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Working Conditions in Zanzibar

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Working Conditions in Zanzibar

Abstract

The first Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey, carried out in 2010, found that the incidence of physical risks, namely exposure to vibrations, noise and high temperatures, is considerably high. Hearing problems and respiratory problems are particularly prominent in manufacturing, whereas shoulder and neck problems, injuries, stress and skin problems seem to affect a considerable proportion of workers in the hotels and restaurants sector. Overall, working conditions in Zanzibar vary considerably across sectors but are, in general, characterised by a relatively high incidence of physical risks and work-related health problems.

Keywords

working conditions, Zanzibar, physical risk, work-related health problems

Comments

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Eurofound

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Introduction

The first Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey was carried out in 2010, and the results published in an overview report in June 2011 by the Ministry of Labour, Economic Empowerment and Cooperatives of the Zanzibar Revolutionary Government. The International Labour Organization (**ILO**) provided technical and financial support to carry out the survey. It was conducted on the basis of the Global Module for Working Conditions Survey, developed jointly by the ILO and Eurofound to provide a comprehensive and systematic review of changes in quality of working life in developing countries.

The Zanzibar 2010 Working Conditions Survey is presented as a follow-up and completion of the study on **Working conditions in Tanzania** in 2009, which also followed the Global Module for Working Conditions Survey (see also ILO, 2009).

The survey carried out in Zanzibar aimed to provide a complete picture of working conditions in the United Republic of Tanzania, of which Zanzibar is a semi-autonomous part.

National context

Creating good-quality employment is seen as a key component of Zanzibar's poverty reduction strategy, with the aim not only of achieving higher rates of economic growth but also of increasing levels of societal welfare and reducing household poverty. The economic growth experienced by Zanzibar since the 1990s has led to the swift growth of the services sector, especially through private enterprises operating in the tourism industry. However, this is an economy that is traditionally dominated by the agriculture sector. Indeed, manufacturing in Zanzibar only accounts for 6% of total employment (see ILO, 2010). Zanzibar's labour market is also dominated by informal self-employment and paid employees only make up 17.3% of Zanzibar's labour force. The remainder generally work in the informal sector, working on their own farm, helping out in a family business, or in some more conventional form of self-employment.

The growth of the urban services sector since the 1990s has created high levels of labour market dualism between the urban and rural sectors of the economy, and between the services and agricultural sectors. This dualism is characterised by great differences in earnings, productivity and job quality between the urban informal, urban formal and the rural labour markets.

A key focus of the 2010 Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey was to analyse the specific vulnerability to poor working conditions faced by workers in the urban informal or services sector, and to analyse the differences between these and other sectors. The monitoring of working conditions in the informal sector of the economy, which appear particularly problematic, is a key step towards '**decent work**' objectives in Zanzibar.

Methodology

Although the ILO global survey methodology was the basis of the 2010 Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey, scarce information is provided in the survey’s final report about its detailed methodology. The final report states that the data were collected ‘through an employer and employee survey in all regions of Zanzibar’. It is also stated that the interview covered two sectors, Zanzibar’s informal sector and tourism. Yet the data include a breakdown of results by other sectors of economic activity, including health services, wholesale and trade, hospitality, manufacturing, transport and communications, construction and the public administration sector.

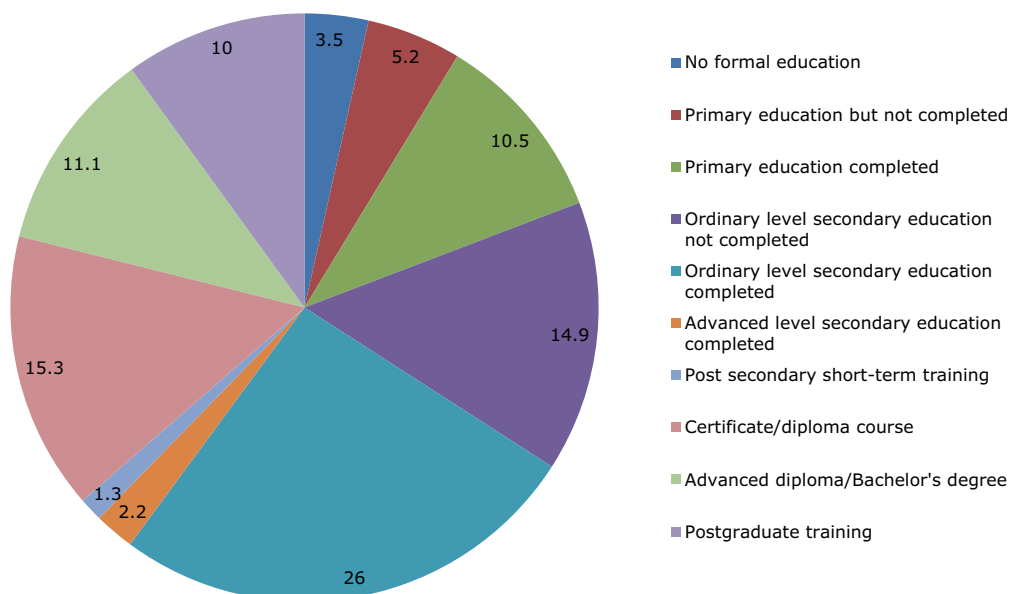
This report highlights the main findings from the 2010 Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey as outlined in the survey’s Final Report published in June 2011. The survey covers key aspects of the working conditions of paid labour such as working time, work organisation, employment status and job security, physical environment and physical risks, health and safety, unionism, social protection, wages and maternity protection. Other dimensions, such as awareness of workers’ rights and capacity to reconcile work and family life, have also been covered. The data are drawn from responses from 554 workers.

Survey findings

Educational attainment

The survey shows that ‘ordinary level secondary education’ is the most common level of educational attainment in Zanzibar, reported by 26% of survey respondents. This is followed by workers educated at ordinary secondary level who did not complete their studies, which accounts for 15% of the respondents. The share of respondents increases steadily between the category of ‘no formal education’ to that of ‘ordinary level secondary education’, and then progressively decreases for post-secondary and tertiary education onwards. It is worth noting that the overall percentage of workers with a level of education not exceeding primary education is almost 20%.

Figure 1: *Distribution of workers by level of education (%)*



Source: Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey 2010

The distribution of workers by levels of educational attainment and by sector of economic activity reveals great variation within and across sectors. For example, in the health services sector, 28% of workers report having completed a bachelor's degree or having obtained an advanced diploma, but at the same time 10% of respondents report not having any formal education and 20% only having completed primary education. Levels of educational attainment appear to be particularly low in the manufacturing sector and the construction sector, where 35% and 40% of the workforce respectively have primary-level education or lower.

Working time and risks at work

The majority of workers (around 60%) report working an average of eight hours per day. However, about 20% report working less than eight hours per day and the remaining 20% report working longer hours. The majority of those working longer hours are concentrated in the tourism and services sector, which includes informal and family-run economic activities.

Risks and physical environment

Workers' exposure to physical risk during work activity was examined in the survey through the characteristics of the physical work environment. The survey questions cover elements such as exposure to vibrations, noise, breathing in chemicals and other substances, passive smoking, the handling of chemical substances, and exposure to high and low temperatures.

Around 12% of survey respondents report suffering from vibration and effects of loud noise at work at least a quarter of the time, and another 12% report being frequently exposed to high temperatures. Exposure to breathing in smoke is another common risk, with about 12% of respondents reporting frequent exposure, 70% of which experience this all the time or almost all the time.

The effect of work on health has been presented by sector of activity. Manufacturing presents higher levels of harmful health consequences for workers: diseases (36%), hearing problems (35%) and respiratory problems (33%) were reported by those working in the sector. The hotels and restaurant sector also presents a considerable proportion of workers who report shoulder/neck problems (26%), injuries (25%), stress (24%) and skin problems (22%).

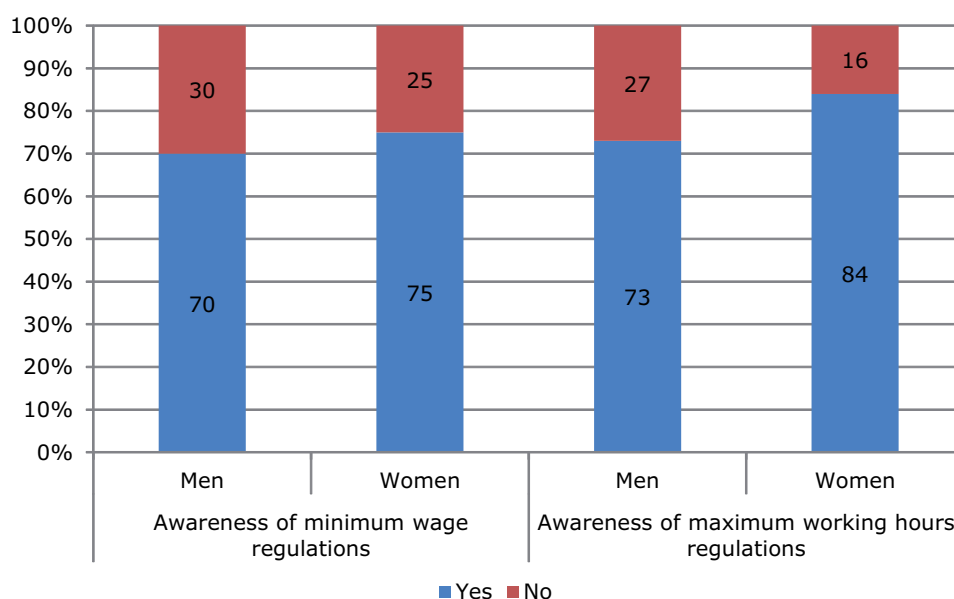
Labour regulations

The survey explored respondents' awareness of key elements of Zanzibar's labour and employment legislation. This part of the survey was based on the premise that awareness of and information about legal rights represent the first essential conditions for the realisation of decent work that offers acceptable working conditions. The results were analysed in correlation with employees' wages, to observe how awareness of labour legislation changes among workers in different wage brackets.

The proportion of respondents who report being aware of minimum wage developments increases with wage level, as does awareness of maximum working hours. Workers in the lowest wage category (below 100,000 Tanzanian shillings (TZS) per month, about €45) are also those most likely to report not being aware of minimum wage legislation (40%). The share of workers who reported not being aware of such regulation is lowest in the highest wage category (20%); this is also the case for awareness of maximum working hours.

The survey also explored gender differences in awareness of labour regulations relating to minimum wage and maximum working hours. Figure 2 shows, somewhat surprisingly, that women were on average better informed than their male counterparts about regulations. While 27% of men said they were not aware of maximum working hours regulations, only 16% of women reported not knowing about the regulations.

Figure 2: Awareness of minimum wage and maximum working hours regulations (%)



Source: Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey 2010

Awareness of maternity leave rights among female workers is relatively high (around 90% of female respondents were aware of these rights). However, the proportion of workers who reported not being aware of maternity leave rights was considerably higher (20%) among those workers earning less than minimum wage levels, or TZS 100,000 a month (about €45). When awareness of maternity leave was compared with how many respondents had received the maternity leave to which they were entitled, the proportion was lower across all wage categories. This share falls below 70% for workers in the two lowest wage brackets.

When asked if they worked during public holidays, 68% of workers in the lowest income category said they did. The proportion was lower among workers in higher wage brackets, but in all wage categories more than 50% reported working during public holidays.

Training and other employment benefits

Almost 80% of respondents working in the private sector said they had received no training in the 12 months before the survey. This figure was significantly lower for workers in the public sector (44%). Still, levels of employer-paid training appear to be relatively low in Zanzibar.

Respondents were also asked about other benefits they might receive from their employers, such as ‘payment during public holidays’, ‘overtime’ and ‘other fringe benefits’. These benefits were most common among workers in public administration: 41% reported receiving fringe benefits of some kind; 40% reported overtime payments; and 37% said they were paid extra for working during public holidays. In the hotels and restaurants sector, 38% of workers said they were paid extra for working during public holidays; 21% reported overtime; and 20% other fringe benefits. In all other sectors, percentages for receipt of any of these benefits were consistently below 10%.

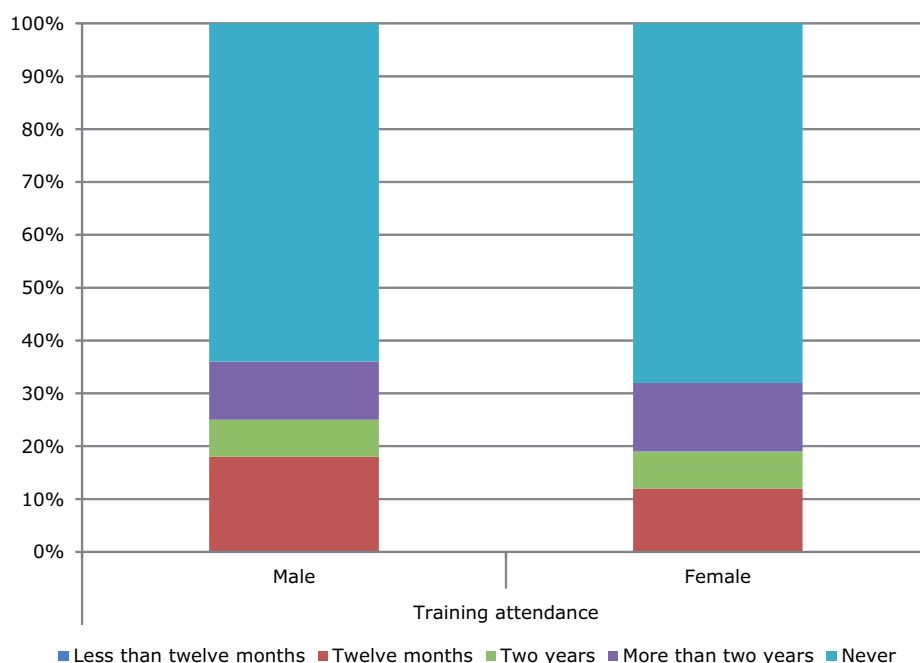
Gender differences

Gender segregation between occupations and sectors of economic activity is deeply rooted in the Zanzibar economy, following similar trends to those reported in the report on [Working conditions in Tanzania](#). Embedded social norms about gender roles and gendered division of labour suggest that women are likely to be overrepresented in low-paid,

unskilled or low-skilled jobs, especially in the hospitality sector, the agriculture sector or in the informal sector of the economy. They are likely to be heavily underrepresented in highly skilled occupations such as technical and associate professionals, senior officials and craft skills occupations. Women make up less than 15% of technical and associate professionals and less than 10% of those holding senior officials' positions or employed in craft skills occupations.

The survey report emphasises that to improve working conditions and address gender inequality in the Zanzibar labour market, key priorities are addressing gendered occupational segregation and increasing women's opportunities for access to education to upgrade their skills. Figure 3 shows by gender the distribution of respondents according to the duration of past training they have received. It shows that female workers are less likely to receive training than their male counterparts. Striking, however, is the low incidence of training for all workers in Zanzibar, making this an issue for both women and men.

Figure 3: Training attendance by gender and duration (%)



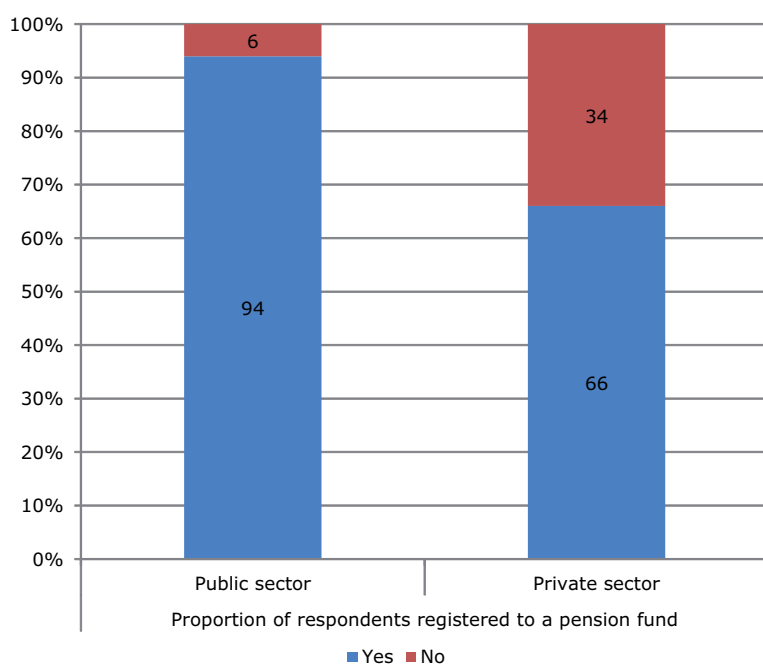
Source: Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey, 2010

Social protection

Employment conditions and wage levels affect workers' entitlement to social security and social protection schemes. These forms of social protection are crucial to help workers avoid or mitigate the risks presented by their working conditions and is therefore an important component of job quality. This was explored in the Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey 2010. In particular, the survey asked whether respondents were registered with a pension fund (ZSSF or NSSF).

The analysis revealed, as expected, that the vast majority of workers in the informal economy have little or no access to social protection, increasing the vulnerability of these workers who are already exposed to problematic working conditions. Figure 4 shows that the share of employees who report being registered with a pension fund is much higher in the public sector (94% coverage) than in the private sector (66% coverage).

Figure 4: Proportion of employees registered with a pension fund, by sector (%)



Source: Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey, 2010

The data from responses to pension fund questions were further broken down by wage category. Table 1 shows clearly that the share of those not enrolled in a pension fund varies considerably by wage bracket. Indeed, only 5.8% of those who said they did not belong to a pension fund were earning more than TZS 500,000 per month (about €225), while 46.2% were earning TZS 70,000–149,999 (between about €32 and €67), and 27.9% were earning less than TZS 70,000.

Table 1: Pension fund membership, by wage category

Earnings per month (TZS)		Below 70,000	70,000–149,999	150,000–499,999	500,000 or more	Total number of respondents
Are you a member of ZSSF or NSSF? (pension schemes)	Yes	5.4%	48.4%	38.5%	4.7%	340
	No	27.9%	46.2%	18.3%	5.8%	104

Source: Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey, 2010

The same data are broken down by percentage distribution of workers who report being members or not being members of a pension fund within each wage category in Table 2. What emerges clearly is that, among survey respondents, the vast majority (60.4%) of those earning below TZS 70,000 (about €32) per month were not enrolled in a pension scheme – thus confirming the previous findings about the vulnerability in working conditions and protection for those working in the low-wage segment of the economy. Conversely, the highest share of pension coverage was found in the TZS 150,000–499,999 wage bracket (between about €67 and €224), in which only 12.3% of respondents reported not being members of a pension scheme.

Table 2: Pension fund membership within each wage category

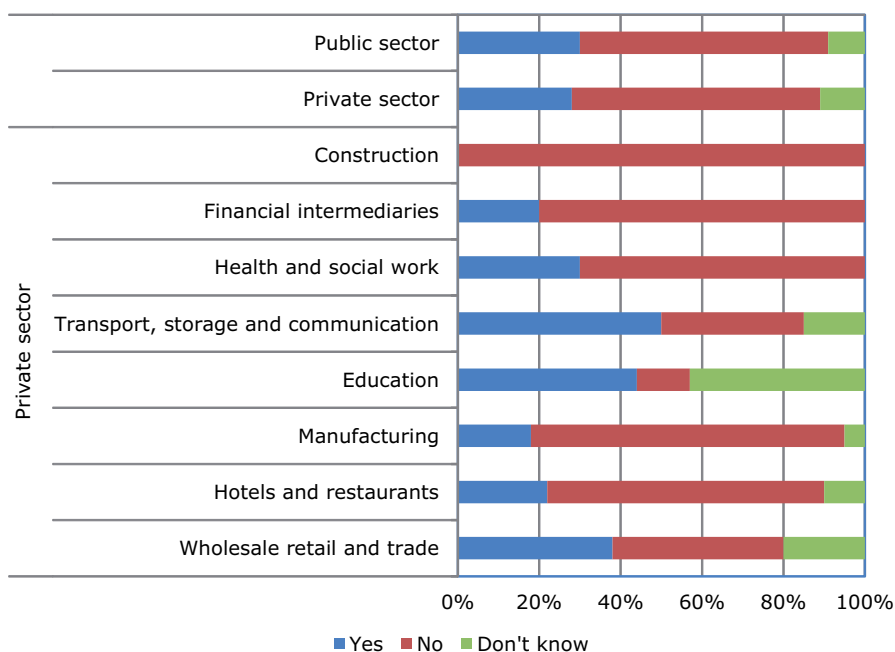
Earnings per month (TZS)		All wage categories	Below 70,000	70,000–149,999	150,000–499,999	500,000 or more	Total number of respondents
Are you a member of ZSSF or NSSF? (pension schemes)	Yes	76.6%	39.6%	78.0%	87.7%	72.7%	340
	No	23.4%	60.4%	22.0%	12.3%	27.3%	104

Source: Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey, 2010

Collective bargaining

The survey asked respondents whether their working conditions were covered by a collective agreement between a union and their employer. The results, broken down by sector, are presented in Figure 5. The results show great variation between sectors. The sector with the highest share of workers covered by a collective agreement is transport and communication (50%), followed by education (44%). The lowest level of coverage is found in construction, in which no respondent reported being covered by a collective agreement.

Figure 5: Collective agreement coverage, by sector (%)



Source: Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey, 2010

The survey also asked about respondents' union membership, and found that overall levels of unionisation are very low in Zanzibar. While the rate of unionisation is as high as 60% for respondents working in the public sector, it is very low for all respondents working in the private sector, hardly exceeding 10%. The highest recorded rate in the private sector is in the hotels and restaurants sector (17%).

Policy considerations

The results of the Zanzibar Working Conditions Survey partially reflect the features of a traditional African labour market, characterised by a high share of employment in agriculture but with growing importance for the urban services sector, particularly in tourism and hospitality.

Informal employment relations dominate the economy and this has serious implications for working conditions and health and safety at work. The survey found that the incidence of physical risks (particularly exposure to vibrations, noise and high temperatures) is very high, and significant proportions of those working in tourism and manufacturing reported health problems that were a consequence of their work activity. The problem of long working hours (above eight hours per day) was also prominent in the tourism sector.

Given the high incidence of informal work outside the framework of health and safety and employment standard regulations, a key focus of the survey was to analyse respondents' awareness of legal provisions for minimum wages, maximum working hours and maternity leave. Around 30% of workers said they were not aware of such regulations.

Gender segregation in occupations and sectors is also shown by the survey to be a marked feature of the Zanzibar labour market. Women were found to be overrepresented in the low-pay segment of the economy, and it was also shown that they receive less training and less often than their male counterparts. It should be noted, however, that very few workers of either gender reported having received training as part of their job.

Entitlements to social security in the form of enrolment in a pension scheme were also very low among workers in the informal economy, as were levels of unionisation. Significant differences in levels of unionisation were found between the public and private sector.

Overall, the survey shows that working conditions in Zanzibar vary significantly across sectors. However, conditions are generally characterised by a high incidence of physical risk, work-related health problems and low levels of the protection to which all workers are entitled.

In an economy in which employment informality is dominant, this suggests that the first step necessary to improve working conditions is the formalisation of employment relationships and enforcing compliance with labour standards. Both can be achieved by encouraging the collective organisation of workers, and by increasing employees' awareness of labour laws and of their rights.

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