



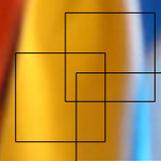
International
Labour
Organization

The ILO at Work

Results 2014-2015



The Americas: Latin America and the Caribbean



ILO work in the regions

THE AMERICAS: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Projects: **116**

Countries: **33**
(and 9 non-metropolitan territories)

Ratifications of international labour
standards: **14**

Active Decent Work Country
Programmes: **5**



In 2015, after almost a decade of sustained growth and social improvement, many countries in Latin America and the Caribbean experienced an economic slowdown accompanied by deteriorating employment and working conditions. The regional unemployment rate rose from 6.2 per cent in 2014 to 6.7 per cent in 2015, meaning that 1.7 million workers – more than half of them women – joined the ranks of the unemployed. There are also worrying signs of growing informality and declining respect for rights at work.

This scenario influenced ILO activities during 2014-15. The ILO has supported its constituents on labour formalization, with a special focus on workers' rights, social protection and the productivity of micro and small enterprises. The ILO also continued to tackle key development issues, such as youth employment and entrepreneurship, skills for jobs of the future, and the elimination of child labour and forced labour.



“We have to continue our fight against inequality, create jobs, and ensure the access of the most vulnerable to essential public services, decent housing, health care, and quality education.”

H.E. Mr. Juan Carlos Varela Rodriguez, President of the Republic of Panama in his address to the 104th Session of the International Labour Conference, 11 June 2015

Latin American and Caribbean governments, workers and employers adopted the “Lima Declaration” in October 2014, at the 18th American Regional Meeting of the ILO, held in Peru. The Declaration highlights the main challenges faced by the region and requests the ILO to provide timely support to address inequality, informality and rights at work through policies that promote economic and social inclusion, productive employment, and sustainable enterprises.



Formalizing the informal economy

“Informality is a labour issue which is very relevant to this region. It is not about the quantity, but the quality of jobs. The informal economy poses a formidable yet unavoidable challenge, in order to move towards a future of sustainable and equitable development. Formalized work leads to growth, social inclusion and sustainable development, and this is true for all countries.”

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder at the 18th American Regional Meeting of the ILO, 13 October 2014

A key challenge for Latin America and the Caribbean is formalization, considering that half of the region's workforce – around 130 million people – find themselves in the informal economy, often earning less than the minimum wage and without access to social protection. Through its Regional Programme for the Promotion of Formalization in Latin America and the Caribbean (FORLAC), the ILO has developed several initiatives that have led to legislative and policy changes in **Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico** and **Peru**. Social actors across the region have also been active on this front. In 2015, for example, the **Jamaica** Employer's Federation, with ILO support, adopted a gender-sensitive policy on the transition to formality – with guidance to support its members towards business formalization.

In the spotlight: Ensuring rights at work in the informal economy

The project on Promoting Respect for Labour Rights of Workers in the Informal Economy in Costa Rica, El Salvador and Honduras (PROSEI) began in 2012. Its goal is to create and strengthen mechanisms for women and men working in the informal economy so that they can move towards formality – through access to social protection and by ensuring that their rights are realized. With activities in selected municipalities of the three countries, governments, workers' and employers' organizations are key stakeholders in this project.

So far the project has achieved the establishment of tripartite social dialogue "tables" in all participating municipalities where policy measures are discussed to promote the transition to formality. At the same time, the capacities of workers – and their right to organize

and associate in the informal economy – has been strengthened. More than 200 women entrepreneurs have been trained on how to formalize their businesses. The ILO has provided technical assistance to the development of specific legislation relating to the extension of social protection in the informal economy in El Salvador and Honduras, and helped simplify the participating municipalities' procedures in all three countries.

Strengthening trade unions is essential so that they can train and organize workers in the informal economy. So far, by strengthening the capacity of 70 trade union leaders, more than 300 workers have received training on how to organize and move towards formalization.



Our impact, their story: Lennin

In 2008 the ILO set up the Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) programme, now active in nine countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia and the Pacific, which aims to increase productivity and improve working conditions in small and medium-sized enterprises through workplace cooperation. In the Andean region, SCORE has benefited a total of 71,890 workers in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru, by using a methodology that harnesses the direct link between productivity and good working conditions in businesses.

In **Colombia** the SCORE methodology has been used in 95 companies and has benefited 63,188 workers and managers (53 per cent of them women). In most of the participating enterprises the application of this tool has led to substantial improvements in working conditions, especially health and security, based on trust and dialogue between managers and workers. In Nariño, where more than two-thirds of the population lives in poverty and about 400,000 families have been victims of armed conflict, the ILO has joined forces with the

National Apprenticeship Service (SENA) to develop SCORE for several cooperatives, ultimately benefiting more than 300 families who mainly work in the production of agricultural goods. As a result, all cooperatives have reported a reduction in transportation costs and production time, as well as an increase in the income of their members. Given the excellent results, SENA has decided to include SCORE in its portfolio of courses and tools, thereby ensuring much wider impact throughout Colombia.

“Thanks to the SCORE methodology we have been able to improve the way we handle chemical products, avoiding personal and environmental accidents. We all had to make a contribution to ensure that these processes are implemented in the best possible way.

Lennin Puche Contreras, Supervisor of Health and Security in the Workplace, ESECO, Ltd., Riohacha, Colombia



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Strengthening labour administration, workers and employers, and promoting social dialogue

A major element of the ILO's work in the region in 2014–15 has been the strengthening of labour administration and of workers' and employers' organizations, and the promotion of social dialogue, as tripartite institutions are essential to good governance and democracy. The ILO has implemented capacity-building programmes on freedom of association and collective bargaining, with a focus on the public sector, legislative reform and gender equality. The ILO has also implemented significant projects to support public institutions and social partners so that they can create an enabling environment where respect for rights at work is promoted, also by strengthening labour inspection and labour mediation institutions in various countries, including **Guatemala** and **Colombia**.

In June 2014, the ILO launched a project supporting the labour inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in **Haiti**. A ministry task force has been set up, and training for ministries' mediators, conciliators and labour inspectors has been provided in collaboration with the Labour Ombudsperson and Better Work Haiti.



Ensuring decent work for young women and men

As in other parts of the world, young people in Latin America and the Caribbean suffer from the lack of decent work opportunities. The ILO has developed a knowledge sharing platform and has held capacity-building events focusing on informality among young people, young women's and men's first jobs, youth entrepreneurship, and rights at work.

The ILO has strengthened the Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (ILO-CINTERFOR), based in Montevideo, Uruguay, as a repository of technical experience benefiting training institutions — with the capacity to provide substantive advice on competencies for the jobs of the future and promote South-South cooperation. For example, ILO-CINTERFOR has implemented projects to enhance the skills and abilities of people detained in police custody as a way of facilitating their reintegration into the labour market on their release.



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In the spotlight: Combating forced labour

“According to the ILO, approximately 21 million people are victims of forced labour in the world and 1.8 million are victims of such practices in Latin America and the Caribbean. We share Peru’s concern about the need for reliable and systematized information about forced labour in the country. We also agree with Peru about the need to strengthen inter-agency coordination to combat forced labour.”

Chargé d’Affaires (CDA) of the United States to Peru, Jeffrey M. Hovenier, at the launch of the project in Lima, 13 March 2014

The project Strengthening and Disseminating Efforts to Combat Forced Labour in Brazil and Peru has contributed to the improvement of public policies in both countries: in Peru a roadmap has been prepared for the implementation of the Intersectoral Protocol against Forced Labour through the labour Inspectorate, which better coordinates the work of all relevant



SUNAHIL Peru

authorities to tackle this phenomenon. The project has also trained justice officials (including prosecutors, the police and judges) and labour administration officials, and has provided for the collection and dissemination of knowledge on forced labour and risk factors through studies in key sectors (such as illegal logging, gold mining and domestic work), especially through South-South cooperation with Brazil.

Stepping up efforts to end child labour and forced labour

“I believe that modern slavery is the most outrageous assault on the rights of an individual. It is something that touches me deeply because I grew up in rural Brazil and could see first-hand how poverty forced people to work in harsh, exploitative conditions.”

Wagner Moura, award-winning actor and ILO Goodwill Ambassador on forced labour

The elimination of child labour and forced labour has continued to be an issue of special concern for the ILO in Latin America and the Caribbean. Some 12.5 million children and adolescents in the region are still in child labour, most of them in hazardous work. The ILO has supported the development of national strategies to address this issue, such as Crecer Felices (Growing up happy) in **Chile**. At the ILO’s 2014 American Regional Meeting, 25 countries launched an initiative with the goal of achieving a region free of child labour by 2025: the



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Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour Regional Initiative. In a South–South cooperation forum held in 2015, more than 50 agreements were reached between Latin American countries to share experience on matters such as the school-to-work transition, child labour in agriculture, policy decentralization, and child labour in value chains. In 2015, **Cuba** became the 180th ILO Member State to ratify Convention No. 182, which calls for the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

“Today, Cuba joins the global fight against the scourge of child labour in all forms, and commits to protecting children from work that has a debilitating effect on their health, morals or psychological well-being. Cuba’s ratification confirms the status of Convention No. 182 as the most ratified ILO Convention, bringing us one step closer to the goal of its universal ratification.

ILO Director-General Guy Ryder on the occasion of the Government of Cuba’s deposit of the instrument of ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 29 September 2015

To fight forced labour, the ILO implemented a major South-South cooperation project between **Brazil** and **Peru**, as well as many specific initiatives in these and other countries.

“It is precisely because of the persistence of an economic and social growth model with high volatility, poor economic and social inclusion, poor traction in labour markets, and poor environmental impact, that the concept of sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth, job creation, full and productive employment and decent work for all has become relevant, and therefore has now emerged fully as SDG 8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, ILO Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean, at the XIX Inter-American Conference of Labour Ministers, Cancun, December 2015

Our impact, their story: Candy

The programme the Economic Inclusion and Sustainable Development of Andean Grain Producers in Rural Areas of Extreme Poverty in Ayacucho and Puno is a partnership between the ILO, FAO and UNESCO. It aims to improve farmers and quinoa producers’ employment and incomes. Ensuring gender equality, respect for economic and social rights, and rights at work are key to the success of the programme. In Puno, for example, the project has contributed to the development of a pilot organic quinoa production model involving a chain of small producers associated with a cooperative.

Since the programme started in 2015 it has benefited 2,573 people (1,339 men and 1,234 women) and has certified 42 trainers and workers in value chains, cooperatives, financial education, and other issues such as the prevention of family violence and food security. The programme has trained more than 1,200 quinoa producers in Puno and Ayacucho and is directly associated with the attainment of several Sustainable Development Goals.

“The programme is a good initiative to ensure direct sale from producer to final consumer, for export or the national market, as it provides what we always wanted: a greater return on our product and sources of direct income for producers, ensuring that not only large companies see major earnings. It is a pilot from which we will learn, and we will continue with organic certification.

Candy Condori Mamani, President of the Capro Seeds cooperative



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“A strict line between humanitarian and development dimensions has become increasingly difficult to maintain... Consequently, jobs and livelihoods are moving to the centre stage.

Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General

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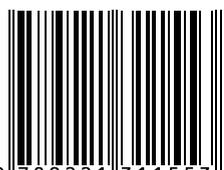
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