



SPACES FOR COMMITMENT: USING KNOWLEDGE TO IMPROVE PUBLIC POLICY IN FAVOUR OF THE POOR

Case Study

*“Impact of the scientific production of the Inter Trade Union Department
of Statistics and Socio-economic Studies (DIEESE) in implementing
specific public policy for the protection of the quality of employment by
Brazil’s Ministry of Labour”*

Final report

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THE CASE STUDY

1. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

1.1 Description of the origin of the Case Study. Who created it and what were the motives?

- **Project “Spaces for commitment: using knowledge in public policy in favour of the poor”**

The project “Spaces for commitment: using knowledge to improve public policy in favour of the poor” is a GDN initiative, implemented in Latin America by CIPPEC. The programme is based on the results of the consultation process prior to a workshop held in Buenos Aires in February 2008, and on different lessons learnt on the link between research and policy in the region.

Its main purpose is to use knowledge management to improve the link between research and policy (BRP or *Bridging Research and Policy*) in Latin America through the creation of a plural and active Community of Practice (CoP). The essential idea is to promote debate on how to strengthen BRP between civil society stakeholders that use research and evidence to influence public policy and policymakers interested in incorporating it into their policy decisions. By contributing to improve the form in which actors commit to each other, the project seeks to promote better interventions in the use of research in policy in order to ensure more effective public policy in favour of the region’s poor.

This initiative proposes that the various links between civil society actors and policy-makers be studied and promoted, bearing in mind the motivations, capacities, and constraints of each of them. In other words, it proposes to analyse the bridge between research and public policy as an integral whole (not focusing simply on supply - the research side-, or demand - the policy side). This is based on the belief that the use of research and evidence occurs by means of a dynamic process between both sectors, which assumes constant exchange, the creation and utilisation of diverse spaces of commitment, in a constant process of interaction.

Nevertheless, the relationship between civil society actors that produce information to influence public policy and policymakers is very complex. The nature of the relationship depends, to a large extent, on the specific subregions of Latin America and the Caribbean, and on the diverse topics covered by public policy. In order to circumscribe this broad and diverse relationship, the first invitation made by this project focuses on producing case studies on a particular topic: social policy (including poverty, vulnerability and exclusion) and a certain type of civil society actor: policy research institutes or *think tanks*.

1.2. Approaching the Case Study.

Since work as a fundamental right (that not only covers access to income, but is also a form of social insertion and personal realisation) and, particularly, decent work, are closely linked to the reduction of poverty and inequality. They should therefore be the epicentre of public policy in Latin America and the Caribbean, something which has been understood in

almost all the countries of the region, where the issue is generally part of the public policy agenda, but in which very different outcomes have been obtained.

It is highly recommendable that forms be found to promote the creation of an articulating axis of public, economic and social policies with evidence-based information management. Given the interesting outcome of the joint work experiences in Brazil between the Inter Trade Union Department of Statistics and Socio-economic Studies (DIEESE), with important, systematised technical-scientific production available for more widespread diffusion, and the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MTE), which occurs in a period of particular importance for social management in Brazil, this case study has as a general objective to identify the ends and means of these experiences.

In the course of the research, sufficient evidence emerged regarding the national and international credibility of DIEESE, which has become a reliable source of information for Brazil's Ministry of Labour since it is an institution that manages knowledge by working with methodological rigour, has a highly skilled and competent technical team, a clear identity and sense of belonging, but principally because it has voluntarily decided, as a directed and conscious fact, to work to make an impact in public policy in Brazil, choosing between the opportunities and alternatives open to it, and what it believes can and should be done to benefit a position and a commitment which are fully assumed and internalised. The organisational learning process in the DIEESE reveals *"the acquisition of new competences by the members who act as a collective in an organisation. This allows the organisation to provide a creative solution to problems"* (Bolívar, 2000) **(1)**

DIEESE's experience, its relationship with the MTE and the joint results achieved must be understood as a process, and the systemic approach must be used to analyse it. This will bring comprehension of both the dynamic of change which occurred internally and externally and, principally, the various influences of its temporal and spatial contexts on those changes.

Undoubtedly, the usefulness and impact potential of this experience may be important in the area of knowledge management in order to see the different levels and elements that make for a successful insertion of technical-scientific production in promoting evidence-based public policy.

However, and since the delicate network of ends and means is part of an absolutely unique human, spatial and temporal framework, this contribution seeks to make (and is content with) the presentation of a remarkable case that, in a profoundly human form, shows that the conjunction of collective intelligence, will and passion, coupled with shared and deeply-felt purposes, can lead to concrete and positive results.

2. INTRODUCTION

Managing knowledge in a broad context (such as the “Spaces for commitment: using knowledge in public policy in favour of the poor” project) or in a specific organisational framework such as the DIEESE, which is an example of “good practice”, and to do so in the “information society”, as conceptualised by Manuel Castells in 1998 in his *The Information Age*, implies interacting within a “new technological, economic and social system; and an economy in which increased productivity does not depend on a quantitative increase in the factors of production (capital, labour, natural resources) but on the application of knowledge and information in management, production and distribution, both in the processes and in the products”, and becomes a multidimensional challenge.

Besides having had to overcome various myths as to what knowledge management is according to information gathered on the concept¹ (InWent, 2003) (2) and being profoundly involved in an issue as complex as labour, the DIEESE, the target of this study, has consolidated itself as a “**learning organisation**” (understood as one that has managed to develop in its core structures and strategies that increase and maximise organisational learning, and one that has structural conditions, such as “climate” and “culture”, which facilitate or foster it, based on team work, information flows in multiple directions, organisational transformation processes, etc.) and that is one of the most interesting motives for this investigation. The other, more fundamental, is how the DIEESE was able to use that learning to act, in the full sense of the term, and thus impact on its own reality and on that of the society of which it forms part.

¹ Thomas Davenport (10 Principles of Knowledge Management and four case studies, 1997) Yogesh Malhotra (Knowledge Management for the *New World* of Business, 1998) and Carol Hildebrand (Intellectual Capitalism, 1999) mention some of the myths associated with the topic, e.g., that managing is merely a question of systematising and automatising; it implies considerable cost; it is a problem of collecting and storing information, or that knowledge management means getting the right information to the right person at the right time (which is impossible in a dynamic reality). Knowledge management is, in fact, “an integral and holistic concept that includes psychological, organisational and technological factors to guarantee the effective mobilisation and transfer of knowledge” (Norbert Wilkens, 1998).

3. GENERAL CHARACTERISATION OF THE EXPERIENCE STUDIED: THE TOPIC OF WORK AS A SPECIFIC AREA OF PUBLIC POLICY IN THE CASE STUDY.

3.1 Employment overview in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the question of work, an important reference framework in the region is the document “Employment Overview in Latin America and the Caribbean” (ILO, 2006) (3), which claims that poverty and income inequality are pressing problems in Latin America and the Caribbean, the region of the world with the greatest income inequality. This document also says that “...the insufficient progress on the road towards the goal of reducing the percentage of poor population has been explained by stressing the weak and volatile economic growth of the region since 1990, aggravated by the profound initial inequality in income distribution...” Both factors, poverty and income inequality, are very closely linked to the quantity and quality of the employment created.

One element that leads to income differences is the level of different qualifications of human capital (skilled and unskilled labour), a fall in which is deemed to be of extreme importance. Therefore, social and professional qualifications (which we shall touch on several times below), is a means of achieving a reduction in the income gap. In terms of suitable mechanisms to foster policies and agreements promoting substantial improvements in the matter, the ILO encourages **social dialogue and collective bargaining** between the social actors, which, as we shall see, have become the field of work *par excellence* of the DIEESE.

Finally, the interest and awareness of the importance of “decent work” in achieving socially just and sustainable development, both worldwide and in Latin America and the Caribbean, is a recent development. The outcome documents of the 2005 World Summit, held during the 60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2005, said that the objectives of full employment and decent work had been given priority on the UN Development Agenda. The promotion of decent work is an implicit slogan in the mission of DIEESE, which even made an effective contribution to defining the concept, hence the importance of its contributions, not only in knowledge production but also in how it was able to insert it in the implementation or modification cycle of public policy on employment in Brazil.

3.2 Decent work in the Americas: a hemispheric agenda for 2006-2015.

In the Director General’s introduction document to the 96th International Labour Conference held in Geneva in 2007 (4) mention was made of four important issues that should serve as a guide to formulate the organisation’s policies and boost its institutional capacity:

- Globalisation and the transformation of the investment and employment structures.
- Work and society: combating poverty, discrimination and social exclusion.
- Modernising governance in the world of work.
- Decent work and the international development agenda.

In addition, it indicated that in order to enhance policy elaboration and reach the objectives of decent work a solid base would be required of information and knowledge that will allow the evolution of the labour market to be traced and observed. The document concluded that: “faith in market magic dissipated as soon as it was understood that in order for that market to function without distortions and in order to reestablish a balance between unequal social results efficient States are needed. Sustainable development, which rests on three fundamental values (economic and social development, and environmental protection), requires the presence of an effective welfare state and dynamic tripartism. However, globalisation poses new difficulties that require adapted responses and a strengthening of the systems of governance in the ILO and in its resource base.”

It is precisely on this kind of information and knowledge base (that allows the evolution of the labour market to be traced and observed) and on tripartism that the DIEESE has worked systematically and methodically all these years.

The “ILO Programme and Budget for 2006-2007” (ILO, 2005) (5) focused on four strategic objectives and five transversal objectives geared to generating “decent work,” a concept introduced by Juan Somavia (First Director General of the International Labour Organisation and from the Southern Hemisphere) in 1999, characterised by four strategic objectives: labour rights, employment opportunities, social protection and social dialogue, in which each one also fulfils a function in meeting broader goals such as social inclusion, the eradication of poverty, the strengthening of democracy, integral development and personal realisation (ILO, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2004) (6). All are universally valid although, as in the case of the Americas, in each country certain nuances were adopted and adapted to the specificities and particularities of the area.

The first strategic objective was to comply with regulations on labour law and, very especially, on the principles and fundamental rights at work. This is a central objective of the policy on creating decent work. The second strategic objective, which was awarded maximum priority, was the creation of more work opportunities for men and women. The third strategic objective was social protection, since the social security systems, both in the field of health and in that of retirement and pension plans, frequently suffers management problems and, very especially, low coverage. The fourth strategic objective was the promotion of social dialogue and the strengthening of the social actors organisations intervening in it.

Articulating policies and achieving the objectives described involve a large number of actions and social actors under the assumption that they must act synergic ally.

3.3 Decent work in Brazil. Public policy and actions.

Social and professional qualification is one of the issues to which attention must be paid in articulating social dialogue, because it is a necessary element in defining the labour relations models mentioned above.

Brazil’s Ministry of Labour and Employment drew up a public policy on professional qualification, which faced the challenge of adopting a new perspective as an effect of the guidelines of the new Pluriannual Plan (PPA) for the period 2004-2007, which aimed at a

long-term development model, beyond 2007, designed to promote deep structural transformations in Brazilian society.

One of the biggest differences that sets this proposal apart from previous approaches was that it extended the participation of society in the construction of the PPA. It should also be mentioned that in the state context in Brazil there has been great progress in terms of constructing a social dialogue that conquers ever more space. The greatest convergence of the work undertaken by the MTE and the DIEESE is explained by the agreement on topics for the agendas and by the conditions of the political and social scenario.

On the other hand, and despite the data gathered for this Case Study, in Brazil there are other more advanced experiences in this field (the broad participation of various social actors), such as that of the Committee of Entities Against Hunger and For Life (COEP), which established a network formed by a group of Brazilian state enterprises that sought a point of convergence of the efforts to combat the situation of poverty in the country. As time passed, the network grew so much that it integrated government bodies, private enterprises and other civil society bodies; and this expansion transformed its original structure and led to a complex management model as a result.

In the document that systematises the experience (Fleury, Migueletto & Bloch) (7) we find the following comment, which can help to better shape the social context that surrounds these experiences: *"...The COEP is the expression of several of the paradoxes that characterise Brazilian society, such as the mobilisation of the most advanced sector of State capitalism, promotor of industrial development in this country which is responsible for a considerable part of the gross domestic product (GDP), in combating hunger and extending citizenship, to those who are excluded by that same process of growth without distribution. But, even in Brazil, where the State has always remained separate from the Nation, the COEP was born out of a civil society mobilisation campaign against hunger and for citizenship, unprecedented in the history of the country. Another paradox may be found in the search for a public identity by state companies, which in previous years had largely adopted the organisational forms, culture and competitive strategies of the market".* National Agenda for Decent Work (ANTD) in Brazil.

According to the ILO, decent work is a fundamental condition for overcoming poverty, reducing social inequalities, and guaranteeing democratic governance and sustainable development. The concept of decent work used by the National Agenda for Decent Work in Brazil is the same as that proposed by the international organisation, i.e., : "adequately paid work carried out in conditions of freedom, equity and security to guarantee a decent life."

On the MTE web page it can be seen that the promotion of decent work in Brazil became a commitment assumed between the Brazilian Government and the ILO in June 2003, with the commitment of the President of the Republic, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and of the Director General of the ILO, Juan Somavia, through a Memorandum of Understanding that provides for the establishment of a Special Programme of Technical Cooperation for the promotion of a National Agenda for Decent Work, in consultation with employers and workers organisations.

According to the information gathered, the MTE and the ILO are undertaking a project which in one of its phases recently involved the DIEESE in advising and carrying out work

on domestic employment in which close to 10 million female workers are negaged in Brazil. This surpasses professional qualification, and has produced legislation and fruitful discussion on the subject, using data gathered, systematized and included in the Employment and Unemployment Survey (PED), which is one of the most consolidated of DIEESE's products.

On the same topic, Sirlei Marcia de Oliveira, Technical Projects Supervisor of DIEESE, says that although the DIEESE has no direct or central participation in this process, it produced a very complete set of information on the labour force in an attempt to identify its principal problems related to the need of formalisation and the right to a Guarantee Fund for Length of Service which, considering the number of female workers involved, has enormous economic implications.

The Guarantee Fund for Length of Service was set up by Law No. 5107 of 13/09/66. The law was enforced by Decree No. 59,820 of 20/12/66 which established the payment of monthly deposits, made by companies on behalf of their employees, to a value equivalent to 8% of wages paid. In the case of a temporary contract of fixed-term work, the percentage is 2%, according to the provisions of paragraph II, Article 2 of Law No. 9601 dated 21/01/98. At present the Law that governs the Guarantee Fund for length of service is No. 8036 of 11/05/90 republished with several alterations on 14/05/90. This Fund is made up of a sum of Money which is available for retirement ora t the death of a worker and is a compensation guarantee for length of service, in cases of unfair dismissal.

As a result, the importance of DIEESE's contribution can also be inferred in terms of the value of the figures and data in processes of this nature.

3.4 Importance of professional qualification in the creation of decent work.

"There is no decent work without health, security, higiene and continuous professional training, because education is a factor that helps all society become aware of the need to formulate active prevention policies that are planned with the participation of the social actors". (Babace, 2001) (8)

The fight for the professional qualification of workers has always been one of the historical banners of the trade union movement. Its origin was marked by demands for a certain kind of (professional) education which was essential for the industrial worker, who needed a qualification in a determined profession as a substitute for the arts and crafts of the former artisans. Since then, the preparation for work has been a focus of trade union action in different countries with varying types and levels of intervention (DIEESE, 1998).

At the end of the 18th century and throughout the 19th, workers' demands reflected their desire to learn about new techniques and knowledge, as a result of the transformations imposed on the crafts and professions by the introduction of machinery and the emergence of heavy industry under the auspices of capitalism.

According to Manfredi (2002: 51), as an institution whose function in the current social imagery is to prepare the young person for entry into the labour market, school does not emerge historically linked to training for work but to "prepare select groups of persons for the exercise of leadership, power and social management." (DIEESE, 2007) (9)

Even though this concept of decent work is still being constructed, it is recognised as having a profound ethical content characterised as highlighting the importance of workers' rights and the quality of working conditions. Professional qualification, meanwhile, is upheld as a fundamental right of workers and training is recognised as a factor of employability, in the advent of a knowledge society. Therefore, it is an essential part of decent work. It is an economic instrument that forms part of employment policies and of companies' productivity and competitiveness strategies.

The relationship between professional training and social protection has been highlighted by European trade unions and included in ILO documents as the need to promote continuous education for those who run the risk of being excluded by the growth of the information society.

At present, there is a tendency to prioritise the interlinkage between these concepts since a connection is apparent between decent work, occupational health and professional training. This is not only because there is no decent work without health, security, hygiene and continuous professional training, but also because education is a factor that helps raise awareness within society as a whole as to the need to formulate active prevention policies that are planned with the participation of social actors (Babace, 2001).

On various opportunities the joint work between the DIEESE and the MTE has targeted social and professional qualification. Four projects were carried out and they began with the diagnoses made and identified a demand for professional qualification in the Sectoral Development Plans (PlanSeQs).

The four case studies are on the plastics production chain in São Paulo (which has reached a high degree of development and could be positively assessed thanks to its integral approach and the quality of training given); the trade sector in Porto Alegre; the fruit-growing sector in Valle de San Francisco, and the private surveillance sector in the Federal District. Each party addressed within these projects considered participatory construction among the workers, entrepreneurs and public administrators representative bodies.

Identification of institutional synergy in Brazil for professional qualification and the promotion of decent work.

With the advent of democracy in Brazil in the 1990s, there was increased workers participation in institutional, usually tripartite, spaces (according to the model of the International Labour Organisation) which were open to negotiation inside the state system.

From the perspective of the information collected inside the DIEESE, the Government began to attach growing importance to the issue of employment and workers, and the experience of producing reliable information and participatory diagnoses based on social dialogue, which permitted an alignment of the actions of both institutions.

However, it should not be forgotten that at the heart of the Lula government's programme is the so-called "social question", designed to generate a new development model based on growth in employment, the generation and distribution of income and social inclusion (Workers' Party, 2002) **(10)**

Resting on a very broad political coalition, with a strategy that at times adopts populist traits, Brazil's current president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, has deepened the liberal hegemonic cycle initiated by his predecessor, giving it its own particular tone. The specific characteristics of the Lula government can only be understood in the framework of the construction process of a new form of State initiated in 1995, with the accession of Fernando Henrique Cardoso as president.

After a long political transition between 1983 and 1994, that new form of State substituted the old State of the Vargas years (1930-1982), which excluded autonomous popular participation from political life, even during its democratic periods, and which was predominantly autarchic and development-oriented in its relationship with the economy. Unlike the Brazil of Vargas, the new State is democratic in its relations with society and moderately liberal from the point of view of its relations with the economy.

The new model has two central pillars. On one hand, the Democratic Constitution of 1988, which guaranteed political and social rights; and on the other, the Real Stabilisation Plan launched in 1994 and the set of liberal reforms implemented during the Cardoso administrations, principally the first. Although distant in time, these pillars are articulated: the 1988 Constitution had set the rules and guarantees of Brazilian democracy before the start of the Real Plan and the Cardoso reforms, but without achieving economic stability. Later, the stabilisation of the currency brought peace to the population and contributed to reconciling it with the Rule of Law, while the liberalising reforms succeeded in leaving behind the bitter controversies and conflicts on statism. (Sallum, 2008) (11)

It is in this context that the joint work between the DIEESE and the MTE on issues such as the Employment and Unemployment Survey (PED) and Social and Professional Qualification, stands out along with the internal and external recognition of DIEESE as a significant social actor and an institution of public utility for Brazil.

3.5 The Inter Trade Union Department of Studies and Socioeconomic Statistics (DIEESE)².

"The DIEESE is a unitary organ of the Brazilian trade union movement engaged in the production and diffusion of knowledge and information on labour, in a multidisciplinary context. It has as an instrument of analysis the scientific method, and is at the service of the interests of the working class, despite the diversity of union positions and approaches" (DIEESE, 1955) (12)

The Department was founded on 22 December 1955 to conduct research to justify workers' demands. At present it has 262 officials (between the technical and administrative teams, and over 200 high-level technical professionals) and 521 affiliated union bodies throughout Brazil.

Its members are legal, not natural persons. The DIEESE supports the trade union movement without having direct representation in it. It thus has no autonomous mandate and its actions are not neutral, because the institution exists to produce information and

² For further information, see: www.dieese.org.br.

knowledge on the basis of the scientific method and on the basis of state-of-the-art science, but with the specific finality of subsidising the trade union movement.

Throughout its 50 years of history the institution has won credibility both nationally and internationally (it is recognised by multi- and bilateral bodies that have even funded some of its projects) and it is recognised as an institution of technical-scientific production. It acts in the areas of consultancy, research and education.

The key areas that orient all the body's production and that structure its knowledge production are: employment, income, negotiation of collective labour agreements, public policy and development. The last two issues have been incorporated in the last four years. This enlargement of spheres of action and issues occurs because that is where the sphere of action of the trade union movement has expanded.

To further the studies related to its thematic axes, besides the work usually done for the trade union movement, the DIEESE carries out projects in association with government bodies and civil society bodies, whether national or international.

The DIEESE was born as a body to produce information and to advise the trade union movement. However, over time, when those responsible began to perceive that not only must they produce information, but they must also allow individuals access to it, then training processes were also included.

Training and consultancy spaces, on the other hand, are also spaces of knowledge construction, because each project is an important source of information that is systematised and integrated into the bases that already exist. The DIEESE is characterised by collective knowledge construction.

3.6 The Ministry of Labour and Employment of Brazil.

The history of the MTE began in 1912 when the Brazilian Labour Confederation (CBT) was formed at the Fourth Brazilian Workers Congress, held between 7 and 15 November. The function of this Confederation was to promote a long-term programme of workers' claims, such as an eight-hour working day, a six-day week, construction of housing for workers, compensation for work accidents, restrictions on the length of the working day for girls under the age of 14, collective contracts to substitute individual contracts, compulsory sickness insurance, old-age pension, a minimum salary, reform of public taxes and compulsory primary instruction. The regulation of the labour organisation in Brazil was entrusted to the National Labour Department, created in 1918.

The Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce was created on 26 November 1930, by Decree No. 19,433 issued by the then president, Getúlio Vargas. This institution changed its name and organisational structure several times (Ministry of Labour and Social Provision, simply Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Labour and Federal Administration, etc.) until finally, in 1999, it received the name Ministry of Labour and Employment, as it is now known.

The MTE has different commissions and councils (Commission of Sectoral Ethics, Executor Council of the Guarantee Fund for Length of Service, Deliberative Council of the Workers' Protection Fund, National Council for Economic Solidarity, National Immigration Council) and administers the Public System of Employment, Labour and Income. It is

responsible for inspecting work practices, with the mission of combating slave labour, child labour, inspect and guarantee safety and health at work. It also has a National Secretariat of Economic Solidarity that is implementing a Programme of Economic Solidarity and has a National Information System on Economic Solidarity.

As regards labour relations, this government body looks after assistance and ratification of cancellation of work contracts, mediation, register of collective labour conventions and agreements, domestic and temporary work, combating discrimination at work, and union contributions. It also has a Prior Conciliation Commission and a National Register of trade union bodies.

Since one of the priorities of the present Government is trade union and labour reform, a National Labour Forum (FNT) coordinated by the Secretariat of Labour Relations was set up in 2003. It is worth discussing this in a little more depth.

The National Labour Forum and the intervention of DIEESE.

Around 600 workers, government and employers representatives participated in the National Labour Forum. Its objective was to promote the democratisation of labour relations by adopting a model of trade union organisation based on freedom and autonomy.

Clemente G. Lucio, technical director of the DIEESE since 2003, claims that the participation of this organisation was designed to support the work of articulation of union organisations and offer them advice. It was supposed to organise and prepare the participation of groups of workers to meet, discuss and draw up proposals. The DIEESE carried out this support work during and after the Forum, which was held in 2004 and 2005, understanding that what the Government was seeking was to organise an agenda of discussions and, hence, develop a proposal to implement a new model or system of labour relations in Brazil.

In the Forum a proposal was drawn up to determine how to structure the trade union representation of workers and employers, the funding mechanisms of the union structure, how to project the relationship between employers and workers, how to handle and settle conflicts principally concerning collective negotiations and strikes, the bases for regulating the right to strike, how to establish the right of organisation in the workplace -another important debate within the trade union movement resisted by employers-, and how the system of labour relations in Brazil would be permanently updated by a National Labour Relations Council.

The proposal is currently in the National Congress as a draft bill drawn up with broad participation of workers, employers and government administrators. Although it is not an ideal bill and does not contain what each of the parties broadly proposed, its main merit is that it allows a certain degree of agreement.

The National Labour Forum has articulated a true system of labour relations, which goes beyond simple union reforms and mobilises many opposing interests. For that reason, approval may take years or even decades (because there will always be observations made by the parties). However, it is evident that the work already undertaken is an important step in the search to update labour legislation and ensure that it is more compatible with the new

demands of national development, in such a way as to secure a suitable environment for generating employment and income; and to modernise the institutions of labour regulation, especially justice at work and the Ministry of Labour and Employment, stimulating dialogue and tripartism to ensure social justice.

The conclusions of the National Labour Forum were sent to Congress, but were not seen as a priority, because there were divergences regarding the project, resistance by the business sector, etc. Another of its merits was that it showed the MTE's capacity to conduct a project democratically, listening to all parties and recognising trade union bodies.

3.7 The relationship between DIEESE and the Ministry of Labour in Brazil. Agreements and projects (2004/2007.)

The projects drawn up by the DIEESE, which have produced several inter-institutional agreements with the Ministry of Labour (2004-2007), cover the following:

"Perfecting the PED system and designing new indicators and surveys". Agreement MTE/SPPE/CODEFAT No. 098/2005 and First Additional Term (2005/2006). Validity: Agreement: 26/Dec/2005 to 6/Dec/2006 Additional: 26/Dec/2006 to 30/April/2007 (*)

Objective A: Provide permanent technical assistance for regional research work.

Objective B: Perfect the monthly disclosure of the PED System.

Objective C: Construct the policy of access and availability to PED indicators and microdata.

Objective D: Incorporate the Monthly Occupation and Unemployment Survey (PMOD) into the PED System.

Objective E: Institutional articulation and management of the PED System.

Objective F: Pilot research in special areas with PED methodology.

"Development of methodologies for the construction of diagnoses, methodologies for drawing up proposals of a social and economic nature and methodologies for social qualification". Agreement MTE/SPPE/ CODEFAT N° 163/2004 (2004/2005). Validity: 16/12/2004 to 31/12/2005 (*)

General objective: The project "Development of methodologies for the construction of diagnoses, methodologies for drawing up proposals of a social and economic nature and methodologies for social qualification" has as its principal axis of action the construction of instruments to subsidise the qualified intervention of social actors and/or groups in spaces and issues considered essential for a process of sustainable development. The general objective of this project is the construction of instruments for social dialogue and joint work, targeting social groups or actors that perform actions in areas and issues that demand this kind of qualification.

Subproject I: Development of a training programme for members of trade union councils of regional labour delegations.

Subproject II: Development of a methodology of diagnosis and drawing up of proposals on the labour market and professional qualification across the country and in production chains.

Subproject III: Professional qualification: a new space for negotiation.

Subproject IV: Statistics Yearbook subsidies for social dialogue.

Subproject V: Development of a training methodology for union leaders and production of studies on the competitiveness of production chains in Competitiveness Forums: a production chain in the plastic transformation industry.

“New trends in the socioeconomic, political and cultural dynamic in the reality of the north-east region”. Contract N° 001/2006 (Agreement MTE/SPPE/CODEFAT n 081/2005). Validity: 25/08/06 to 30/11/06. (*)

General objective: Preparation of four Case Studies to provide knowledge of new trends in the socioeconomic, political and cultural dynamic in the north-east region, stressing the changes in the world of work and in the demands and needs for professional qualification.

“Social qualification for action by individuals or social groups in collective bargaining and in the management of public policy”. Agreement MTE/SPPE/CODEFAT - 075/2005 and Primeiro Termo Aditivo (2005/2007). Validity: 22/12/2005 to 31/12/2007. (*)

General objective: Exercise of social dialogue, of participation in government councils and of collective bargaining.

Subproject I: Extension and diffusion of the training programme for members of union councils in regional labour delegations.

Subproject II: Professional qualification: publishing and production of the kit and of the pilot experience on negotiating professional qualification.

Subproject III: Yearbook of Social and Professional Qualification 2006.

Subproject IV: Workers Yearbook 2006 with historical series: regular information for social dialogue.

Subproject V: Consultancy in preparing and implementing sectoral qualification plans - PLANSEQs in the plastics production chain in the State of São Paulo and in the local production agreement on irrigated fruitgrowing in the lower and middle San Francisco.

Subproject VI: Construction of a proposal to institutionalise the continuous training of workers in questions concerning the world of work.

Subproject VII: Training of counsellors on the Public Employment System.

(*) The full text of products delivered is available on the page www.dieese.org.br.

3.8 Origins of the DIEESE/MTE relationship and current situation

The production of the DIEESE in the period 2004-2007 in projects entrusted to it by the MTE was more prolific in the later years, but it is important to note that the relationship had already been in existence for a long time and was constructed on the strong relation of both

institutions in the same subject area: employment (although DIEESE's point of view focuses strongly on trade union representation).

The relationship between DIEESE and MTE dates back to the 1960s and 1970s, but became deeper and stronger with the appointment of the first Labour Minister after the dictatorship, Almir Pazzaniotto, a great lawyer specialising in labour rights, currently Minister of the Superior Tribunal of Labour, and who was a lawyer for the chemical workers and the metal workers trade union, among others. The relationship was strengthened after one of the most important historical milestones of the DIEESE was reached, the implementation of the Training Programme for Union Leaders and Advisors (PCDA) (see: Milestones).

The functions of the DIEESE vary in the different joint projects, but they are principally geared to accompanying processes by means of the provision of data and relevant information, consultancy and training of workers in a bid to authorise them to take part in social dialogue on issues that interest them.

On the subject of professional qualification in the PlanSeQs, for example, the DIEESE does not participate directly in the professional qualification plans, but rather in a stage prior to them. Its actions consist in preparing diagnoses on the labour market and, in some cases, in consultancy, preparation and implementation of the PlanSeQs. In general, the plans are prepared in the localities (municipalities or States) and are then channelled to the government.

In general it can be said that both for the PlanSeQs and for the Territorial Plans (PlanTeQs) DIEESE's contribution stems principally from the two projects on which it works together with the MTE. One of them is a project for preparing a methodology by DIEESE to make diagnoses on the labour market of a determined sector.

The added value of this methodology, which has become a reference in the issue, is that it was devised to include the participation of the principal social actors of the sector to be analysed. There is real concern that the actors themselves should participate and offer their perspective in the construction of knowledge on the labour market for the sector in which a plan of government intervention will subsequently be built.

Four cases have so far been worked on under the PlanSeQs. In two of them (commercial sector in Porto Alegre and the plastics industry sector in São Paulo), the diagnosis construction project had continuity with the construction of PlanSeQs, which likewise were prepared in a participatory fashion between the representations of workers, entrepreneurs and also public administrators. DIEESE's work on articulating these actors is most significant since it also has an advisory function to the trade union movement on negotiating the Plan. The plans are subsequently channelled to the Federal Government, and their implementation is requested. The DIEESE only participated in assessing the plan for the plastics sector.

The other DIEESE project with the MTE which impacts on government intervention plans is the training project for members of the Municipal Commissions on Employment and Income. These commissions have existed since the 1990s, but the DIEESE was recently called upon to train its members when it became evident that its exact role, and where the required information could be found for it to carry out its work, were not clear.

The DIEESE designed a course which deals with the role of the commissions and tripartite spaces; training is given in seeking information and planning actions. Many of those commissions drew up PlanTeQs, and so, indirectly, the DIEESE has participated in them, subsidising as ever the actions of the trade union movement.

3.9 Endogenous factors that furthered the influence of knowledge and research in the policy process for professional qualification.

The DIEESE, a learning organisation.

One of the main strengths of the DIEESE, and a very important contribution to Brazilian society, is its capacity to promote and support the construction of social dialogue, providing technical and scientific knowledge. This can be seen in the great quantity of institutions and persons involved in the different projects it develops, and in the concrete results of its research that originate the “knowledge products” which it has managed to deliver to society, particularly, to the workers.

The history of the DIEESE officially began on 22 December 1955, when a group of 20 trade union leaders from São Paulo, who had already held a series of joint mobilisations under the Pact for Interunion Unity (PUI), decided to build a body specifically for workers not included in the trade union structure, for the purpose of producing data as the basis for negotiations with employers. At that time, the unions believed that the official inflation figures were being manipulated, and wanted a reliable index for the working class.

Even if the reasons that motivated the founding of the DIEESE are still valid today, the study object of the entity took on new angles, accompanying the social and economic changes which have occurred in Brazil in the last 50 years. At the outset, the principal objective of the institution was to produce an index that would allow price fluctuations to be assessed in order to contrast them with official data during the campaigns to readjust the data base. At present, its activity is totally diversified with the labour market, technological development, income distribution, category profiles, mobilisations and achievements for the workers, work process and training of union leaders, all forming part of today’s DIEESE. (DIEESE, 2007) (13)

Something remarkable in the DIEESE is a very strong sense of cohesion in the specific requirements of the trade unions in the struggle for workers claims. The first characteristic emerging from the research has to do with the organisation’s identity, which has always been linked with the trade union movement and its demands; and with a strong sense and unity of shared purpose. The trade unions are partners of DIEESE, and it was they who founded it and who keep it functioning and to whom the institution owes its existence.

Another important characteristic observed is the interunion nature of the institution (which has partners of different political tendencies, with different conceptions of the world and varying “party colours”) which has led to a specialisation of its work with diversity and divergence to develop processes whose outcome is collective knowledge production and/or participatory agreements.

Another important detail of DIEESE organisation is that it has double direction. On one hand is the Union Directorate and on the other the Technical Directorate. The former is in fact

the political directorate of the organisation and also its legal authority. It decides which projects will be carried out, and which offers will be accepted or rejected. This is a particularity of this body: it never carries out any work which, in principle, could be thought to act against the interests of the workers. No project is approved if it is not deemed relevant by the Union Directorate.

So, the DIEESE exists and sees its role as producing knowledge by and for the workers. As regards its culture and organisational atmosphere, the awareness and the pride at being at the service of the trade union movement are clear to see.

It is also interesting to observe the interaction and interdependence of the Union and Technical Directorates. The former manages and organises the strategic processes, while the latter is responsible for the operating processes. Although the Technical Directorate depends on the Union or Political Directorate, both can be said to see themselves as essential for the harmonious functioning of the organisation and they have managed to develop a system of effective incentives to make the technical team highly skilled and to keep it updated.

There are investments and stimuli for masters and PhD studies, because this is felt to be an investment in promoting the quality of the work done by the institution.

Thanks to this background and capacity to respond to manifest needs linked to the central subject of its work, it can be claimed, without a doubt, that the DIEESE has the characteristics of a **learning organisation** whose development is the product of triple-loop learning, on the basis of which the organisation promotes its full restructuring, as a consequence of the reconsideration of its identity and *raison d'être*.

In an age which is characterised by constant change, it should not be ignored that organisational learning is the main tool of knowledge management and that triple-loop learning is part of the process that allows organisations to “learn to learn” (the only thing that ensures a maximum degree of proactivity, since by triggering increased learning potential, it guarantees their continuous renewal and development and, therefore, their survival and growth. The organisation promotes its own continuous movement.

According to Peter Senge (1992) (14), a learning organisation is able to see the future in relation to the present, to institutionalise processes of reflection-in-action, which it plans and sees as an opportunity to learn. Such organisations learn from each other as they develop and thus achieve meta-learning: they learn to learn. A learning organisation acquires the ability to “transform itself” through an alteration in its way of doing and its collective results, and due to the interaction of the members that belong to it.

The DIEESE transformation process, the evolution and refinement of its form of learning can be observed in its gradual but constant growth represented by the following milestones:

1955:

- **After a period of union struggles (strike of the 300,000), the DIEESE is founded by 18 trade unions of different political and ideological orientations, as an organisation to talk to Government and society on the cost of living in Brazil.**

1964:

- **True to its cause, the DIEESE continues to work in secret** after it is closed for several months by the military dictatorship.

1970s:

- **The DIEESE decides to invest in and tackle the problem of education** with an approach on training teachers at the end of the dictatorship.
- **The DIEESE responds to a need linked to the objective for which it was set up but, due to an identified need, acts on a different level to that initially foreseen and gains visibility.** This is evident because, due to distrust over the official inflation figures in the country, the DIEESE prepares a dossier on manipulation of the inflation index and publishes its own figures. It thus gains visibility in society because it has exposed the official index. This led to a workers' mobilisation demanding recovery of wage levels. The manipulation of the 1973 and 1974 figures was acknowledged even by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It thus becomes a reference organisation for the cost of living index, the base of the campaign for wage increases. The figure of Lula emerges as a great trade union leader in San Bernardo along with other leaders such as Mengheli and Vincentinho. Lula refuted the data of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and became a reference in the matter.
- **The DIEESE takes on a management role within the trade union movement.** Both the trade union movement and the DIEESE survived the dictatorship with great difficulty, but had already begun to train union leaders (in secret) to fight, not only against the authoritarian situation of the country, but also against the transformation of capitalism and labour relations. These training efforts led to the creation of the DIEESE's Trade Union School, which operated from 1980 to the beginning of the 1990s.
- **The DIEESE begins to act as articulator of a still precarious social dialogue.** In this period it becomes prominent as an interlocutor between trade unions, because at the time unions were not banned from forming Union Organisations (CUT, the first trade union organisation in Brazil, dates from 1983).

1980s:

- **The DIEESE increases its geographical coverage and its spheres of action.** A moment of rapid expansion as a result of the expansion of the trade union movement. A time of democratic restructuring in the country, which facilitated the expansion of the DIEESE and the creation of regional offices of the institution. It becomes a national institution.
- **The DIEESE conducts research into the Life and Employment Register and the Family Budget Survey** and thus resumes calculating the Cost of Living Index.
- **The DIEESE focuses its role on the union movement in specific fields,** such as Formation of a Trade Union School, where the dialectic method and its application

in concrete cases, such as worker's pay and the Constitutional Convention, were studied.

- **The DIEESE acts as an articulator of the trade union movement.** Pre-Constitutional Convention: the DIEESE trains and subsidises the unionists in their demands for a Constitutional Convention.
- **The DIEESE assumes an active role in central discussions of national interests.** The Technical Directorate of the DIEESE in the Commission of Notable Figures called to discuss the new Constitution also participates.
- **The DIEESE contextualises and designs methodologies, adapting instruments for the reality in which it is to act.** In 1985, the Employment and Unemployment Survey (PED, *Pesquisa de Emprego e Desemprego*) is launched. A process of dispute and denunciation begins on how employment indices should be prepared in Brazil. The DIEESE creates an appropriate methodology for observing the Brazilian labour market, with the aim of revealing hidden unemployment in the country. Until then research on employment was carried out on the basis of a methodology applicable to European countries. This research was funded by the State of São Paulo and was also conducted by the SEADE, a foundation from the same State. As of the 1990s, it was funded by the MTE with resources from the Workers' Protection Fund. Currently, it is administered nationally with over 12 institutions involved in managing the PED system in seven regions.

1990s:

- **The DIEESE boosts its role as a guide for the trade union movement, extends its actions to authorising actors to construct social dialogue in issues inherent to the demand for workers rights.** The Fernando Collor de Melo government opens up the country to imports and there is great concern, both in the Government and among entrepreneurs, over how to face international competition. The (Government) Assessment Commission on Labour and Employment in Brazil is created, and gives rise to the Brazilian Programme of Quality and Productivity (PBPO). Workers identify the need for training in order to discuss the issues of restructuring production.
- **The DIEESE trains its team internally** while producing kits (documents created for programme implementation, with basic material for the development of training courses), another consolidated product of the institution. Research was done with the trade union movement and 20 priority topics were identified for collective bargaining.

1994:

- **The DIEESE begins the Qualification Programme for Union Leaders and Advisors (PCDA),** which exists until 2002. The programme trained over 4000 workers to discuss the topic of restructuring production, new labour relations, etc., as a sort of high-level academic specialisation. The project was funded by the

Ministry of Science and Technology and the MTE, with which it began to intensify relations. This was prior to the Government of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

- Creation of a network of leaders, several of whom subsequently became public administrators. This was the first time that the unions had worked together and they succeeded in making a much broader situation diagnosis, promoting reflection on the role of current public policy. It is important to mention that at first DIEESE technicians themselves took part in the programme along with union members because the issues discussed were new for society. This dynamic remains the same: the new challenges in the labour market for workers, for instance, and participation in defining public policy, become a challenge for DIEESE technical experts.

The DIEESE has always had to struggle with diversity, but has been able to make this one of its strengths, which is reflected in all its work methodology and in experiences such as that of the PCDA.

Recent years:

- **The DIEESE sets up the GAM** (Group for Methodological Accompaniment) and the **GENE** (Group for Studies in Negotiation), internal teams for methodological accompaniment and to adapt the institution to impending changes.
- **The DIEESE prepares trainers** in using the information kits produced by the institution.
- **The DIEESE supports the National Labour Forum** promoted by the MTE. The bill is currently in Congress, although it has not been debated. Even so, this is very important in terms of defining labour relations and a new system that could be perfected and implemented in the future.
- **The DIEESE receives general recognition nationally and internationally as articulator of social dialogue between parties representing diverse and often opposing interests.** Municipal and state commissions on Employment and Income are set up, with the participation of public administrators, entrepreneurs and workers. The DIEESE is called upon to train participants in these commissions. In other words, the body that represents the trade union movement is recognised and invited to train the entrepreneur and Government representatives. This is a very important achievement for the organisation.
- **The DIEESE succeeds in articulating the creation of the School of Labour Sciences**, a dream that had remained latent since the very foundation of the institution. It thus hopes to transmit to the world a different vision, based on the point of view of the working class and of the training of persons.
- **The DIEESE is today in a process of growing participation in government projects** as a consequence of the greater participation of the trade union movement or of former union leaders in public spaces.
 - **Relevant organisational characteristics of the DIEESE.**

The DIEESE is a not-for-profit entity of national scope (particularly important in a country the size of Brazil with its great material and cultural diversity), which has 17 regional offices and produces and systematises information on a daily basis.

All the institution's production is structured on the basis of three types of work units, found in various Brazilian states and in the Federal District of Brasilia. Its national administration is in the city of São Paulo, where the DIEESE articulates all its technical production. In this unit, those responsible for the technical coordination of the institution and most of the consultancy, research and education teams work. DIEESE's regional offices are units created to develop regionally the consultancy, research and education work and to attend to the affiliated local entities.

The DIEESE has a project to expand the number of regional offices to be able to provide consultancy and conduct other work for the trade union movement around the country. The subsections are DIEESE units located in trade union entities affiliated to the institution, at the request of its directorates, anywhere in the country. Their objective is to produce studies, investigations and analyses that will contribute to growth in the union activities of the bodies. DIEESE subsections are present in union entities of bank, metal or petrochemical workers, commercial employees, workers in telephone companies, education, oil workers, electricians and public officials, among others, in various units of the Federation. Any affiliated union entity can ask the DIEESE for the establishment of a subsection.

DIEESE direction is exercised by three bodies:

- National Union Directorate, responsible for political orientation, planning guidelines and the budget.
- Executive, also Union, Directorate which accompanies and assesses planning execution.
- Technical Directorate, comprising employees who execute the planning of the other directorates and coordinate the work of the various teams.

In 2007, the institution developed a series of activities related to their specific areas of activity. They included union relations that involve consultancy work and studies for the trade union movement, activities of union formation through the Support Network for Collective Bargaining (RAN) for union leaders and advisors, and the articulation of work in sectoral networks. The Research Area conducted permanent studies, such as the Employment and Unemployment Survey (PED), thematic or sectoral research, or research by category and trade union surveys, like *Meu Salario*. The object of the Studies and Development Area is to prepare and realise pioneering projects, gather information from primary and secondary sources of data and also subsidise the implementation of Labour Observatories³ projects.

The DIEESE is an institution which is profoundly committed to workers' demands. Research and the production of technical-scientific knowledge is an important instrument in this struggle.

³ For further information, see: www.dieese.org.br.

DIEESE's technical personnel permanently seek to place themselves at the frontier of knowledge, not in order to win a Nobel Prize or a prominent position in the Academy, as they themselves say, but because they need to have the best instruments for that great struggle within capitalist society over the division of the wealth produced. The DIEESE fights for the need to overcome the subordination of workers in society. "The day that Brazil is an absolutely fair country... which it will be one day, perhaps the agenda of an institution like the DIEESE will be poorer, but that's alright, because we'll accept it as just another stage in our development" they say.

In the DIEESE, the commitment to continuous improvement is evident, as it is to personnel development (reflected both in the training programmes and incentives already mentioned, and in that absolute conviction on the "need" to be well prepared, which they have internalised).

The DIEESE is trying to stamp a creative and innovative, and not merely accumulative or reproductive, mode on its actions. It hopes to add value for a fight that is deemed to be noble and necessary. There can be said to be congruence between the intention declared and the results obtained from their work (see "Milestones"). The DIEESE produces high-quality knowledge, and performs collective work with a negotiating and inclusive approach, which promotes social dialogue, and in which many different actors participate.

On one hand, the DIEESE has a very experienced team of persons linked to the institution for several decades, but also permanent contact with new persons and a high insertion of its techniques in different regions, since they work in the union entities. This gives them a great advantage in knowledge of different local realities. Its team is multi- and interdisciplinary and is enriched by interaction with other organisations working on the same topic (there is often knowledge exchange with the constant movement of workers to and from the public sector).

Something else that can be seen is that it has achieved a coherent construction of "critical routes" for different processes and projects, since it normally bases itself on a diagnosis of objective data. When implementing a new methodology, the DIEESE first conducts "pilot tests", which are rigorously assessed before the launch as an end product outside the institution, thus assuring greater effectiveness.

However, and although the evidence shows many more strengths than weaknesses, the latter exist and are basically reflected in two questions: financial management (because there are constraints in financial and physical resources) that implies certain instability; and change management (because the institution has grown a great deal, and this growth has not necessarily been assimilated internally to the same extent by all, nor with the same degree of acceptance). On this point, its strong culture, which is a strength, also becomes a weakness, since it is less flexible to change and needs a greater effort to achieve it.

3.10 Exogenous factors that furthered the influence of knowledge and research in the professional qualification process in Brazil.

In recent years there has been clear growth in the participation in social movements in Brazil and, in particular, in the trade union movement, which plays an active part in a broad

discussion agenda on public policy. This is a very important framework of action for this Case Study.

In the eighties and nineties there were several experiences of social participation, including bodies of a consultative and deliberative nature and even broader initiatives, with greater influence on the implementation of government actions. Both locally and nationally there are many cases of this type of participation that may involve decisions on specific investments to more complete regulation propositions.

Examples are the Forums for Industrial Competitiveness promoted by the Federal Government; the recent campaign for monitoring the minimum wage, which led to the creation of a Quadripartite Commission to propose a permanent policy on the matter; the experience of tripartite or multipartite commissions created to act in local production agreements and production chains, and many others.

The changes occurring today thanks to the globalisation process have shown that the Brazilian economy lacks the full capacity to absorb the growing labour force, because unemployment, precarious working conditions, fall in real income, income concentration, etc. still exist.

This means that the question of work is considered to be a high priority at different levels, and that both the workers and the Government and employers participate in the discussion on possible solutions in spaces created for the purpose and where the DIEESE fulfils various articulation functions. Opportunities for the DIEESE are related to the relevance of the subject of work for society. In Brazil, there are few institutions that produce specific, complete information with the sufficient level of detail; and the way to obtain information from the DIEESE is greatly valued at different levels (participatory construction, “from the bottom up”, promoting social dialogue).

On the other hand, the threats that hang over the institution are linked precisely with its direct dependence on the trade union movement, since if participation of the latter decreases for any reason, (including the rise in individualism within the capitalist system) or there are internal fractures, this would directly affect the institution. Also assumed as risks are certain political instability in Brazil, and its potential to increase, a rise in the number of limited-term projects (more than 50% of DIEESE’s current budget) and staff turnover (with all its effects) that stems from them.

3.11 Focus and goals of the joint work.

The DIEESE has the clear purpose of accompanying the Brazilian trade union movement, supporting, recommending and developing its proposals for workers and all society.

As part of its constitutional mandate, the MTE is conducting a series of efforts for a social pact on the questions of work and the trade unions through, for example, the National Labour Forum, which is a legitimate public space for discussion and channelling of union or labour reforms and the affirmation of social dialogue.

The joint work between the DIEESE and the MTE is very broad and varies in intensity according to union and government agendas. However, in the period of analysis (2004-2007), the following projects stand out:

- **The Employment and Unemployment Survey (PED)**, which succeeded in providing permanent technical assistance for the execution of regional surveys, perfecting the monthly disclosure of the PED System, constructing a policy of access and availability of indicators and microdata of the PED, incorporating the Monthly Occupation and Unemployment Survey (PMOD) into the PED System, institutional articulation and management of the PED System, and conducting pilot surveys in special areas with PED methodology.
- **Social and professional qualification.** Preparation of methodologies for the construction of diagnoses, drawing up proposals of a social and economic nature, and for social qualification, which have as their principal axis of action the construction of instruments that can subsidise the qualified intervention of social actors and/or groups in spaces and issues considered essential for a process of sustainable development.

The MTE supports, finances and entrusts projects to the DIEESE because it is an institution that produces scientific knowledge, works with methodological rigour, has a highly skilled technical team, and this is reflected in a gradual increase in projects entrusted and an extension of its sphere of action.

3.12 Impact of joint work in public policy in Brazil.

The impact of joint work between the DIEESE and the MTE mentioned in this document refers to experiences and progress achieved principally in the construction of social dialogue and in allowing actors to take part in it.

In the question of **professional qualification**, which has direct impact in employability, and therefore, in the quality of employment, the joint work of these two organisations targets the opening of spaces for discussion; analysis and reflection, and the involvement of a large number of social actors belonging to the sector of workers, employers and the State. That is an achievement in itself.

Besides, the experiences studied on collective bargaining on professional qualification were able to articulate themselves with the implementation mechanism of the National Agenda of Decent Work in Brazil.

However, the fundamental impact is indirect and, therefore, difficult to measure. The information produced by the DIEESE for the MTE is valuable for the Government as it draws up work-related policies. The DIEESE is one of the most reliable sources of information on several areas, in which the MTE itself has not developed its own means of production. No institution other than DIEESE is so representative (due to the large-scale union presence of its members) or thinks, discusses or works on the question of labour and pay, the quality of life of the workers and the distribution of income, and other topics.

An interesting experience linked with impacts is that related by Nelson Karam, coordinator of the Education Area of the DIEESE, on the participation of the DIEESE in the

question of foresight, in which a discussion was launched with the participation of the union organisations and several relevant topics were put forward.

This produced a distortion of the claim that “incomes were part of public spending and shouldn’t be as high as they are today” because that supposedly “compromised public finances.” With its research, the DIEESE showed that the truth was that social security was in surplus, that there were sufficient resources to pay retirement pensions without problems and that there was even a positive side, besides the question of citizens rights, which was the promotional effect on economic development.

The DIEESE was also very active in denouncing slave and child labour, having spent two years gathering data that was later integrated and consolidated in the ILO proposal on decent work.

Work was also done on the questions of gender and race, with the DIEESE being one of the first organisations to concern itself with these issues. The information produced led to it being included on the National Agenda.

A further impact of DIEESE’s work in public policy concerns the actions of the trade unions in spaces for public policy discussion. By advising the union movement, and preparing it for negotiations with entrepreneurs and public administrators, the information and knowledge administered by DIEESE subsidises workers representations justifies their claims, strengthens their actions and the point of view of the workers in preparing work-related policies.

However, this impact can only occur when trade unions are called upon to participate in those spaces, which has happened fairly frequently, especially in the last decade, due to a greater openness on the participation of the trade union movement by means of the construction of various tripartite spaces. Besides, it is also important to mention that much necessary information for defining certain public policy is produced only by the DIEESE.

Finally, it is also necessary to refer to the impact stemming from the training of public administrators. As already mentioned, the DIEESE acts fairly frequently in qualifying participants in tripartite spaces and has thus achieved respectability, credibility and recognition outside the trade union movement.

3.13 Knowledge management for impact on public policy.

Knowledge management concerns intangible assets that have to do with processes related in one way or another to capturing, structuring and transmitting knowledge, whose principal tool lies in organisational learning.

As a conclusion to this Case Study, from the perspective of a research institution that wants to act to make an impact on public policy, the “best practices” identified reveal the need to develop the ability to “learn to learn” or, in the language used by Swieringa & Wierdsma (1992) achieve a level of “meta-learning”, which involves questioning one’s own learning capacity (already acquired), to find new forms of continuing to learn.

So due to its complexity and dynamism, the purpose mentioned, impact on public policy, demands, as with DIEESE, much more than “adaptive” learning (understood as focusing efforts on achieving incremental improvements in activity, but within a framework

of established action), making it imperative to reach “generative” learning, which demands radical modification in the framework of global action (McGill, Slocum & Lei, 1992) with which the competence for managing change will acquire great value.

Moreover, although the DIEESE has unique particularities (origin, mandate, circumstances and history), the most important constant elements that stand out in its actions and that are fundamental in terms of “best practices” are:

- ⇒ **The capacity to adapt to change.**
- ⇒ **The principles or guidelines.**
- ⇒ **The will, above all else, to act to change reality.**

In the history and evolution of this organisation, which belongs to the Brazilian trade union movement but has achieved considerable visibility, renown and recognition from the technical point of view; up to a certain moment, DIEESE can be seen to make an impact in public policy as an indirect result and one that is thus difficult to measure.

However, with the inclusion of the topic on its working agenda (around four years ago), which demanded a series of internal adjustments in structure, knowledge, instruments and the fine-tuning of its competences in areas in which it had already achieved a great deal (social dialogue, participatory methodologies for information management, etc.), a clearer approach can be seen towards obtaining outcomes, with clear acceptance of the contingency to which it is subject, since it is a body whose future is linked with the union movement and in which its greater or lesser participation will always condition its own role.

On the other hand, if we consider the generic process of policy development, we can see within the so-called “policy cycle” (Young and Quinn, 2002) **(15)** the following steps:

- 1) Defining the problem.
- 2) Construction of alternatives.
- 3) Choice of solution.
- 4) Policy design.
- 5) Policy implementation.
- 6) Policy appraisal.

The DIEESE plays a very active support role in the two initial steps (defining the problem and construction of alternatives), using different resources and strategies to subsidise the trade union movement, adopting a position that is not neutral but, on the contrary, “pushes” these processes forward.

From the point of view of the government body and of public policy administrators, it is clear in the case study that one condition for success is openness in spaces that allow knowledge of the research institution to be integrated and thus achieve synergic action. This seems to respond to a more democratic, broader and more inclusive vision of government.

Finally, a last element to mention is that it would seem that in order to allow public policy to be built in a participatory form, it should represent a form of doing things that goes beyond links of belonging (bonds of affection, culture, values or characteristics already

given), to place itself in a broader sphere of participation, with the possibility of new and different associations where critical thinking can be exercised.

4. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

4.1 Sources consulted

Interviews conducted in DIEESE:

- ⇒ Clemento Ganz Lúcio, technical director of DIEESE.
- ⇒ Suzanna Sochaczweski, head of the School of the Sciences of Work.
- ⇒ Nelson de Churi Karma, coordinator of the Education Area of DIEESE.
- ⇒ Ana Claudia Moreira Cardoso, secretary of Training in DIEESE.
- ⇒ Paulo Roberto Arantes do Valle, coordinator of the Subproject “Construction of Diagnoses on the Labour and Consultancy Market in the PlanSeQs with the participation of social actors”.
- ⇒ Crystiane Peres, technical expert from the Projects Secretariat.
- ⇒ Sergio Eduardo Arbulo Mendonca, technical supervisor of the “Labour Observatories” since 2007.
- ⇒ Sirlei Marcia de Oliveira, technical supervisor of Projects.
- ⇒ Francisco José Couceiro de Oliveira, research coordinator of DIEESE since 2007.
- ⇒ José Silvestre Prado de Oliveira, coordinator of Union Relations of DIEESE.

At the Ministry of Labour and Employment:

- ⇒ Marcelo Aguiar Santo Sá, Diretor do Departamento de Qualificação

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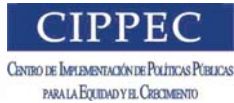
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