

DATA-DRIVEN SERVICES TO INCREASE THE CENTRE'S TRAINING OUTREACH BY PROMOTING FREE SELF- GUIDED DISTANCE-LEARNING COURSES

IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADDITIONAL FINDINGS:
EXPERIMENT NO. 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper describes an experiment conducted with Data Driven Services (DDS) to increase the training outreach of the Centre and, more in particular, to “harness the data streams generated during past and ongoing service transaction processes to identify, by way of causal inference, individuals and institutions with a high demand and need for the Centre’s services (...).”¹

The overall objective of the experiment was to contribute to the achievement of the outcomes of the 2022–23 ITCILO Programme and Budget. The **immediate objective** was to strengthen the capacity of the Technical Programmes of the Training Department to reach a larger number of people in the world of work with the right services at the right time, here by experimenting with segment-specific promotional activities informed by marketing data analytics. The intermediate beneficiaries of the experiment were the Technical Programmes in the Centre’s Training Department, while the ultimate or intended beneficiaries were all people in the world of work represented through the ILO constituency and other ILO development partners. The **scope** of the experiment was limited to the promotion of the Centre’s free self-guided distance-learning courses. The scope was further limited to *digital* marketing channels used to promote outreach of the Centre’s free self-guided distance-learning courses.

The experiment was part of a series of tests to boost uptake of the Centre’s training services performed in 2022. It built on earlier findings regarding the right digital-marketing mix required to increase training outreach and the role of free self-guided distance-learning courses in stimulating the uptake of fee-based services.

The experiment had two parts: (1) a targeted course-specific digital-marketing campaign; and (2) a global outreach campaign to digitally market the entire portfolio of self-guided distance-learning courses, with a view to comparing results. The preparatory stages of the experiment, including concept design, data preparation and data analysis, took place in September and October 2022. The actual promotional campaigns were run from November 2022 to January 2023 in several waves via social media and email. The experiment was evaluated in February and March 2023.

The results of the experiment imply that promotional campaigns of both individual courses and a portfolio of courses increase the number of new registrants for free self-guided distance-learning courses, but it is important to have a coordinated and diversified digital-marketing mix.

The conclusions are that the principal driver in stimulating demand is the course topic, while the most efficient channel for creating leads in free self-guided distance-learning courses is Facebook Ads. However, Facebook campaigns are not particularly efficient for certain geographical areas. There is also room for the ITCILO to improve its performance on LinkedIn and Instagram.

¹ ITCILO Programme & Budget 2022–23, p.37

Furthermore, coordinating and integrating different promotional channels can help the ITCILO to reach more people and so to increase views, engagement and enrolments.

The recommendations are:

- to promote the portfolio of free self-guided distance-learning courses to the beneficiary universe on different digital channels, and particularly on Meta, and to increase our presence on other digital channels in order to increase visibility, outreach and conversion rates, and to boost CRM;
- to coordinate the promotional activities on different channels and develop free self-guided distance-learning courses per main area of expertise; and
- to continue to experiment on how to expand the digital-marketing mix, incentivize follow-up enrolments and target marketing campaigns more efficiently.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive summaryIII
1. Introduction	1
2. Objectives of the experiment	2
3. Target groups.	2
4. Scope	3
5. Research framework.	4
5.1 Findings of Previous Experiments	4
5.2 Key Performance Indicators.	4
5.3 Description of the data set	5
5.4 Description of the course sample.	6
5.5 Implementation Roadmap.	9
6. Results11
6.1 Test 1: Promotion of selected free Self-guided distance-learning courses to further investigate other channels for increasing training outreach and other possible segmentation variables11
6.2 Test 2: Promotion of the ITCILO's portfolio of free self-guided distance-learning courses	16
7. Conclusions and Recommendations.	19
7.1 Conclusions.	19
7.2 Recommendations and future experiments	19

1. INTRODUCTION

The environment in which the Centre operates is undergoing fundamental change, driven by long-term trends accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Learners are increasingly technology-savvy, wanting to access learning services 24/7 and co-create their own learning experience, while advances in digital technology open up new opportunities for learning-service providers to upscale outreach and reduce unit costs.

In response to these changes, the Centre has for several years been shifting asset weights in its service portfolio; the COVID pandemic has accelerated this transformation process. Before 2018, the Centre's main emphasis was on individual capacity development, with the focus on face-to-face training. The Centre's 2018–21 strategy framework set the stage for the diversification of the service portfolio to better harness digital learning and collaborative technology and applications, in response to the ILO's renewed focus on institutional capacity development. During the 2018–19 biennium, the Centre extended its distance-learning outreach and developed a suite of advisory services to complement its training activities. The Centre also invested heavily in learning innovation, piloting augmented and virtual-reality applications, and introducing new training products involving future foresight techniques, big-data mining and artificial intelligence. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the pace of transformation of the Centre's service portfolio has accelerated, characterized by a shift in emphasis from face-to-face training to online learning and a stronger focus on institutional and system-level capacity development services.

Data-driven services (DDS) play a crucial role in the Centre's new operational model. DDS are about the use of data for evidence-based management. They focus on data as a critical resource for value creation and come into their own in cases where large amounts of data need to be collected, processed and visualized or disseminated to inform decision-making.

The Centre's DDS are grouped under three themes:

- DDS to extend outreach are used to better target the Centre's intended beneficiaries.
- DDS to improve impact enable the Centre to fine-tune service content and delivery.
- DDS to manage knowledge inform decisions at the different stages of the service-delivery cycle by creating systems for data collection, processing, analysis, visualization and dissemination.

This paper focuses on DDS to extend the training outreach of the Centre and, more in particular, DDS that “harness the data streams generated during past and ongoing service-transaction processes to identify, by way of causal inference, individuals and institutions with a high demand and need for the Centre's services (...).”²

In the past, the Centre's digitally enhanced outreach activities were more likely to rely on decentralized initiatives at the Technical Programmes level, with compartmentalized access to

² ITCILO Programme & Budget 2022–23, p.37

data about learners and individual network connections. Going forward, the Centre is in the process of building a centralized in-house data-analytics function in the Office of the Director of Training (TDIR), with the aim of shifting the focus from this more reactive approach towards an approach with stronger emphasis on prediction and co-creation. The work of the newly established data-analytics team at the TDIR has so far focused on the following steps: establishing a central participant database by pooling and cleaning existing data in MAP and the eCampus; developing profiles (or personae) of prevalent user groups in the Centre's beneficiary universe; and testing and developing segment-specific outreach campaigns that harness digital technology to further boost training outreach.

The experiments described in the following paper were designed and implemented in the context of this biennial work plan.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE EXPERIMENT

Considering the overall objective of contributing to achieving the outcomes of the 2022–23 ITCILO Programme and Budget (P&B), the aim of the current experiment was to implement the recommendations of the previous experiment run from June to September 2022.³ The immediate objective of the new experiment was to strengthen the capacity of the Technical Programmes of the Training Department to reach a larger number of people in the world of work with the right services through the right channels, here by experimenting with segment-specific promotional activities informed by marketing data analytics.

The expected overall outcome of the experiment was an expanded participant universe. The expected immediate outcome was to provide the Centre's Technical Programmes with a strengthened knowledge base on (a) how to develop and raise awareness of their free self-guided distance-learning courses (marketed as stand-alone offerings or in bundles) and (b) how best to convert leads into participants by using different marketing channels.

3. TARGET GROUPS

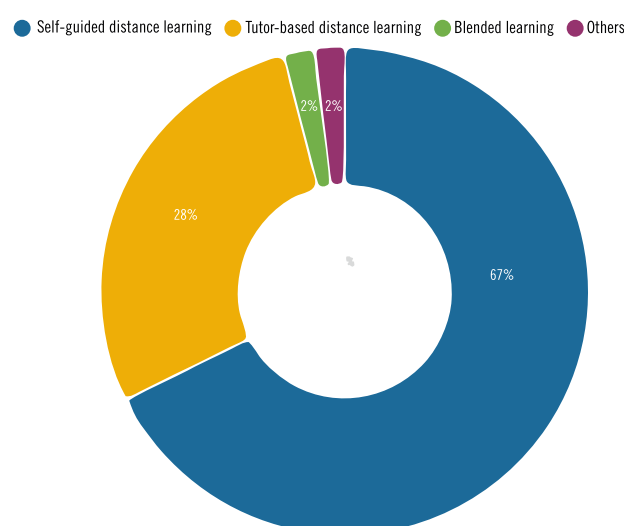
A distinction was drawn between the intermediate and ultimate beneficiaries of the experiment. The intermediate beneficiaries were the Technical Programmes in the Centre's Training Department, while the ultimate or intended beneficiaries were all people in the world of work represented through the ILO constituency and other ILO development partners.

³ For more information on the previous data-analytics for outreach experiment, refer to the Digital brief <https://www.itcilo.org/sg-promotion>

4. SCOPE

The scope of the experiment was limited to the promotion of the Centre's free self-guided distance-learning courses. In 2022, these courses accounted for 67 per cent of all participants reached with distance learning;⁴ they cover core ILO policy messages and are available 24/7 free of charge in official ILO languages. They thus constitute the Centre's most democratic and widely accessible learning modality. The focus on these free self-guided distance-learning modules reflects the primary emphasis of the experiment on boosting outreach (not income) through data analytics.⁵

UNIVERSE OF ONLINE LEARNERS BY TYPE OF DISTANCE LEARNING (2022)



The scope of the experiment was further limited to *digital* marketing channels used to promote outreach of the Centre's free self-guided distance learning courses. More specifically, it was decided to focus on (a) social media channels (Meta, i.e. Facebook and Instagram, and LinkedIn, conducting both organic and paid campaigns) and (b) email newsletters using a CRM application called Active Campaign. The selection was motivated by the fact that these tools were readily accessible to the Centre at low cost and had been tested during the previous experiment. Compared to the previous experiment, this exercise investigated additional channels (LinkedIn, both organic and paid, and Instagram organic) and the channels were coordinated one with another.

Please refer to the next chapter for more information on the sample of free self-guided distance-learning courses, the mix of digital promotional tools and the data sources used by the Centre.

⁴ IBI database

⁵ The Centre's free self-guided distance-learning courses effectively constitute the first touchpoint between many people in the world of work and the Centre. Participants in free self-guided distance-learning courses might decide to enrol in other learning activities run by the Centre, whether free or fee-based. A secondary emphasis of the pilot was to analyse the ensuing learning journey of return participants, including freemium users converting from free to fee-based activities. See the chapter on the research framework for further information.

5. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

5.1 Findings of Previous Experiments

The experiment was part of a series of tests run by the Office of the Director Training during 2022 to boost service outreach through better use of digital marketing channels. More in particular, its design was informed by selected recommendations of a previous test, in response to which the Office of the Director Training was (1) to assess whether centralized digital marketing of the entire portfolio of self-guided distance-learning courses would have a measurable impact on enrolments; (2) to further investigate the right channel mix for increasing training outreach.⁶

5.2 Key Performance Indicators

The Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for measuring the results of the experiment were:

Experiment	KPI ⁷	Target	Source of verification
Promotion of the ITCILO's free self-guided distance-learning courses portfolio and selected single courses by digital marketing mix	Enrolments	Increase of 500% in 1 month considering all channels	eCampus
Promotion of the ITCILO's free self-guided distance-learning courses portfolio and selected single courses on social media	Views Active engagement ⁸	Above the average of ITCILO organic posts in 2022	Meta Business; LinkedIn
Promotion of the ITCILO's free self-guided distance-learning courses portfolio and selected single courses by email	Views Active engagement ⁹	Above the education sector benchmark	Active Campaign

The experiment also used a data-driven marketing funnel to compare the results of the promotional activities on the different channels.

⁶ For more information on the previous data-analytics for outreach experiment, refer to the Digital brief <https://www.itcilo.org/sg-promotion>

⁷ Glossary: Enrolments: new people enrolled in the free self-guided courses promoted
Views: number of people who see the content (post or email)
Active engagement: number of interactions with the social media post (likes, shares, comments) or email (link clicks)
SG: self-guided
DL: distance learning
Meta: Facebook and Instagram

⁸ Active engagement includes likes, comments and shares. For more information, refer to the ITCILO Quality Manual, 2023 page 15 <http://intranet.itcilo.org/internal-service/office-of-the-director-of-training/QA/QualityManagementinITCILO2023Web002.pdf>

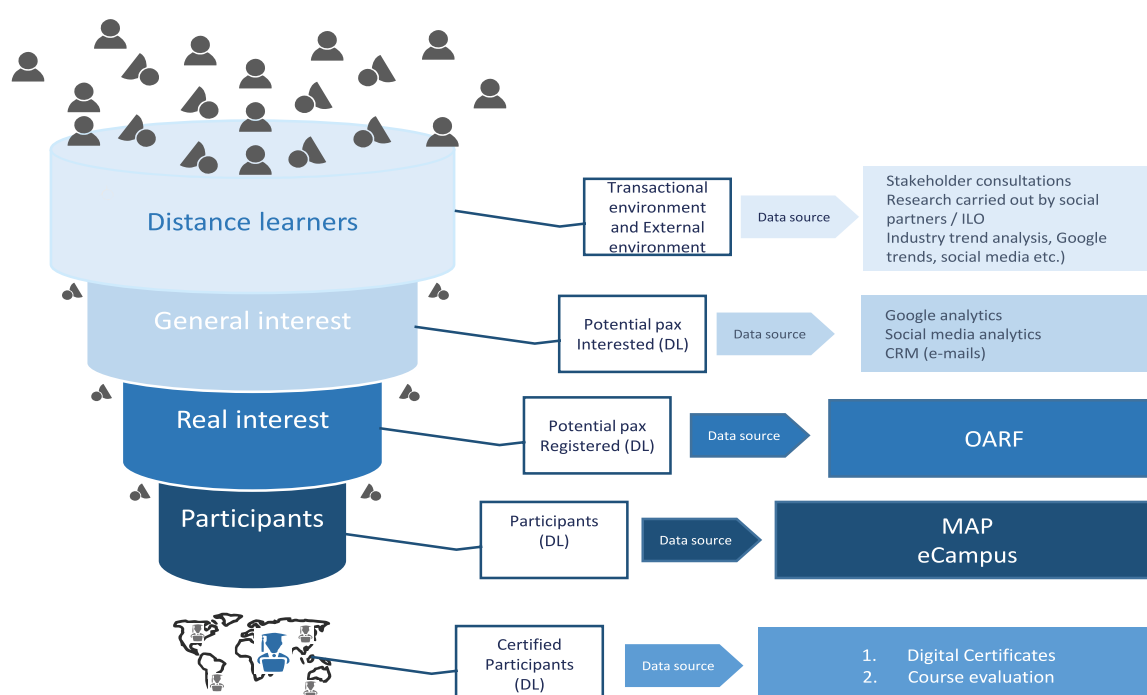
⁹ Active engagement includes clicks on the links to the course webpage.

5.3 Description of the data set

The Centre's data warehouse stores information from a number of in-house ITCILO databases, plus data sources from the transactional and external environment. These databases furnish information about the beneficiaries of the Centre's distance-learning offerings as they move through the marketing funnel to convert into participants.

For more information on the dataset, refer to the experiment *Data-driven services to increase the training outreach of the Centre via the promotion of free self-guided distance-learning courses*.¹⁰

THE MARKETING FUNNEL FOR DISTANCE LEARNERS



For the purposes of the experiment described in this paper, the Centre analysed *data from internal and external databases*. Data about free self-guided distance learners is only recorded in the eCampus through the self-enrolment option.

For the purposes of participant segmentation, *all* former participants in fee-based distance-learning activities offered by the Centre from January 2021 to October 2022 were considered.¹¹ In practice, only parts of the database were used for the course-specific outreach campaigns, after being cleaned and checked for consistency.¹²

¹⁰ <https://www.itcilo.org/sg-promotion>

¹¹ Data has been exported from MAP, considering all the activities started from 1/1/2021 to 31/12/2022.

¹² Refer to the chapter on findings for more information about the data samples.

5.4 Description of the course sample

For the purpose of the first part of the experiment (test 1), the Office of the Director of Training asked seven Technical Programmes to select, or where applicable develop, one flagship free self-guided distance-learning course:

- 1) Continuing Legal Education 1 – Introduction to International Labour Organization (ILSGEN) – selected from the existing portfolio;
- 2) Introduction to Project Cycle Management (ODPS) – selected from the existing portfolio;
- 3) Social Dialogue and Industrial relations: a self-guided induction course (SPGT) – quality assured and published on the website for self-enrolment;
- 4) The future of work in the rural economy (SEE) – quality assured and published on the website for self-enrolment;
- 5) Digital Facilitation in Synchronous Events (LIP) – newly developed for the purpose of the experiment;
- 6) MOOC on Quality Apprenticeships (EPAP) – newly developed for the purpose of the experiment;
- 7) Trade Union eLearning course on UNSDCF and the Decent Work Agenda (ACTRAV) – newly developed for the purpose of the experiment.

TECHNICAL PROGRAMMES AND THE FREE SG DISTANCE-LEARNING COURSES ADOPTED FOR THE EXPERIMENT

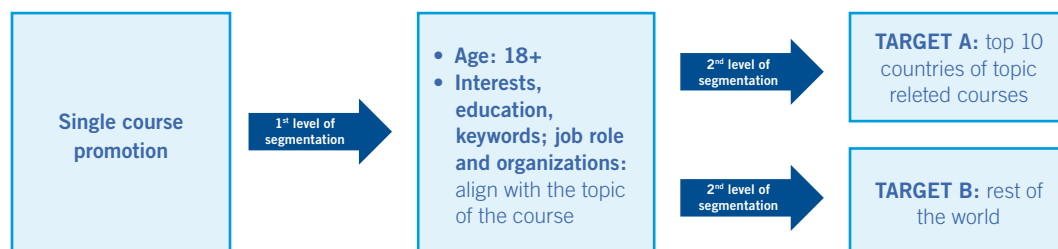


This promotion targeted selected personae. During previous experiments¹³ it had been observed that distance learners were more likely to belong to the 25–34 age cohort, while the region of origin and gender of the learners varied significantly according to the main subject area and the economic implications of the course (free or paid). Considering the findings and conclusions of the previous experiment, for this experiment was taken into account the main subject areas and economic implications of the courses, while gender and age were not considered as segmentation variables.

The data set was filtered for profiles of prevalent groups that had participated in topic-related fee-based training activities in 2021-22, since three of the courses were new and two newly published, and considering also the interest in investigating the link between the participants in free self-guided and fee-based courses. The characteristics of these prevalent participant groups were then used to construct personae¹⁴ to test the results of targeted outreach campaigns.

In summary, during the first test of the experiment, the seven courses were promoted to seven different personae on the basis of interests, education, keywords, job role and organizations (where possible) in line with the subject area of the free course.¹⁵ As a second level of segmentation, these seven personae were divided into two target groups per country of affiliation: target group A comprising the 10 regions from which most of the participants in the topic-related fee-based courses come, and target group B from the rest of the world.

TARGETING THE AUDIENCE AT TWO LEVELS

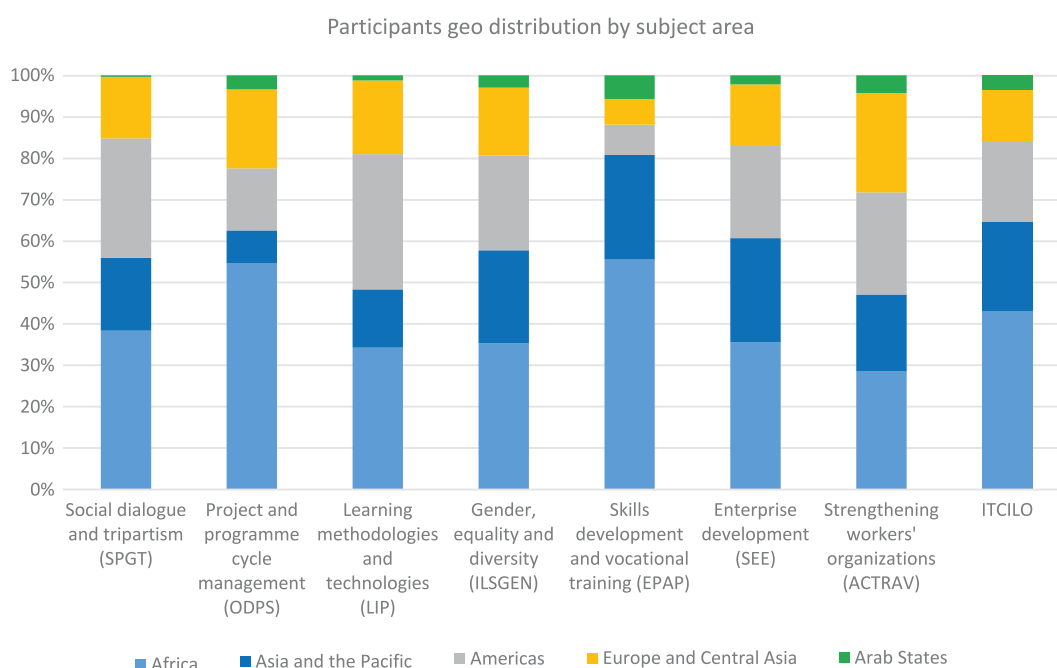


¹³ For more information, refer to the Digital Brief <https://www.itcilo.org/sg-promotion>

¹⁴ For the purpose of this experiment, a “persona” was defined to be an abstract representation of the ideal participant, based on qualitative and quantitative data from research and existing customer profiles. For more information, refer to the Digital Brief <https://www.itcilo.org/sg-promotion>

¹⁵ The activity managers of the technical programmes provided the information on key words, interests, roles, education and organizations, while the social media expert consultant, under the supervision of LIP, imported the social media information to create the personae.

**REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF PARTICIPANTS IN FEE-BASED COURSES IN 2021-22
BY COURSE SUBJECT AREA¹⁶**



The seven courses were promoted to all genders, over the age of 18, in English.

For the second part of the experiment (test 2), the entire universe of free self-guided distance-learning courses was promoted. The ITCILO offers more than 40 free self-guided distance-learning courses (depending on the period of the year).¹⁷ The courses are standardized in terms of structure, quality and overall characteristics. A typical free self-guided distance-learning course will comprise a series of short modules with videos, slides, quizzes and a final test. Participants who have successfully completed the test can download a certificate of completion as a micro-credential of their learning achievement. The minimum duration of a free self-guided distance-learning course is one hour (equal to the smallest unit of learning distinguished in any of the Centre's learning activities). For more information on each free self-guided distance-learning course, refer to the Centre's online catalogue.¹⁸

¹⁶ Source: MAP, participants export, activities start day from 1/1/2021 to 31/12/2022, export on 26 October 2022.

¹⁷ ITCILO free courses page: [https://www.itcilo.org/courses?field_course_typology\[187\]=187](https://www.itcilo.org/courses?field_course_typology[187]=187)

¹⁸ ITCILO courses page: <https://www.itcilo.org/courses>

5.5 Implementation Roadmap

The first part of the experiment was implemented over a four-month period from October 2022 to the end of January 2023. The promotional campaigns were run from November to January through two different digital marketing channels:

- On 7 December 2022, an email was sent to ITCILO subscribers to the newsletter, promoting the selected seven free self-guided distance-learning courses and the overall portfolio.
- Social media campaigns were performed on LinkedIn and Meta, both organically and paid:
 - Paid posts were implemented in seven waves, one for each course, via Facebook Ads and LinkedIn Ads. Considering the results of the previous experiment, the courses were promoted in English. The duration of each campaign was one week.¹⁹
 - Organic posts were implemented in two waves via the ITCILO Meta pages (Facebook and Instagram) and the ITCILO LinkedIn page, simultaneously on the three channels, with one post per day for one week (30 Nov. to 6 Dec. 2022).

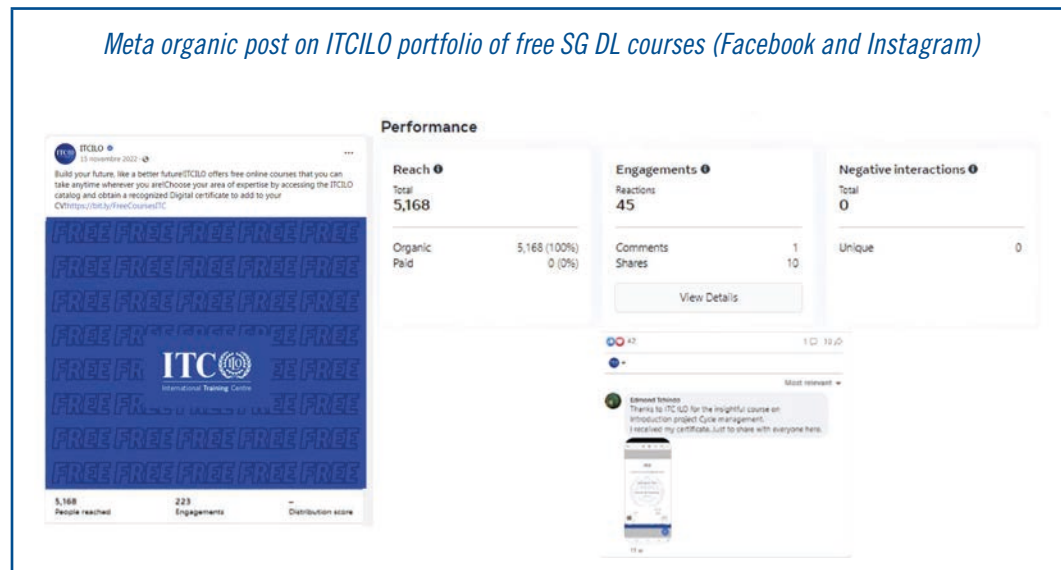
Each wave of the paid promotion was in turn divided by target audience: target A, based on the personae identified in the analysis (top 10 countries), and target B as the control group comprising the rest of the world.

The second part of the experiment (promotion of the portfolio of free self-guided distance-learning courses) was implemented between November and December 2022 on three channels:

- **Social Media - organic**
 - On 15 November 2022, one social media post was posted on the ITCILO Facebook and Instagram pages, promoting all free courses together.
- **Email newsletter**
 - On 7 December 2022, an email was sent to ITCILO subscribers to the newsletter promoting the whole portfolio of free self-guided distance-learning courses (and the selected seven courses). The recipients of the email were the 11,742 people who had subscribed to the ITCILO newsletter before September 2022.
- **eCampus**
 - Where feasible, to increase participants' awareness of the ITCILO portfolio of free courses, a link to the portfolio of free courses was inserted on the eCampus pages of the seven selected flagship courses. The eCampus, in fact, represents another digital channel and was mentioned during the "Quick survey on the eCampus" performed in 2022.

¹⁹ Considering that the efficiency of a social media campaign depends on the day of the week, a promotion lasting at least one week (seven days) is recommended. Source <https://adespresso.com/>

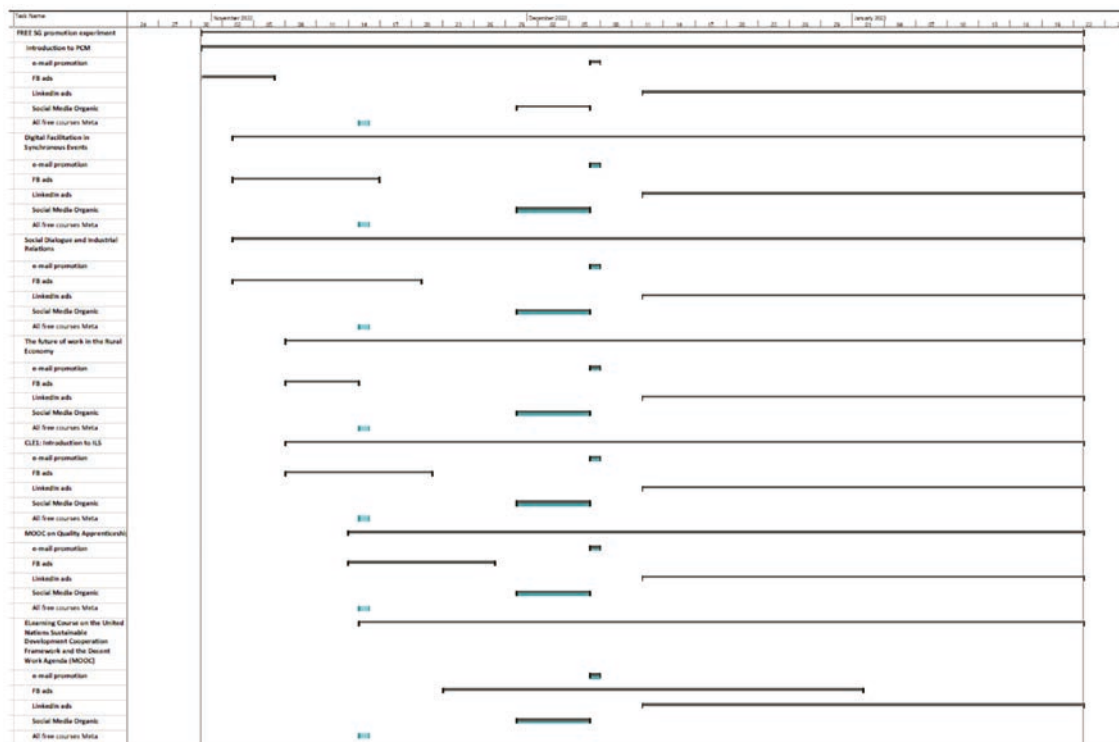
The image below shows the analytical results of the organic social media post on Meta (Facebook and Instagram).



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/itcilo/posts/pfbidQ2BLUAXy6nz5QjzAVpjmXT5ic5b9kqEbiMEnVZpmmApGqnzs9TNPzJJEgVemHfnu99I>

The GANTT chart below shows the timing and duration of the email and social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram organic, and LinkedIn and Facebook Ads) campaigns.

SCHEDULE OF PROMOTIONS (31 OCTOBER 2022- 30 JANUARY 2023)



The sequence of promotional activities was designed to test the coordination of organic and paid social media campaigns in terms of view, engagement and enrolments. On Facebook, the selected seven courses were promoted first by running a paid campaign in order to reach new people, and then using an organic campaign to engage with them. On LinkedIn, was used the opposite approach, promoting each course first organically and then through a paid campaign.

The results of the experiment were evaluated and documented in February and March 2023.

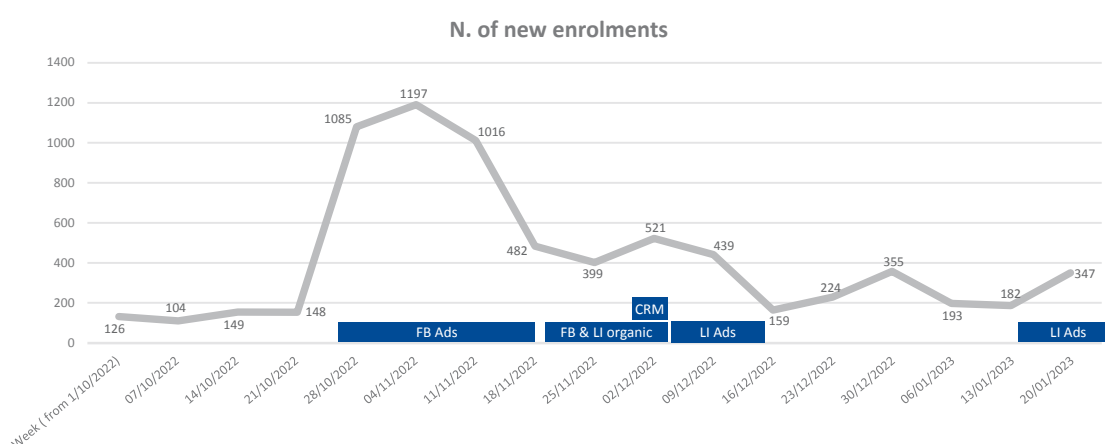
6. RESULTS

6.1 Test 1: Promotion of selected free Self-guided distance-learning courses to further investigate other channels for increasing training outreach and other possible segmentation variables

The results of the first part of the experiment show that targeted outreach campaigns specific to given distance-learning courses further drive up demand.

The following graphics show the trend of enrolments in the seven free self-guided distance-learning courses from 1 October 2022 to 27 January 2023 (before and during the outreach campaigns). The spike in interest is clearly visible, especially during the Facebook Ads campaigns.

NUMBER OF ENROLMENTS TRIGGERED BY THE DIGITAL MARKETING CAMPAIGNS PER WEEK



A closer look at the number of enrolments by course sheds further light on the effectiveness of digital marketing. As the next graphic suggests, there is a correlation but no causality: enrolments go up in all courses as a result of the campaign but the topic of each course still makes an important difference.

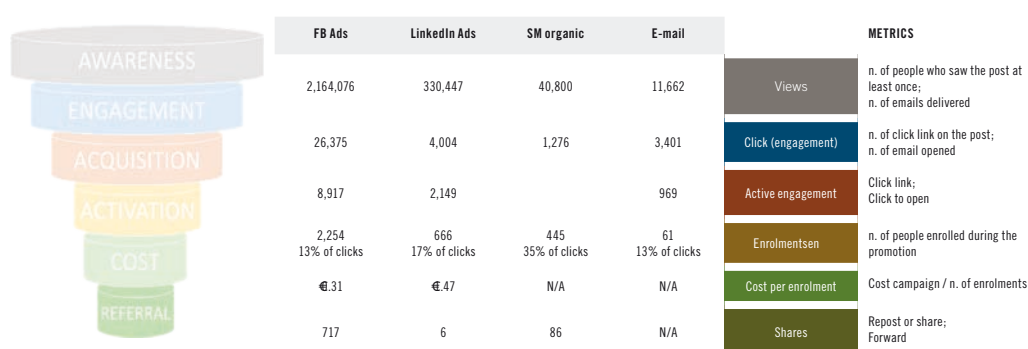
NUMBER OF ENROLMENTS TRIGGERED BY THE DIGITAL MARKETING MIX

Digital marketing mix: campaigns run from 31 Oct. 2022 to 22 Jan. 2023 Course Title (TP)	No. of new enrolments
Introduction to Project Cycle Management (ODPS)	2,677
Continuing Legal Education 1 – Introduction to International Labour Organization (ILSGEN)	831
Digital Facilitation in Synchronous Events (LIP)	677
The future of work in the rural economy (SEE)	624
Trade Union eLearning course on UNSDCF and the Decent Work Agenda (ACTRAV)	538
Social Dialogue and Industrial relations: a self-guided induction course (SPGT)	448
MOOC on Quality Apprenticeships (EPAP)	290
Total	6,085
Average per course	869

BASELINE (monthly average enrolments in free SG DL courses from Jan. to June 2022)	KPI	TARGET (baseline* KPI)	RESULT (average number of enrolments per course)
114	500%	570	869

New enrolments in free, self-directed distance-learning courses are imported into the CRM system. Consequently, as new enrolments increase so do the contacts in the CRM database who will then be contacted for future course promotions on similar topics.

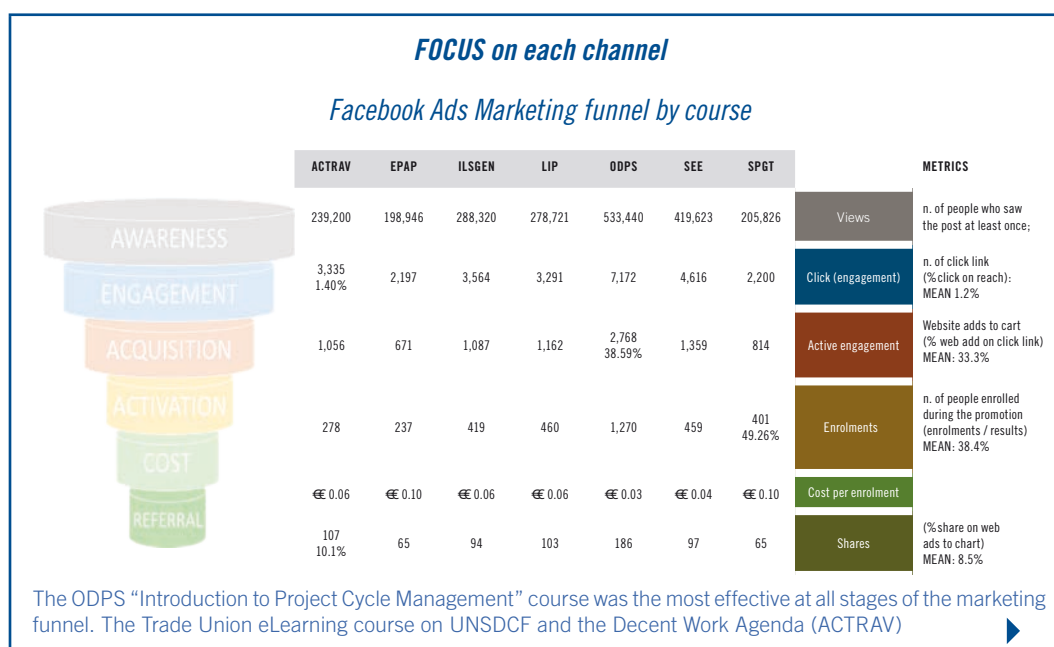
The next graphics show the impact of different digital marketing tools at a higher level of resolution. In order to investigate different levels of impact during the campaigns, a revised and personalized version of the marketing funnel was developed. The adopted marketing funnel shows people's level of awareness (seeing the post or receiving the email), their engagement with the communications (minimum level of interest measured by their clicking on the post or opening the email), their acquisition (consideration of the learning opportunity measured by their clicking on the course link), their enrolment (new enrolments on the course eCampus page) and cost per enrolment (if paid campaign,) and finally their referrals (when the recipient become an "ambassador" for ITCILO free SG courses by sharing the post/email with their network).



The results show that the conversion rate of social media organic posts was very high (35%), followed by LinkedIn Ads (17%). In terms of absolute numbers, 2,254 new enrolments came from Facebook Ads and the cost of a new enrolment was very low (€0.31). In terms of awareness, Facebook Ads were very effective with more than 2 million people seeing the post at least once or receiving the emails.

As a result, it can be stated that it is important to coordinate and integrate different promotional channels. In this case, promoting first on Facebook Ads and then organically could have helped to expand the audience interested in free SG DL courses through paid promotion and then increase the engagement and conversion rate.

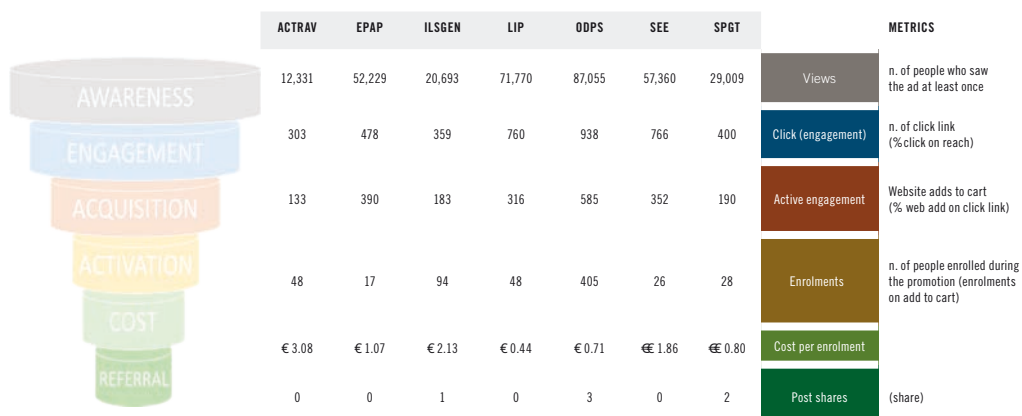
The box below shows the analytical results of the marketing mix on each channel, using the marketing funnel as a framework.²⁰



²⁰ For more information on data-driven marketing funnel see “Data-Driven Innovation, Why the Data-Driven Model Will Be Key to Future Success”, Michael Moesgaard Andersen, Torben Pedersen, 2021

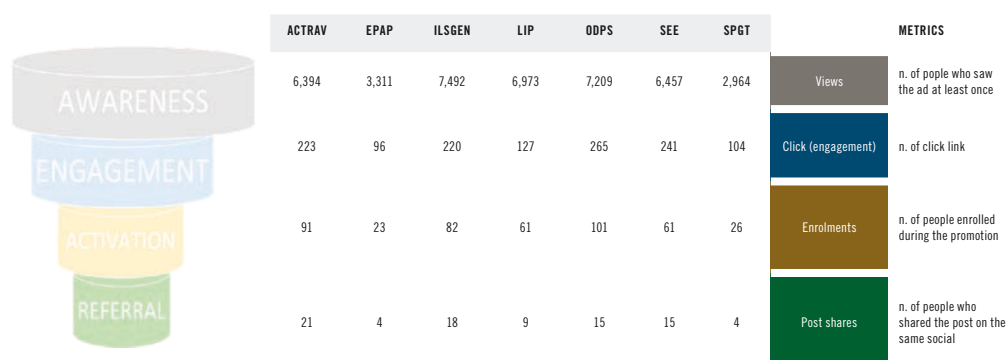
was very effective in terms of engagement (1.4% for reach) and shares (10.1% for acquisition). A specific note on the SPGT course: Facebook rejected the ad three times because it was not considered compliant with Meta Ads policies on social issues, elections or politics.²¹ This means that the ad did not run for a few hours during the promotion time. This may have affected the results of the Facebook campaign for this specific course. It is clear from this experience that the ITCILO should consider social media policies before posting.

LinkedIn Ads marketing funnel by course



The ODPS and LIP courses reached a large audience but, as a percentage of people reached, many people interacted with ILSGEN's course post and clicked on the EPAP course link. In absolute numbers, the "Introduction to PCM" course remains the most successful in converting leads, with 405 new enrolments, an acquisition cost of €0.71 and the creation of three ambassadors (3 shares).

Social Media organic (FB, IG, LinkedIn) marketing funnel by course



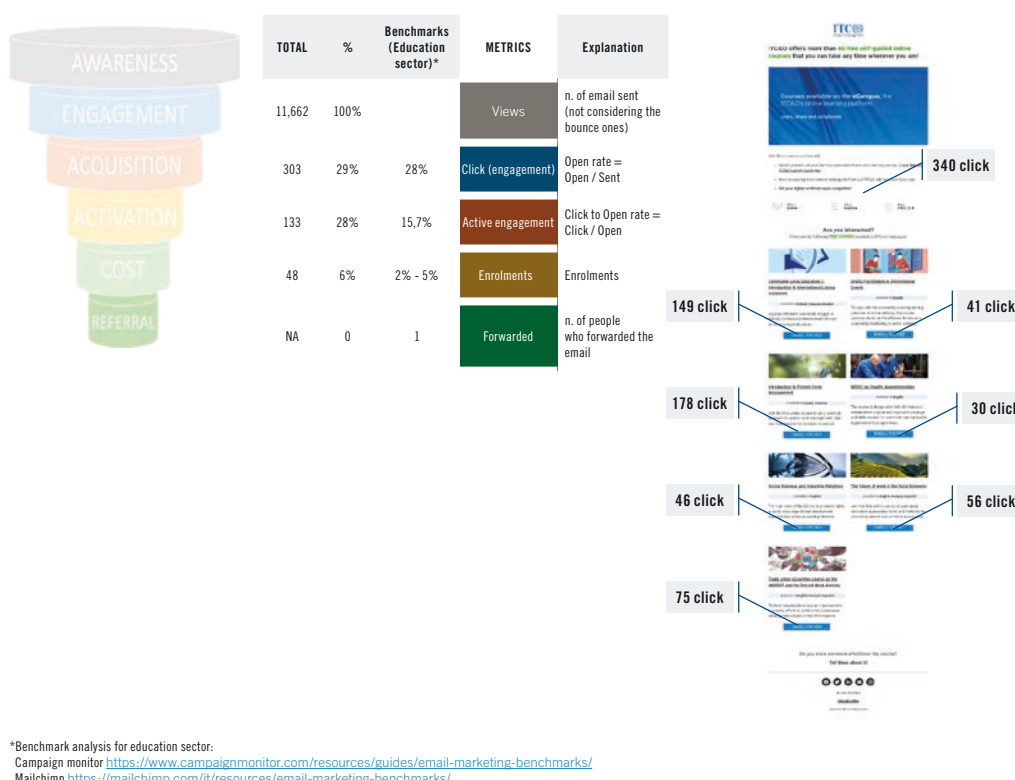
Social media organic posts were addressed to ITCILO followers on LinkedIn and Meta (Facebook and Instagram). The audience was the same for every post, while for the ads post the audience was targeted by interest, education and job (according to the area of interest of the course). As we can see from the marketing funnel above, engagement was quite well distributed, even though the numbers of people reached differed. The high number of shares for the ACTRAV course shows that, for our followers, the topic is relevant to themselves or their friends and family²² and that they support ITCILO causes or the ITCILO brand.²³

²¹ For more information: https://transparency.fb.com/en-gb/policies/ad-standards/SIEP-advertising/SIEP/?source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fpolicies_center%2Fads%2Frestricted_content%2Fpolitical

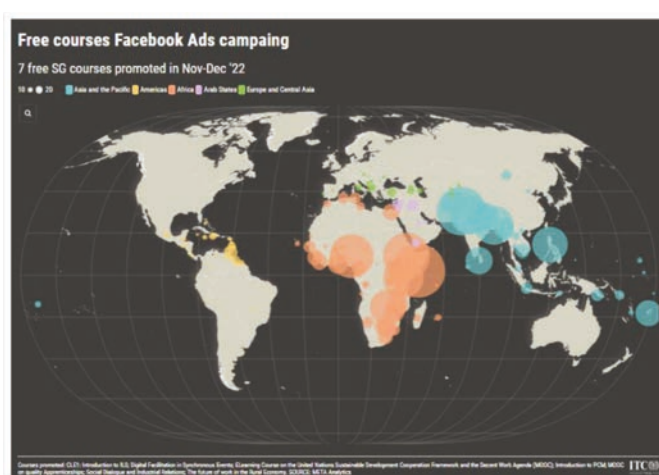
²² For more information: <https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/annenberg-communication-what-makes-us-share-posts-social-media>

²³ For more information: <https://digitalstack.io/the-5-reasons-why-anyone-would-share-your-posts/>

E-mail newsletter marketing funnel and number of clicks by course



In relation to the benchmark for the education sector,²⁴ the above graphic shows good open and click-to-open rates and also a good conversion rate. It is also interesting to see that the number of clicks differed from course to course, without showing a clear pattern, depending on the order of the courses promoted. The most clicked link was the one leading to the ITCILO's free SG DL portfolio, followed by the links to the course on Project Cycle Management, then the course on ILS. In general, the results were in line with those of the social media campaigns, where the Project Cycle Management and ILS courses were of greater interest to our audience, but we should also consider the fact that the e-mail newsletter results depend on the interests of the contacts in the database.



Aside from the choice of right channel mix, the geographical distribution of Facebook campaigns was not particularly efficient for certain areas, such as North and South America, Australia, north Europe, East Asia and North Africa. This may have been influenced by the language of the courses (mainly English), but it is important to reach countries and groups in

which ITCILO does not have a presence, so that the values of social justice and decent work can be spread around the world. This aspect can be further investigated in future experiments.

²⁴ Campaign monitor: <https://www.campaignmonitor.com/resources/guides/email-marketing-benchmarks/>

Mailchimp: <https://mailchimp.com/it/resources/email-marketing-benchmarks/>

6.2 Test 2: Promotion of the ITCILO's portfolio of free self-guided distance-learning courses

The results of the second part of the experiment show that centralized digital marketing boosts awareness and response rates, although effectiveness varies from channel to channel. The following graphic shows the results of the posts on Facebook and Instagram. The extent of the green bar represents their performance as compared with all ITCILO organic posts published in 2022.

PERFORMANCE OF POSTS PROMOTING ALL FREE COURSES AS COMPARED WITH ALL ITCILO ORGANIC POSTS IN 2022

Title	Date published	Reach	Engagements	Likes and reactions	Comments	Shares
<div><div><div></div><div><div></div><div>Build your future, like a better future! ITCILO offers free online c...</div><div>ITCLO</div></div></div><div><div>Boost Unavailable</div><div></div></div></div>	15 Nov 2022	5.3K Accounts Centre accounts reached	225 Post engagements	46 Reactions	1 Comments	10 Shares
<div><div><div></div><div><div></div><div>Build your future, like a better future! ITCILO offers free online courses...</div><div>itclo</div></div></div><div><div>Boost post</div><div></div></div></div>	15 Nov 2022	443 Accounts Centre accounts reached	26 Likes	0 Comments	0 Shares	

The green bar for Facebook organic posts is almost fully extended, showing that performance was far above average (except for comments), while there is room for improvement for posts on Instagram. Tracking and increasing views is important as, in general, a higher number of page views can lead to increased traffic to the ITCILO website.²⁵

RESULTS TABLE – PROMOTION OF THE PORTFOLIO OF FREE SG DL COURSES ON FACEBOOK

Metric		BASELINE (Average results of organic Facebook posts in 2022)	KPI	TARGET (baseline + 1)	RESULT (Facebook posts promoting free SG DL courses)
Promotion of the ITCILO portfolio of free SG DL courses	Views (no. of people reached)	3,303	Above the average for organic posts in 2022	3,304	5,276
	Active engagement (likes + shares + comments)	97	Above the average for organic posts in 2022	98	226

The following graphic compares the results for the promotion of the portfolio of the free self-guided distance-learning courses (test 1) with those for each individual course (test 2). Considering the views/number of people reached (FB²⁶: 5.3K, IG: 443), engagement (FB: 225, IG: N/A), likes and reactions (FB: 46, IG: 26), comments (FB: 1, IG: 0) and shares (FB: 10, IG: 0), the Facebook

²⁵ Search engines like Google take into account various factors in determining the ranking of websites on their search engine results pages. If a website receives a high number of views and positive user interactions, it will help to increasing its authority and relevance in the eyes of a search engine and potentially improve its ranking.

²⁶ FB stands for Facebook and IG stands for Instagram.

post promoting the portfolio performed well in relation to the results for the individual free SG DL courses posted organically. However, our presence on Instagram could be improved.

	Title		Date published	Reach	Engagements	Likes and reactions	Comments	Shares
	FREE COURSE! Do you want to know more about Trade Unions... ITCUD	Boost Unavailable	6 Dec 2022	3K Accounts Centre accounts reached	127 Post engagements	22 Reactions	2 Comments	6 Shares
	FREE COURSE! Do you want to be prepared to design, impleme... ITCUD	Boost Unavailable	3 Dec 2022	3.4K Accounts Centre accounts reached	95 Post engagements	24 Reactions	1 Comments	6 Shares
	FREE COURSE! Do you want to continue your legal education f... ITCUD	Boost Unavailable	4 Dec 2022	6.3K Accounts Centre accounts reached	166 Post engagements	28 Reactions	0 Comments	12 Shares
	FREE COURSE! Join this course to 🍷 Get an overview of the di... ITCUD	Boost Unavailable	3 Dec 2022	4.4K Accounts Centre accounts reached	141 Post engagements	26 Reactions	0 Comments	8 Shares
	FREE COURSE! Are you a policy maker promoting rural develop... ITCUD	Boost Unavailable	2 Dec 2022	2.5K Accounts Centre accounts reached	58 Post engagements	12 Reactions	0 Comments	6 Shares
	FREE COURSE! Do you want to promote social justice? Are you ... ITCUD	Boost Unavailable	1 Dec 2022	2.1K Accounts Centre accounts reached	59 Post engagements	10 Reactions	2 Comments	2 Shares
	FREE COURSE! Do you need to prepare yourself for a lifetime in... ITCUD	Boost Unavailable	30 Nov 2022	6.1K Accounts Centre accounts reached	244 Post engagements	43 Reactions	10 Comments	15 Shares
	Build your future, like a better future! ITCUD offers free online c... ITCUD	Boost Unavailable	15 Nov 2022	5.3K Accounts Centre accounts reached	225 Post engagements	46 Reactions	1 Comments	10 Shares
	Build your future, like a better future! ITCUD offers free online courses... Ilo	Boost post	15 Nov 2022	441 Accounts Centre accounts reached	--	26 Likes	0 Comments	0 Shares

Results differed from course to course. The differences in numbers of people reached and engagement in the posts promoting the individual courses (which were published within one week, one post at a time) confirm that the principal driver in stimulating demand continues to be the course topic.

RESULTS TABLE – PROMOTION OF THE SEVEN SELECTED COURSES ON FACEBOOK

Metric	Technical Programme of the course promoted	BASELINE (Average results of organic Facebook posts in 2022)	KPI (Above the average for organic posts in 2022)	TARGET (baseline + 1)	RESULT (Facebook posts promoting free SG DL courses)
Views (no. of people reached)	ACTRAV	3,303	Above the average for organic posts in 2022	3,304	3,076
	EPAP	3,303		3,304	3,466
	ILSGEN	3,303		3,304	6,325
	LIP	3,303		3,304	4,487
	SEE	3,303		3,304	2,563
	SPGT	3,303		3,304	2,127
	ODPS	3,303		3,304	6,146
	AVERAGE of the 7 courses	3,303		3,304	4,027
Active Engagement (likes + shares + comments)	ACTRAV	97	Above the average for organic posts in 2022	98	127
	EPAP	97		98	95
	ILSGEN	97		98	186
	LIP	97		98	141
	SEE	97		98	58
	SPGT	97		98	59
	ODPS	97		98	244
	AVERAGE of the 7 courses	97		98	130

The results for views, active engagement and enrolments in response to social media organic posts depend on the interests and profiles of ITCILO followers. It is therefore important to know the audience, their preferences, behaviours and needs when ITCILO is posting organically.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusions

The results of the tests lead us to conclude that:

- Meta, in particular Facebook Ads, is a very effective channel for the promotion of the free self-guided distance-learning courses as it stimulates enrolment in the promoted courses. However, there is scope for the ITCILO to improve its performance on LinkedIn and Instagram. In any case, while the choice of marketing channel influences results, the principal driver in stimulating demand continues to be the course topic. Aside from the channel mix, the geographical distribution of Facebook campaigns was not particularly efficient for certain areas, such as North and South America, Australia, north Europe, East Asia and North Africa. This may have been influenced by the language of the courses (mainly English), but it is important to reach countries and groups where ITCILO does not have a presence, so that the values of social justice and decent work around the world can be spread.
- Marketing mix: coordinating and integrating different promotional channels can help the ITCILO to reach more people and so increase views, engagement and enrolments. During this experiment, promoting first on Facebook Ads and then organically was helpful in expanding the audience interested in free self-guided distance learning courses through paid promotion. It was also helpful in increasing the engagement and conversion rates of our organic posts promoting the free self-guided distance-learning courses to our followers. Furthermore, an effective social media promotion that stimulates uptake increases the number of contacts on the ITCILO's CRM systems as their email addresses are imported into the list of contacts for future promotional campaigns.
- Both centralized and course-specific campaigns are effective in increasing visibility, engagement and enrolments in ITCILO training activities. The centralized promotion of free self-guided distance-learning courses via social media stimulates course uptake. To further improve uptake, these global campaigns should be accompanied by course-specific campaigns, ideally targeting groups of potential participants (personae) known to be more inclined towards online learning.

7.2 Recommendations and future experiments

For TDIR:

- Support Technical Programmes in developing additional free flagship self-guided distance-learning courses.
- At regular intervals, promote all free self-guided distance-learning courses and other types of courses to the beneficiary universe on Meta (Facebook in particular).
- Increase our presence and expertise on the current channels (for example Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter) with the help of LIP and ICTS.
- Further investigate engagement, conversion rates and beneficiaries' needs across channels to increase training outreach.
- Coordinate and integrate the promotion of training activities on different channels. In particular, after a social media paid promotion, engage with followers through organic posts.

For Technical Programmes:

- Develop at least one flagship free self-guided distance learning course per main area of expertise.
- Create a learning journey path on eCampus that can help participants to learn more about ITCILO training activities from the "Quick survey on the eCampus" conducted in September 2022.
- Use social media in general and Facebook Ads in particular to boost CRM and increase the universe of contacts.
- Use social media campaigns to significantly increase visibility and product awareness across the beneficiary universe.

Future experiments can be conducted to investigate how to:

- Expand the digital marketing mix, testing new channels (in particular Google Ads) as a way of increasing training outreach among core constituents, targeting groups with known vulnerabilities and groups of people in the unreached market. Use predictive marketing analytics and artificial intelligence to identify which new courses to promote, to which audiences, through which channels, at what times and with what messages.
- Incentivize follow-up enrolments, for example by embedding links to follow-up training activities and by offering the prospect of gaining a higher-level learning credential, for instance a diploma.
- Target email and social media campaigns efficiently to follow up on potential leads, customizing the message to the recipients' languages and known interest in topics.
- Conduct data analysis of the social media audience. It is important to understand ITCILO followers on social media so as to engage better with them and expand social media outreach with the main objective of sharing knowledge about social justice and decent work in the world of work.

ITCILO, 02.05.2023

INFO

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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