



Better Work Lesotho Newsletter

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OSH Day 2014

Like in previous years Better Work Lesotho plans to celebrate the Day of Safety and Health at Work, to be organized in close collaboration with its national stakeholders, on the last weekend in April. More information about the event will be disseminated to factories within the next month.

WELCOME 2014



We hope you had a good start into the New Year.

We are pleased to share with you our first newsletter for 2014. It includes programme updates, sector relevant information, stakeholder views as well as our 'Learner's Corner' to gain or refresh technical knowledge on selected OSH and other topics.

In 2014 we are looking forward to further strengthening cooperation with our national stakeholders with a view to build engagement and reinforce ownership for the programme. We also aim to introduce changes to our core services delivery model that will promote factories' capacity to improve on compliance in a sustainable manner by, for example, conducting self-assessments, establishing systems or delivering training to mid-level management and workers through in-house trainers. Other objectives for this year include the organization of awareness raising campaigns on selected industry issues and promotion of social dialogue and stable industrial relations.

It is through these and other activities that we strive to assist national partners in building a sustainable industry and increase its level of compliance further.

The Better Work Lesotho Team

Participating Suppliers

C & Y Garments
Chainex
CGM Industrial
Everunison
Formosa Textile
Global Garments
Humin Jeanswear
J & S Fashion
Jonsson Manufacturing
Kopano
Lesotho Precious Garments
Maseru E-Textiles
Mauri Garments
Nien Hsing International
Presitex
Springfield Manufacturers
Sun Textiles
Superknitting
Tai Yuan Garments
TZICC

Participating Buyers

Jones Apparel
Levi Strauss & Co.
Phillips-Van-Heusen
SEARS
The Children's Place
The Gap Inc.
Walmart

Better Work Lesotho

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BWL STAFF DEVELOPMENTS

At the end of last year Enterprise Adviser, Moipone Moabi, and Finance Officer, Paul Pitso, left the programme to pursue new careers. We are wishing them all the best for their future. Better Work Lesotho is currently in the process of filling its vacant Enterprise Adviser position.

From March, Katleho Chaolana will join the programme full time as Training Officer. His responsibilities will include, among others, the management of the programme's new supervisory skills training initiative and the Workers' Life Skills training peer education model. ◇



Ntate Katleho Chaolana joins the Better Work Lesotho Programme full time as Trainer Officer from March 2014.

www.betterwork.org

Being committed to complete all pending work within the next 2 months, we are planning to have our programme website (under www.betterwork.org) up and running in April 2014. It will provide access to training brochures, updates on our training courses, factory guidance and best practice sheets, publications, and any other programme news. As some of our partners may not have regular access to the internet, we will continue to issue a newsletter in reduced form that will summarize the latest posts on the website. ◇

LEADERSHIP CHANGE IN THE MoLE

In late December 2013, as part of a cabinet re-shuffling, the Ministry of Labour and Employment saw a change in leadership. Lebesa Maloi who headed the Ministry since June 2012 became Minister of Transport, whereas his counterpart in the Transport Ministry, Keketso Rantso, was appointed new Minister of Labour and Employment. ◇

FACTORY FOCUS: KOPANO TEXTILE



*Grace Tu,
Factory Manager,
Kopano Textile*

Kopano Textile, a Taiwanese investment located in Maputsoe, started operations in Lesotho in 2006. The factory produces knitwear that it mainly exports to the US market. Like other factories in Lesotho it is characterized by a multicultural workplace environment, comprising of five different nationalities, which brings with it its own challenges. The factory manager, Grace Tu, better known as 'Me Grace', came to Lesotho in 2000. Over the years she has developed a true affection for the country and its people. She spoke to us about the past and recent changes in her factory.

"We were facing difficult times due to fluctuations in demand, as we depend on orders from the US. As a result we had to retrench workers and face a number of strikes. It was hard to keep in business. Also, we were struggling with meeting buyers' labour compliance demands. In early 2012 we decided to join the Better Work programme as we hoped it could help us improve compliance and build better relationships with workers.

"Since then we have been working closely with the Better Work Lesotho (BWL) Enterprise Adviser who visits Kopano regularly. The major

change that the Better Work programme has brought to us is probably that of improved communication between management and workers. We hold PICC meetings at least once a month, even in the absence of the BWL Adviser. I attend the meetings as they help me understand the workers' needs better. Hearing from them directly about issues that need to be improved allows me to decide quickly about how they can be rectified. Also, I talk to the supervisors whenever there are complaints by workers about disrespectful behaviour. There have been numerous OSH improvements as well, for example emergency preparedness, chemical safety, housekeeping and OSH management."

And when asked about how business is going, Me Grace adds with a smile, "Since joining BWL our order situation has improved as it has become easier for us to pass compliance requirements by our customers. We were able to increase our production lines from 12 to 22 and our workforce from 900 to 1,100, and this number is about to increase further. In addition, absenteeism per line of about 50 workers fell from 15% to 5%. We have experienced that Better Work is good for both business and compliance." ◇



BWL Enterprise Advisors in a meeting with factory management and supervisors.

WORKER STORY

From Packing to Promoting OSH – The Story of Pule

It's a cool summer's morning, but the African sun is already rearing behind the closest small hill promising to bring with it another scorching day. Pule "David" Lebatla has been up since 05:30 am, getting ready for work while taking care of his parents who live with him. An hour later he sets off from his village Sem-pethenyane near Maseru to walk the 30 minutes to the garment factory where he works as OSH Officer.

Pule started his career in this factory in 2011 as a worker in the packing department. During his time in packing he attended external training on OSH and acted enthusiastically as an OSH representative in the factory. When he had successfully passed his training course, he was promoted to OSH officer. Pule explains that his position encompasses much more than just health and safety, and that he takes care of labour compliance in general by assisting with audits and assessments. It was at this stage that he realised that he needed more training.

"When Better Work came everything changed for me. The trainings they provide have helped me so much in my job. I understand

much clearer what is expected of me and it has helped me organise the health and safety within the factory more efficiently." Pule has truly embraced the training offered by the programme and has attended the 2-day OSH Training, OSH for Committees (COMOSH), Risk Assessment, Housekeeping and others. He also attends refresher courses and is regularly bringing new staff from his factory to participate in the training. "The more everyone knows what is expected of them and what their job is, the smoother the factory runs."

As a young OSH officer, he contemplates the many challenges facing him on a daily basis. "Many people think that OSH problems only arise at the level of management when they do not want to or are slow in taking action, but those are isolated incidents. The biggest challenge is a daily one of training workers to appreciate the importance of PPE and to comply with basic OSH requirements."

Pule underscores the importance of management buy-in. "At our factory management plays a vital role in the efficiency of health and safety. I am fully supported by my seniors and they provide me with all these valuable opportunities to attend training. And at PICC meetings we brainstorm all together on how to solve problems."

Pule believes health and safety plays a crucial role in the performance of the factory. And he adds "Access to knowledge and specialized training is good for the industry. I still want to learn more and become the best OSH officer I can be." ♦



Pule Lebatla proudly posing with one of his PICC members.



Buyers' Forum Training

On 9 October 2013, as an ad-on to the Buyers' Forum, Better Work Lesotho invited suppliers to training sessions on Best Practice in Fire Safety and Environmental Health & Safety Management. The sessions were facilitated by buyer representatives, who briefed suppliers on the latest thinking on these topics in their organizations. They also took the training as another opportunity to better understand their suppliers' needs and challenges in relation to OSH compliance standards.



Pankaj Kapoor, Levi Strauss & Co., holding a training session on Environmental Health & Safety.



Loay Tolba, The Gap Inc., in discussion with suppliers and buyers.

LESOTHO BUYERS' FORUM 2014

On 8 October representatives from Walmart, Levis Strauss & Co. and The Gap Inc. met with the Better Work Lesotho team and national stakeholders to discuss industry developments, areas of non-compliance and improvement. Buyers appreciated that factories who have been participating in BWL for at least 2 years (having had 3 assessments) showed a decrease in the number of findings under OSH and for verbal harassment. Nevertheless, issues relating to lack of fire safety (e.g. locked exit doors, insufficient number of workers trained in firefighting) and irregularities in recording overtime were among those that need to be addressed further. In a discussion with the BWL team and factory representatives, buyers aimed to learn more about the root causes for continuous non-compliances in factory assessments under these critical areas, particularly in regards to fire safety. As an outcome of the discussion BWL has started to develop a model that would allow factories to conduct in-house training on firefighting through certified factory trainers. It would also include a training quality assurance and monitoring mechanism. The model shall be ready for testing in the second quarter of 2014.

Represented buyers underlined their commitment to Better Work Lesotho and voiced interest in more multi-stakeholder dialogue as part of the next Buyers' Forum. ♦

MATERNITY BENEFITS / MINIMUM WAGE

Maternity-related benefits

Workers in clothing, textile and leather manufacturing—like in other sectors—are entitled to 12 weeks maternity leave (six weeks before and six weeks after the confinement) and to a one hour per day paid breastfeeding break during the first six months after they return from maternity leave [see Labour Code Section 137 (1)]. There is a difference, however, in ‘paid’ maternity leave.

With effect from 1st October 2013, as per Labour Code Wages (Amendment) Notice 2013, workers in clothing, textile and leather manufacturing with more than one year of continuous service with the same employer receive 6 weeks paid maternity leave. This benefit is limited to two confinements per employee during her employment with the same employer. This increase from previously two to now six weeks has reduced the gap between paid maternity leave entitlements in clothing, textile and leather manufacturing and other sectors. Nevertheless, entitlements in other sectors (except for private security) remain considerably higher, with workers getting paid 12 weeks (6 weeks before and 6 weeks after the confinement).

The Ministry of Labour and Employment intends to make maternity-related benefits part of a Social Security Scheme which is currently in a design stage.

For more information on this topic, please contact Mamohale Matsoso (Labour Commissioner; phone: 22323444) or Molebatsi Koalepe (Labour Inspection Manager; phone: 22315700).

LABOUR LAW
WATCH

New minimum wage 2013-2014

Last year’s minimum wages negotiations, held by the Wages Advisory Board, resulted in a 7% increase for the clothing, textile and leather manufacturing sector; as published in the Labour Code Wages (Amendment) Notice 2013. Under the new gazette, monthly wages for textile machine operators and textile general workers with less than 12 months continuous service with the same employer amount to M1,045.00 and M972.00 respectively. With more than 12 months continuous service with the same employer, a textile machine operator is getting M1,143.00 and a textile general worker M1,076.00.

Raising Awareness on Maternity Protection

In 2014 Better Work Lesotho aims to raise awareness on the importance of maternity protection - a topic which deserves more attention as it impacts on workers’ well-being in both their work and their private lives. Maternity protection is already part of our Workers’ Life Skills training—which discusses with workers maternal health care. But how do factories accommodate pregnant workers? Why do some workers try to hide their pregnancy? And how do they organize child care upon return to work?

Through focus group discussions we want to learn more about workers’ needs in relation to maternity protection and managing day-to-day life after the baby is born. Depending on the outcome of these discussions, we will suggest measures to improve workplace conditions for pregnant workers as well as initiatives that could assist workers in dealing with problems around child care, work load at home etc. We will work on this topic in close cooperation with project partners and ILO Pretoria, and also seek the engagement of other relevant ministries and NGOs.

LEARNER’S CORNER EMERGENCY EVACUATION

how to react when you hear the alarm



1. Stop Work, Get up and Exit



2. Do Not Use Lifts



3. Use the Emergency Exit Doors



4. Queue at the Assembly Point

TRAINING 2013 Q4

Since offering Supervisory Skills Training (SST) from late 2011, we have seen positive changes in 67% of factories with two or more assessments that had been able to address issues of verbal harassment successfully. To assist the industry further in developing their supervisors' skills and building a respectful and productive workplace communication culture Better Work Lesotho (BWL) is launching a special SST programme, which is part of a wider initiative by Better Work to roll out this high impact training for supervisors in all its country programmes. The initiative, funded by the Walt Disney Company, will be implemented for a 2-years period (October 2013 to September 2015). It consists of four elements, including:

- (1) SST in Sesotho and Mandarin, offered at subsidized rates,
- (2) Training-of-Trainer courses to build in-house trainer capacity in factories and organisations,
- (3) Identification and training of female workers who show the potential to become supervisors, and
- (4) Building of a supervisor network to assist trained supervisors in developing their skills further through advanced training and provide them with a platform to learn from each other through sharing of experiences (challenges, good practice etc.).

The initiative represents a unique opportunity for Lesotho's garment industry to equip supervisors with the right managerial and communication skills effectively and at low costs. Factories can expect fewer disputes and higher productivity levels. Also, by developing trainer in-house capacity, they will be able to train supervisors as per their own schedule and needs. We strongly encourage factories to release their supervisors for training and participation in the networking meetings.

For upcoming SSTs, please see our training schedule on page 10. For more information about this initiative, please contact Kalleho Chaolana (phone: 22314638; Email: Chaolana@webmail.co.za).

IMPROVING SUPERVISORY SKILLS

MORE TRAINING, MORE OPPORTUNITIES



COMOSH TRAINING—Our first COMOSH training was held last year at Maseru E on the 14th November 2013. COMOSH is a training course that brings practical OSH to the committees that are involved with OSH, i.e. the OSH Committee and the Performance Improvement Consultative Committee (PICC). The 2-day training focused on fostering an understanding of what are unsafe acts and conditions; and to establish effective cooperation between the two committees.

TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

Course	Date	Duration	Location
MARCH 2014			
Risk Assessment Basics	4 March	1 day	Maseru
OSH Appreciation (Mandarin)	13 – 15 March	2 days	Maseru
Industry Seminar on Chemical Safety	20 – 21 March	2 days	Maseru
PICC Member Training (Role of the PICC, Workplace Cooperation)	26 – 27 March	2 days	Maseru
Firefighting Training (tentative)	to be decided	3 days	Maseru
APRIL 2014			
OSH for Committees (COMOSH)	to be decided	2 days	Maputsoe
Human Resource Management	7 April	5 days	Maputsoe
Supervisory Skills Training (SST) (Mandarin)	15 - 17 April	3 days	Maseru
SST Training-of-Trainers (ToT) (Mandarin)	24 April	1 day	Maseru
MAY 2014			
OSH Appreciation (Mandarin)	to be decided	2 days	Maputsoe
Housekeeping	6 May	1 day	Maseru
SST English	12-14 May	3 days	Maseru
SST ToT (Mandarin)	13 - 15 May	3 days	Maputsoe
SST ToT (Mandarin)	29 May	1 day	Maputsoe



Formosa Textile in partnership with LNDC have embarked on a revolutionary project of its kind in Lesotho's textile and garment industry. From October 2013 a number of 10 interns are on attachment at Formosa Textile for a period of two years. During this time they will learn the ins and outs of the textile mill to become qualified technicians.

Upcoming Training and Industry Seminars: February to May 2014

We are pleased to share with you our training calendar from February to May 2014. All training courses offered by BWL can also be conducted in-house (in the factory premises), provided that we have 10 participants at a minimum. In order to improve our training administration further, please note that payment has to be settled prior to or on the day of the training. All our training courses are offered at a subsidized rate to promote a culture of learning and skills improvement in the industry.

In addition, we are planning to organize industry seminars this year for PICC members on chemical safety (20 and 21 March), fire safety (11 and 12 June) and grievance handling (10 and 11 September).

For more information on our training courses, please contact Katleho Chaolana (phone: 22314638; Email: Chaolana@webmail.co.za). For more information about industry seminars, please contact lead Enterprise Adviser Nthabeleng Molise (phone: 22314638; Email: molise@betterwork.org).

Capacity Building for Unions:

On 24 March 2014 BWL will invite union representatives (General Secretaries and their Deputies, shop stewards, organizers) to a training on Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining. The training, focusing on ILO Conventions 87 and 98, will be conducted by the ILO's Bureau for Worker Activities (ILO ACTRAV) and the global union IndustriALL.

REVISING OSH OFFICER REGISTRATION PROCESS

On 9 December 2013 the OSH Directorate of the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) invited members of the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health and other stakeholders to a workshop to review the qualification requirements for OSH Officers as per Safety, Health and Welfare Officers' Regulations of 2002. The exercise was part of the overall revision of these regulations, a process which started in October 2013, with the aim to clarify qualification requirements and increase the efficiency of the registration process.

An important change in this regard was introduced in late 2013 when the OSH Directorate started to offer registration exams on a monthly basis. It allows applicants who are ready to undergo the exam to complete the registration process in a timely manner, without having to wait for a number of months until the exams panel would convene again, as it was often the case in the past. Based on stakeholders' views, the OSH Directorate is currently in the process of revising the minimum qualification requirements for registration, which are composed of educational degree, OSH specific training and years of practical experience. It is planning to complete the revision process by October 2014. BWL has provided input to the process, emphasizing the need for the industry

to have access to relevant training at reasonable costs.

There is a positive trend in the percentage of garment factories with a registered OSH Officer. Only 52% of factories had registered safety and health personnel when BWL assessed them for the first time. Among factories with 3 assessments this percentage has increased, amounting to 86%. It is hoped that the revised regulations will facilitate an increase in the number of registered OSH Officers in all sectors, inclusive of garments, further.

Teboho Mafooa, Principle OSH Inspector, underlines the importance of employing qualified OSH Officers. "Experienced and competent Safety and Health Officers are able to develop OSH systems that create a workplace environment which enhances the wellbeing of workers and promotes productivity."

For more information on the Health & Safety Officer registration process (status of revision and other questions), please contact Mr. Teboho Mafooa, Principal OSH Inspector, Directorate of OSH, MoLE (phone: 22317859; Email: dosh-les@yahoo.com or tmafooa@gmail.com).



Fire Safety Learning Seminar

On 28 November, 2013 BWL held a 1-day Fire Safety learning seminar for three factories to share with them more knowledge on fire safety issues. The seminar, facilitated by BWL Enterprise Advisers, discussed the following topics: fire safety checklist, common causes of fire in the garment industry, fire risk reduction, fire management system and role of fire marshals.

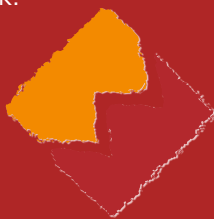
Participants were also requested to prepare a summary of good practices in advance to facilitate sharing of skills and experience across factories. TZICC, Maseru-E and CGM Industrial attended the seminar. Amongst participants were members of the PICC and OSH committees.

BWL will continue to assist factories in enhancing their skills on fire safety through training and advisory services throughout 2014.



LABOUR COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENT

- 2-Day factory assessments against ILO core labour standards and national labour law;
- Factories assessed annually;
- Assessment reports shared with buyers to:
 - Increase transparency;
 - Allow buyers to reduce and eventually stop their own auditing in areas covered by Better Work.



BETTER WORK
Lesotho

ADVISORY SERVICES

- About 10 advisory visits per year.
- Suppliers assisted in developing and implementing labour compliance improvement plans through labour-management committees.
- Improvement documented in bi-annual Progress Reports.
- Strengthened buyer-supplier relationships as factories demonstrate commitment to improvement.



BETTER WORK
Lesotho

TRAINING SERVICES

- Training to address common areas of non-compliance and complement advisory services.
- Main training products:
 - Occupational Safety and Health
 - HR Management
 - Supervisory Skills
 - Workplace Cooperation
 - Workers' Life Skills Training
- Training target groups:
 - Labour-management committees
 - Factory mid-level management
 - Workers



BETTER WORK
Lesotho

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