



International  
Labour  
Organization

## DECENT WORK: AN ALLIANCE FOR THE FUTURE

### ILO public-private partnerships and social protection

The first ILO public-private partnership on social protection was signed in 2000. Since then a further 20 partnerships have been signed, amounting to a total value of

US\$ 3,059,689. These have focused on social security, skills development, occupational safety and health, working conditions and HIV and AIDS.

#### What is social protection?

*Effective social protection contributes to fair growth, social stability and enhanced productivity. Only 20 per cent of the world's population has adequate social security coverage, and more than half lack any coverage at all. The ILO actively promotes policies and provides assistance to countries to help extend adequate levels of social protection to all members of society. Social security involves access to health care and income security, particularly in cases of old age, unemployment, sickness, invalidity, work injury, maternity or loss of the main income earner.*

#### Social security

In a world characterized by the revision and reform of welfare and protection systems, many developing economies face the challenge of inequality in wealth redistribution due to the lack of national social protection schemes (social assistance, social insurance, health benefits, pensions or short-term cash benefits) and a poorly trained workforce.

**Training for social security experts:** Well-trained experts make a notable difference in developing effective social protection schemes. In 2000 the ILO and the University of Maastricht agreed to set up a Masters programme on social protection financing, which was later supplemented by a Masters programme on social policy design. These were consolidated into a single Masters programme on public policy and human development. This successful partnership was later implemented in collaboration with the University of Mauritius (2010) and the University of Algiers (2013). A similar partnership was implemented with the University of Phitsanulok in Thailand (2008) to develop a Masters course on social health protection. This course is now open to students from all ASEAN countries. Discussions are ongoing with a number of universities (Bangkok, Jakarta, Montevideo, etc.) with a view to introducing similar programmes.

During the twelve years that the programmes have been available, 361 students have obtained an MSc in public policy and human development with specialization in social protection. These students came from over 69 countries, and 48 per cent of them were

from low- and middle-income countries. The graduates have successfully pursued career trajectories in international organizations, including the ILO itself, the World Bank and UNDP. Others have taken up careers in national governments and administrations, subnational bodies administering social protection programmes, and private companies such as insurance providers and consultancies related to the field of social protection.

In 2011 the Government of Thailand sought to improve benefit packages under the voluntary insurance scheme, which then only covered a few thousand out of a target population of some 24 million informal workers. Faced with an unattractive benefit package and realizing the target population's lack of awareness of the voluntary scheme, Khwanploy Cheechang, who had completed the Masters programme at the University of Maastricht, participated in the design of the new benefit package that financially matched the proposed flat-rate contribution shared by the Government and voluntarily insured persons. A new benefit scheme was introduced covering over 2 million persons.

**A global business network for social protection floors:** A growing number of enterprises are putting in place global systems of social protection guarantees for their employees around the world. In addition, many companies are concerned by the absence or inadequacy of public social protection schemes that may hinder their productivity, competitiveness and development. A global business network for social protection floors



*"I was lucky that my first job after graduation was related to what I had learnt in Maastricht. Working as a social security actuary at the Social Security Office (SSO) of Thailand, I was responsible for analyses of financial and demographic statistics and projections of the income and expenditure of the Social Security Fund (SSF) in the current situation and different reform scenarios."*



Khwanploy  
Cheechang, student

is being developed with the private sector. This network will include multinational enterprises, employers' organizations and private sector foundations that wish to share good practices and contribute to the promotion and establishment of social protection floors worldwide.

The network will operate at several levels and achieve the following objectives, subject to changes based on the wishes expressed by the members of the network and the ILO:

- **Objective 1:** Exchanging information on current practices and emerging trends in order to identify common challenges and opportunities and to broaden private sector actors' support to public social protection systems;
- **Objective 2:** Structuring the involvement of the private sector in the construction of public social protection systems, including social protection floors.

For more information, see <http://business.social-protection.org>

## Occupational safety and health

Occupational accidents and illnesses cannot be seen as an inevitable price to be paid in the course of a country's development. Rather, creating a safe and healthy working environment will help prevent human suffering, exclusion and poverty, and will also benefit business and the national economy by increasing productivity, cost-savings and competitiveness. It will contribute to longer term economic, social, political and environmental development. Integrating OSH issues in the policy agenda, be it as a specific theme or mainstreamed into other areas of focus, will therefore serve various major objectives in development cooperation.

Source: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) – Occupational Safety and Health.

A partnership with Volkswagen (VW), which ran from 2004 to 2008 in Mexico and South Africa, set out to enhance occupational safety and health (OSH) in VW's supply chains – while also improving national OSH standards. As a result, supply chain workers at the enterprise level benefited from improved working conditions, a more preventive OSH culture, and enhanced productivity. The project also raised awareness at the national level of the need to decrease deficiencies in OSH, and led to stakeholder dialogue at various levels.

In 2011, Sodexo, Edenred and the ILO signed a partnership to assess national nutritional needs in Chile, for which a methodology was developed that included, inter alia, surveys and interviews (nearly 1,000 workers and companies were interviewed). This collaboration not only resulted in healthier lifestyles, improved nutrition and a reduction of disease among workers in Chile, but also encouraged enterprises to adopt adequate nutrition programmes suited to their requirements. The results of the partnership had a notable influence on national legislation on workplace nutrition.



## HIV/AIDS

The HIV pandemic has become one of the most critical workplace issues of our time. In addition to its devastating impact on working women and men and their families and dependents, HIV affects the world of work in many ways. Stigma and discrimination against people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS threatens fundamental rights at work, undermining opportunities for people to obtain decent work and sustainable employment.

Source: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) – HIV/AIDS

*“You can talk about abstinence, faithfulness and condoms, but the strategies are nothing without empowering people with information and skills to embrace safer ways of making the money they need.”*

Charles, 42 year old beneficiary of the economic empowerment project in Malawi

## HIV and AIDS

Nine out of ten people living with HIV (PLHIV) are of working age. Stigma and discrimination associated with HIV and AIDS still persist. The workplace can be a vital source of life-saving information on both HIV information and services which, in turn, reduces stigma and discrimination to ensure that people do not lose the opportunity to work due to their HIV status.

Partnerships related to HIV and AIDS have been the most numerous in the area of social protection. Between 2008 and 2015, 13 partnerships were implemented with a total budget of US\$ 2,753,629, reaching 4 million workers in over 2,400 workplaces.

As a lead UN agency for workplace and private sector engagement in the AIDS response, the ILO sees PPPs within a broad framework of human rights, gender equality and labour standards, involving constituents, public and private companies, foundations, national AIDS programmes, civil society – including PLHIV networks – and the UN and international organizations. Each partner contributes its core competence and resources.

### Broadly the PPPs are of three types:

**PPPs for HIV and AIDS workplace programmes in enterprises:** The ILO undertakes advocacy and provides technical support, while companies allocate their time and resources and set up workplace policies and programmes for their workers, including contractual workers and supply chains. For example, the Strategic HIV/AIDS Response in Enterprises (SHARE) project has been active in 24 countries – where 16,500 key representatives have received HIV and AIDS awareness training. Over 50 countries now have a national or sectoral tripartite policy on HIV and AIDS, including a number of enterprise-based policies.

**PPPs for HIV prevention and impact mitigation of vulnerable populations: The ILO facilitates innovative PPPs for vulnerable populations:** sex workers, men who have sex with men, mobile and migrant workers, etc. For example, following an economic empowerment approach in six countries (Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and the United Republic of Tanzania), over 8,000 people, including sex workers, have been offered training and helped to set up businesses.

**PPPs to upscale voluntary counselling and HIV testing for workers (VCT@Work):** The ILO is engaged in the **VCT@Work** initiative to enhance access to voluntary HIV testing. Workers who test HIV positive are referred for treatment. Projects are underway in over 32 countries – and they also include partnerships with the private sector. For example, Pertamina, one of the biggest companies in Indonesia, has taken the lead role in the workplace and the **VCT@Work** initiative. By the end of 2014, over 150,000 workers had received HIV counselling and testing. Following the company's lead, more than 100 enterprises have signed a commitment to provide counselling and testing and to prevent HIV employment-related stigma and discrimination.

## Social protection floors

A growing number of studies also highlight that social protection supports companies' competitiveness, and leads to lower absenteeism, greater productivity and reduced turnover of workers. They also show that social protection contributes to reducing poverty, exclusion, vulnerability and inequality, while boosting aggregate demand for goods and services by increasing incomes, which can create new business opportunities for private sector enterprises.

Source: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) – ILO launches Global Business Network for Social Protection Floors.



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