

THE SERVICES OF THE ILO CENTRAL LIBRARY
AND DOCUMENTATION BRANCH

International Labour Office

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I. Background

1. Article 10 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation defines responsibilities of the Office with respect to the collection and dissemination of information. The Central Library and Documentation Branch has a major role to play in fulfilling this responsibility for the Office as a whole through the identification, collection, processing, storage and dissemination of information relevant to the needs of the Secretariat and the membership of the ILO.
2. The Library, a special library in the social sciences, provides international coverage of all areas of ILO competence including industrial relations, employment, social security, vocational training, conditions of work, labour legislation and labour-related aspects of economics, social development, rural development and technological change.
3. In the years following its creation in 1919, the ILO acquired the libraries of the International Association for Labour Legislation, the International Association on Unemployment and the International Association for Social Progress. These collections provided the ILO library with a foundation that is particularly rich with respect to labour history.
4. Between 1919 and 1965, the growth of the library, in quantity and in subjects covered, kept pace with the growth of the Office itself. Traditional methods were used to organise the collections; they were classified according to the widely-used Universal Decimal Classification (UDC). In 1963, a decision was made to introduce computer technology into the library and in 1965, a ten-year period of automation began which saw the progressive conversion of most library operations from manual to machine-based methods.
5. By 1975, most printed catalogues had been eliminated and the machine-readable data base LABORDOC was a familiar tool to regular users of the library. In addition, the ILO had developed its own computerised library management and information storage and retrieval system (ISIS) that was eventually to be used by more than 100 national, regional and international organisations the world over.
6. In spite of the success of ISIS, the ILO decided in 1978 to replace it by a more modern system designed to run on a smaller, cheaper computer. MINISIS - a software system derived from the original ISIS - was installed in 1979; it operates on a mini-computer, performs the same function as ISIS, but places more control in the hands of the user.
7. For the user, the main result of automation is the computerised catalogue of the modern holdings of the library, the LABORDOC data base.

LABORDOC contains over 110,000 bibliographic records, with abstracts, and grows at a rate of up to 500 items each month. From LABORDOC is produced the monthly printed bulletin, International Labour Documentation.

8. In 1978, the ILO signed a contract with the American data base supplier, System Development Corporation, making LABORDOC available to outside users. Today the data base can also be searched through the French service, Télésystèmes, and through a number of non-profit institutions in Africa, America and Asia.

9. Nevertheless, LABORDOC only represents about 25% of the total holdings of the ILO library. If best use is to be made of the available resources, it is necessary to know the older collection (1919-1965), and certain more modern material that has not yet been fully computerised (official gazettes and labour legislation from most member States, for example.)

10. In 1928, in his Director's Report, Albert Thomas expressed the hope that governments, organisations, authors and publishers would come to think of the ILO library as a depository for all publications concerning the world of work, its history and its legislation. Half a century later, the ILO library is using the most modern techniques available to cope with the information explosion. With a mandate to conserve and disseminate information, the library tries to reach policy-makers, planners, researchers, teachers and practitioners the world over whose concerns are related to the world of work.

II. The Collections of the ILO Library

<p>1,000,000 books, reports and documents (including those from other Intergovernmental Organisations) and 8,000 current periodical titles cover 17,000 linear metres of shelving on three floors of the library.</p>

11. Since the first task of the library is to provide information to support the programmes of the Office, collection development is a joint effort by the library and ILO programmes staff and it should always reflect the major interests of the Office. Much of the material ordered by officials becomes part of the library collection and the LABORDOC data base; but library staff also select material and consult officials about the desirability of including particular books or journal articles. Officials are the experts in their particular fields. The library has the responsibility for ensuring that the general needs of the Office, as a whole, are met. Out of collaboration between the two groups, a solid information base can be built.

12. Most of the library collections are held in closed stacks, and the users will require the assistance of library staff to identify and locate material held there. Some of the special collections described below, however, may be consulted independently by library users.

Collections: reference, periodicals, ILO documents and publications, statistics, Infoquick, country information, international organisation documents.

13. The reference collection: located in the Reading Room (R.2), contains national bibliographies, specialised bibliographies in the social sciences, directories, encyclopedias, technical and language dictionaries, phone books, etc. Material is arranged by the Dewey Decimal Classification system and subjects are indicated on the sides of the shelves. Printed indexes by title, personal and corporate author and classification numbers are also available. Items from the Reference collection must be consulted in the Reading Room.

14. Periodicals on display (R.2): Among the 8,000 periodicals received, 200 titles (including all ILO periodicals) are available for consultation in the Reading Room, along with printed subject and title indexes. Users will also find the following daily newspapers: El Pais, Financial Times, Herald Tribune, Journal de Genève, Le Monde, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Times (of London), Trud and Isvestia.

15. The ILO collection (R.2): contains proceedings of the Governing Body, the ILO Conference, Regional Conferences, and Industrial Committee meetings; all ILO periodicals from their first publication date (The International Labour Review, Legislative Series, Yearbook of Labour Statistics, Official Bulletin, etc.), and other important reference material including the International Labour Code, the ILO Constitution, and the ILO conventions and recommendations.

16. The statistical collection (M.2): is made up mainly of specialised periodicals covering the last five years; most are government publications, but the collection also contains material from other financial and statistical institutions. The collection begins with statistical publications of major international organisations and then is organised alphabetically by name of country in English.

17. Infoquick (R.2): assembles pamphlets, brochures and articles of ephemeral or short-term interest. Material is arranged by subject, in hanging files. The expected life of Infoquick material is five years. Material must be consulted in the Reading Room.

18. Country files (R-2): are reserved for use by ILO officials. They contain confidential reports from international organisations and other material that is likely to be useful to officials preparing missions. Material is arranged alphabetically by country. Users should consult a member of the library staff.

19. International organisations documents (M.2): are in principle reserved for use by ILO officials. A substantial collection of both documents and publications of all major international organisations has been built up over the years. It is particularly useful in the case of organisations which are not based in Geneva, and arrangements may be made for outside users to consult this material.

III. The catalogues

Catalogues of library holdings

20. The dictionary catalogue is a card catalogue which covers all acquisitions made by the library from 1919 to 1965. Cards by author, title and subject are arranged in a single alphabetical sequence.

The catalogue for 1965 to the present is produced by computer on COM microfiche and is composed of a master file of full citations to all acquisitions since 1965, supplemented with indexes by:

- personal author;
- corporate author and conference;
- title.

Each index is divided into three parts:

1965 - 1977	cumulative
1978 - 1981	cumulative
1982 - present	cumulated each month

Catalogue of ILO documents and publications

21. As in the catalogue of library holdings, the catalogue of ILO material is divided into two parts:

The dictionary catalogue contains reference to all ILO documents and publications produced between 1919 and 1965 and is supplemented by the "Subject guide to publications of the International Labour Office, 1919 - 1964" (Bibliographic contribution No. 25):

The ILO catalogue on microfiche covers, fairly comprehensively, the period of 1965 to the present with some references to earlier material; it is divided into three separate indexes:

- corporate author and conference;
- title;
- document number.

Each index is divided into three parts:

1952 - 1969	cumulative (but with limited coverage from 1952 to 1965)
1970 - 1977	cumulative
1978 - 1982	cumulated each month

Users looking for a document produced in 1965 or 1966 should consult both catalogues

The PROCESS catalogue

22. This is an index to material that is in the processing pipeline; through it, users can locate items that have been ordered but are not yet on the library shelves. Three microfiche indexes are produced monthly by:

- personal author;
- corporate author and conference;
- title.

The periodicals catalogue

23. This catalogue includes references to approximately 10,000 periodicals, that are, or have been, regularly received by the library. As well as the key periodical literature in the fields of interest of the ILO, the holdings include official gazettes from most member States, as well as annual reports from ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, trade unions and employers organisations, and from many other national, regional and international bodies. Two microfiche indexes are produced:

- by title;
- by country of publication.

Three copies of all microfiche indexes are available in the Reading Room for consultation by users. In addition, copies are available in documentation centres in ILO's technical units. Microfiche specifications are: COM: 400 frames (reduction 48x); diazo; A6 (105 mm x 148 mm).

International Labour Documentation

24. International Labour Documentation (ILD) is a monthly abstract bulletin which contains bibliographic descriptions and abstracts for all major items added to the library collection each month. Items are arranged in broad categories which correspond to the facets of the ILO Thesaurus: labour, employment and training terminology. Each issue contains subject indexes in English, French and Spanish, and a list of recent ILO documents and publications. ILD is distributed widely within and outside ILO; outside users may receive it on exchange or subscription. Printed cumulations of International Labour Documentation, covering the periods 1965-69, 1970-71, and 1972-76, are available, in 15 volumes, from G.K. Hall, 70 Lincoln St., Boston Ma. 02111, U.S.A.

IGODOC

25. IGODOC is a monthly printed catalogue of new documents and publications produced by other international organisations. Each issue refers to about 60 items and is distributed only to ILO officials.

IV. Information Services

Bibliographic searchers

26. The library no longer produces a cumulative subject index of its collection. Subject access is assured through an interactive dialogue with the computer. Each record in the machine-readable data base, LABORDOC, contains descriptors which represent the subjects of the document. These descriptors can be combined with other elements (date, language, etc.) to identify those documents which correspond to the needs of the user.

27. If users want a subject search urgently and require only a few references, these can be retrieved and displayed or printed immediately. Normally a more substantial bibliography is required. In this case, the user should complete a bibliographic search form detailing the subject areas of his request as well as the countries and regions in which he is interested. Often a discussion with the librarian on duty helps to ensure that the question is defined in a way designed to achieve the best results.

28. The results of the search are usually available the next day. External clients may request a search by letter, or exceptionally by telephone.

29. The Reading Room staff are not limited to searching the LABORDOC data base. They also have access to the Labour Information data base, created to support the production of an ILO quarterly - the Social and Labour Bulletin - and to the LABNOR database which covers ILO conventions.

30. In cases where the library cannot provide a satisfactory answer, users may be directed to the documentation centres of ILO's technical departments or to other organisations in Geneva.

Selective Dissemination of Information

31. Each month about 500 new entries are added to the LABORDOC data base. To keep abreast of these new items, users can request an SDI (selected dissemination of information) search. With the librarian responsible for this service, the user establishes a profile of his interest which is then matched against new additions to the file every six months.

Loans

32. Both ILO officials and outside users who wish to borrow books can do so by completing a form available at the information desk in the Reading Room.

33. Outside users may only borrow five items at a time and must consult this material in the Reading Room. ILO officials may borrow an unlimited number of items, but the library reserves the right to limit officials who are reluctant to return borrowed items.

34. ILO external offices may borrow items from the ILO library, as may other libraries with which the ILO library has a reciprocal inter-library loan arrangement. Similarly, the ILO library will arrange to borrow material from other libraries for ILO officials.

35. Users will receive a faster and more accurate loan service if they provide as much information as possible about the item they are requesting.

Circulation of periodicals

36. Literally thousands of periodicals are circulated each month to ILO officials. Officials who wish to have their names added to or deleted from the circulation list for a particular periodical should contact the periodicals unit.

Training and advisory service

37. The ILO library has more experience in the use of computerised information processing techniques than any other UN organisation. Training sessions can be arranged for staff of other national or international organisations and library school students may fulfill their practicum requirement here.

V. Availability of LABORDOC

38. For users outside Geneva, LABORDOC is available through two commercial data base suppliers (SDC, from 1978; Télésystèmes, from 1983):

SDC Search Service, Inc.,
Stuart House,
47 Crown Street,
READING,
Berkshire RG2 2SG (England)

SDC,
2500 Colorado Avenue,
SANTA MONICA,
California, 90406 (USA)

Télésystèmes,
40 rue du Cherche-Midi,
75006 PARIS (France)

39. LABORDOC is also available to certain users through the following organisations:

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA),
P.O. Box 3001,
ADDIS ABABA (Ethiopia)

Centre for Development of Instructional Technology (CENDIT),
C11 Community Centre Safdarjung Development Area,
NEW DELHI 110 016 (India)

International Development Research Centre (IDRC),
P.O. Box 8500,
OTTAWA K1G 3H9 (Canada)

Centre de Documentation des Sciences Humaines (CDSH),
54 boulevard Raspail,
75270 PARIS Cedex 06 (France)

Centre National de Documentation (CND),
B.P. 826,
RABAT (Morocco)

VI. Telephone numbers to call

Chief of the library	
Kate Wild	99.86.76
Christine Fiore	
Patty Meyers	99.86.75
Training	
C. d'Audiffret	99.86.24
Systems	
G.W. Thomas	99.86.27

Cataloguing	
R. Binggeli	99.86.67
J. Desigaud	99.86.73
A.M. Metroz	99.86.74
Acquisition	
A. Ng	99.87.11
E. Monnier	99.87.13
W. Perera	99.87.23
Serials	
L. Alpern	99.87.14
A. Crottet	99.87.16
M. Malliet	99.87.15
M. Salvatella	99.87.16
Searches and SDI	
L. Page	99.86.25/94
A. Pellier	99.86.30
Loans	
L. Pecherina	99.87.12
J. de Markos	99.86.85
C. Weissenfels	99.86.94
Collections	
J. Lambert	99.87.06
A. Golan	99.87.06
P. Vanel	99.87.05/10
International Organisation Documents	
C. Chave	99.86.22
H. Janin	99.86.23
Document Analysis and Terminology	
S. Luzy	99.86.29
A. Jesse	99.86.28
Photocopies and microfiche	
J.C. Reygrobellet	99.87.09

