialogue and discussion among participants often raises new ideas and solutions which nobody had thought of before the group discussion.

In the group work, the PAOT trainers can remind and encourage participants to develop their own practical ideas for improvements. Some participants or groups may be satisfied just to identify the points to be improved and forget to develop their own ideas on how to improve. *Selecting three points to be improved is only a preliminary stage, but finding a practical solution for each point is the real necessary outcome of the group work.* Locally existing good examples presented in the technical sessions already provide the participants with many practical ideas which can be realized at low-cost. By drawing on their own knowledge and experience in their workplaces, the participants enjoy working in a group to identify practical solutions appropriate to the actual conditions of their work.

### 2-3. Stress good practice approaches

As already mentioned, the PAOT programme takes existing good practices and strong points of local workplaces and instructs the training participants to learn from them instead of looking at their weaknesses or problems. Training participants learn many examples of good solutions from the checklist exercise and also through the technical sessions. In addition, the group work format also helps participants know how to find appropriate solutions matched with actual conditions.

*“Look at the good points of other workplaces, and try to reflect them in your own workplaces”.* Remind the participants in the group discussion to look at strong and positive points for solutions if they talk about the weaknesses of any workplaces. Rather, we should use the term “points to be improved”. Our work is to make positive changes and not to talk about weaknesses. When participants use the term “points to be improved”, they are at the stage where they are ready to make changes. If some participants can find practical solutions to improve, rather than difficult points, training participants can surely apply similar solutions. It is always important to look at workplaces in a positive manner and keep ourselves action-oriented rather than problem-oriented.

## II. Teamwork and commitment

Teamwork and commitment are other important aspects which group work teaches trainers and participants. In fact, these are important outcomes of the PAOT programme for long-term, sustained action. The PAOT programme trains participants to have a teamwork mindset and commitment to continuous improvements.

After each technical session and the subsequent group discussion, participants will naturally learn the value of teamwork rather than thinking of improvements alone. They can apply a

better teamwork mindset when they go back to their workplaces. Many OSH improvements actually need collaboration and teamwork for improvements to be made. New ideas for improvements can also be born from teamwork. We have witnessed that many workers, employers and farmers trained in the PAOT programmes have formed teams in their workplaces to make improvements.

Group work also increases the sense of commitment for participants. Participants are often proud to show their ideas for solutions in the group discussion. Their willingness to implement their improvement ideas will increase further when other participants agree with their proposals and present them in front of other groups. Commitment is neither enforcement nor pressure, but strong voluntary willingness to make their ideas happen.

### III. Implementation of improvements

The “Implementation of improvement” session is the final technical session in the PAOT training programme. This session provides useful tips on how to implement improvement ideas which were formed in the group work. Here are some key principles addressed to participating farmers, workers and employers.

#### 1. Principles in implementation of improvements

##### 1-1. Use local materials and ideas

Making use of local materials and skills, PAOT participants start improvement actions immediately. The initial improvements may be small, however they can become a trigger for further steps for continuous improvements. The initial small but qualified achievements will motivate the participating farmers, or factory workers and managers, to move forward to the next practical steps and investment.

##### 1-2. Develop improvements at low-cost

Normally when the participants start improvement actions, they still lack experience. Starting with small, less expensive improvements is the practical first step. If they invest a lot of effort and capital at the beginning, they will be at increased risk of failure and may be disappointed with the result that does not meet their expectation. Be wise to take things step-by-step before attempting bigger changes. Step-wise achievements are our practical strategies.

##### 1-3. Start from small ways

The more simple the tasks, the more easily we can achieve success. Create and consolidate confidence by starting the improvements with small and easier tasks.

After the preliminary result, we will be more confident to move on to more difficult tasks.



## 2. Strategies for change

An ILO manual for small enterprises, “Higher productivity and a better place to work”, provides many useful steps to start the improvement actions. The PAOT programmes have applied these steps and assisted the participants in implementing improvements. The following steps will gradually build confidence before starting the changes.

### Step 1: Develop a step-wise solution

Normally, a problem cannot be solved immediately or with a single solution. Many factors contribute to a problem, so solutions should be varied and flexible. Let’s try to find solutions for a common problem which occurred at a mechanical enterprise in the following illustration.



This is an illustration of a workplace in a mechanical factory. Consider the handling problems during production in the picture. Workers must make frequent trips to take the work pieces from one work station to another. The work is slow and tiring. There is a narrow passageway with many pieces of metal and oil all over the floor. There is a risk that workers will fall and damage the parts or injure themselves. In order to solve this problem effectively, how can we start making changes?

You may suggest the following solutions:

- (1) **Use a tray and place more products on it.** The workers will immediately limit the trips, the risk of injuries will reduce and therefore the quality of work will increase.
- (2) **Arrange all the work pieces on a pushcart.** This solution seems to be more effective, however, we have to clear the passageway and move obstacles to allow for the smooth transportation of the work pieces.



- (3) **Use several pushcarts instead of only one.** Your work will be much faster. With this solution, you must find an appropriate place to park the pushcarts; you are likely to think of a multi-level rack to store the work pieces, or have other ideas.
- (4) **Apply another solution which is less tiring, such as a conveyor.** The workers do not have to move, they just put the work pieces on the conveyor and it will automatically move these products to storage places.

Use the whole checklist to look for ways to achieve a complete solution to our problem. If the problem is especially complex, establish a work group to get practical advice.

### **Step 2: Make sure your ideas will work**

There are several ways to try and be sure that the improvement you have chosen is the best one and that it will work. In order to accomplish this, you should:

- Consider alternative solutions before starting and see which one suits you best;
- Try your ideas first in a small way and see how they work;
- Observe a similar improvement in the same conditions. It is always important to learn from others' successful and failed experiences as well as your own; and
- Get advice from someone who has experience in solving similar problems.

### **Step 3: Mobilize the support of your colleagues and community**

If your improvements are intended to be fully effective, your colleagues or community will surely appreciate and support your actions. Therefore, before starting a change, you should consider who will benefit from these improvements, and who will be adversely affected.

When you make improvements, you should notice two things:

- (1) Limit the negative impact on anyone to as little as possible; and
- (2) Assure people that there will be nothing to be nervous or worried about.

The following steps will help you to make sure that changes will be accepted by your colleagues and community:

- Make it known that these improvements will not cause any problem or affect anybody's work and life;
- Explain your improvement plan and provide an opportunity for people to contribute their ideas. You can provide the necessary training or issue clear instructions and assign specific responsibilities;
- Show your support for the change by paying close attention to the developments, by praising progress and by reacting to any sign of going back to the old methods; and
- Make sure that all members know they should report any problems to you and take action if unforeseen difficulties arise.

Nowadays, one of the best ways to introduce change smoothly and effectively is to assign responsibility to one group.

Actually, if all members in groups are part of the process of planning and implementing the change, they can be confident that their interests will be taken into account. They will feel able to suggest their own ideas and take responsibility for the success of the improvement. They will therefore not only be cooperative, they will monitor that change carefully and propose or carry out any necessary adjustments.

Remember that changes accepted by the community or colleagues will be implemented more smoothly. In other words, if you make a sudden change, you may get negative reactions from your colleagues, however if you consider their contributions to this improvement, they will accept and support it.

#### **Step 4: Make improvements which will last**

Even simple and immediately productive ideas are not always followed. Old habits are strong and do not die easily. There are two basic strategies which help to make sure that improvements are introduced smoothly, implemented effectively and are lasting:

- Change people's habits and behavior; and
- Build the change into equipment and facilities instead of using a saying or motto.

We advise you to apply these two strategies together to achieve positive improvements. To change people's habits and behavior, you can apply Step 3 to promote community cooperation. However, it is known that old habits are quite strong and it is hard to change in a very short time. As a result, the best way is, if possible, to build the change into

objects or more specific things such as facilities or equipment. This will prevent people from preserving old habits or customs.

Reconsider the handling problems illustrated in the previous figures. There are several ways to build the change into facilities and equipment:

- Place all the work items dropped all over the floor into a separate storage bin, design a multi-level rack and define clearly a “home” for each work piece. These actions will surely eliminate the workers’ habit of leaving things carelessly on the floor;
- Build the improvement into equipment or facilities so that it is always available at the workplace: use pushcarts;
- Design new or modified equipment so that it is easier to use and maintain in the new work system: provide a parking place for the cart near the work area; and
- Make the improvement easily visible and natural to follow: provide barriers or painted lines to identify the workplace.

### **Step 5: Manage the change**

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, whether you are a manager of an enterprise or head of a family, you will certainly deal with several challenges and difficulties. Everyday you have to improve the quality of products, facilities and equipment, upgrade the skills and knowledge of employees, and other challenges.

Some managers run from one problem to another and never develop any real strategy. Others are able to move beyond their problems and build a real management system which generates constant improvements in their workplaces.

The following experience will offer you the opportunity to improve your management skills.

#### *(1) Supervise the improvements carefully*

Each individual improvement is a challenge to your consistency and determination as a manager. If you pay no attention to what is happening to the improvement, everyone will quickly understand that it is not important to you.

- To ensure that you will not delay completing an improvement and forget about it, establish a firm deadline and clearly announce it to everyone concerned. It is especially important that the deadline is not a general intention but the same kind of commitment you would give to completing an order on time;
- You should appoint someone responsible for completing the improvements. If there is no clear designation, your colleagues may wait for someone else to do the job. In contrast, if the tasks are well assigned, they will try their best to accomplish and monitor the progress of these improvements;
- It is certain that most changes need a labor force, time, materials, facilities, and

perhaps some purchases. You should allocate adequate resources to get the job done;

- Once the improvement has started, you should request regular reports on progress from the person responsible. This will enable you to take corrective action if necessary and will make sure that the improvement is not forgotten;
- After the improvement is completed and is in operation, you should check to ensure that it works well. It is also important to see that the change is accepted by your colleagues and that it has no unexpected results; and
- You should make sure that, throughout the improvement process, you and your supervisors lead the way by strictly following the new rules and by frequently praising workers who respond correctly to the improvement.

### *(2) Make improvement a systematic process*

Once you have the experience of making a few improvements, you will begin to see the potential for developing a systematic, dynamic approach to the management of change. Specifically, each improvement tends to lead to new possibilities. Improvement can become a habit, with everyone trying to find a better way of working. The implications for productivity and motivation are very powerful.

Improvement requires **new ideas** and **thoughts**. When you often work in groups, you know how valuable the exchange of ideas and experiences can be. You should never forget to **visit** other units which are in a similar situation to yours. All of these are useful sources of ideas and technical information. **The best sources of information, however, are already in your unit or family.** Indeed, some managers do not like to ask their employees or colleagues for ideas. They think that managers should make decisions about the work and that employees are just performers. You will find, however, that asking the opinion of colleagues does not reduce your authority or responsibility for decisions. Instead, it gives you the information you need to make better decisions. At the same time, it gives your colleagues a feeling that they have something to contribute to the agency, which increases their loyalty and motivation.

In short, you can only receive the opinions from your employees and colleagues if you make it clear that you want their ideas. The following steps are effective ways of doing this:

- Hold a meeting during work time. It is known that a good manager values the office hours, and therefore in this particular period of time he only holds very important meetings. Explain your goals to your colleagues. Make it clear that they have a stake in your agency and that they will benefit if your agency succeeds. Their jobs and their wages depend on your profits;
- Make it easy for everybody to give you their suggestions. Set aside a time when you are available. Walk through their workplace and ask questions. Listen carefully to the answers. Don't criticize. Thank anyone who makes an effort; and
- Take action on suggestions in a very obvious way. Even if the first suggestions



do not seem very interesting, give them a try. Your colleagues will be watching to see if you sincerely intend to pay attention to their advice.

*(3) Take action*

You now have enough knowledge and confidence to act. You can work in groups or individually and implement the improvements for your family (or your agency).

## IV. Conclusions

This chapter discussed the important roles of group work in the PAOT training and also explained the steps taken to implement improvement ideas arising from the group work. Some concrete examples of improvements were also mentioned.

Group work is a core method in the PAOT training to ensure and promote real participation of all participants. PAOT trainers need skills to facilitate productive group discussions which can gather everybody's ideas for improvements. They also need skills to foster a teamwork mindset and a sense of commitment to implement improvement through their own ideas. The success of group work almost guarantees the success of any PAOT training.

# Roles of PAOT facilitators

CHAPTER

6



### **I. Essential points to being a successful facilitator**

1. Discuss practical solutions instead of theories
2. Use familiar examples
3. Do not give many opinions; share experience instead of lecturing
4. Build on strengths and achievements instead of weaknesses and problems
5. Keep a friendly attitude
6. Try to be a facilitator instead of a teacher

### **II. How to upgrade our trainer skills and knowledge**

1. Learn from local good examples to refresh and advance your training experiences
2. Make effective presentations
3. Maintain the interest of participants and create a sense of involvement
4. Create a pleasant and encouraging training workshop
5. Be a skillful organizer

### **III. Guide for useful follow-up activities**

1. Follow-up visit to the participants' workplaces
2. Achievements workshop
3. The "small, inexpensive and clever" contest (SIC contest)
4. Collect successful stories and examples to develop the PAOT training materials

## I. Essential points to being a successful facilitator

The PAOT programme assumes that participants attending the training course are ready to implement the improvement actions by mobilizing their own experiences, knowledge, skills and available local resources. Trainers or facilitators just play simple roles such as sharing practical low-cost good solutions, helping participants identify good points through the action checklist exercise, and supporting their efforts. The following are some useful hints to being a successful trainer.

### 1. Discuss practical solutions instead of theories

The main role of PAOT facilitators is to encourage participants to discuss specific and practical solutions. When attending a training course, participants always expect to receive information from the trainers. In most training activities, technical details and basic theories are usually the methods used to transfer knowledge. Changing from theory into practice is highly recommended in the PAOT programme. As facilitators, we need to help participants change general



and broad discussions to be more specific and practical. Try to steer the participants to look at their specific daily experiences instead of the theories from the training material. We should notice that one practical improvement is more useful than 100 theoretical discussions. Encourage participants to reveal practical improvements or feasible solutions instead of rigid theories, encourage their creative thinking and avoid the dependence on theoretical assistance.

### 2. Use familiar examples



*One petrol lamp lights two rooms.*

Sharing familiar examples can stimulate the self-effort of participants. Try to collect as many good solutions from the workplaces as possible in line with the training purposes and share them with the participants. These familiar and easy to recognize examples will leave an unforgettable impression on the participants. They will keep these familiar examples in mind, enable their self-help efforts and gradually transfer them into real improvement actions.

A typical example from the WIND programme explains clearly the effectiveness of using familiar examples in the PAOT training.



*The same idea helps farmers, using electronic light.*

During the presentation of the technical session in the WIND workshop, a good practice, “Put the petrol lamp in the niche between two rooms to save energy” from the ethnic Hmong minority in the Northern part of Viet Nam, was shown to the farmers. This example was quite simple and familiar to the farmers in the rural area.

A poor farmer in Can Tho city (South of Viet Nam) memorized this solution and immediately applied it in his family. His neighbor followed this practical idea some months later as his economic condition had improved.

### 3. Do not give many opinions; share experiences instead of lecturing

Facilitators of courses have more knowledge on the training topics, however they should provide an opportunity for participants to share their practical experiences. Facilitators should only take the lead to encourage open discussion among participants and should never teach them how to solve the problems. All technical related questions from participants should be given back to others to answer.

The PAOT programme differs from other training workshops in that trainers only facilitate discussion among participants and avoid frequently giving their opinions or giving only a single solution that participants have to follow. However discussions can be hindered in some situations, such as:

- Discussions are too general or just only give simple comments;
- Discussions deviate from the main points; and
- Conflicting ideas are raised among participants.

### 4. Build on strengths and achievements instead of weaknesses and problems

Pay attention to any positive proposal from the participants, even if it is quite small or not directly relevant to the technical sessions. Praise their efforts so that participants will know that we seriously value their initiatives. Focus not on weak points but on the positive aspects and efforts of their proposal, and encourage them to take improvement actions.



PAOT facilitators always try to be positive, that is to give credit to any praiseworthy proposals and achievements coming from the participants.

## 5. Keep a friendly attitude

A warm and friendly attitude will open the participants' hearts and encourage them to speak about their ideas for possible improvements. Furthermore, it will increase the participants' confidence and guide them towards practical orientations for future improvement plans. Critical and authoritative attitudes will stop them exchanging their frank views.



*Trainers adopt a friendly approach.*

Pay attention to and spend time with every participant. Participants express their opinions in different ways. Some of them are quite vocal and others may not be. A silent participant may have an alternative proposal for the action. Pay careful attention to all the participants' responses and catch any signs showing that they wish to express their practical ideas.

## 6. Try to be a facilitator instead of a teacher

PAOT facilitators are those who know how to facilitate the participants' group work dynamics and to help them develop their own ideas and solutions. Explain the benefits of their cooperative actions; this cooperation will ensure smooth and rapid change. Maintaining close relationships among participants is the responsibility of the facilitators. This should be maintained not only in the training course but also when they go back home.

# II. How to upgrade our trainer skills and knowledge

As a facilitator, we have to keep upgrading our training skills and technical knowledge. The following are some useful ideas and recommendations:

## 1. Learn from local good examples to refresh and advance your training experiences

Practical low-cost good examples always attract and stimulate participants to take action. After attending the PAOT workshop, many good practices will be produced in the workplace and this is a good moment for facilitators to collect and introduce them in other training courses. These local good examples are valuable resources for empowering local improvement



*Collecting good examples in the community is the passion of PAOT facilitators.*



actions. Moreover, local good examples are the most convincing in encouraging local people to proceed with further actions. The exchange of such good examples between facilitators is also highly recommended.

## 2. Make effective presentations

Rules and illustrations shown to participants should be carefully prepared. Select clear and easy to understand pictures and arrange them so that all participants can see them clearly from any point of the training room. Besides using colors and large letters to help participants understand the key issues of each technical session, facilitators should learn to show only key words and then explain the contents in a crisp manner with the aid of clear illustrations and photos.

It is essential to create a good impression on the participants when they attend the PAOT course. Each sentence, word and picture should be chosen carefully. Moreover, facilitators have to improve their presentation skills and gradually modify the training programme and technical content to match the local conditions.

## 3. Maintain the interest of participants and create a sense of involvement

PAOT fully relies on the participants' initiative and not on that of the trainers. The essential role of PAOT facilitators is to help participants build on their own experiences and creative ideas toward their improvements, not to teach them how to solve their own problems.

Trainers are requested to act as facilitators and not as lecturers.

The entire course depends on the positive actions of the participants rather than those of the trainers. In order to maintain the participant's interest and create a sense of involvement, trainers should always refer back to the participants and ask them about their experiences. This attitude will increase the sense of involvement where participants are the centre of the training course.

Never use complicated sentences or difficult words to show you are an important person. Speak simply and use everyday words in your presentation.

#### 4. Create a pleasant and encouraging training workshop

Create a pleasant and encouraging training course using your own experience and attitude. Simple songs, games and cheerful stories have been used for energizing and refreshing the course participants. Use this tradition to develop successful training courses and relate them to the technical content of the course as much as possible.



*Games are part of PAOT training.*

#### 5. Be a skillful organizer

Organizing a successful PAOT training course is really a big challenge for new PAOT facilitators. We must pay attention, not only to the technical content, but also to various aspects of organizing the course such as cost management, the arrangement of training facilities, the recruitment of participants and sharing of information among colleagues. All of these items are important. These characteristics might be different from other training programmes that we have ever experienced.

Invite the participants' opinions about the conduct of the course instead of taking care of them. Involve them in running the training course so as to get them experienced in the course administration.

### III. Guide for useful follow-up activities

According to PAOT principles, people attend the courses to be inspired to take improvement actions. Participants simply express their commitments through the action plans at the end of the workshop. Then, we should make a follow-up visit to check on their real improvements. Who should assess their achievements and when is the best time to conduct the follow-up visit? The following are some useful hints for conducting the follow-up activities:

## 1. Follow-up visit to the participants' workplaces

Organizing several follow-up visits to participants' workplaces provides a good opportunity to identify practical examples and to motivate their positives actions. It is more effective if we carry out a follow-up visit to the participants' workplaces around two or three months after the training course. Participants need a certain period of time to complete their actual actions plan. Organizing an early visit might be a problem for participants; however they might forget their commitments if the follow-up visit is organized too late.

### ● Purpose of a follow-up visit

The follow-up visit is an essential task of PAOT facilitators. It is a good opportunity to be exposed to the actual workplace of the participants and to motivate their self-help efforts. Moreover, the visit creates a good opportunity for participants to demonstrate their commitment to the trainers and other colleagues.

Based on the information obtained in the PAOT workshop, participants will take pains to implement some simple improvements at the workplace. However it is quite difficult for some participants to start a change, even a small one. These workplace visits allow us to understand the great efforts of participants. Remember that the follow-up visit is the best way to stimulate a fresh look at participants in their own workplaces. Some improvements are realized while others might still be in progress or even dropped! Give positive remarks on their achievements. In case of constraints, we should listen carefully to their explanation and share with them similar good practices we have already collected from other places.

### ● Points we should do

An effective follow-up visit will focus on the three following points:

- Take note of the improvements before and after the training workshop;
- Examine existing constraints and the potential for future improvement actions; and
- Encourage participants to make further improvements.

**Step 1:** Listen to participants as they explain the progress of their improvements. We should make an overview of their efforts and assess how much they keep maintaining the improvement actions. Don't go into the technical details during this step.

**Step 2:** Walk through the workplace with the participants and carefully observe the progress of their improvements. Take photos of these improvements and, if possible, compare them with the original action plan. Wherever possible, record the approximate costs, time and materials required to complete these improvements. Ask who in the workplace or in the family proposed the ideas for



*Follow up activities at a farmer house.*

improvements and how they implemented the improvements. The participants are usually very happy to explain these points. They will also talk about cooperation among workers and employers or among the family members when they implemented the improvements.

**Step 3:** Listen to the progress, the aims of the improvements, as well as how they overcame difficulties during the implementation. Share with them many good solutions from similar conditions if they ask for help.

- **Some useful hints**

- Show your politeness and respect to the participants by informing them the exact time of your follow-up visit and wait for their acceptance. Limit unexpected visits or sudden visits. This is a negative action we should avoid. Participants usually feel uncomfortable because they have not been informed of the visit. Some participants believe that the trainers might check them and don't want to cooperate or they make an excuse for this visit. Some misunderstand and made a simple effort just to satisfy the visit.
- Be positive and not authoritative. Praise the progress and efforts of participants and discuss the constraints in a friendly manner. Listen to their opinions and share information or good solutions from other workplaces. This action brings benefits to both sides and helps us spread good examples to many people.
- Participants who are responsible for the implementation of the improvements will be very happy to show their good examples. Listen carefully to the process of their success so that we understand what is the key to self-effort. Take photographs of both completed and on-going improvement examples. These local good examples will stimulate other participants to sustain their actions.
- Usually there are three reasons why the implementation cannot progress smoothly:
  - (1) Technical difficulties.
  - (2) Financial limitations.
  - (3) Poor communication between participants and other members.

It is our important role to break this stagnation by sharing improvement examples from other workplaces. Always try to encourage participants on the basic principles of PAOT: *“Start from small and possible action in the local context. Look at multiple aspects together and do not stick to a certain technical area”*.

- At the end of the follow-up visit, the final remarks should be given to the participants from the perspective of facilitating further improvement actions. As PAOT facilitators, we should give positive and constructive comments based on three essential aspects, as follows:
  - (1) Strong points and available potential efforts.
  - (2) Key issues in furthering the improvement actions.
  - (3) Suggestions for future follow-up visit with a definite date and time.
  - (4) Cooperation with other workers, employers or farmers to make more improvements, and how to share the progress with them.



## 2. Achievements workshop

This workshop can be held from six to 12 months after the PAOT course and continued annually. The purpose of this workshop is to provide opportunities for participants to exchange and learn from the good practices of their colleagues and friends and to share their achievements. This achievements workshop can, moreover, provide a platform to award creative and excellent participants as well as to spread good and practical improvement actions.



*An achievements workshop held in Can Tho, Viet Nam.*

In order to achieve more successful outcomes, we should select good practices in different workplaces of the participants. Solutions will be varied, multifaceted and will create opportunities for people to share their ideas. Inform the speakers in advance so that they will have enough time to prepare the presentation. If possible, provide a data projector and PowerPoint slides to share good example photos. In remote areas where electricity is in short supply, prepare large photos and stick them on the writing board. A photos contest could be inserted into the achievements workshop to invite full participation of all participants.

## 3. The “small, inexpensive and clever” contest (SIC contest)

The main purposes of this contest are:

- Help participants better understand the basic principles of PAOT “use local materials and skills”.
- Emphasize the approach “simple and small thoughts or actions are always the winners” when we look for solutions to resolve daily problems.
- Stimulate the participants to start implementing practical improvements after the PAOT workshop.
- Facilitate the development of close cooperation and mutual support among group members.
- Make the PAOT programme more exciting and attractive for participants.



*SIC contest organized in a rural workplace of Viet Nam.*

### ● Organize the SIC contest

The contest is organized in a flexible way in accordance with the local conditions. A suitable

time for the SIC contest would be around one or two months after conducting the PAOT workshop. The SIC contest can be carried out on the occasions of achievement workshops. Facilitators should inform the dates for the SIC contest in advance so that participants can arrange time and effort for this meeting.

After a brief welcome remark, participants are asked to join their groups. Each group will select three best solutions for the contest that meet the following criteria:

- Solutions should be practical and reflect daily work and life, and include the three characteristics of simple, low-cost and clever.
- Solutions must be completed, real and currently implemented.
- Solutions must be explained clearly to all participants by showing the before and after improvements with the exact date of implementation.
- Each solution must be presented in five minutes by a representative of the group.



#### Useful hints:

- Facilitators should prepare good solutions as large color photos in advance and distribute them to all groups for better selection and presentation.
- Prepare colored stickers (yellow, green and red) for the voting procedures.

#### ● Vote for the best photos

- Step 1: Stick all the selected photos from the groups showing practical solutions on a writing board.
- Step 2: Invite a representative from each group to make a presentation, which should include a general discussion after each presentation to enhance the understanding of the solution.
- Step 3: Distribute the colored stickers (yellow, green and red) to all members and ask them to write their names on each sticker.
- Step 4: Vote for the best photos:
  - Yellow sticker should be the simple solution.
  - Green sticker should be the inexpensive solution.



*Participants voting for the best photos.*



*Facilitators evaluate the SIC contest.*

- Red sticker should be the clever solution.
- Step 5: Evaluate the contest.

The photos receiving the highest number of similar colored stickers are selected as the best solutions for different categories: Simple, Inexpensive and Clever. Facilitators should select the name of one or two participants stuck on the photos to share their opinions.

The purpose of selecting winners is to motivate all participants, especially those who find it hard to begin the changes and to continue their efforts. We should keep in mind that the three winning solutions are equal in terms of quality, therefore it is recommended that we should not classify them as first, second or third prize. Your purpose is not to promote competition among the participants to become a winner. Pay careful attention to all the participants to ensure all of them are happy with the contest.

- **Lessons learned from the SIC contest**

If we would like to start an improvement with a low-cost (Inexpensive) solution, we must be experienced and creative (Clever) and, as much as possible, we must use available local resources to reduce expenses (Simple).

#### 4. Collect successful stories and examples to develop the PAOT training materials

Success stories and examples collected from the follow-up visits, achievement workshops, SIC contests, etc. are valuable treasures. It is particularly recommended to arrange them in a systematic way. Ask for detailed information from the authors, especially costs, technical skills, manpower, time and purposes for the improvements. Develop leaflets, pamphlets and booklets of these successful examples showing pictures and related information. These materials will be used as the most stimulating training materials for the PAOT training courses.



*Selecting good example photos.*

# Organize and conduct a PAOT workshop

CHAPTER

7





## **I. Organize a PAOT workshop**

1. Recruit participants
2. Advertise the PAOT programme
3. Visit the participant's workplaces
4. Prepare the workshop

## **II. Conducting a PAOT workshop**

1. Opening
2. Action checklist exercise
3. First group work
4. Technical input
5. Implementation of improvements
6. Evaluation and closing



## I. Organize a PAOT workshop

The organization of PAOT workshops requires the full collaboration of many people; maintaining participants' good impressions is really a challenge to the facilitators. In the PAOT programme, participants play a vital role, therefore the recruitment of participants is particularly important. The PAOT programme requires a strict recruitment process; experience shows that good recruitment of participants contributes to 70 per cent of the success of the workshop.

### 1. Recruit participants

The realization of implementation for improvements in the PAOT programme depends on the decision of the person who has authority to make a change. This would be the task of the director or manager in an agency, or the head of the family in the informal economy. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the representatives who can make decisions regarding improvements are the best choice for PAOT participants. More specifically, we should select managers to participate in WISE programmes. With regard to the WIND programme, we usually invite the couple of the family (husband and wife) to attend the training course. From our experiences in the first pilot WIND workshop conducted in Hau Giang province of Viet Nam in 1992, we have learned that the participation of farmer couples in the WIND workshop facilitated the decision making during the implementation of improvements in the family. Furthermore, during the WIND workshop, the active contribution of the couple to the group discussions was very evident.

The main constraint to recruitment of the participants is the difficulty for leaders and managers to fully participate due to their tight work schedule. They normally join the opening ceremony and then leave for their colleagues to complete the training course. This could destroy our efforts to have the leaders' commitment to the implementation of improvements at the end of the PAOT workshop. It is suggested the PAOT course be advertised to have more chance of recruiting the right participants.

### 2. Advertise the PAOT programme

It is crucial to advertise the training programme to gain the full participation of the leaders. The title of the course is not enough in itself to convince the leaders and to give people an understanding of our training programme. We have experienced that the lack of support from leaders will hamper the implementation of improvements from participants who attend the PAOT programme.

- **Advertise through the meetings**

Short meetings to prepare a PAOT workshop are useful; we can invite representatives of our target workplaces and leaders to brief them on the purpose, content and expected outcomes of the training programme. The meeting is a useful way to attract the commitment and

support of managers or leaders by explaining more clearly the criteria for recruitment of participants as well as the impact of the programme. We should emphasize that the benefits of the training programme are to increase the quality of work and productivity with minimum investment. If we spend time and effort on this preliminary step, we will surely receive good results.

- **Marketing via documents**

Design materials such as leaflets, pocket documents, flyers, etc. and distribute them wisely. Nowadays, advertisements through the internet will help us spread the PAOT programme to managers, leaders, participants or potential donor agencies. We can provide the necessary information on the background of participants, criteria on recruitment as well as necessary financial contribution to the course. This investment is not wasted and can be quite advantageous to the future development of our programme.

- **Marketing through the mass media**

We can attract the attention of participants through the mass media, but not in the usual advertisement formats. It is better to disseminate the information in the form of news items or articles and emphasize the impact of the training course. We should not forget to include our contact address and date of the workshop at the end of the news item.

### 3. Visit the participant's workplaces

After obtaining a complete list of participants, our next step is to visit their workplaces. This is the first contact between participants and trainers; we may get important information from this visit.

- **Purpose of the visit**

- To ensure that participants fully understand the purpose of the course.
- To confirm that they will definitely participate.
- To collect some good examples from their workplaces.

- **Main activities**

- Introduce the training programme as well as the exact date. Try to overcome problems of timing with them if necessary.
- Provide them with the list of participants to empower their commitment and confidence.
- Obtain a clear view of their working conditions and the potential to make further improvements.



*Visit the participant's workplace.*

- Visit the participants' workplaces and record their good examples. We can ask permission to take photos of actual conditions in order to compare them with their improvements in the future.

This is an initial step to open contact with the participants, therefore the meeting must be friendly and cheerful. If participants are not comfortable with photos being taken, we should politely explain why we want them or skip this step.

#### 4. Prepare the workshop

- **Invitation**

In order to organize the workshop in time, we should send an invitation to every participant. The invitation sheet should be designed formally with the title of the workshop, address and date of the workshop. We should give this invitation to the participants during our first visit to their workplaces. Keep in mind that the number of participants for each workshop should not exceed 25 people.

- **Workshop venue**

Select a large and comfortable room to hold the workshop. The workshop venue will be modified or changed in accordance with the content of the workshop or the background of participants. It can be a conference hall of a hotel, office or enterprise if participants are managers or leaders. When there are heads of households, we can select a public hall in the village or a farmer's house. Wherever the location, it must have some common points, as follows:

- Should not be far from the checklist exercise.
- Should have adequate power sources for audio visual aids.
- Provide comfortable chairs and tables for all participants.



*WIND workshop in Viet Nam.*

Useful hints:

- Avoid traditional, class-room style arrangements with rows and chairs; it discourages easy communication among participants. Island seating arrangements are highly recommended to facilitate both the technical session input and group discussions.
- The PAOT programme depends very much on the showing of good example photos. All the visual aid equipment must be set up and tested before the training activity.
- A hall or separate room can be used for coffee breaks. Provide enough beverages and fruit or snacks for the refreshments. This short break is useful for the participants to relax and share information with others, including the facilitators.



*Coffee break for refreshments.*

- **Place for checklist exercise**

This is an essential task for facilitators and it can be prepared in advance. (Refer to the chapter “Action checklist” for more details). An ideal place for the checklist exercise would be one of the participants’ workplaces. See Chapter 3 for more details about the checklist.

- **Materials for participants**

Make sure that all materials are carefully prepared:

- Training programme;
- Action checklist sheet Manual showing low-cost good solutions;
- A3 paper, marker pens; and
- Certificates, etc.

- **Materials for trainers**

- Technical input showing low-cost good practices and games. (Refer to the chapter “Practical low-cost solutions” for more details).

## II. Conduct a PAOT workshop

### 1. Opening

The opening ceremony should be short - less than 10 minutes, and can be organized before the checklist exercise. We can invite local leaders or donor agency representatives to give the opening remarks.



*Opening ceremony of WIND workshop in Senegal.*

## 2. Action checklist exercise

As this is the self-practice activity at the workplace, facilitators have to make sure that all participants clearly understand the content of the action checklist. (Refer to the chapter “Action checklist” for more details).

It is recommended that facilitators join the checklist exercise in order to advise and motivate participants. They absolutely should not impose their subjective ideas on the participants, just quietly observe their tasks, remind them about the time, and encourage their self-efforts. Remember that the whole training course depends on good results from the action checklist exercise; therefore we should not, for any objective reason, skip or modify the content of this very important session.

## 3. First group work

Participants will be asked to divide into groups (each group consist of six to seven persons) and identify one good point and one point to be improved at the workplace they have just visited.

This is the first trial of group work activities which aims to:

- Familiarize participants with small group discussion;
- Motivate the role of group leader and the participation of all members; and
- Steer the main purpose of group work towards concentrating on specific points instead of general conceptions.

The time needed for the first group discussion is 15 minutes followed by a presentation from a representative of each group.

A general discussion follows with general remarks from the facilitators to praise the good observation of participants. Avoid any criticism or analysis of right or wrong ideas of each group. Try to resolve all conflicts during the discussion in a positive way. This first group work session provides a good opportunity for facilitators to correct any negativity from the participants, for example remind them to use the right sentences “Points to be improved” instead of “Bad points”.



*Group discussion.*

## 4. Technical input

This is a good moment to share with participants many practical low-cost good solutions we have collected and classified in an appropriate manner. Keep in mind that the presentations of each technical session should not surpass 20 minutes. Each technical session will be



followed with group work. The content of the group discussion should always focus on the relationship between the technical input and the situations gathered from the checklist exercise. Participants should identify three good points and three points to be improved and their best solutions. The results of this group discussion are useful for both participants and facilitators due to the following:

- The impact of the technical session cultivates the positive thinking of participants and gradually formalizes their understanding toward a specific improvement action;
- The observation of good points is now more specific compared to the first group work, due to the strength of several practical low-cost practices coming from the technical input; and
- Wise, simple and inexpensive solutions will be clearly identified following this group discussion.



*Group presentation.*

A general discussion is necessary to better understand the feasibility of the participants' suggested solutions.

## 5. Implementation of improvements

This is the final commitment of the PAOT programme. Participants are asked to gather together in the same agencies, units or families and develop an action plan to solve their own problems based on the practical guidelines obtained from the training workshop. Each unit should define three immediate actions to be completed within a period of one to three months and three long-term actions to be completed within a period of six months to one year.



*Husbands and wives jointly make their action plan in the WIND workshop.*

To make sure that all participants know how to initiate their improvement actions, facilitators should explain briefly the three following principles:

- Use locally available skills and materials;
- Start with simple and low-cost ways; and
- Develop step by step improvements.

The before and after success stories from many workplaces will also be presented in this important session to motivate the positive ideas of participants. A representative of each unit will be responsible for sharing their commitment in front of everybody.

## 6. Evaluation and closing

### ● Workshop evaluation

Assessment of the workshop by looking back on the weak and strong points is necessary for the future development of the workshops. Short evaluation sheets are prepared and distributed to all participants. Facilitators will collect and analyze them, then immediately inform the participants of the results.

### ● Giving certificates and training manuals

This morale-boosting remuneration stimulates full cooperation of participants to continue improvements into the future. Participants attending all technical sessions have the right to receive a certificate. Invite leaders or local authority representatives to present the awards to all participants.



*Giving certificate.*

### ● Closing

The closing ceremony will be simple with the feedback of participants, local government and the organizing committee. We should not forget to announce the date for the SIC contest and the details of the follow-up visit schedule to all participants.



## Epilogue

This manual is prepared on the basis of the achievements and experiences gained from the PAOT workshops conducted in different countries in Asia and Africa. Now PAOT is growing in many workplaces and communities across Asia, Central Asia, Africa and Latin America. People have the potential to make changes in their living and working conditions, and the PAOT programme is a practical measure to support their efforts. The authors will continue to learn from the initiatives and achievements of local people and upgrade the approaches of the PAOT programme. We would be grateful if you could share your valuable experiences with us. You can contact us at [drkhai@gmail.com](mailto:drkhai@gmail.com) for Ton That Khai, or [kawakami@ilo.org](mailto:kawakami@ilo.org) for Tsuyoshi Kawakami.

## Useful publications

### A) Publications relating to PAOT activities.

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## Participatory Action-Oriented Training

Participatory Action-Oriented Training is a practical method to support workplace initiatives based on self-help voluntary actions. It also helps local people carry out immediate improvements in occupational safety and health and their working conditions by using locally available resources. This manual provides participants with experiences and analytical skills for the formulation of practical improvement with particular focus on enabling the action at workplace level. The manual explains clearly the useful tools used in the Participatory, Action-Oriented Training such as action checklists, practical low-cost solutions and group work. The manual also shows ways to organize and conduct the participatory, action-oriented training workshops.

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