

**Bilateral Cooperation through the  
Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL)**

**Final report**

Soliciting institution: *Employment Services Directorate – Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security (MTEySS) of Argentina*

Providing institution: *Skills and Learning Branch, Department of Labour and Advanced Education, Nova Scotia (Halifax) – HRSDC Canada*

Duration: 5 days (from Monday the 24th to Friday the 28th of September 2012)

**1. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**

Within the RIAL Bilateral Cooperation Framework, we benefited from the provision of technical assistance from the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, Nova Scotia, to the Ministry of Labour, Employment, and Social Security of Argentina in regard to “Public Employment Services—Linkage with the local business community and the population of older persons.”

The activity took the form of an on-site visit which included the participation of: Margarita Laría, Director of Employment Services; Daniel Helbig; Chief of the Department of Articulation and Constitution of the Employment Services Network and Daniela Liker, Coordinator of the Argentine Northwestern Region, all under the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security of Argentina.

Keith Messenger, Planning and Accountability Manager, coordinated the visit on behalf of the providing institution with the support of Michael Warner, Jobs Program Officer.

During the five days of work, there were presentations from experts on thematic areas contemplated for the technical assistance and in accordance with the agreed-upon agenda. These included visits to various organizations that receive funding for programs run by the government in Halifax.

*Site visit:*

The on-site visit began with an introductory framework consistent with overall presentation of the structure and operation of the soliciting institution and of the provider. Regarding the latter, after contextually situating the visitors in a local perspective regarding labor market intermediation, the issue of support benefits and employment measures was further deepened as well as the programs offered by the Department of Employment (ENS). Developed specifically and prominently were aspects of the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers (TLOW). The second day of work continued with presentations, this time on the pillars of employment of the economic development strategy of Nova Scotia, which included an explanation of the main aspects of the “jobsHere” and the economic growth plan and the development strategy of the labor force. The group then began field trips, which included: a visit to the Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia (MANS), an NGO which represents the interests of multicultural organizations and communities within the province and in connection to multicultural education, advocacy and information-sharing; a visit to an employment assistance center at which the administrator made presentation on Job Junction (NGO which is one of the operators of the employment assistance service), a visit to the Centre for Education and Entrepreneurship Development (CEED) which was introduced by the team of the Centre. Mediating the study visit, on the third day the emphasis was primarily on a visit to institutions

where services are outsourced. First, we visited the Nova Scotia Community College, which is the largest training institution and operator skills development program in Nova Scotia. It has multiple delegations within province and it receives the largest quantity of clients benefiting from LAE programs. After hearing a presentation from the Direction of the establishment and from the employees, there was a tour of the facilities where different teachers showed and explained how they work with students. In particular, the operation of the "Apprenticeship Training Program" was presented by one of the representatives of the Apprenticeship Department. Secondly, we visited a training institution for people with disabilities where furniture is made. There was a presentation by its director and a tour of the organization to see how raw materials are fashioned into finished products that go on sale in an adjacent room.

Since the on-site assistance had finished, on the fourth day the activities contemplated during the first half of the day a series of presentations on Workforce Strategy which included a demo and online toolkit on the Sector Council program, on the "One Journey" initiative, on the Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive (WIPSI) and on the Workplace Education Program (WEP). During the second half, there was a visit to a company located in an industrial park, dedicated to the manufacture of safety clothing, which implements the WIPSI program. It included presentations by the General Manager of the company and an officer responsible for monitoring the program in the workplace, then a tour of the production area to directly observe how the final product is made in its entirety. The closure of the study visit on the fifth day first included a presentation on adult education at the School for Adult Learning of Nova Scotia, detailing aspects of programs and initiatives, funding partners and best practices. Secondly, as the last activity, was a visit to the Valley Community Learning Association (VCLA), a leader in collaborative partnership, volunteerism, and capacity building programs that promote inclusion and job retention. The principal and volunteer teachers of the association gave a presentation.

It is noteworthy that in each activity during the entire on-site visit there was a mutual space for questions and answers.

## 2. MAIN LESSONS LEARNED

✓ It was very interesting to share the experience of the implementation of employment policies from a provincial perspective. In particular, the manner in which Nova Scotia designed a service delivery model with funds sent from the national government, with the mission to meet the immediate challenge of a prolonged recessionary impact, as well as achieving efficiency in maximizing available funds for direct investment by the "customer." This practice came to our attention because it differs from our system, in which actions that are performed by the national government for municipalities and where provinces have an emerging role. The flexibility allows work programs in Nova Scotia more autonomy and more specifically defines performance areas, providing the ability to offer a common menu of services available through a variety of channels to all citizens of Nova Scotia.

✓ By visiting different institutions the use of both the public and private spheres as outsourced services could be directly observed, according to the best response to the demands of the labor market. These practices help us to think of innovative ways to establish partnerships with various institutions in the private sphere, in order to be able to respond to demands in localities where public institutions do not have sufficient coverage for recipients.

✓ As for the relationship with the business sector, the matter of helping businesses become more competitive globally, and of increasing foreign direct investment and international trade and improving productivity, allows us to reflect on the integrity of the strategy for the well-being of the business sector, this being one of the main recipients of our Public Employment Service. It also allows us to think about the design of future actions aimed at raising awareness among employers, in cooperation with local authorities, so that they know about all the efforts made in training, access to specific credits and tax incentives, in order to gain confidence in public employment services, thus promoting their firm involvement.

- ✓ The local workforce support system, “LaMPSS” (Labour Markets Support System), which has been in place for approximately three years, is in the process of continuous improvement in order to be uniform to all registered organizations with which it maintains registered working arrangements. Similarly, cash benefits to the “clients” and the services provided are recorded. The form which collects information consists of three parts: 1.) Organization of funds, 2.) Contracts with “clients” (individuals and organizations) and 3.) Tracking information about customers. Since our Information Platform for Labor Mediation is a similar management system that is also in a continuous change and improvement, it serves as an input, to consider the addition of new categories to help us improve access and information processing.
- ✓ In response to local unemployment, which remains high at 9.7% of the population, a multi-year strategic plan (2011-2016) was carried out to allocate resources. There was a focus on those sectors for which there is projected an overview of industrial growth and greater potential to absorb the population with employment issues: health, welfare, trade, transportation, manufacturing, accommodation and food, oil, gas and mining. These prospective analyses serve us from the comparative point of view, to include areas of work, among other things, as part of the strategic planning of our Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security.
- ✓ In relation to the important tools for exercising national labor intermediation: We recognize the great importance of the National Employment Portal and how beneficial it would be to have the use of a site for employment at this level, and it encourages us to consider such an idea in our analysis of the development of this type of tool in our country.

### 3. STEPS TO FOLLOW

On the basis of consultation and social dialogue, an employment impact policy was built in Argentina in each of its regions, addressing the problems of each province and running the defined programs in each of the municipalities in a decentralized manner through municipal employment offices that make up the Employment Services Network. Canada, by contrast, maintains a model of provincial authority to designate the distribution of funds for national and local programs. Having said this, and relying on the experience in question, we identified three main lines of work to delineate future actions based on the best practices used by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education of Nova Scotia:

- ✓ Liaison with employers: Prioritize the development of a more comprehensive care strategy for the sector through the implementation at an inter-agency level of public-private actors (chambers, Federation of Argentinian Municipalities, municipal representatives and unions) for the redesign and improvement of the local response in order to more effectively meet demand for local employment. For this purpose, it is necessary to streamline the recognition of local employers and clearly identify and gather the best possible information about their characteristics as job applicants. Second, link labor supply with the demands of the productive sector in a systematic and focused way. Third, promote and articulate labor and production needs, building trust through technical meetings with the industry, in order to be able to implement placement actions and improve management comprehensively.
- ✓ Labor Mediation Information Platform: Improve access and information received by the people registered in the portal; expand the tools for the employers’ sector participating in the actions of the Employment Services Network; improve job placement results of the network, in particular the integration of populations participating in the program driven by the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security.
- ✓ Public-Private Partnerships: Greater coordination of public and private efforts for the development of localities; strengthening employment promotion areas of provincial governments to address employment issues comprehensively and in concert with the municipalities and the Ministry of

Labor, Employment and Social Security; to institutionalize these initiatives gradually, especially considering that the construction of social and institutional capital is one of the cornerstones of a development policy with decent jobs, and that these are long-term processes.

#### **4. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The experience has helped us to reflect on the issues that we need to strengthen both our processes and tools for planning and monitoring the services provided at the central level, and for those services that municipal employment offices can carry out. While each country focuses its efforts based on specific objectives, it is agreed that shared best practices may be appropriate to the characteristics and needs of each Public Employment Service. It also highlights the valuable participation of members of the providing institution and all facilities visited, the willingness to hold long and arduous working hours, the enthusiasm to promote mutual exchange and socialization of good practice in terms of employment services.

In short, the experience gained in this study visit successfully met the objectives, providing tools and equipment needed to strengthen our management.

#### **5. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS TO THE PROVIDING INSTITUTION**

✓ Some corrections made via e-mail by LAE regarding the particularities of the site visits, have already been included in the present report.