

Administrative Work Alternatives in Emergency Periods

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Abstract

In this research, various factors that arose as a result of the global confinement and the performance of work, academic and professional activities in remote environments were analyzed. The Home Office has been not just a resource, but a daily activity for new activities. Having the need to work remotely represents a significant 85.7% of the surveyed universe, while 9.8% did so partially and only 4.5% had to work at their work site. Work activities were balanced in the sample measure. Having a specific space to work is a trend in people. The main problems that has arisen were: 1) Family disruption, 2) Lack of or failures in connectivity, 3) Noise, 3) Having a defined physical space to carry out activities. Teamwork can be favored, however, some of the respondents consider that it is not feasible to facilitate it. The biggest challenges are monitoring activities, improve productivity and optimize communication and connections. The great challenges and needs for companies is to provide the appropriate tools and train staff in the use of new resources. One fourth did not have access to these resources from the company and another similar amount, they barely had access to the basics to carry out their activities. Given the situation, labor thinking and new trends indicate that a combination of activities in the workplace and at home will be the optimal modality, since a large majority think this way. The new challenges focus on establishing new models of productivity and performance evaluation, generating new organizational dynamics and training in the use of efficient tools.

Keywords: Home Office, Global Confinement, Labor Crisis.

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INTRODUCTION

The years 2020 and 2021 has tested the entire world, businesses, governments and society as a whole; we have learned to reinvent the way we live, work, live together and run a company.

The learning has been substantial and very surely after this pandemic we will not live in the same way again neither in society nor in the productive sectors around the world.

That is why it is important to listen to the perception of the actors in this dynamic in order to establish new strategies for coexistence and wealth generation.

According to the United Nations in the special report determined that COVID-19 will have serious effects in the short and long term on supply and demand at the aggregate and sectoral level, the intensity and depth of which will depend on the internal conditions of each economy, world trade, the duration of the epidemic and social and economic measures to prevent contagion.

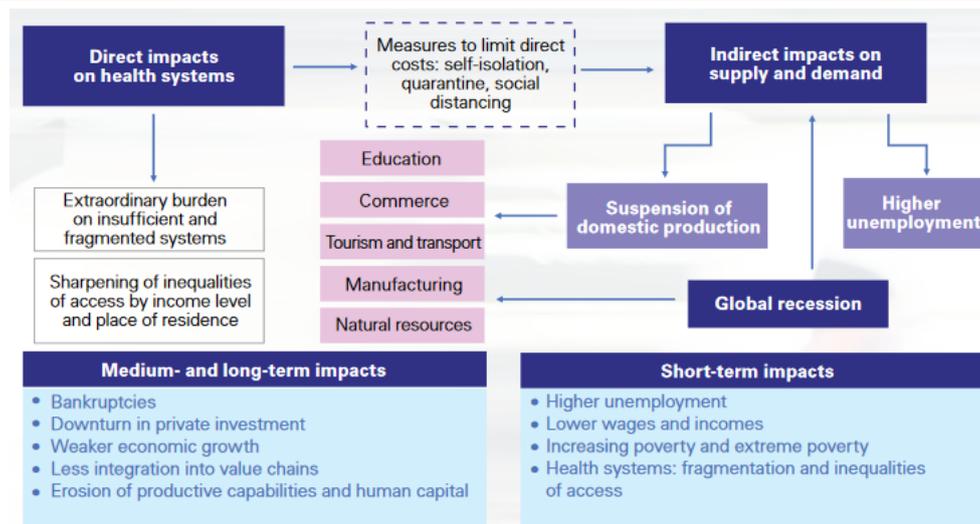


Fig 1: Economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2020) [1]

Economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America and the Caribbean

In addition, the reorganization of companies and organizations has also been tested, as well as the rethinking in the daily activities of individuals in any of the economic sectors in which they participate. Having to adjust their operating models of work within companies and / or personal and family activities in the case of employees.

Not only have people had to adjust their lifestyle and work, but governments have also found it necessary to legislate on this issue and open up new employment options in order to guarantee a fair and adequate employment relationship. In the case of Mexico, the Senate of the Republic recently approved the reform to article 311 and Chapter XII Bis of the Federal Labor Law is added, it is determined that the employer must "Assume the costs derived from work through the telework modality, including, where appropriate, the payment for telecommunication services and the proportional share of electricity". It also establishes that companies will be responsible for installing and maintaining the equipment they deliver to employees so that they can carry out their work from home (Senate of the Republic, December 2020) [2].

In a detailed analysis we can say that this pandemic came at a time when society already has tools that give a hand to coexistence at a distance and also in one of the cases to be able to be productive at a distance so it is convenient to comment that digital technologies have reduced the impact of the pandemic in some professions and in education, at the same time that they have made it possible to maintain personal communications and entertainment activities in homes.

Jürgen Weller, Consultant of the Employment Studies Unit of the Economic Development Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the

Caribbean (ECLAC, 2020) [3], highlights that there are jobs in decline and others in expansion according to the turn they have. Employment in commerce, restaurants and hotels and manufacturing is among the most affected, on the other hand, employment increased in new occupations, both in the development of companies that organize electronic commerce, and in occupations of purchase and distribution of products.

To be able to generate new platforms for coexistence and work it is important to listen in detail and interpret the requirements of the new times, for this reason this research seeks to determine the situations that employees are living in organizations and clearly determine what type of strategies will have to be implemented to ensure the success of the different economic sectors.

However, we see that when this scenario surprised many organizations were not prepared according to Diego Miguel Ángel Rivera Mares, head of Trends and Markets Research of the Directorate of Continuing Education of the Ibero-American University (Ibero, 2020) [4], there is a null preparation of some companies to face eventualities such as the Covid-19 crisis, especially so that the affectation does not reach companies and collaborators.

(González, E. 2020) [5], points out that the benefits are several and apply to both parties:

Increase in productivity: When working in an office, employees tend to extend the duration of time [...] On the contrary, in a remote work, the metrics and results can be under objectives, thus maximizing working hours.

Quality of life: Saving time on transfers and having less exposure to stressors such as city insecurity and mobility, are some elements that make the employee have a higher quality of life. "

Cost reduction: You have the idea that only employees are the ones who benefit economically by working from home [...] but companies also save a lot of money. It is estimated that, with remote work, a company can reduce its overhead by 30% a year.

Benefit to the environment: Remote work is environmentally friendly. The vast majority of employees drive their own vehicles to get to their jobs or use public transportation. That produces pollution that ends up taking its toll on our environment and ourselves.

(Mercer 2020) [6] released the results of a global survey to understand and share the business responses assumed by various organizations as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. 300 companies from 37 countries participated and shared the actions they are taking in relation to planning to address this crisis, issues related to expatriates and business travel, as well as procedures on post-trip quarantine and self-imposed isolation.

What the participants point out is that despite the media reports and the natural concern it arouses in the population, in general companies have not panicked. Rather, they have decided to wait and many have faced the situation with practical actions, such as providing work areas with hand sanitizer gels and providing masks to their employees, or increasing the flexibility of remote work in the affected places. Most companies are not evacuating their expats, but they are postponing or restricting business travel to such places.

The overall message is clear: stay informed, minimize exposure, and take the necessary precautions.

The Mexican Association in Human Resources Management (AMEDIRH) [7] believes that a specific telework policy will help companies to correctly implement this modality, without risks and exposing all the benefits for employees and employers themselves.

The home office has benefits for both workers and employers. Teleworking can help achieve a better work-life balance, just to mention an example of the advantages for human capital.

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, this type of work has allowed many companies to continue with their operations, in addition to testing the productivity and motivation of employees in a new work context.

In a Preliminary finding on the numbers of workers working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic the ILO (2021) [8] estimates of working from home during the pandemic using data from 33 household surveys covering 31 countries.

Estimate too that during the second quarter of 2020, 557 million workers worked from home, accounting for 17.4 per cent of the world's employment.

The figure is derived by stratifying the world's workers by country income and deriving a worldwide estimate with a 95% confidence interval that ranges from 14.9 per cent and 19.9 per cent, with 17.4 per cent as the midpoint

The 17.4 percent estimate, based upon real world data from household surveys, is remarkably close to the ILO estimate of 18 per cent published in May 2020 using only the occupational distribution of employment and a Delphi study of home-workability.

At last, in accordance to the literature on working at home potential, the higher the income, the higher the percentage of workers carrying out their work from home.

For the United States, the percentage was 35 per cent, and for other high-income countries the percentage was 25 per cent. For upper-middle-income countries, the percentage was 17 per cent and for the lower-middle and low-income country group, it was 14 per cent. Using these strata, the global number of workers working from home was estimated at 558 million, which corresponds to 17 per cent of global employment (ILO, 2021) [9]

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The nature of the research was mixed, with inductive method starting with the individual study of the facts and formulating general conclusions and proposals. It was non-experimental research that was carried out during May 2020 to November 2021, which was a period of greater social isolation due to the health contingency due to COVID-19.

A descriptive transitional designed survey was developed, as it identified a situation and generated new knowledge.

The population of interest is related to remote work and the sampling framework was determined according to a mainly administrative profile focused on activities that involve the use of Information Technologies.

The analysis unit was focused on people who have had the need to work in the "Home Office" modality.

Variables, the evaluation of survey indicators to determine mainly, what were the main problems the people face and if the dynamics of the family favors work in the modality of Home Office

Perception of the ease of working as a team in the “Home Office” mode in what were the biggest challenges and in addition to determining what are the main challenges for companies or organizations from establishing more remote work

The type of sampling was probabilistic, as the observation or sampling units had the same opportunity to be selected. The results of this research can be generalized to the rest of the population related to the process.

Sample size, based on the above, 333 surveys were conducted.

The measuring instrument for this research was a Likert scale survey, in which the project indicators were evaluated and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program was used to encode and statistically analyze the Information, using tables and graphs to present the results of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Having the need to work remotely represents a significant 85.7% of the universe surveyed, while 9.8%

did it partially and only 4.5% had to work in their workplace.

Work activities were balanced in the sample measure. Having a specific space to work is a trend in people...

The main problems were:

Family disruption	34.3%
Missing or failing connectivity	22.6%
Noise	15.7%
Have a defined physical space	12.3%

Teamwork can be favored; however, a third party considers that it is not feasible to facilitate it...

The biggest challenges are:

Track activities	37.3%
Improve Productivity	27.9%
Optimize Communication	27.6%

One of the great challenges and needs for companies is undoubtedly to provide the right tools and train staff in the use of new resources...

Since 24.6% did not have access to these resources by the company and 28.9% barely had the basics to develop their activities...

Given the situation, work thinking and new trends indicate that a combination of activities in the workplace and at home will be the optimal modality... as 83.4% think so.

The new challenges focus on:

Establish new productivity models and performance evaluation	46.9%
Generate new organizational dynamics	36.2%
Training in the use of tools	16%

CONCLUSION

The ILO warned about the need to adopt immediate strategies to face the labor crisis caused by COVID-19 that has caused the loss of at least 34 million jobs, as well as Vinicius Pinheiro added that “It is essential to strengthen the mechanisms of social dialogue for the conclusion of national pacts or agreements that aim towards a recovery with productive transformation, formalization, universalization of social protection and just transition towards more sustainable and inclusive development models” ILO (2020) [8].

What should companies do?

Mercer invites its customers to take into account the following recommendations to immediately address this contingency, applicable to any type of organization:

1. Communicate to partners the hygiene guidelines recommended by who and the authorities of each country.

2. Avoid contributing to the emotional stress of employees by making them aware of the concrete measures that the company has planned.
3. Provide workspaces with cleaning supplies such as soap, disposable towels and disinfectant gel.
4. Reinforce the cleaning and disinfection of the facilities.
5. Encourage remote meetings with suppliers or third parties via video calls or calls.
6. When possible, promote remote work or home office.
7. Restrict travel abroad as much as possible.

Within the policy framework the ILO established four fundamental pillars in the fight against COVID-19 on the basis of international labour standards and specifically in pillar 3 talks about protecting workers in the workplace Strengthening OSH measures Adapting working patterns (e.g. teleworking or homeworking) preventing discrimination and exclusion, allow access to healthcare for all and extend the use of paid leave.

This shows the interest of this body to regulate and seek agreements that do not affect the economic development of countries through labor activity.

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