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International Labour Office  
Manila

# Decent Work for All

Quarterly Newsletter of the ILO in the Philippines

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## Towards a globally competitive workforce

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) gathered top government officials and representatives from labour and employers sector at the 2007 National Human Resource Conference to bolster the opportunities and employability of the country's workers and emerging labour force.

"Our main premise is that quality education and training, plus good human relations, plus harmonious labour relations, equals productivity and competitiveness for the Filipino workforce and human resource," said DOLE Secretary Arturo Brion.

Brion acknowledged the cooperation of social partners, particularly labour and management, several government agencies, and the private sector, enabling the conference to develop the necessary impetus to shape up, transform, and ensure the success of the Filipino human resource.

Key labour and management officials shared their expertise in the conference held on April 25 at the Manila Hotel. Among them are representatives from the International Labour Organization (ILO), Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), Federation of Free Workers (FFW), Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP), Department of Trade and Industry, National Anti-Poverty Commission, Commission on Higher Education (CHED), key sectors and industries, and various DOLE bureaus and agencies.

For more information, on the 2007 National Human Resource Conference please visit [www.dole.gov.ph](http://www.dole.gov.ph).



**Bread and butter.** From being unemployed, Maila and Virgilio produce bread and pastry as their main source of income in Mindanao.  
(Photo by ILO / TREE Project)

## Families, former combatants become peace builders and bread winners in Mindanao

At 23, Virgilio was out of school, no job and no direction. Luck came one day when he joined the Training for Rural Economic Empowerment's (TREE) bakeshop training in Lanao del Sur. The Al Jadeed Rural Workers Association proposed the training, implemented by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in Mindanao.

After the training, Virgilio started the Al Jadeed Bakeshop together with six fellow graduates. They produce bread, cookies and pastries as their main source of income. Virgilio now aims to run and expand his own bakeshop in other Muslim areas.

Maila, on the other hand, helped in organizing the Sukran Bakeshop Cooperative when she completed the bakeshop training in Datu Paglas, Maguindanao. TESDA also conducted the training through the initiative of the Regional Commission on Bangsamoro Women (RCBW).

"Having a bakeshop here in our community is a big help for us. People don't need to go to the poblacion (town plaza) just to buy bread and cookies," said Maila. As a member of the

cooperative, Maila prepares baking ingredients and ensures cleanliness of their bakeshop.

In the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), the ILO is partnering with government agencies and local organizations for skills training and enterprise development. The TREE project, funded by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) has assisted more than 80 communities with a focus on youth, women, indigenous peoples and persons with disability to gain technical and entrepreneurial skills as well as access to resources and materials to start economic activities.

The TREE project was designed to contribute to the peace process where building trust and confidence among former combatants was the main concern. Hence, it was implemented in direct partnership with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

Aside from Virgilio and Maila, the project has helped many families and former combatants to earn income as entrepreneurs and become workers for peace and development in Mindanao.

## Decent Work for All

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## EDITORIAL

As the final stages of implementing the current Philippines Time Bound Programme on child labour are upon us, it is time for reflection on the lessons learned and the way forward. We seem to be pointed in the direction of finding ways to draw down more effectively on ILO's comparative advantage and mandated areas of technical competence to address the root causes of child labour and poverty. Economic empowerment and mobilization for social justice are clearly needed for millions of families still struggling to survive despite steady economic growth.

Attaining these requires the integration of explicit and gender responsive employment plans (and their implementation) into existing development plans and budgets at municipal, city and provincial levels. This entails addressing job and enterprise creation based on relevant market analysis, relevant vocational and entrepreneurial skills training provision, developing local labour market information and job matching systems as well as social insurance and safety net schemes. Advocating the range of ILO technical tools in these areas in an integrated manner is strategic for supporting and strengthening institutional actors at various levels in this regard.

It also means tackling through social dialogue challenging issues such as productivity and adequate wages for parents so children do not have to work for families to eat and collective bargaining for better wages and working conditions particularly in the sectors with a high prevalence of the worst forms of child labour such as agriculture.

Stronger partnerships with UN agencies and others are critical for implementing the coordinated and multidimensional actions required in different sectors to effectively address complex problems such as child labour.

For SRO Manila staff further inspiration on integrated approaches being developed by the ILO was derived from a recent visit to the office by Mr. Craig Churchill of the ILO Social Finance Programme. He was in Manila for the first Asian conference on micro finance. The discussion on how social finance approaches could be integrated into local level efforts to provide enhanced and sustained incomes and security for families of child labourers was extremely enlightening for the design of future child labour programmes.

Linda Wirth  
Director

## Employers and workers to abide by law on self-organization

By Hilda Veronica Tidalgo  
Senior Programme Assistant

Participants representing the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), Federation of Free Workers (FFW), Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL) and other workers group jointly signed conclusions of the ILO workshop on Promoting Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining through Social Dialogue and Partnership held on 25-27 June 2007 in Tagaytay City.

One of the major issues agreed in the conclusions is for employers' representatives and trade unions to abide by the provisions of the recently enacted Republic Act 9481, otherwise known as An Act Strengthening the Workers' Constitutional Right to Self-Organization. Both employers' representatives and trade unions were concerned on the need to conduct consultations with social partners in the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council (TIPC) and other tripartite mechanisms on the new law's implementing rules and regulations to be drafted by DOLE.

The three day workshop, attended by 27 employers' representatives and trade unionists also agreed to push for the full implementation of fundamental ILO Conventions ratified by the Philippines on freedom of association and collective bargaining (No. 87 and 98) by putting this on the agenda of the TIPC. They also proposed promotion of and advocacy for the ratification of ILO Conventions on Workers' Representatives (No. 135), Labour Relations (No. 151) and Collective Bargaining (No. 154). All of which support and expand the two fundamental ILO Conventions.

## ILO supports typhoon recovery in Albay

By Lourdes Kathleen Cacho  
Programme Assistant

The Philippines was hit by two super typhoons in 2006 – Milenyo and Reming. The Bicol region was the most affected region in the country. A total of 229,572 families have been affected by the fury of Typhoon Reming. As of date, a total of 2,472 families are still in evacuation centers established in different parts of the province according to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Region 5. The families in the evacuation centers are largely urban dwellers. The survey conducted by the DSWD shows that 87.2 per cent of the

families rely heavily on livelihood activities such as carpentry and masonry, construction related jobs, service jobs, vending and trading, basic cosmetology, and micro-enterprises. This situation also had detrimental outcomes for women with an increase in women headed households and expansion of women's burden of productive and reproductive work.

The ILO, with the Department of Labor and Employment, is developing appropriate and specific intervention strategies leading to early livelihood recovery and disaster risk management.

A template and capability building programme for ILO's constituents and local partners are being developed to increase the capacity to prepare and respond to disaster situations. In addition, a project on gender-responsive livelihood recovery was also formulated to assist governments and other stakeholders in enhancing rehabilitation plans through a participatory Local Economic Development (LED) approach. Moreover, the ILO will co-chair a cluster on Livelihood, together with DSWD, as directed by the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC).



# Social security needs for informal economy workers

By Jesus Macasil, Jr.  
Programme Assistant

Informal jobs make up majority of employment in the Philippines. However, many of the workers in this sector earn barely enough income to buy sufficient food, finance the education of their children and pay premiums for health or retirement insurance. Under these circumstances, emergencies can aggravate further their hardships as most of them would tend to borrow or sell whatever assets they have to be able to survive.

In 2005, the informal economy made up 76.3 per cent of employment in the Philippines. However, many of the workers in this sector

lack social protection for health or retirement. Visible as they are in our daily lives, the informal workers' economic contributions to society as well as their right to a decent standard of living are significantly overlooked.

The ILO recently commissioned a survey on social security needs among informal economy workers. The survey aims to collect primary indicators on social security needs and priorities. It will interview 2,500 informal economy workers in select urban and rural areas in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. ILO envisions that, in partnership with its constituents, the results of the survey would support further discussions on policy options and strategies of the Decent Work Country Programme in the Philippines.

## 6th World Day Against Child Labour in RP marked by innovative activities

By Mitchell Duran  
IPEC Programme Officer

Five years after it was first observed in the Philippines, World Day Against Child Labour (WDACL) last month was marked with meaningful events throughout the country, initiated by stakeholders, local government units, trade unions, employers groups, programme implementers and civil society.

Events this year focused on the theme "Harvest for the future: Agriculture without child labour." The WDACL events included street marches joined by former child labourers, their families and programme partners, awareness-raising forums on children in agriculture, a radio programme on child labour-related issues and challenges, a dialogue with media practitioners, signing of a "call to action" to eliminate child labour, art contests, information caravans, and the signing of an agreement on product labeling to combat child labour, among other activities.

Last June 14, the National Child Labour Committee (NCLC) organized a photo exhibit

on initiatives against child labour in agriculture and a forum on programme interventions against hazardous work in agriculture, particularly in sugarcane and tobacco plantations, and vegetable farms.

The signing of the "Call to Action to Eliminate Child Labour in Agriculture" was also done by senior officials from the Departments of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Agriculture (DA), Agrarian Reform (DAR), Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), Federation of Free Workers (FFW), and Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP).

On 22 June 2007, at least 30 major Davao City and Davao del Sur growers and buyers of mango, pomelo, durian, sugarcane and banana met at a forum during which they signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) banning the involvement of children in the production and packaging of agricultural products. Consumer groups from shopping malls, wet markets and retailers also committed to patronize only "child labour-free" marked products.



**CALL TO ACTION.** With ILO-SRO Manila Director Linda Wirth (4th from left), the 'Call to Action' (foreground) signatories were (from left): Executive Director Rey Ubaldo (DOLE), ECOP President Sergio Ortiz Luis, HRM Chief Mary Ann Sotto (DA), Undersecretary Gerundio Madueño (DAR), Treasurer Jose Cayobit (FFW), and Vice-President Alejandro Villaviza (TUCP).

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### JULY - SEPTEMBER 2007

Trainers for Entrepreneurship Development Cooperative Strategic Planning Workshop (July 18)

Capacity Building for Trade Union Youth Leaders (July 19-21 and August 23-24)

Seminar on ADB Core Labour Standards Handbook (August 2)

Training of Entrepreneurs (July 14, 21 and 28)

Child Labour Time Bound Programme Support Exit Conferences: The Final Score Card (July 16, 19 and 31 & August 8-11, 15-18 and 20-23)

Media Congress on Child Labor (July 26)

Finalization Workshop of the Standard Entrepreneurship Curriculum Developed for Tech-Voc (July 30-31)

Tripartite Consultations on the Matrix on Extent of Philippine Compliance to the ILO Maritime Labour Convention (July-September 2007)

Launch of Career Guidance Tool Kit for Youth Employment Service Providers and for Job-seeking Youth (August 2007)

Key Child Labour Time Bound Programme Stakeholders' Consultation on Results of the Expanded Evaluation/ Impact Assessment (August 2)

External Audit of Philippine Child Labour Time Bound Programme (August 6-17)

"The Road to Empowerment: Strengthening the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act" Book Launch (August 8)

Consultation on "Securing and Managing Lands and Resources in Ancestral Domains of Indigenous Peoples" (August 8)

Gender Audit Facilitation Workshop (August 7-10)

Pre-Trial Conciliation for Labour Court Judges (August 8-10)

International Indigenous Peoples Day Development Forum (August 9)

Conciliation / Mediation of Labour Disputes (August 13-16)

Regional Youth Employment Workshop (August 27-30)

Case Conference on Partnership of STEAM Foundation and Jollibee: Promoting Equal Employment Opportunity for Young Deaf Persons (31 August 2007)

Orientation and Planning Workshop for DOLE Focal Persons of Indigenous Peoples Desks in all Regions (August / September 2007)

Training on Results-Based Management and Project Cycle Management (September 3-7)

National Youth Employment Conference and Exhibition (October 2007)

# Decent and productive jobs for young people

**By Maria Asuncion Ortiz**  
National Project Coordinator

*Towards a Policy and Action Agenda on Decent and Productive Work for the Youth.* A technical meeting organized under the auspices of the ILO-Canadian International Development Agency's Promoting Youth Employment in the Philippines (PYEP) in cooperation with key partner institutions was held on July 3, 2007 in Makati City.

It gathered agency heads, planners, technical experts and implementers of youth employment programmes – representing national, local and sector organizations of governments, employers, workers, youth, education and training sector, statistical community and other related institutions.

Discussions revolved around the proposed framework document commissioned by ILO within which policies and programmes of various youth employment relevant institutions can be assessed, formulated and implemented in a coherent and coordinated manner. It is oriented towards enabling concerned stakeholders address the jobless growth

situation in the country as this mainly affects a great majority of young Filipino men and women in their productive age.

The forum participants agreed that problems on youth unemployment in the country must be given special attention as the longer a young working-age person becomes unemployed, the more he or she becomes less employable, hence, requiring interventions in the areas of employment creation, formal education and life skills development

The National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) announced it will consider inputs and recommendations on youth employment in the planned update of the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan. NEDA will look into a spectrum of broad imperatives, including:

- Sustaining high GDP growth 6-7 per cent;
- Pumping up growth in particular manufacturing and agriculture sectors;
- The need for more investment, especially in labour-intensive industries;
- Changing subsistence agriculture into high-value agribusiness;
- Setting up off-farm industries in the rural sector to complement farming;

- Upgrading elementary and high school education;
- Lowering dropout rates;
- Expanding technical and vocational education;
- Promoting entrepreneurship among the youth;
- Building private sector alliances in microfinance.

Further policy-oriented contributions from partners and stakeholders are most welcome for inclusion in the submissions to NEDA.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the National Youth Commission (NYC) and the NEDA have accepted the challenge of forming a multi-stakeholder committee and convening it regularly to help define and push for the next steps and cross-institutional arrangements towards achieving greater coherence, coordination and adequacy of policies and programmes in addressing youth employment problems in the country.



Facilitating youth employability in housing projects.

## Combating trafficking together

**By Robert Larga**  
National Project Coordinator

The Swedish Embassy, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and International Labour Organization (ILO) jointly organized a forum on "Combating Trafficking Together", in time for the visit to Manila of Ambassador Anders Oljelund, the Swedish Ambassador against Trafficking in Human Beings. The forum held on June 7 in Makati City, provided a venue to share experiences and strengthen cooperation in the global campaign.

Linda Wirth, Director of the ILO Subregional Office for South-East Asia and the Pacific and Mr. Anders Lisborg, Associate Expert, IPEC Project to Combat Trafficking in Children for Labour and Sexual Exploitation

of the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific emphasized the labour dimensions of trafficking in persons. Both Wirth and Lisborg highlighted the need to combat trafficking in persons, especially among women and children, by addressing its root causes, increasing employment opportunities, improving working conditions, and providing everyone with full, productive and freely chosen decent work.

Ambassador Oljelund stressed the demand side of trafficking, and that trafficked persons should be considered as victims. He said that in Sweden, prostitution is regarded as part of male violence against women and children and the purchase of sexual service is punishable by law.



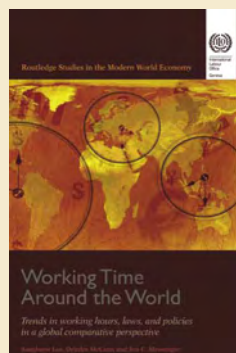
Lisborg on the other hand explained that aside from the ILO Forced Labour Conventions (Nos. 29 and 105), Minimum Age Convention (No. 138) and Worst forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182), there are existing ILO Conventions which do not exclusively deal with trafficking but are highly relevant in addressing the elements of exploitative employment. He cited those relating to labour inspection, private employment agencies, migrant workers, employment and social policy, payment of wages and discrimination in employment.

Other speakers were Mr. Bruce Reed of IOM, Chief State Counsel Ricardo V. Paras, III of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and Ms. Andrea Anolin of Batis Center for Women. Representatives from government and non-government organizations, UN agencies, embassies, consulates, trade unions, media and other stakeholders participated in the forum.

## MUST READS

### Working Time Around the World: Trends in working hours, laws, and policies in a global comparative perspective

Examines working time in over 50 countries around the world, and explores the implications for working time policies in developing and transition countries for the first time. For more information, please visit [www.ilo.org/publication](http://www.ilo.org/publication).



### Philosophical and spiritual perspectives on DECENT WORK

In all societies, there is an ethical dimension to work, connected to the rights and entitlements of those who perform it. This also includes spiritual values such as dignity, personal identity, a sense of purpose in life, the "divine call to work" and so on. For more information, please visit [www.ilo.org/publication](http://www.ilo.org/publication).

