



International  
Labour  
Organization

# The ILO in Fiji



## Key Facts and Figures

Population (2012): 875,000

GDP per capita (2012): US\$ 4,260

Labour force (2012): 342,000

- 227,000 male

- 115,000 female

Labour participation rate (2012): 55.0%

- 72.0% male

- 37.5% female

Employment to population ratio (2012): 50.4%

- 67.2% male

- 33.0% female

Unemployment rate (2011): 8.4%

- 6.6% male

- 11.8% female

Fiji's economic growth suffered a major setback in late 2006 when the military coup put the country into social unrest and damaged investors' confidence. Its GDP growth plunged to a negative 6.6 per cent in 2007 and remained almost "zero growth" in the next few years. In 2013, Fiji's GDP rebounded to a 3.6 per cent broad-based economic growth. Tourism, sugar exports and remittances from Fijians working abroad are main sources of the national revenue.

### Ratified Conventions

Fiji has ratified 37 ILO Conventions including all eight Fundamental Conventions:

C.29 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930

C.87 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948

C.98 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949

C.100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951

C.105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957  
(Not in force)

C.111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958

C.138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973

C.182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999



The presidential election in September 2014 is expected to stabilize Fiji's political situation and boost investors' confidence. But in order to keep the momentum of economic growth, Fiji needs to address issues such as deteriorating physical infrastructure, growing squatter settlements, unproductive farms and rising unemployment.

Fiji has the most developed labour market information system in the Pacific Islands region. However, untimeliness and infrequency have limited its usefulness for decision-making purposes.

Young people in Fiji experience significantly higher unemployment rates than their adult counterparts and constitute a big proportion of the unemployed workforce. The prospects of young school leavers obtaining paid employment in the formal sector are limited. On the other hand, Fiji experiences severe labour shortages mainly caused by the ongoing emigration of skilled labour as well as low levels of workplace competence.

The informal economy in Fiji is not particularly visible because most of it is home-based and consists of tailored products, handicrafts and the processing of agricultural produce. As the rural-urban migration is accelerating and job opportunities in the wage sector are declining, the informal sector appears to play an important role in absorbing surplus labour, contributing to GDP and augmenting household income.

Sources: ILO KILM.

## The ILO - Who We Are

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the UN specialized agency dealing with work and workplace issues, and related rights and standards. Its overarching goal is to achieve decent work for all so everyone benefits from working conditions that offer freedom, equity, security and human dignity. In working towards this goal the ILO has four principal strategic objectives:

- To promote and realize standards, and fundamental principles and rights at work.
- To create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment.
- To enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all.
- To strengthen the relationship between workers, employers and governments, and encourage social dialogue.

Founded in 1919, the ILO is the only surviving major creation of the Treaty of Versailles, which established the League of Nations. It became the first specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946.

# The ILO in Fiji

Fiji became a member of the ILO in 1974. In 1975, the ILO opened its office in Suva, Fiji, managing the ILO work in Fiji and other neighbouring countries in the South Pacific.

## Current areas of work

In response to Fiji's social and economic needs and corresponding with strategies and activities rolled out in its development frameworks, the ILO in consultation with its tripartite constituents formulated a Decent Work Country Programme for Fiji (2010-12) with four main priority areas:

- Review and implementation of the Employment Relations Promulgation and related legislation.
- Promotion of decent employment opportunities.
- Extending social protection.
- Capacity building of tripartite partners and strengthening of tripartism.



A wide range of projects have been undertaken, or are still in operation, to create decent work for all within the framework of the DWCP, including:

- Integrated Human Resource Development Programme for Employment Promotion (IHRDPEP): Initiated scores of income generating activities and created thousands of jobs in the informal sector.
- Cash for Work Project: Provided alternative post-disaster employability skills.
- Social Security in Pacific Island Countries project: Conducted baseline social security studies with the aim of determining the areas of productivity improvement of provident fund institutions, as well as possible extension of coverage and feasibility studies on extending social security.
- Walking out of Poverty project: Trained poor people in urban and rural areas in vocational skills.
- Pacific Regional Strategy Implementation Programme for HIV/AIDS: Formulated National HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy.
- Strengthening the Creative Industries in Five ACP Countries Through Employment and Trade Expansion: Enhanced employment and entrepreneurial skills for artists.
- Tackling Child Labour through Education (TACKLE): Formulated a Project Advisory Committee on Child Labour, conducted a legislative review of child labour, finalized research and organized training and workshops.
- Men as Partners in Reproductive Health project: Reached out to thousands of people nationwide.
- Trained social partners in the areas of labour law, industrial relations, tripartism and social dialogue, conciliation, mediation and dispute settlements.
- Built the capacity of employers' organizations in Corporate Social Responsibility and women's entrepreneurial skills, and for workers' organisations in the Maritime Labour Convention, safety in Ports and Fishing, OSH/HIV and Freedom of Association/ Collective Bargaining awareness.
- Conducted labour market information and analysis to improve OSH in Ports.

## Social partners

The social partners are the Fiji Trades Union Congress (FTUC), the Fiji Employers Federation (FEF), and the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment (MLIRE).

## The International Labour Organization

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is the UN agency for the world of work. It was founded in 1919 as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the principle that universal and lasting peace can only be achieved if it is built on social justice. The ILO is the only 'tripartite' United Nations agency that brings together representatives of governments, employers and workers to shape policies and programmes for social justice and decent working and living conditions for all women and men. For this it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969. The ILO is also responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards (Conventions and Recommendations). This unique arrangement gives the organization an edge in incorporating 'real world' knowledge about employment and work into its activities.



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