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Inter-American Council for Integral Development  
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OF MINISTERS OF LABOR (IACML)**

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**INTERSECTORAL WORKSHOP ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT:  
ARTICULATION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND LABOR**

December 15 to 16, 2016 - Brasilia, Brazil  
Results - Preliminary Document (Open to comments from delegations)

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## **Intersectoral Workshop on Youth Employment: Articulation between Education and Labor**

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#### **CONTENT:**

- I. Description
- II. Conceptual framework and background
- III. Results - lessons learned and recommendations, prepared by the three Working Groups

#### **I. DESCRIPTION**

The intersectoral workshop gathered officials from Ministries of Labor and Education, along with other stakeholders, to analyze and discuss strategies implemented, specifically in conjunction, to improve the situation of youth in the labor market.

The event was co-organized by the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Government of Brazil, through the Ministries of Labor and Education. It was a technical meeting, of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML), and the Inter-American Committee on Education (CIE), specialized dialogue instances of the OAS.

#### **Participants:**

The event gathered officials from Ministries of Labor and / or Education of 21 OAS member states specializing in the areas of professional training, technical education and youth employment, as well as representatives of workers, employers and youth, and international organizations, including the Organization of American States (OAS), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the Inter-American University Organization (IOHE), the Ibero-American Youth Organization (OIJ), the Vale Emprender Association, representing the voice of the youth of the Young Americas Business Trust (YABT), and Manpower.

#### **Objectives:**

- Learn about the strategies adopted by the Ministries of Education and Labor to improve education and vocational training systems, and prepare the labor force considering each country's development needs, and productive sector demands. In the framework of these strategies, it is important to recognize the changes to the world of work and the demands imposed by new technologies, and the so-called "fourth industrial revolution" on employment, education, and training.

- Identify and analyze specific collaboration and coordination initiatives between the Ministries of Education and Labor in the region to improve the labor inclusion of youth. Identify lessons learned and policy recommendations.

### **Format and Content:**

The Workshop's first day started with an inaugural session attended by the Minister of Education of Brazil, Brazil's National Secretary for Youth, the Director of Economic Development of the OAS, the Secretary General of the Ibero-American Youth Organization (OIJ) and the Chairs of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) and the Inter-American Committee on Education (CIE). Subsequently the first panel provided contextualization of the reality of the world of work and the challenges of youth employment with presentations from the OAS, ILO, the World Bank, OECD and Manpower. The second panel hosted presentations from the Ministries of Chile, Panama, Jamaica, Mexico and Brazil on their experiences of coordination among the Ministries of Labor and Education. The third panel offered perspectives of social actors and non-governmental experiences with interventions from the youth, employers, unions and university sectors; followed by open dialogue. To conclude the first day of the Workshop, the representatives participated in a field visit to the School-Business Integration Center (CIEE), which is a valuable initiative to improve the school-to-work transition for youth in Brazil.

The second day offered a space for dialogue to learn about the national experiences of participating states through the use of the "Fishbowl" mediation methodology. This format of group discussion promoted the dialogue and exchange between the participants of the session, allowing equal opportunity to express experiences and points of view, as well as diminishing distinctions between the presenter and the audience. Participants were then divided into three subgroups to exchange experiences, hold technical discussions and to identify lessons learned, recommendations and challenges for intersectoral coordination between education and labor on youth employment. During the closing session, moderators of each of the subgroups presented a summary of the lessons learned and recommendations proposed by their respective groups, which are included in this report.

## **II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND BACKGROUND**

The relationship between education and labor is a priority for the region that has generated continuous discussion in the development of labor, education, and productivity policies.

Education is a fundamental process to develop human capital, through which children and youth acquire key abilities and knowledge that will allow them to actively participate in the integral development of their countries. This is done through their insertion in a productive and decent life, that at the same time contributes to the construction of more democratic, inclusive, and socially just societies.

Work is a means for personal realization and social contribution that allows individuals to develop their capacities, acquired and learned throughout their lives. It is through work that the benefits (or lack thereof) of human capital are exposed. In the hemisphere as well as in other regions, the quality of work and the probability that it is decent, productive, protected and well paid depends largely on the level and quality of education.

Groups of people living under conditions of poverty or vulnerability possess fewer opportunities for accessing and completing a quality education. Consequently, they have fewer possibilities for

accessing quality and well-paid jobs. In most of these cases, they insert themselves in precarious and lower-paying jobs, reproducing a vicious circle that deepens poverty and inequality in the region.

In addition to the above, the region faces a great paradox: on the one hand, millions of people cannot find jobs, and on the other, businesses cannot find the talent they are looking for. This mismatch, which has been described in recent studies<sup>1</sup> as occupational inadequacy or skills gap, poses a threat to employment, productivity, and increased social inclusion in the region.

This gap affects mostly young people in the region. They face unemployment rates that double or triple those of adults, are over represented in the informal economy, and face high levels of inactivity.

Additionally the rapid changes in the workplace driven by the fourth industrial revolution's technological advancements require significant education and vocational training adjustments to be made. According to a recent study conducted by the World Economic Forum, 65% of children that are entering primary school will work in jobs that do not exist today<sup>2</sup>.

**This situation, which includes the unequal status of various groups in the labor market based on their educational level, skills gap, difficult situation for youth, and accelerated changes in the world of work, makes it urgent to have greater coordination between the Ministries of Education and Labor regarding: strengthening vocational and educational training systems, skill certifications and employment service systems, and prepare the workforce to respond to the development needs of the countries and the demands of the productive sector.**

The Organization of American States (OAS) has made significant strides to improve the dialogue and coordination between the Ministries of Labor and Education in the region, through its Ministerial Meetings. A space for dialogue was opened for the Ministries of Labor of Mexico and Panama, in representation of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML), during the Meeting of Ministries of Education, held in February 2015 in Panama. Likewise, the XIX IACML held in Cancun in December, 2015, hosted a panel about "Education and Labor: integrated public policy making to promote effective inclusion in the labor market", with an intervention from the Minister of Education of Panama, who is the President of the Inter-American Committee on Education and represented the Ministers of Education in the region.

This workshop was an additional step in the effort to achieve greater coordination between education and labor, and is a concrete response to the Plan of Action of Cancun adopted at the XIX IACML in 2015, in which the Ministers of Labor, decided to: "Deepen intersectoral collaboration between Ministries of Labor and Ministries of Education in order to strengthen education and continuing training systems to better prepare the workforce, particularly young people, in accordance with the sustained, sustainable and inclusive development needs of our countries and the demand of the productive sectors, paying special attention to vulnerable populations." (Article 6, f, Cancun Action Plan).

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<sup>1</sup> See for example: Manpower Group: Talent Shortage Survey, 2015 y World Bank Enterprise Surveys.

<sup>2</sup> World Economic Forum. The Future of Jobs (2016)

### **III. RESULTS - LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the final sessions of the event, participants were divided into 3 working groups, in order to hold deeper discussions on the main lessons learned and policy recommendations for the articulation between education and labor. The groups were moderated respectively by:

Working Group 1: Gerardo de la Torre, Director of Institutional Consultation and Reports of the National Employment Service, Ministry of Labor and Social Security of Mexico

Working Group 3: Rodrigo Vásquez, Head of the Training Department of the National Training and Employment Service (SENCE) of Chile

Working Group 3: Keysha Bastian Assistant Director of Education – Career and Technical Education of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Bahamas

The results of these discussions are presented below. *This section is open to comments from all participants.* Once received, these comments will be consolidated into a single summary of lessons learned and recommendations.

#### **WORKING GROUP 1**

##### **LEARNED LESSONS:**

- 1) Strategies to involve employers and workers' organizations in the definition of technical education and vocational training are necessary. Some useful strategies are:
  - Develop surveys for employers on their technical skills requirements in the short and medium term. It's necessary to be clear and understand what they need.
  - Generate cross-cutting specific and generic profiles by sectors and activity classifications, with the active participation of employers and workers' organizations
  - From public employment services, support employers in the definition of job profiles, mainly for small and medium enterprises.
- 2) Vocational education and training must respond to a country vision - where we want to go - and be linked to sustainable economic and productive development strategies. This includes understanding the dynamics of industrial, commercial, agricultural and service development; as well as the development dynamics at the sub-national level (regional, provincial) and, if possible, at the local/municipality level, to define vocational training courses and contents.
- 3) Create teams within the Ministries of Education and Labor, which have the vision and perspective to integrate the technical or organizational needs of both sectors to facilitate the definition and articulation of intersectoral policies in favor of flexible professional training and in accordance with the requirements of the productive sector. This implies having, within both Ministries, professionals who know about or have studied and developed their professional trajectories in professional technical training and the transition of youth into the labor market or to the productive sectors.
- 4) Social dialogue has a very important role in defining and implementing policies on labor inclusion, vocational training, and the promotion of entrepreneurship and, in this sense, contributes to a closer link between education and labor. Social dialogue is key in the

development of occupational profiles and in the orientation of training. It is important to point out that unions understand training as an extension of collective bargaining.

- 5) One of the most important challenges of vocational training is to encourage young people to seek their vocation based on their interests and abilities - to develop what they like to do. Help them identify what makes them happy (since basic education), not just to build their resume.

It must be taken into consideration, that countries in the region operate in economies in which industrial revolutions (second, third and fourth) coexist and intertwine, making policy development in favor of vocational guidance and training for labor inclusion and production of young people even more complex.

The current context calls for flexible public policies for professional training, labor inclusion and entrepreneurship development that are adapted to the regional and sectoral social, cultural and environmental contexts.

- 6) Life skills, also called soft skills, are key in the labor market, even more important in the current context of a constantly evolving world of work.
- 7) It is recognized that education is too 'Edu-centric' and that it needs to be effectively adapted to the needs and to the social and employment evolution of the countries of the region.
- 8) Faced with an environment of constant and accelerated transformation, as shown by the so-called "fourth industrial revolution", education (basic education, technical training and secondary and vocational education) faces the great challenge of adapting to this social, economic, political and cultural change, therefore, the following factors, among others, should be taken into consideration:
  - The role of teachers, as multipliers of modern techniques and flexible vocational training, linked to productive organizations. This is central to linking education to the world of work.
  - To involve universities in discussions on the definition of contents of primary, secondary and technical-vocational education, as well as vocational training, in order to define educational policy measures and technical and professional vocational training in the short, medium and long terms that adapt to the productive environment with the support of business and labor organizations.
- 9) Youth councils (regional, national and sub-national) are indispensable fora to include the voice and expectations of the youth, given it is essential to listen to young people about their aspirations and needs, as well as to understand the different generations (millennials, generation Z, digital natives).

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Involve all actors, including employers and trade unions, in vocational training, and achieve the participation of all actors in a systemic and coordinated manner. In order to achieve this, it's necessary to strengthen consultation mechanisms and instances such as vocational training, productivity, and employability Committees or Councils.

- 2) Strengthen the diagnoses, through the analysis of trends and behaviors of the labor market based on information systems / labor market observatories, fed by censuses and surveys of business activity, work and productive occupation and development of technologies. Take advantage of studies and analysis on the subject to define, reformulate and adapt professional training and technical and vocational education to the goals of labor and productive inclusion of young people.
- 3) Develop articulated structures between the Ministries of Labor and Education, with public servants whose profiles and trajectories specialize in the areas of vocational training and technical education, to achieve a better link between education and training with the world of work.
- 4) Link vocational and professional technical training to local, regional, national and global development priorities in a flexible manner with a long-term vision. (From the local context to the global context)
- 5) Evaluate and define the characteristics of target populations for training, and attend to the great diversity of our countries, in order to achieve good results in labor market insertion. Within these characteristics it is important to consider the income profiles and adapt the training to the particular needs of each group. For example, in the case of young women, include issues of child care and non-discrimination; and in ethnic groups harmonize uses and customs.
- 6) Work with other sectors (health) in the care of young people, especially the vulnerable youth. It is necessary to strengthen the capacity of public employment services to offer comprehensive care to young people for their access to: formal labor and productive integration, training and capacity development with interventions according to their profiles, labor mobility, and health services, among others.

## **WORKING GROUP 2**

### **LESSONS LEARNED:**

- 1) Education must be collaborative and no longer in isolation.
- 2) Career Planning must be seen as critical to senior high school education, so as to allow for measured decisions by students.
- 3) Parental involvement in the education process is critical for the student's progress.
- 4) Education plans are segmented and even though they appear to target all youth, a bias seems to exist in favor of those above the poverty line.
- 5) There is still a lack of marketing of the value of a TVET education as a viable & competitive option for youth engagement, reflected in the allocation of resources and promotion of the area.
- 6) There must be more involvement of stakeholders in education. There seems to be a lack of interest on part of students to be engaged in the conversation on education, this has to be addressed.

- 7) TVET is a means to address labor and youth engagement, but many programs have been noted to focus more heavily on the service industry as opposed to the production and manufacturing industries.
- 8) Many still see a quality education as solely academic, ignoring the highly technical skills sets needed in the global community

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1) Education must adapt a preventative attitude and not one that is reactionary. Governments should seek to create programs and skills sets that address labor market needs, but also anticipate future projections and provide training accordingly.
- 2) Develop policies for education that transcend political parties and become national oriented. A national platform for education should be developed across political divides, there are some examples in the region that have brought together political parties and stakeholder to develop long term education goals and policies.
- 3) Create Intersectoral Ministry working committees, with those that have implication in education and youth employment.
- 4) Develop thorough assessments of diversified initiatives within varying ministries that have implications for youth engagement, in order to ensure a successful implementation.
- 5) Develop a modular approach to Technical Education with Competency Certification at each level to engage unattached youth (i.e. not working/not in school).
- 6) Develop afterschool Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that consider the role of single mothers, or mothers of a young age.
- 7) A strengthened CTE Competency Certificate, as a part of the main stream criteria to earn high school diplomas.
- 8) CTE programs, for relevance and reliability, should seek to expose students to an internship program for immersion and transfer of knowledge from academic to application.
- 9) Increase investments in structured entrepreneurship programs to create expansion in the labor market and provide direct entry, employment opportunities.
- 10) Target at risk youth through social/civic and community outreach, considering some of them are not in schools.
- 11) Include fundamental civics skills in curriculum. Teach students to be responsible citizens is fundamental to reshaping nations.
- 12) Engage youth and students in the initial dialogue towards policy design, where they feel that their opinions matter. It was recognized that many efforts are made to engage youth after decisions are made.

- 13) Improve involvement of stakeholders in education, including parents, teachers and private sector.
- 14) Improve dialogue among governments in the Caribbean region as to address simple inconsistencies, for example the school leaving age. This was mentioned in the context of this Group, which was mostly comprised by Caribbean representatives, considering the existence of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

### **WORKING GROUP 3**

#### **LESSONS LEARNED:**

- 1) The disarticulation between education and labor policies in relation to youth employment has not contributed to the effective development of programs to facilitate school - work transitions.
- 2) Lack of coordination with cross-sectoral policies for young people, such as child care or health systems, does not favor synergies between different public-private initiatives that promote higher levels of youth employment and better quality.
- 3) The lack of information systems and methodologies to understand occupational demand, which could provide info on future jobs in each territory, has affected the pertinence and foresight of public policies.
- 4) It is necessary to achieve greater equity in access and greater quality of interventions in youth employment policies. This is proportionally related to the variable of resources, expressed in the human factor -the facilitators, technical groups-, as well as infrastructure, methodological resources, and in how we manage to increase the levels of investment in order to be able to improve policies towards youth.
- 5) It is necessary to advance in greater stability of the sectorial education and labor policies, avoiding abrupt changes or budget limitations due to changes in government. In that sense, to advance from the project and program's logic, to stable policies that remain in time and effectively allow progress (also in modular form, building progressive careers), requires, as a condition, that states have policies that are permanent over time.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1) Strengthen secondary education and technical-secondary education to promote a comprehensive education that facilitates the bridges and transitions from the world of education to the world of work, and from the world of secondary education to occupational training. This relates to updating and improving technical skills, in particular improving the profiles of current expenditures of secondary education, as well as basic and socio-emotional skills.
- 2) Strengthen tripartism (state-employers-workers) in the design and management of policies and programs, having the effective commitment from companies to open spaces for youth employment. In the cases where their expertise is pertinent, also consider the opinion of non-governmental organizations.

- 3) To incorporate elements of the world of work, citizenship, rights and duties, aiming at a more versatile training. To think not only of the eventual necessity of a productive sector, with respect to a certain function, but the training of youth in life skills through work.
- 4) In regards to qualification frameworks, recognize different knowledge types, regardless of the form in which they have been acquired. In this sense, strengthen and improve competency certification systems, articulated with modular training systems that allow the closure of gaps detected in competency assessments.
- 5) Curriculums, training plans and methodological instruments must be adapted to the entry conditions and particularities of each target group and each territory, aiming also to know the relevance of the training according to the standards included in the respective qualification frameworks.
- 6) Invest in the training of teachers and facilitators, especially in emerging issues such as innovation, and new technologies, where there is a growing demand for training. Currently, there are no trained teachers to develop training in new technologies, relevant to companies' needs.
- 7) Greater articulation with companies to detect future occupational needs, thus providing feedback on the training offer.
- 8) Organize training systems in a modular way using the dynamics of both the youth and companies. In that sense, if in general we are targeting programs for a first job, we need to modularize them in order to achieve better intervention dynamics. More specialized trainings should be delivered throughout life and with greater financing from companies.
- 9) Define / develop "training routes" that allow the achievement of career paths from a trade or occupation at an initial level to a technical level (baccalaureate) and, where appropriate, at a professional level. There are already existing experiences of some training routes that allow the delineation of this trajectory.
- 10) Carry out strategies of technical education positioning in the productive sectors in order to improve the opening of new jobs through the commitment and adherence of companies. This is coupled with revaluing vocational and technical education and training to the population in general, which values baccalaureates more, making it a viable and desirable option.
- 11) Continue to move forward in the institutional strengthening of education and labor entities through trained technicians for policy monitoring. Due to the changes of government and authorities, medium level technicians are required to ensure the permanence and sustainability of the initiatives that are underway.
- 12) Consider entrepreneurship programs for technical levels within the Ministries of Education and Labor in addition to professional studies, research, innovation, and consulting programs, to be able to specify sectoral diagnoses and new forms of intervention.
- 13) Strengthen or improve labor observatories as a way of systematizing labor market information and making it available to the youth. Take the information available in different entities, systematize, process and make it available so that young people effectively have information for their decision-making.

- 14) To follow up with graduates, to identify trends in employment permanence, continuous studies, etc., so that they are not only trained, or receive some sort of labor intermediation, but that they can continue to be monitored once they are employed.
- 15) Initiatives to improve youth employment should be framed within a set of active labor market policies; taking into account shared and organized actions with labor intermediation policies, socio-occupational orientation, job training, recruitment incentive programs, and public employment programs, among others.
- 16) Improve monitoring and evaluation of youth employment policies. Due to budget availability, it is difficult to consider better mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. However, it is necessary that governments also develop this line of management.

SUGGESTED FOLLOWING STEPS:

- 1) Enhance south-south cooperation to strengthen all institutions to be able to exchange practices, and learn from other countries.
- 2) The systematization of these conclusions should be sent respectively at the level of Ministers, in such a way that systematization becomes an input for the programming of sectoral actions for our governments.