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# *Inter-American Research and Documentation Centre on Vocational Training*

*Coordinating unit and technical cooperation instrument  
among institutions and agencies committed  
to vocational training*

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The Inter-American Research and Documentation Centre on Vocational Training (CINTERFOR) is a technical service of the International Labour Organization (ILO) created at the 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of American States Members of the ILO in 1961 and established in Montevideo, Uruguay, since 1964.

It acts as the core of a system made up of the institutions and agencies related to vocational training of the ILO Member States in the Americas and Spain.

It is by nature the co-ordinator and technical cooperation instrument between its member institutions; it encourages and promotes the development of human resource training institutions, through the exchange of experiences among them, based on studies and research, information and documentation, and the transfer of methodologies and technologies typical of vocational training, and helps to train the executive, technical and teaching staff of the institutions of the region.

The work of the Centre is done within the framework of the programme led by the ILO through its Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, with headquarters in Lima, and the Skills and Employability Department of the ILO in Geneva.

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## *Its objectives*

- To promote and strengthen horizontal technical cooperation aimed at developing and streamlining the vocational training systems in the whole region.
- To help design public policies and implement vocational training programmes, through the promotion of strategic alliances between the State, employers and workers organizations.
- To develop and expand the regional network of information on vocational training among stakeholders, through the dissemination of information, experiences and innovations, technologies and knowledge accumulated in the region and through other networks of information on vocational training the world over.
- To promote research activities and studies leading to the institutionalisation and establishment of vocational training systems and programmes in accordance with efficiency, competitiveness and social equity requirements.

## *Financing*

Cinterfor/ILO finances its activities with the contributions it receives from the ILO as well as voluntary contributions committed by the vocational training agencies of the ILO Member States in the American region and Spain and the contribution of its host country, Uruguay. It also obtains resources from international technical cooperation, both bilateral and multilateral, as well as earnings from the sale of its publications.

The contributions in services offered by the national and international agencies committed to joint initiatives and the mobilisation of specific resources by national and international agencies are decisive factors that facilitate the action of the Centre in the region.

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## *Modes of intervention*

Cinterfor/ILO seeks to fulfil its tasks in answer to the resolutions adopted by the Technical Committee, its governing body that is made up of representatives of the ILO Member States of the American region and Spain. For that purpose it avails itself of a praxis and a style of work that has been improved and consolidated throughout its existence.

The organization and projection of its work is structured mainly around three spheres of action:

- **Technical cooperation**
- **Editorial production**
- **Dissemination of knowledge**

Although each of these areas has its own identity and clearly delimited fields of action, the three find their *raison d'être* and fulfil the mission assigned to them in a clear and systematic reciprocally articulated manner.

Their main tools to respond to the demands of Member States are: research; technical assistance; training of technicians, executives and social players; holding technical meetings and seminars; editorial production and the dissemination of knowledge through its electronic portal.

Cinterfor/ILO bases its *modus operandi* on two main axes: horizontal co-operation and the sum of efforts with other institutional initiatives. From its origins, the Centre established itself as a horizontal co-operation mechanism of national vocational training institutions. Thus, the basic support for its action lies in the capacities of its own member institutions, on the basis of which it promotes circulation of the knowledge themselves generate.

In order to avoid duplicating efforts, Cinterfor/ILO appeals to the construction of alliances with other institutions of diverse types that act in the training environment. To do this, it maintains fluid ties of co-operation with other agencies of the United Nations System: UNESCO, ECLAC, PAHO/WHO, World Bank; with other international agencies: Inter-American Development Bank, Organization of American States, Ibero-American Youth Organisation and the Organisation of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture. At the bilateral co-operation level, the following deserve to be mentioned: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, GTZ of Germany and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Spain.

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## *Strategic areas for action*

Cinterfor/ILO at present concentrates its efforts around several strategic areas that are significantly important for the development of vocational training as an instrument to contribute to the achievement of decent work for the workers of the American continent, which is the objective of the ILO for the coming years. The areas referred to are:

- Competency-based training
- Quality management in training
- Gender mainstreaming in training
- Youth skills development and employment
- Social dialogue in the field of training
- The role of trade unions in vocational training
- The role of employers in vocational training
- Training and rural development.

The Centre fulfils its role through the identification, exchange and dissemination of information, knowledge and experiences that favour the development of co-operation among countries and the social dialogue among the participants, actors, agents, stakeholders, that is becoming ever more important. Information management in the areas mentioned above is a key factor in the execution of the Cinterfor/ILO programme of action, that concentrates its efforts on the detection of innovations, analysis of trends, systematisation, documentation and dissemination of experiences, spaces for dialogue and exchange, etc.

The Centre believes that the institutionality of training has proved to be an unavoidable requirement to guarantee the accumulation of a pool of knowledge and methodologies applied to the training of workers. The innovation and development typical of organizations that learn is also corroborated by the level of institutional development of training. Action with institutional backing allows the organizations to learn and to continually improve training processes. It is very unlikely, in this sense, that isolated and sporadic investment will manage to provide the conceptual content to training actions such as that provided by effective institutional backing and accumulation of experiences. Thus, the Centre will continue to develop instruments and tools to improve institutional management and to train the executive and management cadres in order to facilitate innovation and institutional change.