

Forum : Citizen's forum of Labour

2026

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

Name of the citizen : Hanna Kopecky

Family situation ☐ Married / dating ☒ Single ☐ With kids, if so how many _____	Education level ☒ Primary ☐ Secondary ☐ University
--	--

1. How are you concerned by the subject?

My name is Hanna Kopecky, I am 22 years old and I work in a mine every single day for 12 long hours. I speak on behalf of everyone who is stuck working in any dangerous conditions at any age. My goal is to improve these working conditions for everyone and make it a safer place.

As a child I was stuck in a never-ending nightmare, I woke up every morning to the screams of the officer in charge. This was the military camp I was taken after being taken from my parents at the age of 6. I was a child soldier like almost a third of the rest of the child population in one of the many militias operating in the republic of Congo. At the age of 17, I was finally rescued by the DDR program (Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration). I am one of the few lucky children who have been saved from these camps. The DDR supported me after my traumatic events and settled me into a town giving me opportunities to learn, grow and finally live a normal life that I never had as a child.

Kids are not only exploited in militias, but also in illegal mining activities. Approximately 14% or roughly 2 million people work in these conditions. My experience taught me that taking care of these kids is a necessity so that they do not have the same trauma we have and instead can live and fit into society with a normal childhood allowing them to make more of themselves. My background shows how even though I was saved unlike many other unfortunate children.

These unfortunate work environments are not only for children but also many adults are stuck in these conditions without escape of the never-ending cycle. These workers are exposed to horrible working conditions where many get injured or even die due to no protection and unfair salaries by employers.

2. What do you suggest on your scale?

The future of the next generation lies in our hands and how we make differences now. Because of my heavy past I will not stop fighting for the next generation and the many people still stuck in dangerous jobs without protection and fair prices. I want the ban on child labor to be enforced. I want the children to get an education, as if they have diplomas, they can get jobs in the formal sector, which will allow them to build the life we never had. If we do not act now the next generation will suffer even more than we did as they will have different needs and will have grown up differently in our world today.

For the adults, such as myself, I want to secure a future where we do not have to be scared that we will not be able to go home to our families. I want to ensure that if we are sick and we stay at home that we do not need to worry about having enough money for food and having a job by the time we come back healthy.

Overall I would want to start with asking exactly what the workers want to improve most and then offer small solutions to problems like no sick leave or not enough pay. Not having enough pay is usually a very big part of informal jobs and I want to try and set a minimum pay for these informal jobs in hope of improving how it affects the workers. Workers in the labor sector are continuously scared of what could happen to them and not knowing their rights. To help this I want to have organizations educate the workers on their rights and have a box that the workers can file complaints anonymously, so they aren't scared about getting fired. Lastly I would want to improve workers education as the level currently isn't very high. I would get other organizations to teach workers, I order to improve the education level.