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GRATITUDE IS THE SIGN OF NOBLE SOULS

HAI DUONG

For many years, Vietnam has been one of the world's major producers and exporters of agricultural products, with its coffee export volume being the second biggest after Brazil. Currently, the Central Highlands is the largest coffee cultivation area in the country with nearly 711,000 hectares; Son La is the largest in Northern Vietnam with 20,000 hectares. In 2022, Vietnam's coffee export reached USD 4 billion in value.

Most of the coffee in Vietnam is cultivated by smallholder farmers. For each hectare of coffee, it usually requires several workers for tasks like planting, caring, harvesting, and possibly pre-processing. With nearly 750,000 hectares of coffee, the number of workers involved in cultivation and other services in the coffee supply chain in the country is up to millions of people.

The majority of coffee workers in our country are ethnic minority and migrant ones, of which the former ones account for a big proportion and come from various provinces. In general, the awareness of the importance of occupational safety and health (OSH) among Vietnamese workers is still low, and even lower among coffee ones, whereas coffee production is a hard work with high risks of occupational accidents and diseases.

Although serious and fatal occupational accidents do not occur frequently, accidents due to electric shock, pesticide poisoning, sharp objects splashed in the eyes, cut in the limb, musculoskeletal and joint pain due to falls or heavy loads, etc. are quite common. It is worth mentioning that most of these occupational accidents are preventable.

In the past time, along with the efforts of our political system and authorities at all levels in communicating, disseminating information and encouraging coffee workers to pay attention to OSH in production, international organizations have also made contributions to this work, notably the International Labour Organization (ILO). As a result, there has been certain OSH progress among coffee workers, especially among coffee cultivators. The number of occupational accidents has been decreased, while the quality of life, living environment and working conditions of coffee farmers have been significantly improved.

However, in this labor-intensive sector, there is still a lack of trade unions, which are organizations to protect workers. To date, many coffee farmers in Son La have joined cooperatives where they can work as agricultural workers. Is it possible to establish trade unions in cooperatives? If the answer is yes, the OSH situation of coffee workers will surely be improved.

Coffee farmers in the Central Highlands used to "swing" according to the ups and downs of coffee price, i.e. when it was high, everyone rushed to cultivate coffee - when it was low, everyone cut down coffee trees. Meanwhile, coffee farmers in Son La have always been afraid of the frosty season. In addition, they face many existing safety risks. Whenever you drink a cup of tasty coffee, please think of the ones who produce it. In order to have that cup of coffee, coffee workers have devoted their sweat, even their blood. □

THEME: OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN VIETNAM'S COFFEE SUPPLY CHAIN

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OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN VIETNAM'S COFFEE SUPPLY CHAIN

The “Improving safety and health in cooperation with the public and private sector in the coffee supply chain in Vietnam” project implemented by the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Vision Zero Fund (VZF) is part of a global initiative that seeks to eliminate work-related serious or fatal accidents, injuries and diseases in global supply chains. The ILO manages the Fund and carries out VZF projects in collaboration with global and national partners. Over the years, VZF has implemented projects in Colombia, Ethiopia, Honduras, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Madagascar, Mexico, and Vietnam.

The VZF Vietnam project started in October 2019. Under the VZF Global Strategy 2019-2023, the VZF Vietnam Project sought to leverage the strengths and duties of multiple public and private sector stakeholders as well as multi-stakeholder sustainable coffee initiatives to drive OSH improvement in Vietnam’s coffee supply chain through partnership and collective action.

This OSH magazine produced in collaboration with VZF Vietnam with the theme "OSH in Vietnam’s coffee supply chain" will introduce to readers a series of articles on VZF project implementation, the role and participation of trade unions at all levels in specific VZF activities and initial achievements. Please enjoy the magazine. □



A worker harvesting coffee in Lam Dong province. Photo: ILO Viet Nam.



VIETNAM TRADE UNION PLACES IMPORTANCE

TO OSH

MR. NGO DUY HIEU

*Vice Chairman, Vietnam General
Confederation of Labor (VGCL)*



After construction and mining, agriculture is the sector where workers face the most adverse health risk factors. In particular, workers in Vietnam's coffee supply chain have been encountering many OSH hazards and risks.

Vietnam is the second largest coffee exporter in the world with an export volume lower than that of Brazil only. The sector is using more than 600,000 workers and providing livelihoods for about 2.6 million people. However, coffee workers have been facing risks at different tiers of the supply chain, e.g. improper storage of raw materials, unsafe use of agricultural chemicals and disposal of chemical packaging, unsafe machinery, exposure to dust and noise in coffee processing facilities. In addition, slopes in coffee gardens can pose a risk of slips and falls for harvest workers, especially when they carry

heavy bags on slippery roads without personal protective equipment (PPE). Many workers also face psychological risks, especially high stress due to the inherent financial instability of the industry. Such conditions are detrimental to the health of workers and to the productivity of businesses.

With the role of representing and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of union members and workers, for many years, the Vietnam Trade Union has been affirming that all workers in Vietnam (including workers in the coffee supply chain) have the right to a safe and healthy workplace. Therefore,

the Vietnam Trade Union always pays attention to and focuses on the implementation of labor protection, guarantee of OSH, protection of workers' health and life.

This is also consistent with the views of the Vietnamese Government and State, which always consider OSH as the most core interest for workers, and with ILO Conventions No. 155 and 187 as well as the new-generation free trade agreements (e.g. CPTPP, EVFTA) to which Vietnam is a signatory.

In order to promote the implementation of OSH in general and OSH in the agriculture sector in particular, in recent years, VGCL has urged the implementation of Resolution No. 10c/NQ-BCH dated January 12, 2017 by the 11th VGCL Executive Committee on improving the effectiveness of trade unions' OSH work in the

new situation, VGCL Directive No. 04/CT-TLD dated March 3, 2017 on continuing to promote the "Green - Clean - Beautiful and OSH" movement in the new situation.

Resolution No. 10c/NQ-BCH states: "Organization of OSH implementation is the obligation and responsibility of all

levels, sectors, organizations, individuals, employers and workers, in which trade unions have important roles and responsibilities in ensuring safe and healthy working conditions, building OSH culture in the workplace, proactively preventing occupational accidents and diseases among workers, contributing

to promoting the development of production and improving labor productivity, etc. Good implementation of OSH will contribute to affirming the role as well as enhancing the position of trade unions, developing union membership, attracting workers to trade unions, building a strong working class and trade unions".

“
 FOR THE ROLE OF REPRESENTING AND PROTECTING THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF UNION MEMBERS AND WORKERS, FOR MANY YEARS, THE VIETNAMESE TRADE UNION HAS DETERMINED THAT ALL VIETNAMESE WORKERS (INCLUDING WORKERS IN THE COFFEE SUPPLY CHAIN) HAVE THE RIGHT TO HAVE A SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACE.”

Accordingly, the direction of the implementation of Resolution 10c/NQ-BCH was given from VGCL to trade unions at all levels, covering more than 11 million union members in over 125,000 grassroots trade unions. VGCL has proactively proposed to the Government and to the State many mechanisms and policies on job creation, improvement of union material and spiritual life as well as protection of legitimate rights and interests of union members and workers; joined relevant authorities in investigating and concluding occupational accidents in accordance with regulations; detected and requested remedies to OSH violations and risks.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the implementation of VGCL guidelines and resolutions, apart from issuing guiding documents, trade unions at all levels also establish audit teams or collaborate with other authorities to audit and supervise the implementation of OSH in industries/occupations at high risk of OSH deficiency, with focus on equipment/machinery subject to strict OSH requirements, monitoring of the working environment, provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), periodic health check-up, medical examination to detect occupational diseases among union members and workers.

At the same time, trade unions



A worker of 715A Coffee Limited Company takes care of coffee trees. Photo: DVCC.



“ I BELIEVE THAT IN THE COMING FUTURE THIS WORK WILL CONTINUE TO BE CARED FOR, WITH MORE SUBSTANTIVE AND SOLID RESULTS BEING ACHIEVED ”

Happiness of a coffee farmer with a bumper crop. Photo: ILO Vietnam.

Training of trainers for OSH practitioners from coffee processing companies. Photo: ILO Viet Nam.

also renew the contents and diversified the forms of their activities, apply information technology and use social networks to improve the effectiveness of OSH communication and dissemination; promote solutions to meet "green production" requirements in the agriculture industry, limit the use of pesticides and enhance the use of organic fertilizer in production, innovate the production process, invest in upgrading machinery and equipment to reduce occupational accident risks among workers.

I was lucky to immerse myself in OSH in the agriculture industry when I was the Secretary of Phuc Tho District (a rural district of Hanoi city) Party Committee. Thus, when I moved to VGCL,

I continue to pay attention to this topic, participating in law/policy making, monitoring the enforcement of law and find solutions to many major issues of trade unions like those related to human rights, occupational safety, etc. Until now, guarantee of workers' rights and labor protection remain at the top of my interests.

In fact, the number of trade union members in the agriculture sector is small, despite of the large number of workers in the sector. In addition, the State's policies on OSH in agriculture are limited in terms of quantity, and communication on OSH in agriculture does not reach farmers. VGCL has directed

the agriculture and rural development sector (ARDS)'s Trade Union to collaborate closely with local authorities and to propose to them issuing social security policies for coffee workers. Accordingly, the ARDS Trade Union and the Vietnam Coffee Corporation (VINACAFE)'s Trade Union have actively made efforts to carry out many activities to support union members and workers, fulfilling well their tasks of representing and protecting legitimate rights and interests of union members and workers. I believe that in the coming future, OSH work will continue to be paid attention and more substantive and solid results will be achieved. □

IT IS NECESSARY TO PROMOTE THE CARE AND PROTECTION OF WORKERS' INTERESTS

IN THE COFFEE SUPPLY CHAIN

The ILO VZF project has actively collaborated with VGCL in information sharing, consultation and promotion of a communication campaign for OSH awareness raising in Vietnam's coffee supply chain. A reporter of our magazine already had a conversation with Ms. Ho Thi Kim Ngan, Deputy Director of the VGCL Industrial Relations Department to further explore this Project.



Ms. Ho Thi Kim Ngan, Deputy Director of the VGCL Industrial Relations Department. Photo: Huyen Vi.

Reporter: Please tell me about some of the main activities between the Project and tripartite partners in Vietnam.

Ms. Ho Thi Kim Ngan: As far as I know, ILO VZF is a project that brings together ILO tripartite constituents as well as other companies and stakeholders to join hands and work together towards the vision of zero serious and fatal work-related accidents, injuries and deaths in global supply chains. In our country, the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Ho Chi Minh city (VCCI-HCM) is the project executing agency. It has approved the project workplan with various activities to be implemented from October

2020 to June 2023, including: a survey on the current OSH situation of workers who cultivate and process coffee to assess the risks to which they may be exposed in the coffee supply chain; then determine the activities to be implemented to promote safe and healthful working conditions in the coffee supply chain.

The project has also invited and financed tripartite partners (including the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs - MOLISA, VCCI and VGCL) to participate in an international planning workshop on a global communication campaign for OSH awareness raising in the coffee supply chain in order to "realize the right to

a safe and healthy working environment in the coffee supply chain" (March 12 - 17, 2023) at the ILO International Training Center (Turin, Italy); collaborated with MOLISA to organize a training workshop on methods for developing a communication strategy in the coffee industry; implemented a number of activities to help the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Vietnam Cooperative Alliance (VCA) and Vietnam Coffee - Cocoa Association (VICOFA) organize training to raise awareness of OSH among farmers; organized a technical workshop on "mainstreaming gender in OSH". From now until the end of 2023, the ILO/VZF project will implement a communication

campaign to raise OSH awareness in the coffee supply chain, replicate good practices, disseminate knowledge products and call for specific activities in 3 countries of Uganda, Brazil and Vietnam.

The project focuses on the coffee supply chain, but also seeks to replicate good OSH practices in other agriculture sub-sectors.

As far as I can see, over the last years the project activities have been implemented with the participation of many partners, including tripartite agencies and experienced OSH experts.

Reporter: According to you, how relevant are the project objectives to the activities of trade unions?

Ms. Ho Thi Kim Ngan: I appreciate the project objectives in Vietnam, which are to raise public awareness of OSH in the coffee supply chain (throughout all the stages of cultivation, processing, distribution, etc.). The message of VZF is: "to join hands in

realizing the vision of zero serious and fatal work-related accidents, injuries and deaths in global supply chains."

It must be said that it is a very meaningful message. However, during project implementation, there were some activities in which we needed to consider the approach to ensure the conformity with our regulations in terms of legal procedures, key partners, long-term plan, purpose of each specific activity. In addition, the project's target audience is different from ours (it focuses more on farmers than on union members), so is their implementation methods (it focuses more on communication than on professional and technical assistance).

Reporter: What are your suggestions for the project to better collaborate with trade unions in the coming time?

Ms. Ho Thi Kim Ngan: Personally, I support the implementation of the project in Vietnam in order to enhance social responsibility of enterprises,

business associations, coffee brands, coffee users drinkers so that they all support safe and healthy coffee production and processing. Therefore, if there are any opportunities and project activities that are suitable with our functions and tasks, we are willing to collaborate with the project.

The project should engage researchers, scientists, and representatives of tripartite organizations in the survey/assessment of OSH in the coffee supply chain, thereby the survey findings, data and recommended solutions will be more acceptable and more likely to be implemented by tripartite constituents in Vietnam. In the process of "going together", we will see gaps, agree on the viewpoint and approach as a basis for proposing activities to be jointly implemented by the parties.

ILO has strengths in terms of international experts, experience and good practices from countries around the world, thus we are eager to learn and get support from ILO in the



Participants in the " Campaign planning workshop: Realizing the right to a safe and healthy working environment in Vietnam's coffee supply chain: " organized by VZF in Hanoi on May 31, 2023. Photo: ILO Viet Nam.



Ms. Ho Thi Kim Ngan and representatives of relevant agencies discussed solutions to promote occupational safety. Photo: ILO Viet Nam.

development of new policies (e.g. on voluntary occupational accident insurance), delivery of training, preventive measures, health services, vocational training, etc., especially in the context where ILO has just made OSH a fundamental principle and right at work.

Reporter: What policies does VGCL have to ensure the interests of union members and workers suffering from occupational accidents?

Ms. Ho Thi Kim Ngan: In order to ensure the interests of workers, VGCL labor protection is carried out in three aspects at the same time: (1) development and implementation of policies and laws; (2) research of OSH sciences and technologies, and (3) OSH communication/training and mobilization of the public to ensure OSH.

Specifically, trade unions have participated in the consultation for and finalization of many laws such as the OSH Law, Law on Social Insurance, Law on Health Insurance and their guiding documents; enhanced joint monitoring and supervision

of the implementation of OSH policies to make sure it is active and effective.

When any worker in an enterprise suffers from occupational accidents, the representatives of the grassroots trade union's Executive Committee always pays a visit to him/her and timely provide him/her with some financial support from the trade union fund. Our Golden Heart Charity Fund also has a regulation on support for victims of occupational accidents and diseases, with the maximum amount of subsidy reaching up to 10 million VND.

Every year, trade unions at all levels select victims of occupational accidents and diseases to enjoy gifts on the occasion of Workers' Month, OSH Action Month and Lunar New Year.

In the agriculture sector, the ARDS Trade Union, within its authority, regularly supports union members and workers victims of occupational accidents and diseases who are in difficult circumstances. Every

year, the Trade Unions organizes activities to raise awareness for union members and workers, which contributes to reducing occupational accident risks; launches emulation movements to improve occupational safety conditions; establishes a network of OSH representatives; collaborates with local agencies to inspect and examine the compliance with OSH law by enterprises; participate in the testing of agricultural machinery at high risk of OSH deficiency as stipulated.

It can be said that although the number of union members in the agriculture sector and especially in coffee enterprises is limited, the ARDS Trade Union and the Vietnam Coffee Corporation's Trade Union have been very active and making efforts to carry out many activities to support union members and employees, implementing well their function of representing and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of union members and workers.

Reporter: Thank you very much! □

GIA HUNG

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT SECTOR (ARDS) TRADE UNION

CONTRIBUTIONS TO OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH IN AGRICULTURE



VCCI-HCM in collaboration with ILO and Lam Dong Provincial Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA) organized a workshop to share findings of a research on OSH in the coffee chain. Photo: Mai An.

MARD is a management authority responsible for various sectors, e.g. agriculture, irrigation, fisheries and aquaculture, forestry, food industry, etc. In recent years, OSH has been one of the focuses of the ARDS Trade Union.

Risks of safety deficiency in production, especially in the coffee sub-sector

Over the past years, a strong equitization and re-structuring of MARD enterprises has been taking place. Currently, the majority of MARD enterprises have converted their forms of ownership, except for those which are providing public services in the sector.

According to Mr. Ha Tien Dung, Deputy Head of the Policy Department under the ARDS Trade Union, currently the Trade

Union is directly managing 200 grassroots trade unions and 12 immediate upper-level trade unions (which, in turn, manage approximately 300 grassroots trade unions).

Although their governance and ownership model has changed, the majority of MARD enterprises still maintain their traditional production and business. The working conditions of their workers are very specific. They operate in various sub-sectors, such as aquaculture and seafood processing, irrigation construction, hydropower, mechanical engineering, civil construction, food processing, coffee, tea, vegetables, timber and wooden products, etc. where there are many potential



Occupational safety training course for more than 100 workers of Nam Irrigation Limited Company.
Photo: Hai Dang.

risks of occupational accidents and diseases.

Units in our coffee industry are mainly cultivating and processing coffee in raw form, with low value, and depending greatly on the market. During the production and business activities of these units, there are many potential occupational safety risks, for example: workers mainly work in mountainous areas which are difficult to travel, prone to natural disasters, storms and floods.

During the cultivation and care of coffee trees, workers are regularly required to operate and use rudimentary working tools, or mechanical devices such as tractors, lawnmowers, or plant protection chemicals (herbicides, pesticides), leading to a high risk of occupational accidents and toxicity.

Most of the units in the coffee industry operate in the Central Highlands, their workers are mainly local ethnic minority people or migrant workers from central and northern mountainous provinces. Most of

them have low education level, leading to limited awareness. In addition, workers are used to performing outdated customs and practices. These characteristics greatly affect the quality of OSH work.

The role of the ARDS Trade Union

Given the above mentioned situation, the ARDS Trade Union advised the MARD Labor Protection Council to develop an OSH plan and direct MARD units to well implement the OSH Law as well as relevant legal documents. Every year, based on the actual situation, the ARDS Trade Union guides MARD units to develop their own OSH plan, with focus on prevention measures suitable with the characteristics of the industry and of localities, urges MARD units to implement Resolution No. 10c/NQ-BCH dated January 12, 2017 by the 11th VGCL Executive Committee on improving the effectiveness of trade unions' OSH work in the new situation, VGCL Directive

No. 04/CT-TLD dated March 3, 2017 on continuing to promote the "Green – Clean - Beautiful and OSH" movement.

The ARDS Trade Union also takes the lead in establishing audit teams or collaborates with other authorities to audit and supervise the implementation of OSH in industries/occupations with high safety risks, testing of machinery and equipment subject to strict OSH requirements, monitoring of the working environment, provision of PPE, periodic health check-up and medical examination to detect occupational diseases for workers.

Through examination and supervision, the ARDS Trade Unions has recommended MARD units to take remedial measures, proposed to the MARD Labor Protection Council and relevant authorities to issue polices and regimes for ensuring workers' interests.

Particularly, the coffee industry has gradually applied measures to meet the "green production" requirements, limited the use of

pesticides and enhanced the use of organic fertilizer, innovated the production process, invested in upgrading machinery and equipment to reduce occupational accident risks among workers. Scientists have studied the breeding of coffee varieties which give high yield, are resistant to pests/diseases

and the impacts of weather/ environment, etc.

The agriculture and rural development sector and its Trade Union also recommend local authorities to have policies to ensure social security for workers in the coffee industry, invest more in building schools,

hospitals, communication facilities, roads for ethnic minority and migrant workers to settle down. The creation of favorable living environment and conditions will contribute to promoting solidarity between local workers and migrant workers.



"Summer cooling" program and gifts for employees of Nghe An Rubber and Coffee Limited Company by the ARDS Trade Union in Nghe An province. Photo: Hai Dang.

Over the last time, MARD, the Ministry of Health (MOH) and MOLISA have implemented a series of initiatives to raise awareness and reduce occupational accidents in agriculture as well as prevent risks for production workers. The MOLISA Department of Work Safety has built a WIND model to help workers in the industry understand a number of common occupational diseases/accidents and preventive measures.

The agriculture and rural development sector also cooperates with farmers' unions at all levels to organize hundreds of training courses to improve farmers' OSH knowledge, with focus on the care and protection of crops, identification risks in agriculture, safe use and operation of tractors, earthmoving machines, sowing machines, harvesters and transporters of agricultural products in rural areas as well as a number of fixed machines (e.g. threshing machines, rice millers, water pumps, crushers, animal feed mixers. etc.) and measures to deal with occupational accidents in the use of agricultural machines.

Results gained and tasks for the coming future

Given the above efforts, OSH work has been maintained and implemented by enterprises in the industry in accordance with the law. Over the past 5 years (2018 - 2023), the number of serious and fatal occupational accidents and diseases has decreased. Every year there is an average of only 5-6 occupational accidents, of which the majority are minor and commuting ones. In the industry, there are almost no victims of occupational diseases.

According to Mr. Ha Tien Dung, in the coming future, the agriculture and rural development sector and its Trade Union will continue to collaborate with units under MOH, MARD and with Provincial Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development to review the working conditions in industries/ occupations and propose the addition of some occupational diseases to the list of ensured diseases.

Trade unions at all levels will advise party committees to direct the authorities at all levels, mass organizations (e.g. Youth Union, Women's Union) to promote communication and mobilize their members to carry out OSH work, visit and support victims of occupational accidents who are in difficult circumstances. □

QUANG HAI



Ms. Quang Thi Dan is putting on a helmet before going to work. Photo: D.P.

RAISING OSH AWARENESS OF WOMEN COFFEE FARMERS

In the last year, thanks to the ILO WIND training courses organized in collaboration with IWCA, women coffee farmers in Son La province have learned to work more safely, better organize their lives, and ensure a cleaner and more beautiful environment.

Be guided to prevent accidents at work

In the morning, before going to the garden to pick coffee berries, Ms. Quang Thi Dan (36 years old, residing in Ban Nam village, Hua La commune, Son La city) carefully puts on his boots and gloves, and then takes the necessary tools with her to the garden. It is mid-November, the morning is still cold but there is some sunshine. In recent years, coffee prices have been

increasing to 12 - 13 thousand VND/kg. Like all the coffee workers in the locality, Dan feels very happy.

According to Dan, the terrain of Son La province features with steep passes, posing high risk of slips, trips leading to injuries. The collection of coffee berries is done by both women and men, however men tend to do other heavy work such as carrying bags of coffee up and down the slope from the garden to the place of gathering or to home.



Ms. Quang Thi Cu, 67 years old, in Ban Nam village, Hua La Commune, Son La city is guided by a technical staff on recognition of risks for safe production. Photo: D.P.

“
ACCORDING TO MS. DAN, THE TERRAIN
OF SON LA PROVINCE FEATURES WITH
STEEP PASSES, POSING HIGH RISK OF
SLIPS, TRIPS LEADING TO INJURIES ”

Through the "Empowering and developing OSH skills for women coffee growers and employees of coffee shops" project implemented by IWCA Vietnam, Dan learns a lot. "I received a lot of guidance from experts, from wearing gloves of different colors than leaf color to avoid cutting into my hands during pruning to using a lawn mower to avoid accidents. I was provided with this PPE (boots and gloves). I was also instructed on proper use of PPE, so the risk of stumbling or cut by sharp objects is no longer a concern", Dan said.

Apart from being instructed to work safely, women farmers like Dan are also provided by the Project with knowledge on health protection, first aid in case of accidents and how to contact and reach the nearest health facility if an accident occurs. The project also equips them with knowledge on children education, family financing and gender equality promotion. A number of women farmers are selected to receive skills to become tour guides so that they can organize eco-tours and improve their income.

Women coffee farmers are also trained to recognize the risk of electric shock from pesticide sprayers and coffee crushers; know how to buy relevant pesticides (e.g. the products must have labels), keep them in a separate cabinet with sign of danger to avoid mistaken drinking.

"When spraying pesticides, all of us wear masks and other PPE. As guided by experts, we place warning signs at sprayed areas. We are also guided to identify the risk of thunderstorms and lightning strikes in the rainy season", Dan smiled.

Form cognitive to behavioral changes

According to Ms. Le Thi Hang, Director of IWCA Vietnam, being aware of the difficult terrain where coffee farmers work, IWCA Vietnam always

pays attention to the OSH of these farmers, especially of women ones. Therefore, it has collaborated with the ILO/VZF project to conduct a survey on OSH needs and awareness of women farmers in Son

La province, interviewed women farmers about their daily work and living activities, their needs for health care and gender equality at work and in life, etc.

On that basis, IWCA Vietnam has organized many WIND training courses from the beginning of 2022 to present for women coffee farmers, including a ToT course for 10 trainees from Son La province who are local group leaders, with focus on application of OSH improvements. Each of these 10 ToT learners will expand the training to 10 more people in their localities.

The OSH contents delivered in the training courses are not something totally new to them, instead they are closely linked to the daily work of women coffee growers in Son La, for example: agricultural tools and instruments at home and the workplace must be arranged scientifically to minimize the risk of accidents; some tools need to be carried by a wheelbarrow; when trimming branches and weeding, they must wear masks and PPE to prevent splashes in the eyes.

In addition to theoretical and practical training, the Project also requires learners to take specific measures in practice and monitors their implementation. "Each trained women farmer must commit to 5 improvements, including 3 short-term and 2 long-term ones. Such improvements can be related to electrical safety, pesticides,

covers for high risk machinery, and many other things. These commitments are monitored by experts to see how effective the improvements are", said Hang.

As a result of the above efforts, according to Hang, the most significant thing is that the awareness of women coffee farmers in Son La has changed positively. They not only recognize hazards and risks but also understand the need to apply OSH at all times to ensure their own safety. Cognitive changes will lead to behavioral changes. "I believe that the situation of accidents and injuries will definitely be improved. The health of women coffee farmers will also be improved", Hang added.

As for Dan, she affirms: "Training helps women farmers not only know how to work safely but also organize our living better. Each house and the whole village become cleaner and more beautiful". □

HOANG HIEN

“ DAN AFFIRMS: "TRAINING HELPS WOMEN FARMERS NOT ONLY KNOW HOW TO WORK SAFELY BUT ALSO ORGANIZE OUR LIVING BETTER. EACH HOUSE AND THE WHOLE VILLAGE BECOMES CLEANER AND MORE BEAUTIFUL" ”



Previously empty pesticide containers were thrown into the environment. Currently, local people know how to collect and put them in a separate box. Photo: T.L.



Ms. Ndong K'Hem is happy that the ripe coffee season is about to start and coffee gets a good price. Photo: NVCC.

LEARNING TO BRING IMPROVEMENTS TO PRODUCTION

In collaboration with relevant agencies and authorities at all levels of Lam Dong province, ILO has implemented many activities to improve working conditions of local coffee workers such as organization of OSH training courses, assessment of risks at work, etc. to help farmers in Lam Dong province understand their current situation and ensured OSH for themselves.

The small road of Ndong K'Hem

Like other K'Ho people in Dong Do village, Tan Nghia commune, Di Linh district (which is the Robusta coffee capital of Lam Dong province), Ndong K'Hem is happy that the ripe coffee season is about to start and coffee gets a good price. Unlike before, when people had to carry coffee on their shoulders, now people in Dong Do village have a small road for transporting coffee by motorbike instead of carrying it manually.

K'Hem said that during the pandemic season, farmers in Lam Dong province (including herself) participated in a

training course on the ILO's WIND approach, which is developed to support farmers implement low-cost practical measures to improve health and safety at the workplace. The training course was organized by the ILO VZF Vietnam project with the objective of promoting OSH in the coffee supply chain. In this training course, she was instructed by the trainer on methods to improve the working conditions of coffee growers in line with the local situation and with each household; methods to identify and reduce risks at low costs and suitable for the conditions of each family and each village.

K'Hem said: "Previously, people in Dong Do village had to carry coffee manually from the field

to big roads, whereas the terrain here is quite steep. Therefore, it is very tiring work. Many people stumbled and fell while carrying heavy bags of coffee, getting seriously injured, and had to stop working for the entire coffee season".

After participating in the training, K'Hem mobilized her family members to build a small road for motorbikes to run through the field. She also organized small discussions in the village to guide local people on how to reduce risks while working in the field, starting from building a small road. Following K'Hem and others in the village, people in Dong Do village also make small roads in their fields to transport coffee by motorbike instead of manual carrying.

According to K'Minh, another farmer in Dong Do village, K'Hem has guided local people to do a lot of small things to make their work more convenient like making sure their scissors are always cleaned with wrapped handle to reduce pain in the hands while pruning branches, or collecting and putting empty fertilizer packaging and pesticide containers into a separate box after fertilization/spraying of pesticide. Along with the technical transfer by agricultural staff, the detailed, specific and close guidance of a neighbor farmer like K'Hem has helped local people aware of OSH risks at work.

From small holder farmers to a cooperative group

In the coffee season of 2023, the Da Nghit coffee cooperative group (Lat commune, Lac Duong district, Lam Dong province) is busy buying small coffee bags (for packaging) and repairing the small concrete road linking coffee fields. Those changes start with a farmer namely Y Cuong Long Dung.

Y Cuong's hometown, Da Nghit village, has so many slopes. Y Cuong also participated in the WIND training course and the benefits brought by the WIND approach to him and his community were very impressive. Y Cuong said: "In the course, farmers like me learned about safe production, improvement of the quality of farmers' work. I decided that I needed to invest in improving the working conditions for the sake of myself and others. Thanks to such improvements, our cooperative group has grown".

As shared by Y Cuong, after participating in the training, when coming back to his garden,

he saw risks everywhere that can be dangerous to people and need to be addressed. First, he used plastic pipes to cover all the power wires in the warehouse to prevent exposure to the open wires as a consequence of rat bites, which may lead to accidents. Then he used steel to weld and fix the crankcase system of the generator to avoid the touch of hands or tools. Regarding the small road linking coffee fields, he mobilized local people to investing in expanding it and filling potholes with cement.

With far away gardens with rough terrain where transport by motorbike is impossible, he mobilized people to replace large coffee bags with smaller ones. "In the past, people wanted to save money, thus they used to use 50kg bags only, creating big dangers during the carrying on slopes. Now they switch to 10-20kg bags, which are lighter and safer", Y Cuong excitedly said.

The improvements launched by Y Cuong were fully supported by the core members of the Da Nghit coffee cooperation group. In 2023, the group was able to build a greenhouse for drying ripe Arabica coffee in service of the production of high-quality coffee. This helps them save efforts for manually drying and covering the coffee during rainy weather. The greenhouse also makes their coffee beans better preserved, have higher quality and sold at a better price, helping farmers have increased income.

Y Cuong's improvements were appreciated by the Head of Da Nghit village and by the government of Lat commune, and disseminated to community members for replication. Y Cuong also received support from local agriculture unit as well as commune and district governments to bring such improvements into production. □

DIEM QUYNH

“ AS SHARED BY Y CUONG, AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THE TRAINING, WHEN COMING BACK TO HIS GARDEN, HE SAW RISKS EVERYWHERE THAT COULD BE DANGEROUS TO PEOPLE AND NEEDED TO BE ADDRESSED ”



Farmers in Lam Dong province participate in a WIND training course, which helps farmers to improve safety and health at work. Photo: ILO Vietnam.

HAPPY TO WORK IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

715A Coffee Limited Company is located in Dak Lak province, the coffee capital of the country. Here, the Company's leaders and trade union pay a lot of attention to OSH implementation, fire prevention and improvement of working conditions for workers. Perhaps that is why most workers feel happy and comfortable.



Every year, the Company organizes periodic health check-up for workers. Photo: DVCC.

Paying attention to working conditions from the smallest things

Mr. Le Dong Duong has been working at the Company for more than a decade and is a trade union member. As shared by Duong, as a union member, he has his legitimate rights and interests protected, and enjoys free-of-charge legal and labor counselling. In particular, he receives technical training which equips him with knowledge and skills to apply to his work in order to increase

productivity and reduce the risk of occupational accidents and diseases.

According to Duong, the picking of coffee berries in Dak Lak province happens in the rainy season, which is very hard and has a lot of impact on health. "The road to transport coffee from the field to the Company is so slippery, so many workers (especially women ones) often fall or have accidents. Given such situation, recently the Company has collaborated with local authorities to flatten some rough parts of the road to reduce commuting accidents for workers.

Ms. Dau Thi Oanh (a worker of Team No. 6) shares that among the stages of coffee production, the most difficult one for her is the watering of coffee trees because she has to pull the water hose a long distance. In addition, the picking of coffee berries in the rainy season also makes women workers like her prone to cold or gynecological diseases / osteoarthritis.

Being aware of such challenges encountered by workers, the Company has provided sufficient PPE (2 sets of PPE annually, each includes protective costumes, helmet, boots, gloves, raincoats). Every year, the Company also



The Company has established a coffee processing workshop with modern equipment, helping to improve working conditions.
 Photo: DVCC.

organizes periodic health check-up for workers and promptly provides treatment if diseases are detected.

Workers are happy and comfortable at work because they receive attention from the management and trade union; the products produced by them are sold at a good price; they can also participate in the sport activities organized by the Company and trade union.

Best efforts to assure safety

According to Mr. Nguyen Van Quang, the Company Director, in addition to comply well with the policies stipulated by the State, the Company also buys physical injury insurance packages for its workers (each package ranging from 200,000 to 500,000 VND depending on the nature of work). If any worker is hospitalized, that package will provide him/her with 100,000 VND/inpatient day, of if s/he has to undergo a surgery, the package will also provide him/her with some compensation, reducing the burden of treatment costs.

"Being aware of the difficulties

encountered by the workers, the Company leaders determine to try our best to assure OSH. In particular, we will regularly provide training to improve workers' skills. We will also continue to study and implement solutions that are beneficial to workers", Quang affirmed.

As said by Mr. Phan Van Binh, President of the Company's trade union, the union here has 7 branches with 249 members. In relation to OSH work, they always receive the instructions and help from the VINACAFE's Trade Union, the direction from the Company's Party Committee, the support of the Company's Directorate and collaboration from departments, production teams, union members and staff of the Company.

According to Binh, coffee workers often face health risks due to working in an environment where they have to expose to pesticides. Processing workers have to work in dust, noise, heat, smoke (when drying coffee), etc. To improve working conditions, the Company's trade union has collaborated with technical staff to deliver communications on situations prone to occupational accidents, training on OSH and use of PPE; establish a

coffee processing workshop with modern equipment (using suction and packaging machines instead of manual work); arranging accommodation of workers near the workshop to facilitate their living.

The Company and its trade union pay special attention to women workers (because their health is not as good as that of men while the work is the same) through the following activities: creating safe and comfortable working conditions for women workers, timely visiting and supporting women workers who are victims of occupational accidents and in difficult circumstances, especially on special occasions like March 8 (International Women's Day), October 20 (Vietnamese Women's Day), public holidays, Tet festival.

Mr. Pham Dinh Tuong, Vice President of the VINACAFE's Trade Union said: "It is quite notable that the Company's OSH communication takes place very systematically and comprehensively. OSH posters and slogans are displayed at the gate of the headquarters and visible to every worker. OSH information is regularly posted on Zalo, Telegram, YouTube, Tiktok of the Company's branches, helping raise awareness of the workers on this issue. In addition, advise is also promptly provided to workers in case they fall into any situation where there is OSH deficiency.

Thanks to its care of worker's safety and working conditions, 715A Coffee Limited Company has gained the trust of workers who are dedicated at work to develop the production and business of the Company. The Company's products are accepted by the market and its brand is becoming more and more widely known. □

HUNG THINH

1

NEW LIFE IN A LONG-KNOWN COFFEE AREA

TRAN DUY PHUONG

Not many people know Son La province, also known as the capital of Vietnamese coffee. Its Arabica coffee is one of the finest in the world



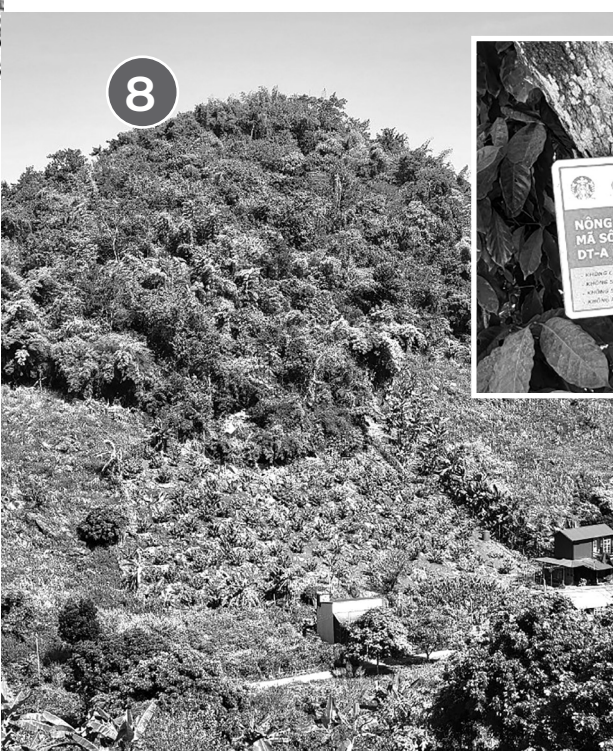


Photo captions:

1 + 2 + 3: This worker is doing a traditional activity, which is drying coffee on the yard of Detech Company - an enterprise long known for buying and processing coffee from local people.

4 + 5: This is a new variety of coffee. Cultivating Arabica coffee in Son La requires "less efforts" than cultivating Robusta coffee in the Central Highlands. Meanwhile, the price of Arabica coffee is twice as high as that of Robusta coffee.

6 + 7 + 8: Walking along small roads in Hua La and Chieng Ban communes (the boundary between Son La city and Mai Son district), we can see a nice landscape with spacious houses striking the vast green of coffee and other trees. Both Cu and her daughter Dan, who have lived their lives growing coffee, say this peaceful scenery is thanks to the coffee. We can also see a few cars in the yard of a house.

9: A small sign attached to a 10-year-old coffee tree stating that this land has changed. A new management process, a new attitude to the environment and a new life have come to this coffee area.



**PROMOTING THE RIGHT TO A SAFE AND
HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT IN
THE COFFEE SUPPLY CHAIN**