

BOOK REVIEW

ILO Thesaurus : Labour, employment and training terminology. Ed 4. Geneva, International Labour Office 1992. (Reviewed by Mrs. J.K. Ahluwalia)

The ILO thesaurus was originally conceived following the decision of the International Labour Office to computerise information storage and retrieval in the ILO Library's LABORDOC database. The thesaurus was basically meant to be used to convert the International Labour Information System from subject classification of documents to identification of concepts through a system of keywords or descriptors. The fourth edition of the thesaurus contains the English, French and Spanish terminology relating to economic and social development. The terminology of the areas of major concern of the ILO, i.e. labour, manpower and employment, social security, working conditions, wages, occupational safety and health, labour relations, vocational training, management development and personnel management are treated in greater detail.

Many new scope notes, synonyms, broader and narrower relationships between terms have been added to all the three versions of the thesaurus. The terms in the thesaurus are principally composed of nouns or nouns with adjectives, in natural word order and having a maximum length of 50 characters. Abbreviations are excluded in descriptors except as acronyms for organizations and programmes. Trade names and proper names are excluded except for countries and geographical areas. Ambiguous descriptors are followed by scope notes. All descriptors are in the singular except where a plural meaning has been deliberately chosen.

The thesaurus is in two parts. Part 1 contains three separate alphabetical keyword-out of context (KWOC) indexes referring the user to full details on each descriptor given in the systematic display in English, French and Spanish in Part 2. The keywords in part 2 are grouped in nineteen major facets broken down into various sub-facets and sub-sub-facets. It is arranged in three columns to enable users to compare descriptors, equivalents and scope notes in each language.

Each descriptor is numbered to facilitate referral from the alphabetical indexes to the systematic display. The date of introduction of all descriptors added since 1978 is given, often followed by a history note indicating descriptors previously used in the LABORDOC databases of ILO.

The thesaurus, running into 557 pages, is an important tool for indexing and retrieval purposes for International Labour Information System as well as other various information services within ILO and any other information system with similar scope of coverage.

