

Virtual webinar

Lessons from the COVID-19 crisis: An unprecedented role for labour market policies?¹

Monday, 28 March 2022, 14h00 – 15h30 CET

Overview and agenda

[Register](#) in advance for this meeting

1. Context

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on economies and labour markets around the world as a result of the lockdown and containment measures. The impact in 2020 was both vast and deep - 4 times greater than the global financial crisis if analysed in terms of a reduction in working hours. Since then, the recovery has been uneven, uncertain and fragile. Global economic output declined by -3.3 per cent in 2020 with an estimated growth rate of -4.8 per cent in advanced economies and -2.2 per cent in emerging market and developing countries, where the latter is far more severe than witnessed in 2009. Looking within countries, certain sectors and groups have been hit much harder. Youth and women, along with those in the informal economy, have been badly affected and are, in some cases, being left behind as recoveries get underway.

To mitigate the immediate impact of the COVID-19 lockdowns, policymakers frontloaded emergency financial support to enterprises and income transfers to households to ensure their survival and to stop the economy and jobs from collapsing. As a key pillar of crisis responses, job retention schemes have played a critical role in helping employers keep workers in jobs (through short-time work schemes and wage subsidies). By May 2020, 50 million workers were covered in OECD countries by such measures, 10 times the level reached during the global financial crisis. At the same time, as highlighted in recent ILO reports², young people and other groups, including

¹ Supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Sector Project Employment Promotion in Development Cooperation, on behalf of Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ)”.

² [Briefing note: An update on the youth labour market impact of the COVID-19 crisis \(ilo.org\)](#)

informal workers, didn't benefit from these schemes to the same extent due to the more precarious work they are engaged in.

As economies embark on recovery (where possible), countries have shifted their attention to restarting the economy by focusing on priority areas in line with a post-COVID-19 policy vision (i.e., a human-centred transition towards economies that are sustainable, inclusive and resilient). Key measures for recovery include active labour market programmes, such as hiring subsidies and employment services, which can facilitate the re-entry of the jobless and those marginalized in the labour market, including in the context of growth/priority sectors (such as the digital, green and care economy).

2. Objectives of the webinar:

Against this background, the aims of the webinar are to:

- i. Take stock of the different labour market policies and programmes employed during the COVID-19 crisis.
- ii. Highlight key lessons and gaps in their implementation.
- iii. Identify major issues for further policy monitoring during the recovery period.

3. Agenda for the webinar

All times are Central European Time (UTC/GMT +1 hour)

Moderator: Sher Verick, ILO

14:00 -14:15 – Welcome by ILO and GIZ

- **Sukti Dasgupta**, ILO
- **Sabine Becker**, GIZ

14:15 – 15:30 – Presentation: Labour market policies during COVID-19

Objective: Drawing on recent analysis, the aim of this session is to highlight key policy lessons with a particular focus on labour market programmes, including job retention schemes and hiring subsidies, along with those policies targeting disadvantaged groups, especially youth. In addition, it will underscore the efforts made to support incomes, particularly to those outside the scope of formal protections. The session will highlight gaps in implementation, while stressing key issues for achieving an inclusive and job-rich recovery.

- Presentation by **Werner Eichhorst**, IZA
- Discussants: **Niall O'Higgins**, ILO, TBC
- Q&A

Closing

4. Participants

The workshop will consist of participants from international organizations, development partners, national policymakers, social partners and other experts.

5. Format

The workshop will be done virtually. Please register [here](#).