

# UNI Online

<http://www.union-network.org/uniononline>

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Connecting unions online

The overall objective of *UNI Online* is to bridge the digital divide and to turn UNI into an online organisation, with a maximum number of affiliates being connected through the Internet.

The design of the *UNI Online* project and its implementation are based on previous experience of donation of IT equipment, Internet connections and software training courses. This experience serves as a solid base for continued work made possible through financial assistance, donations of equipment and IT skills' training.

The Internet and e-mail are powerful tools for global union work, sharing information, international solidarity and crucial in developing online networking between UNI affiliates. The success of *UNI's Strategic Objective No. 6* depends on affiliates' commitment towards the aims and requirements of the objectives.

*UNI Online* is expanding and now comprises support projects, such as software development, with UNIconnect, the membership database programme; simple web presence, with UNI Bridge, which includes html websites, templates and CMS; IT skills' training, with online learning, and new project ideas, such as advanced web presence, including web applications and advice for e-unions.

## Achievements

- The project document *UNI Online* serves as background information when approaching funding organisations and other sources for financial assistance. The document can also serve as an eye-opener and guide to unions that plan to purchase IT equipment and get Internet connection and staff training.
- UNI Bridge - a project to help unions create and run their own websites with help from other affiliates - was launched in Ghana in August 2003. Seven staff members of affiliates CWU, ICU and HSWU were trained as web co-ordinators. The three unions were each delivered a website created by Ashley Nealfuller of UNIFI (UK), who was chosen at the UNI Webmasters' Forum to pilot UNI Bridge. The three new websites are hosted on the UNIFI server but fully managed in Ghana, thanks to a purpose-built content management system. The sites went online in August 2004.
- Some unions in developing countries are contributing to the success of *UNI Online* by prioritising the purchase of IT equipment through their own financial means or other channels.
- The *UNI Online* campaign has sensitised a number of affiliates to assist UNI in reaching the objectives:

## Achievements and Future Priorities

- The Telecom project "Computers for Africa", CWU, Ireland donated computers to COWUMA, Malawi, SYNACOM, Cameroon, SINTAC, Mozambique and in Latin America to SITRATELH, Honduras.
- CWA, USA donated a computer to the UNI-Africa Women's President.
- In co-operation with UNI LCJapan, UNI-Apro is providing some developing unions with recycled computers donated by the Japanese affiliates. UNI LCJapan also raised funds by selling UNI T-shirts at national conventions of Zenyusei, JSD, JPU, NWJ, Joho-Roren, JAW, FNIU, UI Zensen to contribute to UNI-Apro's Online project. The total sales amounted to more than a million Japanese Yen, which were donated to UNI-Apro.
- UNI-Apro is concentrating on equipping the Liaison Councils in various countries.
- UNI LCJapan, NWJ and Joho-Roren, Japan sponsored NPTWU, Sri Lanka.
- The project on Information, Communication and Technology, IC&T is ongoing in the Caribbean countries, and includes purchase of computers and Internet connection. The project is sponsored by HTF and LO/TCO, Sweden.
- With a fully equipped computer training centre, the only one of its type in the country, sponsored by the SDA Australia and FNV Mondiaal, the ASPEK Indonesia Training Institute, AITI, reskills redundant bank workers in IT skills and the English language on an on-going basis.
- UNI National Liaison Councils and groups of affiliates have in some cases agreed to share equipment, including costs, and take advantage of acquired IT skills.
- A display for the *UNI Online* campaign is available and pamphlets have been produced in English and French for distribution during seminars, meetings, conferences and other activities.
- Surveys of affiliates not yet connected to monitor progress.
- The ILO sponsored an IT training course for unions from both English and French-speaking Africa prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> UNI-Africa Regional Conference in South Africa, October 2003. Second hand desktops were donated.
- UNIconnect, the Membership Database Programme, and the manual have been updated to an interactive database version 2 and will soon be available for use.
- A UNI-Africa Online project has been approved with 50 second-hand computers purchased, refurbished and ready to be delivered to targeted unions and Liaison Councils in English and French-speaking Africa.
- Basic IT hard and software skills' training material has been collated in English and will be put online. Students taking part in this training will be tested and graded by the project partner and given a certificate on completion of studies.
- The IT skills training material is down-loadable to reduce connection costs and to extend the training reach to union staff.
- A new project to extend UNI online to Eastern Europe and Central Asia has been prepared. Two Swedish affiliates are supporting this project in funding discussions with LO/TCO.
- E-tradeunions is providing a multi-lingual resource for unions running a website or preparing to have an online presence.

## Future Priorities

- Continue the *UNI Online* information campaign to encourage involvement of UNI affiliates through ideas, contacts, financial and/or technical assistance and country-to-country cooperation.

## *Achievements and Future Priorities*

- Regularly update the survey on UNI unions not yet connected to the global information society and on this basis earmark adequate strategies.
- Submit special *UNI Online* projects to cover countries (sub -regions) where greater needs still exists.
- Secure external financial and/or technical assistance from funding organisations, computer companies, telecom providers and software training schools.
- *UNI Online* should be taken into consideration and costs for IT equipment, peripherals and training be budgeted for, when submitting trade union development projects to funding organisations
- Examine all on-going projects based on unions' need of IT equipment and discuss further financial assistance within the framework of the project co-operation.
- UNI National Liaison Councils and groups of affiliates should consider the possibility of sharing equipment, including costs, when possible and taking advantage of acquired IT skills.
- Co-operate with other sectors and organisations on *UNI Online* initiatives.
- Ensure that donated equipment, Internet connections and training provided are utilised.
- Ensure continuity and sustainability of IT skills' training in addition to donation of equipment.
- Keep UNI-affiliates informed about the progress of *UNI Online* by setting up a *UNI Online* website and make new connected unions visible and their voices heard.
- Promote the project regularly through the *UNI Online* website, UNI Info and UNI Netnews.
- Consider placing additional downloadable self-training software programmes on the UNI website to give unions' access to IT skills' training.
- Market the Membership Database Programme, UNIconnect, to unions already equipped or in the process of obtaining IT equipment.
- A UNI Online contract, with affiliates who are being donated IT equipment, will cover installation, budgeting, continuous training of both men and women and Internet connectivity.
- UNI Bridge will be assessed and new strategies worked out for its continuation to increase affiliates' web presence in other regions, with the next target group being unions in Latin America.
- Extend training to include news gathering and writing for the web in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.
- E-tradeunions, which is about to become "e-unions.org", provides a multi-lingual resource for unions with or without a website. This material already exists in five languages and will also be translated into Italian and printed out as a handbook for all UNI affiliates.
- Translate the basic IT skills' training material into French, Spanish and Russian and make it available online.
- Investigate the possibility of owning a webserver dedicated to UNI affiliates only, which would host their websites and provide them with web-mail (mailboxes with union e-mail addresses).