

Sharing Philippine Ban Asbestos Campaign

Presented by:

Alan A. Tanjusay

Policy Advocacy Officer,
Associated Labor Unions (ALU)

Spokesperson, Trade Union
Congress of the Philippines
(TUCP)

atanjusay@yahoo.com

November 24-25, 2014 Bangkok,
Thailand

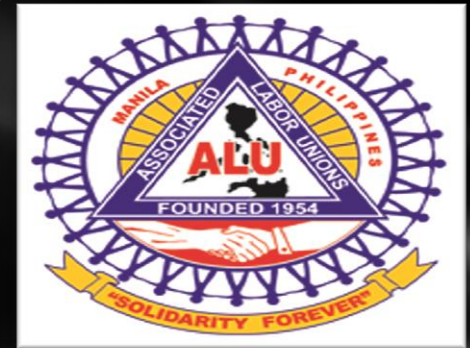


Presentation Outline

- Introduction: who & what is Associated Labor Unions (ALU), Building and Woodworkers International
- Philippine asbestos scenario
- ALU/BWI ban asbestos campaign
- Campaign experience and tactics
- Conclusion

The Associated Labor Unions

- Organized by 42 union workers in Cebu City port in April 1954
- Union members in 17 industries (land-based, seafarers)
- Biggest labor union federation in Philippines, more than 200 staffs
- Organizational structure administration, finance, audit, legal, medical, dental services, union organizers
- Consulted by government in crafting, re-crafting national laws, regulations, policies



The Associated Labor Unions

- Critical but constructive in promoting workers' rights & well being (wages, precarious work, workers health & safety, child labor, women, informal sector, etc.) in unilateral, bilateral, tri-partite mechanism
- Responsible partner of TUCP, Nagkaisa (United), BWI, UNI, ITF, JSU, IndustriALL,
- Collaborate with Government, ILO, WHO & NGOs, CSOs in forging solutions



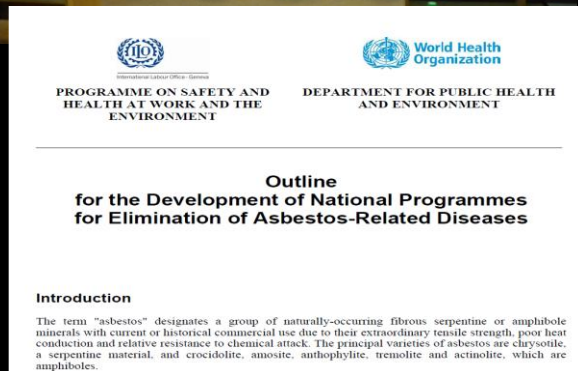
The Philippine asbestos scenario

1. Blue & brown asbestos are banned in 1980s
2. Chrysotile is regulated
3. First asbestos manufacturing company in 1954
4. 8 government housing projects with asbestos roofs
5. Water pipelines with asbestos until 1980s
6. 1,441 former US Navy port workers were tested from 1993-1996 by Lung Center of Phils./ class suit, settlement
7. 502 were found to have contracted asbestos diseases
8. Government created Chemical Control Order for asbestos, Code of Practice, ban bills, compensation for ARDs at the Employment Compensation Commission, Social Security System
9. Health Department attention to the disease– NPEAD process
10. Government estimates 1.3 million construction workers are significantly exposed every day
11. Asbestos industry employs 10,000 to 15,000 employees (manufacture of asbestos roof shingles, panel boards, brake and clutch pads etc.)

The ALU & BWI ban asbestos campaign



- ALU formally started the campaign in 2007
- Major break in August 2009 letter to former President Arroyo about adoption of ILO & WHO National Programmes for the Elimination of Asbestos-Related Diseases (NPEAD)
- 1st NPEAD meeting took place Sept. 16, 2009 with ALU, BWI affiliates, DOLE, DENR, DOH, DOST, DTI, Customs, SSS, ECC, Cancer Society, Association of Chrysotile Industry of the Philippines (ACIP)



The ALU & BWI ban asbestos campaign

- Filed ban asbestos bill in July 2010, re-crafted, re-filed in 2013
- Pressure to improve Philippine government position in Rotterdam Convention
- Pressure the Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education to stop using asbestos wire gauze in schools upon ALU/BWI discovery in August 2012



<http://www.rappler.com/nation/31593-asbestos-lab-schools>

Cancerous material still in most school labs – labor group

BY JEE Y. GERONIMO

POSTED ON 06/18/2013 6:38 PM | UPDATED 06/18/2013 7:24 PM



CANCER
OUS. ALU-TUCP advocacy officer Alan Tanjusay shows asbestos-laden wire gauzes found in some high schools in Metro Manila. Photo by Jee Geronimo/Rappler

MANILA, Philippines – Labor groups on Tuesday, June 18, revived talks with the Department of Education (DepEd) regarding the presence of cancer-causing wire gauze in most public and private school laboratories in the country.

Alan Tanjusay, Associated Labor Union-Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (ALU-TUCP) advocacy officer, said that just two weeks ago, they found asbestos wire gauzes in the laboratories of 8 schools in Metro Manila.

This is despite DepEd's "positive response" to the same call by the labor federation in 2011.

In a letter addressed to Education Secretary Armin Luistro, ALU-TUCP president Michael Mendoza pointed out how the department continues to "unknowingly [put] to great risk the health of millions of students, teachers and non-teaching staffs...to highly cancerous asbestos dust fibers."

Wire gauze is commonly used in chemistry and biology experiments.

The ALU & BWI ban asbestos campaign



- Catalyze government action in addressing improper asbestos abatement in Manila Thermal Power Plant, Central bank renovation
- Deepen, expand network with local labor groups (NAGKAISA), environmental advocates (Greenpeace, Eco-Waste), GUFs
- Partner and contribute with ABAN, IBAS, TBAN and other ban asbestos network advocates
- Using conventional tri-media & new media in educating general public, civil societies, non-government organizations on asbestos & catalyze their support

Shared burden on Chrysotile Information Center (CIC) influence in Southeast Asia



- Discovered active presence of lobby group Chrysotile Information Center (CIC) in the Philippines with the all-expense paid trip of 4 government officials (legislator with wife, and 1 each from OSHC, ECC, DENR)
- Accompanied by 2 Filipino CIC staffs and 1 from CIC Thailand
- From August 1-10, 2014, they were brought to Eternit factory– the Chrysotile Asbestos Manufacturing Plant and to the Open-pit Chrysotile mine to show that Chrysotile is not harmful
- The Philippine CIC is now actively seeking out politician legislators, government executives, & platforms to lobby against ban asbestos bill and against our ban asbestos movement campaign---that Chrysotile is safe



Campaign experience and tactics: Tips

- Robust advocacy organization: goal, objective, workplan
- Optimize government capacity, political will
- Use CSO, NGO partnership well
- Use information, network and partnership very well
- Be creative , simple and consistent in utilizing opportunities, media
- Be constructively militant and assertive
- Make calibrated risk
- Remember that you have an adversary: the asbestos lobby group, asbestos related diseases



Conclusion

- Facebook: Ban Asbestos Philippines



Campaign targets for 2015

- Pressure government to come out with Asbestos Code of Practice within next year
- Pressure government to approval raising government standard on Threshold Limit Value of asbestos workplace from 2 to 0.1 fiber per cubic centimeter
- Try to organize an asbestos victims' group to humanize campaign
- Develop NPEAD matrix
- Asbestos in Haiyan-hit areas