



► ILO EIIP Brief Ring Road Project Bamenda

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Implementing activities to support the employability of young people through the EIIP Approach and to create jobs for young people within the framework of the support Programme for the Transport Sector - Phase III: Construction of national road no. 11 - Ring Road in the Northwest Region.

News brief on the implementation of Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) in Bamenda Northwest Region of Cameroon.

Key points

- The International Labour Office and the Government of the Republic of Cameroon signed a cooperation agreement for the implementation of activities to support the employability of young people through the EIIP Approach and to create jobs for young people within the framework of the support Programme for the transport sector - Phase III: Construction of national road no. 11 - Ring Road in the Northwest Region.
- This news brief aims to provide information on the project activities, including the application of OSH measures to support decent work.

Update on activities

Through the project titled “Implementing activities to support the employability of young people through the EIIP Approach and to create jobs for young people within the framework of the support Programme for the Transport Sector - Phase III: Construction of national road no. 11 - Ring Road in the Northwest Region”, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has been carrying out the training of youth in public works-related trades by applying the Employment Intensive Investment (EIIP) approach. This initiative includes the construction of market sheds, maintenance of roads as well as extension of water. These activities have triggered the discussion around Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) for training participants as well as for workers in other ongoing projects in the region.

OSH remain a critical issue in the construction sector worldwide, and Cameroon is no exception. According to the International Labour Organization, a safe and healthy working environment is a fundamental right for all

workers. Yet, construction sites particularly in developing regions continue to expose workers to significant risks. In Cameroon, the construction sector plays a vital economic role, contributing over 6% to GDP and providing thousands of jobs. However, the sector is largely informal, with more than 95% of workers operating outside formal regulatory systems. This informality often translates into weak enforcement of safety standards and limited access to protective equipment and training.

The Northwest Region stands out as one of the areas most affected by occupational hazards. Data shows that approximately 23.4% of workers in this region reported work-related accidents, one of the highest rates in the country. This alarming statistic reflects both the dangerous nature of construction work and the lack of adequate safety systems. Construction workers are particularly vulnerable due to exposure to hazards such as falls from heights, collapsing structures, heavy machinery accidents, and poor use of protective equipment. Globally, the International Labour Organization estimates that millions of workers suffer injuries each year, with the construction sector among the most dangerous industries.

Several factors contribute to weak OSH practices in construction sites in the Northwest Region:

- **Informality of the sector:** Many workers lack contracts, insurance, or formal training.
- **Limited government inspection capacity:** Labour inspections are often insufficient.
- **Lack of awareness:** Workers and employers may not fully understand safety standards.
- **Resource constraints:** Small contractors may not invest in safety equipment.

Additionally, ongoing socio-political challenges in the region have disrupted governance and reduced oversight, further complicating OSH enforcement.



Trainees of the Ndu chantier-école receiving morning briefing dressed in their PPE before the start of work

A local contractor in the Northwest Region, who preferred anonymity, highlighted economic pressures: “Safety equipment costs money. When clients want cheap buildings, contractors cut corners. Even if we know the standards, we don’t always apply them.” This reflects a broader systemic issue where cost minimization outweighs safety considerations, especially in informal construction projects. The International Labour Organization provides international standards such as the Safety and Health in Construction Convention (No. 167), which promotes preventive safety culture across all construction activities. These frameworks emphasize employer responsibility, worker training, and risk prevention throughout the project lifecycle. This is what was considered in all the chantier-écoles implemented by this project.

Cameroon, as an ILO member since 1960, benefits from technical support and programmes aimed at promoting decent work and improving labour conditions. However, translating these standards into practice at the local level remains a challenge.

Focus of this brief

This brief aims to demonstrate the central place of OSH in the effective implementation of the ILO projects as compared to the other works being implemented in the region. It also aims to demonstrate the confidence that the respect for OSH has brought to the ILO project participants who receive training in its chantier-école sites.

The project has so far implemented five (05) chantier-écoles. Upon completion, all have been handed over to the beneficiary communities. The remaining five (05) chantier-écoles have just been initiated; they are: the rehabilitation of 1 Km Road in Nkambe council, the construction of market sheds in Kumbo, Jakiri, Babessi and the water extension in Bafut.

These projects have trained close to 500 youth in public works trades in the different localities, with about 30% being females. By ensuring that the trainees are provided with the necessary personal protective equipment (PPEs), registered against workplace accidents, given access to well-equipped first aid kits and qualified medical support, and that they receive a stipend, that the working time is clear, that they can make their voice heard and have signed an engagement with the implementing partner that serves as a binding contract, the ILO projects have helped raise OSH awareness, standards and practices, setting these initiatives apart from other ongoing projects in the region.

Testimony

Trainee in the Ndu Council, chantier-école

“Before joining this ILO project, I had never worked on a site where safety was taken so seriously. Here in Ndu, everything is done with respect for our wellbeing. We were trained on OSH, and on the site, these rules are followed every day. I feel safe wearing my protective equipment, and the supervisors always check on us to make sure we are working correctly and without danger. This gives me peace of mind and allows me to focus on learning and doing my job well. I wish this is extended to other non-ILO projects in our area. I am truly satisfied and proud to be part of a project where workers’ safety is a priority”.

ILO implementing partner in the Ndop chantier-école

“Working as an implementing partner on this ILO project in the Ndop has been a very positive experience, especially when it comes to safety. The OSH standards set by the ILO were clear, realistic, and strictly respected on site. My team and I made sure every worker had the right protective equipment, and we never started a task without reviewing the safety procedures. The trainees also took safety seriously because they were well trained from the beginning. Thanks to this approach, we’ve had smooth operations, no major incidents, and a team that feels confident and protected. It’s a good example of how construction work should be done”.

Female trainee in the Tubah chantier-école

“As a young woman trainee on this ILO project in the Tubah, I feel very satisfied with how OSH standards are respected on site. Before joining, I was worried about working on a construction site, but the training and the safety measures put in place changed everything for me. I always have my protective equipment on, the supervisors guide us patiently and everyone follows the safety rules. This makes me feel safe, respected, and confident in my work. Thanks to this project, I now believe that women can take part in any type of work as long as the environment is safe and supportive”.



Workers doing iron bending in a building site in Bamenda working without any PPE



Distribution of PPE and other working equipment to trainees in chantier-école in Tubah

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