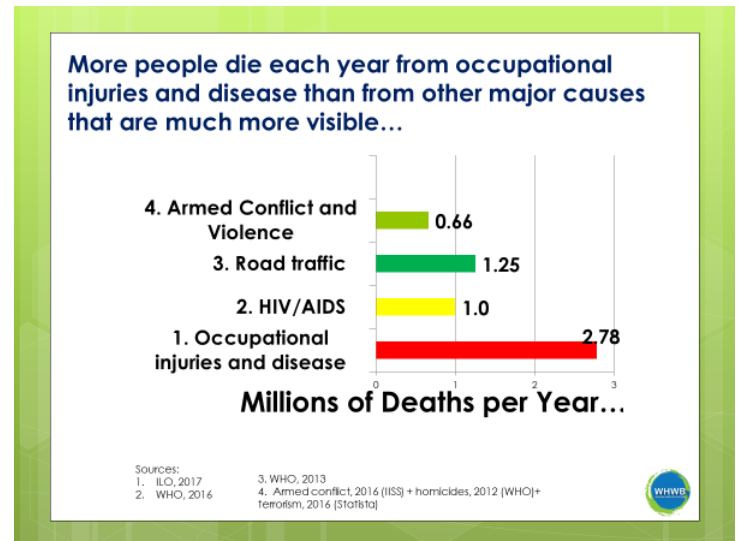


Preventing occupational disease worldwide

Work-related disease kills more than 2 million people a year around the world – more than other well-recognized global health and safety challenges like HIV/AIDS, armed conflict and automobile crashes. Another 160 million people in the world get sick every year from occupational health hazards. Not only adults are affected: 152 million of the world’s children are child labourers, half of whom work in hazardous conditions. The International Labour Organization estimates that occupational injury and disease cost the world \$2.8 trillion (USD) every year: 4% of the world’s Gross Domestic Product.

Dedication to the prevention of occupational disease motivated the creation of the non-profit organization Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB). Incorporated as a charity in Canada since 2011, WHWB has a network of nearly 3,000 people around the world, including occupational hygienists, physicians and others concerned about workplace health. Branches have been formed in the United States, Australia and the UK, and one is forming in Africa.



Our Mission and Vision

WHWB’s vision is *a world where workers, their families and communities do not get ill because of their work.* Our mission is *to prevent work-related disease around the world through shared expertise, knowledge and skills.*

What We Do

WHWB members volunteer their time to offer training, mentoring and technical assistance to develop capacity for preventing occupational disease and injury around the world. Following are examples of our work.

1. Training Programs

Only 16 countries offer professional certification in occupational hygiene, the profession devoted to assessment and control of occupational health hazards. It is estimated that another 45,000 certified hygienists would be needed worldwide to offer the level of service available in those 16 countries. WHWB members volunteer their knowledge and services to help fill this gap.

WHWB offers training in occupational health and safety (OHS) in areas that need more professional OHS resources. WHWB is an approved training provider with the Occupational Hygiene Training Association



(OHTA), which maintains a program of training courses and certification in occupational hygiene. Each OHTA course consists of 5 days of instruction. Examples include *Basic Principles of Occupational Hygiene*, *Control of Hazardous Substances*, *Measurement of Hazardous Substances*, and *Noise Measurements and Effects*. We also offer a basic health and safety course and can customize courses to user needs. We have given training in Tanzania, Botswana, Swaziland, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia Egypt, India and Viet Nam in partnership with universities and government agencies responsible for health and safety.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, WHWB has offered training programs that combine e-learning self-study with online tutorials in multiple languages. In 2022-23 we offered programs in Basic Occupational Health and Safety Awareness, training for labour inspectors in Africa, Basic Principles in Occupational Hygiene and Noise in the Workplace. A recently formed Health Care Providers Group offers training and mentoring to occupational physicians, nurses and other health professionals. Our Waste Workers Committee has given training in respiratory protection to waste workers in Brazil.



WHWB courses in Viet Nam, Tanzania and Mozambique



2. Mentoring Programs

WHWB offers a mentorship program, through which highly trained and experienced volunteer professionals around the world mentor new professionals. Mentors and mentees meet regularly, usually through electronic communications, for educational and guidance sessions.

3. Professional and Public Awareness

Our members organize, sponsor, and speak at seminars, professional and non-professional conferences, to universities and schools, and are available to the media to speak on global occupational health and safety. During the pandemic, WHWB held 22 webinars on topics related to COVID and infection control in a variety of countries. In 2022-23 we offered webinar series on asbestos and silica exposure from engineered countertops.



4. Support to NGOs, Universities and Public Institutions

WHWB provides support to universities and schools that want to develop their own professional education programs in occupational hygiene and health. WHWB-US has worked with Viet Nam National University to establish a new degree program in Occupational Safety, Health and Environmental Engineering, and offered a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) program that enables the students to interact and exchange ideas with their peers from other universities around the world. Support for offering OHS programs has also been provided to universities in Nigeria, Ethiopia and Eswatini.



Students at Viet Nam National University

WHWB has supported NGOs working on infectious disease outbreaks, helping to recruit occupational hygienists and providing expertise in personal protective equipment and infection control. WHWB volunteers also supported establishment of occupational hygiene laboratories and makes occupational hygiene expertise available to NGOs to protect the health and safety of their volunteers.

5. Facilitating Donations of PPE and Equipment

WHWB has facilitated donations of PPE and occupational hygiene equipment to institutions in Africa, Asia and South America, including universities, NGOs and government health and safety agencies.

6. Projects

WHWB offers support and technical assistance for projects around the world to evaluate and control occupational health hazards. Examples of our projects include the following:

Gem workers in India: WHWB has worked on projects to control silica exposure among gem workers in India. Because the work is often located in the home, whole families, including children, get sick from breathing hazardous dust from cutting and polishing gemstones.



Local students help install ventilation system for gem stone polishing in India



Brick plants in Africa and Asia: Brick plants are common throughout Africa, Asia and South America, often employing children. About 65% of child brick plant workers have been found to suffer from work-related injury or illness. WHWB has provided guidance on health standards for the Nepal brick plant industry and technical review for the International Labour Organization Child Labour Project on its report on child brick plant workers.

Waste Workers in Brazil: WHWB's Waste Workers Occupational Safety & Health Committee (WWOSH) has sponsored a number of projects aimed at protecting the health and safety of waste workers, especially in Brazil. It recently sponsored a project that trained hundreds of waste workers on proper use of respiratory protection. WWOSH has also collaborated with partners in developing health risk maps for waste workers and educational materials on COVID.





Artisanal Miners and Roadside Mechanics in Ghana



Artisanal miners, Ghana

WHWB and WHWB-UK evaluated the exposure of informal workers in Ghana who work in artisanal mining and roadside mechanics. Together with a local university we evaluated worker exposure to hazards including noise, silica, metals and organic compounds. The project is continuing to explore measures to control these hazardous exposures.

7. Working Groups

WHWB has established working groups to address specific issues such as asbestos and risks to nail salon workers. Our Health Care Group focuses on training and mentoring of health care providers on occupational health issues. Our asbestos working group recently sponsored a webinar series on asbestos, featuring 35 speakers, drawing more than 500 participants from around the world.

INSIDE FIBRE SHEET MAKING FACTORIES



WORKERS INSIDE FACTORY WITHOUT PPE



WORKERS INSIDE ASBESTOS SHEET MAKING FACTORY WITHOUT PPE

Presentation at WHWB Asbestos Webinar, on asbestos work in India, Dr. Priyanka Roy



Partners

WHWB works closely with partner organizations including the International Occupational Hygiene Association, American Industrial Hygiene Association, Occupational Hygiene Training Association, International Commission on Occupational Health, Belgian Centre for Occupation Health, the French Occupational Hygiene Society, the South African Institute for Occupational Hygiene and the International Occupational Medicine Society Collaborative.



For more information

- www.whwb.org
- Youtube (including recordings of WHWB webinars)
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj5PLvW65Lr0feLYGVLBnmQ>
- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/workplacehealthwithoutborders>
- Twitter <https://twitter.com/WHWB15>
- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4104875>