THE ROLE OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES IN SKILLS MATCHING OF MIGRANT WORKERS

MAIN POLICY CHALLENGES

Migrant workers are **one of the largest groups having more problems in proving and using their skills** since those previously gained in formal, non-formal and informal learning go generally unrecognized resulting in de-skilling.

At the same time**, large numbers of employers report difficulties in finding suitable skilled workers.**

Public employment services (PES), career guidance services, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions play a key role in improving skills recognition and matching labour market supply and demand.

However, they **often lack the capacity** to carry out work in this area.

2008-2015 Sub-regional coordinating project composed of 7 national projects: Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama.

International partner: World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES)

National partners: Labour Market Observatories + Council of Ministries of Labour + Ministries of Education + Forum of Employment Directorates + Municipalities.

The **Regional Process of Certification of Competencies** required:

1. **Homologated and Standardized Regional Methodologies** for the formulation of technical labour skills standards, development of curricula and skills evaluation systems at the national level.

2. **Development of Regional Technical Labour Skills Standards and Curricula** to generate minimum quality standards and advance labour certification and skills recognition of professional training provided by the institutions part of the Sub-regional Network.

3. **Bank of standards** including a total of 213 technical competency standards and 44 curriculum design www.redifp.net **constituting the basis for the process of certification of occupations in Central-America and the Dominican Republic.**

STRATEGY

➢ **Consolidation of Sub-regional Networks:**

  ✓ Sub-regional Network of Public Employment Services
  ✓ Sub-Regional Network of Vocational Training Institutions) including national institutions, but also local level institutions

➢ **Recognition of skills considered as an important step towards the mobility of qualified workers in the region and as contributing to regional integration in the Central American Integration System (SICA)'s agenda:**

  ✓ Regional Strategic Agenda for Labour and Employment Affairs;
  ✓ Declaration of the Regional Forum of Directors of Employment in Central America and the Dominican Republic:
        "Decent work, youth employment and labour migration".

➢ **PES bilateral and tri-lateral agreements:** Mexico-Guatemala (2014) and Guatemala-El Salvador-Honduras-Mexico (2016)

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

- Long and costly technical processes.

- Limits imposed by professional bodies or associations to professionals integrating the labour market.

- International portability of skills still tends to be limited due to a few number of highly-skilled occupations.

- **Lack of information, and lengthy and difficult administrative processes** forcing migrant workers to take lower levels jobs than their skills would warrant with little or no occupational mobility.

- Recognition arrangements with countries outside the sub-regional integration schemes are yet to be developed, but work underway with Mexico and parallel work on labour certification in MERCOSUR countries.

ILO present and future work

Skills mismatch is on the agenda of the **International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 2018**, following limited discussions in previous conferences.

The ILO is currently preparing a **Guide on Skills Recognition of Migrant Workers**, targeting employment services in both origin and destination countries, and covering formal and informal learning.

The ILO is promoting mutual recognition of skills (MRS) arrangements in low and middle skilled occupations in the **ASEAN region** and carrying out work on labour certification with **MERCOSUR countries**.