

As an organization rooted in the history of social democracy and the labour movement in Germany, FES operates worldwide with a mandate and priority to engage in trade union cooperation. FES is engaged with trade union organisations on the national, regional and global level. The Kenya Office implements activities in cooperation with global trade union organizations, as e.g. UN I Global Union and PSI, and supports regional activities with ITUC Africa and EATUC. Nationally, FES Kenya enjoys a long-term cooperation with the Central Organisation of Trade Unions and its affiliates.

Global Outlook School of Trade Unions

In 2007 FES Kenya and the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU-Kenya) launched an annual training programme addressing young trade unionists. It aimed at providing knowledge and skills in areas relevant for officials and leaders of trade unions affiliated to COTU. Main subjects are, among others, the labour law and institutions, international labour standards and their domestication, basic economics, and collective bargaining agreements. Every year 20 to 25 candidates, after having passed a screening process, are trained in an intensive course over two weeks. By end of 2013, more than 130 participants have passed the training programme of the Global Outlook School of Trade Unions.

Additionally, FES and COTU invite alumni to an annual meeting. It serves to raise topical issues and to strengthen the bonds among the alumni. Their reports support the trainers and designers of the curriculum in updating the training programme with a view to maximizing its usefulness for the actual work of trade unionists in leading positions.

The alumni have made an impact in the management of trade unions, and quite a few have acquired important positions such as General Secretary, Dep. General Secretary, Branch Secretary and negotiators of collective bargaining agreements.

Cooperation with affiliated trade union organizations

FES Kenya supports trade unions affiliated to COTU through training and capacity development with the intention to strengthen the capacity for lobbying and advocacy. Highlights of the past years were the contributions of KUDHEIHA to the discussion on the ILO Standard 189 at the ILO meeting in Geneva and the resolutions of KNPSWU on the Private Sector Security Bill. These inputs are based on research and workshops with stakeholders, including employers and ministries. Upcoming topics are the out-contracting and casualisation of work affecting public service sectors (e.g. power generation and distribution), social security systems and the informal sector.