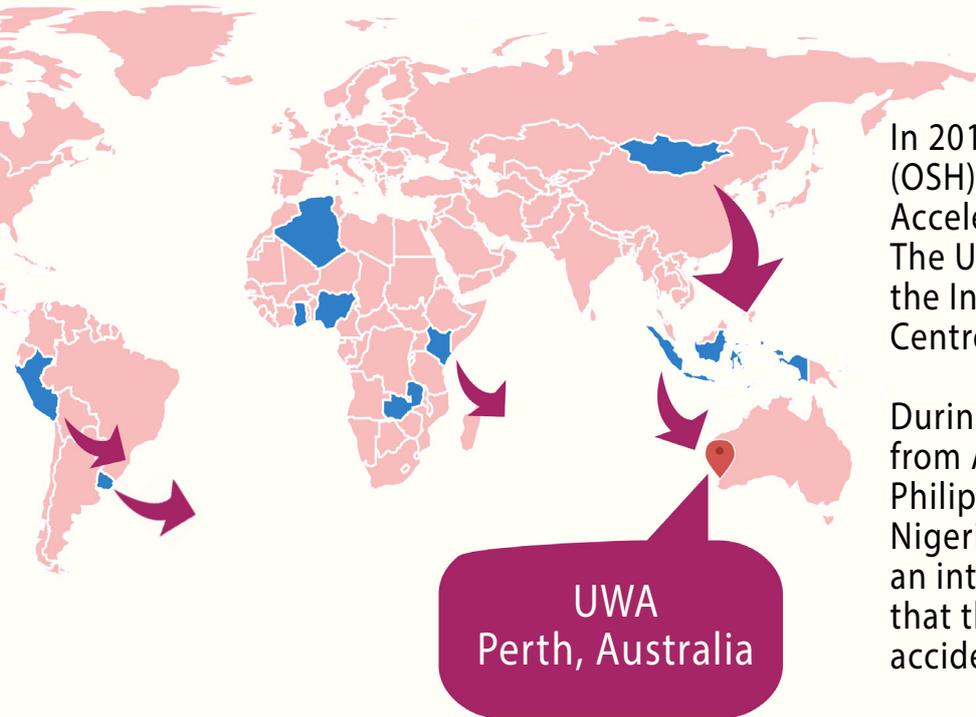# BENCHMARKING THE STATUS OF SAFETY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

UWA
Perth, Australia

In 2013, an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Leadership program was run at the Accelerated Learning Lab (ALL@UWA) at The University of Western Australia, for the International Mining for Development Centre (IM4DC).

During this program, the many participants from Algeria, Gambia, Ghana, The Philippines, Indonesia, Kenya, Mongolia, Nigeria, Peru, Uruguay and Zambia showed an interest in safety issues, but remarked that there was a lack of safety data beyond accidents and incidents in their country.
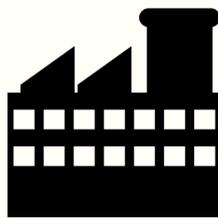
Professor Mark Griffin, Dr. Daniela Andrei and the team at the ALL@UWA saw an opportunity to investigate safety beliefs, practices and risks in developing countries, and as a result, put together a series of measures in order to investigate different aspects of safety in developing countries.

THE SURVEY

The survey was a comprehensive tool that measured risk factors contributing to safety at:

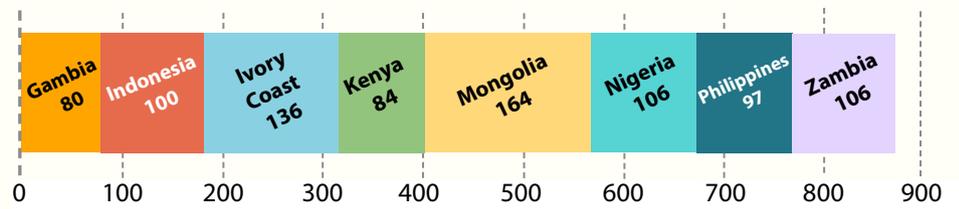The individual level   The organisational level   The national level

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS: Strongly disagree to Strongly agree

I often think: "How could I have prevented this?"

Responsibility for safety is owned by all employees

Number of respondents per country

| Gambia 80 | Indonesia 100 | Ivory Coast 136 | Kenya 84 | Mongolia 164 | Nigeria 106 | Philippines 97 | Zambia 106 |

0 · 100 · 200 · 300 · 400 · 500 · 600 · 700 · 800 · 900

879 people completed the survey

Dr Daniela Andrei sent this survey half way across the world to Mongolia, Zambia, Kenya, Gambia, Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Recently, this project was also expanded to include 3 countries from South America: Peru, Argentina and Ecuador.
This extension of the project is still ongoing from Jan 2015.

Participants were from a range of backgrounds: operational roles, administrative roles and managerial roles. A total of 91 different companies were included in the survey and represented industries such as mining, construction, oil and gas, and manufacturing.
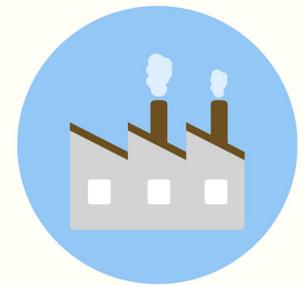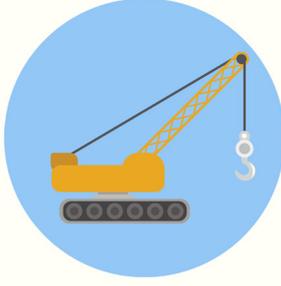
FINDINGS

WHILE SAFETY VISION AND ATTITUDES WERE RATED THE HIGHEST, PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF SAFETY WERE RATED THE LOWEST

The disconnect between management safety values and vision, and actual safety indicates the importance of embedding a safety vision into an organisation. It is not enough to have leaders and employees say and believe that safety is important, but they must be supported to act safely. Employees must firstly be given adequate safety equipment, training and rewards to help deal with and prevent accidents, and secondly be supported by both their colleagues and leaders in performing work safely.

SAFETY AS A METHOD TO ACHIEVE POSITIVE OUTCOMES INSTEAD OF AVOIDING BAD OUTCOMES

Survey respondents who participated more in safety behaviours, and who were more compliant with safety procedures had a tendency at work to focus on achieving positive outcomes, instead of focusing on avoiding negative outcomes. This may imply that these respondents tend to think of safety as a way to ACHIEVE positive outcomes (e.g. more productivity, or returning home safely to their family), as opposed to thinking about safety as a means to AVOID bad outcomes (e.g. accidents and incidents). This finding is somewhat counterintuitive as safety is usually framed in terms of avoiding negative consequences.

ADDITIONAL RISKS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Besides the most common risks present in the typical dangerous work environments in Western countries, a number of risks specific to developing countries were identified, such as: hygiene and sanitation, poor working conditions, and adequacy of safety equipment and protocols

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