

ASSESSING PHYSICAL RISKS OF YOUNG WORKERS IN AGRICULTURE: SPECIAL GROUPS NEED SPECIAL METHODS

Informal Work Webinar Series

Date: Thursday, 28 May 2026

Time: 14:00 UTC (15:00 Douala, Cameroon; 10:00am US EDT)

Duration: 90 mins (at least 30 min. Q&A)

Brief summary of content: This webinar is organized by the IEA Informal Work Technical Committee in collaboration with Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB). It draws on recent research in the vanilla supply chain in Madagascar where workers operate largely under informal arrangements. We will demonstrate how risk assessments tailored to the local situation can be helpful to communities and buyers alike in reducing ergonomic risks among those who produce such desirable agricultural products as vanilla.



Images courtesy: WHWB

Presentations:

- 1) Introduction to Workplace Health Without Borders and Panel Presenters – **Mary O'Reilly**
- 2) Putting the Spotlight on the Occupational Health of Young Workers: Examples from an ILO project in Madagascar - **Susan Gunn**
- 3) Adapting Traditional Ergonomic Assessment Methods for Use with Adolescent Workers – **Mary O'Reilly**
- 4) Conducting a Comprehensive OSH Risk Assessment of Young Workers in Agriculture – Process and Policy Implications – **Mario Rakotomanga & Joseph Kaptue**
- 5) Q&A Panel Discussion moderated by **Donald Cole & Bernard Martin**

Presenters:

Mary O'Reilly holds a PhD in Human Anatomy and Cell Biology from the University of Michigan, Dr. O'Reilly has served as an environmental toxicologist, as research assistant professor at SUNY Upstate Medical University and as an industrial hygienist and a certified professional ergonomist with State agencies and companies since the 1990s. Her publications cover such topics as risk, decision making, and ergonomics. Currently she is President of ARLS Consultants, Inc, and holds an adjunct assistant professorship in the Department of Environmental Health Sciences at the University at Albany, State University of New York.

Member of the Technical Advisory Committee to the ILO Madagascar Project.

Joseph Silvere Kaptue, MD, Specialist in Workers' Health and Industrial Hygiene. Dr. Kaptue currently heads the Société Camerounaise de Santé et Sécurité au Travail, Cameroun (SCSST), based in Douala, Cameroun, which under his direction has conducted several occupational health studies of young workers in various occupations throughout Africa.

Senior Consultant responsible for overall project design and team training of the ILO Madagascar Project.

Mario Rakotomanga holds a degree in chemical engineering from the Ecole supérieure polytechnique from the University of Antananarivo Madagascar, Mr. Rakotomanga is a health and safety professional with a large practice in occupational hygiene in mining and refining companies in Madagascar.

Field Manager responsible for conducting the research and overseeing the field teams for the ILO project: "Evaluation of Occupational Health Risks to Children in the Vanilla Industry in Madagascar".

Donald Cole is an occupational, environmental and public health physician and emeritus professor at the University of Toronto with four decades of work in environmental and health experience in Canada and lower- and middle-income countries. Interests include agriculture, ecosystems, food systems and health and population health intervention evaluations. He has co-lead research on musculoskeletal disorders among workers and participatory ergonomic interventions impacts. He currently engages in clinical practice with the Occupational Health Clinic for Ontario Workers and research informing programs and policy, while contributing to an Ontario, Canada family farm.

Member of the Technical Advisory Committee for the ILO Madagascar project

Susan Gunn is a medical anthropologist with a master's in public health (MPH) from UC-Berkeley and a PhD from the University of Colorado. She has taught at the American University of Beirut Medical School and in the National Health Service in the UK. From 1974 to 2001 she managed projects for USAID and other development agencies before going onto the staff of the International Labor Organization as Senior Technical Advisor on hazardous child labor, a post which has involved policy negotiation, research on the health impacts of early work, design and management of projects, and development of tools for countries to use in addressing their child



labor problems. Her particular concern is the formal child workers, who are now above the legal age for work but still suffer high rates of injury and psychological trauma.

Lead of the ILO Project, "Evaluation of Occupational Health Risks to Children in the Vanilla Industry in Madagascar".

Organisers:

Mary O'Reilly, PhD, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Health Sciences, University at Albany, NY.

Clive D'Souza, PhD, University of Pittsburgh, and Chair, IEA Informal Work Technical Committee.

Zoom Registration: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_X5jbeb5lQtir-0usAHZCZA

Registration is complimentary (free) though it is necessary to register to attend. Registered attendees can complete a brief post-webinar survey to receive e-certificates of completion. Some presentations will be in French with English subtitles. The webinar will be recorded and published on YouTube. Attendance permits live interaction with the presenters via Q&A.