



## Wellbeing of workers and their families

## G. Wellbeing of workers and their families

Agricultural workers and their families play a fundamental role in the development and operation of the agriculture sector, and in food production systems. Ensuring their wellbeing is essential to the sustainability of production units and their commitment to human development.

Despite their contribution to food security and economic growth worldwide, agricultural workers –especially wage earners– face conditions that negatively affect their livelihoods. Approximately two-thirds of the world’s poor work in agriculture, and conditions in rural areas and agricultural landscapes limit workers and their families’ access to decent wages, potable water, basic education, health care and safe housing conditions (ILO, 2017).

Essential needs, the elements of a decent standard of living for workers, smallholders, and their families, are defined as having access to or having sufficient income to afford food, water, housing, education, health care, transport, clothing, and provision for unexpected events (Anker & Anker, 2013 and 2017). SAN sustainable agriculture programs establish the provision of essential needs as the foundation for a decent standard of living in rural areas, including:

- **Access to potable water:** a basic human right and critical to effective health protection. SAN recognizes the WHO (2011) definition of safe drinking water as “water that does not represent any significant risk to health over a lifetime of consumption” and embraces its integrated approach to cover all domestic purposes, including water for drinking, food preparation and personal hygiene.
- **Access to basic education:** basic education is defined by SAN as education for workers’ and producers’ children, which includes reading, writing and basic mathematics (primary education).
- **Access to health care:** based on the ILO’s Occupational Health Services Recommendation No. 171 (ILO, 1985), SAN expands its definition as the provision of first aid and emergency treatment in cases of accident or indisposition of workers at the workplace, whether by direct provision of those services or by collaborating with health care providers.
- **Decent housing conditions:** the SAN approach is based on the ILO Guidance on Workers’ Housing Recommendation No.115 (1961), where housing provided to workers should meet certain minimum specifications with respect to the nature and standard of the accommodation and facilities to ensure “adequate and decent housing accommodation and a suitable living environment” for workers, including maintenance, improvement, and modernization.
- **Living wage:** the main elements of the eight SAN essential needs are covered by the Global Living Wage Coalition’ (GLWC) definition of Living Wage.

On that base, SAN offers a set of practical requirements that guide production units towards the empowerment of workers', smallholders', and their families' wellbeing; including practices for:

- providing safe drinking water and training for treatment options to workers and smallholders, and their families;
- protecting sources of safe drinking water;
- facilitating access to public health care and basic education services;
- providing basic medical services and emergency attention for workers during working hours;
- assuring that in those cases where housing is provided by agricultural operations, it offers good hygienic, safety and health conditions; and
- advancing towards the payment of a living wage according to the benchmarks published by the GLWC.

## G.1. Sustainability goal: Essential needs of workers and their families

Outcomes	ID	Performance Indicators /Best practices
When operations provide housing to workers, it is safe, hygienic and protects from adverse weather conditions.	G101	Operations ensure that provided housing infrastructure provider good hygienic, safety and health conditions; including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- access to potable water and sanitation;</li> <li>- waste recollection;</li> <li>- control of disease vectors;</li> <li>- functional and effective smoke evacuation mechanisms;</li> <li>- dry floors and non-leaking roofs, windows and doors;</li> <li>- natural ventilation and light;</li> <li>- protection against rain, wind or cold weather conditions;</li> <li>- sufficient space and separate beds to avoid overcrowding (beds are not arranged in more than two levels, and space does not force unrelated persons to share a bed);</li> <li>- doors with locking mechanisms;</li> <li>- at least one shower per 10 persons, separated by gender;</li> <li>- at least one large laundry sink for every 30 persons;</li> <li>- at least one toilet for every 15 persons, one urinal for every 25 men, one washbasin for every six persons or per family;</li> <li>- areas for recreation and drying clothes;</li> <li>- installed and maintained fire extinguishing mechanisms; and</li> <li>- marked safety exits (for shared spaces) and marked meeting points in case of emergency.</li> </ul>
	G102	Operations keep records of all workers and family members allowed to live in management-provided housing.
	G103	Operations respect traditional housing arrangements if they do not represent any hygienic, safety or health risk to the workers and their families.
Producers, workers, and their families have access to safe and clean water.	G104	Operations make potable water available to their workers at the field and infrastructure.
	G105	Operations demonstrate that water consumed by workers is suitable for human consumption and does not pose a serious risk to human health in the immediate and longer term.
	G106	Operations protect potable water sources and water distribution mechanisms to minimize contamination risks caused by human and agricultural activities within their scope.
	G107	Operations maintain water distribution systems and remediate leaks, breaks or other problems that could result in contamination.
	G108	Operations train workers and associated smallholders about potable water treatments and the actions to prevent water contamination.

Outcomes	ID	Performance Indicators /Best practices
Producers, workers, and their families have access to safe and clean water.	G109	Workers and smallholders know how to purify water and are aware of actions implemented to protect potable water sources and distribution mechanisms.
	G110	Workers and their families do not show evidence of illnesses directly related to the quality of the water they consume within the operations, such as recurrent intestinal infections, parasites, diarrhea, or cholera.
Producers, workers, and their families have access to basic education and health care services.	G111	Operations facilitate access to health care and basic education to all workers and their families.
	G112	If applicable legislation requires to contract medical services, operations comply with these requirements. The contracted medical professionals confirm that they have the necessary resources to carry out their activities within the contract scope.
	G113	Where public health or education services are not available, operations improve the access of workers and their families to such services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- when located far from clinics and populations centers, operations transport workers or hire doctors or nurses to offer these services on the farm, and allow workers' families living on the farm or nearby to use such services;</li> <li>- in rural areas and when located far from schools; operations provide teachers and necessary resources to satisfy children's obligatory educational requirements; or the transportation services to the closest public school; and</li> <li>- support to local health care and schools' services, through the provision of resources or infrastructure.</li> </ul>

## G.2. Sustainability goal: Living wage

Expected outcome	ID	Performance Indicators /Best practices
Workers' remuneration received for a standard work week is sufficient to afford them and their families a decent standard of living.	G201	When a living wage calculation <sup>17</sup> is available for the region and sector, operations implement actions to pay the living wage to all workers. In-kind payments can be an option only if permitted by applicable legislation and cannot exceed 30% of the total wage.

<sup>17</sup> According to the Anker & Anker Methodology <https://www.globallivingwage.org/>