



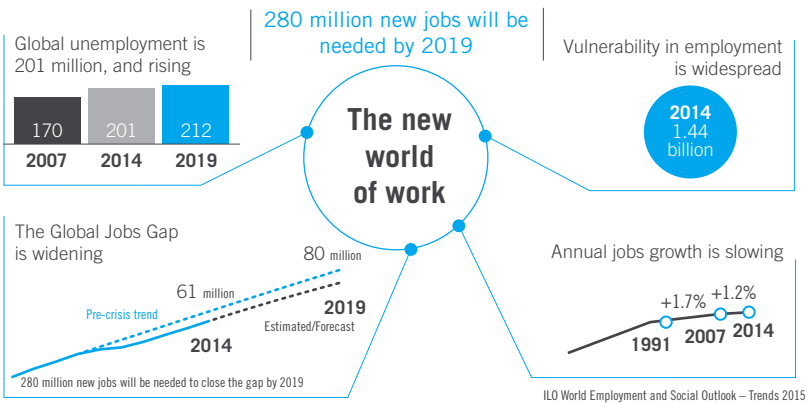
International
Labour
Organization

Employment Services in the evolving world of work



Challenges facing Employment Services in the world of work

Turbulence in global labour markets has accelerated the need for more efficient employment services around the world. Vulnerability in employment is increasing, and now affects 1.4 billion people worldwide. Meanwhile, the global employment gap, indicating the number of jobs lost since the start of the economic and financial crisis in 2008, currently stands at 61 million. Underemployment and informal employment are expected to remain stubbornly high in emerging and developing economies. Now, more than ever, stronger employment services play an increasingly important role in addressing the challenges facing governments, jobseekers and employers in this evolving world of work.



Today, employment services are grappling with an ever more complex range of issues—from chronic unemployment or under employment to demographic shifts and the impact of digital and technological evolution. Many employment services must also address particularly high unemployment among youth and women. High-income countries are struggling to maintain efficient services in the face of severe austerity measures. Middle- and low-income countries have more complex needs. They must broaden the basket of products while ensuring basic levels of service, often with meagre or declining resources.

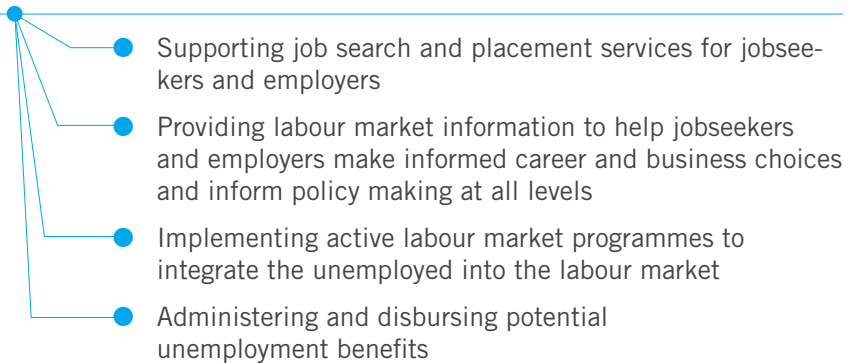
An evolving world of work poses many new challenges

- Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs for helping employers and jobseekers to adapt to change
- Developing good labour market information systems to guide career and training decisions
- Adapting labour market regulations to strengthen job search services and social protection systems
- Promoting the participation of under-represented groups facing strong barriers entering the labour market

Meeting these challenges will require new, comprehensive and integrated strategies. Employment services, as one of the major conduits for implementing government employment and labour market policies, must gear up their efforts to contribute to the generation of productive and decent jobs. Coherence across the entire policy spectrum, from the macroeconomic and sectoral level to labour markets and institutions is imperative if the battle is to be won.

How Employment Services respond to labour market challenges

Public employment services (PES) promote an efficient development, integration and use of the labour force through a set of core functions and more comprehensive labour market interventions:

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- Supporting job search and placement services for jobseekers and employers
 - Providing labour market information to help jobseekers and employers make informed career and business choices and inform policy making at all levels
 - Implementing active labour market programmes to integrate the unemployed into the labour market
 - Administering and disbursing potential unemployment benefits

In advanced economies, PES are undertaking important activities to increase labour market participation and improve cost-effectiveness. In emerging and developing economies, PES are often less developed and faced yet another challenge of having to deal with the majority of the labour force concentrated in the informal economy. Faced with this scenario, the challenge to PES is to find the right mix of services and active labour market policies.

The emergence of private employment services (PrEAs) offers opportunities for cooperation in service delivery and outreach to diverse groups in the labour market. PES play an important role in ensuring that workers are protected and have decent employment. Collaboration is also established with not-for profit and non-governmental institutions to expand coverage and provide additional services to specific target groups.

What is the ILO doing for Employment Services in the world of work?

The ILO offers support to its constituents for the modernization of PES and for establishing regulatory frameworks and collaborative arrangements with private employment agencies. Technical advice ranges from functional assessments to estimate capacity for service delivery to direct assistance aimed at improving responsiveness and targeting of interventions so services are better suited to the needs of jobseekers and employers. This is done within the broader scope of national employment policy frameworks.

The ILO's involvement with PES and PrEAs is enshrined in international labour conventions

The **Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88)**, establishes that PES have a role in bringing together jobseekers and employers through a variety of services for enhancing employability. It also promotes cooperation with appropriate public and private bodies for ensuring the best possible organization of the employment market as part of employment promotion policies.

The **Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181)** recognizes the contribution of private agencies to create better functioning labour markets and reaffirms the need to protect workers' rights, including those recruited from abroad. It establishes general principles for securing effective cooperation between the public employment service and private agencies.

The Country Employment Policy Development and Coordination Unit (CEPOL) is responsible for providing technical advice to the ILO tripartite constituents for the formulation of National Employment Policies and strategies in support to the priorities defined in the Decent Work Country Programmes. CEPOL also contributes to the promotion of national, regional and international policy coherence in making employment central to social economic and international development strategies through knowledge building, policy advice, advocacy, capacity-building and technical cooperation.

The ILO Employment Policy Department works to help member States

- Improve responsiveness of national employment services to serve jobseekers and employers with different needs
- Implement effective labour market programmes adapted to the specific characteristics of regional and local labour markets
- Modernize PES and adapt provision to the different phases of the economic cycle
- Promote appropriate regulation and bolster cooperation between PES and PrEAs

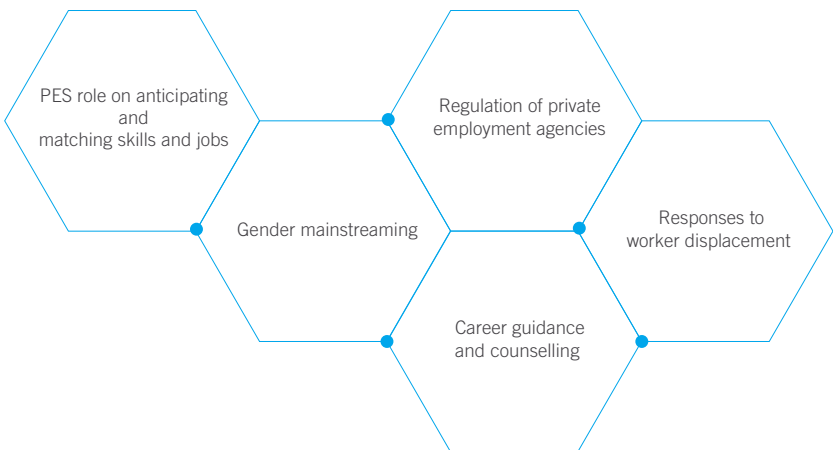
One example is the *Programme d'Appui à la Promotion de l'Emploi et à la Réduction de la Pauvreté* (APERP) covering five French speaking countries in West Africa namely, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Togo and Benin. The programme aims to reduce poverty by strengthening the capabilities of social partners and employment services for the implementation of national employment policies and the promotion of labour market participation, especially of vulnerable groups.

To support Employment Services, the ILO has developed tools and resources for planners, officials and decision-makers including

Global, regional and country training courses:



Guides and resources:



Key partnerships on Employment Services

The ILO works in close partnership with the World Association of Public Employment Services (WAPES) and the International Confederation of Private Employment Agencies (CIETT) to support the reform and modernization of public employment services, promote the appropriate regulation of private employment agencies and foster cooperation between public employment services and private employment agencies.



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