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**INTERSECTORAL WORKSHOP “TOWARDS A STRONGER COORDINATION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND LABOR IN THE AMERICAS”**

**May 4 and 5, 2023**

**Buenos Aires, Argentina and on-line – hybrid workshop**

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8. **BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION**

Within the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS), the Ministries of Labor and Education of the Americas have taken important steps to improve their linkage and coordination, recognizing that it is essential to solve historical lags in the quality, equity, and inclusion of education, and to face profound changes in the world of work. The importance of this intersectoral coordination has become more visible during the pandemic and in the recovery phase, where efforts to address deep education and labor inequalities must continue. The "Conceptual Framework" section of this document delves into these issues.

The OAS is in an excellent position to promote education-labor coordination, thanks to the permanent relationship it maintains with the Ministries of Labor and Education in the region, through its specialized ministerial meetings, as well as in the implementation of the Inter-American Education Agenda and the operation of the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL).

In the OAS Inter-American Meetings of Ministers of Education a space for dialogue with the Ministers of Labor who lead the OAS labor ministerial process, has been opened since 2015. Reciprocally, during all the meetings of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) since 2015, the Ministers who preside over the Inter-American Commission on Education (CIE) have participated, representing the Ministers of Education of the region. These dialogues have reaffirmed the commitment to achieve greater coordination between both sectors, at the highest level.

In order to ground political commitments in technical actions, to date, two intersectoral workshops have been held within the framework of the RIAL, which have been pioneering meeting spaces for officials from the Ministries of Labor and Education to exchange experiences and collectively define collaborative actions. The first one was held in December 2016 in Brasilia and focused on "Youth Employment: Coordination between Education and Labor"; and the second was held in May 2019 in Santiago de Chile under the theme "Skills for the future: Coordination between the Ministries of Education and Labor." In both workshops, lessons learned and policy recommendations were identified, which are contained in the OAS publication "The Coordination between Education and Labor in the Americas" and in results documents.

The current Work Plans of the ministerial processes of education and labor of the OAS contemplate actions to continue working towards a greater coordination.

1. **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The coordination between the world of education and the world of work is a priority issue in the Americas and has been a constant concern in discussions on development, productivity, education, employment, and inclusion. It is not a new issue, it can even be seen in the origins of professional training since the 1940s in the region; however, today it takes on a greater urgency and a new dimension.

The greater urgency of achieving a better coordination between education and labor is mainly due to the accelerated changes in all spheres of life brought upon by new technologies, artificial intelligence, the Internet of things and, in general, the dynamics associated with the 4IR. In terms of education and labor, these new dynamics generate transformations, challenges, and opportunities on several fronts, including: learning processes, productive sector needs, labor relations, the contents of education and professional training, and skills, among others. It is worth mentioning that technological changes and digitization accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic - for which it has been called "the great digital accelerator"[[1]](#footnote-2) – and generated greater pressure on education and training systems, as well as on their coordination.

The difficult situation of youth employment and the so-called skills gap, although they are challenges that the region has been facing in recent decades, have also contributed to promoting the need and urgency of improving the coordination between education and labor. In fact, young people consistently have higher unemployment rates than those of the general population -15.8% compared to 7.2% in the regional average for 2022-, they are overrepresented in the informal sector -60% of informality rate among young people compared to 47% for adults in 2022[[2]](#footnote-3) - and a large percentage does not study or work. Meanwhile, companies in Latin America and the Caribbean state that they are unable to find the talent and skills they need**[[3]](#footnote-4)**. This mismatch has been described as occupational inadequacy or skills gap and threatens the opportunities for economic growth, inclusion, and social development in the region. These challenges have underpinned the call to improve the quality, inclusion, and equity of education, as well as its relevance, referring to guaranteeing that the contents of education and training respond to the needs of the world of work.

The new dimension of the coordination between education and labor refers to its link with social justice and the fight against inequality. In the Americas, as in other regions of the world, the possibility of having a job increases considerably with a higher level of education; likewise, the probability that this job will be decent, productive, protected, and well-paid depends to a large extent on the level and quality of education. It should suffice to cite the situation of informal employment, characterized by precariousness and lack of rights, to corroborate this statement: 79.2% of women and 70.3% of men who have only completed primary education have informal employment; these percentages are considerably reduced to 35% and 32.5% respectively for women and men who have tertiary education[[4]](#footnote-5). Breaking the cycle of intergenerational reproduction of poverty requires improving the quality, equity, inclusion, and relevance of education and guaranteeing a better insertion into the world of work -improving the school-to-work transition- of all segments of the population, especially those traditionally marginalized and excluded.

The search for greater intersectoral coordination is anchored both in the coordination among educational, labor, and employment policies, as well as in the institutional coordination between Ministries of Labor and Education and can materialize in specific areas of action. Throughout the discussions held and the priorities established in the meetings of the OAS Ministers of Labor and Education, as well as in the hemispheric workshops of the RIAL that have brought together both sectors, the following specific areas of action to improve education-labor coordination have been highlighted:

* Promote and create the conditions for lifelong learning.
* Strengthen teacher training.
* Achieve skills-based education and training, which allows the development of foundational and transferable skills, including digital and socio-emotional skills, relevant to changes in the world of work.
* Improve technical and professional training processes, including reskilling and upskilling.
* Consolidate labor market information systems, develop prospective analyzes and ensure that they provide feedback to education and training systems.
* Strengthen public employment services, created to efficiently connect labor supply and demand, and facilitate the school-to-work transition.
* Strengthen and revalue professional training and improve its linkages with post-secondary education, so that people can transition from one system to another.
* Promote apprenticeship programs and business practices in professional training.
* Develop and consolidate labor skills certification systems.
* Develop national and regional qualifications frameworks.

These areas of action demonstrate that there are multiple strategies to improve the education-labor coordination; all complementary and that should be undertaken simultaneously.

Within the commitments and actions at the regional level, the importance of teacher training has been increasingly recognized, considering that the digital transformation and the accelerated changes in education and employment have generated great pressure and demands on teachers, who must strengthen both their own digital skills and their ability to develop these skills, as well as social-emotional skills, in their students.

Additionally, since the Recommendation 195 from 2004 on the development of human resources, the ILO adopted the concept of "lifelong learning" to encompass all learning activities carried out throughout life to develop skills and qualifications. It also urged governments to develop qualifications frameworks that facilitate lifelong learning and support employers and employment agencies to reconcile the demand with the supply of skills and facilitate the recognition of previously acquired training, skills, and experience.

The region finds itself at a conducive moment to deepen the analysis and exchange of experiences and to effectively improve the education-labor coordination. Therefore, the proposed Workshop will allow for a general discussion and will focus on a concrete advancement: national qualifications frameworks.

The decision to focus the exchange of knowledge and good practices during the Workshop on qualifications frameworks is due to two considerations. The first is that these frameworks aim to address the challenges that make education-labor coordination essential, including: ensuring the quality of the educational and training offer, as well as its responsiveness to the needs of the productive sector; promoting lifelong learning; facilitating dialogue between the productive and training sectors; ensuring the coordination of education and training systems, among others[[5]](#footnote-6). The second consideration is that the development of these frameworks in the region is relatively recent (starting in 2014) and the countries have made uneven progress. Some countries, such as Chile, Colombia, and Costa Rica, are in an implementation phase, while others are beginning their conceptualization and design. This makes having a regional discussion very helpful; the exchange will make it possible to identify lessons learned and elements of success to strengthen the frameworks at the national level. In addition, the exchange can help lay the technical and political foundations for a Regional Qualifications Framework.

1. **MANDATES: COMMITMENTS AT THE HEMISPHERIC LEVEL**

The Declaration and Plan of Action of Buenos Aires, approved by the Ministers of Labor during the XXI IACML in 2021, establish:

* “We will continue improving the interaction and coordination between labor, education and training. In this regard, we celebrate the dialogue and cooperation that we have sustained since the XVIII IACML with the Ministries of Education within the framework of the OAS, and we will continue to promote, through active public policies, the coordination between professional training and formal education systems placing special emphasis on: technical and professional training; lifelong learning and reskilling; harmonization between training supply and labor demand; greater access to connectivity and affordability of digital technologies; the development of foundational and transferable skills including digital and socio-emotional skills relevant to changes in the world of work; the development, in accordance with national circumstances of each member state, of national and regional qualification frameworks, and the promotion of entrepreneurship” (art. 18, Declaration of Buenos Aires).
* “Continue strengthening dialogue and cooperation among Ministries of Labor, Ministries of Education and Professional Training Institutions through the IACML and the Inter-American Committee on Education (CIE), with the aim of achieving better coordination between education, training, and employment policies” (Art. 7, e Plan of Action of Buenos Aires).
* “Encourage ILO-CINTERFOR, OAS and UNESCO to continue working jointly in the development of a Regional Qualifications Framework at the level of the Americas to guide the design and implementation of national qualification frameworks” (Art. 7, g Plan of Action of Buenos Aires).

For their part, the Ministers of Education agreed on the Hemispheric Plan of Action on Education “Towards Building a New Educational Hemispheric Pact in Contexts of Change", approved at the XI Inter-American Meeting of Ministers of Education in November 2022, the following:

* “In 2022 – 2027, the intersectoral agenda will be reinforced by the following initiatives: **Education, labor, and health for regional development**: Topics of the Agenda include the coordination of economic, educational, cultural, health, and labor policies to address and overcome the effects of the crisis--in particular, the creation of strategies to promote youth employment; to reduce youth unemployment and job insecurity; to facilitate the transition from school to work; and to generate opportunities for education and technical and vocational training for this age group, especially for those who are at greater risk; as stated at the Ninth Summit of the Americas, “taking into consideration the interconnection of multiple and compounding forms of discrimination, exclusion, and inequality."

Additionally, the 2022-2025 draft Work Plan of the Inter-American Commission on Education (CIE) contemplates, under its intersectoral agenda, an *Inter-American Program for the development of skills in changing contexts. An intersectoral approach to skills for the future and professional training*. This Program proposes to deepen the collaboration with the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) and strengthen the interaction and coordination in job training through active public policies on priority issues such as life-long learning, technical and vocational training, and professional qualification frameworks, especially for the most vulnerable members of society such as women, young people, people with disabilities, migrants, indigenous people, and those not studying or working through no choice of their own.

1. **DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERSECTORAL WORKSHOP**

The Intersectoral Workshop **"Towards a stronger coordination between education and labor in the Americas"** will be held under a hybrid format, which will allow participation in person in Buenos Aires, Argentina, or virtually. It will bring together representatives of Ministries of Labor and Ministries of Education of the Americas, representatives of workers and employers -grouped in the Trade Union Technical Advisory Council (COSATE) and the Business Technical Advisory Committee on Labor Matters (CEATAL)-, and international organizations, to exchange and analyze strategies to achieve a better coordination between the world of education and the world of work, according to the objectives set out below.

This is an activity of the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration of the OAS, sponsored by the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security and the Ministry of Education of Argentina, and is part of both the Work Plan 2022-2024 of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) as well as the draft Work Plan 2022-2025 of the Inter-American Commission on Education (CIE).

**Expected outcome:** The expected outcome of the Workshop is the identification of lessons learned and policy recommendations to strengthen the coordination between the Ministries of Labor and Ministries of Education and the development of national qualifications frameworks, as well as laying the foundations to move towards a regional qualifications framework.

**Proposed objectives:**

General objective: Increase knowledge and strengthen the capacities of the Ministries of Labor and Education to move towards greater intersectoral coordination, especially around national and regional qualifications frameworks.

Specific objectives:

* Exchange and analyze concrete experiences of collaboration and/or coordination between Ministries of Labor and Education in the region.
* Exchange information on the state of progress, the successes, and challenges in the development of national qualifications frameworks in the different countries of the region.
* Discuss and explore possible steps to follow to design a regional qualifications framework.
* Identify lessons learned and policy recommendations to strengthen the coordination between Ministries of Labor and Ministries of Education and the development of national qualifications frameworks.

**Methodology:**

The Workshop will have two plenary sessions and a subgroup session that, in a complementary way, will address the objectives of the Workshop and facilitate meeting the expected outcome.

All the sessions will have a series of **guiding questions** with the objective of guiding the presentations and spaces for dialogue, maintaining consistency during the discussions, stimulating the debate, and ensuring that the proposed objectives are covered.

Plenary sessions:

* The first plenary session will focus on "Institutional coordination: Concrete experiences of coordination between Ministries of Labor and Education in the region" and the second plenary session will focus on "National Qualifications Frameworks as concrete tools for education-labor coordination”.
* The plenary sessions will be divided in:
  + An introductory presentation to frame the session and guide the subsequent exchange.
  + Three (3) or four (4) formal presentations from the Ministries of Labor and Education, which have demonstrative experiences and contribute to propel the subsequent dialogue. The presentations will answer the guiding questions.
  + Open dialogue among all participants to share their national experiences on the core theme of the session, in response to the guiding questions.

Subgroup sessions:

* The total number of participants will be divided by the organizers into subgroups to promote a deeper exchange on the issues raised in the plenary sessions and facilitate the identification of lessons learned and policy recommendations.
* The number of subgroups will depend on the number of participants, both in-person and online. In similar workshops, between 3 and 4 subgroups have been formed.
* Each subgroup will appoint a moderator, who conducts the work to answer the guiding questions raised and will present the conclusions of the subgroup at the end of the event.
* Each subgroup will have the support of a member of the Technical Secretariat and/or the organizing institutions to draw up the conclusions.

1. **PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

**Thursday, May 4**

9:00 – 9:30 **Welcome and opening remarks –** By the Government of Argentina and the OAS

9:30 – 12:30 **1st Session – Institutional coordination: Concrete experiences of coordination between Ministries of Labor and Education in the region** *(Session based on Guiding Questions)*

* Introductory presentation by the Chairs of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) and the Inter-American Commission on Education (CIE) – (20 minutes)
* Presentations from 3 or 4 Labor Ministries and 3 or 4 Education Ministries (ideally from the same country), to encourage dialogue (20 min. each)
* Perspectives from workers and employers, represented by COSATE and CEATAL (10 min. each)
* Open dialogue between all participants to share their national experiences (1 hour)

12:30 – 14:00 Break

14:00 – 17:00 **2nd Session – The National Qualifications Frameworks as a concrete tool for education-labor coordination** *(Session based on Guiding Questions)*

* Introductory presentation by ILO/CINTERFOR with an overview of the development of national qualifications frameworks in the region (20 minutes)
* Presentations from 3 or 4 Labor Ministries and 3 or 4 Education Ministries (ideally from the same country), to encourage dialogue (20 min. each)
* Open dialogue between all participants to share their national experiences (1 hour and 20 minutes)

**Friday, May 5**

9:00 – 11:00 **2nd Session** – Continuation of day 1 discussion

11:00 – 11:15 Break

11:15 – 13:00 **3rd Session** – Activity in subgroups – based on guiding questions

13:00 – 15:00 Lunch break and space for subgroups rapporteurs to refine conclusions

15:00 – 16:00 Presentation of subgroup conclusions

16:00 – 16:30  **Closing remarks**

1. **GUIDING QUESTIONS**

The following questions seek to guide the presentations and spaces for dialogue and are an important input to dynamize the debate; therefore, participants are kindly requested to prepare their answers beforehand and send them to the Technical Secretariat ([trabajo@oas.org](mailto:trabajo@oas.org) for Ministries of Labor and [education@oas.org](mailto:education@oas.org) for Ministries of Education) no later than April 20, 2023. Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

**For the 1st Session** - **Institutional coordination: Concrete experiences of coordination between Ministries of Labor and Education of the region**

1. What are the main areas and actions of coordination between the Ministries of Education and Labor in your country? We suggest considering actions in the field of teacher training, the link between education and professional training, actions to facilitate the school-to-work transition, among others.
2. What are the main successes and lessons learned from the actions indicated in the previous question? [Question applies to both the general discussion and the subgroups exercise]

**For the 2nd Session** - **The National Qualifications Frameworks as specific tools for education-labor coordination**

1. At what stage is the development of the qualifications framework in your country?
2. What aspects favor and what aspects hinder the formulation of a national qualifications framework?
3. What lessons learned can be synthesized to further advance in national qualifications frameworks? [Question applies to both general discussion and subgroups]

**For the 3rd Session – Activity in subgroups:**

In addition to questions 2 and 5, the subgroups will answer the following question:

1. What policy recommendations can be made to promote and improve coordination between the Ministries of Labor and Education? What should be the priority areas of said coordination?

**7. REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

**Registration**: Please complete the attached Registration Form and send it to the Technical Secretariat as soon as possible and no later than April 14 [to trabajo@oas.org](mailto:to%20trabajo@oas.org) for Ministries of Labor and other guests and [education@oas.org](mailto:education@oas.org) for Ministries of Education. For governmental delegations, please also submit this form through the Permanent Mission of your country to the OAS.

**Financing:** Travel expenses shall be covered by the participating institutions. The OAS, with resources from the RIAL, will be able to co-finance travel expenses, covering lodging for some government representatives, COSATE and CEATAL.

Resources are limited, thereby applications will be reviewed and awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis. Those participants who wish to obtain co-financing (accommodation expenses) must indicate this in the Registration Form and send it as soon as possible, no later than April 14.

**Accommodation:** It is the responsibility of each participant to make the reservation directly at the hotel of their choice, except for those who will receive financial assistance, in such case the OAS will take care of their reservations.

**Information to participate on-line:** The Registration process is as indicated above, both for in-person and remote participants. The connection link for the sessions will be sent only to registered participants.

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**Registration Form**

**INTERSECTORAL WORKSHOP “TOWARDS A STRONGER COORDINATION BETWEEN EDUCATION AND LABOR IN THE AMERICAS”**

**Hybrid event**

**May 4 and 5, 2023 – Buenos Aires, Argentina**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Last Name | First Name | |
| Title | | |
| Organization | | |
| Country | | |
| Telephone | | E-mail |

Will participate:

\_\_\_\_\_ In person

\_\_\_\_\_ On-line

In case of participating in person, please indicate if you require co-funding (accommodation expenses) from the RIAL/OAS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please submit this Registration Form before **April 14** to: [trabajo@oas.org](mailto:trabajo@oas.org) for Ministries of Labor and other guests and [education@oas.org](mailto:education@oas.org) for Ministries of Education. Government officials should also send this form through the **Permanent Mission** of their country to the OAS.

1. David Autor, Kaushik Basu y Dani Rodrik. *An inclusive future? Technology, new dynamics, and policy challenges*. Brookings Institution's Global Forum on Democracy and Technology (2022). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. ILO (2023). 2022 Labor Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Consult as an example: Manpower Group: Talent Shortage Survey and World Bank Enterprise Surveys. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. ILO (2023). Op.cit. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. OIT/CINTERFOR (2020). Analytical inventory of experiences in the development and implementation of qualifications frameworks in Latin America. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)