

# THIS WORKS IN MY PLACE! LATIN AMERICAN EDITION

## *The WOP contribution to Sustainable Development Goals*

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY

FINAL REPORT 2022



**THE GLOBAL GOALS**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Goal

To identify, through the participation and dialogue with experts in Work and Organizational Psychology (WOP) in the Latin American region, relevant **contextual factors** and **WOP strategies-practices** in achieving five **United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals**: “no poverty”, “good health and well-being”, “gender equality”, “decent work”, and “innovation”. Dealing with a health crisis (due to the situation created by Covid-19) was added during the process as a goal.

### Method

The project is based on a **participative process** where **WOP experts from Latin America** participated in the different steps (design, answering questionnaires, revision of documents, etc.). Two main methodologies were implemented: a) **Workshop** (with the participation of seven experts), and b) **Delphi Method** (with the participation of 33 experts)

#### **Contextual factors:**

- Macro-economic indicators make Latin America vulnerable to crises
- Existence of economic programs to reduce poverty, but limited access to funding
- Positive progress in education for all, but with a low level of education in general and difficulties in transferring the education of vulnerable groups to adequate opportunities as professionals
- Social policy has improved significantly, but lack of social protection persists, especially for vulnerable groups
- High dependency on the natural resources market
- Vulnerability to natural disasters
- Populist governments in some countries
- High levels of corruption

### No poverty

#### **WOP practices-strategies:**

There are six practices-strategies that are **important and urgent** for reducing poverty:

- Reducing corruption in organizations
- Protecting workers’ mental health

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- Supporting workers in the transition to telework
  - Inclusive practices in employee selection and promotion
  - Cooperation with stakeholders to reduce poverty
  - Entrepreneurship initiatives for the population at risk of poverty

However, on two of these practices, experts are not very optimistic about the **feasibility** of their implementation:

- Reducing corruption in organizations
- Dialogue with stakeholders to reduce poverty

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#### **Contextual factors:**

- Gradual generalization of the universal health service and more interest in well-being in the workplace and preventive health. However, some problems persist: Hospitals are inadequate and understaffed, and primary care and prevention are not generalized
- Existence of working conditions that are negative for health and well-being (high workload, negative stress, corruption, inequalities)
- More regulation is needed to protect workers
- Demographic trends and migration processes that make access to healthcare services and pension systems a challenge
- Lack of sustainable urban plans, creating traffic-congested cities, pollution problems, insecurity, social stress, etc.

#### **Good health and well-being**

#### **WOP practices-strategies:**

There are seven practices-strategies that are **important and urgent** for health and well-being:

- Implementing employees' well-being programs
- Achieving healthy telework and respect for employees' private lives
- Implementing programs for psychosocial risks at the workplace
- Reducing negative stress and mitigating mental health problems
- Partnerships with universities and professional associations to enhance employee well-being

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- Showing evidence to governments and organizations about the positive health effects of avoiding unproductive time and having healthy free time
  - Programs for healthy and positive integration of migrants at work

However, experts are optimistic about the **feasibility** of implementing these strategies-practices, except for programs for healthy and positive integration of migrants at work

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#### **Contextual factors:**

- Despite the positive impact of prevention programs and laws, the gender gap is still generalized in Latin America
- Leadership positions remain predominantly occupied by men
- Gender inequality is based on predominant cultural values (“machismo”)
- One of the most negative facets of gender inequality is violence towards women
- Human resources management practices also hinder the achievement of gender equality. Flexible work hours, telework, commuting, and other arrangements aimed at facilitating a work-family balance are the exceptions rather than the norm

#### **Gender equality**

#### **WOP practices-strategies:**

There are six practices-strategies that are **important and urgent** for gender equality:

- Contributing to an organizational culture of respect that avoids degrading behaviors against women
- Education of men to avoid harassment of women
- Fair personnel selection and promotion oriented toward enhancing gender equality
- Training activities (preventing and dealing with harassment and leadership training for women)
- Productive and healthy work-family balance for women
- Knowledge management (research on gender equality, disseminating knowledge about female leadership).

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## Decent work

### **Contextual factors:**

- Despite positive advances in regulations and laws, precarious work is still generalized in Latin America
- The informal economy has an important role
- Hierarchical organizational and societal culture and obedience values
- Lack of high-end technological infrastructure, low percentage of highly skilled workers, and lack of decent work.
- Low participation of the Latin American region in assessing and monitoring data about decent work

### **WOP practices-strategies:**

There are five practices-strategies that are **important and urgent** for decent work:

- Collaboration with top management to build decent work strategies.
- Cooperation with relevant stakeholders, such as policy makers, labor unions, etc.
- Strategic planning and performance management within organizations, oriented toward enhancing decent work.
- Creation of observatories for the study of decent work.
- Achievement of better work conditions within the informal economy

However, despite the importance attributed to the achievement of decent work, experts are not optimistic about the **feasibility** of implementing the aforementioned practices-strategies. They are skeptical about the possibility that WOP will contribute to this goal in Latin America. Therefore, a special effort is needed.

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### **Contextual factors:**

- Incipient collaboration among organizations, universities, and governments to promote and develop

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science and technology and an entrepreneurship culture in general

- There is a hardworking, resourceful, agile, and creative problem-solving workforce, that is, human capital that could be used in intensive-knowledge areas
- Many virgin niche markets related to the sustainable economy are growing fast
- Low investment in Research & Development plans
- Specific barriers to innovation: low level of English language competence; lack of a long-term sustainable culture of innovation; limited access to internet in some areas; limited innovation in “soft” sciences; little interaction with other cultures and subsequent lack of mutual learning; difficulties in leveraging technology to promote innovation in business; and difficulties in transforming hard work into innovation

## Innovation

### **WOP practices-strategies:**

There are four practices-strategies that are **important and urgent** for innovation:

- Training the workforce for the development of a green economy
- Collaboration with the business community to enhance entrepreneurship skills, innovation, and new initiatives
- Contributing to the management of entrepreneurship and innovation
- Promotion of scientific networks and research dedicated to innovation

In general, experts are somewhat optimistic about the **feasibility** of implementing the aforementioned practices-strategies, except for training the workforce for the green economy (they were more skeptical). In addition, there is some disagreement among the experts about training the workforce for the green economy and promoting scientific networks and research dedicated to innovation

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## Health crisis

### **Contextual factors:**

➤ The Covid-19 pandemic provoked a social, health, and economic crisis. Implementation of telework, lockdowns, mobility restrictions, etc.

### **WOP practices-strategies:**

There are four practices-strategies that are **important and urgent** for dealing with the health crisis:

- Improving work conditions through the evaluation of the impact of telework
- Innovating and developing programs to enhance workers' well-being and health during health crises like Covid-19, including work-family balance
- Dissemination of research results to enhance gender equality during the health crisis
- Training workers who lose their jobs during the health crisis, enhancing their employability

In general, experts are quite optimistic about the implementation of these practices-strategies

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