



October 2025

Building synergies to promote Occupational Safety and Health in the coffee supply chain: the case of the Vision Zero Fund's work in Uganda

In 2023, Uganda was selected as one of the target countries of the International Labour Organization [Vision Zero Fund](#)'s project "Improving Safety and Health in the coffee global supply chain" (GLO/22/12/EUR) and "Improving Safety and Health in Agricultural Global Supply Chains" (GLO/23/34/EUR). Uganda is the second largest coffee producer in Africa and the sixth largest producer in the world¹. Coffee is one of the main foreign currency exchange earners for Uganda and provides employment to almost 1.8 million families. Coffee produces both Robusta and Arabica coffee. Coffee is produced by different types of producers, including small holders who intercrop coffee trees with other traditional food crops. Coffee growers face significant challenges to guaranteeing safe and healthy working conditions, and fundamental principles and rights more largely.

This case study highlights the Fund's work in Uganda, with a focus on collaboration and synergies with other ILO constituents and other projects in the coffee sector.

What was done

Working with other ILO projects working in the Ugandan coffee sector, namely, ACCEL Africa Project Phase 2 and the CLEAR supply chains project, the Fund...

- **CoffeePeople Campaign:** The #Coffee People campaign which produced a video showcasing coffee producers and workers, included Uganda as one of the featured countries. The video was screened during different events in Uganda and used to promote discussion on issues related to OSH in the coffee sector. Adapting and implementing a global campaign to the national context was the first activity

that the Fund conducted in the country, with strong support from the Country Office, and laid a strong foundation.

- **Research:** The project conducted research into cooperatives in the coffee sector. The "[Needs assessment for fighting child labour and improving occupational safety and health in the coffee and tea supply chains in Uganda through cooperative development](#)" was jointly undertaken with the ILO COOP unit, the ILO Accel II project, and the CLEAR Supply Chains project. Findings were validated in a tripartite+ workshop organized jointly between the different projects.
- **Training:** The project delivered training for coffee growers in three regions of Uganda. This was done in close collaboration with the National Union of Cooperative Commercial Agricultural and Allied Workers (NUCCA AW). Stakeholders in the evaluation reported the training had helped strengthen awareness of safety and health at work in the plantations.
- **Sport Days:** The NUCCA AW, with the support of VZF, organised two sport days on World Day on Occupational Safety and Health in 2024 and 2025. These were a "fun run" and a "football tournament". Local tripartite representatives were invited and awareness sessions held to introduce the importance of OSH in plantations. The ICO decided to adopt the theme 'Joining forces for a safer coffee supply chain' as the official theme of the World Coffee Day for 2023.
- **Indications of policy change:** During a showing of the #CoffeePeople campaign video and panel discussion, the Government of Uganda indicated it intended to

1 <https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/production/commodity/0711100>

► VZF thematic Case Study

Building synergies to promote Occupational Safety and Health in the coffee supply chain: the case of the Vision Zero Fund's work in Uganda

ratify the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (no.187). Shortly after the event, it wrote to the ILO asking for technical support to update the national OSH profile. At a local level, the local government in the region the NUCCAOW has worked on cooperatives, indicated an intention to implement a by-law stressing the importance of OSH in coffee plantations.

that VZF had been successful in convening discussions between different groups on the issue of OSH that had not taken place in the past. The workers' organisations have been able to interact with exporting companies, who they had previously had trouble reaching out to.

Successes and Good Practices

- **Integration with the ILO's work on fundamental principles and rights at work**

The Fund worked closely with two ILO projects that focused on the elimination of child labour. The collaboration allowed the Fund to have greater reach than otherwise would have been the case, complementing OSH activities with those being conducted by other projects focusing on other fundamental principles and rights at work. This supported an integrated approach to the ILO's actions on the fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW), that has been mandated by the International Labour Conference and the ILO's Governing Body.

- **Mobilization of cooperatives strengthens opportunities for organising workers**

The project has targeted working with cooperatives, in partnership with NUCCAOW. The focus on cooperatives has allowed the ILO to access a key segment of the supply chain where workers often work in an informal setting and awareness of OSH regulations the importance of projecting workers for hazards is limited. The NUCCAOW also reported that strengthening the capacities of cooperatives has strengthened opportunities for the union to organise workers and recruit additional members. The potential for developing collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) was identified as another opportunity arising from the engagement of the cooperatives.

- **Improving Social Dialogue**

The project was reported to have improved social dialogue within the sector. Stakeholders informed the evaluator

Lessons Learned and Challenges

- **The VZF has successfully built strong collaboration with other projects that has helped to maximise the potential of the projects on a small budget.**

The budget for the projects was small and acting alone would have limited the reach of the projects. VZF has effectively engaged with other ILO projects in Uganda, which has allowed for more activities that would otherwise have been possible. In particular, synergies have been developed with projects working on other FPRW issues, supporting the ILO's strategy of an integrated approach to FPRW. The projects have also successfully worked with other departments. For example, the partnership with Coop was developed through an initial webinar, which led onto joint research being conducted.

- **Stakeholders are interested in addressing disability inclusion but need support to do so**

Both employers and workers' representatives indicated they would be interested in conducting more activities to strengthen disability inclusion within the supply chain. The NUCCAOW has developed a strategy on disability inclusion, which has the goal of increasing participation of persons with disabilities in cooperatives and unions, ensuring accessibility of project activities, promoting inclusive employment, training, and business opportunities, and eliminating discrimination and stigma against persons with disabilities within the coffee sector supply chain. The Uganda Employers Federation has previously worked with the National Union of Persons with Disabilities. Support from the ILO would help the stakeholders to increase the focus on workers with disabilities.

More information

[VZF project webpage](#)



International
Labour
Organization



Vision Zero Fund is part of **Safety & Health for All**, an ILO flagship programme building a culture of safe, healthy work.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Occupational Safety and Health
and the Working Environment Branch
(OSHE)

International Labour Organization
Route des Morillons 4
CH-1211 Geneva 22
Switzerland

vzf@ilo.org
ilo.org/vzf