



BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

# ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

EFFORTS TO ADDRESS LABOR RIGHTS IN PRIORITY SECTORS IDENTIFIED IN  
THE COLOMBIAN LABOR ACTION PLAN (2011-2021)

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## INTRODUCTION

This annotated bibliography aims to identify and summarize evidence of the outcomes of labor-focused programs or studies implemented in Colombia from 2011 to 2021, not funded through the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). These programs or studies focus on the five priority sectors identified in the Colombian Action Plan Related to Labor Rights (Labor Action Plan or LAP) to address serious labor concerns in the context of the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (CPTA).<sup>1</sup> These priority sectors include (1) ports, (2) flowers, (3) mining, (4) sugar cane, and (5) palm oil. In addition, the annotated bibliography features several projects or studies addressing labor issues in the coffee sector, Colombia's top agricultural export and currently on USDOL's list of goods produced with child labor.<sup>2</sup> USDOL commissioned IMPAQ International LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of the American Institutes for Research to develop this annotated bibliography.

## APPROACH AND LIMITATIONS

The team conducted desk research of sources within the public domain to identify relevant English-language and Spanish-language reports in the LAP priority sectors completed within the past ten years (2011 to 2021). This was followed by a process of screening-in and screening-out of reports based on a set of pre-established criteria. In total, 27 studies were included in the annotated bibliography rubric, 18 of which were determined to be most relevant and are summarized below. All of the identified studies or projects can be found in the Annotated Bibliography Rubric. While every effort was made to include several studies from each sector, only two relevant studies were found for both the port sector and palm oil sector. In contrast, numerous studies were found in the mining and flower sectors, and to a lesser degree in the sugar cane and coffee sectors.

## SUMMARIES

The following 18 summaries are organized by sector: ports, flowers, mining, sugar cane, palm oil and coffee.

### PORTS

**1. *Trabajadores portuarios de Colombia/Port Workers in Colombia*** (Thiago Pereira de Barros, 2018). This study analyzes the union structure of dockworkers in Colombia and describes the difficulties endured as a result of the modernization process that began in the mid-1990s with the termination of the state-run Company Ports of Colombia (COLPUERTOS), who owned and operated the country's port system from 1959 to 1999. With the privatization of ports (Law 01, 1991), dockworkers had to adapt to a new labor model introduced by the new port authority. Under the previous COLPUERTOS, workers secured stable jobs through their unions, with remuneration and conditions negotiated in collective labor agreements. In contrast, the private port "societies" (business groups) introduced new forms of labor management to reduce production costs and generate employment. This new management model paved the way for third-party contracting of labor services, low wages, informality, and anti-union policies. The privatization of ports resulted in precarious labor conditions and the loss of labor rights. Trade unions remained largely inactive for nearly 20 years until 2013 when the first labor agreement was signed between the port business group management in Cartagena and a

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/2016-Colombia-Action-Plan-Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/reports/child-labor/list-of-goods>

union representing dockworkers. Since that time there have been other small victories, but port workers urgently need to organize and gain the support and representation of trade unions that can collectively fight for their labor rights.

Full link:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329930912\\_TRABAJADORES\\_PORTUARIOS\\_EN\\_COLOMBIA\\_TRABAJO\\_SINDICALISMO\\_Y\\_RETOS](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329930912_TRABAJADORES_PORTUARIOS_EN_COLOMBIA_TRABAJO_SINDICALISMO_Y_RETOS)

**2. *Worker power, trade union strategy, and international connections: Dockworker Unionism in Colombia and Chile*** (K. Fox-Hodess, 2019). This case study compares dockworkers' power at the point of production, or "shop-floor" power, in both Chile and Colombia, and its effect on trade union strategies to address labor disputes. Dockworkers in Chile have a high degree of shop-floor power and therefore can apply a "class struggle" unionism strategy to settle disputes in which unions may organize national strikes in ports, assisted by local community allies and international labor allies. In Colombia, on the other hand, dockworkers' power at the point of production has been eroded through state-sanctioned violence, the absence of labor law enforcement, and the presence of a large surplus labor force resulting from the armed conflict in the surrounding countryside. These factors, together with the privatization of Colombia's ports, have created a highly uneven playing field for addressing labor disputes in which employers have at their disposal a wide range of tools to intimidate and repress trade union activists. Consequently, Colombian dockworkers have turned to a strategy of "human rights" unionism—built on external pressure via international allies and lawsuits—to compel employers to come to the bargaining table. This strategy has been facilitated, in part, through the enforcement of the labor provisions of the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

Full link: <https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/146909/3/FoxHodessfinal.pdf>

## FLOWERS

**3. *Prevención y erradicación del trabajo infantil en zonas floricultoras en Colombia: desafíos en la articulación institucional/Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor in Flower-growing Areas in Colombia: Challenges in Institutional Coordination*** (María Eugenia Morales Rubiano, Yenni Viviana Duque Orozco, Carolina Ortiz Riaga, 2020). According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Colombia is the second largest exporter of cut flowers, generating about 130,000 formal jobs. Of these jobs, 36% are held by men and 64% by women, with 60% of whom are mothers who are heads of household. This study presents the challenges of coordinating actions to prevent and eradicate child labor (CL) in the flower sector based on the current actions of private sector employers, local governments and public schools in three departments (21 municipalities) in Colombia. The study found that companies affiliated with the Colombian Association of Flower Exporters (Asocolflores) focused on compliance with national and international regulations that prohibit CL within its facilities, but they failed to take actions to prevent CL throughout their production chain, or to establish strategic alliances with schools and local governments to jointly address the problem. The lack of coordinated actions between producers, schools and government was exacerbated by the failure to involve families throughout the supply chain. The study concluded that problems such as CL require both medium and long-term goals that can lead to the formulation of consensual strategies between the various actors and facilitate the ability of public and private institutions to follow and support the processes.

Full link: <https://www.funlam.edu.co/revistas/index.php/RCCS/article/view/3206/pdf>

**4. *Las mujeres en la industria colombiana de las flores/Women in the Colombian Flower Industry*** (Erika González, 2014). This study looks at the working conditions of workers in the flower sector associated with the Colombian Association of Flower Exporters (Asocolflores) in

the region of La Sabana de Bogotá in Cundinamarca, where there is an abundant female workforce from traditional rural backgrounds. Five dimensions of transnational corporations were analyzed for their effect on workers: economic, political, social, environmental and cultural. The study found that the social and economic context of these workers created a situation of vulnerability, making it difficult for workers to defend their fundamental labor rights before the State and the private sector employers. At the same time, trade unions played a key role in supporting workers to raise awareness on how to take collective action to defend their fundamental labor rights such as organizing unions, filing complaints, and organizing strikes and protests. To raise awareness on labor violations in the flower sector, the Colombian NGO Cactus Corporation provided training and legal support for workers and conducted international campaigns and research on the sector's social, labor and environmental conditions. As part of a larger network of women in the La Sabana region, they denounced the monoculture development model imposed on them and raised awareness that flowers for export were destroying their territory, displacing food production, and leading to social injustice and inequality for women. The study provided five key recommendations to improve labor conditions in the flower sector: 1) Reduce the workload and establish production objectives that are reasonable and compatible with occupational health; 2) Promote healthy and respectful work environments; 3) Recognize workers at the beginning of the production process; 4) Establish greater control over fumigation and promote the use of biological and organic methods; 5) Promote the participation of both male and female workers. Full link: [https://omal.info/IMG/pdf/2014\\_informe\\_omal\\_no\\_11.pdf](https://omal.info/IMG/pdf/2014_informe_omal_no_11.pdf)

### **5. Challenges and Contributions of Women Workers in the Agricultural Sector in the Sibaté Region** (Víctor Enrique Bonilla Castillo, 2021).

This study identifies the challenges and contributions of women working in the municipality of Sibaté, Cundinamarca, one of Colombia's prime flower-growing regions. Female participation in the floriculture industry is 65% higher than that of men. Women are assigned the tasks of cleaning weeds, tying plants, pruning, cutting, harvesting and packing. Men, on the other hand, focus on tasks such as irrigation, fumigation and crop maintenance, oftentimes earning a much higher wage than their female counterparts. While the success of the Colombian floriculture sector depends largely on the role played by female workers, flower companies often view women as an easily replaceable resource. This leaves women more vulnerable to labor violations and without any effective oversight by governmental entities to ensure their protection. The authors' survey of 44 women in this sector indicated a high rate of turnover and informality. Furthermore, companies in the floriculture sector are not adequately training their personnel in occupational hazards, nor are they equipping personnel with the necessary personal protective equipment. These management strategies are designed to save money on production costs since their human capital is easily renewable. The study's key recommendation focuses on the need to establish governmental regulations to control the hiring systems used by the agricultural sector. Furthermore, workers should have access to permanent employment contracts that include legal benefits and guarantees for themselves and their families. Full link:

<https://centrosureditorial.com/index.php/revista/article/download/210/456>

## **MINING**

**6. Artisanal Gold Mining: Environmental Impact Reduction Activity, Final Report of *Oro Legal Project*** (USAID, 2015-2021). This USAID-funded project aimed to improve the social, economic, and environmental performance of small gold miners through the legalization and formalization of operations. It also sought to mitigate environmental liabilities from past illegal mining. The study noted that small-scale gold miners struggle to overcome multiple obstacles such as (1) regulatory barriers; (2) high cost of lawyers and mining consultants needed to develop complex mining and environmental instruments; and (3) approval process that can

extend for years or even decades. The formalization process is technically arduous, bureaucratically challenging, prohibitively costly, and is frequently overshadowed by a high level of uncertainty and significant risk of failure. All of these factors pose significant barriers and create disincentives for miners to even consider the formalization process. Based on these observations, the project facilitated an intensive multi-stakeholder process to make ASGM formalization more accessible and efficient. This resulted in a simplified temporary environmental impact appraisal (TEIA) requirement, which is an important step in fulfilling regulatory requirements specific to ASGM operators. As a result, *Oro Legal* successfully implemented 12 mining formalization projects (109% of end-of-project target). The project also facilitated processes for ASGM miners to obtain fair market value for their legally mined gold, reduce mercury use to almost zero, and rehabilitate land degraded by illegal mining. Furthermore, *Oro Legal* supported alternative income generation activities such as the production and sale of honey. The project's final recommendations were presented to the Ministry of Mines and Energy and included a specific plan for the formalization of artisanal gold mining called the *Plan Único de Formalización Minera*. They also recommended a differentiated policy approach based on the size of mines and type of mineral extracted, and the simplification of regulations and procedures surrounding mining formalization. Full link: [https://land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/USAID-Colombia\\_Oro-Legal\\_Final-Report.pdf](https://land-links.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/USAID-Colombia_Oro-Legal_Final-Report.pdf)

**7. Creative Capacity Building to Address Gender-based Violence in the Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining Sector (ASGM) in Colombia** (Libby McDonald, Anne Thibault, et. al., 2021). Gender-based violence (GBV) is defined by USAID as violence that is directed at an individual based on his or her biological sex, gender identity, or perceived adherence to socially defined norms of masculinity and femininity. This study focuses specifically on economic GBV of artisanal and small-scale women miners and how they are excluded from or marginalized in their economic activities based on their gender, resulting in economic harm. The analysis was conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Design Lab (MIT D-Lab) in combination with the Alliance for Responsible Mining under USAID's "Resilient, Inclusive, and Sustainable Environments (RISE) Challenge" program. The latter was created to prevent and respond to GBV across programs that address the access, use, and management of natural resources. The analysis highlights six domains pertaining to economic GBV, with close attention given to GBV as it relates to the earning potential of female head of households, mothers, and women with caring responsibilities. Its theoretical framework centers on the premise that women who are supported in their efforts to self-advocate and act collectively will then organize more successfully to campaign for social, economic and environmental well-being; this, in turn, will result in improved management of natural resources and greater dialogue on GBV at the local and national levels. The study found substantial evidence of GBV at many junctures along the supply chain, resulting in ASGM women having fewer opportunities for achieving economic stability within the ASGM sector. The authors concluded that identifying and responding to GBV can enhance women's empowerment and thus promote environmental action; however, tackling one issue without the other is unlikely to succeed due to their interconnectedness. In order to address GBV in the ASGM sector, the study recommends continuing the data collection on GBV and environmental degradation, as well as creating greater awareness of both issues at the local and national levels. Furthermore, it is important to amplify the collective voices of "ordinary" or marginalized women miners, including indigenous and Afro-Colombian women, and to bolster existing municipal programs and services available for reporting and managing violence against women. Full link: <https://www.responsiblemines.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Creative-Capacity-Building-to-Address-Gender-Based-Violence-in-the-Artisanal-and-Small-Scale-Gold-Mining-Sector-in-Colombia-02172021.pdf>

## **8. 'What is Legal?' Formalizing Artisanal and Small-scale Mining in Colombia (Cristina Echavarría, 2014).**

This report describes how formalization processes in Colombia's artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) sector have evolved within a political economy marked by conflict, complex human rights issues, and a mining policy that prioritizes large-scale mining developments. The report identified the historical barriers to formalization including the lack of differentiated approaches based on the size of the mining operation, leaving artisanal and small-scale miners at a disadvantage when requesting mining concessions. The government fees and entry application discouraged artisanal and small-scale miners to begin the formalization process since most informal miners have little education, operating capital, or access to banking and credit. Furthermore, there exists a culture of informality associated with ASM that can make formalization seem unattractive. Despite these barriers, actions were taken to include and engage ASM representatives in permanent mining dialogue processes at the regional and national level. This helped pave the way for the adoption of Resolution 90719 in 2014, the National Policy for Mining Formalization. The policy's implementation plan set out strategic objectives to address many of the barriers to formalization identified including adjustments to the regulatory mechanisms so that artisanal and small-scale miners can work under legal titles; providing occupational safety and health training for miners; enabling social inclusion and development in mining communities; ensuring relevant, timely and culturally adapted information for miners to formalize; delivering on technical, organizational and entrepreneurial strengthening of ASM; and securing resources and effective incentives. The report was published shortly after the Mining Formalization Policy took effect; therefore, data were not available to measure effectiveness. Full link:

<https://www.responsiblemines.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/What-is-legal-C-Echavarrria.pdf>

## **9. Formalization of Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining in Colombia: A Proposal for Improving Environmental, Social, and Economic Performance in a Post-conflict Scenario**

(Gregory Minnick, Peter Doyle and Thomas Hentschel, March 2020).

This study discusses the strategies used by two cooperation programs to promote responsible mining and formalization in Colombia's ASGM subsector: "Oro Legal" supported by USAID (2015-2021), and the "Better Gold Initiative for Artisanal and Small-scale Mining" supported by the Swiss Better Gold Association and Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (2013-2021). Both of these programs engaged ASGM operators to identify obstacles to formalization, which, taken as a whole, create immense disincentives for these operators to make the investment toward formalization. Obstacles identified include (1) a disconnect or disarticulation between national mining policies and legal frameworks and the realities of ASGM operators; (2) conditions that favor informality due to the onerous, excessively costly requirements, and lengthy review and approval processes; (3) difficulty reconciling ASGM needs and mining titleholder rights, compounded by the lack of participation of government entities to legitimize agreements; and (4) limited development options for subsistence miners who use unmechanized mining and are only allowed to produce and legally sell up to 420 grams of gold per year, leaving them open to exploitation by local intermediaries who buy gold for cash at highly discounted prices. The two cooperation programs analyzed the inputs of the stakeholder consultation process resulting in the development of practical steps to enable ASGM operators to transition to formality. For subsistence miners, however, the logical solution that emerged was to move out of this highly precarious activity and into an alternative economic activity that offers a decent wage.

Full link:

<https://www.planetgold.org/sites/default/files/2020.%20G.%20Minnick.%20P%3B%20Doyle%3B%20H.Thomas.%20Formalization%20of%20ASGM%20in%20Colombia..pdf>

## 10. Not All that Glitters is Gold: Gold Boom, Child Labor and Schooling in Colombia (Rafael Santos, 2014)

This paper explores the impact of the 2002 surge in international gold prices on child labor, school attendance, and school attainment in Colombia, the 14th largest gold-producing economy in the world. The author laid out a simple theoretical model of child labor and commodity booms. He then analyzed individual-level information on child labor and school attendance from the census data of 1985 and 1993 when gold prices were stable, and data from 2005 when gold prices were surging. The individual-level data were then merged with regional data on gold production capabilities. The author found that the gold boom increased the probability of children being put to work by 6.4% and lowered the probability of children attending school by 7.7%. He then examined whether lower school attendance translated into poorer academic performance by comparing with data on school attainment; he found a positive correlation between the two. Applying a causal interpretation to these findings, the author posited that an increase in gold prices can exert an income effect on certain families who, as a result, take their children out of school to work in the ASGM subsector in order to increase the family's income. Consistent with this view, school enrollment decreased during the boom for children aged 10 to 17 years as well as for younger children aged 5 to 9 years. Poor school attendance is known to negatively affect child welfare; evidence supports the positive and permanent effect of years of schooling on future wages, versus the transitory and short-lived character of income derived from a boom in the price of a commodity. Interestingly, the author found that the years of education of the head of household, and not asset ownership, mitigated the negative effects of the gold boom on child outcomes.

Full link: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2489203](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2489203)

## SUGAR

**11. *Evaluación del cumplimiento de la Cláusula Laboral y del Plan de Acción del Acuerdo Comercial entre Colombia y Estados Unidos: Análisis específico para el sector azucarero Colombiano*/Evaluation of Compliance with the Labor Clause and the Labor Action Plan of the Trade Agreement between Colombia and the United States: Analysis Specific to the Sugar Sector** (Lorena Salgado Pinzón, 2014). This study discusses the degree of fulfillment of the labor provisions and Labor Action Plan (LAP) that form part of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. The Colombian sugar sector was identified as a priority sector in the LAP due to the broad prevalence of illegal subcontracting practices. The author assessed any changes in labor conditions in the Colombian sugar sector three years after the Trade Agreement went into effect to determine whether any improvements could be attributed to the commitments stated in the agreement. The analysis found that the labor commitments exerted significant pressure on the Colombian sugar sector to comply with labor laws and improve labor conditions. This result was more feasibly achieved in the sugar sector due to its formal nature and the fact that its 13 largest sugar mills are concentrated within a few specific departments. Non-compliant companies can be easily identified, adding to the pressure for the entire sector to make improvements. Such is not the case in sectors such as palm oil, whose companies are more dispersed and function more autonomously. The study concluded that political actions linked to trade agreements are more effective in forcing employers to improve labor conditions than a traditional strike, labor inspection or labor lawsuit, but such change is highly dependent upon the economic, labor and social characteristics of the sector.

Full link:

<https://repositorio.uniandes.edu.co/bitstream/handle/1992/12700/u686841.pdf?sequence=1>

**12. Trabajos en la caña de azúcar ¿Cotidianidad de lo precario o precariedad de lo cotidiano?/Sugar Cane Work: Daily Precariousness or Precariousness of Daily Life?** (Cristian

Bedoya-Dorado, Deidi Maca-Urbano, 2020). Precariousness can be defined as a state of uncertainty or instability leading to potential danger. This qualitative study analyzes the ways in which labor precariousness in the sugarcane sector has become pervasive to the point of being accepted as a part of everyday life for agricultural sugarcane workers in the Cauca River Valley in Colombia. Researchers examined various aspects of precariousness, including cycles of poverty and vulnerability, limited access to basic services, and perils of working in the informal sector. They identified actors contributing to these precarious labor conditions, many of whom are interconnected through their positions of power. Other factors contributing to the precariousness of sugarcane agricultural workers include labor reform measures favoring employers; sugar mills whose policies mask illegal subcontracting; outsourcing companies supplying temporary contractual workers; monoculture replacing traditional crops; workdays of extreme weather conditions; outdated transportation causing delays and extended work hours; repetitive use of outdated or dangerous tools; and hiring practices that target workers perceived as able to withstand excessive physical labor. Once a state of precariousness has been established it progressively becomes “normalized” and integrated into daily life. The authors view the current precariousness of working conditions as a by-product of the historically precarious conditions experienced by ancestral slaves or populations without access to land, who lived under a shroud of vulnerability and uncertainty with little hope of breaking the cycle. Current labor issues center on the absence of legally binding contracts that directly link agricultural sugarcane workers with their employers, thus dispossessing workers of labor rights and protection systems. These conditions position the sugarcane workers as subjects of informality and therefore of precariousness shared with their families and the broader community. In this context, direct contracts and their symbolic charge of stability and labor rights constitutes a critical element for informal workers in resolving their precarious circumstances, but one that must be closely and continuously managed. Full link:

<https://www.psicoperspectivas.cl/index.php/psicoperspectivas/article/viewFile/2061/1295>

## PALM OIL

**13. Producción de aceite de palma en Colombia: ¿trabajo decente y saludable?/ Palm Oil Production in Colombia: Decent and Healthy Work? (Óscar Gallo, Daniel Hawkins, et.al, 2020).** This article analyzes the relationship between the production process of palm oil in Colombia and its effects on the health of workers in this sector. The study describes the accident rate, illness rate, and psychosocial problems of palm workers as a likely consequence of intensification of the palm oil production process to increase international competitiveness of Colombia’s palm industry. The study applied qualitative research methods to interview workers and union leaders. Those interviewed mentioned several common adverse health effects caused by production processes involving high temperatures, noise and vibration, chemical exposure, repetitive motion, and manual handling of heavy loads. Persistent muscle pain, shoulder and back pain were commonly mentioned, particularly for harvesters who continuously manipulate a hook. Workers also reported psychological symptoms associated with long working hours, incidents of workplace or sexual harassment, excessive work responsibilities, union persecution, and debts incurred. Workers’ salary was based on the number of kilograms of fruit harvested or the number of manual maintenance tasks conducted. The study reported that there have been attempts to mechanize field activities and use tools or protective equipment to reduce work-related accidents. However, these new forms of work organization also can lead to increased repetitive movement, time pressure and physical exhaustion. The authors concluded that the incidence of negative health effects currently experienced by palm oil workers is high, and likely underreported; there is an urgent need to protect their health and safety. More research is needed on the effect of changes in agricultural production systems on the health of palm oil workers. Full link:

<http://www.scielo.org.co/pdf/recis/v18n2/1692-7273-recis-18-02-88.pdf>

#### 14. Social dialogue and *Tercerizados* in Colombia's Palm Oil Industry: The cases of Palmas y Extractora Monterrey S.A. and Palmas de Cesar

Colombia's palm oil industry has a high number of outsourced workers hired through subcontractors or temporary work agencies. This has served to fragmentize the labor movement and prohibit social dialogue. The present case study examines the only two companies in which there has been genuine advancement in the formalization of palm oil workers: Palmera y Extractora Monterrey S.A. and Palmas de Cesar. Bridging the divide between formal and informal workers and standing as a united front has served as a key strategy to advance social dialogue in the sector. This process first began by forming a strong alliance between the indirect workers' union (SINTRATERCERIZADOS) and the direct workers' union (SINTRAINAGRO-MINAS and SINTRAPALMAS). Together, they carried out numerous and persistent industrial actions such as strikes and lockouts. Company management soon realized that current labor practices would have to change in order to avoid more labor conflicts. International pressure to fulfill the commitments stated in the Labor Action Plan also played a role in promoting social dialogue, as did the Ministry of Labor's sanctions on employers using illegal subcontracting practices. An important lesson emerged in both cases, centering on the importance of gaining the trust of indirect workers and including them in the collective bargaining process. In the two cases, the trade unions invested time and effort in improving their relationships with community members, thus allowing them to stand as one front and strengthening their bargaining power. At the same time, convincing employers of the benefits of formalization and peaceful labor relations cannot depend solely on legal measures or international pressure; employers must envisage the potential positive economic impact of formalization in terms of increased productivity and promotion of social dialogue to circumvent future labor conflicts.

Full link:

<https://www.fnv.nl/getmedia/469f2dd6-e8ee-4812-8b25-1f04e19ac97c/Mondiaal-FNV-Case-study-Colombia-final-aug-2019.pdf>

#### COFFEE

**15. Work-related Accidents and Illnesses: Perceptions and Good Practices in the Colombian Coffee Sector** (ILO, 2020). This study is part of the ILO's Vision Zero Fund project "Improving Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in Coffee Value Chains," whose purpose is to develop and reinforce sustainable, safe and healthy working conditions and practices in coffee value chains. The study was conducted on two levels. For the quantitative component, work-related accidents and illnesses in the formal sector were analyzed using secondary data. For the qualitative component, perceptions and good practices in OSH were analyzed through semi-structured interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders in the Colombian coffee sector. The study concluded that owners of the producing farms should be the first ones trained in order to understand their obligation to protect workers. Growers often do not have information about the people who work on their farms; they also have no control over OSH training topics and are frequently unaware of the issue of non-compliance with OSH and the sanctions they might face if they fail to abide. Furthermore, accessing information on accident rate and occupational disease in the coffee sector is made difficult by the fact that most of this population is part of the informal work sector. Additionally, the official public record includes data from the entire agricultural sector including livestock, hunting and forestry, making the analysis of coffee production activities a complex process. The authors of the study recommend developing strategies that promote self-management, self-care, and a preventive culture to strengthen OSH conditions. They conclude that there is a need for greater coordination between the institutions and associations linked to the coffee sector to generate new good OSH practices. Full link:

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--americas/--ro-lima/documents/publication/wcms\\_764241.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--americas/--ro-lima/documents/publication/wcms_764241.pdf)

**16. Good Procurement Practices and SMEs in Supply Chains: Nespresso AAA Sustainable Quality Program Impact of Procurement Practices in an SME in Colombia** (Richard McFalls, 2017). Colombia is the third largest coffee producer in the world, characterized by small family farms. This case study identifies procurement practices carried out by Nespresso, an individual large buyer, and how ‘good procurement practices’ associated with its AAA Sustainable Quality Program contributed to economic and social improvements of selected suppliers (intermediaries) and some 30,000 producers (farmers) in Colombia. The study assesses Nespresso AAA Sustainable Quality Program that focuses on “building a long-term relationship with farmers” based on (1) quality (consistent cultivation practices to attain taste and aroma); (2) sustainability (environmental and social responsibility, including biodiversity, water management, worker rights and working conditions, developed in conjunction with Rainforest Alliance and SAN Standards for Sustainable Agriculture); and (3) productivity (improving net income through increased productivity and reduced cost). Each of these pillars is supported by field technical assistance and monitoring, with compliant farmers rewarded transparent premiums on purchase price, 30% – 40% above market. Nespresso commissioned the Center for Regional Coffee and Entrepreneurial Research (CRECE) in Colombia to conduct a multi-year impact assessment of value chain diagnostics, in combination with conclusions from an independent 12-country Committee on Sustainability Assessment (COSA) study to evaluate the potential effectiveness of the Program in supporting the economic and social improvements of producers and suppliers. The three-year study indicated that better outcomes were more prevalent among AAA Program participants than the non-participating control groups. However, more data over a longer period is needed, along with direct farm-level verification of impacts for producers in the supply chain, in order to provide consistent evidence that the AAA Program and price premiums (and similar initiatives) are truly leading to sustained social, economic and environmental improvements. Full link: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed\\_emp/--emp\\_ent/--ifp\\_seed/documents/publication/wcms\\_545933.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/--ed_emp/--emp_ent/--ifp_seed/documents/publication/wcms_545933.pdf)

**17. Estudio rápido sobre trabajo decente, condiciones de trabajo seguras y saludables, cualificación del sector del café y efectos de la COVID-19/ Rapid Study of Decent Work, Occupational Health and Safety Conditions in the Coffee Sector and the Effects of COVID-19** (Robinzon Piñeros Lizarazo, publication pending 2022).

This study was conducted as part of the ILO project “Sustainable Supply Chains to Build Forward Better—Coffee in Colombia.” The study analyzes both the factors that constitute decent working conditions including fair wages, social protections and safe work environments, and the shortcomings found in Colombia’s coffee supply chain. The study also considers the effects of COVID-19 on the coffee production process. Its methodology included a document review, key informant interviews, analysis of statistical sources, and field visits to coffee growing areas in the department of Huila. The findings on decent work indicated that the sector has a high rate of labor informality, with only 1.5% of the 135,000 to 165,000 coffee collectors working under formal contracts. The remaining collectors carry out their work under verbal agreements or unpaid family agreements. The most recurrent form of hiring is “piece rate,” followed by daily hiring. The workforce usually consists of family members (paid or unpaid) and external workers that come from other departments, or Venezuelan migrants, creating complicated migration patterns. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a shortage of coffee harvesters. This prompted the National Coffee Federation (FNC) and its departmental committees to implement the “Comprehensive Harvest Plan” to promote labor mobility toward harvesting areas. The plan guaranteed the health of coffee workers and their families through adherence to strict biosafety protocols on its affiliated coffee farms. Other protections for workers include the current *Piso de Protección Social* (Basic Social Protection), a social security system for minimum wage and temporary workers that took effect in February 2021.

Critics of the policy say that it may be incentivizing employers to reduce workers' pay so that they qualify for the program. The study also found high underreporting of injuries and illnesses at the farm level. Based on these findings, the researcher made a number of recommendations to guarantee decent work on coffee farms: (1) Improve inspections and monitoring of coffee growers; (2) Build a roadmap for the formalization of workers in the production stage, recognizing the particularities of temporary and migratory work of coffee harvesters and the proper application of the Basic Social Protection program; (3) Improve the coordination between actors in the supply chain, including international coffee governing bodies and national governmental institutions, to propose and implement programs aimed at promoting decent work; (4) Open up a dialogue between coffee growers and workers with regard to wages, utilizing the support of the Permanent Commission for Coordination of Salary and Labor Policies and the FNC.

## FLOWERS AND COFFEE

### **18. Working Conditions of Flower Packers and Coffee Pickers in Colombia: Results of Field Research on the Impact of Sustainability Certification** (Sanne van der Wal, Mark van Dorp, et.al., July 2016, updated September 2018).

This study assesses labor conditions and labor compliance on both certified and non-certified large-scale farms in Colombian flower and coffee sectors. The study is part of a wider research project initiated by the Dutch Center for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) that aims to help understand the impact of sustainability certification on working conditions in the large-scale production of food and agricultural commodities in developing countries. The field studies were carried out between March and October 2015 by the Colombian NGO *Escuela Nacional Sindical* (ENS), in close collaboration with SOMO. For the cut-flower survey, a total of 171 semi-structured interviews were conducted with flower workers from 81 different farms in East Antioquia and Cundinamarca. For the coffee survey, a total of 142 semi-structured interviews were carried out with coffee workers from 131 different coffee farms in Antioquia, Huila, Tolima and Caldas. In addition, interviews were conducted with groups of experts from both sectors. In the flower sector, findings confirmed precarious labor conditions that effectively inhibit freedom of association and collective bargaining, compounded by the increasing use of temporary contractual workers. In addition, 8% of surveyed flower workers responded that they had experienced sexual harassment or other workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation; physical disability; or social activism. In the coffee sector, there are no trade unions or worker-based associations for agricultural coffee workers at the primary stage of production, but at least half of these workers would be willing to join a trade union if one existed. Furthermore, a significant portion of coffee workers received a salary below the minimum wage, and 95% of respondents (the majority of whom were coffee pickers) had no written employment contract. Key recommendations for sustainability certification systems to improve working conditions in both sectors include the following: (1) ensure auditors are aware of and monitor fraudulent contracting arrangements; (2) include exact location of certified farms to enable greater transparency and traceability of the certification process for researchers and other stakeholders; and (3) develop or support dedicated improvement programs for each farm that include elements of awareness raising and education on fundamental labor rights. Full link:

<https://www.somo.nl/working-conditions-of-flower-packers-and-coffee-pickers-in-colombia/>