

Sexism in Bolivia Hampers Women's Inclusion in Labor Market



La Paz, June 23 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Bolivian women continue to face many obstacles in the labor market, as discrimination, a wide salary gap, and work overload, warned anthropologist Aida Ferreyra Villarroel during a presentation of the recently released bi-annual journal *Technical Training*, which is sponsored by the Swiss Cooperation.

“Strengthening and developing the productive abilities of youth and adults of both sexes is crucial to improve employment and income, which contributes to economic development and eventually to the reduction of poverty and inequality,” stated Swiss Ambassador to Bolivia Peter Bishof.

Switzerland initiated a program of cooperation with the Andean country in 2006, providing technical training to over 30,000 people. While, the rural areas were the focus until 2014, now the program also includes urban areas. The bi-annual publication meant to provide a broader vision of the challenges faced by technical training in Bolivia, in order to improve the employability and income of youth and adults.

Specialists believe that the participation of women should be facilitated, with the creation of nurseries and the negotiation of the schedule, among other measures. The persistence of stereotypes considering that

women should only receive training as a hairdresser or as a cosmetician, is another obstacle to female employment in electronics, mechanics, and engineering areas that are in need of increased labor force.

Women in Bolivia represent the most precarious labor population with low incomes, instability, or lack of social security. They are the first victims of unemployment, as about six out of 10 Bolivians searching a job are women – especially under 34 years old and with higher levels of education, according to the Center of Information and Development of Woman (CIDEM).

The right to a decent job, inscribed in the Bolivian Constitution, still fails to be properly implemented and overcome as sexist prejudices are still deeply rooted in the society. “Society still believes that male work is more valuable than female's, even as many women lead institutions,” said CIDEM Director Mery Marca.

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