

EMPLOYMENT PLAN 2014

ARGENTINA



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1. Employment and labour market outlook

The current successful trends in terms of employment and decent work in Argentina must be analyzed in the general and institutional context in which policies have been implemented in recent years. The main conclusions from these results are: a) macroeconomic policies implemented are consistent with the objectives of full employment and social protection; and b) the set of labour and employment policies were decisive for the outcomes in employment growth, in the reduction of unregistered work, etc.

Since 2003, during three democratic governments, the country started a path of economic growth with social inclusion through formal employment and social protection. The fostering of an increasing level of employment, especially of quality jobs, is one of the pillars of the strategy of inclusive growth that Argentina has been pursuing and will continue to implement. Only coordinated efforts in this direction can generate a sustained improvement in the population's living standards. For each period, the specific labour and employment policies show continuity or change depending on the national and international context.

In order to describe the policies implemented during this decade, we propose three stages for the analysis:

The period 2003-2008, characterized by strong economic growth and active employment policies, resulting in a significant increase in employment, especially of formal work. The main objective of the economic growth strategy adopted since 2003 –the creation of quality employment– was sustained even in the context of the international crisis. The main policies implemented were: Re-installing labour inspections; inclusion of the issue in the public agenda; simplification of administrative procedures for registration of workers (online system adoption); reducing recruitment costs (for new workers in SMEs); tax exemptions for employers of domestic workers; the transformation of the Unemployed Household Heads Plan into a labour stimulus plan based on the Training and Employment Insurance, with a strong training component.

The period 2008-2011, in the framework of the international crisis, characterized by the implementation of countercyclical policies to maintain the level of employment (REPRO¹, reducing payroll taxes for a certain period of time and in particular circumstances) while the policies of collective bargaining, minimum wage and social protection contributed to moderate the impact of the international crisis. The implementation of Universal per-child allowance and the increase of the social protection for the elders were also measures taken in this period.

The period between 2012 and the present, is characterized by the implementation of a new set of policies focused on more specific issues. In this period, the fight against unregistered work, labour regulation to include especially vulnerable groups in the labour market and the emphasis on training and education for young people are good examples of the traits of this period (as it is reported in the Labour Market Regulation section).

The economic model implemented since 2003 encouraged a rapid and strong improvement in the labour market. Social protection policies and the support provided to labour institutions further boosted domestic demand, creating a positive feedback loop for domestic employment.

¹ Production Recovery Program (REPRO). REPRO was created in 2002 to confront the domestic crisis of that period, and was especially useful for dealing with the global crisis (2009-2010). The program consists of a subsidy for a share of the wages of workers in firms facing difficulties, during for as long as these companies develop a recovery plan and commit not to fire employees for a period of up to 12 months. MTEySS has had strict oversight to certify that beneficiary companies comply with the terms and do not incur in staff reductions.

Table 1: Economic and labour market conditions, 2008 (LHS) and 2013 (RHS)								
	GDP growth		GDP per capita (USD terms)		Employment Growth		Employment to population ratio	
Country	3,1 ¹	2,9 ¹	10.182	14.482	1,5	1	42,3	42,7
G20 Average	1,4	1,9	25,339	26,243	1,1	0,9	57,7	57,1
	Unemployment rate		Incidence of long-term unemployment		Youth unemployment rate		Youth unemployment to population ratio	
Country	7,8	7,1	28,3	26,6	18,6	19,4	8%	7,8
G20 Average	6,3	6,1	24,1	31,0	-	-	6,9	7,8
	Participation rate		Female participation rate		Informal employment rate		Collective bargaining coverage	
Country	45,9	46	37,4	38	37	33,7		60
G20 Average	60,2	60,3	50,0	51,8	-	42,2	-	28,8
	Minimum wage (% of average wage)		Gini coefficient		School completion rate ⁴		Literacy rate ²	
Country	70,2	66,4	0,455	0,423	44,3	49,6 ³	98,8	99,1
G20 Average	34,9	34,9	0,341	0,376	78,5	78,9	-	-
	Social protection: Coverage of the elders ⁵		Social protection: Coverage of under-18 population ⁵					
Country	92%	95%	58%	88%				
G20 Average								

¹ Constant price

² % of people age 15 and above

³ 2012

⁴ Upper secondary graduation rates

⁵ Period 2008 - 2011

2. Employment challenges for Argentina

As we mentioned, since 2009 there has been some slowdown in the favourable trend, which highlights the need to introduce new measures to further consolidate the improvements achieved in the labour market and to simultaneously promote overall economic development with emphasis on reducing inequality. In this context we identified the following main challenges.

CHALLENGE: EMPLOYMENT CREATION AND REDUCING INFORMALITY

The macro, labour and social policies implemented in the last decade improved the employment growth rate at an average of 3% per year. This job creation process reduced the unemployment rate from more than 20% in the past to less than 8% currently. Also, the unregistered wage employment rate fell approximately 15 percentage points, reaching a minimum of around 32%. Nonetheless, since 2012 the country entered in a stage of stagnation in terms of employment creation and the unregistered rate is still significantly high. Facing these problems, employment creation and reducing informality stand as key challenges for Argentina, resulting in a new set of policies. Reducing informality is an important challenge for the country since it implies a lack of labour protection and workers' rights, less productivity and competitiveness for the whole economy, less fiscal resources and unfair competitiveness.

CHALLENGE: EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR YOUTH

Despite important efforts done, the issue of youth employment remains a policy challenge. In 2003, the youth unemployment rate was of 31%, while in the context of the 2008 crisis it was 16.8% and currently it's still 17.9².

The characteristics of youth employment in the country reveal that the main difficulty lies not only in finding a first job, but also in its instability. It was verified that youth usually spend their first years in the labour market in the vicious circle between informal employment and unemployment.

One of the tools that may enable youth to obtain a formal, stable and fairly paid job is correlated to the level and type of qualification and training. This explains why the second challenge in terms of policies are education, training and professional training of youth.

CHALLENGE: STRENGTHEN SOCIAL DIALOGUE THROUGH COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT AND MINIMUM WAGE

In recent years, collective bargaining was maintained even in the period characterized by an economic slowdown due to the impact of the global crisis. In this regard, the government will continue to drive growth in real wages, especially through collective bargaining and the sustained policy of minimum wage, which is updated on a tripartite basis. Currently, the percentage of coverage of private workers registered is around 85%, a high value which is expected to be sustained. The number of collective agreements recognised increased from 380 in 2003 to 1231 in 2008 and 1378 in 2013. On the other hand, the number of jobs comprehended within collective agreements went from 2,935,000 in 2003 to 4,850,000 in 2008 and to 5,250,000 in 2013.

CHALLENGE: SUSTAINING SOCIAL PROTECTION

In relation to social protection, the coverage to seniors and infants has been increased to 88%³ since 2006, thus forming a "social protection floor", reaching an integrated system of social protection. The commitment and challenge of future policies is to sustain these levels of coverage.

² 4q 2003, 2008 and 2013.

³ In 2003 the coverage of minors was of 38% and 61% for elders.

3. Current policy settings and new commitments

BROAD ECONOMIC SETTINGS*

Argentina's growth strategy is mainly focused on the domestic components of aggregate demand. Since consumption is the largest component, it has a key role in stimulating the whole economy, particularly private and public investment and consequently the level of employment. With regards to employment and social inclusion, the generation of an increasing level of employment, especially of quality jobs, is one of the pillars of the strategy of inclusive growth that Argentina has been pursuing and will continue to implement. Only coordinated efforts to achieve this can generate a sustained improvement in the population's living standards. In this regard, formal employment grew by 80% in the past ten years. Also, country policies will especially focus on continuing to make progress in terms employment and income distribution, while supporting the necessary expansion in the economy's productive capacity. This requires pursuing policies to remove supply-side bottlenecks and, in particular, it demands a significant increase in investment in infrastructure and energy. These efforts should also contribute to improving the economy's overall competitiveness.

Macroeconomic policy

- **Monetary and exchange-rate policy:** due to the fall of international reserves and considerable pressures in the foreign exchange market at the end of 2013, a depreciation of the exchange rate occurred in January 2014. The resulting higher real exchange rate will improve the exports sector, particularly for products of regional economies. With regards to the monetary policy, the aim is to continue expanding and improving the allocation of the different credit lines that had been put into effect by the Government in the recent past, especially increasing the share of firms that typically face more problems to access private credit, such as micro, small and medium-size firms.
- **Fiscal policy** aims at maintaining the strategy followed in previous years, focused both on implementing a countercyclical policy (fiscal impulse was positive in the first quarter of 2014), while maintaining a low debt to GDP ratio.
- **Trade:** Argentina considers that the most decisive and useful contribution that a country can make to boost global trade is to strengthen its own growth process, its industrial sector, its domestic market and its employment levels. This, in turn, will result in an increase in its production scale and purchasing power, therefore raising exports and imports in a sustainable manner. In this direction, it is worth notice that the Argentine economy has experienced remarkable growth. The country's GDP expanded at an average annual rate of 5.5% over the last decade. Concerning trade flows, Argentina has significantly contributed to the G20 pledge to increase trade and aggregate demand as a mean to sustain the global economic recovery since 2008. Argentina is also undertaking a varied range of programs in areas which offer potential synergy to expand trade opportunities, for instance national initiatives to foster technological innovation, training programs for improving SMEs' exporting capacities, and programs to deepen the linkages between national universities and firms, among others. Along this vision, two ambitious programs have been launched recently: "Program for Exports Growth and Diversification" (PADEx), and "Country Value Plan". Within this context, Argentina aims to improve its position in the worldwide trade, including active participation in both regional and multilateral organizations, as well as in regional trade agreements. (See "growth strategy" for more detailed information regarding the multilateral trade system).

Regulation, finance, incentives, investment and entrepreneurialism

- **Investment and infrastructure policy:** since 2003, the National Government has undertaken an aggressive public investment program to compensate for the lack of private initiatives in previous years in the areas of energy and transport. Regarding energy, the government is giving a strong boost to production and investment in this strategic sector, promoting growth and employment, increasing the domestic supply of hydrocarbons, providing greater FX stability through reduced foreign exchange requirements for imports of these products, and

developing new technologies that can benefit the economy's overall technological capabilities. In the area of transport infrastructure, with the aim of significantly reducing transport costs, especially in regional economies located far from the ports, the Government signed investment agreements with foreign companies to modernize the equipment of the country's most important railways, which will allow a higher frequency and total load capacity and will, in general, increase logistics efficiency and improve market access for producers.

- Investment funding: Argentina has been implementing measures to develop alternative means to finance investment, given the underdevelopment of domestic capital markets, the scarcity of traditional private funding for many priority sectors and the existence of a bias toward consumption loans granted by the financial sector. These measures are aimed at increasing funding for business investment and infrastructure projects in order to spur investment of SMEs and less developed regions. This implies an expansion of key credit programs. Moreover, the National Bank of Argentina (BNA) and the Investment and Foreign Trade Bank (BICE) —both public banks— have a predominant role in funding the private sector, especially SMEs. In addition, the PRO.CRE.AR Program aims to increase access to housing finance through mortgage loans at subsidized rates, and flexible eligibility criteria.

LABOUR MARKETS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Labour market regulations

Since 2003, labour institutions were strengthened through a number of measures. The government: (i) approved a new legal framework for both collective and individual labour rights; (ii) reinstated workplace inspections, (iii) promoted collective bargaining and increase of minimum wage; (iv) recovered the government's capacity to mediate in labour conflicts; v) reinforced commitments on training and education vi) improved the relation between supply and demand through public employment services at local level.

The permanent incentive strategy for social dialogue continued to be applied even in the years of the hardest impact of the international crisis. This dialogue continued to sustain collective bargaining and the annual increases in the minimum wage (at the company level -in a situation of crisis-, via the Crisis Prevention Procedure⁴). As an indicator, the number of agreements reached between 2008 and 2011 through collective bargaining increased by 22% (from 1,231 to 1,513 agreements negotiated annually), and the annual call of the Employment, Productivity and Minimum Wage Council was convened in each of the years. This allowed a systematic update of the minimum wage on a tripartite negotiation. These instruments contributed both to increases in real wages and improvements in wage distribution through the years of the economic crisis, an unprecedented event in our economic history.

Regarding the challenge of reducing labour informality, the Argentine government, in coordination with several national ministries, promoted the law 26,940 (2014) to implement a strategy to fight informality. The main objective of this set of articulated and integrated policies is to increase the employment formalization by a combination of incentives and sanctions for those not complying with the law.

The new measures include:

- Permanent 50% reduction in the rate of employer contributions on all workers in firms employing up to five workers.
- Temporary reduction in employer contributions according to company size if the total staff increases in net terms: for employers of up to 15 employees, 100% reduction in the first year and 75% in the second; for companies from 16 to 80 workers, a 50% reduction for 24 months, and for companies with a payroll exceeding 80 employees, a reduction of 25% for two years.

⁴ The Crisis Prevention Procedure is an instrument created by the 1991 Employment Act, but which has had an increasing importance since 2009 as it is designed to prevent early dismissals in periods of crisis. It is a tripartite mechanism between the worker, the employer, and the state where the company must first prove it is in a crisis, at which point the MTEySS steps in to mediate.

- Strengthening the Ministry of Labour's power to control working conditions through the signing of agreements with the Provinces and the exchange of relevant information;
- Creation of a Special Unit articulated among Ministry of Labour, AFIP, Ministry of Economy and Public Finance to control and identify cases of Irregular Work, developing a digital system to establish a Public Registry of Employers reporting unregistered employees, child labour or trafficking;
- Implementation of joint actions with relevant social actors to guarantee compliance with the new legal framework for critical sectors (rural, and domestic workers). The new scheme for rural work (Law 26,727) was established to ensure labour rights and social protection for rural workers. This law was not updated since 1944. Also, special conditions for domestic workers were adopted (Law 26,844), recognizing their rights at the same level of other individual workers. The same approach led to reformulate the regulation of domestic work, promoting decent work in an activity that shows high rates of informality.

These measures will be implemented over the 2014-2015 period. Progress will be measured by the unemployment rate, which is expected to reach a level below 7% at the end of 2015, and by a reduction in the rate of informality to around 30%.

Social protection

As a strategy to confront the consequences of the international crisis, the government implemented a set of measures designed to expand access to the social protection system, as well as to improve its payments. The suite of policies implemented in this context was consistent with the general social protection policy regime since 2003.

A policy of particular importance was the extension of social protection coverage to retirement age adults, which went into effect towards the end of 2005 aiming to repair the informality levels that had increased during the 90's. The objective of the Pension Inclusion program (*Programa de Inclusión Previsional* or *Moratoria Previsional* in Spanish)⁵ was to make easier for people of retirement age to access the retirement system. The program was of an unprecedented scale: 2.6 million people became eligible, which increased the system's coverage of retired people (women over 60 and men over 65 years old, the legal retirement) from 70% to 89%.

Towards the end of 2008, the government re-nationalized the mixed retirement system, one of the most important modifications made to the social security system during this period.⁶

Based on the new budget, a very significant policy implemented was the expansion of the family allowances system. In late 2009, the aforementioned Universal Per-Child Allowance (AUH) was implemented, extending family allowances of the contributory system to population not previously covered under that system. Specifically, it was created for children and adolescents from unemployed families, families working in the informal sector, or children whose parents are domestic workers earning less than the minimum wage. The AUH consists of a monthly cash allowance, subject to health and school attendance checks. As of May 2011, coverage was also extended to pregnant women (after the third month of pregnancy) in the informal economy.

This policy, unprecedented in the country, extended coverage to 1.9 million additional families and 3.4 million children under 18 years of age. Coverage of the contributive system expanded from 46% of minors to current levels of over

⁵ Law 25.994 established a plan to (a) facilitate payments for adults of retirement age who had not made the requisite 30 years of contributions and (b) establish early benefits for older adults who had made sufficient contributions but were not yet of retirement age (and were unemployed).

⁶ Another important change was the institutionalization of policy increases in pension benefits. The Retirement Mobility Act (*Ley de Movilidad Jubilatoria* in Spanish) enacted in October 2008, established two annual adjustments based on pension income and wages. This change represented an increase in the growth rate of minimum and average benefits. For the first time in the country's pension system history, fiscal issues as well as issues inherent to the labour market are explicitly considered as key elements at the time of establishing benefit increases mechanisms.

88% coverage (ENAPROSS). The amount of the monthly allowance is identical to that of the contributory system and has been updated four times since its implementation (once a year), to maintain the beneficiaries' purchasing power.⁷

In June 2014 a new Social Protection Inclusion Plan was announced. The program aims to extend the coverage of the social protection system especially to people in the most vulnerable sectors who are old enough to access a pension but have no coverage. It is expected that this program will reach a total of 473,000 people, taking the coverage of the social protection system to almost 100% of the population in retirement age.

Active labour market programs

Argentina has an important set of active employment policies. Even if such policies had been implemented before, they have now become institutionalized State policies that contribute to improve different aspects of the insertion of workers in the employment market. The most important among these policies are:

- **Programa Jóvenes con Más y Mejor Trabajo:** (Launched in 2008, currently active) **The Youth with More and Better Employment program** seeks to generate opportunities for social and labour market inclusion of youth through an integrated set of actions that prepare them for jobs in the profession of their choosing, encourage them to complete their mandatory schooling, help them undergo training and workplace internships, find jobs, or start their own business. Beneficiaries are young people between 18 and 24 with permanent residence in the country and with incomplete primary and/or secondary education that were unemployed when joining the program. 600,000 young people have participated in the program since March 2013.
- **Seguro Capacitación y Empleo (SCyE, implemented in 2006) The Training and Employment Insurance (SCyE)** program functions as a non-contributory unemployment insurance. It provides recipients a monthly allowance for a period of two years, which could be accompanied by additional support for completion of primary and secondary studies, career guidance and job search support, referral to social services, education, job training, coaching, self-employment guidance and support to individual and/or collaborative enterprises.
- **Public Employment Service Network:** Public Employment Services (SPE) created in 2003 – since there were no public employment services in the country– are technical bodies that work at the local level as a link between the supply and demand for employment, giving free information, providing guidance and referral to employment and training services. These offices serve as a link between the set of active employment policy tools, employment opportunities originated in the private sector of the economy and unemployed workers, or those who are looking to improve their employment situation. The aim of the Network of Public Employment Services is to provide support, assistance, and occupational guidance in the process of looking for employment, as well as in the process of generating work as a self-employed individual. It also undertakes outreach and guidance actions targeted to applicants to employment programs. In this framework, the Municipal Employment Offices, jointly with the Ongoing Training Network, are responsible for the training and occupational guidance of those receiving services aimed at increasing employability at the local level. The network also addresses the needs of employers as they attempt to fill vacancies and to train potential employees. Four hundred Municipal Employment Offices were created throughout the country since 2003. The level of development and specialization of these heterogeneous Municipal Employment Offices varies greatly. Hence, the strengthening and expansion of the Network of Public Employment Services represents a major challenge for employment policies.
- **Argentina Trabaja** (implemented in 2010, currently active): This program (**Argentina work**) creates opportunities for inclusion allowing the improvement of the living standards of the families in their own neighbourhoods through the creation of jobs, through training and the promotion of cooperative organization for the implementation of infrastructure projects. The program is intended for people in vulnerable situations with no

⁷ Different assessments have concluded that the policy was properly focused, not only among lower income households but in the poorest regions of the country: 83 percent of the households that receive the AUH have household income that ranks them in the bottom 40 percent of the income distribution. In that sense the AUH has made up for deficiencies in the contributive system, in addition to having functioned as a countercyclical policy that helps families maintain at least a portion of family income in the down cycles of the labour market.

formal income in the household, neither national pension benefits nor other social programs, with the exception of National Plan of Food Security.

- **INTERZAFRA: (currently still active)** this program was created to address the improvement of employability and placement of unemployed workers in the productive chains of citrus and sugar, during the periods when seasonal activity is not performed. Also, rural workers receive a grant during this season.

As a part of Argentina's Employment Plan, the government launched a new program last August called PROEMPLEAR, aimed at modifying a set of existing actions and introducing new ones targeted at PROTECTING jobs, PROMOTING registered employment and FOSTERING the inclusion of workers in a precarious labour situation. One of the key points of the program is that it was designed based on the analysis of the Impact Assessments for each of the policies the Ministry had been implementing. This resulted in several recommendations to improve the coverage and efficacy of each program, at the same time that it allowed paying special attention to the need to generate comprehensive, holistic policy schemes that can jointly and systematically act to meet the different challenges presented by the current labour context.

This comprehensive and articulated system includes, on one side, changes in the REPRO (see section 1) with the main goal of preventing negative consequences for workers' living standards and the productive capacity of companies in periods of transitory of specific crisis. On the other hand, a real articulation between different active employment policies is fostered, especially for those targeting the most vulnerable sectors, especially youth and women.

The main changes in the REPRO, a program targeted at sustaining employment in companies undergoing difficult economic situations, are the following:

- Strengthening of the awareness raising for the policy and assistance on how it works for SMEs throughout the country.
- Extension of the validity of the benefit to 12 months.
- Increase of the fix monthly sum given to workers in adhering companies. The maximum value went from AR\$1,500 to AR\$2,000.
- Procedures of request assessment and benefit approval will be streamlined to shorten times and providing the program with greater efficiency.

The scheme of labour policies that are implemented or modified in each case to improve their effectiveness in terms of access to better job opportunities for the most vulnerable groups is formed by:

- **PROGRESAR:** the Government recently launched the "Plan Progresar", aimed at promoting the improvement of employability and the probability to find a registered job. The program encourages beneficiaries –young people who do not work, work informally or have a salary below the minimum wage– to complete their studies and/or their professional training, thus increasing their chances of productively entering the labour force. Young people receive a universal allowance of AR\$600. As a part of the recent modification of PROEMPLEAR, youth participating of the PROGRESAR plan can access internships in companies (see PIL and AET below) that help the development of specific skills on the job.
- **Programa de Inserción Laboral (PIL):** The program promotes the inclusion of unemployed workers in quality jobs through the implementation of economic incentives to companies that decide to increase staffing. Employers can subtract the economic incentive provided by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security of the employee's salary and pay the corresponding difference according to applicable regulations. This action is aimed at unemployed workers of the Youth with More and Better Jobs Program, of the Insurance of Training and Employment, of PROGRESAR Program, graduates of the Vocational Training Program, participants of Unemployment benefits Program, and other actions and programs of the Ministry, private sector and non-profit companies. Having seen that Impact Assessments have shown that this type of programs have a significant effect to improve labour insertion, their reach is intended to expand with the launching of the PROEMPLEAR program, targeted especially at youth enrolled at the PROGRESAR program with a total investment of AR\$ 150 million equivalent to US\$ 18 million for the second semester of 2014.

- **Acciones de Entrenamiento para el Trabajo (AET).** A job training is a practical learning process, with some theoretical aspects, which takes place in a company. Apprentices are guided by a coach in charge. This experience intends to provide Apprentices with tools to improve their performance in the labour world. This program has also shown a significant improvement in the impact assessment against other programs, especially in terms of access to formal jobs, reason for which its coverage was extended to also cover youth enrolled at the PROGRESAR program. The increase of the total investment for the second semester of 2014 is of AR\$ 450 million. (54 millionU\$S)

Policy measures targeting labour market disadvantage

The Ministry of Labour has also developed a specific policy called “Integrating”⁸, to improve the employability of disabled people, with the goal of ensuring equal opportunities. The policy was implemented with collaboration of governmental institutions and NGOs through the network of employment offices to ensure an optimum territorial coverage.

Since 2008, there have also been changes implemented in the programs of social assistance targeting the most vulnerable segments of the population. There have been significant increments in both the number of beneficiaries and the amounts of non-contributive pensions that beneficiaries receive, particularly among families with more than 7 children and to disabled persons. The number of disabled receiving transfers has increased by 166 percent between 2008 and 2012 (almost 500,000 persons). Similarly, transfers to families with more than 7 children increased by about 60 percent.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Training and employment active policies designed to develop skills were enhanced simultaneously, in order to improve work inclusion.

In this sense, the MTEySS has developed different lines of action over the years, which implementation has continued throughout the international crisis. People who qualified for assistance in entering the labour market were helped through the provision of Training and Employment Insurance (coordinated by the Ministry of Labour), through which they received training and job search support.

Continuous Training System: Coordination of this system relies on the dialogue between the social actors : the chamber of Commerce, companies, unions, workers and educational institutions; in order to make commitments related to strategic sectorial development and to define profiles and qualification levels required for every position. The Program of Quality Certification implemented in training institutions was performed by the Ministry of Labour. Within this structure, some of the most critical components of the system were set in motion:

- **Continuing Training Institutions Network:** through the implementation of plans to improve the quality of their services. Approximately 500 institutions were strengthened as part of this plan, and 44 implemented quality certification processes;
- **Tripartite Certification and Continuing Training Sectorial Council:** currently working with representative actors from approximately 40 productive sectors;
- **Work competence certification:** over 70,000 people have certified their skills through this process.

In late 2011, during the strategic programs of the government, the Ministry of Labour launched Argentina 2020, a strategic plan for ongoing training, innovation and employment, aimed at training human resources in order to increase competitiveness, incorporating the use of technology and universal access to them.

⁸ Through this program, the Ministry of Labour set and achieved a 4 percent goal for hiring of disabled men and women (of total personnel), while at the same time setting a reference point to be applied by the public and private sectors (Law 25,689).

School education

Argentina is characterized by universal primary school coverage, and in the last year was extended from preschool to high school (13 years mandatory). At the same time, coverage for 3 and 4 years old children was also increased last year.

In the educational sphere of the social protection system, the Ministry of Education launched the Plan to Complete Primary and Secondary Studies (Plan FINES) in 2008 (and currently active). Plan FINES provides tutors and teachers who guide students through the process of completing courses. Tutoring takes place in Plan FINES headquarters schools. It is a program of national scope, targeting adults and young adults who either did not begin or did not finish primary or secondary school. The program has provided support to 1.3 million people for primary or secondary education, of which over 400,000 completed their studies. More than 14,000 sites have been opened around the country, with 128,000 tutors.

Also in the educational arena, the Connect Equality Program (*Programa Conectar Igualdad*) was launched in 2010 (and is still active). This program seeks to strengthen the quality of education and equality in access to the information society through the distribution of 3.6 million laptop computers to students, teachers, and directors. The distribution of the netbooks is accompanied by the installation of servers and routers for the creation of school networks. The program is aimed at students and teachers in public schools, special education schools, and teacher training institutes. Up to 2013, 3.5 million laptops had been delivered, with the remaining laptops to be distributed by the end of the year.

Apprenticeships, vocational training and higher education

Youth with a future Program was launched in 2010 and is still active. It is part of the initiative for decent work promoted by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security (MTEySS) in the context of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). It consists of a qualifying internship, that, even if it cannot be similar to a job, it is perceived as an experience 'between school and work'. The Program includes an incentive to the completion of high school and provides hands-on knowledge in work-related skills.



4. Monitoring of commitments

Related to monitoring, we emphasize the importance of policy and employment programs evaluation. The continuous evaluation of results allows feedback to the original design of the policy. The main role of systematic evaluation is to analyse impact data and, if necessary, to make changes in public policies.

As we have mentioned, most of the Ministry of Labour's policies is permanent and statically evaluated to determine whether its goals were achieved. In relation to the results, the impact of the articulation of the different policies has in the formal insertion of workers in the market is also analysed.

In the case of the new PROEMPLEAR program, the result of this kind of assessments was used as a key input for their design. Amongst those of greater relevance, it is important to highlight:

- The **REPRO's** impact assessment shows that companies with access to REPRO showed a lower rate of layoffs (0.7%) than those companies of equal attributes but who did not take part of the program (layoff rate of 1.3%). The program has proven to be successful in diminishing the amount of lay-offs in periods of economic crisis.
- The impact assessment of the **professional training policies** showed that workers who took a professional training course have better chances (30% higher) of finding a job registered at the social security system than people of equal attributes who didn't take part of the policy. This evidences that professional training enhances insertion in the labour market.
- The impact assessment of the Training for Work program shows the effect that the Actions for Job Training (or AET) in private companies have on the probability of finding a registered job. Workers taking part of a professional training course have greater chances (13 p.p more) of finding a registered job than people with the same attributes who didn't take part of the policy. The policy acts as a traineeship (since it is a training at a company) and manages to increase the probabilities of finding a job.

Likewise, and taking into account the experience gained in previous years regarding the real importance of assessments for the monitoring and continuous improvement of implemented policies, the new programs making part of the Employment Plan of our country have a strong component of impact assessment and monitoring. The aim is essentially to strengthen the focus of the policies to the most vulnerable sectors of the population that have very specific problems.

www.oit.org.ar/WDMS/bib/publ/libros/macroeconomia_2012.pdf

http://www.trabajo.gob.ar/left/estadisticas/descargas/toe/toe_11_completo.pdf

