

# IMPACT of COVID-19

## on Young Workers

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INTERNATIONAL YOUNG CHRISTIAN WORKERS

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***"With the fear of getting infected, I can no longer see my friends" Egypt***

Young workers, as many people all over the world today, are afraid. Some are sick or got infected from their own surrounding and those who already lost friends and family-members. Others feel frightened of getting the virus and spread to their loved ones. They are terrified of going out, they feel uncertain about their future concerning their jobs. Many young people have feelings of loneliness and isolation. Being locked down with the family and parents can increase conflicts, especially if the living space is limited or people are worried

## 1. Young workers are losing their income

***"I started to work in a small grocery store which belongs to my father because I have lost my work during this Corona virus" - Egypt***

With the spread of the Corona virus, many countries took measures like a lock-down, a curfew or social distancing put into place. In the consequences, many workers lost their income or even their job.

There are different scenarios and cases of this reality:

- There are free-lancers and "self-employed" who lost their projects and thus their income due to this crisis.
- Young workers who were working for an employer or a company and lost their job.

about their existence like in the loss of jobs. As one young worker from Brazil says:

***Family violence tends to increase, mainly because we all feel stressed, the house is messy, and there are several other factors.***

However, the Pandemic has more consequences than impacting our health. It affects the worldwide economy and all our lives. It enhances and exposes the already existing inequalities. In the following, we describe some concrete impacts young people experience. One of the first ones is the following:

- Informal workers are particularly vulnerable. Often, they do not have any social security. Some lost their jobs and income due to the disruption of global value chains, example in the garment sector. Others, working as street vendors or garbage collector, find themselves in the choice of leaving the house for working but risking to be infected, or being without income, without social protection and usually without reserves.
- Precarious workers are another vulnerable group as shown also in these testimonies below. In several cases, regular and precarious workers, in spite of doing the same work at a work-place, do not have equal rights. But in every case, it is easy in an economic crisis to just not to prolong a short-term contract.

***"I am only a contractual worker and the policy of the agency and company to us is "No Work No Pay" only the regular workers has the right to get financial assistance (...) This is really difficult for me because I don't have other source of income aside from my work in factory, I cannot supply my daily needs and my family. It is sad because for almost 2 month of (ECQ) Enhanced Community Quarantine until now we don't receive any help from the government." (Philippines)***

***" I was working for a financial institution, I had a temporary contract, when the quarantine was decreed the company suspended the work and the contract will end when the quarantine is over and then we will be 50 young people without work."(Peru)***

**All in all, Unemployment rates rise all over the world.** Among the sectors very exposed to job loss are the gastronomy and tourism and travel sector, the retail trade and administration, wholesale and retail trade, accommodation and food services, real estate, business and administrative activities; manufacturing. Global value chains are interrupted. Some workers, having lost their jobs, seek a way to get income through informal or self-employed work. However this is difficult since especially informal and self-employed are vulnerable due to the lack of social security.

**Young people are among the first to suffer.** Also independent from the Pandemic, the unemployment rate of young people was higher than the one of the whole population. This also reflects in the current situation, or, as a young worker from Japan puts it: **"Job hunting younger generation are at a loss."** For young workers who are looking for the first job but are unable to find one in the economic crisis, long-lasting effects are to be expected.

The same number of people will compete over less jobs. Like in the Philippines According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, joblessness soared to 17.7 per cent in April, about a month into a sweeping lockdown that saw the country closing off its borders and imposing strict shelter-at-home restrictions. At least 7.3 million Filipinos had no jobs in April, mostly as a result of one of Asia's strictest lockdowns to curb the outbreak. The highest unemployment rate previously recorded

was 14.4 percent in the second quarter of 1991. At the end of last year, unemployment stood at a record low of 4.8 per cent.

Most jobs lost were in the arts, entertainment, recreation, information, communication and construction sectors, as well as in the food and hotel industries. The government also reported that two in five of those who still had jobs were working from home in April. (Source: The StraitsTime June 6, 2020 issue)

In addition to the loose of jobs, some companies are delayed paying the salary of their workers which leaves them with the fear of totally losing their income. Other permanent workers received only 50% of their salary, while the contractual ones did not get any, like in India. Several employers asked the workers to either take this time as unpaid vacations, meaning that they are sent home without any salary or income. Others are asked to finish their annual vacations during this period. In other cases, workers are sent home without salary and they are on hold waiting for further info or calls. In some countries, it is one reaction in the Pandemia to weaken the labour rights and to make it easier for the employer to fire workers.

***"At work everything is uncertain and I am very concerned about the ways of working that may exist and that labour rights may be further violated." (Peru)***

In Brazil, in the midst of the pandemic, the Chamber of Deputies approved Provisional Measure N° 905 which, among other things, reduces the employers' social security contributions as well as the fine employers have to pay to a guarantee fund (FGTS) in case of dismissals; it cancels the payment of the 13<sup>th</sup> month and one 1/3 of paid vacation; it considers that traffic accidents between work and home are work-related accidents only if they take place in the employer's means of transport; and it places collective agreements above case law and above the general views of the Higher Labour Court.

While we lose working hours, incomes or the whole job, living costs increase in many countries.



## 2. The Digitization of our world of work boosts

We already saw how we use the technology in our life and work before the Pandemic. This impacted our whole way of life, work and organizing. In many countries had been a trend towards “tele-working” already before the Pandemic. Now, since everyone needs to avoid physical contact as much as possible in the current crisis, the trend towards digital processes even increased. Really everything is somehow digital, including art. In order to participate in this global digital society, obviously Internet and electricity are necessary. This is not guaranteed everywhere. There is a gap between countries as well as between rural and urban areas in the same country. As YCW leaders from Haiti say, for instance:

***"In our country, it is really not possible for the large majority of young workers to stay at home to work and to tele-work because there is almost no electricity, the internet is very expensive and sometimes very slow."***

So, the inequality in access to Internet is becoming more important which increases an already existing inequality. This is an inequality between countries, but also between cities and countryside in a very same country. In general, weak Internet connections become a more severe challenge. In the same time, the digitization of the world of work brings impacts for everyone involved. Looking at tele-working, it definitely increased a lot. This includes tele-working where possible, online-conferences/meetings and all conferences online and will also impact the "after-Corona-time". On the one hand, it can be nice to have more time at home. In some cases, the workers used to have long travels to work, so the tele-working saves the transport-time. On the other hand, as we see in some testimonies, there are also difficult consequences:

***"I am now working from home, but the company does not provide a computer, so I had to pay more than 100,000 yen myself" (Japan)***

***"Home office is difficult because we are not equipped for home office! (...) There is actually no possibility to work properly in one's own home: There is no desk; there is hardly any space at the dining table and it is not made for working. (...) I was able to take my screen, keyboard and mouse with me from the office, but that was only possible because I had a car. (...) I use my private phone and internet (...). There is much more communication on private channels. For example, I'm off today, but this morning I had a WhatsApp-message from my boss" (Germany)***



- With the teleworking, working hours often increase.

The boundaries between work and life shrink and workers are always reachable.

- In many sectors and all over the world, workers are using their own devices in order to do the work.
- It can be very difficult to organise a proper work-place at home if there was no desk or room to work.
- For parents whose children are always at home given the closing of schools, it is a challenge to combine working from home with looking for their children. However, many workers feel there is expectation to deliver the same performance of work under these new circumstances of home labor.

Independent from the telework, working and living online often goes along with using services while giving away our data to multinational companies who earn money with it without us being really aware. In this Pandemic, also young workers' use of social media increased again. This is an easy tool for communication while they are also platforms for "fake news". They can also induce us to invest our time in superficialities **instead of focusing on what is really happening** (testimony from Japan) and what is more important.

In the Pandemic, logically, online-shopping increases. Online shopping however is often done with digital platforms which boost precarious forms of work. This can be temporary contracts and often free-lancing without any long-term responsibility held by the employer. The production and consume of technological devices also brings questions both when it comes to the limited resources of the earth

as when it comes to the working conditions of those working in the production of the devices.

Education is also being digitized. In the Pandemic, the education has completely changed, shifting in many cases also to "online-teaching".

***"I work in a school, and now due to this pandemic I am somehow doing more work than the actual work I used to do. It's exhausting, and i am not sure if it is useful to the students especially the ones who needs special treatment and more effort to really understand the given information. This situation is very complicated for me and for my students" Egypt***



**"Basic education teachers who provide distance learning work with their own computer or mobile phone, their personal Internet connection, their social media accounts and other applications. They are not given any guidance on the methods they should use for distance learning."**

**Brazil**

All in all, teachers try in several cases to call each pupil to see if they need help, still of course, the whole situation is completely different and much less help is provided to the pupils. Again, it is more difficult for the disadvantaged. It is also a question of having technological devices, having enough space to follow an online class and being able to cope without someone physically explaining. With play grounds closed and quarantines set, some children need to stay at home all day without going out. Will this stay without the consequences for the physical well-being?

While men seem to be more likely to suffer very bad from a Covid-19 infection, including higher rates of male deaths over the world, which is so far explained both by biological reasons as well as gendered ways of care to the own body, women are particularly affected by the socio-economic effects of the crisis.

On the one hand, many of the sectors particularly affected by job-losses due to the pandemic show bigger shares of female workers. On the other hand, it is precisely those professions that are currently often considered to be systemically relevant



### 3. Gender inequalities/inequities are even more enhanced

and are under particular pressure. Those professions are often performed by women.

In the field of paid care work, there are many part-time jobs, not enough personnel and low wages.

In the household, too, it is mainly women who do the care work. This is partly due to traditional and established role patterns - *we live in a world that looks at women as fragile. So in this pandemic women are most likely to lose their jobs either to stay at home to take care of their family or just to stay at home just because they are women.*

It is also due to the fact that women earn less than men on average and are therefore more likely to lag behind when it comes to the family's overall income. The need for unpaid care-work increases because of schools being closed and the need to look for sick relatives. As a young worker from Germany says:

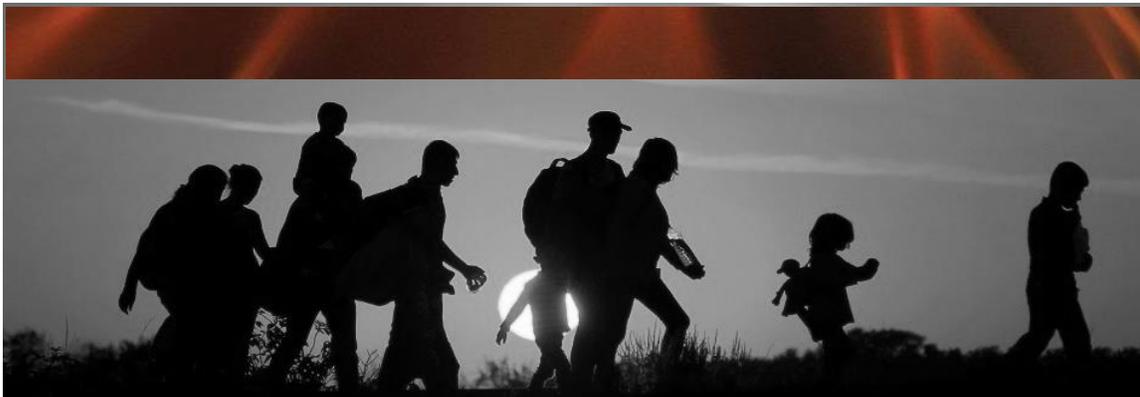
***"Only if our salaries were the same would we consider a different division of work and childcare. Because as a family we have to make ends meet - equal rights are unfortunately secondary. So we do more care - work and are particularly affected by the school and kindergarten closures, who now look after the children at home full-time."***

So, looking at the whole picture of the division of the labour market and its consequences in such a pandemic, the deep-rooted gender-based discrimination and exploitation is evident.

Furthermore, the rate of domestic violence is increasing across the world which needs immediate intervention.

***"There are a lot of conflicts, in families, among genders. The situation of couples who were not on good terms has worsened."***  
**(Argentina)**





## 4. Migrants are particularly affected

Another particularly vulnerable group to be impacted in the current situation are migrants, both domestic as well as international. Local migrants, especially in big countries, can be stuck at one place without being able to get home because of travel restrictions. This is particularly difficult in the case of informal workers who lost their income without having any social security. Also overseas migrants can be stuck in a foreign country if the border is closed or transports don't work. This can be extremely difficult in these cases where migrants workers are asked by the "host country's government" to go back to their countries.

Cases of quarantine can require stays in the hotel where the worker needs to pay this hotel. In general, migrant workers

who take care of their families at home often feel their burden increasing due to the economic difficulties at home while also the situation in the host country is worsening. In some cases, it is not only an individual responsibility towards their own family and friends at home, but also towards the state. For instance, the Philippine government increased the contribution of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) need to pay mandatorily for their Health Insurance. Social distancing is difficult in a camp. This is the case for many refugees in camps having no choice than being together.

There is an increase of discrimination towards people from Asia all over the world connected to the break-out of Corona in China.

## 5. Lack of Social Protection even more evident

The current reality exposes the lack of social protection and safety-nets for all in the economies, especially those of developing countries.

There is also insufficient attention to health in work and life all over the world.

Working conditions in so called

"care-sectors" (education, health care etc.) were heavily impacted by austerity and "privatization" measures taken all over the world by governments after the financial crisis of 2008 and in the last years.

*"People whose life hangs in the balance between the dangers of life and economic dangers are present yet there are not enough countermeasures for infections that put people in danger. It is just not a disaster made by the covid 19 but also a human made disaster by politicians" (Japan)*

During this pandemic the governments of most of the countries tried to take or took measures to support the people in this global crisis pandemic situation of losing jobs, working hours and incomes. However, the support is not sufficient.

- In several countries, people are given some support or compensation. There is financial support in many cases. In Brazil, a “basic income” was introduced for the informal and low income-workers. In some cases, there is a support with basic goods, like in the Philippines and Ghana.

*"We received help from our community but this is only 3kilos of rice every week, my situation is too difficult because of "no work no pay" we are helpless we don't know how we will provide the needs of our family because the assistance of our local government is not enough".*  
Philippines

However, as we also see in the testimony, the existing support is far

from enough in most countries.

- Some governments were delayed or could not pay the social help. In other cases, it is simply not enough to cover the needs including food and rent.
- In many cases, there is less or even no social protection for informal and precarious workers. Seeing mostly informal economies, like the one in Haiti where only 2% of the workers are protected, such a crisis hits hard.
- The social support in many countries didn't reach the mass impacted. For example, because the system did not really work: the compensation went to only one million families, which means 1% of the population.

On the other hand, several governmental health systems all over the world show the big weaknesses from this current situation. Hospital beds, medicines and lack of personnel as well as not everyone gets access to tests, treatment and medicine.

So, in a nutshell, we can see that the governments all over the world are taking some measures. Unfortunately, the systems are far from protecting everyone. People are left with fear and with the feeling of being worthless. On the other hand, the situation clearly highlights the weakness of social protection issues around the world. We need a fair and effective social protection to avoid collapse of the world of work in a sense we just see.





## 6. Health is put at risk

### Health is not always guaranteed at work.

The necessary safety measures are not always guaranteed at work. This was a reality we also saw before the Pandemic: Lack of occupational health and safety (OHS) in several work-places. This is the same in this specific reality brought by the Corona virus.

- Obviously, boarding-houses where workers live together bring a specific risk to infect each other.
- In other cases workers who could work from home are just not allowed to do so. It looks like the distrust of employees is so great in some cases that supervisors are not even prepared to allow home offices in order to contain the pandemic. Their employees are thus running the risk, against their own will, of infecting themselves and carrying the virus further.

*"Our manager does not want us to make a home office. This is only possible for IT people and risk patients\*. Why I'm not so sure." Germany.*

- After a lock-down of several months, we see many employers asking their workers to come back to work. However the Virus is not contained at all, nor is the curve flattening. Occupational health and safety at work is not into place. Only through disinfection and social distances are in practice.
- As already mentioned, some categories of informal workers such as garbage collectors, construction workers and street vendors continue to go out to work because they depend on the income. Thus, they put their health at risk, not always using face masks and gloves.

### Undignified working conditions in the health care sector.

Obviously, health care workers are most exposed to the Virus and in the frontline combatting it. They are doing their best putting on safety measures and help calm the spread of this deadly virus. However, they themselves are directly exposed to it, we see many cases of sickness/deaths of health care workers in several countries. Lack of Personnel Protected Equipment (PPE's) are still the problems of many health care workers like in the Philippines putting specifically doctors and nurses into vulnerable situations. Risking more of their lives while attending patients affected by the virus.

*"I am working for a medical related field that makes work busy. "Am I not infected?" is always the worry that I have while I work." (Japan)*

***“ I work in a private hospital, at the beginning of this pandemic we were asked if ever one felt sick or feverish to take a personnel unpaid vacation until one feel better...and even if we still have some personnel paid days left”  
(Egypt)***

In the last decades, healthcare has been cut down and privatized in several countries. The effects were already visible before, but we see the drastic effects clearly in the current situation. Even before, many caregivers were already burdened, and this overburdening is increasing.

## **7. We see different reactions from society**

**On the one hand, we do see many actions of solidarity.**

There are neighbours doing the shopping for vulnerable groups and concrete help given for instance to elderly and migrants. There are also actions taken to help homeless persons. These can be individual actions, those of movements, of NGOs, communities and states. There are also collaborations of social movements to tackle this reality. In Brazil, there are local initiatives taken by states and cities or workers' organizations which, with the support of parliament members, propose laws and put pressure to approve measures providing for the payment of income to informal workers and unemployed

This overload of work represents a health risk for health care workers including mentally.

There is also not enough necessary protection for the specific risks in this sector. All this contributes to the spread of the disease in hospitals and nursing homes.

In Ghana exist strong measures to support health care workers in this situation: they receive 50% additional allowance and they should not pay taxes for three months. Also, the country provides free transport buses to convey health workers to and from work, along specific routes, for the entire duration of the restrictions.

people. To a lesser extent, there are also initiatives taken by local employers who, on an individual basis or together with others, made their facilities, raw material and labour force available to produce equipment such as ventilators, face shields, masks, gowns and sanitizers, and delivered them to one or more hospitals.



In general, there is a lot of help to each other. Please see the following experience:

***“My YCW friend Beatriz invited me to her home. In the first weeks, it was difficult for me to get used to a new family, to the weather and other things. We leave the house to milk the cows early in the morning, then we come back home and do the cleaning, cook and have breakfast. After that, we go and feed the pigs, the guinea pigs (called cuy) and young goats. I like being in my new home, I help with a number of things, the food is really good because they are fresh products coming from family farming, and I think that if I had stayed in my room, I might have died, not of Covid-19 but of starvation. But here I am very grateful, my friend's parents are very friendly.” (Peru)***

The whole lockdown also has positive elements.

- Activities are slowing down, people travel less and some have more time to read and to do things where we did not have the time before, and spend with their families.

***“My family’s way of life has changed dramatically, for the better though, because now we have more time to share and our communication has changed in a positive way. I know that when all this is over, I will continue my studies and I will have to leave them, and this makes me very sad.”(Peru)***

- Also, our "normal" way of living high speed had several negative impacts on the environment; some cities are cleaner today because much less traffic. Also less electricity is needed for the sluggish economy and pollution has dropped with reduction of air flights.
- Apart from this, the current situation visibilizes vulnerabilities and injustices in our system, so awareness raises. Precarious living and working conditions become particularly apparent in crises like this one. For example, the recognition of the achievements of employees in the care sector shows a need for action and there is an increase of discussion about the working conditions in this sector such as wage, hazard pays and being part of an association or union.

### **On the other hand, we wander about the real priorities in society.**

- For instance, if Shopping-Malls are considered so important that they need to stay open eve in the lock-down, but religious services are closed. Is shopping so important?
- In some countries, religious leaders are not included in the drafting of the protocols for precautionary measures and need to advocate strongly for the awareness about church activities.
- And what is the real importance of big sport-events? In Japan, young workers have the impression that the real priority before taking other decisions were the Olympic Games. In Germany, soccer-games (without viewers present) started before the opening of schools.
- The underlying and big question is: Is the priority health or the economy? Some young workers conclude:

***“Health is more important than social contacts, education, culture and mental well-being. But industrial production is still put above the health and well-being. Nationalistic and profit-oriented decisions of the state and of companies cause incomprehension.” (Japan)***

In addition, although we see many solidarity activities, we also see a lack of solidarity.

- In many countries the beginning of the lock-down was accompanied by panic shopping, meaning that people were buying enormous amounts and making reserves for themselves, making it difficult for vulnerable groups to buy at least their basic necessities.

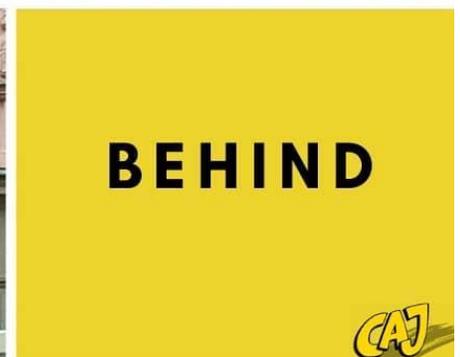
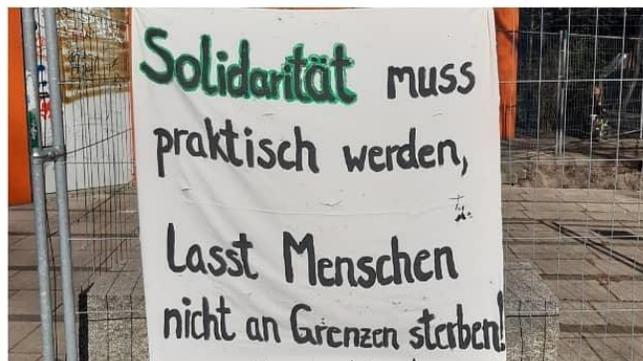
For the ecology, while the current situation helps reduce some forms of pollution, we are far from saving our earth. This pandemic minimizes the movement of the people (cars, airplanes, any public transportation). But the activities of big companies mining and/or producing carbon emission are still ongoing. More and more coastal areas are submerging little by little into the water, much of it can be found in Asia and the Pacific.

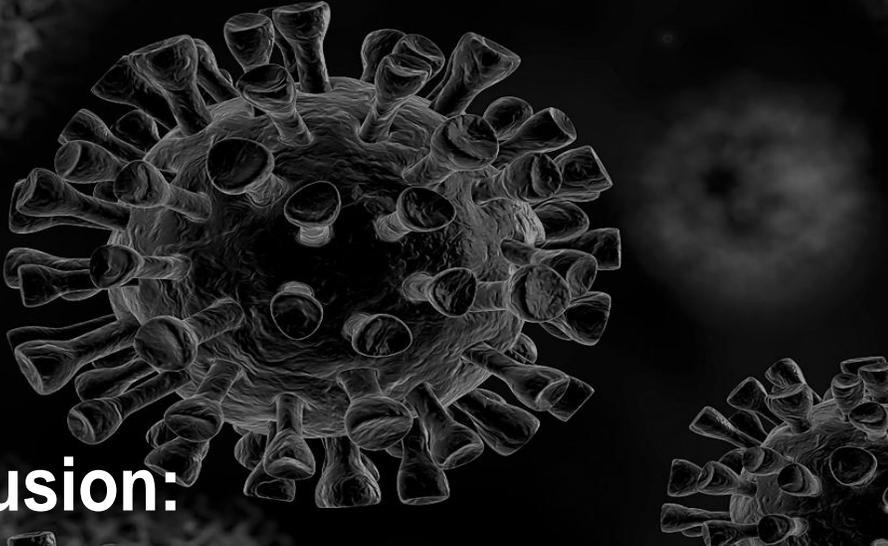
- Young workers in several countries denounce that big companies and major national and international groups operating in the country and owning a large part of the wealth produced have not been or have hardly been involved in the cost of the pandemic considering their returns and the social and environmental impact caused by their business in the country.
- Unfortunately, we also see cases of companies abusing an existent social security system meant to support businesses in this crisis. This abuses systems of solidarity and puts more burden on the workers:

***"Our company introduced short-time working, even if it is not necessary. This exploits government regulations, because the order situation has not actually changed. This leads to a concentration of work. It is all about cost savings and that is annoying, because nothing has changed in the demand for our products. The handicraft sector continues to operate. The online trade also tends to order more goods. It's simply a matter of having fewer expenses for personnel."*** (Germany)

- In the same line, we continuously see people who do not seem to care, neither about their own health nor about protecting others. As one militant from Peru says:

***"I feel outraged by all those people who do not realize how serious the situation is and do not pay any attention to what the government says."***





## Conclusion:

Put in a nutshell, we see young workers all over the world heavily impacted. The global unemployment rate rises constantly, and young people are among those who suffer at first.

In general, those who are already disadvantaged suffer particularly from the situation:

- Those in precarious employment are at greater risk of finding themselves in even more precarious situations.
- Families who can only afford small apartments now sit together in very confined spaces, which leads to tensions.
- Young people who come from less well-off financial and educational backgrounds do not receive the support and resources they need at home and are left behind in education.
- Regional inequalities are even

more enhanced. They play a major role in how the health system and social protection work in a place. Some regions, like the Amazonia, are particularly vulnerable. Also inequalities between cities and rural areas, for instance regarding Internet access, widen as well as the inequalities between countries.

- Gender inequalities are enhanced as well as ethnical minorities who always have been disadvantaged are more vulnerable in this particular situation.

Regarding governments, there are some who intend to use the pandemic for their own agenda and increase their power. We see cases of media control, for instance silencing media who criticize governments for mistakes in the Anti-Covid – measures.

There are also cases of police and military brutality and addressing the problem with violence towards the people without providing the means for them to be saved.

It seems like in some countries the rampant use of military and police is supposed to give the impression that the government is in control of the situation disregarding police abuse towards civilians as is the case for example in India, Philippines, and Indonesia.



# What is our opinion on this reality based on our values? How should it be?

*"Each young worker is worth more than all the gold in the world"* is the famous quotation of our founder in which we continue to believe. Human dignity must be above all, thus human beings must be at the center of economy. The acceptance of a God-given dignity and vocation of every (young) person inevitably entails that the human being must be at the center of all economic activity. Decisions must not be based on the political and capital yield of a society, but must be oriented towards the added value for people themselves. Human lives must not be attached to money. The value of human beings, regardless of their place of residence, origin, gender, political beliefs, etc., must be the central guiding principle of all our social actions, not profit.

All people should have equal opportunities for adequate education, equal access to resources - regardless of their financial and social background. We want equal rights in all situations of life, so that all people have the same chances and opportunities! There should be no discrimination, for example on grounds of gender, origin or sexual orientation or political beliefs.

The health care system should aim solely at maintaining people's health and not to submit to the classic capitalist market logic. Health is a

human right and cannot be treated as merchandise. The state is responsible to guarantee this right in the society. The state must require big companies to meet their responsibility to ensure medical care to all workers, and above and beyond that, it must address social inequality, levying a tax on wealth.

Public services of general interest are at the service of mankind! Thus, everyone should get free access to them independently of nationality or economic situation.

On the one hand, we are grateful that there are attempts of protection. On the other hand, we are angry about the lack of recognition and support. It is clearly the result of lack of investment in public services, in health care services and in social measures ensuring equality. All of the current vulnerabilities are not the sole phenomena of this crisis, but have long been shaped by our society and decisions which were taken.

People are indeed capable of solidarity as we see in the enormous amount of initiative of mutual support. However, this is not at all represented by our economic system. It is on the contrary cruel and based on the image that humans just look for their own benefit. This is illogical and in this sense inhuman.

We need an economic world representing this solidarity. Our world (of work) needs a safety net for all. We see how urgent it is to ensure everyone's survival and dignity!

This includes everyone to be protected including freelancers and informal workers. Values of justice and solidarity need to be represented in the system.

In order to have a working social protection system, everyone must contribute to it. Of course, richer people must contribute more to ensure social security, good infrastructure and education for all. It is also a question of global justice speaking especially of transnational acting corporations: They should pay social security contributions and taxes in the countries where they earn money, not only where they have their company head office.

In the current situation and the obvious times of transformations, we hope for positive change and call:

"Let's use this opportunity!" Since we face the global crisis and nearly all human processes are interrupted, there is an occasion to create new systems. So it is a moment to reflect upon our priorities in different fields:

- **In the education:** It is obvious that the awareness of people today is crucial. For instance, if people do not act responsibly right now (e.g. wearing masks), it damages the whole society. In this sense, it is evident that we need people to be aware: our education should be transformed into an education which guarantees this. As a young worker from Japan hopes: ***"May these harmful conditions be a transition for change in the Japanese education system and how children are supported."***

We also need education that reiterates the human as the centre of progress and that he will give back as a whole to benefit the society and not only to amass more wealth for the already wealthy.

- **In labor:** We see again that this Pandemic even enhances already existing inequalities.

Those who were already disadvantaged before are suffering more. Precarity and insecurity that many workers face have severe consequences for the whole society. Thus, we see the clear need to transform the labor laws to be in favor of the people and workers, not the capitalistic system. The strict implementation of occupational health and safety (OHS) must be observed and violations should be punished. There is also evidently the need for all workers to organise, associate and join trade unions or movements which act to safeguard workers labour and human rights.

- **Care-work:** We see the importance of care-work in this crisis more than ever. This includes all forms of care-work; care about the family, other people, elder, children, and health-care-work. Also cleaning is one way of caring and should be valorized according to the importance it has for all of us. However, if we see the reality, there is a big contradiction: While care-work is so important, it is not really valorized. This is the case for cleaning in different forms

(garbage collectors, domestic workers, cleaning offices) and care done in the families without financial remuneration. Work in the families and care work in general is a common task of the society, which should be appreciated and supported, also financially. It must not be passed on to individuals. There should also a good and fair distribution of gainful employment and care work between the sexes. We also saw the bad working conditions in the health care sector and other fields of paid care work. We need a mindset and a system really valorizing all forms of care-work. Such special recognition as it is given currently in Ghana to the health care workers should not be the exemption but rather the norm. Also working conditions in care-sectors should even in "normal times" allow dignified life and work.



- **Social Protection:** during this pandemic the importance of a concrete social protection program and a good health care system has become even more obvious. We need to create a global health, education and infrastructure system protecting everyone.
- **The ecology:** We see that it is actually possible to interrupt what we always considered as "normal". One young worker from Peru even believes that "this disease is something that Mother Earth has sent on us to be able to clean itself." Will we use this opportunity for long-lasting savings of our Earth?

So, after all: We need a different model of economy. We need Social Protection for all.

As our current economy is down, the question is if we will just continue like before or we could use this chance to elaborate a better approach, respecting people's dignity, ensuring justice and respecting the natural ecological boundaries? As long as we ourselves are not rendered incapable of action by the illness or its consequences, we see ourselves called and obliged to stand up for the interests of young people in uncertain and precarious realities of life - also worldwide.

As international UN institutions like the WHO and the ILO recommend, countries should reserve a fix percentage of their Gross Domestic Products (GDP) for social protection. These SP should be run by the government agencies and not by the private corporation and its funds must not be used for the objective of gaining more profit.

Such effective Social Protection must:

- Cover everyone including migrants and informal workers. Steps should be done for the formalization of the informal economy without any criminalisation of the informal workers.
- Include access to qualified health-care for all.
- Include access to Infrastructure such as internet, electricity and water because they are necessary for equal participation in today's world.

## What needs to be done?



**Governments need to act** because...

- Strong and solidary Social Protection is needed worldwide.** This implies dignified working conditions for those working in its services as well as ensure a safety net for all. (Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) as per agreement in the ILO conventions must be implemented at all cost.

Everyone should contribute to it, of course more or less depending on the own wealth, including significant shares from transnational companies. Regulations are needed for the digital transnationals (such as Google, Amazon, Facebook etc.) to pay taxes in the country where they make the income, not only where they have their head office.



- Include some safety income for all in the case of unemployment
- Quality education, equal chances and support for all in the education
- Provide decent, nutritious foods and hygienic surrounding for refugees.
- Promote sustainable ecological solutions. Climate change agreement must be implemented and responsible actors (like USA, China) hold accountable.

**b) Laws and policies for dignified work and life for all are necessary.**

Dignified work for all is necessary. This includes so-called minorities such as youth, migrants, and women.

Concretely,

- Steps need to be done to include youth in the labour market. This means to fight youth unemployment, but also to take the quality of jobs into account. Rights and conditions in the workplace for young people need to be improved.

- It is necessary to act for more equality between the sexes including promoting female leadership. Also, governments need to ratify the ILO convention on gender based violence in the world of work and ensure its strict implementation.
- Severe improvement of the working conditions, including wages, and representation rights of workers in essential care services is needed. It is obviously not enough to clap on balconies or engage in public laudatory statements.
- The big risk for workers' health in boarding houses must be reduced. Workers have the right to decent housing!
- Worker rights in the digitized world of work need to be developed and updated including measures to limit the working time to what was agreed in the contract and clear regulations about the responsibility for employers to provide the electronic devices which are needed for work.

- Justice also in the digital sphere must be ensured and citizens must be in control of their data. So steps are needed in limiting the dominance of the big enterprises like Google, Facebook, Amazon, who earn their money by collecting our data.
- In general, already existing labour laws must be complied with and this must be controlled!

We ask concretely:

- 1) To uphold the right to occupational health and safety, freedom of association, collective bargaining, gender rights at work and the labor and human rights as a whole.
- 2) For guaranteed income and job security for all workers;
- 3) For greater social protection for all and immediate support to low-income and informal workers;
- 4) For immediate implementation of mass testing and free treatment for all.

## Society, Civil society and we as young workers need to act, because..

As young workers and in the civil society, we should deepen our discussions and standings in various fields:

- We need to deepen our discussions on social protection.
- We should update our standings and demands to this "new" world of work (questions for example: "Who pays for the devices?" / "How to guarantee the boundary between work and life?" "How to ensure everyone's access to electricity and Internet while respecting the boundaries of ecology?" "How can we make sure that people's data will be protected in work and life? ") And develop clear demands and solidarity with the workers in the production of the electronic devices...
- Trade Unions and associations should increase the inclusion and organising of informal workers and care workers close to informality, young people, women and migrants.
- We should all become aware about the gender differences in context of work, including the awareness that care-work has a human dimension and everyone should participate in it. This is a matter of cultural patterns as well as of social protection and of "job-culture". Our societies might need a reduction of remunerated working hours for all.

- Civil society should follow up the processes in politics, including to raise the voice for the implementation of existing worker' and civil rights and to ask for the ratification of the convention on gender based violence.
- Awareness-raising about the crucial role young people play in our societies, to include young people in decision-making spaces and avoid any kind of (age-) discrimination in society as well as in labour are necessary.
- Everyone is called to see that the own workers' rights are respected, to raise the voice if necessary and to promote peace and solidarity in the own surrounding.
- Networking among CSO's, NGO's, social movements, church people with the same goal must be strengthened. As the labor and human rights advocate in the Philippines said "Now more than ever we need to build bridges among ourselves because the enemy is too big and we need more strength to fight back."

However, all this should not hinder a serious reflection of all of us: How can we use this current interruption of economic processes and global value chains as chance for a transition to a global economy respecting everyone's dignity?

**What we need are better working conditions,  
justice, equality and safety at work for all!**