



Reviving the **Organising Academy** in the New Context

Building a Technology-Friendly Labour Movement
for the Future of Work

01

1. Executive Summary

The labour movement is entering a period of unprecedented transformation. The rapid advancement of digital technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), automation, platform-based work, and changing labour market dynamics are fundamentally reshaping the world of work. Traditional trade union organising methods, developed largely in the context of industrial workplaces and stable employment relationships, are increasingly inadequate for addressing the realities of the twenty-first century.

Recognising these changes, this proposal seeks to revive and modernise GEFONT's Organising Academy, originally established following the Sixth National Congress (2014), as a comprehensive institutional platform for policy analysis, research, training, resource management, digital organising, and mobilisation.

The renewed Organising Academy will serve as the strategic centre for building a technology-friendly labour movement capable of responding to contemporary challenges while remaining firmly committed to social justice, workers' rights, productive economic development, and democratic participation.

2. Background

The concept of an Organising Academy is rooted in successful international trade union experiences. Trade union centres across Europe operate dedicated labour institutes, training schools, and summer academies to develop organisers and strengthen organisational capacity. Similar initiatives have been implemented through Australia's Trade Union Training Authority (TUTA), the Organising Academy in the United Kingdom, AFL-CIO Organising Institutes in the United States, and the programmes promoted by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

Inspired by these experiences, GEFONT's Sixth National Congress (2014) incorporated the concept of an Organising Academy within its organisational restructuring agenda. The Academy was designed around four institutional pillars:

Policy Analysis

The establishment of GEFONT Trade Union Policy Institute (GEFONT-TUPI) as the movement's think tank responsible for policy formulation, strategic analysis, and advisory support.

Research

Strengthening the National Labour Academy (NLA) as a research institution generating evidence and analysis on labour and socio-economic issues.

Labour Resource Centre

Creating a National Labour Resource Centre by integrating existing documentation, archives, and library resources.

Training

Operating a Trade Union School providing systematic education and leadership development for trade union activists.

Alongside these four pillars, mobilisation was envisioned as the practical application of organising skills through membership expansion campaigns and workplace organising initiatives.

Over the past decade, the Academy has contributed significantly to trade union education, leadership development, research, and policy advocacy.

3. Why Revival is Necessary

More than ten years after its establishment, the context within which the labour movement operates has undergone profound transformation.

Technological Transformation

Automation, AI, robotics, big data, and digital platforms are altering production systems and labour processes. Many occupations are being transformed while entirely new forms of work are emerging.

Informalisation of Labour

Contract work, outsourcing, platform-based work, gig work, freelancing, and remote work have expanded significantly, challenging traditional models of workplace organisation.

Migration and Demographic Change

Large-scale migration of young workers and changing workforce demographics have affected union membership patterns and leadership succession.

New Expectations of Workers

Today's workers increasingly demand not only wages and working conditions but also social security, pensions, lifelong learning opportunities, digital inclusion, and work-life balance.

Digital Communication Revolution

Social media, digital platforms, online communities, and AI-powered communication tools are transforming how people receive information, build networks, and engage collectively.

Post-COVID Reality

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the transition toward virtual learning, digital consultation, online services, and hybrid organisational models.

These developments require a fundamental rethinking of how trade unions educate, organise, communicate, research, and mobilise.

4. Vision

To establish a modern, technology-friendly, research-based, and future-oriented Organising Academy capable of strengthening workers' collective power in the digital age while promoting social justice, productive economic development, and democratic participation.

5. Guiding Principles

The revived Organising Academy shall be guided by the following principles:

Democracy and Participation

Promoting broad-based participation of workers in decision-making processes.

Social Justice

Ensuring equitable distribution of opportunities, protections, and economic benefits.

07

Development of Productive Forces

Supporting economic growth, innovation, and productivity while safeguarding workers' rights.

Social Dialogue

Promoting dialogue, consensus-building, cooperation, and coexistence among labour, employers, and the state.

Technology as an Enabler

Viewing technology as a tool for empowerment, organisation-building, productivity enhancement, and social protection rather than as a threat.

Inclusiveness

Ensuring active participation of women, youth, informal workers, migrant workers, and workers in emerging sectors.

6. Strategic Objectives

The revived Organising Academy shall pursue the following objectives:

1. Build a technology-friendly labour movement equipped for the future of work.
2. Modernise trade union organising through digital platforms, AI-assisted tools, and data-driven strategies.
3. Develop a new generation of trade union leaders, organisers, educators, and researchers.
4. Strengthen labour market research and evidence-based policy intervention.
5. Expand workers' access to information, legal assistance, social protection, and education.
6. Promote greater engagement of youth and women in trade union leadership.
7. Enhance organisational effectiveness and membership growth.

7. Proposed Institutional Framework

Pillar I: Policy and Strategic Analysis

GEFONT-TUPI 2.0

The Policy Institute shall be upgraded to function as a strategic think tank on:

- Future of work
- AI and automation
- Platform economy
- Labour market transformation
- Social protection
- Industrial policy
- Migration and labour mobility
- Green transition and just transition

Outputs:

- Policy briefs
- Strategic papers
- Position papers
- Legislative recommendations
- Future of Work Reports

Pillar II: Research and Innovation Wing

The National Labour Academy shall evolve into a labour research and innovation centre.

Key functions:

- Labour market intelligence
- AI impact assessments
- Workforce mapping
- Organising research
- Membership studies
- Sectoral labour studies
- Wage and productivity analysis

Special attention shall be given to emerging sectors and non-traditional workplaces.

Pillar III: National Digital Labour Resource Centre

The traditional resource centre shall be transformed into a Digital Labour Resource Centre.

Services:

- Digital library
- Online archive
- Knowledge repository
- E-learning materials
- Research databases
- Multimedia content

The Centre shall provide nationwide online access to educational and research resources.

Pillar IV: Trade Union School and Leadership Academy

The traditional trade union school shall be upgraded into a continuous learning platform.

Training areas:

- Labour rights
- Labour laws
- Collective bargaining
- Social dialogue
- Leadership development
- Digital organising
- Social media communication
- AI literacy
- Public speaking
- Campaign management

Training shall be delivered through:

- Residential programmes
- Online learning
- Hybrid courses
- Mobile learning applications
- Certification programmes

Pillar V: Digital Organising and Mobilisation Lab

This shall be the most innovative component of the revived Academy.

Functions

Digital Organising

- Online recruitment
- Digital membership campaigns
- E-membership systems
- Workplace mapping
- Campaign management

Communication

- Social media strategy
- Content creation
- Video production
- Podcasting
- Digital storytelling

Data Management

- Membership databases
- Labour market databases
- Campaign analytics

AI-Assisted Organising

- AI-supported communication
- Research assistance
- Data analysis
- Campaign targeting

Pillar VI: Legal Aid and Social Protection Centre

Functions:

- Legal consultation
- Labour dispute assistance
- Social security counselling
- Foreign employment support
- Online legal services

The Academy shall institutionalise:

8. Youth and Women's Leadership Programme

Youth Leadership Track

Target: Workers below 40 years of age.

Focus:

- Leadership
- Digital activism
- Communication
- Research
- Organising

Women's Leadership Track

Focus:

- Leadership development
- Gender-responsive labour policy
- Women organisers' network
- Mentorship programmes

9. Membership Digitalisation Initiative

The Academy shall support organisational modernisation through:

- E-membership cards
- Integrated digital database
- Mobile applications
- Digital dues collection
- Membership analytics
- Digital communication systems

10. Expected Outcomes

By the end of the implementation period:

- A fully modernised Organising Academy will be operational.
- Digital organising capacity will be institutionalised.
- Membership growth campaigns will become more effective.
- Research and policy intervention capacity will be strengthened.
- Youth participation will significantly increase.
- Women's representation in leadership will expand.
- Workers' access to information and legal support will improve.
- The labour movement will be better prepared for AI, automation, and future labour market transformations.

11. Implementation Roadmap

Phase I (Year 1)

Phase II (Year 2)

Phase III (Year 3)

Phase IV (Year 4–5)

The Organising Academy was conceived at a time when the labour movement needed stronger organisers, educators, and researchers.

12. Conclusion

Today, the need remains equally important, but the context has fundamentally changed. The future of organising will require not only committed activists but also digitally capable organisers, researchers, communicators, data managers, and policy advocates.

Reviving the Organising Academy is therefore not merely an institutional reform; it is a strategic investment in the future of the labour movement. By integrating policy analysis, research, training, digital innovation, and mobilisation within a single framework, GEFONT can position itself as a leading force in shaping a technology-friendly, socially just, and future-ready labour movement for Nepal and beyond.



GEFONT
Trade Union Policy Institute (GEFONT-TUPI)

P.O.Box: 10652, Anamnagar, Kathmandu, Nepal • Email: tupi@gefонт.org

www.gefонт.org