



BetterWork
Bangladesh

AT A GLANCE



International
Labour
Organization



International
Finance Corporation
WORLD BANK GROUP

Creating Markets, Creating Opportunities



Better for All

Better Work Bangladesh was launched in 2014 with a clear focus—to help build a competitive garment industry that provides decent jobs to workers, good business for factories and brands, and economic development for the country.

Better Work Bangladesh is working to shape the sector's future development using practical, tried-and-tested methods to address persistent challenges that threaten to limit the industry—and the country's—potential. Addressing issues related to industrial safety, labour law governance and the equal role of women is at the forefront of the agenda.

As well as delivering its proven approach to more garment factories in more regions, Better Work Bangladesh is sharing its expertise and tools with national actors across the industry. In doing so, the programme is helping to shape public policy and supply chain practices, fostering a garment sector in which respect for labour rights is entrenched, businesses thrive and millions of workers and their families benefit.



84.21

Percentage of garment sector exports of total export revenue



230

Factories enrolled with Better Work Bangladesh



25

International brands have partnered with Better Work



530,000+

Workers in Better Work-registered factories



54

Percentage of female workers

OUR IMPACT

Better Work Bangladesh, a joint initiative of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), has been engaging workers, employers, the government and multinational businesses to influence the garment industry. Through assessments, training and advisory work at the factory level, as well as research and advocacy at the national and regional level, the programme has:



IMPROVED SAFETY

By informing and supporting national safety initiatives including the ILO's RMG safety programme and brand-led initiatives such as the Accord and the Alliance, and by developing Safety and Health committees to address factory-level concerns.



FACILITATED DIALOGUE

Through promoting fair and free elections for worker-management committees where 211,142 workers voted to elect 1400 representatives, 43 % of whom are women, in BWB-affiliated factories.



EMPOWERING WOMEN

Including through the ongoing Gender Equality and Returns (GEAR) programme, a partnership between ILO and IFC to promote women which so far has seen 64% of female sewing operators being offered a promotion and pay rise.



IMPROVED HEALTH

Through Mothers@Work, a joint initiative of UNICEF and Better Work, BWB partner factories are strengthening maternity rights and promoting breastfeeding. The factories also distribute nutritious food and provide breastfeeding facilities to young working mothers.



TRAINED FACTORY STAFF

Providing learning opportunities to more than 5,000 factory managers, supervisors and workers on gender equality, supervisory skills, financial literacy, industrial relations and workplace cooperation.



ENCOURAGED LABOUR LAW REFORM

By supporting the government through efforts to revise the law to provide for openly elected worker representation on worker-management committees.

“ What we have seen is that investing in workers – especially female workers – brings real business benefits, reducing absenteeism, limiting turnover and boosting productivity. Getting this message out far and wide is key to changing the way the industry operates. ”

Anne-Laure Henry-Gréard, Country Programme Manager, Better Work Bangladesh

Where next?

During its next strategic phase (2018-21), Better Work Bangladesh will build on its impact to date with three broad objectives:

1. IMPROVE WORKING CONDITIONS IN GARMENT FACTORIES, WITH A FOCUS ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY.

- ◆ Continue to expand the programme to build labour standards compliance in an increasing number of

factories that will serve as models of good practice for the industry. By 2021, 400 factories – more than double the current enrolment – will be engaged.

- ◆ Target improved industrial safety through a focus on quality, accountability, inclusiveness and transparency of the institutions related to workplace safety. Working with the ILO's RMG programme, continue close collaboration with

brand members, and the Government's Remediation Coordination Cell, to ensure Better Work's expertise has the widest possible impact on workplace safety.

- ◆ Expand worker-management committee elections according to international labour standards and ensure they are functioning effectively according to Bangladesh's Labour Law, while also striving for gender balanced committees.

2. SUPPORT A POLICY AND BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT THAT PROTECTS WORKERS' RIGHTS AND BOOSTS COMPETITIVENESS.

- ◆ Finalize and promote new research findings that demonstrate the business benefits of higher levels of labour standards compliance.
- ◆ Through regular forums, presentations and dialogue, convene diverse business stakeholders, harnessing the influence of major brands and manufacturers to address their own sourcing practices, encourage factories to join the programme and motivate their suppliers to take a proactive role in protecting workers' rights, safety and health.

- ◆ Support the Government's 'Vision 2021' provisions for better working conditions through coordination with labour market institutions, employer groups, unions and brands.

- ◆ Offer practical solutions to the Government on bridging the gap between private sector initiatives and public policy, including through the secondment of government labour inspectors to work alongside Better Work staff.

3. EMPOWER WOMEN, REDUCE SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP.

- ◆ Enhance women's voice and decision-making power across the industry, promoting their active participation in worker-management committees, unions and employer organizations.
- ◆ To reduce discrimination and boost factory productivity, continue to expand the women's productivity training developed with the IFC, as well as Better Work's sexual harassment prevention work.
- ◆ To expand impacts on women's empowerment, deepen collaboration with other actors working on gender and maternity rights in Bangladesh's garment factories, including UNICEF.

Key Partners



GOVERNMENT

- ◆ Ministry of Labour & Employment (MoLE)



EMPLOYERS' ORGANIZATIONS

- ◆ Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF)
- ◆ Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)
- ◆ Bangladesh Knit Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA)



WORKERS' ORGANIZATIONS

- ◆ National Coordination Committee on Workers' Education (NCCWE)
- ◆ IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC)
- ◆ International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)



BUSINESS COMMUNITY

- ◆ 25 brand and retail partners

Better Work Bangladesh is supported by the following donor partners:

