

Forum : Labour**Thématique : Empowering the youth to drive / thrive / embrace and match the requirements of the future labour market.**

Nom du/de la Citoyen.ne : Ema Levičar

Family situation • Married / dating ○ Single • With kids, if so how many: 2	Education level ○ Primary • Secondary ○ University
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1. How are you concerned by the subject?

As a small-scale soybean farmer, married and a father of two, the current changes in the labor market directly affect my family, my farm, and my community. Problems such as informal work, the growing use of artificial intelligence, and the movement of young people from rural areas to cities all create challenges for the future of small farms like mine.

With a secondary education and limited financial resources, I manage our family farm with the help of seasonal workers. However, current labor laws often require complicated administrative procedures and high payroll taxes. These rules are difficult for a small farm to manage and make it hard for me to legally register my seasonal workers during the busiest periods of the harvest. At the same time, some local workers are hesitant to accept official contracts because they are afraid of temporarily losing their state social benefits. As a result, both farmers and workers can remain stuck in the informal economy, even when they would prefer a legal and more secure situation.

This situation also affects the younger generation. Many young people no longer see traditional farming as a stable or attractive career. They often see it as hard physical work with limited opportunities for the future, so they choose to move to cities and look for other types of work, including jobs in the gig economy and through online platforms. This makes it increasingly difficult for small farms to find workers and ensure that the next generation will continue working in agriculture.

At the same time, technology is developing quickly, but rural areas often do not have the same access to digital tools and infrastructure as cities. Artificial intelligence is already changing many jobs, education, and the way businesses are managed. If these changes mainly focus on urban workers and office jobs, rural workers and farmers could be left behind. We would have less access to new technologies while also struggling to attract the skilled workers needed to modernize agriculture. For small farms like mine, it is therefore important that the digital transition includes rural communities as well.

2. What do you suggest at your scale?

At my level, I think we need a strategy that combines simpler regulations, better access to technology, and new opportunities for young people in agriculture.

First, the State should create a simpler legal and tax system for small farms. A “single-window” system could allow farmers to register seasonal workers quickly and easily, for example through a simple mobile application or government website. This would reduce the amount of paperwork and make it easier for small farms to follow labor laws without facing the same administrative burden as large agricultural companies.

To make formal employment more attractive to workers, I also propose a social security system that takes their situation into account. State benefits could be temporarily adjusted or suspended while a worker has a short-term harvest contract and then automatically restored when the contract ends. This would give workers more security and could encourage more people to accept official contracts instead of remaining in informal employment.

Second, small farms should also have better access to new technologies. Future regulations concerning artificial intelligence should include tools that are accessible to people with limited technical skills. For example, public employment and agricultural websites could offer free voice-based services. Farmers and workers could then use a smartphone and simple voice commands to manage basic accounting, employment contracts, or other administrative tasks without needing advanced computer skills.

Finally, I propose the creation of local agricultural technology cooperatives. These cooperatives could give young people the opportunity to work with modern agricultural technologies, such as drones, digital farming tools, harvest data, and logistics systems. This could change the way young people see agriculture: instead of being only physically demanding work, farming could also offer skilled and modern careers.

By making agriculture more accessible, more technological, and more attractive to young people, we can support small farmers while also creating better opportunities in rural communities. This would help protect the future of the agricultural sector, strengthen local economies, and contribute to global food security.