IMPROVING OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY – AN ISSUE AFFECTING US ALL

How to protect workers against occupational diseases, injuries and accidents while maintaining productivity high? What is needed for proper Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) management in companies? What policy is needed to create compliance to international standards of OHS regulations? How can I benefit from sector-specific knowledge and solutions to improve working conditions and set up new business?

As one of the internationally leading institutes on Work & Employment and Occupational Health and Safety, TNO Work & Employment offers solutions to address challenges in the area of safe and healthy working conditions to ensure lasting impact that benefits business, government and society, especially in developing countries.
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CHALLENGES IN OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY
Keeping workers healthy is crucial for a stable household income, maintaining productivity levels and a prosperous economy. It is known that healthy people are happier and perform better. Furthermore, there is compelling evidence that a safe and healthy work environment increases productivity and reduces healthcare costs.

However, in improving safe & healthy working conditions, many challenges have to be met.

- First, governments need to create sound policy strategies in order to effectively address OHS issues, including a sound regulatory framework and monitoring.
- Second, knowledge and solutions are sector-specific, while knowledge building and – transfer are often not well-enough organized. A lack of monitoring and evaluation processes creates not only a dangerous black box concerning the presence, nature and size of OHS-related hazards, it also fails to clarify which improvements are effective. Sound monitoring and evaluation therefore, could help governments, companies, employers and trade unions in establishing effective OHS programs.
- On company-level, proper OHS management is often a challenge, such as: risk assessment and evaluation, monitoring of internal OHS issues, and dedicated in-house professionals on OHS. The lack of knowledge about effective measures and/or implementation causes inertia in companies, hampers industrial development (profit), as well as occupational health and safety (people) and the environment (planet).

EXAMPLES OF OUR PROJECTS
TNO supports governments in the development, implementation and sharing of knowledge of OHS-policies, and offers services/solutions to companies by advise and tools to prevent work-related accidents, incidents and work-related illnesses of employees. An example of our projects is displayed below:

THE DUTCH FOCAL POINT (FOP) OF THE EUROPEAN AGENCY OF SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK;
- A task dedicated to TNO by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment
- The Dutch FOP actively contributes to further development of occupational health and safety in the Netherlands and in Europe.
- It does so by exchanging knowledge, instruments and good practices on OHS between industry, knowledge institutes and government.

BUSINESS CENTERS;
- TNO helps to set up Business Centers abroad
- These Business Centers collect, sustain, and share information, knowledge and experiences, in partnerships with relevant local initiatives and development partners, government, private sector and civil society.
- Our activities are aimed at capacity building of the local experts of the business center and the development of tools.
- The Textile Technology Business Center in Bangladesh is an example of such a Business Center.

OIRA (ONLINE INTERACTIVE RISK ASSESSMENT);
- Together with social partners and the Dutch government, TNO offers support to enable and promote compliance to the legally required Risk Assessment for companies.
- By involving sector- and employers organizations, as well as other intermediary consultants, TNO has built an interactive OHS-risk assessment tool to support the implementation of Risk Assessment at company level by developing instruments, tools and communications.
- This system has been adopted and implemented Europe wide by EU-OSHA.
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**OHS MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY CULTURE:**
- TNO has experience in setting up OHS management in companies. This involves appointing a dedicated person for OHS, and accommodating their start with easy tools and a website.
- In terms of improving safety culture within companies, TNO has created Safety@Core Business, a valuable instrument which can foster substantial improvement.

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**‘TRAIN-THE-TRAINER’ PRACTICES:**
- In its projects, TNO aims to be a knowledge broker and a capacity builder.
- One of the activities we are specialized in therefore are ‘train-the-trainer’ practices, through which we help governments, employees, employers to train targeted groups of the OHS infrastructure, such as Labour Inspectorates.

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**OHS MONITOR:**
- To monitor national OHS working conditions, TNO set up national surveys on OHS among workers, employers and self-employed. Based on the data, TNO performs analysis and interpretation of most emerging OHS-risks, impact of measures and policies, and specific risk groups of workers and sectors.

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OUR STRENGTHS
TNO endorses the importance of addressing the specific health needs of workers. TNO’s strengths are:
• Multi-level approach by involving governments, industries, workers, labour unions and local supplies.
• Locally shaped solutions: sensitive to local circumstances and promoting local business.
• Multi-disciplinary experts: from applied technical and psychosocial and organizational scientific disciplines.

EXPLORING BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES
TNO is actively exploring opportunities to create value to developing countries and emerging economies by improving safe and healthy working conditions. Bringing together our well recognized knowledge on occupational health and safety on one hand, and our experiences on system innovation and transitions in developing countries on the other hand, we aim to build capacity of governments, social partners, organizations and companies (public and private) by sharing our knowledge and expertise. Collaboration could take shape through, for example, knowledge exchange and transfer in workshops or the co-development and execution of a project.

Interested in exploring new opportunities with TNO?

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ABOUT TNO & INNOVATION FOR
DEVELOPMENT
TNO, the Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research, connects people and knowledge to create innovations that boost the sustainable competitive strength of industry and well-being of society. As an organization regulated by public law since 1932, TNO is independent: not part of any government, university or company.

The Innovation for Development program within TNO focuses on creating inclusive innovations in developing countries and emerging economies. Through public private partnerships, TNO develops and launches products and services with sound business models in the field of nutrition, renewable energy, health, water, ICT and safety which have a boosting impact on entrepreneurship, income and wealth of people, and simultaneously create business opportunities for the private sector. TNO established an extensive network in Africa and Asia, through various collaborations with the private sector, civil society organizations, public partners, knowledge institutes and end-users.

HEALTHY LIVING
TNO initiates technological and social innovation for healthy living in a vital society.

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