

Labor Notes Asia Regional Conference, August 16-18, 2019

Friday, August 16

	Main Room 1	Room 2	Room 3
8:00am-9:00am	Registration		
9:00am-11:00am	Roundtable: Labor Movement in Taiwan	What is Labor Notes? Labor Journalism and Organizing to Build the Progressive Wing of the Labor Movement	Training: Building Union Democracy
11:15am-12:15pm	Opening Plenary: Highlights of Labor Organizing across Asia Welcome: Labor Notes, International Labor Rights Forum, Taoyuan Serve the People Association Speakers: Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, EVA flight attendants, Action Labor Rights (Myanmar), Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions		
12:15pm-1:45pm	Lunch Break		
1:45pm-5:00pm	Training: Building Transnational Campaigns (1:45-4:00pm)	Training: A Democratic Approach to Training and Facilitation	Roundtable: Labor Movement in China

Labor Movement in Taiwan

How much do you know about Taiwan’s labor movement and workers’ struggles? As the host country of this conference, you cannot miss this introduction on Taiwan’s labor movement. This roundtable discussion features unions across a range of sectors and occupations to provide an overview of the state of the labor movement in Taiwan, and highlight some of the unions’ current organizing efforts.

Facilitator: Ray Cheng (Youth Labor Union 95)

Speakers: Solidarity, Taiwan Federation of Financial Unions, the Union for Taiwan Higher Education, Taoyuan Union of Pilot, Taipei Doctors’ Union

What is Labor Notes?

Labor Notes is a media and organizing project that since 1979 has been the voice of union activists in the United States. In this workshop, Labor Notes will discuss our approach to journalism and how we use our magazine, website, books, schools, and conferences to cultivate more activists, and to put them in touch with each other to multiply their power.

Facilitators: Saurav Sarkar and Chris Brooks (Labor Notes)

Building Union Democracy

It’s not enough to just tell your co-workers to “get involved” in the union. Building a thriving, high-participation union requires developing democratic ways to engage our coworkers. In this workshop we will discuss why it is particularly important to involve your co-workers as much as possible in the functioning of the union, and how to involve your co-workers and members more regularly and more deeply in the union. We will discuss different

strategies of building your co-workers' investment in the union by making their voice matters, such as meeting schedules, sharing information, democratic and transparent dues structures, and different opportunities for internal voting and elections. A democratic union is almost always a strong union, so being proactive in making your union as democratic as possible is vital!

Facilitator: Andrew Tillett-Saks (Solidarity Center)

Building Transnational Campaigns

All too often when workers organize in multinational corporations' supply chains, employers threaten that production will move and workers will lose their jobs. In this interactive workshop, together we will generate and share strategies for organizing effective coordinated worker-driven and international solidarity campaigns that put checks on capital mobility, increase reputational risk on brands, build worker power, and result in concrete, enforceable victories.

Facilitators: Liana Foxvog and Elena Arengo (ILRF), Johnson Yeung Ching Yin (Clean Clothes Campaign), Benjamin Velasco (Partido Manggagawa, Philippines).

A Democratic Approach to Training and Facilitation

Labor Notes trainings are designed to help rank-and-file workers learn how to build power on the job, step-by-step. Our approach to these trainings is grounded in the principle that we are all teachers and all learners. In this workshop, we will explore the ways that Labor Notes arranges and facilitates trainings and meetings and tips and techniques for facilitating your own!

Facilitators: Chris Brooks and Saurav Sarkar (Labor Notes)

Labor Movement in China

Since the early 2000s, China has seen waves of strike predominantly in - but not limited to - the southern export-processing zones. Thousands of such strikes and labor protests have taken place each year throughout this period. Rural migrant workers, highly exploited and poorly protected, looked to collective actions to resolve disputes and defend their rights. But in the last several years, as the Chinese economic growth slows down, the government turned to repression. This roundtable will discuss the trajectory of China's labor movement in recent years, the changing nature of the labor movement, the repression and what the future may hold.

Facilitators: May Wong (Globalization Monitor); Kevin Lin (International Labor Rights Forum)

Saturday, August 17

	<i>Main Room 1</i>	<i>Room 2</i>	<i>Room 3</i>
9:00am-10:30am	Facilitated Conversation: How to Organize a Strike	Panel: Organizing Education Workers: Teachers and Graduate Students	Panel: Organizing around Chinese Investment under Belt and Road Initiative
10:45am-12:15pm		Panel: Organizing Workers in Service, Logistics and Tech Companies	Panel: Eliminating Gender-Based Violence, and Building the #metoo movement in Asia
12:15pm-1:45pm	Lunch		
1:45pm-5:00pm	Panel: Organizing Migrant Workers in the Seafood Industry	Panel: Resistance and Solidarity in Response to Repression	Panel: Organizing Workers in the Context of Short-Term Contract, Labor Dispatch, Outsourcing
	Strategy Workshop: Seafood and Fishing	Strategy Workshop: Resistance and Solidarity	Strategy Workshop: Precarious Workers

How to Organize a Strike

The strike is back! Workers across the world are turning to labor's most powerful weapon. In this facilitated conversation, we will discuss how strikes are planned, how to get our coworkers on board, how to bring in community and labor allies, and how to find our employer's pressure points.

Facilitators: Chris Brooks and Saurav Sarkar (Labor Notes)

Organizing Education Workers: Teachers and Graduate Students

Around the world, school teachers, academics and graduate students are organizing. In the United States, graduate students are organizing their own unions, and since last year school teachers have gone on strike to demand better pay, conditions and better education for the students. In Asia, education workers have been organizing, too. This panel features unions who are at the forefront of organizing against significant challenges.

Speakers: Taiwan Higher Education Union; Hyunsu Hwang (South Korea Teachers' Union);

Organizing around Chinese Investment under Belt and Road Initiative

In 2013, the Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), an ambitious global strategy of infrastructure development and investments. Controversial since the very beginning, labor and environmental groups have been acutely concerned about the impact of Chinese overseas investments. This panel invites organizations that have closely observed and researched China's BRI, and will discuss the possibilities of labor organizing around Chinese investment.

Speakers: May Wong (Globalisation Monitor, Hong Kong); Khalid Mahood (Labour Education Foundation, Pakistan); Jing Hau Lin (Events in Focus, Taiwan)

Organizing Workers in Service, Logistics and Tech Companies

Away from manufacturing, an increasing number of workers are now employed in the service and logistics sectors and in tech companies. They face new employment conditions but also organizing opportunities. Against odds, tech workers in the US and China, call center workers in the Philippines and Amazon workers across the world are beginning to organize. This panel discusses the challenges and opportunities of such organizing efforts.

Speakers: Tim Beaty (Teamsters); JS Tan, (Tech Workers Coalition); Jane Siwa, BPO Industry Employees Network (BIEN) and Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTUHR)

Eliminating Gender-Based Violence, and Building the #MeToo Movement in Asia

This session will bring together participants from across Asia for a cross-regional conversation about gender-based violence in the workplace. In the wake of the historical approval of the ILO Convention on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, participants from different countries will share recent experiences of organizing to identify, name, denounce, eliminate and prevent gender-based violence in the workplace, including sexual harassment.

Facilitators: Chie Matsumoto (Newspaper and Wire Service Workers' Union, Japan), Elena Arengo (ILRF)
Speakers: Mami Yoshinaga, Wiranta Yudha Ginting (Asia Floor Wage Alliance), EVA airline representative, FADWU representative

Organizing Migrant Workers in the Seafood Industry (panel and workshop)

This panel will bring together participants from across Asia for a discussion about organizing migrant workers in the seafood industry. Panelists from Thailand, Taiwan, Indonesia, and South Korea will discuss the extent to which migrant workers can exercise their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining in the seafood and fishing sectors in their countries. Panelists will discuss the legal barriers and other practical challenges to organizing migrant workers in these labor sectors and share case studies for how their organization and other actors have overcome some of these obstacles. The panel will be followed by a strategy workshop for a deeper discussion on these issues, with exercises to help build solidarity and plans for joint action across countries or the region.

Facilitators: Phil Robertson, Human Rights Watch, and Kim Rogovin, International Labor Rights Forum
Speakers: Allison Lee, Yilan Migrant Fishermen Union, Taiwan; Anwar Maarif, Indonesian Migrant Fishermen's Union (SBMI); Jung Young-sup, Alliance for Migrants' Equality & Human Rights / Migrant Workers Movement supporters' group, South Korea

Resistance and Solidarity in Response to Repression (panel and workshop)

Despite increasing restrictions on civil society, violence at the hands of security forces, the risk of falsified charges and imprisonment, and mass dismissals of trade unionists, grassroots labor organizations continue to fight back and advocate for workers' rights. In this session, we will discuss specific strategies and approaches around defending workers and labor activists under threat with the goal of identifying tools that you can bring to organizing and building resistance in repressive environments.

Facilitator: Jane Siwa, BPO Industry Employees Network (BIEN) and Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTUHR)

Speakers: Jolovan Wham (HOME, Singapore); Sithar Chimm (NagaWorld Casino Union, Cambodia).

Organizing Workers in the Context of Short-Term Contract, Labor Dispatch, Outsourcing (panel and workshop)

Globally, insecure and precarious employment has been a key feature of the neoliberal era. It has been a serious challenge to organize workers employed on short-term contract, by a labor dispatch agency, or outsourced in an effort by employers to cut costs and offload welfare responsibilities. This session will discuss and share experience of ongoing efforts by unions to organize precarious workers.

Facilitator: Michael Ma (SACOM)

Speakers: 3M; Hiroshi Watanabe (Japan Post), Sherry Huang (Migrant Worker Centre, Australia)

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Sunday, August 18

	<i>Main Room 1</i>	<i>Room 2</i>	<i>Room 3</i>
9:00am-10:30am	Panel: Protest and Labor Movement in Hong Kong and Taiwan	Panel: Organizing Immigrant Domestic Workers	Training: Corporate Research for Organizing and Bargaining
10:45am-12:15pm	Training: Identifying and Organizing Worker Leaders	Strategy Workshop Immigrant Domestic Workers	Panel: Investigating and Organizing in Electronics and Apparel Sectors
12:15pm-1:30pm	Lunch Break		
1:30pm-3:00pm	Facilitated Workshop: Cultivating Women Workers' Leadership within Workplaces and Unions	Facilitated Discussion: Occupational Health and Safety	Training: Turning a Workplace Issue Into a Union Campaign
3:00pm-4:00pm	Closing Plenary: Labor Solidarity in Asia and Beyond		

Protest and Labor Movement in Hong Kong and Taiwan

Mass protest movements, such as the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong and the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan, erupted in Asia in recent years, and galvanized global attention. In the last two months, a new protest movement in Hong Kong, sparked by the opposition to the China Extradition Amendment Bill, has emerged, which used among other tools the general strike as a way to protest and make their voice heard.

Facilitator: The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions

Organizing Immigrant Domestic Workers (panel and discussion)

In Asia, there is a large number of domestic workers who are mostly young female immigrants from other Asian countries. Institutional discrimination and restriction, social prejudice and mistreatment and at times physical abuse by employers are commonplace. This panel features labor groups focused on organizing immigrant workers, especially domestic workers, and protecting their rights against employer and government pressure.

Speakers: Lennon Ying-Dah Wong (Taoyuan Serve the People Association, SPA), Federation of Asian Domestic Workers Unions, Hong Kong; Emily Chen (Taiwan International Workers' Association, TIWA)

Corporate Research for Organizing and Bargaining

This workshop will review the basics of corporate financial analysis and power mapping for union campaigns, including corporate ownership structure and risk analysis. These skills can help union activists develop more effective campaigns that take into account the corporation's profit centers, growth strategy and decision-making apparatus. These techniques are best for campaigns against large, publicly-traded firms, because

more information is available through public reporting and more accountability mechanisms may exist.

Facilitator: Nell Geiser (Communications Workers of America)

Identifying and Organizing Worker Leaders

Your workplace may feel like an unorganized mess, but the truth is you're not starting from zero. There's organization there already--though it might have nothing to do with the union. Learn how to map out the existing networks in your workplace, identify the leaders in those networks, and then knit them together into an organizing committee.

Facilitators: Chris Brooks and Saurav Sarkar (Labor Notes)

Investigating and Organizing in Electronics and Apparel Sectors

The electronics and apparel industries share many of the same characteristics. Both are labor intensive and have a similar supply chain structure dominated by powerful and rich multinational brands and some large Asian transnational corporations, with numerous production facilities scattered throughout most of Asia. Drawing from shared experiences under these similar conditions, this session will focus on what organizers in the electronics industry can learn from organizing in the apparel industry, and vice versa. Specific topics will include sharing information about how to conduct effective investigations, sharing experiences on various approaches to worker organizing, and discussing ways to transform the industry through enforceable binding agreements.

Facilitator: Bent Gehrt (Worker Rights Consortium)

Speakers will include representatives of organizations involved in conducting investigations or worker organizing in the electronics and/or apparel industries

Cultivating Women Workers' Leadership within Workplaces and Unions

Women face gender-specific challenges in and outside of the workplace that prevent them from gaining leadership. Having to juggle two—sometimes three—jobs and to care for children/elderly parents may not allow them time for union activities. Unions are all about acting collectively. This exercise encourages participants to work together in solving problems through sharing experiences and ideas. Discussions will draw out how women are resources and assets at work and in unions.

Facilitator: Chie Matsumoto (Newspaper and Wire Service Workers' Union, Japan)

Occupational Health and Safety

Across industries, grassroots worker organizations and unions are advocating for employers and the multinational corporations that source from them to respect workers' rights to occupational health and safety. In this session, advocates and organizers from several countries will share how they are tackling and addressing key OSH issues from overwork to exposure to toxic chemicals to fire and building safety, and lead a discussion on ideas for enhanced coordination going forward.

Facilitator: Noel Colina (AMRC)

Speakers: Omana George (AMRC, Hong Kong), Shogo Saga, (SHARPS, Korea), Faisal Murshed (Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity)

Turning a Workplace Issue into a Campaign

Everybody has complaints and frustrations, but an organizer has the skills to turn problems into opportunities. Learn how to sort the issues you hear from co-workers, bring people together, and make an escalating plan to solve the problem.

Facilitators: Chris Brooks and Saurav Sarkar (Labor Notes)