

Participation and Power: The Workshop
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This workshop is aimed at uncovering the issues of power which are inherent within the participatory process, and discussing mechanisms for enhancing the ability of workers to participate as equals. A combination of exercises, case studies and discussion will be utilized.

In the workplace, as in other sectors of society, one cannot avoid issues of power and control. In order to develop a true participatory process, it is necessary to recognize these issues and apply concrete methods to overcoming power imbalance. Power is manifested in decision-making in both overt and covert ways. Many of the participatory forms that are being used either ignore power issues totally or deal only with the overt manifestations. A model of power within social interaction will be discussed, based on the following four questions, that focuses on the covert:

- 1) Who makes the decisions?
- 2) Who sets the standards of behavior and option evaluation?
- 3) Who poses or defines the problem?
- 4) Who has access to resources, including information?

The workshop will examine techniques of participation such as brainstorming, consensus decision-making, analytical tools such as cost-benefit analysis, and participation training in light of the above model. It will also discuss specific cases of union-driven work re-organization and participatory design.

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