

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Welcome to a special edition of LERASA's Newsletter for 2021, this publication highlights important information relevant to the ILERA 9th African Regional Congress.



LERASA NEWSLETTER

ILERA 9th African Regional Congress 26 - 29 September 2021 Mpumalanga, South Africa

The Labour and Employment Relations Association of South Africa (LERASA), was tasked to convene the African 9th Regional ILERA (International Labour and Employment Association) Congress from 26 – 29 September 2021, in Mpumalanga, South Africa. The Organising Committee was led by the President of LERASA, Mr Frikkie de Bruin, and the Scientific Committee led by Prof Marius Olivier.

The Congress theme was ***“Challenges Facing Employment Relations, Labour Law and Social Protection to Reduce Poverty, Inequality and Unemployment in Africa, In the Wake of a Global Pandemic”***, and attracted scholars and practitioners across the labour and employment fraternity. The Congress was held in a hybrid format, comprising of 125 physical delegates and 153 virtual delegates. The Congress was held at the Skukuza Safari Lodge, in the Kruger National Park.

The ILERA President, Prof Harry Katz delivered the opening message on 27 September 2021 via a recorded message. We are thankful to Prof Katz and the ILERA Executive Committee for facilitating funding from ILERA Head Office for the Congress. The Congress was also endorsed and supported by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva, represented by the Assistant Director-General, Ms Cynthia Samuel-Olunjuwon.

Congress Theme:

“Challenges facing employment relations, labour law and social protection to reduce poverty, inequality and unemployment in Africa, in the wake of a global pandemic”



Congress Sub-Themes

TRACK 1: COLLECTIVE VOICE AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE

In recent times, Africa has witnessed a decline in trade union membership and employer organisation membership, weakening collective action and social dialogue. Governments play a crucial role in creating an enabling environment for the promotion of collective voice and social dialogue, through legislation and policy. New challenges like pandemics, climate change, economic downturns, and fiscal strains require new partnerships with collective actors across society. Strong collective actors and strong social dialogue institutions are critical in times of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic.

We therefore solicit papers that debate matters of:

- 1.1 Freedom of association in African countries, worker rights, right to strike, legislation and labour laws
- 1.2 Comparative studies on trade union membership (including e-unionism) and employer organisations membership
- 1.3 Collective bargaining and social dialogue institutional arrangements within the region
- 1.4 Capacity and fit for purpose labour market institutions within the region
- 1.5 How can social dialogue assist in dealing with inequalities, social inclusion, work sustainability, and emerging and new trends in the world of work?
- 1.6 Impact of COVID-19 on inequality (income/ wealth/ gender/racial inequalities)

TRACK 2: WORK, EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS AND LABOUR LAW IN AFRICA

The effects of globalisation, internationalisation of markets, labour market flexibility and deregulation have dominated research in the last few years. Although these trends continue, Africa, in particular, is affected by an increase in the informal economy and casualization, resulting in diverse working conditions and employment practices across the continent. COVID-19 has further impacted on working conditions, with temporary work closures, loss of labour income and introduction of remote work. As a result of these and other developments, the borderlines of labour law and labour law's interrelationship with other legal and policy areas, notably trade law and immigration law, have also been the subject of constant interrogation.



The COVID-19 pandemic also impacted on people's mental health, particularly frontline workers. The psychological effects of the pandemic cannot be under-estimated.

We welcome papers that address the changing nature of employment and employment relations in Africa, and the implications for labour law. We would like to solicit contributions that indicate the latest trends:

- 2.1 Comparative studies of the impact of COVID-19 on employment in African countries and labour law's response to COVID-19.
- 2.2 Case studies on industrial conflict, human resource management and skills development in different countries and regions of the continent.
- 2.3 Casualisation, vulnerability, and precarity of work in the formal and informal economies.
- 2.4 The relevance of labour law for gig work and other forms of non-standard employment.
- 2.5 Case studies on impact of COVID-19 on mental health.

TRACK 3: SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES AND SYSTEMS

Labour market disruptions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have forced governments to introduce fiscal stimulus packages and provide social protection relief to households and individuals. These measures vary across high-, medium- and low-income countries. Social grants during lockdown measures have become necessary to meet basic needs of the most vulnerable. Such measures and systems vary across the continent based on fiscal capacity and resources, policy response and implementation. What has been government spending on pandemic-induced social grants in different countries in Africa? Has distribution benefited the most vulnerable groups? What are the various social security policy instruments across the continent? Coverage of informal workers and the poor, particularly during the pandemic, is of particular concern.

We call for papers that address social security and protection systems across the continent, including on the issues raised above, as well as the following:

- 3.1 Conditional and unconditional cash transfers in Africa
- 3.2 Strengthening contributory social security regimes
- 3.3 Social protection for workers in the informal economy and their dependants
- 3.4 Improving social security governance

TRACK 4: MIGRANCY IN AFRICA

The continent has over recent years witnessed increased labour migration, both regular and irregular. Worker rights, working conditions and social protection continue to be a challenge for migrant workers. This is exacerbated by uncontrolled and undocumented flows of labour migrants, resulting also in an unprecedented proliferation in human trafficking, for employment and related purposes. The African Union has introduced instruments to support free movement, open borders and improved treatment of migrant workers.

COVID-19 has exacerbated the unequal treatment of migrant workers, and adversely impacted on their socio-economic conditions, and loss of earning due to closing of borders.

Papers are requested that address the following:

- 4.1 Policy imperatives on strengthening of migrant workers' protection
- 4.2 The better management of labour migration, including addressing inefficient recruitment practices
- 4.3 Root causes of labour migration within and from Africa.
- 4.4 Impact of COVID-19 on migrant workers in Africa



- 4.5 Appropriate responses to climate-induced migration in Africa
- 4.6 Evaluating the role of remittances and diaspora engagement in Africa
- 4.7 Free movement regimes and restrictions on labour market access for migrants
- 4.8 Enhancing protection of refugees and asylum-seekers

TRACK 5: DIGITIZATION OF WORK AND 4IR

Remote work as a result of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown measures has accelerated the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and made digitization of work a 'new normal' and no longer the 'future of work'. Having to work remotely has drastically changed work processes across sectors, occupations and professions. Technological platforms like Zoom and Microsoft teams have become the new meeting method with homes and personal space becoming boardrooms.

The impact these new technologies have are dependent on the levels of development of countries in Africa, and their IT infrastructure and capabilities.

We call for papers that will address these issues. In particular we welcome papers that can discern trends regarding the changing nature of work due to new technologies, as well as climate, environmental, political, economic and social changes in society. Analysis of the reasons for the trends will add value to the contributions.

TRACK 6: PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS IN AFRICA

Over the last three decades there have been substantial improvements with public sector employment relations, with an increase in trade unionism, and collective bargaining rights of public service employees. This has resulted in considerable improvement of terms and conditions of work, within the public sector. However in recent years, with the global economic recession and the pandemic, there have been fiscal pressures to reduce the public sector wage bill. This is placing a strain on relationships between governments and public sector unions.

The pandemic has further put frontline health workers and other essential service workers at the forefront of the fight to prevent the spread of an infectious virus. Strikes over working conditions and access to personal protective equipment and clothing, were prevalent. Many frontline workers were infected and lost their lives, the mental health of others has been negatively impacted.

We call for papers that examine the above issues, but also on any other interesting and unique developments in public sector employment relations and law taking place in Africa, including areas of formal and informal alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, such as mediation, conciliation and arbitration amongst African countries.



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TRACK 7: GENDER AND WORK

The global increase of female work participation calls for a stronger focus on gender discrimination, equal treatment and work-family policies. The continuing different societal expectations for women and men influence role expectations in the workplace and employee relations in ways that are gendered. In many African contexts these expectations create challenges for women as they struggle with 'inclusion', and thus experience sexual harassment, work-life balance issues and many other exclusions.

Women workers have also suffered disproportionately the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Data has shown that sectors like services, travel, retail, food and restaurant, hairdressing, etc. where women are in the majority have adversely suffered. With school closures, day care services where mostly women are employed have been affected negatively.

We therefore welcome papers that address critical questions in women and men's experiences and historical attachments to work. What are the continuities and discontinuities of unequal treatment of women in work? What are the new experiences and conceptions of masculinities emerging as a result of unemployment and precarious work? How do these experiences influence industrial relations and conceptualizations of masculinities and femininities? Case studies of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on women workers are also welcomed.

Once the papers were received the themes/ tracks were consolidated into the following:

Track 1: Work, Employment Relations, Collective Voice, Social Dialogue and Labour Law in Africa

Sub-theme: Digitization of Work and 4IR

Sub-theme: Public Sector Employment Relations in Africa

Track 2: Social Protection Measures and Systems

Track 3: Migrancy in Africa

Track 4: Gender and Work



Digitization of Work and 4IR



Scientific Committee & Local Organising Committee



Prof Marius Olivier
SC Chairperson



Ms Ngeyi Kanyongolo



Prof Johann Maree



Ms Sharlaine Oodit



Prof Theophilus Tshukudu



Prof Evance Kalula



Mr Frikkie De Bruin
LOC Chairperson & LERASA President





Congress Registration

Congress registration opened during the month of August 2021. Delegates were able to register through the online registration portal that was available on the Congress website, for either virtual or physical attendance.

Congress registrations:

www.lerasa.org.za

The registration process at the Congress was conducted in an efficient and effective manner; staff were professional and worked in an orderly manner.

Conference bags were provided to physical attendees; containing Congress booklets, Congress safari caps, masks, sanitizer, water bottle, notepads and pens. Delegates were scanned upon entry to ensure compliance with COVID-19 protocols.





The venue for the Congress was the Nobolo Mdhuli Conference Centre located at the Skukuza Safari Lodge, Skukuza Camp, Kruger National Park - Mpumalanga, South Africa. All of the sessions were conducted in the plenary room. The venue was of an adequate size in order to accommodate all delegates comfortably whilst observing social distancing and all COVID-19 protocols.

Delegates were screened on a daily basis, temperature checks were taken, and face masks were worn throughout the conference. Meals were served timeously in the Resort's main buffet restaurant which had suitable room to accommodate delegates. Lunch was efficiently served, ensuring delegates were seated in time for the continuation of the programme. Load shedding (power cuts) was experienced once over the 3-day conference, however conference management ensured that there was only a 15 minute break to switch over to the generators.



ILERA AFRICA

SPEAKER DATA

ILERA Africa speakers represented a total of 9 Countries

The programme included a total of 59 speakers of which 22 were female and 37 male. During the Congress, speakers were accommodated and were able to make amendments to their presentations if required and prepare prior to their respective slots.

ILERA Africa together with LERASA would like to thank all speakers that contributed towards the Congress. Your meaningful contribution ensured the success of the Congress.

All speaker full papers and presentations have been uploaded to the LERASA website.



To download all ILERA Africa full papers & presentations, please click the below link:

<https://www.lerasa.org.za/index.php/presentations-2021>

To watch all ILERA Africa sessions, please click the below links:

Sunday, 26 September 2021

Sunday, 26 September 2021

Sunday, 26 September 2021

Monday, 27 September 2021

Tuesday, 28 September 2021

Wednesday, 29 September 2021

Study Group 1

Study Group 2

Special Session: Latin America

Day 1 Congress

Day 2 Congress

Day 3 Congress

<https://youtu.be/43yBekn1OaI>

<https://youtu.be/lxoKTxkjGHk>

<https://youtu.be/YTcrHIMI7YA>

<https://youtu.be/cHY2UehEZOE>

<https://youtu.be/KJPB7kQrWiI>

<https://youtu.be/mTVmbGZOx44>



"Consequences for the hand that rocks the cradle."

"Social Protection in Non-Humanitarian Settings of Egypt, Jordan & Tunisia."



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HONORARY MEMBERSHIP AWARD



The LERASA Constitution makes a provision for the awarding of honorary membership. This membership may be awarded to any member who is nominated by the Executive Committee in recognition for outstanding services to the Association. The Scientific Committee nominated Prof. Evance Kalula for this award for his outstanding contribution over the years supporting LERASA & ILERA. This membership award was handed to Prof. Kalula by the President of LERASA, Mr Frikkie De Bruin at the ILERA Africa closing ceremony. Prof. Kalula was deeply touched and appreciated the award.



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Contact numbers	Work:	Cell:
Fax		
Previous IRASA member?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Category of membership and fees	☐ Corporate (including trade unions, employer organisations, tertiary institutions) R1, 600 ☐ Individual R330 ☐ Full-time unionist R180 ☐ Full-time learner R180 <i>Please provide student number and institution</i>	
Method of payment	☐ Direct deposit into Standard Bank, Centurion Branch (Branch Code 012645), Current Account No: 310332826 <i>Please print your name as deposit reference and email the deposit slip to us</i> ☐ Cheque (to be made out to LERASA) ☐ PayFast (access this on the website)	

LERASA, c/o Public Service Bargaining Council Centre, 260 Basden Avenue, Lyttelton, Centurion, Pretoria 0176

P.O. Box 3123, Lyttelton South, 0176

Tel: +27 12 644 8019

Fax: +27 12 664 5834

Email: info@lerasa.org.za

Website: www.lerasa.org.za



VISION

To become a vibrant Organisation enhancing Employment Relations through debate and dialogue.

MISSION

- To facilitate an ongoing forum for constructive relationship building
- To deal with themes of relevance to the South African Employment Relations community
- To enhance the understanding, knowledge and practices of Employment Relations at National, Regional and branch levels in South Africa



KEEP IN TOUCH

Have a discussion with us

START

CONNECT WITH US

**260 Basden Avenue,
Lyttelton, Centurion 0176**

TEL: 012 644 8100

EMAIL: info@lerasa.org.za



Consulting



Contact Support



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