



International
Labour
Organization

April 2009

ILO 90 - Celebrating
90 Years of Working
for Social Justice

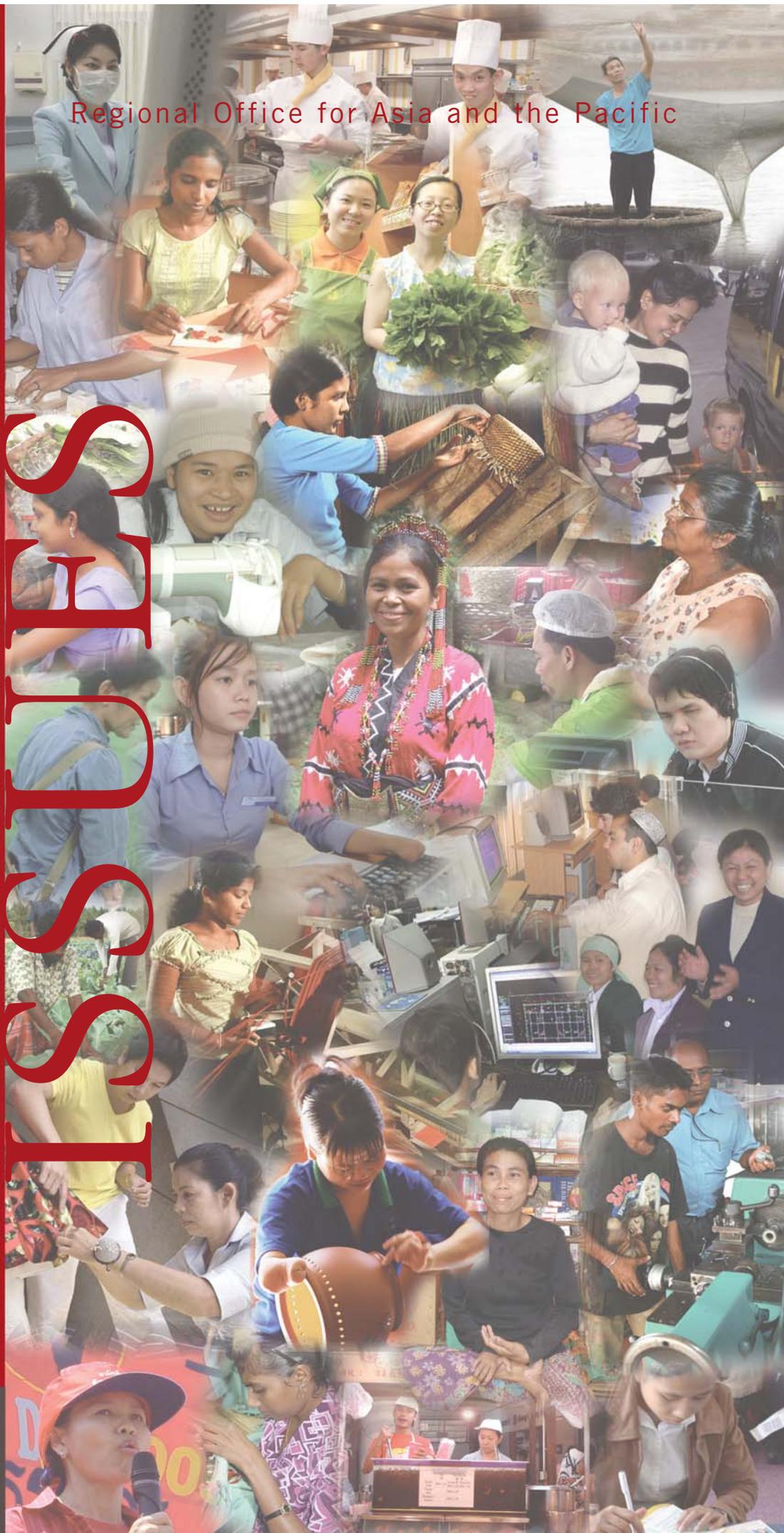
Economic Crisis Hits
Asia's Workers

Sri Lanka's Young
Fish Breeders

Growing up
in Papua

90 YEARS

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific



DECENT WORK

A better world starts here

90 years working for social justice

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Cover: In 2009 the ILO marks 90 years of campaigning to improve the lives of working people. The occasion will be marked by events throughout Asia and the Pacific, focusing on the period 21 to 28 April.

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IN BRIEF

Manila Economic Crisis Meeting

Delegates representing 11 countries in Asia and the Pacific met in Manila to discuss policy responses to the current economic crisis. Delegates to the meeting, "Responding to the Economic Crisis – Coherent Policies for Growth, Employment and Decent Work in Asia and the Pacific", included workers, employers, and representatives of ministries of finance, planning and labour. They agreed that responses must support employment, enterprises and vulnerable groups. The outcomes of the discussions, held from 18 to 20 February, were forwarded to a high level meeting on the crisis convened by the ILO's Governing Body in Geneva. More information about the Manila meeting and the reports prepared for it can be found at the Events & Meetings page of the Web Site: www.ilo.org/asia

60th Anniversary of Conventions No. 87 & No. 98

The 60th Anniversary of the ILO Conventions on Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining was marked with a tripartite seminar held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 30 January. The event followed up on recommendations made by the Committee of Standards at the 97th ILC (2008), and discussed the importance of social dialogue in a changed political environment. About 140 people representing workers, employers, government officials and the ILO took part.

ILO Directors' Meeting

ILO Directors and Deputy Directors of Subregional and Country Offices from throughout Asia and the Pacific met in Bangkok, 2-6 February to discuss implementation and resources planning, technical cooperation delivery, knowledge management, preparations for the 2010 Asian Regional Meeting, legal matters and key regional and global issues.

Ms Sachiko Yamamoto, Regional Director, said that 2009 would be a challenging year; the ILO will be organizing activities to commemorate its 90th Anniversary, assisting constituents with the labour and employment impact of the financial crisis, and following up on the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for A Fair Globalization.

ILO Officials Receive Viet Nam Awards

The ILO's work in developing trade union organizations in Viet Nam has been recognised by the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL). Ms Elsa Ramos, Senior Specialist in Workers' Activities, ILO Bangkok, and her predecessor Mr Raghwan Raghwan, currently ACTRAV (Geneva) Desk Officer for Asia and the Pacific received the medals on behalf of the ILO, from Mr Hoang Ngoc Thanh, Vice President of the VGCL at VGCL Headquarters in Hanoi on 11 February. From left: Mr Raghwan, Mr Hoang, Ms Ramos, Mr Li Van Tran, VGCL International Secretary.

Insurance for India's Tea Plantation Workers

The ILO's Microinsurance Innovation Facility, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, has awarded a grant to ICICI Prudential Life to develop an effective, affordable life insurance product with a saving component, to reduce the vulnerability of more than 1.2 million Assam tea plantation workers and their families in the next 3 years. Tea plantation workers, who are one of the most marginalized groups of workers, are often not able to afford risk insurance.

The grant will help ICICI roll out a pilot product and strengthen relationships with key partners such as tea estates, tea plantation workers' associations, micro-finance institutions and cooperatives. The aim is to build relationships with the workers and help them understand and make use of the benefits of the product. To ensure high quality service and help to educate the workers about insurance, ICICI Prudential will also set up service centres at the tea plantations. These service centres will be the primary point of contact for customers and will handle premium payments, service requests and claims processing.

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND ASIA'S WORKERS

By Steven Kapsos, *Labour Economist, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific*

Against the backdrop of the global financial crisis the ILO released its *2009 Global Employment Trends (GET) Report* in January.

A key finding of the report is that the global economic crisis is likely to lead to a dramatic increase in unemployment, working poverty and vulnerable employment. Globally, the report finds that unemployment could increase by as much as 50 million between 2007 and 2009 and that 200 million workers around the world risk falling into extreme poverty.

Despite tremendous growth and development in recent years the GET report indicates that workers in the Asian region will not escape the current crisis. One way in which the economic crisis is affecting Asian labour markets is through declining demand for labour – reflected in rising unemployment and underemployment rates, reduced working hours, declining labour force participation (due to discouragement among workers unable to find jobs), downward pressure on wages and less job security.

In the most “optimistic” scenario in the GET, unemployment in Asia and the Pacific would increase by 8 million between 2007 and 2009. But this projection was based on GDP growth projections that have since been revised substantially downward. Hence, more pessimistic scenarios are currently more probable outcomes.

In the second scenario unemployment in Asia would increase by 15 million, from a rate of 4.6 per cent in 2007 to 5.1 per cent in 2009. In the most pessimistic scenario, the number of unemployed in Asia would surge by 27 million and the unemployment rate would reach 5.9 per cent.

The advent of the most pessimistic scenario would represent an unprecedented increase in unemployment in the region as a

whole. Given the large number of workers living with their families near or below the poverty line who simply cannot afford to be unemployed (based on the standard definition), this may not emerge. However, anecdotal information from countries in the region – most notably the news that 20 million internal migrant workers in China have lost their jobs – indicates that this scenario cannot be dismissed.

At the start of the crisis more than 60 per cent of Asia’s workers were classified as being in “vulnerable employment” (either own-account workers or unpaid family workers). In South Asia more than three-quarters of workers were classified as vulnerable. The number of workers in vulnerable employment in Asia is likely to rise substantially – by up to 60 million in 2009, indicating that the crisis is not only affecting the number of jobs but also the quality of employment.

The GET also found that of the 200 million workers worldwide who are most susceptible to slipping into extreme poverty (e.g. an income of less than US\$1.25 per person per day), 140 million are in Asia.

What can be done to minimize the adverse impacts of the crisis on workers in Asia? Recent announcements of large fiscal stimulus packages in many Asian countries are a good start, but the packages must be well-designed and well-targeted to have the maximum benefit.

Social safety nets, such as unemployment insurance, health care coverage, and direct support to poor families should be strengthened in order to ensure that basic levels of consumption are maintained and that children are able to remain in school. There is a need to focus measures on vulnerable groups in the labour market, such as women and young people, who are most likely to be pushed into poverty.

Special attention should be given to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) since they account for the bulk of employment and are disproportionately affected by a credit crunch, as they often have difficulties getting credit even in good economic times.

Given the large, negative, economic shock their key trading partners are experiencing, export-oriented economies should not pin their hopes on consumers in industrialized



Investing in infrastructure such as public transport is one way that governments can use crisis relief packages to create employment and support business. Photo: ILO/Jakarta, 2008.

economies. Supporting domestic demand will be essential. Investments in construction and rehabilitation of physical infrastructure (such as roads, bridges, schools and hospitals) are an important way of directly generating employment – particularly if labour-based approaches are used. If goals related to environmental sustainability are linked to such investments – for example, by prioritizing renovations that make buildings more energy efficient or public transport less polluting – this crisis could be turned into an opportunity to lay the foundations for a greener society, on a more sustainable development path.

In the context of falling demand and declining industrial production, effective dialogue between workers, employers and Governments will be essential to ensure that negotiated solutions are reached. Workers will be better off if they are able to remain in their jobs and employers will be better off if they do not have to re-hire and re-train a new workforce once demand picks up. Such strong tripartite social dialogue will not only ensure respect for labour rights and enterprise sustainability, it will also support social harmony throughout this difficult period.

*A report on the effects of the economic crisis in the region: **The fallout in Asia: Assessing labour market impacts and national policy responses to the global financial crisis**, can be found on the Research and Data page of the Web Site: www.ilo.org/asia*

THE ILO IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: 90 YEARS OF PROGRESS

By Allan Dow, Communications Officer,
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Any 90th birthday is bound to be special.

The ILO at 90, however, is behaving – and partying – like a youngster. Together with its constituents throughout Asia and the Pacific dozens of events are being tied to this remarkable and auspicious occasion – from Pakistan to the Philippines and further out into the Pacific islands.

The theme chosen for the anniversary is “90 years working for social justice”.

In China, India and Thailand (three of the founding members of the ILO) these events include radio and TV programmes, workshops and exhibitions. In other countries plans include a ‘fun run’, talk shows and commemorative postage stamps.

The ILO was an offspring of the Treaty of Versailles, an agency of the newly-created



For more than 50 years the ILO has been working with countries throughout the region to improve skills and productivity. In 1959 an ILO productivity expert advised Indonesia's P.T.T. on ways to improve work methods in their Bandung workshop. Photo: ILO, 1959

Ratification of ILO Fundamental (Core) Conventions in Asia and the Pacific 1994 & 2009

1994 (75 th Anniversary of ILO)	2009 (90 th Anniversary of ILO)
68 ratifications ^a	164 ratifications ^b

^a In 1994 there were 25 member countries compared to 31 in 2009.

^b Includes 24 ratifications of C182 (Worst Form of Child Labour, 1999 which entered into force in 2000).

League of Nations. The International Labour Office made its debut in the sober aftermath of devastating conflicts across Europe and Asia – horrendous events that resulted in the loss of millions of productive lives.

At present the Asian and Pacific region includes 31 ILO member States, including seven of the original 42 countries that founded the Organization back in 1919. Globally, the ILO's membership now covers more than 180 countries.

Australia, China, India, Iran, Japan, New Zealand and Thailand joined what was mainly a group of nations from the Americas and Europe¹ to lay the cornerstone of what would become one of the world's oldest and most enduring international organizations. Another generation – and another World War – would pass before the creation of the United Nations and its specialized

agencies, an international system within which the ILO fully participates.

Working in Asia and the Pacific

The ILO opened its first Asian Field Office in 1946 at Bangalore, India. The office was later moved to Colombo, Sri Lanka and in 1966 it transferred to Bangkok and became the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. A series of country offices was set up and a restructuring of technical services resulted in the establishment of multidisciplinary teams working from three subregional offices in Bangkok, Delhi and Manila.

At that time (1964-65), expenditure on technical cooperation work in Asia averaged US\$3.5 million per year or just less than one-quarter of the Organization's global expenditures – equivalent to more than US\$23 million in today's figures when adjusted for inflation².

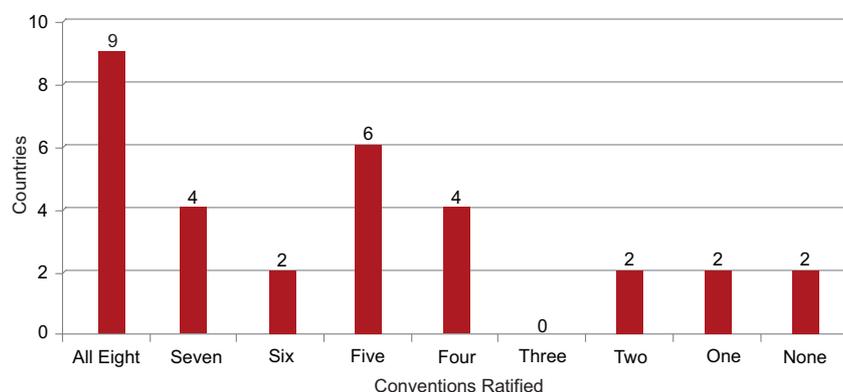


ILO Director-General David A. Morse with the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at the Fourth Asian Labour Conference, held in New Delhi, India in 1957. Photo: ILO, 1957.

¹ Only two countries from Africa were among the founding member States: Liberia and South Africa.

² CPI calculation from US Bureau for Labor Statistics (http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)

Ratification of ILO Core Conventions by Member Countries in Asia and the Pacific



Thirty years later – in 1994, when the Organization observed its 75th anniversary – Mr Tadashi Nakamura, the Assistant Director-General responsible for ILO activities in Asia and the Pacific announced that more than US\$41 million worth of technical assistance had been implemented in 1993, a slight increase from 1992. “This high volume attests to the continued relevance of technical cooperation at a time when new funding is difficult to find,” he said.

Today, 15 years later, the amount of ILO technical cooperation work in Asia and the Pacific has topped US\$50 million (in 2008) and the regular budget for 2008-09 is US\$ 62 million. Funding comes from both regular and extra-budgetary sources – once again at a time of worsening economic conditions for both donors and recipients. Donors, Governments and social partners clearly view the ILO’s continued contribution to improving the world of work as vital to international development.

Ratifications Soar

Since the ILO’s 75th anniversary in 1994, the rate of ratifications of the Organization’s eight fundamental or ‘core’ Conventions has also risen dramatically – especially in Asia and the Pacific. It is also worth noting that many of these ratifications have occurred since the beginning of the new millennium – showing the continuing relevance of these international labour standards.

Currently, there are 164 ratifications of the core Conventions by the 31 member countries in the region. The number of ratifications is now more than double what

it was when we marked the 75th anniversary.

Nearly one in every three of the member countries in Asia and the Pacific has ratified all eight fundamental Conventions, and a further one-third have ratified five or more. Eighty per cent have ratified the core Convention on Worst Forms of Child Labour (C 182) – a Convention that also marks its tenth anniversary this year.

The countries that have ratified all eight core Conventions are: Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Mongolia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa and Sri Lanka.

“It is very encouraging to see this recent rise in rates of ratification of the eight core Conventions, especially as we mark the 90th year of the ILO,” said Ms Sachiko Yamamoto, ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific. “It is a clear indication that, here in Asia and the Pacific, the ILO not only remains relevant, but its technical cooperation and guidance is valued and

increasingly replicated”.

“In just 15 years, since the 75th anniversary, our constituents have shown a great determination to move forward with the basic principles of decent work,” she added.

There are, however, still many hurdles to overcome. With 57 per cent of the world’s population living in Asia and the Pacific, poverty on a large scale is still a major problem.

One of the ILO’s contributions to the Millennium Development Goals is to help reduce poverty by creating an environment where decent, safe and dignified work can thrive.

Although the situation is improving, the contradiction of youth unemployment existing alongside child labour still needs close attention. Ending discrimination - especially gender-related - inside and outside the workplace, is another area of continuing work. Improving the management of intra-regional migration for employment also continues to pose many challenges for Governments, workers’ and employers’ organizations, as the supply of and demand for workers fluctuates from country to country.

“Our constituents have made great strides in improving the world of work for people in Asia and the Pacific,” said Ms Yamamoto. “There are still challenges to confront, but the ILO stands ready to continue providing technical assistance and other support so that as we move towards a century of cooperation, we can make our common goal of social justice and decent work for all a reality”.



Robert Staermose



Tine Staermose

All in the ILO Family

At the end of 1965, when the Regional Office moved from Colombo to Bangkok, one of the officials who made the trek to Thailand was Robert Staermose, a Manchester-educated Danish economist specializing in cooperative management and training.

During his time in Asia Mr Staermose also went on to help establish an ILO-supported training institute on cooperatives in Lyallpur, Pakistan.

His grand-daughter, only two years old at that time, remembers his visits back to see her family in a small village in Denmark and his stories of far-away lands and learning to eat with chopsticks.

Today that little girl is now a grown woman and the ILO Country Director for Sri Lanka, Tine Staermose.

FISH AND FAIRS SUPPORT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN SRI LANKA

By Roel Hakemulder, Advisor, Enter-Growth Project, Sri Lanka

The ornamental fish breeders of Polonnaruwa District in Sri Lanka had a problem. Not enough water.

There was a good market for their fish, both in Sri Lanka and overseas. However, the water in the district was reserved for paddy farmers and the farmers associations had blocked water to the fish-breeding ponds. As a result, development of the ornamental fish sector came to a standstill and its potential to generate new jobs and better incomes in this poor district went unfulfilled.

But two years ago the District Enterprise Forum of Polonnaruwa, with the help of the ILO, found a solution.

The problem came to light after an analysis of the value chain of ornamental fish production, carried out by local organizations with support from the ILO's Sida-funded Enterprise for Pro-poor Growth project, or Enter-Growth for short.

A value chain is the system of enterprises that brings specific products or services to the market. Solving constraints in a value chain can increase the competitiveness of the entire chain and so enable the enterprises that are part of it to grow.

To carry out the analysis Enter-Growth developed its own methodology, which required the participation of the local private sector and development partners. Facilitators were trained in the methodology and worked with Enter-Growth to collect and analyse the data.

The analysis revealed that some of the problems restricting the ornamental fish industry could be solved relatively easily. These included improving the skills of the breeders, helping them get finance, and providing better



The attractive incomes generated by breeding and selling ornamental fish are turning young people into entrepreneurs in Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka. Photo: ILO, 2008.

information on market requirements. However, improving access to water was beyond the power of the local organizations, so they took the issue to the District Enterprise Forum.

This Forum is an informal body that aims to encourage dialogue about enterprise development between the public and the private sector. Its members include district authorities, public sector business development organizations and private sector organizations such as Chambers of Commerce and NGOs. The Forum was set up in 2004 with the help of Enter-Growth. Since then it has become a well-recognized player in the economic development of the District. The Chambers of Commerce serve as the body's Secretariat and the ILO project now only provides technical advice.

"Our strategy is clear," says Enter-Growth project manager Gemunu Wijesena. "We want to give local people the tools and the skills to take ownership and direct their own development. We don't tell them where they have to go but assist them to get where they want to be. We also don't take them there, which means we do not fund direct assistance to enterprises. There is too much dependency on that sort of help".

The Forum is one of the main tools that Enter-Growth uses to make this strategy work and the approach has shown that local conditions for business can be improved by local people taking the initiative.

There are now four Forums, one in each of the four districts covered by Enter-Growth. When the Mahaweli Forum learned about the ornamental fish breeders' need

to access irrigation water, its then chairman, District Secretary Mr Ranith Wijetilake arranged a meeting between the Forum, top level officials of the Mahaweli Authority and the Ministry of Agriculture. Ornamental fish breeders were invited as well. After several discussions it was eventually agreed to grant the breeders access to water. The Farmers' Associations were informed and the reasons for the decision explained.

Since then, the ornamental fish breeding sector has grown rapidly and it now has some 600 fish ponds. Many young people in particular have taken up fish breeding and are generating work and income. The Chambers of Commerce have played a role by holding information meetings and providing support such as training. The District Enterprise Forum has facilitated support from national organizations, such as the Export Development Board and the National Aquaculture Development Authority. With the help of Enter-Growth, the breeders set up an Association to promote their interests and provide the number of fish the market needs. In less than two years its membership has grown from 80 to 500.

In largely rural Polonnaruwa attitudes towards private enterprise used to be negative. Business was seen as a last employment option, after public service and agriculture. Business people were seen as greedy and dishonest people who did not contribute to the community. This is slowly changing, partly because of Enter-Growth's "Palama" campaign.

Palama means bridge in Sinhala (the

Tamil equivalent is similar). The campaign promotes enterprise as a bridge to prosperity, not just for the individual but for the family and community. Its approach focuses on forum theatre, a type of interactive drama.

Enter-Growth set up and trained four theatre groups, one in each district, with Polonnaruwa as the first. The theatre scripts were developed by the drama groups themselves, using their own experiences. This ensured that the stories spoke to local audiences.

The plays present a tragic story, usually one of poverty and conflicting interests, in which starting an enterprise or supporting someone who wants to do so, could make a difference. In one play a young man studies to become an auto mechanic and wants to start a business. His family ridicules him and gives all its support to a son who studies to enter public service. Eventually the young man becomes desperate and attempts suicide. The story is then presented a second time, but members of the audience are encouraged to come on stage to act and change the roles of some of the protagonists and so bring the story to a better end.

The Palama campaign has been a great success, reaching an audience of more than 190,000 people so far. Studies commissioned by Enter-Growth found that nearly all appreciated the performances and thought the stories and messages were relevant to their lives. One spectator commented: "Villagers have skills that need to be exposed, hidden talents that should be revealed. Poverty is not the heritage of people – the plays show that one can overcome it". Another said: "The whole drama was good. It is a meaningful, exemplary drama for both parents and children to make their lives. And it tells you how to start a business with the money available in your hand".



The Palama campaign logo



Actors performing a Palama campaign play at a fair in Polonnaruwa. Photo: ILO, 2008.

Attitudes to enterprise also improved significantly. After one show two audience members commented: "We discussed the possibility of doing our own business. I encouraged my family members to start our own business.... I have considered doing business to make a living. After my A levels I plan to start a shop that sells phone cards. I am planning to borrow some money from my elder brother".

Micro-credit providers in the villages reported that more people took loans after the shows. New people entering business and those who were in business also reported finding the courage to continue and expand. One business woman said: "I found more strength to continue my current business. I thought that whatever problems I face I must run the business. My dedication and courage is the main reason why I could improve the business so far. Palama gave me some kind of support to reinforce this idea".

Enter-Growth has also introduced annual Business Service Fairs in the districts. These four-day events have information stalls run by local entrepreneurs and business service providers, such as banks, micro-credit providers, government and NGO business development organizations. To attract large crowds the fairs also offer entertainment, such as popular bands, theatre (including Palama shows) and fairground entertainments for children. The fairs have become the biggest such events in the four districts, attracting crowds of up to 40,000. They now generate a lot of business for stallholders, both during and after the event.

The three fairs held in Polonnaruwa have attracted the largest crowds, and the

Enterprise Development Forum, under whose auspices the fairs were organized, believes they have contributed to its high standing in the District. The District Secretary Mr Wijetilake said: "At first I was not sure the Forum would last very long, since it depended on voluntary work and involves a change from old working habits. The first fair was such a great success that it established us in the District. People knew about us and listened to us. We, the members, also had some accomplishment to be proud of, and this and later successes kept us together".

Recently Mr Wijetilake was promoted to Secretary of Agriculture. Mr Ari Subasinghe, Enter-Growth's Polonnaruwa manager said that he was missed by Forum members. "Enter-Growth provided the idea of the Forum but it was his active and inspiring leadership that made it work". However, the new District Secretary, Mr Nimal Abesiri has enthusiastically taken up the chairmanship of the Forum, showing it will survive changes in leadership and continue beyond the project.

Enter-Growth is about improving conditions for local business and encouraging local ownership of development. This is being achieved through the Forums it set up. An independent assessment found that people in the district "emphasized the significance of the Forum in addressing the concerns of entrepreneurs, offering direct access to powerful state officers and changing the attitudes of government officers and institutions towards business and entrepreneurs. Many problems that the private sector had for years have been sorted out within the last years".

www.entergrowth.com

HIV/AIDS CAMPAIGN TARGETS CHINA'S RURAL MIGRANT WORKERS

By Lawrence Ong, Communications Officer,
ILO Office for China & Mongolia

The 200 million internal migrant workers in China play a vital role in the country's mining, construction and transportation sectors. But the lack of awareness about HIV puts them at risk of contracting the disease.

Zhang Xiao Hu is a man of few words. When asked about his days as a migrant worker in large cities, Xiao Hu is overwhelmed by memories of loneliness and fear. Not because he had no friends. He had plenty of them. But his life was overshadowed by a secret.

"I was very scared. I could not tell my fellow migrant workers that I had HIV. They would avoid me. Nobody would want to work, eat, or share the dormitory with me".

Every year, thousands of internal migrant workers in China leave their homes in rural villages and towns in search of better job opportunities in larger, more prosperous cities. Internal rural migrant workers in China are Chinese citizens from rural areas who migrate to more developed urban areas where they are able to find work. However due to the Chinese residential registration system which distinguishes between urban and rural residence status, the majority of rural migrants living and working in urban areas face limitations on their access to public and health services in the urban areas where they work.

According to official estimates some 200 million people in China's workforce are internal migrant workers. That's about 15 per cent of the country's population, representing one of the largest movements of people anywhere in the world.



Internal migrant workers in China taking part in an HIV/AIDS awareness-raising campaign. Photo: ILO, 2008.

"Migrant workers are an important element of our HIV/AIDS prevention efforts. The next crucial steps include a much broader strategy reaching many more migrant workers with prevention activities", said Pu Yi, a local director for China's Centre for Disease Control. "In this segment of the population we should continue to focus on the risks associated with unsafe sexual behaviour, with an emphasis on the critical role of condoms in HIV/AIDS prevention".

At just about 0.05 per cent (according to United Nations and Government estimates), China's HIV prevalence remains low. But the epidemic is growing in numbers and spreading geographically. This has prompted the Government to place greater emphasis on protecting rural migrant workers from HIV infection and preventing HIV from passing from so-called high-risk groups to the population in general.

Last November, the ILO and China's State Council AIDS Committee Office jointly launched the country's first HIV/AIDS prevention campaign for internal rural migrant workers. With funding from the US Department of Labor, the ILO started a Workplace Education Programme in three provinces: Anhui, Guangdong and Yunnan. The programme is part of efforts to help the ILO's partners in the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the China Enterprise Confederation and the All China Federation of Trade Unions to achieve the country's decent work objectives.

"The programme helps us to reach out to workers, ensure their occupational safety

and health, and protect their right not to be discriminated against or stigmatized because of HIV/AIDS", said Ms Constance Thomas, Director of the ILO Office in China. "What's more, the programme allows us to target the highly mobile internal migrant worker population".

China has made progress on HIV prevention in recent years, but more needs to be done. An ILO survey¹ shows that negative attitudes towards the disease are still widespread among migrant workers, with eight out of ten workers saying they do not want to work with a person who is HIV-positive.

Xiao Hu is hoping to change this kind of attitude. He is the first migrant worker in China to publically disclose his HIV-positive status. He recently starred in a public service announcement along with the famous Chinese actor Wang Bao Qiang, a former migrant worker himself, whose film "Peacock", directed by Gu Chang Wei, won an award at the Berlin International Film Festival.

The film is part of China's first HIV prevention campaign featuring migrant workers. In it Xiao Hu played a role he was all too familiar with, a construction worker who is rejected by co-workers and friends because of his HIV status.

Despite his starring role in the film, Xiao Hu is naturally very camera shy. But when it comes to speaking to other migrant workers about HIV prevention and the discrimination some workers face, he is determined to help spread the message of tolerance and acceptance.

¹ Results available in both Chinese and English at www.workonaids.org

GETTING AN EDUCATION IN PAPUA

By Urmila Sarkar, *Child Labour and Youth Employment Specialist, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific*

Papua, home to 50 million indigenous people and 300-400 distinct indigenous communities with their own languages, beliefs and livelihoods, is also home to high levels of poverty, child labour and jobless youth.

In the remote areas of this Indonesian province working children are a common sight and considered a normal part of life. Although there has been progress in combating child labour in Indonesia generally, in these areas the level of awareness on child labour is low. With the increasing commercialization of the local economy and use of cash, traditional livelihoods, based on agrarian subsistence on ancestral lands, are being eroded, leading to increasing child labour.

“Child labour has become a coping mechanism by which indigenous communities adapt to the changing patterns of livelihood,” said Ms Joan Carling, a leader of indigenous peoples and Chairperson of the Philippines’ Cordillera People’s Alliance. She heads an indigenous Papuan university research team looking into the province’s child labour problem. This important research, commissioned by the ILO’s Education and Skills Training for Youth Employment (EAST) project, will for the first time shed light on the issue. The results will be used to find ways of preventing child labour through education and training, which will improve the future employment prospects of young Papuans.

The EAST project works to combat child labour by creating education, training and employment opportunities for young people in the most disadvantaged provinces of Eastern Indonesia, including Papua. It aims to prevent working children becoming young people with poor employment

prospects who cannot lift their families out of the poverty trap and cannot contribute effectively to national development. Education and training lead to decent work and are crucial in breaking this vicious cycle of poverty and underdevelopment.

Outside their traditional villages and environments indigenous children are more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labour, including commercial sexual exploitation, deep sea fishing and domestic work. Schools are often outside their villages, making it difficult for them to attend. Indigenous children have historically faced discrimination and social exclusion, including within the formal education system. This learning environment is also potentially alienating for them since they are not taught in their mother tongues or using local customs and the traditional knowledge of their ancestors.

“I feel guilty to ask parents to make sure their children come to school since they need the money their children earn to survive,” said Ms Rachel Humokwarong, Head of a Community Learning Centre (PKBM) in Jayapura, which offers a second chance for education to those who dropped out of regular school. PKBM learners are mostly from indigenous communities and many are from the most rural and remote parts of Papua. Since the students tend not to attend class regularly the focus is more on preparing them for certification towards employment rather than on learning through a normal, year-round school programme.

There is no support system for bringing the children who attend these centres back into the regular school system. While the political commitment and resources put into this equivalency or non-formal education in Indonesia has risen in the last decade, the PKBM centres still operate on shorter hours and have fewer resources - both teachers and materials - than regular schools. The centres run only in the afternoon, making it possible for students to combine work and school. This however leads to absenteeism and early school drop-out.

Twelve-year-old Marie is happy that she has the chance to go to the learning centre in



Indigenous children in Papua, Indonesia, find it difficult to attend formal school and their lack of education leads to problems getting work. Photo: ILO/U. Sarkar, 2009.

the afternoon while she performs her household chores in the mornings. “My favourite subject is mathematics, and I hope to become a nurse when I am older,” she said. But sometimes it is difficult for her to make it to class because of the distance from her home in the highlands, where she helps her family grow cassava and sweet potatoes. Many other indigenous children face the same issues as Marie. Although they are fortunate to get the education their parents did not have, they also find themselves too tired to focus in school, or do their home work, and many drop out.

The PKBM centres also offer women and men of any age a second chance for an education. Forty-five old Betty feels lucky to have a chance to learn to read and write like her eldest son, who is now attending university. At the same centre, a mothers’ group proudly shows off the purses they made during their training programme, which help them to earn some income and do something productive for themselves and their families.

“There are simply not enough staff, training, and infrastructure to reach indigenous children and youth, especially in the remote areas. I have been pushing for equality between school and community-based education so that non-formal education does not become a second class system of education for the poor,” said Mr James Modouw, Director of the Education Department for Papua Province. “We need all the support we can get to ensure education and training reach the most rural and remote areas of Papua”.

S R O F O C U S

PHILIPPINES' DECENT WORK COMMON AGENDA

By Minette Rimando, Senior Communication and Information Assistant, SRO Manila

The Decent Work Common Agenda of the Philippines was launched for the first time at the regional level on 26 February 2009 in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. With the theme, "Strengthening the Gains, Narrow Decent Work Deficits and Expand Social Protection in Difficult Times," the local government, employers and workers presented their first Region IV-A Blueprint for Decent Work Common Agenda 2008-2010. The provinces covered include Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon.

"People and societies want not just work but decent work. One practical and relevant tool to address causes of precarious jobs amidst the crisis is the Decent Work Agenda," said Undersecretary Lourdes Trasmonte of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in the Philippines. "We commend the Regional Tripartite Industrial

Peace Council for responding to the call by being the first region in the country to initiate this localization".

More than 200 representatives from the Government, employers, workers and informal economy workers took part in the launch. Officials from the Ministries of Social Welfare and Development, Public Works and Highway, Health and the National Economic Development Authority were present. Other organizations included the provincial government, cooperatives, migrant and women's group, Philippine National Police, Labour Management Council, Tripartite Industrial Peace Council, Philippine Economic Zone Authority and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"The launch is made all the more significant by the growing concern about the impact of the global financial crisis, particularly on employment and labour markets," said Ms Linda Wirth, Director of the ILO Subregional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific based in Manila. "The crisis may escalate and we do not know when it will end. The decent work agenda and social dialogue have never been more important. I am pleased that this will bring

the tripartite dialogue on the Decent Work Common Agenda and the effects of the crisis to the local level. This is really social dialogue in action", said Ms Wirth.

Ms Wirth also briefed participants on the highlights of the recent Manila regional forum on policy responses to the economic crisis, and gave a presentation on labour market impacts and national responses.

The launch also provided an opportunity for the region to discuss the current economic crisis. Prior to the launch DOLE received proposals from workers affected by the crisis in both the formal and informal economy, through the Workers' Income Augmentation Programme (WIN-AP). DOLE extended financial assistance to help low-wage workers in the formal sector and those working on reduced work weeks to low-wage workers in the formal sector and those working on reduced work weeks or flexible arrangements due to the crisis, including displaced overseas Filipino workers and their families. Informal economy workers also received financial assistance in order to make up for their loss of income from agriculture, as a result of the decrease in exports caused by the crisis.

WEB SITES: ILO IN ASIA-PACIFIC

www.ilo.org/asia

ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok. All subregional and country office sites in Asia Pacific can be accessed from this site.

www.ilo.org/bangkok

Web page for the ILO Subregional Office for East Asia. Covers Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China (including Hong Kong SAR and Macao SAR), the Republic of Korea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

www.ilo.org/newdelhi

ILO Subregional Office for South Asia. Covers Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India,

the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

www.ilo.org/manila

ILO Subregional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Covers Fiji, Indonesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, and other Pacific Island countries.

www.ilo.org/phnompenh

Web page on ILO projects in Cambodia.

www.ilo.org/beijing

ILO Office for China and Mongolia.

www.ilo.org/suva

ILO Office for Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea and other Pacific Islands.

www.ilo.org/jakarta

ILO Office in Indonesia.

www.ilo.org/tokyo

ILO Office in Japan.

www.ilo.org/yangon

ILO Liaison Office in Myanmar.

www.ilo.org/kathmandu

ILO Office in Nepal.

<http://www.ilo.org.pk>

ILO Office in Pakistan.

www.ilo.org/colombo

ILO Office in Sri Lanka.

www.ilo.org/hanoi

Web page on ILO projects in Viet Nam.

CALENDAR

April

6 April, Islamabad, Pakistan	Capacity Building of State Functionaries on International Labour Standards and Human Rights Policies, Practices and Programmes
*8-9 April, Siem Riep, Cambodia	ASEAN-OSHNET Coordination Board Meeting
15 April, Islamabad, Pakistan	National Conference: Learning through Sharing and Moving Ahead
16-17 April, Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia	Regional Tripartite Workshop on Improving Safety and Health in Mining
20 April, Colombo, Sri Lanka	Workshop on Labour Supply and Demand in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka
21-28 April, region-wide	ILO's 90 th Anniversary activities throughout the region
*25-28 April, Viet Nam	6 th ASEAN Ministers Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication 1 st ASEAN+3 Ministers Meeting on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication
*26-27 April, Hong Kong, China	2 nd Asian Asbestos Meeting
*27-28 April, Phnom Penh, Cambodia	17 th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting
27 April, Tokyo, Japan	Symposium: Challenge for Decent Work – toward jobs and workplaces with human dignity during the global economic crisis
27-29 April, Kathmandu, Nepal	Asian Regional Seminar: Good Practices for Implementing Indigenous Peoples' Rights
27-30 April, Bangkok, Thailand	Gender Equality at the Heart of Decent Work - Inter-regional Learning Forum
April, Islamabad, Pakistan	Orientation of Parliamentarians on International Labour Standards, with a Focus on the Legal Regime on Bonded Labour in Pakistan

May

6 - 8 May, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Asia-Pacific Unions Regional Conference
11-14 May, Rajendrapur, Bangladesh	Capacity Training and Child Labour Data Analysis
12 May, Dhaka, Bangladesh	National Seminar on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
12-14 May, Kathmandu, Nepal	Nepal Development Forum
*12-14 May, Vientiane, Lao PDR	ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting
*15 May, Siem Riep, Cambodia	UN ESCAP Ministerial Roundtable on Green Growth in Cambodia
18-20 May, Bangkok, Thailand	ILO/IOE/CAPE Regional Employers' Meeting on Human Resources Development for Competitiveness
18-20 May, Kathmandu, Nepal	National Tripartite Workshop on Draft Labour Law and Unemployment Insurance Act
May, Colombo, Sri Lanka	Workshop on Micro Finance for Livelihood Development and Early Recovery in the North and East of Sri Lanka

June

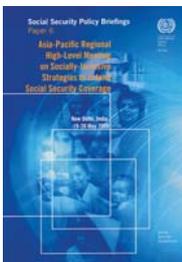
16-19 June, Colombo, Sri Lanka	Regional Conference on Local Economic Development – Knowledge sharing and showcasing of best practises in the South Asian region
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July

15 July, Colombo, Sri Lanka	National Workshop on Tertiary and Vocational Education Commissions's Policy on Vulnerable Groups
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* Non-ILO meeting

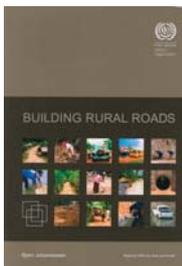
S H E L F L I F E



Asia-Pacific Regional High-Level Meeting on Socially-Inclusive Strategies to Extend Social Security

Geneva: ILO, 2008, 110 pp.
ISBN: 978221218111

This publication covers the extension of social protection, social security and the right to work, social protection and employment and income security for the elderly. It is the product of a meeting held in New Delhi, India, in May 2008.

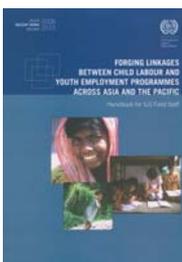


Building Rural Roads

Bangkok: ILO, 2008, 466 pp.
ISBN: 9789221209775

By Bjorn Johannessen

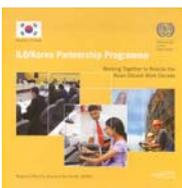
This manual presents some cost-effective technical solutions and work methods commonly used for building rural roads. It emphasizes ways that locally-available resources such as labour, tools and light equipment can be combined with good workmanship and high quality standards.



Forging Linkages between Child Labour and Youth Employment Programmes across Asia and the Pacific: Handbook for ILO field staff

Bangkok: ILO, 2008, 60 pp.
ISBN: 9789221209720

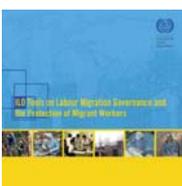
An overview of specific child labour and youth employment challenges. The handbook outlines key conceptual linkages, elaborates pillars for building collaboration and makes concrete suggestions for future technical interventions.



ILO/Korea Partnership Programme, Working Together to Realize the Asian Decent Work Decade

Bangkok: ILO, 2008, 12 pp.

The ILO/Korea Partnership Programme began in 2004 and this brochure gives a summary of current areas of work, including a list of Korean Partner Institutions.



ILO Tools on Labour Migration Governance and the Protection of Migrant Workers

Bangkok: ILO, 2008, 16 pp.

A list of publications relating to migrant workers. It includes research papers, training manuals and law compendiums on labour migration; working papers from the ILO/EU Asian Programme on the Governance of Labour Migration; and background papers for the 2nd Global Forum on Migration and Development.

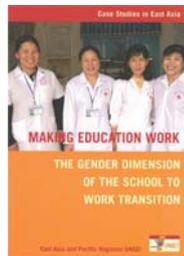


Japan and the ILO, Supporting Decent Work in Asia for more than three decades

Bangkok: ILO, 2008, 12 pp.

Also available in Japanese

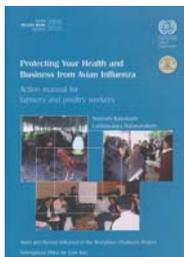
This brochure provides an overview of current activities under the ILO/Japan Multi-Bilateral Programme.



Making Education Work, The Gender Dimension of the School to Work Transition

Bangkok: UN Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI), 2008, 61 pp.
ISBN: 9789746850988

This report examines how different levels of education and vocational training affect men and women entering the labour market in East Asia and the Pacific. It includes three case studies from Indonesia, Philippines and Viet Nam.



Protecting Your Health and Business from Avian Influenza, Action Manual for farmers and poultry workers

Bangkok: ILO, 2009, 24 pp.,
ISBN: 9789221219521, (Thai available)

Protecting Your Employees and Business from Pandemic Human Influenza, Action Manual for small and medium-sized enterprises.

ISBN: 9789221219491; (Thai available)

By Tsuyoshi Kawakami & Laddawalaya Ratananakorn

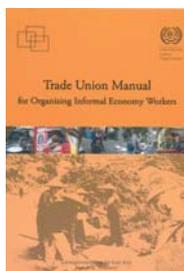
These practical, user-friendly, training manuals include safe practices, prevention measures and action checklists for preventing avian and pandemic human influenza at work.



Skills Development in the Pacific: The special skills development needs of small island economies

Bangkok: ILO, 2008, 26 pp.
ISBN: 9789221218265

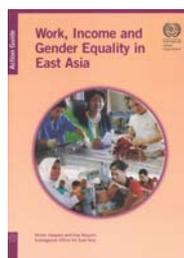
A report from the meeting held in Fiji in March 2008. It covers key issues and major challenges relating to skills development in the Pacific Island Countries. These include skills recognition, skills for young people and skills for informal economy workers.



Trade Union Manual for Organizing Informal Economy Workers

Bangkok: ILO, 2008, 115 pp.
ISBN: 9789221209218

This manual, drafted and validated by trade union trainers and organizers, aims to help trade unionists develop skills and strategies to organize informal economy workers.



Work, Income and Gender Equality in East Asia

Bangkok: ILO, 2008

ISBN: 9789221210030, Chinese & Thai
By Neliën Haspels and Eva Majurin

An overview of labour market and income differentials between men and women in China, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. It looks at the causes of the gender gap and discrimination at work, and provides knowledge and tools relating to benefits, protection and promoting gender equality.