



Decent work and its promotion by higher education – a matter of survival? by Lennart Levi



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The World Economic Forum publishes annual reports on “Global Risks” facing mankind and our planet. To cope with these and related global risks, all 193 member states of the United Nations have agreed on an “Agenda 2030”, comprising 17 very ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This Agenda aims in an integrated manner at the entire multitude of global risks: end poverty; end hunger; encourage good health and well-being (SDG 3); provide quality education (SDG 4); promote gender equality; provide clean water and sanitation; promote affordable and clean energy; provide decent work and economic growth (SDG 8) and nine additional SDGs. The Agenda emphasizes the need to integrate the goals and apply a systems approach. To optimize the likelihood of success, higher education institutions worldwide must teach and train today's and tomorrow's decision makers – to think both critically and ethically, to learn to cope with ethical dilemmas and apply systems-thinking approaches to serious and complex societal problems.

SDG 8 aims at “promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. This contrasts sharply with our current world's labor market reality. Un- and underemployment is high, working conditions often precarious and pathogenic, and in some countries child labor and slavery are not yet under control. As summarized by ILO, “unemployment and

decent work deficits remain high”. The resulting challenges to higher education lead to a major Conference on “Rethinking Higher Education, Inspired by the Sustainable Development Goals”, organised by Karo-

linska institutet in collaboration with University of Gothenburg, Chalmers University of Technology and Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.

One of the Conference's Workshops, “Decent work and economic development”, developed into a Task Group “SDG 8 – Promoting decent work and productive employment through Higher Education”, recently endorsed by the ILO-led “Global Occupational Safety and Health Coalition”. This task group comprises a dozen international experts and is managed by Professor Johannes Siegrist (University of Dusseldorf) and the ENETOSH Task Group “Mainstreaming OSH into Education”.

The task group aims to collect and analyse examples of the implementation of SDG 8 in higher education, establishing a link to SDG 3 and focusing on the quality of education – SDG 4.

The Task Group offers collaboration with already existing networks in the field of OSH, occupational medicine and higher education (e.g., the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, the International Association of Universities in partnership with UNESCO, the World Academy of Art and Science in partnership with UN; and the WHO European Office for Investment for Health and Development).

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Editorial

Networking in times of Corona is also a challenge for ENETOSH.

This issue focuses on the integration of safety and health into higher education, the impact of Corona on higher education and the priority theme of MSDs for future generations in EU-OSHA's Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2020-22. Reports on a learning platform for refugees, qualification offers for young university graduates in Africa and a presentation of the Occupational Health Society of Australia complete the portfolio of this newsletter. Stay healthy!

Ulrike Bollmann & Claus Dethleff

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Imprint

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Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung e.V. (DGUV)

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Education and Culture

Leonardo da Vinci

The impact of the Corona Virus pandemic in higher education - an occupational safety and health perspective by Alan Cowen

It seems such a long time ago and in a different world when I was working in my office on site and not working out of a bedroom at home. The pandemic seemed to arrive quickly and within two weeks most of our premises had closed and the mass exodus to work remotely from home had begun.

At the start we certainly had no idea just how long the lock down would last and much of the road ahead was being planned a week at a time.

Many institutions will have had well defined business continuity plans and may have even held simulations and exercises but few will have planned for a total closure and a pandemic. The Microsoft Teams meetings of the various incident response teams become the new normal.

Not all activities stopped, many students, including international students could not return home and needed on site support during the lockdown. A university is like a small town and essential activities such as time critical research also needed to be maintained.

A remarkable feature within my own institution was the rapid transfer to online teaching and the uptake of both working and learning in a digital environment. A fantastic achievement given the short time scales.

One immediate impact upon maintaining support services was the decline in available staff and the further difficulties around the use of external contractors as the lockdown progressed. This was soon apparent when we started to look at the phased reopening of our 65 buildings and the access to both legionella treatments/water and ventilation contractors, resulting in up to a 3 week period to bring a building back on line.

Rapid support was put in place to support home working, with over 1600 staff completing online computer (DSE) risk assessments and a service put in place to deliver desks, DSE user chairs and equipment to enhance wellbeing and reduce future health issues.

As we moved through the different stages of the incident response plan, guidance was produced to support working from home, mental health issues and implementing operational Covid secure risk assessments. Indeed there are no metrics at present to identify the short term or longer term health impacts associated with the pandemic and the impact of home working. We are very much social beings and the issues arising

from isolation and lack of interactions will need further investigation and evaluating as staff present with stress related concerns. Before the pandemic started we had no staff who were designated as home workers, what will the new normal look like and what changes to estate management, flexible working and sustainability goals may arise from this experience.

As a safety professional I am somewhat troubled by the risk assessment process and some of the control measures that the response to Covid-19 has presented. As safety practitioners we are well conversed



in dealing with specific hazards and the identification of PPE that is grounded in scientific rigor, performance factors and validated through respected testing regimes. The Government requirements to wear face coverings and face shields seem at odds with standard safety practices relating to both chemical and biological controls where additionally worker training, supervision and monitoring processes also form part of the control mechanisms.

Temperature screening at entrances seems another strange control measure adopted by several institutions, something we discounted as people really need to be self-checking before coming to site.

The movement of air around screens and face shields seems to be a lost factor and could give false hopes to what are in reality are at best ineffective safety controls.

Health and safety looks to remove the weak links through the hierarchy of controls from risk elimination, minimisation and substitution. Where so many people are involved it's quite a challenge to provide any significant levels of assurance. We need to remember that the overarching approach to the pandemic was not about an absolute safety measure but careful steps to limit the impact upon limited medical and hospital resources.

Much of the response seems to be orientated to reducing public anxiety as opposed to implementing realistic and validated control measures and it is complicated further when different staff groups have such varying personal responses to the situation. Indeed some staff who are classed as vulnerable do not wish to return to on site working whilst some are eager to resume normal working patterns. As part of our return to on site working we are now implementing an individual staff health assessment and a referral process where necessary to our occupational health service.

The second major concern associated with the risk assessment process is that of human behaviour. In September approx. 43,000 students will return to our city and no matter what control measures you put in place, social distancing, enhanced cleaning or density reduction etc. the weak link is whether people follow such measures.

How such mass movement of people both nationally and internationally and whether the inevitable social interactions between students leads to a risk in localised outbreaks only time will tell.

Much of the crisis decision making resulting from daily and weekly changes to advice from our Government has involved 'wicked' problems, with no right or wrong solutions but only in those decisions that take you forward. Inevitably this leaves both Governments and organisations exposed to criticism as to what they should or could have done, hindsight being a great thing of course.

So with our risk assessments completed, socially distancing signage in place, class rooms limited to 25% occupancy and cleaning regimes in place, the priority is to provide a stimulating learning experience for the start of term.

One thing is for certain, which has been a positive feature throughout the pandemic, is the ability of people to adapt to change. The commitment shown by individuals to go above and beyond, to support their working and local communities is perhaps the most enduring human quality. Whatever the new normal looks like in higher education, we will approach it with our best foot forward, learn from our mistakes and strive to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our staff and students.

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Promote a good musculoskeletal health among the future generation of workers by Lorenzo Munar

The lifelong impact of musculoskeletal pain needs to be considered, as there are reports of schoolchildren reporting pain at earlier stages of life. The findings of research on school children raises the issue of young workers coming into the workplace with pre-existing musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) that have the potential to be exacerbated by work¹.

Several studies show that the reduction in the level of physical activity (prolonged uninterrupted sedentary periods)², increased body weight, overloaded school bags³ and increased usage of electronic devices⁴ may have negative side effects on the musculoskeletal health of children and young



people⁵. Some studies have also suggested a possible association between musculoskeletal pain and injury in childhood and development of MSDs in adults⁶.

Adopting a life-course approach for studying MSDs gives potential for a far greater understanding of how and why musculoskeletal conditions occur over the lifespan of a person and how musculoskeletal health can be promoted.

The risks of developing MSDs increases with age because of cumulative exposure and for easily understanding reasons: muscles, bones and joints naturally deteriorate with age. As the studies mentioned below show, exposure to MSDs risk factors already

starts in childhood, that's why prevention and promotion of a good musculoskeletal health must begin at school.

The education, public health and health and safety at work sectors should work together to invest in enhancing education, awareness and opportunities to engage in understanding good musculoskeletal health and how to reduce risks of developing a MSDs among schoolchildren. EU-OSHA will contribute to this task by addressing this topic under the Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load Campaign 2020-22 on MSDs⁷.

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¹EU-OSHA. The ageing workforce: implications for occupational safety and health - A research review, p.38. Available at: https://osha.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/documents/The_ageing_workforce_implications_for_OSH.pdf | ²Abbott R., et al, Patterning of Children's Sedentary Time at and Away From School, Obesity, 2013 Jan;21(1):E131-3; Bauer D., et al, Backpack Load Limit Recommendation for Middle School Students Based on Physiological and Psychophysical Measurements, Work, 2009;32(3):339-50. doi: 10.3233/WOR-2009-0832; Brackley H., et al, Are Children's Backpack Weight Limits Enough? A Critical Review of the Relevant Literature, Spine (Phila Pa 1976). 2004 Oct 1;29(19):2184-90. doi: 10.1097/01.brs.0000141183.20124.a9 | ³Trevelyan, F.C., et al., Back pain in school children - Where to from here?, Appl Ergon, 2006, 37:45-54. Moore, J.M., et al, Association of relative backpack weight with reported pain, pain sites, medical utilization, and lost school time in children and adolescents, J Sch Health, 2007, 77 (5):232-239. Brackley, H.M., and Stevenson J.M, Are children's backpack weight limits enough? A critical review of the relevant literature, Spine 29(19):2184-90 10.1097/01.brs.0000141183.20124.a9 | ⁴Palmer K., Ciccirelli M., et al, Associations Between Exposure to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Reported Discomfort Among Adolescents, Work, 2014;48(2):165-73. doi: 10.3233/WOR-131609 | ⁵Brek et al, The weight of pupil's schoolbags in early school age and its influence on body posture, BMC Musculoskeletal Disorders (2017) 18:117, DOI 10.1186/s12891-017-1462-z | ⁶Harreby M, Neergaard K, Hesselsoe G, Kjer J. Are radiologic changes in the thoracic and lumbar spine of adolescents risk factors for low back pain in adults? A 25-year prospective cohort study of 640 schoolchildren. Spine. 1995;20:2298-2302. doi: 10.1097/00007632-199511000-00007; Leboeuf-Yde C, Kyvik KO. At what age does low back pain become a common problem? A study of 29,424 individuals aged 12-41 years. Spine. 1998;23:228-234. doi: 10.1097/00007632-199801150-00015; Steve J. Kamper et al, Musculoskeletal pain in children and adolescents, Braz J Phys Ther. 2016 May-Jun; 20(3): 275-284. Published online 2016 Feb 16. doi: 10.1590/bjpt-rbf.2014.0149 | ⁷<https://healthy-workplaces.eu/en>

Schools on the Move - more active school culture to basic education

by Joonas Niemi

Schools on the Move is a Finnish research-based programme for promoting physical activity in schools.

The programme has been developed in Finland since 2010 and has grown from a pilot of 45 schools into a project that covers more than 90 per cent of Finnish schools in basic education.

The objective of the programme is to increase physical activity among school-age children by making the school culture more active in various ways. Linking research and monitoring with the implementation of the programme, the strong bottom-up ideology of the school-oriented approach and the extensive cooperation networks have been central success areas in the implementation of the programme.

As a result, the school culture has become more physically active: a positive change has been observed in the organization of activities and school premises, physical



activity has been added to lessons and more attention has been paid to less active pupils. The programme adds movement to school day in the following ways:

- Activity integrated into teaching
- Break-time and recess
- Breaking sedentary time during lessons
- After-school clubs
- Other structured physical activity, for example theme days
- Physical education lessons
- Active journey to school by bike or walking

Key results in Finland

- One of the government key project during 2015-2019, programme covers 90% of the schools in Finland
- Increased Physical Activity (PA) during recess and throughout the school day - 4% in primary schools and 12% at lower secondary schools.
- More recess time spent outdoors - among lower secondary school students.
- Proportion of children meeting PA recommendation increased 5% in boys (30% => 35%) and 11 % in girls (18=>29%) from 2010 to 2018 - based on surveys (11 to 15 years)

Research material, programme reports, a programme presentation video and more information can be found here:

www.schoolsonthemove.fi

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kiron, an educational platform for refugees that combines social commitment and professionalism by Julia Pazos

With 70.8 million forcibly displaced world-wide and increasing every year, it is crucial to invest in the youth through education. Our mission is to not only provide a learning platform for refugees but to empower them to lead a self-determined life.

At kiron, we try to tackle the main barriers refugees face in receiving high-quality education; financial, documents, language and support. This is why we created our kiron Campus educational platform as a solution to many challenges refugees and underserved communities face and providing support through the community fostered. Students registered on our campus have access to free courses that fulfill university preparation, job market preparation or personal growth learning paths. As internet connectivity can be a huge obstacle to digital learning, our campus works on all devices by using a lower bandwidth and smaller

download size. Our study programmes consist of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) from educational providers created by top universities as well as collaborating on Open Educational Resources with other organisations. Students can study for free at their own pace, be flexible with their time, and receive certificates of completion.

kiron

Open Higher Education

One of the most important aspects of integration for displaced people is through language. Language learning that is free and flexible can give refugees an easier pathway

to becoming more comfortable in their host country and the ability to enter the job market smoothly and get access to university. Our programme includes language learning and our campus is translated into English, Arabic and Turkish with more to come. Socializing especially through the community fostered on our campus helps students stay motivated and have fun learning.

Our goal is to reach more refugees and underserved communities around the world and continue growing the selection of courses and skill booster programmes, making education open and accessible to everyone. To stay up to date with our future initiatives follow us on social media and check out our website.

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Occupational Health Society of Australia by Janis Jansz

The eighth of August 2020 will mark forty three years since the first meeting of the Occupational Health Society of Australia in 1977. The Occupational Health Society was originally suggested to the Director of the the Western Australian (WA) Government Chemical Laboratories in 1977.

The idea was based on the Forensic Science Society that had brought a range of interested people together in Western Australia to advance forensic science. Geoff Taylor and Geoff Ebell from the Laboratories met with an English occupational hygienist from East Africa recently appointed to the Public Health Department, Gerry Coles, and together with Dr Alan Cumpston of that Department, they formed the first executive of the Occupational Health Society.

Committee members came from the mines department, the labour department and from a private company, Osborne Metal Industries. People from the union organisation, the Trades and Labor Council, joined as well as health and safety officers, labor department and mines inspectors, occupational medical practitioners, occupational health nurses, occupational hygienists, and students studying occupational health and safety. Members came from government and non-government backgrounds. Later a

Victorian Branch was formed.

International and interstate visitors who were experts in different aspects of occupational health and safety were invited to speak to the Western Australian (WA) Branch.



The Occupational Health Society has continued as an organisation in Australia in which members meet to share and to promote, to the government and to workplaces, excellence in occupational health and, to a lesser extent, occupational safety practices.

This is facilitated by having regular seminars and meetings to share occupational health and safety knowledge, by providing

input into the development of workplace health and safety legislation and by producing a quarterly publication, The Monitor, on current occupational health and safety developments and issues locally, nationally and internationally to share this knowledge with members and the community.

Further information about this organisation can be obtained from the web address www.ohsociety.com.au/oh-society

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New Members

**Institute of Prevention and Development
IPD**

Greece

www.ipd.gr

**Institute of Southeast Europe for Health
and Social Policies - ISEE-HSP**

Kosovo

www.isee-hsp.net

Heimerer College

Kolegji Heimerer

Kosovo

kolegji-heimerer.eu

Introduction of OSHversity by Ehi Iden

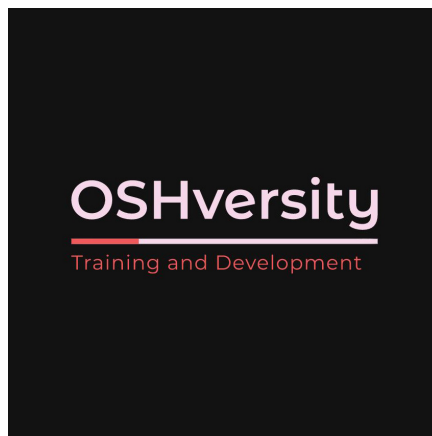
OSHversity Training and Development Company (TDC) is a complete training and competency improvement organisation that offers free occupational safety and health (OSH) training to fresh graduates who are interested in going into the OSH profession. These trainings are funded through proceeds from paid trainings offered to corporate organisations.

The free training idea was inspired by growing concern over the high volume of people who are interested in the field of occupational safety and health but are not able to access entry level training and qualifications in starting a career in the field of OSH. We feel this approach will help cut down the level of quackery and offer fresh minds an opportunity in coming into the practice of occupational safety and health. Our goal is to support teeming ambitious young Africans, train them and make them employable in the estimation of recruiters and modern day thinking employers.

Our for-profit-courses are targeted at corporate organisations that are able to afford occupational safety and health trainings for

their employees; we encourage them to do so in improving the OSH skills of their employees and indirectly empowering us to train more fresh graduates into the field of safety and health.

This makes OSHversity an organisation that



has a blend of two divides, we use a for-profit success in meeting our not-for-profit concerns. If we can train 400 for-profit persons, it means we can train another 400 persons for free in the field of OSH.

Mission Statement

To continuously support the improvement and development of new competencies in the field of occupational safety and health.

Vision

To be a renowned African Training and Development Company supporting organisations in OSH competency improvement and inspiring fresh graduates into the field of OSH.

Focus Area

- Career advisory and coaching
- OSH training and skills improvement
- Workplace mental health training
- Safety and health leadership
- Employees pre-retirement training
- Workplace health and wellness trainings
- Safety, health, wellbeing and productivity
- Patient safety and quality improvement in healthcare
- First aid and EMS training
- Life coaching

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The Memorandum of Understanding between OSHAfrica and ENETOSH

by Claus Dethleff

The Occupational Safety and Health Africa Foundation (OSHAfrica) is a Pan-African organisation. Its main aim is to improve occupational safety and health across the African continent. To support the training and education of occupational safety and health professionals and to promote mainstreaming OSH into education and training tailored to the African needs are two main objectives of OSHAfrica.



On November 6th 2019, Ehi Iden, President of OSHAfrica, and Dr Ulrike Bollmann, President of ENETOSH, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Both organisations have agreed to work together and help nurture a mutually supportive relationship aligned with each organisation's aims and objectives.

ENETOSH and OSHAfrica will endeavour to cooperate, wherever possible, on issues relevant to education and training in OSH. Both organisations would like to exchange ideas and viewpoints on a range of

subjects, including potential areas for future bilateral co-operation.

They agreed to long to encourage, whenever possible, collaboration at worldwide level in the field of education and training in OSH by

- sharing information, experience and research findings on the principles, policy and practice of education and training in OSH
- promoting and facilitating the integration of high standards of competences in OSH in general education and professional training
- supporting the dissemination and implementation of effective approaches and tools to improve education and training in OSH for entrepreneurs and for workers in small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- cooperating in developing proposals and strategies at both political and scientific levels, where this meets the objectives of both parties
- consulting each other over relevant issues of interest, with a view to maintaining professional standards in OSH and avoiding duplication of effort.

Furthermore, ENETOSH and OSHAfrica



agreed to keep each other duly informed of relevant meetings, events and activities, invite key staff and members to speak or take part in meetings, events and activities and consider joint meetings, events and activities as appropriate.

Both organisations hope that this relationship will have an important and positive influence on developing a culture of prevention related to occupational safety and health in Europe, at the African continent and globally.

COVID-19 response training towards reopening of schools by OSHiversity

by Ehi Iden

In Nigeria where we still have growing concerns over the spread of COVID-19, the government has given an order for schools reopening. While many feel this decision has not been supported by evidence, but weighing it from different angles, it is obvious that the children are also tired of being locked up at home and we do not know how long this pandemic will last. Again, if we continuously keep the children at home, most mothers will not be able to return to work and we are also asking ourselves if we are willing to pay the high price for our ignorance if this pandemic does not end within the shortest possible time. We feel this may have been what is influencing the decision of government towards the reopening of schools.

While each State of the Nation has been allowed to draw up their school reopening COVID-19 Response Plans and Mitigation Strategies, it is obvious that most schools are only anxious to open but not really interested in complying with these protocols. At OSHiversity, we are aware we cannot at this point influence the decision government has made but we can at least support schools by training different categories of staff on their role in this cycle of response for their own safety and the safety of the children kept under their care.

We have been able to get the buy-in of an "A Rating" school in Lagos, Nigeria. This is a private school that has been around since 1960, with over 6 branches that carefully cover the different geographical areas of Lagos. The very exciting aspect of this training is how we have been able to divide the employees into different categories which enables us to respond to the specific needs of each work category. This is not a blanket training, we had to develop different training slides to be able to respond to different work categories.

We are offering training to a total of 724 school employees, with arrangements made for 233 people to be trained as categorised in physical classroom sessions and 491 people to be trained virtually. For the less educated, who may not have access to laptops and Internet facilities, we have set up physical classes that take place in well-ventilated halls with adequate space.



The classes were categorised into the following groups:

- Nannies, Stewards, Janitors – 5 classes
- Security guards, Gardeners and Drivers – 2 classes
- Minders – 1 class
- Nurses – 2 classes
- Teachers, Administrators and Management teams – 5 classes

Our training materials covered a wide variety of concerns in COVID-19 Response starting from the need for the schools to review their existing policy to make provisions for Infection Prevention and Control (IPC).

There is a need to commence risk communication with the families of their students so everyone is brought to the same page and also being able to understand the changes the school has put in place towards the safety of everyone. This communication must include a return-to-school health assessment questionnaire which all parents must fill and email back to school on information about their children's health and exposure within the time under review. This should of course help schools to identify those who co-habited with relatives from high-risk countries, those who lost close family members to COVID-19 or whose health status was affected by respiratory or lung disease.

For the others, we were able to look at the new cleaning techniques and frequency, the type of solutions that can deactivate the virus in COVID-19, how to use sodium hypochlorite through proper dilution to guide against irritation of the nose. The use of nose mask, hand gloves and physical distancing at all times, we also looked at hygiene behaviour and proper hand washing, how to use non-contact infrared thermometers and much more.

Above all, we are very impressed by the

way the schools have agreed with us on this issue of documentation and we think that we can start collecting data through this means.

We taught the school employees the importance of documentation in such a crucial time and how this can be so helpful, and that evidence is needed of their plans and processes.

While training them on COVID-19 response, we are also working with the

management on developing documents they need to implement in line with their new processes. They have agreed with us in our concept of "what is not documented was never done", they understood this quickly and are now implementing it.

All in all, it has been a very brilliant experience for OSHiversity even in its infantile stage, being able to meet this responsibility. We are very happy, even if we don't sleep as much as we would have liked. But we understand that every sacrifice made in saving a child or an adult employee from infection or eventual death from COVID-19 is just worth every inch of the pain we may have gone through to make this happen.

We are teaching our participants and the schools entirely on how to use employees family-centred approach in COVID-19 risk communication and education. This is not just about the employee, it is also about the employees going back home to teach their family members everything they have learned, and in this way we also educate their families. We are finding this so impressive, they have our numbers and they call us for clarification on areas they are not so sure of.

You may not have known that children under 2 years of age, people with respiratory conditions and people who cannot remove their nose mask without assistance should not be induced to wear a mask, but those handling them must wear a nose mask consistently. This was a very high value we saw most people appreciating in our training materials, mostly minders who handle pre-kindergarten children.

We will complete this sequence of training next week, and more schools are turning to us to support them with reopening training.

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