

Employment Promotion

The ILO office has been providing technical assistance to Pakistan at different levels to promote employment as a means to poverty alleviation. At the policy level, the ILO extended technical support to the Ministry of Labour and social partners in developing a national employment policy, helping the Ministry of Planning to look into ways and means to improve the employment intensity of public works programmes. Similarly at the provincial level the ILO's support to the Departments of Labour include reviving and revitalizing public employment services by registering and matching unemployed people to job opportunities. At the grassroots level, the ILO is implementing demonstration projects that are creating employment opportunities for the vulnerable groups primarily in rural but also in urban settings where poverty is prevalent. The ILO helped the Ministry of Labour in establishing a Labour Market Information and Analysis Unit. This Unit is developing and disseminating reports on employment trends in Pakistan that inform policies and programmes for employment promotion in the country.

The ILO's recent assistance to Pakistan for employment promotion includes:

- Contribution to the development of PRSP and MTDF documents
- Capacity development of the Planning Commission in conducting research on poverty-employment nexus
- Developing capacity of the Ministry of Labour, social partners and other stakeholders in the area of Labour Market Information and Analysis
- Technical assistance for preparation of the National Employment Policy
- Providing advisory services to the national committee for the improvement of Labour Force Survey (LFS) of Pakistan
- Employment promotion in the post-crises situations

Equality and Discrimination

If women and men had a chance to be more productive and increase their earnings through better quality jobs, poverty and employment vulnerability in the country would decline. This is why equal access to decent work and productive employment for women and men is essential as a sustainable way out of poverty and therefore, to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Within the overall framework of the ILO Conventions such as C-100 and C-111, the ILO is working with all the stakeholders to assess the prevalent gender and other forms of disparities especially in employment and facilitate corrective measures at all levels – particularly by involving key labour market stakeholders, i.e., Government, Employers, Workers / Trade Unions and others. A Coordination Forum for Gender Equality has been established, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Employers and Workers Organizations, for all Labour-market stakeholders to discuss and resolve gender disparities. A series of studies on gender disparities have been conducted and planned in the areas of Skills Development, Employment Programs, Youth Employment and Post-crisis employment recovery. Similarly evidence-based study on best practices in minimizing sexual harassment at workplace has been conducted. Another study on Gender Disaggregated Employment Statistics: Issues and Current Practices has been done. Similarly the ILO provided support for developing Policy on Home-Based Workers as well as for the ratification of ILO Convention 177.

Green Jobs

For ILO, the notion of green jobs summarizes the transformation of economies, enterprises, workplaces and labour markets into a sustainable, low carbon economy providing decent work. Green jobs reduce the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors, ultimately to levels which are sustainable. They contribute to reducing the need for energy and raw materials, to avoiding greenhouse gas emission, to minimizing waste and pollution, and to restoring ecosystem services like clean water, flood protection and biodiversity.

In Pakistan, the ILO has initiated some groundbreaking activities to promote the concept and activities for green jobs in most-demanding sectors. The major initiatives launched include:

The development of a short as well as medium term strategy to introduce and promote the concept of green jobs in three sectors including Construction, Tourism and Energy.

The development of promotional and training material on green jobs for all stakeholders including the ILO constituents, other line ministries, civil society and academia.

Labour Migration

Pakistan is one of the largest labour sending countries in the region and as such remittance from the overseas workforce is one of major source of income not only for the families but overall for the country as well. The ILO office has been providing technical support to the Ministry of

Labour and other stakeholders in making efforts to tap the potential employment opportunities abroad by promoting safe emigration along with protecting the rights of emigrants. The ILO office provided technical support to the Ministry of Labour in developing and finalizing the draft National Emigration Policy. The ILO is working with the Bureau of Emigration to promote awareness on HIV & AIDS to the intending emigrants in their pre-departure briefings. Officials of the Ministry of Labour are provided in-country and overseas training on safe migration especially the issues relating to contractual arrangements and recognition of skills of migrant workers as well as on maximizing development benefits and minimizing adverse impacts, such as: loss of educational investment, skill depletion, social breakdown.

Safety and Health at Work

ILO reports show that while 2.2 million people die every year due to work-related accidents or illnesses, more than 270 million workers are injured and an estimated 160 million suffer work-related illnesses. The report says this grim toll also costs the global economy an estimated 4 per cent in lost GDP, equivalent to 20 times all official development aid put together.

The ILO adopted a systematic approach to safety and health at work with a Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention adopted in 2006. The new Convention establishes a framework within which occupational safety and health can be promoted. At the same time, it can foster political commitments to develop national strategies to promote continuous improvement of occupational safety and health to prevent occupational injuries, diseases and deaths; to take active steps towards achieving progressively a safe and healthy working environment; and to periodically consider what measures could be taken to ratify relevant occupational safety and health Conventions of the ILO. Together with the ILO Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health, adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2003, the Framework Convention is a key tool in reducing work-related accidents and ill-health and thus contributing to the realization of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

The ILO has been providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Labour and social partners in the following areas:

- Technical Assistance to develop Occupational Safety and Health Law
- Counselling Manual on Occupational Safety and Health produced for working children and their employers
- National profile on OSH (TORS finalised- study about to be commissioned)
- Ship-breaking Manual being translated into Urdu MOU with WHO on OSH under discussion for future joint activities;
- International Chemical Safety Cards Translated into Urdu;

Skills and Employability

The ILO has been assisting Pakistan for over 40 years. It has provided a wide range of direct technical support and advice on employment and labour issues during this time. The work on

employment and training has been and remains a high priority in Pakistan's Decent Work Country Programme, as the country faces enormous challenges in developing the knowledge and skills of its workforce both to improve economic competitiveness, create greater opportunities for employment, and reduce poverty in the rural areas. Around 70 per cent of the population lives in rural areas. The majority of working poor – those living on less than US\$ 1 per day – including a significant number of women and young people, have received a little or no formal education. Considered vulnerable groups, they often lack the employable skills to gain decent work and are unlikely to have the opportunities to access education or skill training programmes.

ILO's experience in many countries, including Pakistan, has shown that skill development can play a major role in the alleviation of poverty, when it is carefully planned and implemented in the context of the available and emerging employment and income-generation opportunities. Skill development, particularly for socially and economically disadvantaged target groups, has been found to be most successful when it has been used as a key component of an integrated employment generation and poverty reduction strategy. In this brief note, an overview will be provided on some selected key interventions on employment and training in recent years.

Policy advice

The ILO provided direct policy advice to the National Vocational and Technical Education Commission (NAVTEC) and assisted it to formulate its National Skills Strategy. The National Skills Strategy is in line with the ILO Standard – Recommendation 195 – on Human Resources Development.

Capacity building and Technical cooperation

The ILO has been involved in capacity-building for employment and training for many years and has been responsible for developing many of the earlier policy and standard setting labour market and training institution including the National Training Bureau which set policy and skills standards for many years prior to the establishment of NAVTEC.

In response to the former Finance Minister's letter to the ILO Director General requesting direct support to assess and develop the capacity of training institutions in Pakistan, the ILO developed a project to conduct rapid assessment of 80 training institutions across the country. Following this assessment, a comprehensive capacity-building programme was developed and implemented across the country to provide training in the design and development of short courses for wage and self employment, instructor training and the development of competency standards. The training of instructors to develop and use these materials was a critical element of the capacity-building process.

The ILO has also provide direct advisory services to NAVTEC as they attempt to move towards a competency based training approach in line with the National Skills Strategy. The ILO had developed Regional Model Competency Standards (RMCS) in key sectors such as Tourism,

Hospitality, Manufacturing along with RMCS Frameworks for the Construction, Dairy and Textile sectors. All these materials were shared with NAVTEC and training provided to key officials.

Skills development for livelihood creation and poverty reduction

The ILO's Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology, which is a comprehensive training package that identifies and assesses local economic opportunities, designs and delivers community-based skills training, and provides post-training services, has proved to be very successful in rural Pakistan during the last five years. A TREE project funded by the US-Department of Labour, trained over 3,000 people, of which 55 per cent were women, and more than 90 per cent of those trained used their new skills to gain employment. The importance and usefulness of TREE has been noted in the National Skills Strategy.

The ILO has also been very rapid in responding to natural disasters such as the tragic earthquake in October, 2005. The ILO quickly developed an integrated Community Based Livelihood Recovery Project (CBLRP) comprising Emergency Employment Services and Skills development for re-construction and livelihood development.

5. Employment and skills support programmes

While skills development is an essential element in assisting women and men to get decent jobs, it needs to be supported by a number of other critical elements including, labour market information and analysis, employment services and career information and guidance. The ILO has used an integrated approach to skills development in Pakistan which brings together all these elements. The ILO is presently implementing a very successful LMIA project which has developed the capacity of the Ministry of Labour, to analyse and disseminate labour market information. The LMIA Unit in the MoL provides valuable information and analysis on which new skills development programmes could be based.

The ILO has also developed Employment Service Centres, as part of its CBLRP project in the earthquake affected areas of the North Western Frontier Province and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. These Centres have now been taken over by the Provincial Governments and provide a range of employment services including job search skills, career guidance and employment placement.

The ILO has developed an extensive range of employment services including major publications on public and private employment services. It has also produced many useful publications on career guidance. Some of the ILO's key publications on Employment Services and Career Guidance include:

1. The public employment service in a changing labour market
2. Guidelines for establishing Emergency Public Employment Services
3. Guidelines on laws and policies concerning private employment agencies
4. Career Guidance: a resource handbook for low- and middle-income countries

5. Minute Guide for Young Job-Seekers
6. Guiding Youth Careers
7. Occupational Briefs – an outline of the job, competencies and education required

Social Security and Informal Economy

South Asia is still home to the largest group of population left without any kind of protection against social risks. Countries like Pakistan still face today the daunting challenge of extending social security benefits to all workers operating in the informal economy which account for more than 70% of the total labour force. With a critical mass of poor people dependent upon informal activities there is obviously the need for efficient protection mechanisms that can reduce their particular vulnerability to various shocks and stresses.

Paradoxically, and although recognizing that workers operating in the informal economy are prone to a wider range and higher frequency of risks, the existing social protection systems that are in place often exclude this section of the population while catering only for the needs of the formal economy workers. So far, the excluded groups remain exposed to the multiple risks affecting their daily lives and inhibiting their development initiatives. Among them, the most disadvantaged groups such as the poor women, the elderly, disabled people and migrant workers often remain caught in a continuing cycle of poverty and vulnerability. In recent years, it has been increasingly recognized that vulnerability was not only a component of poverty, but also one of its major causes. The lack of means to cope with some shocks and risks may often result in pushing people farther down the poverty trap. But the incapacity to deal successfully with risks go far beyond a state of deprivation, it has also other negative effects in terms of human and social capital, further restricting opportunities to improve working and living conditions.

In the new global environment, it has become even more important to stress the need for national systems of social security that are essential to social and economic development processes, and in a broader sense to the achievement of social justice. For a country like Pakistan still trying to bridge a huge social protection gap, the central policy challenge would probably be to design pluralistic, social security systems that combine a range of protective mechanisms in an effective way to provide adequate levels of protection to all groups of the society on the basis of universal access to at least some minimum level of protection for all.

The ILO has been providing assistance to Pakistan in the areas of:

- Policy, legal and regulatory context for social security and social protection in Pakistan;
- Institutional arrangements for social security and social protection, both governmental and non-governmental;
- Social security and social protection schemes and mechanisms that could be made available to the population;
- Social security extension plans presently being considered under the various development programmes adopted at the national level such as Pakistan Baitul Mal and Benazir Income Support Programme and at the provincial level such as Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Youth Development Programme in Sindh.

