

Forum : Citizen's forum of Labour

Theme : Empowering the youth to drive/ thrive/ embrace and match the requirements of the future labour market

Name of the citizen : Olivia Bravo Thomsen

Family situation • Married / dating ○ Single • With kids, if so how many ___1___	Education level • Primary • Secondary ○ University
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1. How are you concerned by the subject?

I am a 20-year-old mom who lives out of selling small snacks and drinks to the people passing near the New Delhi railway station every day. My work belongs to the informal sector, which means that I don't have a pension, health insurance nor a guaranteed income. If I cannot work a day I don't earn any money, I work every day a week to provide money to my son and husband but sometimes it's hard with all the competition there is with the other street vendors. This topic affects me directly because the labour market is changing rapidly. With many employers looking for people with digital and technical skills. That makes it harder for young people like me who couldn't go to the university to learn these skills and get a better job. I also see how the new digital tools have taken over because a lot of people prefer to pay over the phone or with a credit card instead of cash. This meant that I had to learn and get a card machine so people could pay with their credit cards. This has improved my competition a lot because I'm one of the few carts who has one of these machines and it has also brought me a lot more customers.

But another struggle is that the private companies have put out vending machines all over the station and people prefer buying food and other snacks from these vending machines instead of buying them from us.

I produce many of the snacks that I try to sell. I need heat in order to produce these snacks. I still use wood because I have a friend who sells it to me cheaper out in my village, but a lot of the other street vendors have started using plastic waste instead of the wood because it's cheaper for them and they buy it from illegal vendors who sell it. I am concerned about the health effect from this production.

I am also concerned about the young people's lack of protection in the informal working sector. We work very long hours and don't have any financial security, health insurance or legal protection. I find it important that we ensure more rights for the workers in the informal sector to work in a safe environment.

2. What do you suggest on your scale ?

Finally, the young generation is our future. I wanted to improve my situation by enrolling in a Skill India training programme through PMKVY (Indian government founded training program). The training was free and offered me the chance to gain new skills and an official certification. However, attending the classes meant leaving my food cart closed for several days. As a young mother, I also had to take care of my child and support my family. I simply could not afford to choose between investing in my future and earning the money we need every day to buy food. I believe the government should make these opportunities more accessible by offering flexible schedules, childcare support and greater financial assistance during training. In this way, young workers like me can improve our skills without risking our family's livelihood. Everyone, regardless of their background, should have a real opportunity to build a better future for themselves, their community and the country.