

SEPTEMBER 2020

Newsletter



ISSUE 2, 2020 | STORIES FROM THE SUPPLY CHAIN & BEYOND

Response to Covid-19

Reimagining sustainability

As factories resumed operating in full scale, we are acting where we will have the greatest impact to help the industry build back better after COVID-19

Annual Report 2019

Highlights of our work and impact in 2019

COVID-19 guidance for factories

ILO RMG Learning Hub



BANGLADESH
VIRTUAL
BUSINESS
FORUM 2020

Join us on 28-29 October 2020



Dear friends,

We know that this period is full of anxiety and doubts, for you as well as for us, but we must not lose sight of the essence: working together to face the crisis. While the pandemic has affected every aspect of our life and work, the garment industry has been one of the most affected sectors in Bangladesh and around the world. In this context, Better Work Bangladesh quickly adapted its services to support, at best, the factories and workers to navigate this crisis. With the factories now operating in full scale and workers returning to work, we are acting where we will have the greatest impact to help the industry build back better after COVID-19. We know that it is only through your support and collaboration we can make this happen, and we thank you for your continued partnership.

Thank you and enjoy the read!

Anne-Laure Henry-Greard
Programme Manager
Better Work Bangladesh



CONTENTS

03 Annual Report 2019

Highlights from Better Work Bangladesh's key initiatives, partnerships, achievements and challenges from the past year.

04 Reimagining Sustainability

As factories resumed operating in full scale, we are acting where we will have the greatest impact to help the industry build back better after COVID-19.

05 COVID-19 guidance for factories

BWB's core services and Covid-19 guidance are helping factories manage through disruption.

05 Global Call to Action

This initiative aims to catalyse action to support manufacturers to survive the economic disruption, to protect garment workers' income, health and employment and to work on sustainable systems of social protection.

06 ILO RMG Learning Hub

The Learning Hub is a comprehensive training initiative to respond to the COVID-19 crisis in the RMG sector.

06 Better Work Bangladesh Virtual Business Forum 2020

Our forum this year will focus on the immediate challenges in Bangladesh's Ready Made Garment industry, on the approaches being adopted to navigate the crisis, as well as our collective commitment to build back better.

07 Capacity Building Training for Welfare Officers

In the coming weeks and months, the training initiative will cover six important topics for the Welfare Officers.

Annual Report 2019

The Annual Report 2019 not only highlights factories' assessment results but also showcases the programme's key initiatives, partnerships, achievements and challenges from the past year. The report draws attention to Better Work Bangladesh's efforts to empower female workers in the industry to take on roles with confidence, and also includes information on the programme's COVID-19 responses. Readers can access the report online, to view more detailed findings and observations from 174 factory assessments completed in 2019. Better Work Bangladesh, which is a partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), has created a strong presence in the country over the last five years and hopes to drive sustainability further. The continued support from our partner organisations and brands has propelled us to work towards a common goal of growth and productivity.



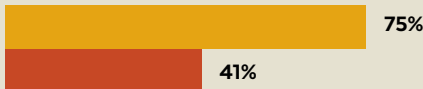
Please visit our Annual Report & Data Portal to learn more

PROGRESS OVER THE YEARS*

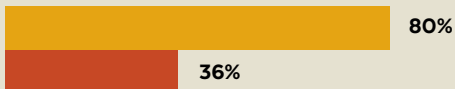
Decrease in non-compliance rate



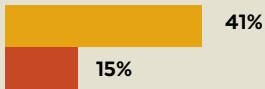
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH
Storage of chemicals and hazardous substances



COMPENSATION
Maintaining accurate payroll records



WORKING TIME
Records reflecting hours actually worked



CYCLE 1

CYCLE 3

* Sample size is 69 factories

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

70%

OF FACTORIES ASSESSED NOW HAVE A FUNCTIONING **PARTICIPATION COMMITTEE (PC)**, ONE OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR WORK

54%

DECREASE IN THE UNFAIR PRACTICE OF MAINTAINING **MULTIPLE PAYROLLS** IN FACTORIES THAT COMPLETED CYCLE 3 WITH BETTER WORK

82%

OF FEMALE WORKERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE GEAR PROGRAMME WERE **PROMOTED TO SUPERVISORY ROLES**

30

STAFF FROM 14 FACTORIES WERE TRAINED UNDER THE **'FACTORY AMBASSADORS'** INITIATIVE TO BUILD THE CAPACITY OF COMPLIANCE TEAMS IN FACTORIES

OUR CHECKLIST

We evaluate over 200 questions or issues on the eight topics below on **international (orange)** and **national (yellow)** labour regulations.



CHILD LABOUR



DISCRIMINATION



FORCED LABOUR



FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING



COMPENSATION



CONTRACTS AND HUMAN RESOURCES



OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH



WORKING TIME

REIMAGINING SUSTAINABILITY

Building back better from Covid-19

In Bangladesh, COVID-19 has thrown up sudden, unforeseen challenges with the delay and cancellation of many buyers' export orders, the risk of layoffs and fluctuating demands in the supply chain. As factories resumed operating in full scale, we are acting where we will have the greatest impact to help the industry build back better after COVID-19.

Adapting our factory services to a new reality

Before the onset of the crisis, BWB started preparing short and long-term plans to support affiliated factories. In addition to the core factory services, we continue supporting factories and workers on crucial health and safety and industrial relations issues. Our team is coordinating information campaigns and training for national partners, providing policy advice, and helping bring the Government, employers, workers, and international buyers together to develop joint responses.

BWB's in-person factory services are temporarily on hold, but all the services are being delivered virtually. We launched the Virtual Compliance Check service in September 2020 to test a different approach of doing Assessment.

COVID-19 guidance for factories

Better Work Bangladesh's Covid-19 response is supported by the **COVID-19 Management Guidance** and **HR Guidelines**, as well as support on employment and industrial relations issues. The COVID-19 Management Guidance is helping employers, workers and respective committee members ensure and maintain safe and healthy workplaces. The HR Guideline is designed to support smooth factory operations, mitigate business risks and interruption in day-to-day business operations.

BWB's core services and Covid-19 guidance are helping factories manage through disruption.

[COVID-19 Guidance](#)

New training courses have been added to our Training Package to raise awareness of COVID-19 and build capacity for effective response to the crisis.

[Upcoming Training](#)

Global Call to Action

This initiative aims to catalyse action to support manufacturers to survive the economic disruption, to protect garment workers' income, health and employment and to work on sustainable systems of social protection. In Bangladesh, BWB helps convene tripartite constituents, IFIs, development partners, brands and other stakeholders around a set of agreed priorities and means of implementation.



BWB's COVID-19 Resource Hub offers useful guidelines, awareness materials and free training courses.



ILO RMG Learning Hub

The Learning Hub is a comprehensive collaboration among different projects of the ILO led by BWB. This initiative is primarily aimed at harmonizing capacity-building efforts to respond to the Covid-19 crisis in the RMG sector. The first phase of the initiative was launched in May 2020 with virtual training of BGMEA, BKMEA and WRC-nominated Master Trainers, followed by a 'training of the trainers' rollout. Once the current situation permits, the training sessions will be physically rolled out.

The Learning Hub is built on an integrated 'One ILO framework' to bring synergy in delivering capacity development needs of the constituents during and beyond the immediate COVID-19 response.



**COVID-19 PREVENTION
AWARENESS**



**COVID-19 OCCUPATIONAL
SAFETY AND HEALTH**



**MANAGING LABOUR
RELATIONS**



6

Training sessions held so far under the Learning Hub



134

Master Trainers from Workers Resource Centre (WRC), BKMEA, BGMEA and employees organisations (IBC/NCCWE) were trained

Better Work Bangladesh Virtual Business Forum to be held on 28-29 October 2020

Over the years we have taken note of the interest of buyers, factories and other stakeholders in addressing issues at the policy and enterprise level. Our forum this year will focus on the immediate challenges in Bangladesh's Ready Made Garment industry, on the approaches being adopted to navigate the crisis, as well as our collective commitment to build back better.

Key speakers will include representatives from the employers' associations, worker federations, brands, manufacturers, civil society, academia and the Government.



**BANGLADESH
VIRTUAL
BUSINESS
FORUM 2020**

28-29 OCTOBER | 2:00PM-4:00 PM BANGLADESH TIME

The virtual event is open to all participants, but given limited capacity, partners and stakeholders will be given priority. Registration will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

[Learn more and register](#)

[Agenda](#)

Capacity Building Training for Welfare Officers

Better Work Bangladesh launched the first phase of the Capacity Building Training for Welfare Officers on 18 August 2020. This initiative aims to further strengthen the capacity of welfare officers and equip them with useful skills to help create a culture of social dialogue and promote a harmonious and productive working environment. The training initiative will cover a wide range of topics including Roles and responsibilities of Welfare Officers, Facilitation Skills, Grievance Mechanism, Industrial Relations, Bangladesh Labour Law and Labour Rules, and Disciplinary Procedures.

In the coming weeks and months, the training initiative will cover six important topics for the Welfare Officers



6th and 7th meetings of BWB Advisory Committee (BAC) held

The 6th and 7th meetings of Better Work Bangladesh (BWB) Advisory Committee were held on 22 July and 20 August 2020 respectively. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the Committee met virtually. Chaired by Mr Shib Nath Roy, Inspector General, Department of Inspection for Factories & Establishment (DIFE), the meetings discussed the latest industry updates, BWB's response to the Covid-19 crisis and BWB's Annual Report 2019. The Committee also reviewed the draft Employment and Wage Protection Guidelines prepared by BWB and provided necessary directions to place the Guidelines for further review by the appropriate authorities.



VIRTUAL COMPLIANCE CHECK

Better Work Bangladesh launched the Virtual Compliance Check service in September 2020 to test a different approach of doing Assessment.



For regular updates, case stories and latest project updates, visit our website and follow us on social media.

 betterwork.org/where-we-work/bangladesh

 facebook.com/betterworkbangladesh

 twitter.com/Better_Work

 instagram.com/betterwork4all

Better Work is a partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). On-the-ground in eight countries across three continents, Better Work brings together all levels of the garment industry to improve working conditions and respect of labour rights for workers, and boost the competitiveness of apparel businesses.



International
Labour
Organization



IFC | International
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Creating Markets, Creating Opportunities

Better Work Bangladesh is supported by the following donor partners:

