

Children and Work: Context

The ILO estimates that 317 million children under 18 are economically active, constituting approximately 20.3% of the age cohort.¹ Many of these children work in the informal sector, in microenterprises receiving loans from MFIs, and the skills they develop in their workplaces represent an important part of the country's workforce development.

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and Partners in Technology Exchange (PTE) began the PPIC-Work project (Promoting and Protecting the Interests of Children who Work) in 2002 to improve the working conditions and learning opportunities for working children in Egypt. The PPIC-Work project has developed a set of tools for assessing workplace conditions for economically active youth, focusing on two key areas: mitigating potential hazards and improving formal and nonformal learning opportunities. Loan officers from partner MFIs are trained to use these tools in conducting workplace assessments.

Workplace Safety:

Workplace safety is a key issue in youth employment around the world. Non-safety experts are often called on to assess workplaces: in North America, teachers select environments for student placements or internships; in developing countries, safety inspectors may be seen as corrupt, requiring others to fulfill this role.

In Egypt, the PPIC-Work project has trained loan officers working in partner microfinance institutions (MFI) to conduct safety assessments; using existing staff to mitigate hazards makes the monitoring a regular part of their loan visits and ensures the sustainability of the intervention beyond the life of the project. In addition, the loan officer creates a connection between hazard reduction and potential financing from the MFI gives business owners a strong incentive to invest in workplace safety.

¹ ILO, "The End of Child Labour: Within Reach." Geneva, 2006.

Tool I: Categories of Hazards

The 7 categories of hazards or potential hazards in workplaces are:

- **Accident hazards**
(e.g., wet or uneven surfaces, accidents with cutting or power tools, motor vehicles or machines)
- **Chemical hazards**
(e.g., exposure to crop dust, fibres, exhaust, mineral dust or toxic chemical agents)
- **Physical hazards**
(e.g., noise, vibration, heat and cold, electricity, poor ventilation)
- **Ergonomic hazards**
(e.g., lifting carrying or moving heavy objects, repetitive motions, awkward postures, poorly designed or sharpened tools)
- **Working conditions**
(e.g., long hours, lack of security, poor sanitation and housing)
- **Biological hazards**
(e.g., contact with biological wastes, animals or plants)
- **Psychological hazards**
(e.g., abuse, humiliation, isolation, lack of learning opportunities, stress)

Sample Table for Workplace Assessment

Type of Hazards	Examples in the Workplace	Possible Mitigation
Accident		
Chemical		
Physical		
Ergonomic		
Working Conditions		
Biological		
Psychological		

Tool 2: SCORING HAZARDS

<i>Probability</i> \ <i>Severity</i>	Serious	Moderate	Minor
High			
Medium			
Low			