



# Inter-American Network for Labor Administration

## Newsletter



### The RIAL in numbers

**404** officers from Ministries of Labor trained

**47** representatives from COSATE and CEATAL trained

**8** Hemispheric Workshops conducted

**28** bilateral cooperation activities undertaken or scheduled

**12** International Organizations participated

**24** research centres and NGOs involved

**34** Member States of the OAS participated

## RIAL continues to show major results and great potential

Two years since its establishment, RIAL continues to yield valuable results to Ministries of Labor in the region through its hemispheric workshops, bilateral cooperation activities, technical studies, and an updated Portfolio of Programs.

Since the XV Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML), held in Trinidad and Tobago in September 2007, RIAL has gained further impetus. The Ministers enthusiastically welcomed the network and decided to continue to strengthen it as an IACML mechanism for cooperation and technical assistance. Subsequently, in December 2007, conference authorities adopted the RIAL Operation Guide, establishing the bases for its future actions.

This impetus to RIAL was ratified in the form of financial and in-kind commitments by different Ministries of the region, especially the Canadian Labour Program, which renewed its commitment to RIAL through a substantial allocation for its activities up to 2010.

This bulletin is a compilation of RIAL's activities in the past year, when the topic of youth employment was analyzed as a central priority on the hemispheric agenda, experiences were exchanged on social dialogue and occupational health and safety, the Portfolio of Programs was updated, and the gender and decent work project was consolidated, as well as many other actions that we invite you to discover.

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# Hemispheric workshops

## Strengthening the exchange and analysis of priority areas

Youth employment, social dialogue, occupational health and safety, and employment services are central items on the region's labor agenda. Therefore, they were the focal points of the 2008 RIAL workshops.

These workshops allowed for the sharing and analysis of experiences among specialized officers from Ministries of Labor, representatives of workers and employers under CO-SATE and CEATAL, international organizations and, in several cases, civil society organizations. Through these exchanges, lessons learned and challenges were identified, with the ultimate aim of supporting labor administrations in defining and reformulating policies and programs.

This bulletin briefly summarizes these activities, but we invite you to visit our web page ([www.sedi.oas.org/ddse/rial](http://www.sedi.oas.org/ddse/rial)), where you will find exhaustive information and where you may even listen to all of the presentations and interventions.

Five workshops were conducted in 2007 and three more have taken place so far in 2008.

### All OAS Member States have participated in RIAL Workshops

- Participation in 1 or 2 Workshops
- Participation in 3 or 4 Workshops
- Participation in 5 or 6 Workshops
- Participation in 7 or 8 Workshops

### To be held shortly:

## Workshop on Public Employment Services

*Panama City, Panama, December 10 and 11, 2008*

## Workshop on Social Dialogue and Social Cohesion

Montevideo, Uruguay - April 15, 2008



This workshop brought together technical specialists of the Ministries of Labor of 27 countries of the Americas, representatives of COSATE and CEATAL, and the ILO to analyze the characteristics of and challenges faced by different forums for social dialogue in the region, such as advisory councils, employment councils, economic and social forums, etc.

For one working day, participants were able to share experiences and approaches, concluding that social dialogue is a core concept of democratic governance and a basic instrument for building societies with social inclusion and social justice. The participants agreed that social dialogue must be effective, institutionalized, and implemented in conditions of constructive cooperation. The seminar's presentations and forums for dialogue reflected a wealth of content and ideas.

## Seminar on Youth Employment

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil - May 20 and 21, 2008



This Seminar was jointly organized by the Ministry of Labor and Employment of Brazil, the U.S. Department of Labor and the OAS.

This was an excellent opportunity to exchange experiences and analyze the most relevant youth employment issues in the Americas, especially: the need to promote partnerships designed to create decent jobs for youth; the benefits of integral or integrated strate-

gies, policies and services; youth entrepreneurship initiatives as alternative ways to create decent work; and the importance of having labor market inclusion strategies for the most vulnerable youth. Participating in the seminar were technical representatives of 29 Ministries of Labor, COSATE and CEATAL members, representatives of international organizations such as the ILO, IDB, World Bank, AMSPE, and over 10 non-governmental organizations.

## Third Hemispheric Workshop on Occupational Health and Safety

Cusco, Peru - October 21 and 22, 2008



Over the course of two days, directors and specialists in occupational health and safety (OHS) from 26 Ministries of Labor in the region, the ILO, PAHO, OAS, COSATE, CEATAL, and OHS collaborating centers analyzed progress and identified ways to strengthen OHS systems, improve mechanisms for prevention and control of occupational hazards, and address the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS in the workplace. This Workshop deepened the analysis which was initiated at the First Hemispheric Workshop in 2004 and confirmed that major progress has been made in the design of national OHS strategies, the development of tripartite decision-making bodies, and the formulation of national diagnostic assessments, all of which are geared to consolidating a culture of prevention in the region. Among the challenges identified are: the need to articulate OHS with national development policies and plans; the need to achieve greater inter-agency coordination; and the need to improve information and registration systems. These ideas are summarized in an excellent document entitled "Summary of Discussions and Lessons Learned."

The workshop was organized jointly by the Ministry of Labor of Peru, the OAS, ILO, and PAHO, organizations that have committed to follow up on this workshop and provide technical assistance through a number of tools and institutional strategies.



Officials of the MTSS of Costa Rica receive cooperation from Mexico's Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare regarding the Registration of Social Organizations - Mexico City, October 27-31, 2008



Officers from MITRADEL of Panama visit MTE of Brazil in a cooperation on labor inspection. Brasília and São Paulo, Oct. 28-31, 2008



Ministers of Peru and Argentina, along with their advisors, discuss the payment of salaries through the banking system in Buenos Aires, Sept. 3-5, 2008

"Undoubtedly, the experiences encountered and the knowledge acquired will constitute an extremely valuable contribution in strengthening our institutional capacities. Such actions encourage our own people and compel us towards better and stronger commitments to service".

*Eugenio Solano, Vice Minister of Labor of Costa Rica, referring to the cooperation with Mexico, through the RIAL*

# The RIAL Cooperation Fund Continues to Show Excellent Results

As we have witnessed in the OAS, there is an immense will to cooperate and strong solidarity among the region's Ministries of Labor. Since the establishment in 2007 of the RIAL Cooperation Fund, we have noted growing interest among the Ministries in channeling this intent to cooperate, and in strengthening one another through policy analysis, expert advice, and the exchange of successful practices.

In response to the first call for proposals, in 2007, the Fund received nearly 30 applications. In response to the second, in 2008, over 80 were received. In 2007, eight activities were selected and implemented, while in 2008, 20 activities were selected (See table on Page 6), more than half of which has been carried out.

One of the Fund's major strengths is that the content of each cooperation activity (on-site visit or expert visit) is defined in accordance with the needs and interests of the participating Ministries, rendering them entirely relevant. Perhaps this would explain why the Fund is showing such promising and specific results, including the reformulation of internal procedures, the drafting of legislation, the inclusion of new management elements, the development of new products or the creation and redefinition of functions and structures.

Some of the activities carried out this year are noted here, while the RIAL web page contains a full summary and the final reports on all of them.

■ **Guyana is making progress with Occupational Health and Safety with the cooperation of Trinidad and Tobago**

*Port of Spain,  
from June 23 to 27  
Georgetown,  
July 21 to 25, 2008*

In 2007, the Ministry of Labour of Guyana reorganized its OHS department, including a redefinition of procedures and training of new officers, for which it requested cooperation through the RIAL Fund from the Ministry of Labour of Trinidad and Tobago, a country recognized in the Caribbean context for its legislative and management developments in this area.

This cooperation was approved, and implemented in two stages: An on-site visit by five officers of Guyana to Trinidad and Tobago in June 2008, and a visit to Guyana by Trinidadian experts the following month, during which training was provided for Ministry of Labour officials and worker and employer representatives. When it was completed, Guyana reported that the cooperation had been highly beneficial and relevant, and that, based on the strengths and lessons learned from the Trinidadian experience, some of the processes of its OHS department would be simplified and organized, adjustments and improvements would be made to the checklist used by labor inspectors, consideration would be given to establishing a telephone complaint hotline, and more in-depth training of labor inspectors would be provided.

Port of Spain ✓  
Santo Domingo ✓  
Mexico City ✓  
Tegucigalpa ✓  
Buenos Aires ✓  
Santiago ✓  
Brasília ✓

■ **Cooperation between El Salvador and the Dominican Republic on labor inspections and international relations**

*Santo Domingo,  
July 28 to August 1, 2008*

For five days, officials in the labor inspection and international relations sections of the Ministry of Labor of El Salvador received technical assistance from their peers in the Dominican Republic's Secretariat of Labor.

This activity established a series of very specific actions to be undertaken in El Salvador, based on lessons learned from the Dominican Republic, such as reform of the Law on the Organization and Functions of the Labor Sector aimed at transforming the functions of labor inspectors, creating a Decent Work Unit, implementation of a new management process for applying ILO conventions and recommendations, and a proposed set of reforms for the trade union registration process.

■ **Honduras receives technical assistance from Argentina in order to strengthen its Labor Market Observatory**

*Tegucigalpa,  
September 22 to 26, 2008*

The Secretariat of Labor of Honduras established the Labor Market Observatory (LMO) in 2007, to study and analyze that market and facilitate decision-making. As part of the Observatory, efforts are underway to develop indicators and generate statistics for analyzing employment trends and business demographics. Through the RIAL, Honduras requested advice from the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security from Argentina, which, by 2003, had already begun operating its Employment and Business Dynamics Observatory (OEDE).

Thus, an OEDE expert traveled to Honduras to provide direct assistance to the LMO team on methodological, statistical, and institutional aspects, and, working jointly with the team, developed a Work Plan for the business dynamics component in this Observatory. The technical assistance provided was tailored to the circumstances and needs of the Honduran Observatory, as the transfer of Argentina's expertise facilitated the enhancement of this Observatory.

# Cooperation Activities selected in the Second Call for Proposals - 2008

| Beneficiary Institution                                                                                | Providing Institution                                                                                  | Thematic Area                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
|  Argentina            |  Canada               | Preventive Mediation Program                              |
|  Bahamas              |  United States        | Occupational Health and Safety                            |
|  Bolivia              |  Chile                | Strategic Planning                                        |
|  Bolivia              |  Chile                | Gender equity                                             |
|  Chile                |  Argentina            | Social Security                                           |
|  Costa Rica           |  Chile                | Promotion of a culture of compliance through the web page |
|  Costa Rica           |  Mexico               | Social Organization registration                          |
|  Ecuador              |  Argentina            | Registry and labor statistics system                      |
|  Ecuador              |  Argentina            | Public Employment Service                                 |
|  El Salvador          |  Argentina            | Labor Inspection                                          |
|  El Salvador          |  Dominican Republic   | International Labor Relations                             |
|  Guyana              |  Trinidad and Tobago | Occupational Health and Safety                            |
|  Honduras           |  Argentina          | Enterprise demography and employment dynamics             |
|  Honduras           |  Chile              | Fixation and revision of minimum wages                    |
|  Mexico             |  United States      | Employment policies and programs (WIRED)                  |
|  Panama             |  Brazil             | Occupational Health and Safety                            |
|  Paraguay           |  Chile              | Social Security System                                    |
|  Peru               |  Argentina          | Payment of salaries through the banking system            |
|  Dominican Republic |  Argentina          | Decent Work National Programs                             |
|  Dominican Republic |  Costa Rica         | Labor statistics                                          |

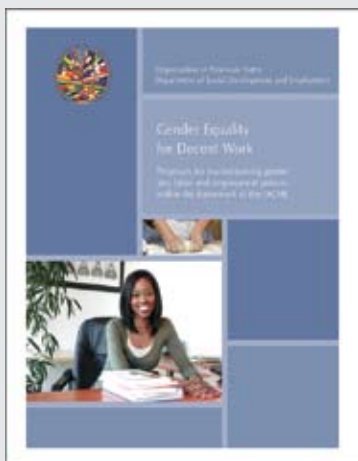
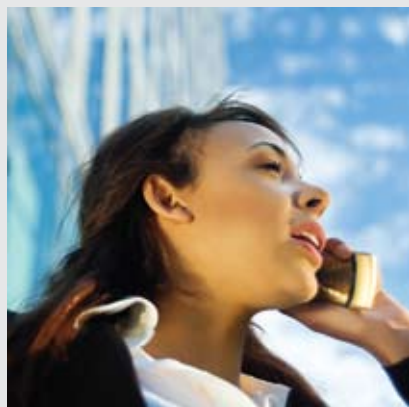
"In this cooperation activity, we sowed a seed that we will later reap in our country. The experience has been so defining that momentous structural changes will be made to labor inspection, from reform to the organic law to the creation of new special units."

**Agustín Rodríguez**

Assistant Director of Labor Inspection

Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of El Salvador

# Gender and decent work: Mainstreaming gender into Ministries of Labor



This year, since the holding of the XV IACML in 2007 and having received the support from Ministers, an initiative on gender has been consolidated within the RIAL, which will contribute to mainstreaming gender into labor and employment policies, and in the operations of Ministries of Labor. This initiative emanates from the strategic guidelines developed based on the study on “Gender Equality for Decent Work”, which were adopted at the XV IACML. Subsequently, the conference authorities defined the following actions:

- To entrust the Technical Secretariat (OAS) the elaboration of a study on the institutionalization of a gender approach in the Ministries of Labor. This study is under way and will provide a current overview of the progress made in mainstreaming gender in labor administrations during the past ten years.
- To continue to identify programs on gender implemented by Ministries of Labor, for inclusion in the RIAL Portfolio of Programs.
- To conduct a RIAL hemispheric workshop on this subject, planned for May or June 2009, in Guyana.
- To explore the possibility of conducting high-level dialogues among women’s authorities and Ministries of Labor at the subregional level.

These actions, like the study from which they arose, are being carried out in close collaboration with the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM) and the ILO.

## What is the RIAL?

The Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL, by its Spanish acronym) is the mechanism for cooperation and technical assistance of the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML) of the OAS.

It was created by the Ministries of Labor of the Americas after the XIV IACML in 2005, to strengthen their institutional and human capacities, through an integrating mechanism for dissemination of knowledge and experience.

The RIAL is coordinated by the OAS Department of Social Development and Employment (DSDE), as Technical Secretariat of the IACML, and has the collaboration of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

The IACML Advisory Bodies, CEATAL (employers) and COSATE (workers), have an active part in the RIAL, and their members can also benefit through its activities.

## The RIAL funding

The Labor Program of the Ministry of Labor and Human Resources of Canada has granted financial resources to start up the RIAL and execute the majority of the activities that are reported in this Newsletter.

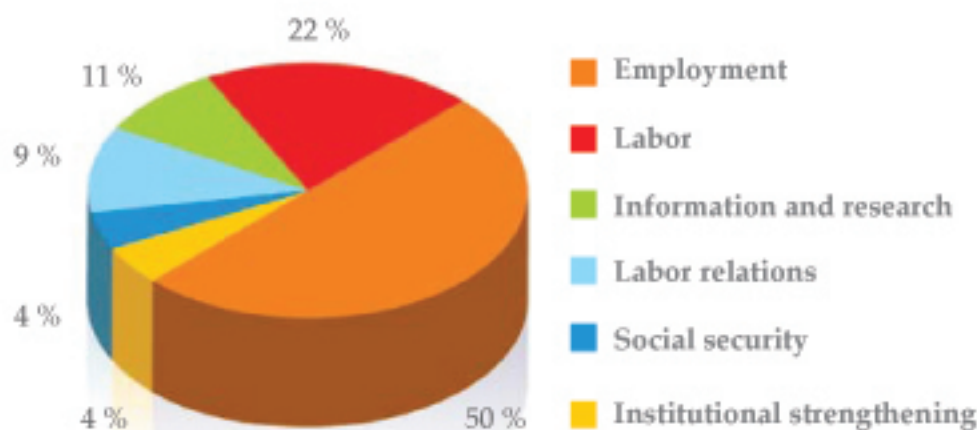
The Secretariat gives special acknowledgement to the Government of Canada for this financing, as well as to the Governments of Argentina, United States, Brazil, Uruguay, Peru, Panama, Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Trinidad & Tobago, for their financial or in-kind contributions to the activities of the RIAL.

## Newsletter

# RIAL Portfolio of Programs

## A useful and continually updated tool

This year, we redesigned the RIAL Portfolio of Programs' virtual tool and reorganized the information categories to include all Ministries of Labor' action areas. After a wide-ranging update, the Portfolio now includes 79 programs in numerous areas of labor administration, distributed among the following categories:



This Portfolio serves as a cornerstone within the RIAL for the planning and selection of bilateral and hemispheric cooperation activities. For this reason, we invite all Ministries to send us information on their programs. The Portfolio is updated on an ongoing basis.

## Contact Information

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