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FOR INFORMATION

Update on the Knowledge Strategy 2018–21

Summary: This Information Note briefly recalls the various means of action and reviews some of the key initiatives that contribute to improving knowledge uptake in policy formulation as the Office implements the Knowledge Strategy 2018–21 adopted by the Governing Body at its 331st Session (October–November 2017). It also looks at how the Office is trying to align the needs of constituents with its knowledge generation and dissemination function to shape thinking on decent work globally and strengthen policy processes.

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Related documents: GB.331/PFA/4.

1. The ILO's Knowledge Strategy 2018–21 seeks to deepen the ILO's position as an authoritative source of knowledge on world of work issues and to ensure that this knowledge influences policy frameworks and national strategies, including by enabling the social partners to participate in policy formulation processes. This vision is supported by three strategic objectives indicated in the resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2016:
 - (i) supporting informed policy dialogue;
 - (ii) improving the understanding of the contribution of the integrated approach to decent work for sustainable development; and
 - (iii) enhancing constituents' capacity to produce, use and share statistics and information.
2. The Knowledge Strategy 2018–21, discussed and adopted at the 331st Session of the Governing Body (October–November 2017), lists various means of action to achieve these objectives. This Information Note briefly recalls the various means of action and reviews some of the key initiatives that contribute to improving knowledge uptake in policy formulation. The Note also looks at how the Office is trying to align the needs of constituents with its knowledge generation and dissemination function to shape thinking on decent work globally and strengthen policy processes. This entails enhancing the constituents' capacity to generate and use knowledge as well as designing research and communicating research evidence in ways that help constituents make use of it.

Objective 1: Supporting informed policy dialogue

3. Policy-makers and social partners need relevant, up-to-date and detailed information as well as quality analyses on which to base their dialogue and decisions. The Office is therefore strengthening its policy-oriented and evidence-based research to respond to these needs.
4. The timely production and dissemination of research is key to ensure relevance and uptake. The Office is increasingly striving to align its research with a solid understanding of the policy processes and priorities of constituents at national and regional level. For example, being ready with the right information when ministries are beginning to prepare the following year's budget can guarantee a receptive audience from both governments and social partners.
5. Collaboratively developed research agendas, involving constituents in the different phases of research, from design and methodological framework, preliminary results, policy recommendations and dissemination of final results, contribute to research addressing the most pressing policy questions. Appropriate cooperation with local research institutions may facilitate better dissemination of results; strategic partnerships can help to balance the need for technical expertise and local engagement, increasing the uptake of research evidence.
6. An example of research that illustrates these points is the ongoing work on the first national employment policy in Tunisia. After intense consultations with the tripartite constituents, five research issues were agreed on and national researchers, in partnership with an international consultant, conducted diagnostic studies on each. The findings were then discussed within the tripartite inter-ministerial committee established as part of the same process. The committee created five working groups, bringing together all key stakeholders and experts to identify possible policy solutions based on the evidence produced. Such joint initiatives use the knowledge of the stakeholders as a complement to the research findings, and contribute to consensus building and knowledge uptake. Dissemination of the findings of this consultative process includes the publication of the employment diagnostic in the

form of thematic briefs in order to make it accessible to a wide audience. In addition, a full communications strategy was developed by the Tunisian Ministry of Labour to ensure that the employment diagnostic and the broader policy-making process is shared with all citizens.

7. The way in which research findings are presented impacts knowledge uptake. The Office will place greater emphasis on the publication of research results in formats that are accessible to non-experts and in formats that may be more appropriate to decision-makers than peer-reviewed journal articles. Some new initiatives are already under way, such as the fact sheets on employment and environmental sustainability produced for 36 countries in Asia and the Pacific and which will be extended to other regions this biennium.¹ An ILO paper on reforming migrant workers' visa sponsorship schemes in the Middle East benefited from engagement with a prominent civil society organization to jointly produce a short video explaining its recommendations. A related briefing note focusing on irregular migrants – a direct consequence of the sponsorship system – was then prepared. This package presents action-oriented solutions for policy-makers in a user-friendly way and was very well received in the region and beyond, generating discussion and reference in the negotiations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.
8. Efforts to generate evidence rely on the availability of quality information and data. The ILO has initiated several major research initiatives aimed at filling data and information gaps. Of particular note is a series of reports providing new quantitative estimates of child labour, youth employment, domestic workers, forced labour, migrant workers and care workers. The methodologies and quality of available national and international data sets used to produce these estimates were thoroughly reviewed and assessed by the statistics and research departments. Further efforts will be made to assure increased availability of data at regional and country level. Labour statisticians in the regions play a crucial role in that regard and the Statistics Global technical team will strengthen its collaboration with other parts of the Office to further enhance data availability.
9. The Office is committed to be the world's leading information source on labour statistics. Important partnerships have been established² and ILOSTAT³ now includes the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators for which the ILO is responsible. The Office will increase automated data exchange with member States and other organizations, reducing the manual overburden of reporting. Furthermore, the Office will continue its efforts to harmonize data pursuant to the standards agreed upon by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) to facilitate international comparison and to meet the quality framework of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics approved by the UN General Assembly. The 20th ICLS (Geneva, 10–19 October 2018) presents an opportunity to improve the statistical standards on various labour-related concepts such as non-standard forms of work, forced labour, child labour, skills mismatch and labour migration, as well as to revise the existing classification system to measure the employment relationship within the context of the changing world of work.
10. In addition to making data and information available, the Office is engaging in a number of innovative initiatives to increase accessibility. For example, the online World Employment and Social Outlook (WESO) data finder now facilitates timely access to up-to-date country labour market information. Other examples include the new ILOSTAT web pages, providing

¹ https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/issue-briefs/WCMS_624557/lang--en/index.htm.

² Partnerships with the UN Statistical Commission of the Economic and Social Council, the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data and National Statistical Offices.

³ Corporate statistical database of the ILO, available at www.ilo.org/ilostat.

more intuitive access to their suite of databases,⁴ as well as the Global Online Access to Legal Information (GOALI), which provides online access to legal research and training for eligible institutions in low- and middle-income countries.

11. The potential offered by big data to better inform policy dialogues is being explored to help reveal patterns, trends, and associations that would not have been apparent otherwise. The Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour Regional Initiative has developed the Child Labour Risk identification model based on big data analysis. It allows analysis of existing national data (quantitative and qualitative data, surveys, census, and administrative registries) to estimate the probability of child labour in a certain region and to identify its principal underlying factors. On that basis, policy-makers have greater capacity to make decisions about effective interventions. The model was launched in 2017 in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, and is becoming a key instrument for fostering comprehensive and inter-institutional policies to prevent and tackle child labour in more than ten countries.

Objective 2: Improving understanding of the contribution of the integrated approach to decent work for sustainable development

12. Enhanced knowledge on the interactions among the four pillars of decent work and the results of the integrated approach on the ground will strengthen the impact of the ILO's work on the sustainable development agenda. The Office is therefore strengthening its knowledge base on the contribution of the integrated approach. This requires greater collaboration in research, data gathering and dissemination activities among technical departments, between headquarters and field offices and among decent work teams.
13. The ILO's integrated approach has three key advantages. First, collaboration can deliver effective knowledge solutions. Global technical teams provide an effective vehicle for producing knowledge with an integrated approach and have been delivering relevant and timely solutions to Members, as the work on domestic workers has shown.⁵
14. Second, the integrated approach brings together best ideas from economics, law, industrial relations and social sciences and their inter-linkages. Such a multi-disciplinary approach often challenges prevailing views in multilateral fora and other international organizations. Maintaining this approach also leads to ILO policy recommendations that are both innovative and progressive and influence global policy debates. For example, the findings of the 2018 WESO "Greening with Jobs", based on a fully integrated approach of the Decent Work Agenda, enriched the G20 discussion of the Climate Sustainability Working Group.⁶ The Report *Care work and care jobs for the future of decent work*, a major product of the Women at Work Initiative published in June 2018 made a substantive contribution to the Future of Work Centenary Initiative and positioned the Decent Work Agenda in the

⁴ Initiatives on better data visualization and access to data are under way to enable researchers and users to embed specific ILOSTAT data directly into their websites, social media and other online platforms.

⁵ Several ILO units and programmes and all field offices are collaborating with national constituents and partner institutions to make decent work a reality for domestic workers worldwide.

⁶ A stand-alone, shorter report based on the WESO was produced for and submitted to the G20 Climate Sustainability Working Group.

framework of the sustainable development agenda.⁷ In both cases, the preparation of dedicated regional and national communication materials was instrumental to ensure wide dissemination.

15. Third, an integrated approach requires responsiveness to, and consideration of, the interests of social partners in research design and analytical framing. Research by the Office on equal pay, for example, highlights the complementarity between effective social dialogue institutions and effective minimum wage policy.
16. Beyond advocacy, research evidence is being used to demonstrate how an integrated approach concretely contributes to advancing decent work at country level. In response to serious concerns by constituents about the persistent challenge of the informal economy, the Office organized the South–South Expert Knowledge Sharing Forum on Enterprise Formalization in the Philippines in July 2018.⁸ Brazil, Chile and Uruguay presented their experiences in implementing an innovative integrated policy mix in addressing informality. Policy-makers from the Philippines very much appreciated this new experience-sharing approach. The ILO played the role of knowledge-sharing facilitator and consolidator of new knowledge. The Forum informed policy dialogues at national and subnational level in the Philippines and influenced the policy agenda: the Philippines’ Department of Trade and Industry created a subcommittee for the informal economy under the inter-agency MSME Development Council it chairs; the subnational Regional Development Council of the Region IV-A created a working group to consider the incorporation of elements of the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), into their macroeconomic policy-making; and the government representatives of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) included pursuing the formalization of the informal economy in their recommendations.

Objective 3: Enhancing Members’ capacity to produce, use and share statistics and information

17. Policy-makers and social partners need to have the capacity to understand and apply evidence in policy-making. Individuals need to have a broad range of capacities including: knowledge about what research is and how it can be used; skills in searching for and evaluating research information; critical skills to absorb, critique and integrate information; and a positive attitude towards research evidence.
18. There are many examples of successful training programmes that strengthen Members’ understanding of key policy issues, using the most recent research findings available. The academies of the International Training Centre of the ILO on social security, skills, social dialogue, transition to the formal economy, and others are offered in an international environment of knowledge exchange and provide a unique opportunity for peer exchange. The Knowledge Management Academy contributes to developing a culture of policy learning. Participants explore and practice state-of-the-art principles, tools and methods used in better creating, applying, sharing and managing knowledge. On statistics, courses cover designing labour force and other survey questionnaires, including: implementation of ICLS

⁷ The report is grounded on the analysis of 100 countries’ microdata and puts forward a number of new indicators to better capture the trends and underlying causes of women’s unequal status in the labour market.

⁸ http://www.ilo.ch/manila/eventsandmeetings/WCMS_634492/lang--en/index.htm.

resolutions; strengthening labour market information systems; and data analysis of various topics covered under labour statistics, including SDG indicators.

19. Capacity-building activities at the national level follow the demands coming from countries. A pilot application of the ILO Guidelines concerning a statistical definition of employment in the environmental sector, including green jobs, adopted by the ICLS in 2013, was undertaken and completed in Mongolia, working in partnership with Mongolia's National Statistical Office. At the request of ILO constituents, the Office is assisting Barbados, Cameroon, Philippines, Senegal and South Africa to initiate similar projects, relying on collaboration among several departments in headquarters and field offices.
20. Building the capacity of social partners is a priority. The bilingual course on "Strengthening the Capacity of Workers' Organizations for Effective Engagement in National Employment Policy Making: Focus on ECOWAS Member States" that took place in Ghana in September 2018 shows how knowledge generated by the Office can be successfully translated into user-friendly training material in the guide, "National Employment Policies: A guide for workers' organizations".⁹
21. Partnerships with other UN agencies broaden the reach of ILO training programmes by providing the integrated decent work dimension to broader UN policies. For example, the ILO partnered with the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to train constituents on the measurement of the employment impact of climate change policies. Three joint training workshops were held in 2018: one in Bahrain in March, a second during the United Nations Climate Change Conference in May in Germany and a third in Cape Town in September.
22. An important avenue for knowledge uptake is peer learning, such as study tours and regional or global knowledge-sharing forums. For example, South Asian employers shared their experiences on the fight against forced labour and human trafficking at a meeting in Nepal in March 2018; constituents from nine countries exchanged experiences on effective design of wage policies at a regional workshop held in August 2018 in India. Peer learning also occurs through specific development cooperation programmes, exemplified by the building bridges programme in Viet Nam and Cambodia and the peer-to-peer learning programme in the Western Balkans.
23. Building the capacity of constituents also takes place through the interactions and work processes that the Office establishes with them. For example, to enhance the capacity of employers' organizations to engage more strategically with governments, companies and other stakeholders on issues related to gender diversity, as well as to enable them to examine their own internal structures, the Office is implementing the Women in Business and Management (WIBM) programme in a number of regions and countries. Through the WIBM, the Office works with employers' organizations to develop knowledge products that are based on enterprise surveys and capture the situation, opportunities and challenges for businesses to realize the competitive edge gender diversity brings to their operations. In 2018, employers' organizations in Honduras, Panama and India launched national WIBM reports which provide policy recommendations that will be further pursued. A new partnership with UN Women has been established to develop national WIBM reports with employers' organizations in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Jamaica and Uruguay in the current biennium.

⁹ Edited in plain language and translated into five languages, this guide is used to conduct capacity-building workshops in the regions and enhance the capacity of workers' organizations to inform their policy dialogues.

24. Another important area for facilitating learning is having well-functioning processes for capturing and systematizing knowledge generated in the process of working, and turning this knowledge into something accessible and easy to share. This includes having systems in place (usually digital in nature) that are designed to store this and other policy-relevant knowledge so that constituents can access it and use it when needed. The Skills for Employment Global Public–Private Knowledge Sharing Platform (Global KSP), a multi-agency, online tool for sharing evidence, evaluations, approaches, knowledge and experiences on policies and practices for promoting effective skills development and training systems,¹⁰ and the ILO’s Social Protection Platform, a global knowledge-sharing tool to extend social protection,¹¹ are two examples of such systems.

Communicating research evidence for improved knowledge uptake

25. The use of user-friendly technology to improve knowledge sharing in the ILO, with a view to enhancing implementation of the Knowledge Strategy 2018–21, is being stepped up. The IT Strategy aims to leverage technology to streamline ways of working, foster innovation, enhance decision-making and facilitate knowledge sharing throughout the Office. The intent is to enable a more efficient, insightful and collaborative ILO where staff, governments and social partners can more easily and effectively work together to share information and knowledge.
26. Internal knowledge sharing, particularly between headquarters and the field, is a priority and the Office has embraced SharePoint as a means of carrying information to ILO staff. The new intranet landing page launched in mid-2018 represents a major step in information sharing, offering new features and a single entry point for all staff at headquarters and in the regions. In addition to easier and unified access to information from across the ILO, the landing page features all content produced for the Inside newsletter, including articles and interviews on ILO priority issues, the latest research and lessons learned, to help ensure all staff are well briefed.
27. Going forward, SharePoint will become a key tool for increasing collaboration – through, for example, a broad set of online community of practice workspaces on specific issues – and knowledge sharing between teams and offices. Offline, a series of information-sharing events called Inside Out has been organized to brief all staff on key reports and developments, and allow interaction with the authors and organizers.
28. Shifts in technology have allowed the ILO to communicate its knowledge across a variety of online platforms in new and engaging ways. The ILO Communication plan for 2018–19 prioritizes taking advantage of these innovations to bring the ILO’s research findings and recommendations to its key audiences in the most effective and user-friendly way. Social media platforms are already being used to disseminate ILO knowledge, including via Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and the ILO blog, and an Instagram account is soon to be added. Features offered by these platforms have been used to help the ILO interact directly with audiences, including Facebook Live, which allows the ILO to broadcast interviews with technical experts to viewers who can post their own questions.

¹⁰ https://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_216427/lang--en/index.htm.

¹¹ <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/ShowWiki.action?id=9>.

29. Recent projects have changed the way ILO staff and constituents engage with the Organization's data, increasing visibility and usage. The Knowledge Gateway, the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, the Future of Work Initiative, the i-eval Discovery dashboard and the Decent Work Results dashboard illustrate how complex data and content can be translated into accessible and user-friendly knowledge portals. Whether providing country-specific data covering all ILO member States, addressing a critical challenge of the world of work or covering the changes the future of work holds, these platforms respond to constituents' needs for knowledge sharing.
30. Innovations such as the InfoStories platform have allowed the ILO to share knowledge on world of work issues in new and interactive ways, combining text, video, data visualization and audio. Similar technology is being used to build a dedicated website for ILO100, conveying the Organization's history and knowledge in an immersive and interactive way.
31. Evaluation of user data for the various platforms, along with direct user feedback will be analysed to evaluate their performance and make improvements as we move forward. Use of the Adestra email service for example allows the Office to monitor user interaction with a weekly news update and other targeted subscriber emails. The Office will continue to monitor developments and assess which new technologies could be adopted to help enhance its ability to reach and engage audiences with its knowledge.

Conclusion

32. Making the ILO the global centre of excellence for knowledge on the world of work and ensuring that this knowledge informs policy dialogue at national, regional and global levels is a high priority for the Office. Significant progress has already been achieved since the adoption of the Knowledge Strategy 2018–21, and the Office will build on progress made to extend best practices to all parts of the Office. Collaboration within the Office and with other organizations will continue to be increased. Working with constituents to meet their needs and to tap their knowledge remains a priority, and the Office will continue to deepen its efforts to engage with Governments and the social partners on a regular basis on the research agenda. The focus on ensuring that statistics produced by the Office and by Members are of the highest quality and conform to the latest international standards will be continued and deepened. Technology is increasingly providing ways for the ILO to disseminate its work for practical results, and the Office will continue to leverage these opportunities as much as possible.