

► Social Dialogue and Vocational Training: elements for a productive and inclusive recovery

A Shared Vision on Vocational Training

2021

► Results of the bipartite regional process ‘Social dialogue and vocational training: elements for a productive and inclusive recovery’

The bipartite process of social dialogue in Latin America and Caribbean entitled, “Social dialogue and vocational training: elements for a productive and inclusive recovery” involved five meetings that took place between September and October 2021.

This pioneering initiative was convened by ILO/Cinterfor, with the support of ACT/EMP and ACTRAV and had the objective of forging a shared vision on various aspects of vocational training. This goal was achieved by fostering a process of bipartite dialogue and building an environment of trust that will facilitate agreements on vocational training between workers’ and employers’ organizations in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

The protagonists of these meetings were representatives of workers’ and employers’ organizations belonging to the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA-CSA) and the International Organization of Employers (IOE), respectively.

Four thematic meetings took place, devoted to the following jointly-agreed priority issues:

(i) vocational training and its links with technological innovation and digitization; (ii) vocational training with a youth and gender-based perspective; (iii) innovation in vocational training; and (iv) vocational training and sustainability.

The process concluded with a fifth meeting, during which the bipartite actors agreed upon the following synthesis of their shared vision and 8 points in common:

- A. The importance of promoting and strengthening institutionalized and effective social dialogue on vocational training in the countries of the region is underscored, both at the level of governance of national vocational training systems and institutions, and in the design, execution and monitoring and evaluation of public training policies. Institutionalized social dialogue should also take place in the areas devoted to generating information and data on the labour market, as well as in relation to current and future demand for training from workers and enterprises.
- B. The future of work and the current COVID-19 pandemic context generate major challenges in terms of knowledge and skills, both for workers and for employers. We need to adopt a vision of training that aims to train people to function in the world of work throughout their working lives, with training systems that are linked to education policies, labour market policies and productive development policies, as well as those that take into account sectoral and territorial specificities. Quality, relevance and equity are three features that should guide the policies and objectives of training systems.
- C. Technological innovation and digitization pose significant challenges to both businesses (in particular, SMEs) and workers; this has become evident in the context of the COVID pandemic. With regard to digital gaps, in terms of access to technology as well as training in digital skills, it has become clear that it is essential to design strategies that help employers and workers adapt to the needs posed by the environment - in this, social dialogue

plays a prominent role. Organizations responsible for vocational training, together with social partners, can make an important contribution to fostering the development of digital skills among all those involved in the world of work.

- D. Young people and women, particularly those from vulnerable households, have historically faced extremely challenging conditions as regards access to and retention in the labour market, which have only become more acute as a result of the pandemic. In this respect, synchronized and integrated public policies in terms of vocational training, are required in order to make it possible to improve the employability of these groups and provide them with tools for good performance when they decide to start businesses on their own, as well as helping to eliminate prejudices and biases in the labour market, particularly as regards gender-based occupational segregation. Comprehensive and quality training for these groups is key to making this goal achievable.
- E. There are significant opportunities for innovation of vocational training in the region, in all its phases or management cycles, including: increasing in-depth work to anticipate the future demand for skills, structuring the response to those needs, and its implementation and subsequent evaluation. In terms of content, building soft skills and digital skills is essential in order to close existing substantial gaps, while training trainers and updating teachers is an imperative for the quality of our training systems. Social dialogue is an effective tool and a key component that underpins innovation in vocational training in all of the above dimensions
- F. Training has a major role to play in building skills to promote the creation of green businesses and jobs, and social dialogue also has a key role in ensuring a fair transition towards more sustainable production models, which include productive development policies based on environmental sustainability criteria, with social dialogue and full respect for labour rights.
- G. The ILO has succeeded in generating significant tripartite agreements on the fair transition and green jobs, including provisions as concerns training, on which to base a regional strategy in this field. Recent developments include the Panama Declaration for the ILO Centenary, which identifies as a priority the need for "Policies to promote a just transition in the framework of the conclusions concerning achieving decent work, green jobs and sustainable development [...] 102nd Session of the ILC, (2013)", and the Conclusions concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises, adopted at the 2007 International Labour Conference. In addition, the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (June 2019) and the Global Call to Action for a People-Centred

Recovery from the COVID-19 Crisis that is Inclusive, Sustainable and Resilient can be cited.

- H. The informal economy is a major structural challenge in the Latin America and Caribbean region. Vocational training policies must be an integral part of, and be synchronized with, policies for transition towards the formalization of employment and productive units in the region.

Employers' and workers' representatives also agreed that the conclusion of this bipartite social dialogue process on vocational training should lead to its continuity and strengthening in 2022, seeking to find new points of agreement, as well as to identify concrete practical action at the level of the countries and/or subregions of Latin America and the Caribbean.