

Results

Workshop “Decentralized Public Employment Services and their Linkage with the Business World”.

Americas – Europe Interregional Event • Mexico City, March 16 to 18, 2011

Contents

1. Overview.....	2
2. Conclusions	3
3. Ideas arising from the working groups.....	9
4. Results of the evaluations.....	11
5. Final agenda	12
6. List of Participants.....	15



Workshop “Decentralised Public Employment Services and their Linkage with the Business World”.

Americas – Europe Interregional Event

1. Overview

Date: March 16 to 18, 2011

Venue: Nuevo León I Room - Fiesta Americana Reforma Hotel, Mexico City

Address: Av. Paseo de la Reforma #80, piso 1, Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtémoc, C.P. 06600, México, D.F.

This workshop was jointly organised by the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES), the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (STPS) of Mexico, the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security of Argentina and the Organization of American States’ (OAS) Department of Social Development and Employment, which operates the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL).

Goal: To facilitate effective and active exchange regarding the need to achieve the consolidation of public employment services (PES) in terms of their effective decentralization and improving their linkage with the business world.

Specific objectives:

- a. To reflect on the effectiveness of strategies and tools for promoting decentralized PES and their contribution to local development strategies.
- b. To review the limitations and explore opportunities for improving the sustained linkage of PES with the business world.
- c. To reflect on the part played by PES in serving vulnerable populations with greatest employment difficulties, especially in post-crisis periods. This objective is crosscutting.

Participants:

- Authorities and officers in the employment area (Secretariats, Deputy Ministries or Employment Departments) from 24 Ministries of Labor and Employment in the Americas and Europe.
- Representatives of the Employment Services of 17 Mexican States.
- A representative from Manpower, the private placement agency.
- Representatives of the Trade Union Technical Advisory Council (COSATE) and the Business Technical Advisory Committee on Labor Matters (CEATAL) as permanent advisory bodies of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML/OAS).
- Representatives from the International Labour Organization, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Association of Public Employment Services and the Organization of American States.

2. Conclusions

Below we have presented the conclusions reached by the moderators and co-organizers of the event.

Panel 1 - Strategic measures for serving employers

- On this panel the experiences of France, Mexico (Coahuila state) and Peru were presented as to how their Public Employment Services (PES) are currently providing services for employers. The presentations of these three cases were preceded by ILO and IBD talks, and their valuable contributions are also included in these conclusions.
- It is essential to take account of the very different backgrounds and development paths which exist in order to understand the different strategic approaches of the services which PES provide for employers. However, it is possible to identify some global trends, and these are included below.
- An employment crisis is always regrettable, but it generates opportunities for PES to connect with the business world. Lessons learned from the 2008 - 2010 global crisis have shown that PES can be effective instruments in the design of employment policies which can have an immediate functional effect in very specific labor market situations.
- A number of initiatives have arisen from crisis situations in various countries and a more highly evolved concept of the PES is emerging as services for employers develop and are increasingly seen as a key element and a successful contribution to the responsibilities and objectives allocated to PES by municipal, regional and federal government organizations.
- New public management sets the pace. The way PES operate is more and more focused on results and less and less on procedures. An integral focus, which includes the viewpoints of all parties involved, is becoming essential, particularly to guarantee a consistent approach with regard to all the players in the labor market with the aim on achieving sustainable results which can be of benefit to society.
- The main aim of a service strategy organized by the PES with the employers in mind is to streamline intermediation between employers and jobseekers.
- Other responsibilities and objectives taken on by PES (like finding work for the at-risk groups), can only be successful if the main aim of providing intermediation services is satisfied.

- Long-term and high-quality relationships with employer clients must be based on responding to and fulfilling their needs, whether they are huge conglomerates or SMEs. Mutual trust is the key to success.
- Services must be simple, equitable and efficient.
- A trend towards developing more personalized, proactive services for employers can be observed.
- An investment essential to services for employers is to produce well trained PES staff skilled in maintaining good relationships with them.
- It is essential that PES have a good understanding of local realities so that they can correctly identify labor market needs.
- In addition to the conventional methods for compiling labor market information, such as surveys, observatories and registration body networks, new forms also exist, such as job fairs and ad hoc cooperation initiatives with the various stakeholders.
- Finally, a useful way to incorporate employer needs in the design of PES services is to allow employer representatives to participate in PES decision-making (along with other players, such as chambers of commerce, NGOs, civil society, municipalities).

PANEL 2 – Tools for the adequate development of services for employers

- This panel presented the experience of PES from Germany, Brazil, the Dominican Republic and the United States. The participants identified points of agreement, one of the more striking being the fact that PES have organized their duties on the basis of a model which responds to the effective attention of employers and jobseekers. Their actions cover the area from employment orientation to the issue of grants or aid, and include training and employment intermediation per se. For this purpose they make use of a wider cover via a growing network of employment offices.
- The participants were in agreement as to the importance of insisting on the following factors as guidelines for a suitable performance of their functions:
 - Striving for labor market transparency;
 - Providing equal opportunities for men and women;
 - Paying suitable attention to groups experiencing difficulties in entering the labor market;
 - Extending the scope of their concerns;

- Organising training in accordance with the needs of the employer sector, the development of which will contribute to the creation of more and better jobs.
- It has been acknowledged that in order to define the direction of PES actions, it is of crucial importance to maintain close links with the employer sector and to understand its characteristics, development and needs. From this viewpoint, the speakers explained that they depend on collegial organizations in which the main players are the employers themselves, entrepreneurial bodies, worker associations and are in permanent communication with the education institutions.
- It was clear that one party essential to ensuring a good outcome for the efforts of PES is the "middleman" or business consultant, whose duties bring him into daily contact with employers such that the relevance of his actions is supported, and hence user satisfaction is improved. The importance of playing a more active role in respect of employer needs was highlighted, as it leads to proactivity and shatters the passive role of the PES as far as companies are concerned.
- They agreed on the importance of providing employers with user-friendly on-line tools such as:
 - Electronic labor exchanges;
 - Jobseeker websites
 - Free-of-charge telephone helplines
 - Occupational guidance
- The participants stated that as the quality of PES services rises, the business sector will use them with more confidence. They also stressed the fact that PES are staffed by civil servants committed to service, which must be of good quality as well as free-of-charge.
- The participants stressed the importance of measuring user satisfaction via surveys designed to identify the needs of the business sector, and its satisfaction with the services provided.
- As far as the vulnerable groups were concerned, they agreed to the need to promote conditions of accessibility and to provide services where all conditions were equal. The PES of the participants on the panel were equipped with specific actions or strategies designed to deal with this sector of the population.

PANEL 3 – Decentralized PES: The municipal option

- This panel presented the experience of the Public Employment Services from Switzerland, Argentina and Costa Rica, which are all at different stages in the decentralization process. This was preceded by presentations by the ILO, particularly with reference to the Support Programme

for the Consolidation and Improvement of the Quality of Employment in Argentina (CEA), and the World Bank.

- Decentralizing the PES through the participation of the municipalities gives rise to a number of advantages in the area of employment police, including:
 - providing a better service through proximity with users (employers and workers);
 - matching the goals and duties of the PES to the characteristics of each locality;
 - allowing the involvement of other social players (government, city government, local employer organizations, local worker organization, training institutions, etc.).
- The way in which the municipal PES relate to each other and to the national (federal) government depends on the nature of the political organization of each country. The experiences commented on this panel (Switzerland, Argentina and Costa Rica), referred to the following conditions:
 - Switzerland: each canton functions like a sovereign state, the PES enjoying a maximum of operational autonomy with a Management Committee consisting of the national head of the Unemployment Funds and four representatives from the cantons (one per region) deciding upon objectives and the distribution of resources;
 - Argentina: a federal state with three state levels recognized in the constitution (national, provincial and municipal), where cover is national, with a single database and the decentralization process driven from the national state, buttressing the development of local powers;
 - Costa Rica: since the passing of the 2008 law, a National Intermediation, Training and Employment System has been in place, with various sectors of the national government, the municipalities and employer and worker representatives participating in its National Council.
- The relationship between the PES and the private placement agencies is different in each of the countries analysed:
 - In Switzerland close collaboration exists between the PES and the private agencies, which are responsible for some 80% of placements;
 - In Argentina placement by private companies for profit is prohibited;
 - In Costa Rica, private placement agencies are unregulated.
- While a consensus exists as to the functions of the municipal PES, it is acknowledged that the priority or importance of those functions varies in each PES, with regard to the particular conditions of the locality and the characteristics of the population (a PES in an area developing fast on the industrial front with a dense population is not the same as one in an area with little economic development, such as a traditional rural zone, with a scattered population).

- From this standpoint, decentralising the PESs via the municipalities offers the best likelihood of meeting needs (plus the recognition of other specifics, such as the different languages used in Switzerland).

PANEL 4 – Strategic partnerships to provide effective employment services with the private sector or nongovernmental actors

- Through this Panel it was possible to complement the discussions led by government officers with the viewpoints of other players. On the one hand the participants enjoyed a presentation by Manpower, the private intermediation service provider; and on the other the tripartite dialogue was completed with representatives from the worker and employer sectors, via leaders from the Trade Union Technical Advisory Council (COSATE) and the Business Technical Advisory Committee on Labor Matters (CEATAL).
- Emphasis was laid on the importance of the role of public-private partnerships in employment services and the need to operate in a complementary manner in a framework of collaboration between public services and private placement agencies. This does not contradict the regulatory and monitoring duties of the state in respect of the private agencies.
- The need for the public employment services and private providers to operate in a complementary fashion is nowadays all the more pressing for a number of reasons:
 - The changing nature of the labor market and the speed with which some occupations are becoming obsolete and other are being created (the “twitteros” for example - professional twitter-service suppliers);
 - The appearance of numbers of private personnel selection and intermediation agencies, whose presence is growing in the region;
 - The mismatch, still looming, despite various efforts to correct the situation, between the content of training courses and the needs of the productive sector.
- Experiences such as that of Mexico demonstrate how partnerships with the private sector can be boosted. During the RIAL workshop on Labor Intermediation held in November 2006 in Cocoyoc, Mexico, questions were posed as to how the National Employment Service (SNE) could establish relationships with private providers. Today, those questions have been greatly answered; one example is the inclusion of direct links to Manpower, Adecco and others in the Mexican Employment Website (Portal del Empleo – www.empleo.gob.mx).
- The importance of workers keeping themselves permanently updated plus lifelong learning was acknowledged. In this context, skills training, understood as a collection of transferable aptitudes and abilities, would appear to be a field to be explored and strengthened.

- The most outstanding areas of collaboration between public employment services and private providers to emerge during the event were:
 1. The generation and distribution of labor market information (occupations in highest demand, etc.): at the macro level this is a public function undertaken by Employment Observatories, Ministries of Labor and statistics institutes, which can be complemented at local level by the findings and trend analyses produced by private providers.
 2. Education and occupational training guidance: The PES and the private providers, at a smaller scale, are permanently assessing the state of the labor market. They are in a perfect position to provide feedback to the education and training systems regarding their courses, with a view to harmonizing them with the needs of the productive sector.
 3. Promoting and distributing vacancies: a high level of collaboration is to be found here, which will allow cover to be extended further.
 4. Contact with businesses: PES and private providers handle different segments of the market, with different needs. Private providers have a much closer relationship with the private sector, which provides them with their client base, and tend to serve the larger businesses. The PES seem to concentrate on micro and small businesses.
 5. Contact with jobseekers: The PES have a much broader base of jobseekers, and their emphasis is to provide services for this group. The private services are more effective in monitoring jobseekers and providing them with feedback, mainly because they are able to deploy greater resources for the purpose.
- Assessment was made of the commitment of government, workers and employers to the social dialogue in respect of employment services and via tripartite commissions and round tables. Thanks to these forums, all three actors can take part in the design, orientation and development of employment services, endowing them with greater legitimacy and relevance.
- The employment services are the basic tools in the process of achieving maximum efficiency in the labor markets, leading to greater productivity. They are also the tools whereby a higher level of inclusion and fairness can be achieved in these markets; the majority of jobseekers in the region have recourse to family and social networks for work, resulting in areas of exclusion. This means that the work of the employment services, as agents of social mobility and inclusion, is crucial.
- While the trend in the region is towards collaboration between PES and private agencies, the question about this relationship, as to whether they should compete or complement each other, has not vanished and may be a factor to be analysed at future events.

3. Ideas arising from the Working Groups

Explanation

One of the activities arranged at the Workshop was to give the participants the chance to take part in a Working Groups session, to suggest idea about how to achieve a useful work synergy between employers and Public Employment Services. This session was most valuable, since it not only provided an opportunity for the delegates to mix, but also to develop, discuss and analyse ideas which they then shared with the other participants and the representatives from the OAS, ILO, IDB and WAPES.

For a 90-minute period the delegates divided into six working groups of approximately six people who then performed an exercise where they put themselves in the position of the employers, answering the following questions:

- a. What ideas or initiatives could you suggest which will more effectively meet the expectations and needs of the employer sector?
- b. What ideas could you suggest reinforce or build strategic partnerships with employers?

Results of the exercise

Here are the most valuable ideas suggested by the delegates:

a. Which ideas or initiatives can be raised to better meet the expectations and needs of the employer?

- Use qualified and highly motivated personnel in the employment services who should be both dynamic and flexible.
- Provide companies with a sing contact point in the PES and pay personalized visits.
- Design an effective communications and public relations strategy which will achieve a wider range of contacts through the PES: Who are we? What do we do? How do we do it? Mission / Vision.
- Work towards a standardization of the PES so that the services offered are the same in all the offices.
- Design mechanisms which help to fill the vacancies which are the most difficult to fill.
- Communicate clearly the scope of the PES as an intermediation service.
- Ask employers to describe the activities and responsibilities of each job in the greatest detail possible. Ask whether people with special abilities can be recruited.

- Depending on the time available for preselection and the profile desired, outline the performance of a personal interview before the candidate is channelled to the employer.
- Make use of an updated and sound database of the of the labor force registered with the PES (characteristics of the population). Keep jobseeker data up to date so that they can be informed of possible offers as quickly as possible.
- Broadcast vacancies swiftly and effectively on the various media: internet, radio, TV, press
- Invite employers to give talks or to chat with potential candidates so that they can have a better idea of their expectations and requirements.

b. Which ideas can be raised to strengthen or establish strategic partnerships with employers?

- Be aware of local demand.
- Give the companies a sense of security and trustworthiness, and this is done, among other things, by locating the profiles sought and answering their queries in the shortest time possible.
- Hold regular meetings with businessmen, government organisations, training centres and universities in order to tackle employment subjects, identify available vacancies and potential candidates.
- Establish partnerships with universities, technical training centres, polytechnics, and also business associations.
- Monitor a placement and provide feedback for both companies and workers. As part of this, carry out satisfaction surveys.
- Offer training services as well as intermediation and placement services to employers.
- Establish relationships with company human resources departments and provide officers or staff to work directly with the. Both should share the same database, should coordinate with each other to recruit candidates as close as possible to the work centres.
- Strive to be a real filter, providing employers with human resources which perfectly meet their requirements, better than they could find using their own means.
- Offer an ongoing training plan to generate more sources of employment and upgrade the individuals' working conditions.
- Make use of training centres for persons with different abilities.

4. Results of the evaluations

In order to find out the opinions of the attending delegates, at the conclusion of the workshop the participants were asked to complete an evaluation form with 8 questions.

A total of 28 questionnaires were received, and the results indicate that in general the participants were satisfied with the organisation, quality, work dynamic and discussion time in the workshop. In actual fact the general average score awarded to this event was 8.98, with 1 being poor and 10 excellent. As you can see below, the results revealed that the activities and the general theme met the expectations of the participants and helped them to discover new ideas, useful information or alternatives to adapt to their organizations.

Question	Score
Response scale: 1 (very poor/disagree) to 10 (excellent / complete agreement)	
1. What is your general impression general of the <u>organization</u> of the event (programme, agenda, venue, etc.)?	9.14
2. Did the activities and the main theme meet your <u>expectations</u> ?	9.18
3. The quality of contents, the programme and working documents was:	8.68
4. The <u>working dynamics</u> during the seminar were:	8.82
5. The <u>time frame</u> for the discussion between speakers and audience was:	9.00
6. Did you discover <u>new ideas, useful or information or alternatives</u> to be adapted to your home organization?	8.89

In response to question 7: “Having in mind the priorities of your organization, what topics would be interesting for you in future events?” the subjects suggested included vulnerable groups, local development and indicators and statistics which whereby the management and quality of the PES could be measured.

And finally, some of the comments and suggestions for future WAPES or RIAL/OAS seminars or workshops, as a response to question 8, included the organisation of working days and study visits which would make for greater interaction between the participants, and avoid burdening sessions with lengthy presentations. Participants also congratulated the organizers and encouraged them to keep on working with the same commitment, enthusiasm and dedication.

5. Final Agenda

Wednesday, March 16

08:00 Participant registration opens

09:00 INAUGURAL SESSION AND PRESENTATION OF WORKSHOP

- Oscar Maurtua, Representative in Mexico of the Organization of American States (OAS)
- Margarita Laria, Director of the Employment Service, Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security of Argentina
- Patrick Venier, Executive Secretary of the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES)
- Jaime Domingo Lopez Buitron, Under-Secretary for Employment and Labor Productivity, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of Mexico

10:00 FRAMEWORK CONFERENCE 1 – The relationship of PES with the business world: recent trends and tools available to employers

- International Labor Organization (ILO), Regina Galhardi, Senior Specialist on Employment Development and Lorenzo Pelaez, Senior Specialist in Employers’ Activities (ACTEMP)
- Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Consuelo Ricart, Senior Specialist in Social Development of the IDB Group in Mexico
- Q & A Session

11:30 Coffee Break

12:00 PANEL 1 – Strategic measures for serving employers

Moderator: Patrick Venier, Executive Secretary of WAPES

- **France** – Marion Badenes, Head of Business Services, Public Employment Service / *Pôle Emploi*
- **Mexico** – Israel Cuellar Hernandez, Under Secretary for Labor and Social Welfare and Chief of the National Employment Service of the State of Coahuila, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
- **Peru** – Astrid Sánchez, National Employment Service, Ministry of Labor and Employment Promotion
- Discussion

13:30 Lunch

15:30 PANEL 2 – Tools for the adequate development of services for employers

Moderator: Alejandro Razo Corona, General Coordinator of the National Employment Service, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of Mexico

- **Germany** – Johannes Klapper, Head of International Placement, Public Employment Service, *Bundesagentur fuer Arbeit*
- **Brazil** – Sinara Neves Ferreira, Technical Advisor of the Secretariat for Employment Public Policies, Ministry of Labor and Employment
- **Dominican Republic** – Sarah Pimentel, Director of the National Employment Service, Ministry of Labor
- **United States of America** – Molly Runyon, Labor and Social Affairs Officer, United States Embassy in Mexico City, representing the U.S. Department of Labor
- Discussion

17:30 Coffee Break

18:00 Day 1 closing

19:00 **Welcome Cocktail offered by WAPES to all participants**

Venue: Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare (STPS) - Mezzanine

Av. Paseo de la Reforma No. 93

Thursday, March 17

09:00 **FRAMEWORK CONFERENCE 2 – PES in the context of local economic development**

- International Labor Organization (ILO), Luis Abad y Jorge Arroyo, Support Program to improve the quality of employment in Argentina (CEA)
- World Bank, Burt S. Barnow, Consultant and Professor of Public Service and Economics, George Washington University
- Q & A Session

10:30 Coffee Break

10:45 **PANEL 3 – Decentralized PES: The municipal option**

Moderator: Luis Castillo Marin, National Director of Employment Promotion, Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security (MLESS) of Argentina

- **Switzerland** – Jean-Christophe Lanzeray, Coordinator of Regional Employment Offices, Ministry of Economy / *SECO*
- **Argentina** – Margarita Laría, Director of the Employment Service, MLESS
- **Costa Rica** – Carmen Capuano, Chief of Labor Intermediation and Employment Promotion, Ministry of Labor and Social Security

- Discussion

12:45 Lunch

14:00 **PANEL 4 – Strategic partnerships to provide effective employment services with the private sector or nongovernmental actors**

Moderator: Maria Claudia Camacho, Labor Specialist, Department of Social Development and Employment, Organization of American States (OAS)

- **Manpower** – Norma Lorena Escobar Ellgutter, Director of Strategic Recruitment and Academic Linkages
- Business Technical Advisory Committee on Labor Matters (**CEATAL**), Octavio Carvajal, Vicepresident of CEATAL
- Trade Union Technical Advisory Council (**COSATE**), Salvador Medina, Vicepresident of COSATE
- Discussion

16:00 **WORKING GROUPS SESSION** – Moderated by WAPES. Includes Coffee break

17:30 **PRESENTATION OF CONCLUSIONS BY THE MODERATORS**

- **Panel 1:** Patrick Venier, Executive Secretary of WAPES
- **Panel 2:** Alejandro Razo Corona, General Coordinator of the National Employment Service, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of Mexico
- **Panel 3:** Luis Castillo Marin, National Director of Employment Promotion, MLESS of Argentina
- **Panel 4:** María Claudia Camacho, Labor Specialist, Dpt. Social Development & Employment, OAS

18:00 **CLOSING REMARKS**

- Jaime Domingo Lopez Buitron, Under-Secretary for Employment and Labor Productivity, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of Mexico

18:30 Adjournment

Friday, March 18

08:00 – 16:00 **STUDY VISIT** to the Employment Office of Cuernavaca, Morelos.

6. List of Participants

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