Partnerships for safe and healthy young workers

From country to country, the entry point for public engagement, and young worker safety and health concerns vary considerably. The Project facilitated the dynamic exchange of initiatives and tools, innovative partnerships, and good practices in supporting OSH policies and legislation to better address young worker vulnerability.

Funded by the US Department of Labor, the project brought together OSH experts and stakeholders including workers’ and employers’ representatives, government officials, educators, civil society, and development partners to advance and promote OSH for young persons, with a focus on those above the minimum age of work up to 24 years.

The SafeYouth@Work Project theory of change mandates youth engagement as key to laying the foundation for a sustainable culture of safety and health prevention, building on synergies with national priorities and complementary development initiatives. The Project sought to promote young worker rights by strengthening their voice in the world of work. The concerns and aspirations of young people matter as well as our collective actions to inform them and integrate them in core decision making processes.

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Spotlight on impact stories
We invite you to explore “Our Impact, Their Voices”, a collection of stories highlighting the work and impact of women and men globally helping to build a culture of prevention and improve the safety and health of young workers.

Data
Assisting countries to collect and effectively use relevant OSH data

Laws
Improving legal frameworks to better protect young workers

Capacity
Strengthening capacity to address workplace hazards and risks

Awareness
Raising awareness on hazards and risks faced by young workers

Youth is the future of work. ILO calls on all of its partners to join its commitment.

Guy Ryder
Director-General, ILO

Results

- 8 countries with strengthened OSH systems and enhanced OSH prevention culture
- 1,300 members of workers’ and employers’ organizations trained on OSH issues, rights, and practices, including for young workers
- 5 national legislations on OSH strengthened, including for young workers
- 4 new National Action Plans developed
- 3 new National OSH Profiles adopted
- 25 guidelines on OSH good practices for young workers adapted to national context
- 4,000 youth engaged in OSH awareness and promotional activities
- 800 labour inspectors and administrators trained on young worker OSH issues
- 800 national tripartite committee members and key stakeholders trained on OSH for young workers

Building a culture of safety and health for young workers

Every day, approximately 7,600 people die from occupational accidents or diseases and more than one million people suffer injury on the job. Younger workers experience the highest rate of work-related injuries due to many causes, including a lack of awareness of safety rules and worker rights; limited job skills and work experience; a lack of training in job tasks or hazard prevention; long working hours; inadequate supervision; and, unsuitable job assignments.

The SafeYouth@Work Project, a cornerstone of the ILO’s Global OSH Flagship Programme – “Safety and Health for All” was launched in 2015, bringing young people to the table to develop solutions to improve OSH for young workers and to promote a culture of prevention. The successes of the SafeYouth@Work Project span eight countries and four years of intensive advocacy, research, policy support, capacity building and awareness raising on the specific OSH concerns of young workers.
Reliable OSH data - safer workplaces for young workers

Better data drive the development of more effective prevention measures and provide the rationale for key initiatives such as integrating OSH into technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Better data also strengthen OSH management systems within enterprises and facilitate effective allocation of scarce public resources.

The SafeYouth@Work Project helped identify knowledge gaps and carried out targeted research on young worker OSH vulnerability. The Project facilitated better reporting by employers and workers through relevant training guidance and tools.

Through innovative partnerships with young workers, government ministries, and workers’ and employers’ organizations, the SafeYouth@Work Project helped to improve data collection and analysis on OSH for young workers.

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Tripartite engagement for better OSH data collection on young workers

Young workers suffer the highest rate of work-related injuries of any age group. This is due to many factors including their limited work experience and training, and a lack of awareness of safety rules and worker rights. The absence of age-disaggregated OSH data often prevents an analysis of the true scope, nature, causes and impact of occupational accidents and diseases.

Sound data on OSH establish the evidentiary basis for policy making and measuring progress, and are essential for the development and implementation of strategies and programmes addressing young workers’ OSH vulnerability.

As young workers, we are now empowered and knowledgeable on how we do OSH reporting.
Joey Adrias, Vice-President, FFW Local Union, The Philippines

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Youth voices contribute to improving OSH legal and policy frameworks

Creating space for youth voices to be heard promotes OSH for all workers, and OSH policies addressing the specific needs of young workers, including youth in hazardous occupations, can help secure decent work for all. Targeted legislation, greater coherence between TVET and the labour market and strengthened advocacy and awareness about OSH rights at work are key to protecting young workers. In this effort, youth voices are paramount.

The SafeYouth@Work Project successfully demonstrated good practices for engaging youth to strengthen OSH legislation, regulations, policies and programmes for young workers.

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Strengthening legal and policy frameworks to protect young workers better

Strong national OSH legislation, policies and programmes are key to protecting the physical and mental health of young workers, including the many young people working in the informal economy.

The ILO SafeYouth@Work Project combined research, advocacy and action to strengthen legal and policy frameworks to better protect the safety and health of young workers. The project worked at multiple levels and with a range of tripartite actors including legislatures, educational and training institutions, employer groups, trade unions and youth organizations.

Argentina
- First National Action Plan on Health and Safety for Young Workers

Ivory Coast
- First National Action Plan on Child Labour with integrated OSH provisions

Indonesia
- First National OSH Profile developed with significant youth input

Myanmar
- New OSH Law incorporates significant youth employment provisions
- First National OSH Profile addressing young worker vulnerability

The Philippines
- New OSH Law mandates complete job safety training for all workers especially to those entering work for the first time

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Strengthening the capacity of tripartite partners to address workplace hazards and risks

Greater OSH Capacity

Strengthening the capacity of tripartite partners to address workplace hazards and risks

Building a generation of safe and healthy workers

Dialogue with young workers is necessary to eliminate OSH hazards, minimize workplace risks and improve working conditions. To effectively represent young workers, OSH representatives need to be more aware of the risk factors faced by young workers and should be provided with guidance on how to better address the OSH vulnerabilities of young workers.

The SafeYouth@Work Project established innovative partnerships with a range of tripartite actors to expand OSH capacities including academic and training institutions, youth organizations, national OSH councils, private business councils and regional associations.

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Building OSH knowledge among governments, employers and young workers

Sustainable progress on OSH for young workers requires more than improvements in data and laws and policies to address young workers’ needs. It requires increased capacity from the tripartite constituents and other relevant stakeholders. Strengthening OSH capacity in governments, employers’ organizations and trade unions allows them to take greater responsibility to protect young workers.

ILO’s SafeYouth@Work Project strengthened national capacity on OSH for young workers, improving the quality and relevance of tripartite engagement and interministerial collaboration.

**Empowerment of young people** to become champions for OSH is an important driver in building a culture of prevention on OSH

**Community-based, institutional “multiplier” training** is an effective tool to spread a culture of OSH prevention

**Cross-sectoral partnerships** and mainstreaming awareness of young worker vulnerability is key to improving OSH capacity for youth
Youth participation in the creation of an OSH culture of prevention

Where there is a culture of prevention, there is respect for the right to a safe and healthy work environment at all levels.

Directly involving young workers and their organizations in the development and implementation of preventive measures is critical to creating a generation of safe and healthy workers.

The SafeYouth@Work Project’s awareness-raising initiatives varied according to national contexts and were linked to global awareness objectives on safety and health, as well as to one another through regional and project-wide platforms.

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Increasing global awareness of the hazards and risks faced by young workers

Conducting OSH awareness and disseminating knowledge on young worker safety is critical. Awareness-raising campaigns on OSH that use real-world experiences to teach young workers conveys essential information to sensitize workers, parents, employers, schools, and communities about young workers’ rights and vulnerabilities.

To raise awareness of young workers’ vulnerability, the ILO SafeYouth@Work Project worked to increase global understanding of the hazards and risks faced by young workers. Actively engaging youth in building this expanded knowledge base and creating awareness and changing attitudes and behaviours on safety and health for young workers, is crucial to building a culture of prevention, which is a pillar of the Project strategy.

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