



8

YOUNG WORKERS IN HAZARDOUS OCCUPATIONS

SUPPORTING THE TRANSITION
TO DECENT WORK

THEMATIC PRIORITY OF THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE ON DECENT JOBS FOR YOUTH



1 Decent Jobs for Youth – the global initiative for action

1.1 Objective

Decent Jobs for Youth is the global initiative to scale up action and impact on youth employment under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Launched in 2016 with the endorsement of the executive heads of the United Nations, Decent Jobs for Youth is a unique platform for partners to address fragmentation and catalyse effective, innovative and evidence-based action at country and regional levels.

1.2 Partners

Decent Jobs for Youth brings together the resources and expertise of multiple partners to create linkages that maximize the effectiveness of youth employment investments. The initiative recognizes the important roles of governments, social partners, the UN System, youth and civil society, the private sector, regional institutions, parliamentarians, foundations, academia and the media in promoting decent jobs for youth. The partners of Decent Jobs for Youth subscribe to 15 guiding principles, which steer their actions and investments on youth employment.

1.3 Strategy



Building a strategic alliance to advocate, ensure policy convergence, stimulate innovative thinking and mobilize resources



Scaling up evidence-based action and impact across eight thematic priorities in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



Sharing and applying knowledge by capturing, analysing and sharing best practices, highlighting innovative approaches and facilitating learning



Mobilizing resources by securing high-level commitments from national, regional and international actors

1.4 Priorities for action

Eight thematic priorities to make a difference in the lives of young women and men – and in our world. Thematic plans identify areas for enhanced action and impact on decent jobs.



Green jobs for youth



Digital skills for youth



Quality apprenticeships



Youth in fragile situations



Youth transitioning to the formal economy



Youth in the rural economy



Youth entrepreneurship and self-employment



Young workers in hazardous occupations

3 Young Workers in Hazardous Occupations

2 Why action is needed

Many young workers aged 15-24 are in hazardous occupations. While global, age-disaggregated data on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) are limited, available data on youth employment indicates that workers aged 15-24 are over-represented in the informal economy, as well as in non-standard forms of employment and seasonal work.¹ Globally, before the onset of COVID-19, 77 per cent of working youth (defined as workers aged 15-24) were engaged in informal employment, compared with 59 per cent of adult workers. This rate is expected to be severely affected by the pandemic-induced job crisis that has pushed young workers into unemployment or underemployment. Informality is most pervasive in subregions such as sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, where it affected close to 96 per cent of employed youth in pre-COVID times.² Workers in these situations are less visible to health and safety enforcement authorities, and are often deprived of appropriate safety and health training and other preventive measures, as well as effective workplace representation, all of which make them more likely to find themselves in hazardous working conditions.

Hazardous work for children (defined as all persons under 18) is listed by the ILO as one of the worst forms of child labour³ and its elimination is listed among the objectives of the UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards to strengthen employment and livelihoods.⁴ Hazardous work for young people deserves global attention, and urgent action is needed when children are found in work that is likely to harm their health, safety or morals. Global estimates of child labour indicate that of the 160 million children engaged in child labour, almost half (79 million) are engaged in hazardous child labour. Thirty-five million children in child labour are between the ages of 15 and 17 and while they may have reached the legal minimum age to work, their right to safe and decent work is not respected.⁵ Of those, nearly 50 per cent are found in the agriculture sector, and face a wide range of threats to their safety and health, including exposure to toxic chemicals and unguarded machinery; biological hazards; extreme weather; physical isolation; and musculoskeletal harm from carrying heavy loads. It is therefore in the 15-17 years age

¹ "Non-standard forms of employment" is an umbrella term for different employment arrangements that deviate from standard employment. They include temporary employment; part-time and on-call work; temporary agency work and other multiparty employment relationships; as well as disguised employment and dependent self-employment. For more information, see <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/non-standard-employment/lang-en/index.htm> [available as of 9 May 2022]

² ILO (2020). Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020: Technology and the future of jobs. International Labour Office – Geneva: ILO, 2020. Available at https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_737648/lang-en/index.htm [as of 9 May 2022]

³ Hazardous work is defined in the ILO Conventions as: "work which, by its nature or circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to jeopardise the health, safety or morals of children" (Article 3(1) of Convention No. 138 and Article 3(d) of Convention No. 182.). The term "hazardous (employment or) work" is found in the Recommendations (Nos. 146 and 190) accompanying these Conventions. In this document, the term "hazardous work" without further description may be used with this limited meaning of such work "to be prohibited for engagement of children below the age of 18 years", instead of hazardous work as one of the general topics of OSH including regulations regarding adults' engagement in hazardous work.

⁴ Toolkit available at: https://info.undp.org/sites/bpps/SES_Toolkit/SitePages/Standard%203.aspx

⁵ ILO and UNICEF: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward, ILO and UNICEF, New York, 2021. Available as of 9 May at https://www.ilo.org/ipec/Informationresources/WCMS_797515/lang-en/index.htm

4 Young Workers in Hazardous Occupations

group that the goals of eliminating child labour, addressing the youth decent work deficit, and ensuring occupational safety and health intersect most clearly.⁶

Attention to the safety and health of young workers should continue even after they turn 18 and are no longer considered children, as they are very prone to suffer non-fatal workplace injuries. Young people 18 and above are still developing, physically and mentally, and are highly susceptible to harm from hazards and risks in the workplace.⁷ Young workers also have less work experience and if not provided with adequate training and supervision, are generally less aware of workplace risks and how to carry out their tasks, increasing their likelihood to suffer work-related harm.⁸ Young women and men may also be generally less aware of OSH issues and rights, or the means to effectively assert those rights.

While not all countries document the prevalence of work-related injuries and illnesses for the age group 15-24, available data shows that young workers have higher non-fatal accident rates compared to the rest of the workforce. In the United States, young workers experience at least a 40 per cent higher prevalence of non-fatal accidents than the rest of the workforce.⁹ Within the European Union, 4.7 per cent of young workers aged 18-24 had an occupational accident with more than three days lost, compared to an average 3.3 per cent for the rest of the workforce.¹⁰ These figures are likely underreporting the global prevalence of injuries among young workers, whose disproportionate presence in informal or casual employment increases their risks.¹¹ Moreover, there is limited reliable data on occupational diseases caused by exposure to workplace hazards during youth, due to problems of latency periods and attribution.

The gender dimension is important, as young women may face some additional OSH risks than their male counterparts. In low and lower-middle income countries, there is a higher proportion of women in informal employment than men,¹² which implies less visibility, less representation and no formal system for recording work-related injuries and diseases.¹³ Among those workers, women working in households are particularly vulnerable. Within some occupations, young women face gender-specific hazards and

⁶ Guarcello L.; Lyon S.; Valdivia C. 2016. Adolescents in Hazardous Work: Child labour among children aged 15-17 years.

⁷ The terms “hazard” and “risk” are sometimes used interchangeably, but in fact have different meanings. A “hazard” is anything with the potential to cause harm (for example, dust, chemicals, noise, working at height, manual handling, unguarded machinery, long or unpredictable working hours, etc.), while a “risk” is the combination of (a) the likelihood that a hazardous event will occur and (b) the severity of the harm that could occur, including long-term consequences.

⁸ For example, this includes the risk of harm from hazardous chemicals, work environment and physical agents, but also encompasses risks from psychosocial factors which can lead to risk-taking behaviours.

⁹ CDC (2010). “Occupational Injuries and Deaths Among Younger Workers: United States, 1998--2007” in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, vol. 59, no. 15, April 2010.

¹⁰ EU-OSHA (2007). *OSH in figures: Young workers - Facts and figures*. European risk observatory report.

¹¹ See <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5915a2.htm#tab2> [available as of 9 May 2022]. See “Age related differences in work injuries and permanent impairment: a comparison of workers’ compensation claims among adolescents, young adults, and adults” at <https://oem.bmj.com/content/60/9/e10> [available as of 9 May 2022]. See “Adolescent occupational injuries and workplace risks: an analysis of Oregon workers’ compensation data 1990-1997” at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17707294> [available as of 9 May 2022]. See “Young, vulnerable and uncertain: Young workers’ perceptions of work health and safety” <https://content.iospress.com/articles/work/wor182788> [available as of 9 May 2022].

¹² ILO, 2018. *Women and men in the informal economy: a statistical picture (third edition)* / International Labour Office – Geneva: ILO, 2018. Available as of 9 May 2022 at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_626831.pdf

¹³ ILO. 2016. *World Employment and Social Outlook 2016: Trends for youth*.

5 Young Workers in Hazardous Occupations

risks, including an increased exposure to violence and harassment, physical and sexual abuse, and forced labour, including for the purpose of sexual exploitation.¹⁴ Finally, poor infrastructure, such as the lack of adequate access to sanitary facilities, may also present additional workplace risks for women.¹⁵

Early impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people were systematic, deep, and disproportionate, affecting not only their employment and educational outcomes but also, and perhaps chiefly, their mental wellbeing. The Youth and COVID-19 survey conducted by partners of Decent Jobs for Youth in April-May 2020 found that 17 per cent of young people were probably affected by anxiety and depression. The lowest records of mental well-being were registered among young women and younger youth between the ages of 18 and 24 (compared to young adults ages 25-29). Young people whose education or work was either disrupted or had stopped altogether were almost twice as likely to be probably affected by anxiety or depression as those who continued to be employed or whose education was on track. This underscores the interlinkages that exist between mental well-being, educational success, and labour market integration.¹⁶

The economic cost resulting from preventable occupational injuries and diseases borne by workers, families and communities can be devastating.¹⁷ Young workers who suffer a serious injury or those affected by anxiety and depression can experience a significant loss of income, while a long-term disabling injury may result in discrimination and harm their chances to access productive employment and decent work for the remainder of their work life. Similarly, work-related injuries and diseases – including declining mental health – among young workers depreciate their skills and employability, limiting the economic gains of national investments in education and skills development.^{18, 19}

¹⁴ ILO (2011). Children in Hazardous Work.

¹⁵ Where there is a lack of access to adequate sanitary facilities in the workplace, women are forced to find alternative solutions, especially during menstruation, which may involve the use of isolated, poorly lit or insecure areas, increasing their safety and health risks, including to workplace violence.

¹⁶ See the report at https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/youth-employment/publications/WCMS_753026/lang-en/index.htm [available as of 9 May 2022].

¹⁷ Hämäläinen, P. et al. (2017). Global Estimates of Occupational Accidents and Work-related Illnesses 2017. <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1702/cost-of-work-related-injury-and-disease-2012-13.docx> [available as of 9 May 2022]; ILO (2012). Estimating the Economic Costs of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses in Developing Countries: Essential Information for Decision-Makers.

¹⁸ ILO (2018). Report for World Day for Safety and Health at Work on Improving the Safety and Health of Young Workers.

¹⁹ The 2019 report “The value of OSH and the societal costs of work-related injuries and diseases” by European Agency for Safety and Health at Work examined evidence from selected European countries to outline steps towards harmonized measurement recognizing the vast economic costs to individuals, employers, governments and society as a whole from occupational injuries, diseases and deaths. Available as of 9 May 2022 at <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/value-occupational-safety-and-health-and-societal-costs-work-related-injuries-and>

6 Young Workers in Hazardous Occupations

3 Evidence and innovations

3.1 What works to eliminate hazardous child labour and reduce hazards and risks for young workers

3.1.1 A national legal framework for identifying and remediating hazardous child labour

Governments have the duty to eliminate hazardous child labour, and to create a legal framework that allows its identification and remediation. Countries that have ratified ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour are expected to implement the convention and to take into consideration accompanying recommendation No. 190, to prevent the engagement of children in and remove them from hazardous work.^{20, 21} In particular, ratifying countries should establish the list of hazardous work prohibited for children under the age of 18, that is work that by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out is likely to jeopardize the health, safety or morals of children.²² The national list of hazardous work is an essential point of reference for remediating hazardous child labour, and should be complemented with official guidance for employers on how to engage safely children of working age in work and apprenticeships. Such guidance is critical to assist employers in understanding the distinction between child labour and youth employment, and therefore ensure that young people can engage in legitimate employment opportunities and away from informal and unregulated work settings.

Governments, employers, and workers are well placed to effectively engage towards the implementation of the national legal framework for the elimination of hazardous child labour. At local level, employers' organisations may collaborate with the government to support the identification of high-risk industries and occupations for hazardous child labour. Once identified, coordinated actions can be taken jointly or individually by different actors to effectively enforce the prohibition of child labour and to offer alternatives to young workers in hazardous occupations, e.g. through supporting schooling or vocational training, as well as improving workplace safety management, as

²⁰ The ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention has reached near universal ratification, with only three countries in which the convention is yet to enter in force by 2020.

²¹ Removing the child from hazardous work means that s/he leaves the work premises or is separated from the hazard (task, equipment, substance, or situation) in such a way that s/he cannot be exposed to harm. For children above the minimum age for work, removing the hazard means that the hazard is eliminated from the workplace altogether, changing the task or transforming the situation or working conditions so that it no longer poses a risk. An example of this in the agriculture sector would be protecting children between the ages of 15 and 17 from exposure to hazardous chemicals during agricultural activities, through substitution of non-harmful agents, or a combination of other OSH management controls.

²² Article 3 of Recommendation 190 specifies that in drawing up the list consideration should be given, for example, to work which exposes children to physical, psychological or sexual abuse; work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces; work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads; work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health; work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer. The list should be drawn up and periodically revised in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.

7 Young Workers in Hazardous Occupations

was done in Thailand in the fishing and seafood industry.²³ Workers' organizations can also contribute to eliminating hazardous child labour by expanding their membership among vulnerable workers, supporting OSH education and mobilising community actions, including by engaging family farming, artisanal fisheries and other small productions, as was done in Ghana in the cocoa and fishing industries.²⁴

At the global level, social dialogue and tripartism can help to effectively reduce risk and eliminate hazardous child labour in global value chains. For example, the cocoa and textiles global value chains carry a high risk of child labour, particularly hazardous child labour. Multi-stakeholder alliances and public-private partnerships²⁵ can be crucial to achieve this objective. For instance, the Child Labour Platform²⁶, co-chaired by the International Organization of Employers and the International Trade Union Confederation, brings together companies from a wide range of sectors, trade unions and NGOs to share experience, drive innovation and foster collaboration to achieve sustainable progress in eliminating child labour from supply chains.

3.1.2 Integrating the needs of young workers into a national OSH system

Efforts to eliminate hazardous child labour should go hand in hand with efforts to enhance OSH prevention and awareness activities for young and adult workers, particularly aged 18-24, to ensure that once children turn 18, they are protected from entering hazardous occupations.

Governments have the responsibility to create an institutional and policy environment that promotes a culture of prevention, to reinforce their capacity to identify, address and eliminate hazardous work conditions, and to build awareness of the importance of sound OSH practices in the workplace to prevent injuries and diseases, particularly for workers aged 18-24 in hazardous occupations. This should be done through the development of a national OSH system in accordance with ILO Convention 187, which provides the necessary framework for implementing national policy and national programmes on OSH. National OSH systems should guide government, employer and worker representatives on how to assess and eliminate occupational risks and hazards, and how to develop a national OSH prevention culture. Targeted information campaigns, consultation, compliance assistance, training and adequate allocation of national resources are all key to reaching those objectives. It is also important for governments to ensure that the process of building an OSH prevention culture is inclusive

²³ In Thailand, the active collaboration of the Employers' Confederation of Thailand (ECOT) in the fishing and seafood industry provided key support to the government initiative tackling hazardous child labour in the industry. See ILO (2012). Towards the elimination of hazardous child labour... Practices with good potential; see also https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/presentation/wcms_164587.pdf [available as of 9 May 2022]

²⁴ In Ghana, the General Agricultural Workers' Union organized small cocoa farmers, lake fishers and fish processors – supporting OSH education, technological inputs to help end dependence on child labour, the establishment of cooperatives, provision of school places and, above all, community ownership – to create child labour free communities. See Understanding Children's Work (UCW) (2015). Child labour and the youth decent work deficit in Ghana, Understanding Children's Work Programme, Rome, available as of 9 May 2022 at http://www.ucw-project.org/attachment/13052016890Ghan_child_labour_youth_employment_report.pdf

²⁵ See for example, the partnership to combat child labour in the chocolate and cocoa industry: https://www.ilo.org/pardev/public-private-partnerships/factsheets/WCMS_409581/lang--en/index.htm [available as of 9 May 2022]

²⁶ <https://www.ilo.org/ipec/Action/CSR/clp/lang--en/index.htm> [available as of 9 May 2022]

8 Young Workers in Hazardous Occupations

by ensuring that materials and campaigns are accessible to workers who are disadvantaged by hearing, visual and intellectual impairments, or who are otherwise marginalized.

In particular, national OSH systems can have greater positive impact on young workers' safety and health if they include the following elements:

- **Create a hazardous work list for young workers up to age 24, in consultation with workers and employers.** Even if not expressly required by International Labour Standards, it is good practice to develop such a list, adapted to national context, industries, and occupations. For instance, the Andean Community's Occupational Safety and Health Instrument (2004) requires member states not only to prohibit hazardous jobs for workers under 18, but to take specific measures to protect young workers aged 18-21.
- **Facilitate accident and diseases reporting and improving the collection of age- and gender-disaggregated data on OSH for young workers.** A solid knowledge base on OSH for young workers is a prerequisite to understanding the extent of the situation locally, nationally, and regionally, and identifying age-related risks, which in turn provide the foundation for effective policies and programmes to prevent and eliminate hazardous work among young workers. A successful reporting system involves not only employers but also workers and the public. For example, in the Philippines, an online and mobile-capable reporting system encourages employers, workers and the public to report accidents when they see them, supporting timely data collection and helping the government, employers and workers to take appropriate action.²⁷
- **Build capacity and raise awareness among labour inspectorates, and employer and worker representatives on specific OSH vulnerabilities that young workers may be facing and their needs,** as well as specific vulnerabilities of children and maternity protection. Successful efforts include adapting inspection resources to local conditions; strengthening local knowledge and the inspection system by ensuring an adequate number of inspectors for the size of the country and workforce; encouraging the recruitment of women inspectors²⁸; providing labour officials adequate salary and regular opportunities for career advancement; and strengthening the training of OSH inspection staff, particularly on age and gender specific OSH hazards and risks. For instance, in Canada, a labour inspectorate focused on workers up to age 24. During worksite visits, labour inspectors identified whether young workers had received training by their employer on hazards in the workplace and whether they were informed of their OSH rights.²⁹
- **Pass legislation to integrate OSH into education curricula.** For example, in the United States, Oklahoma passed a "mainstreaming OSH into education" law in 2015.

²⁷ See EC-ULAT: A Work Accident Reporting System in the Philippines, in ILO (2018). Safe Day Report. The common problem of employer under-reporting of OSH injuries and diseases can also be ameliorated at national level by developing alternative and additional sources of actionable OSH injury and disease data, using national employment injury compensation systems, Labour Force Survey instruments and public health data.

²⁸ In some situations, young women may feel more comfortable reporting cases to women inspectors, especially if this relates to gender-based violence and harassment, including sexual harassment and/or abuse.

²⁹ See Labour Inspection Blitz initiative in Ontario (Canada) in ILO (2018). Safe Day Report.

The law requires state labour and education authorities to provide workplace safety training in schools for students aged 12 to 18.³⁰

3.1.3 Multi-stakeholder action to eliminate hazards and risks for young workers aged 18-24

Sound OSH prevention practices can eliminate hazardous work among young workers and transform it into decent work for youth. A critical element of OSH management in the workplace is the process of hazard and risk assessment. The essence of the process is to identify hazards and risks and then take appropriate action to eliminate those hazards or control risks in the workplace. This can be done by following five steps: 1) identify the hazards taking into consideration special requirements of new and young workers who may be at particular risk; 2) identify who might be harmed and how; 3) evaluate the risk and determine the appropriate safety and health risk control measures; 4) record who is responsible for implementing the control measures and the timeframe for completion; and 5) record the findings, monitor and review the risk assessment and update when necessary.³¹ Employers should ensure that risk factors of specific concern to young workers are recognized and addressed by OSH management systems and practices. The workplace assessment should be carried out in consultation with the workers or their representatives to benefit from their knowledge and expertise about actual working processes and methods and followed by training of workers' and management representatives to enable them to jointly take an active role in the recording, monitoring and regular update of the risk assessment.

The ILO guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO-OSH 2001) also provide important practical recommendations to guide the development of OSH management systems at the enterprise level.³² Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can use an adapted ILO training package to assess risk and implement an OSH management system attuned to the specific needs of SMEs.³³

3.1.4 Increasing young workers' participation and access to resources in the informal and rural economies

Providing employers and workers in the informal and rural economy with targeted incentives and resources to help them identify and address workplace hazards and risks is essential to provide decent work opportunities to all young and adult workers. Making sure that employers have access to resources to invest in technology, training, less hazardous alternatives, and necessary personal protective equipment (for workers 18 and above) is crucial to improve young workers' livelihoods while reducing risks and hazards on the job. Well-designed financial incentives can be useful in this regard. For example, in Egypt microfinance institutions successfully provided new businesses with

³⁰ ILO. 2018. Report for World Day for Safety and Health at Work on Improving the Safety and Health of Young Workers. The US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has also developed a framework of foundational workplace safety and health knowledge and skills for young workers that can serve as the basis for subsequent workplace safety and health learning. <https://www2a.cdc.gov/nioshtic-2/BuildQyr.asp?s1=20048777&f1=NN&View=e> [available as of 9 May 2022]

³¹ ILO (2013). Plan Safe, Plan Healthy.

³² ILO (2001). Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO-OSH 2001)

³³ ILO (2013). Training Package on Workplace Risk Assessment and Management for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

micro-loans to invest in safer machinery, equipment and inputs, complemented by additional support for remedying hazards and improving working conditions of large numbers of young employees.³⁴

Participatory approaches to improve OSH through local and low-cost solutions have also proven to be successful in addressing OSH in rural and informal settings where young workers are disproportionately represented in hazardous occupations. For instance, the ILO WIND training-of-trainer workshops have contributed significantly to OSH improvements of rural workers through discussion groups among farmers. Following its successful development in Viet Nam, the programme was scaled-up and implemented in other parts of South East Asia, Central Asia, Europe, Africa and Latin America.³⁵ Another example is the FAO-ILO visual tool on *Protecting Children from Pesticides!*, which allowed agricultural communities in many countries to acknowledge the risks incurred by the use of hazardous pesticides and to adopt low-cost solutions to decrease or eliminate the risks associated with the use of chemicals in crop farming.³⁶

Moreover, to reach marginalized populations that are particularly vulnerable to hazardous child labour, including in rural settings, it is essential to engage relevant local structures and community networks. For example, in rural settings, a village chief or elder may have the greatest local authority. Careful mapping and engagement of local authorities, local communities, and other relevant rural stakeholders, such as producer organizations and cooperatives, youth and women's groups, is often a prerequisite to effective promotion and adoption of new workplace prevention practices, particularly where local practices are based in custom.

Technology offers a unique opportunity to foster decent jobs for youth. The rapid spread of smart phones and extended use of social media in both urban and rural areas have provided an opportunity to disseminate information and raise awareness on potential hazards, as well as to foster a participatory exchange of experiences and best practices through the establishment of local networks, chat forums, etc.

The voices and agency of young people are key to ensure validity and sustainability of efforts in the promotion of OSH among young workers. Taking young workers' concerns directly into account is key to finding community-based solutions. A good example of how this can be done is the mobilization by the ILO of 125 young workers, employers, unionists and students to create a network of young OSH champions, leading to the drafting of a SafeYouth@Work Action Plan.³⁷ Young OSH champions participated in regional consultations to discuss implementation of the action plan with representatives from government, workers' and employers' organizations.³⁸ Another success story in terms of young workers' engagement is represented by the use of the Dimitra listeners'

³⁴ ILO (2012). Towards the elimination of hazardous child labour... Practices with good potential.

³⁵ Between 2004–07, 24 WIND training-of-trainer workshops took place, 7,922 farmers were trained, and as a result, 28,508 safety and health improvements were implemented in Viet Nam. ILO (2014). Global Action Guide for WIND Practical approaches for improving safety, health and working conditions in agriculture Work Improvement in Neighbourhood Development.

³⁶ FAO – ILO (2015), related story <http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/resources/detail/ar/c/1128038/>

³⁷ ILO (2018). SafeYouth@Work Action Plan.

³⁸ See country level work: <https://www.ilo.org/safework/projects/safe-youth/lang--en/index.htm> [available as of 9 May 2022]

club in Mali, where a dedicated discussion group of young people aged 15-24 was created to take action upon hazardous child labour.³⁹

3.1.5 Increasing young people's awareness and skills on OSH through education

Integrating occupational safety and health into general and vocational education is a highly effective way of building OSH awareness, knowledge and skills among young workers and employers. Mainstreaming OSH in education better prepares children and young adults for work life by allowing an effective school-to-work transition where young workers are equipped to identify hazards and risks in the workplace. This should be done first by passing legislation on OSH in national curricula (see section 3.1.3 on building a national OSH system), and second by supporting the implementation of legislation. Canada, France, and the US have developed tools aimed at teachers, parents, young workers, and employers to support the mainstreaming of OSH into education. A study conducted by the French National Research and Safety Institute for the Prevention of Occupational Accidents and Diseases found that young workers who received OSH teaching at school experienced an occupational accident rate 50 per cent lower than their peers who did not.⁴⁰

3.2 Innovative approaches to eliminate hazardous work for young workers

3.2.1 Increasing the quality of data on young workers in hazardous occupations

Key actions include:

- Collecting representative and age-disaggregated data, including hard to collect data concerning informal workers, particularly in agriculture;
- Mobilizing and training community actors such as healthcare workers, teachers, community leaders to support the collection of data on work-related injuries and illnesses, particularly concerning the informal economy and workers in isolated workplaces;
- Training the labour inspectorate on specific OSH vulnerabilities for young workers, paying special attention to the needs of young women, ethnic minorities, migrant workers, and workers with disabilities;
- Training agricultural stakeholders, such as local authorities and representatives from cooperatives, producer organizations, TVET authorities, youth groups and other rural actors on specific OSH hazards and risks faced by young workers, including the risks for those under 18 years of age, to better reach the informal and rural economy; and
- Encouraging multi-stakeholder consultations to improve data and knowledge on youth employment that will, in turn, help guide constituents to shape more effective policies and programmes on youth employment.

³⁹ Dimitra listeners club: a unique approach, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4706e.pdf> [available as of 9 May 2022]

⁴⁰ Institut National de Recherche et de Sécurité (INRS). 2018. "Synthèse étude INRS Accidentologie des jeunes travailleurs. Recevoir un enseignement en santé et sécurité au travail réduit le risque d'accidents du travail chez les moins de 25 ans."

3.2.2 Promoting business-oriented action

Boosting OSH efforts in support of young workers demands:

- Working with industry players through partnerships for a more effective identification of ways to address issues affecting young workers in hazardous occupations;
- Developing evidence and promotion materials illustrating the business case for investing in OSH, including by identifying the impact of OSH on workers' productivity and retention; and making businesses more aware of the potential returns on investment; and
- Promoting sustainable workplace prevention practices in all sectors, with a focus on high-risk sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, construction, mining and quarrying, services, hospitality, health and social services, and domestic work, where improved working conditions and environmentally friendly practices make business sense and have high potential for reducing work-related injuries and illnesses.⁴¹

3.2.3 Encouraging inclusive discussions and consultations

In addition to the lessons learned from integrating OSH discussions in social dialogue, emerging efforts point to the importance of:

- Including local employer and worker representatives in designing and implementing OSH prevention measures, to better integrate local knowledge on workplace hazards and risks, in specific industries and occupations; and
- Directly involving young workers, including those under age 18, and their representatives in the development and implementation of preventive measures for them to share their views and experiences on the challenges to improving OSH, and to propose their own solutions for promoting safety and health in the workplace, including through social media.

3.2.4 Mainstreaming OSH in education

The promotion of OSH starts with early education and training. Recent innovations include:

- Creating methodologies for educators to help them promote awareness on young persons' rights, including on hazardous child labour, that are adaptable to local contexts, needs and resources, and with a special focus on agriculture and vulnerable children such as orphans, children and youth in care, children affected by HIV, former child soldiers, and children affected by conflict including young refugees and internally displaced youth;⁴²

⁴¹ Sectors in which there is a high prevalence of young workers, but also of working conditions of informality, instability and non-standard forms of employment, as identified in the ILO's SafeDay 2018 report.

ILO (2018). Report for World Day for Safety and Health at Work on Improving the Safety and Health of Young Workers.

⁴² See for example, the ILO SCREAM programme: an education pack based on the arts and the media, aimed at encouraging young people to speak out and mobilise their communities to act on the elimination of child labour; and the Junior Farmer Field Schools methodology developed by FAO and implemented by ILO and other partners: a training

- Calling on students and young pupils to play an active role in health and safety-related aspects of their school environment, as part of their learning;
- Using technology to teach and customize teaching programmes on OSH in schools and vocational training centres, but also in the workplace;
- Integrating OSH as early as possible in school curricula, starting in primary school, to provide tools for children, particularly girls, to help them protect themselves in the workplace later in their life; and
- Applying a “whole-school” approach to OSH whereby OSH and risk education are integrated into school curricula; students, teachers and school management representatives are trained in OSH; risk management is conducted at school level with active student participation, and account is taken of the mental health and well-being of all stakeholders at school.⁴³

3.2.5 Adapting OSH frameworks to smaller and informal structures

Provided the incidence of youth employment in SMEs, cooperatives, and informal economy settings, it is important to explore avenues for integrating OSH actions in their day-to-day operations by:

- Developing guidance on OSH management that is adapted to SMEs and informal structures;
- Consulting with workers to identify and promote community-based OSH solutions that are relevant to local context, bearing in mind the goal of ensuring full protection for young workers;
- Consulting with producer organizations and other rural institutions to reach those working as own account workers in the rural economy; and
- Reinforcing the capacity of the labour inspectorate, workers’ organisations and associations and agricultural stakeholders to identify child labour and hazardous employment for young people by providing training on specific hazards and risks faced by young workers, paying particular attention to high-risk sectors and occupations.

methodology linking sustainable and safer farming techniques with personal wellbeing, aimed at vulnerable children and adapted to address issues of child labour in agriculture.

<https://www.ilo.org/ipecc/Campaignandadvocacy/Scream/lang--en/index.htm> [available as of 9 May 2022]

<http://www.fao.org/resilience/resources/ressources-detail/fr/c/212584/> [available as of 9 May 2022]

⁴³ See https://oshwiki.eu/wiki/A_whole-school_approach_to_OSH_education [available as of 9 May 2022]

4 Action to improve the safety and health of young workers in hazardous occupations

The goal of Decent Jobs for Youth under this thematic priority is to accelerate action in the promotion of youth employment through enhanced OSH policies and programmes that can effectively curb hazardous occupations among young workers and protect them against pandemics, epidemics, and endemic diseases.

4.1 Action at global level

At global level, Decent Jobs for Youth will focus on fostering action across the following areas:

- **Promoting evidence and knowledge for OSH action:** Enhance joint efforts to strengthen knowledge on the push- and pull-factors that cause hazardous child labour and advance a culture of evidence-based action in OSH policies and programmes. A particular focus will be given to the agricultural sector given its employment potential for young people. Furthermore, Decent Jobs for Youth partners will promote the collection of information on OSH risks and the impact of OSH measures on labour market outcomes of youth, to continue expanding the evidence base and business case for more and better investments in youth through OSH.
- **Focusing advocacy and action on the most vulnerable youth groups,** including but not limited to (i) young women; (ii) young migrants, young refugees and young people affected by forced displacement who have greater migratory aspirations than adults⁴⁴ and are more prone to face high-risks of exploitation and poor working conditions, including in hazardous occupations; and (iii) young workers in the informal and rural economy, by ensuring measures to tackle hazardous child labour and improve OSH for own account workers.
- **Investments in mental health and mental wellbeing of young workers:** To foster an inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, it is important to safeguard young workers' mental well-being through mental health services, psychosocial support, and sports activities, mentoring and coaching, and a positive environment in the workplace where their rights are protected, and their voices encouraged.

4.2 Action at country and regional levels

At country and regional level, Decent Jobs for Youth will further advocate for the commitment of governments and regional institutions towards the protection of children and young people and the promotion of decent work. Particular attention will be given to advocacy and action around the following areas:

- The ratification of ILO Conventions No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and No. 138, on Minimum Age, encouraging the development and publishing of a list of prohibited hazardous work for children, its regularly update in

⁴⁴ ILO. 2019. World Employment and Social Outlook 2019. Geneva: International Labour Office.

consultation with the relevant employers' and workers' organizations, and the implementation and enforcement of legislation against hazardous child labour.

- The development of a system to monitor and remediate child labour, including hazardous child labour, as required by ILO Convention No. 182.
- The ratification of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention 155 and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention 187, as well as Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment.
- Stronger national knowledge base and data collection on OSH to address underreporting of work-related injuries and illnesses, particularly of young workers.
- The development, regular update and implementation of laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines to protect adequately the safety and health of workers, including those who may be in vulnerable situations, such as young workers with disabilities, young migrants, and young women.
- Training and information to employer and worker representatives, including training resources in the form and language needed to engage young workers, for example the use of technology to create a safety app, or the use of social media for awareness raising.



SCALING UP ACTION & IMPACT ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

CONTACT

DECENTJOBSFORYOUTH@ILO.ORG

ENGAGE

WWW.DECENTJOBSFORYOUTH.ORG

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