



▶ Better Work Jordan: Worker, Supervisor and Manager Survey Results

RESEARCH BRIEF

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BetterWork.

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► Contents

Introduction	2
Methodology	3
Findings	4
Worker job satisfaction	4
Worker concerns	5
Worker perspectives on resource	7
Trust between workers and managers	9
Worker engagement with the union	10
Worker engagement with the government	12
In focus: Sustaining impact	13
Conclusion	15
Next step	15



► Introduction

Better Work is a partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). On-the-ground in 13 countries across three continents, the programme brings together all levels of the garment industry to improve labour standards, enhance respect of labour rights, and boost sector competitiveness.

Better Work Jordan (BWJ) was established in 2008 and was made mandatory for all garment factories exporting to the US under the US-Jordan Free Trade Agreement (USJFTA). The programme currently includes 95 participating factories covering approximately 79,000 workers, representing nearly 95 per cent of the garment workforce in Jordan.¹ Throughout its 15 years of operations, the programme has made important strides in improving working conditions and industrial relations in Jordan's garment sector.

As BWJ enters its fourth phase, the programme seeks to build on its achievements while ensuring the sustainability of its positive impact. Beyond direct factory engagement, BWJ works with international stakeholders, including buyers and governments, to facilitate dialogue at the factory and sectoral level. Additionally, BWJ collaborates with tripartite national stakeholders to build their institutional capacity, enabling them to effectively fulfil their mandates in monitoring, addressing,

and rectifying labour non-compliances. In particular, BWJ works hand in hand with the following national partners:

1. Government, and specifically with the Ministry of Labour;
2. Employers, including factory management and sectoral representative bodies such as the Jordanian Garment, Accessories & Textile Exporters' Association (J-GATE) and the Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI); and
3. Workers, including individual workers and the only workers' representative body in the local garment sector, namely, the General Trade Union of Workers in the Textile, Garment, and Clothing Industry.

BWJ has continuously invested in research activities to measure the effects of the programme. Since 2019, the programme has conducted a series of surveys among workers, supervisors and managers. The surveys are designed to provide up-to-date information on the opinions of the workforce, inform programmatic priorities as well as ad-hoc studies on the impact of the programme. The surveys gather data on demographic information, working conditions, workers' life outside the factory, factors for business competitiveness and engagement with national stakeholders.

This policy brief summarizes responses to key questions in the surveys implemented between 2019 and 2023.² Aligned with the BWJ Phase

¹ ILO Better Work (2023). Annual Report 2023: An Industry and Compliance Review, Better Work Jordan.

² Responses from previous survey rounds are summarized in a series of policy briefs, which can be found on the Better Work Jordan's website. These include: [Better Work Jordan: Worker Voice Survey Results \(Nov 2019\)](#), [Better Work Jordan: Worker and Manager Survey Results \(Jun 2020\)](#), [Better Work Jordan: Worker and Manager Survey Results \(Oct 2020\)](#), and [Better Work Jordan: Worker, Supervisor and Manager Survey Results \(Oct 2021\)](#).



Four strategy aimed at developing the capacity of national stakeholder, this brief presents the progress of stakeholders' engagement over time. This information not only offers valuable insights into stakeholders' readiness to fulfil their mandates but also identifies gaps where additional effort is required to ensure the sustainability of the Better Work programme in Jordan.

► Methodology

In 2019, Better Work Jordan launched a large-scale representative survey of workers in the garment industry and has repeated the survey

(with some variation in questions over time) to a new, random sample of workers six times since. **Table 1** shows the date and sample size of this survey over time, along with the samples from manager and supervisor surveys, which were conducted concurrently. The latest survey covers a representative sample of approximately 2 per cent of the workers in the garment industry. Over the course of six weeks between July and August 2023, 1,562 workers from 78 different factories were surveyed. As in previous iterations, one manager from each factory was surveyed. BWJ introduced a supervisors' survey since 2021 and surveyed 438 supervisors this year.

Table 1. Survey sample size over time for workers, managers and supervisors

TIME FRAME	NUMBER OF WORKERS	NUMBER OF MANAGERS	NUMBER OF SUPERVISORS
Jun-19	1,731	N.A.	N.A.
Dec-19	1,667	73	N.A.
Jul-20	1,757	72	N.A.
Jul-21	1,458	63	364
Jul-22	1,568	86	437
Jul-23	1,562	78	438



► Findings

This brief focuses on workers overall job satisfaction, workers' concerns at the workplace, workers' perspectives on resources, and stakeholders' engagement in the Jordanian garment sector.

Key findings include:

- The survey results remain overall consistent over the years with minimum variations, even as direct factory-level services by BWJ have gradually decreased.
- Efforts to enhance trade union capacity have led to improved union visibility among workers. Nevertheless, challenges persist, including gaps in union membership awareness, limited knowledge of Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), and workers' unwillingness to approach the trade union to raise grievances.
- Workers lack familiarity with the Ministry of Labour and its services, highlighting the need for increased awareness and engagement for better access to available

support mechanisms for workers.

- There is a noticeable decline in reliance on Better Work for enforcing labour standards in the sector, but this shift has not yet been entirely replaced by increased capacity among national stakeholders.

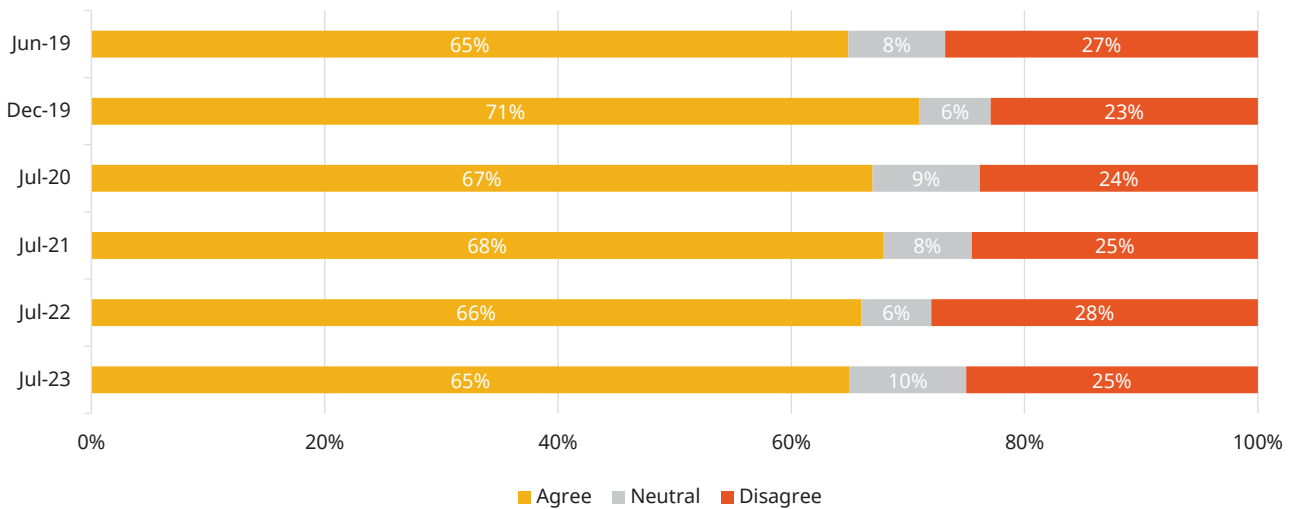
► Worker job satisfaction

Workers were asked about whether they would recommend a friend or family member to work in a garment factory similar to their own. This question serves as an indirect means to evaluate workers' job satisfaction and whether they think the job has improved their lives.

Approximately 65 per cent of workers reported job satisfaction, with minimal fluctuations observed over the years. Notably, since the end of 2019 BWJ has gradually shifted its focus away from direct services at the factory level, initiating the delegation of certain factory assessment and advisory responsibilities to labour inspectors and trade union. The consistent positive result may suggest that the impact of BWJ has potentially achieved a sustainable level.



Figure 1. If a friend or family member like me wanted to improve their life, I would recommend they work in a garment factory like mine.



► Worker concerns

Workers were asked about the concerns that they and their co-workers had on a wide range of issues, including pay, working hours, safety, verbal abuse, and sexual harassment (**Figure 2a**). If they indicated having a concern, they were further questioned what actions, if any, they took in response to these concerns (**Figure 2b**).

Verbal abuse is consistently the most common concern among workers, with 34 per cent of workers reporting this concern in 2023. Jordanian workers were more likely to report concerns about verbal abuse. In 2023, 53 per cent of Jordanian workers said they were concerned about verbal abuse, while 24 per cent of migrant workers shared the same concern.

Pay was another predominant concern for workers, with 32 per cent stating this concern in 2023, up from 28 per cent in 2022. Workers reported several different issues with their pay. The most frequently cited concern was insufficient earnings, especially among Jordanian workers.

Migrant workers, on the other hand, expressed concerns about pay calculation confusion and receiving incorrect pay for the hours they worked. These findings suggest a lack of understanding among migrant workers regarding their pay structures, possibly due to limited financial literacy among these workers or a lack of transparency in the factory regarding compensation.

Concerns about working time increased in 2023, with over one quarter of workers reporting this concern. Jordanian and migrant workers expressed different concerns about working time. Jordanians primarily cited feeling “exhausted after work” and “spending too much time at work” as their top concerns. In contrast, migrant workers frequently mentioned “not knowing their working hours in advance”. This concern may be linked to the overall reduction in the working hours in 2023 caused by the decreased number of orders, especially impacting migrant workers who rely on overtime work to boost their earnings.³ The uncertainty around working hours may contribute to their worries about inadequate income, potentially leading to increased financial



stress. In fact, in 2023, the percentage of workers reporting any savings decreased by 4 percentage points compared to 2022 (from 46.9 per cent to 42.9 per cent), with migrant workers experiencing a more significant drop of 6.5 percentage points.

Concerns with workplace safety (such as dangerous equipment or potential for accident or injury) have shown a decreasing trend since peaking in 2020 (when COVID-19 was the primary cause of this concern). In 2023, around 17 per

cent of workers reported this concern, with no significant difference between Jordanian and migrant workers.

Concerns about sexual harassment were reported the highest in 2021 at 21 per cent and have seen a marginal decrease over the last two years, with 18 per cent of workers reporting this concern in 2023. Jordanian workers are the most likely to report concerns about sexual harassment.

Figure 2a. Proportion of workers with concerns, by topic

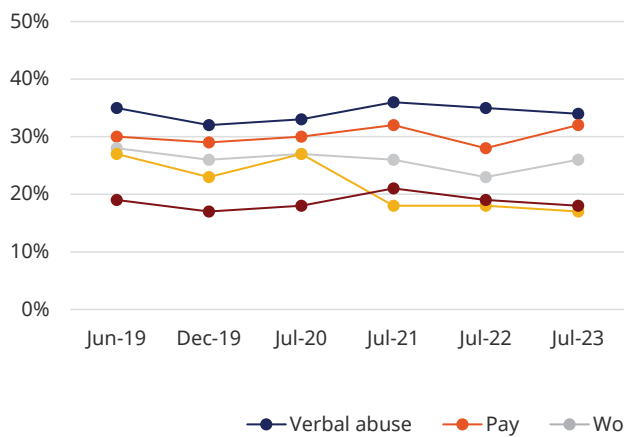
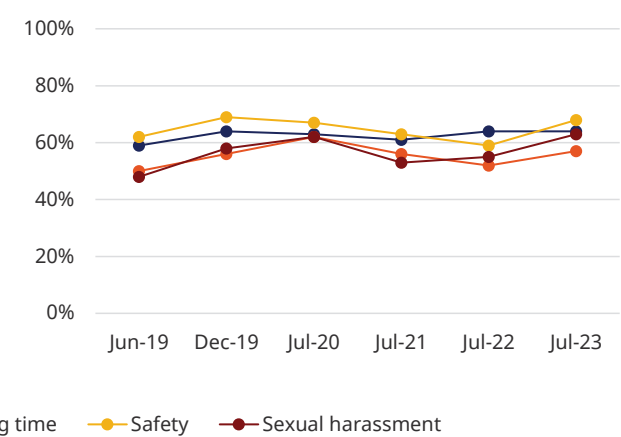


Figure 2b. Proportion of workers with concerns who took an action, by topic



If workers indicated that they had a concern in a particular area, they were subsequently asked if they have taken actions to address this concern. These “actions” were ranged from discussion with co-workers or supervisors to more serious measures such as threatening to quit or going on strike. In general, most workers who reported concerns took some form of action in response to those concerns. Notably, in 2023, there was an overall increase in the percentage of workers who reported taking action in response to their concerns across all issues. This finding can be

interpreted as an improvement in the channels through which workers can address their concerns. This is especially true when looking at concerns about safety and sexual harassment. While the percentage of workers reporting such concerns decreased, the proportion of works who took action increased. This trend indicates that not only are fewer workers experiencing these issues, but more are willing to address them through appropriate channels, suggesting a positive development in workplace environment.

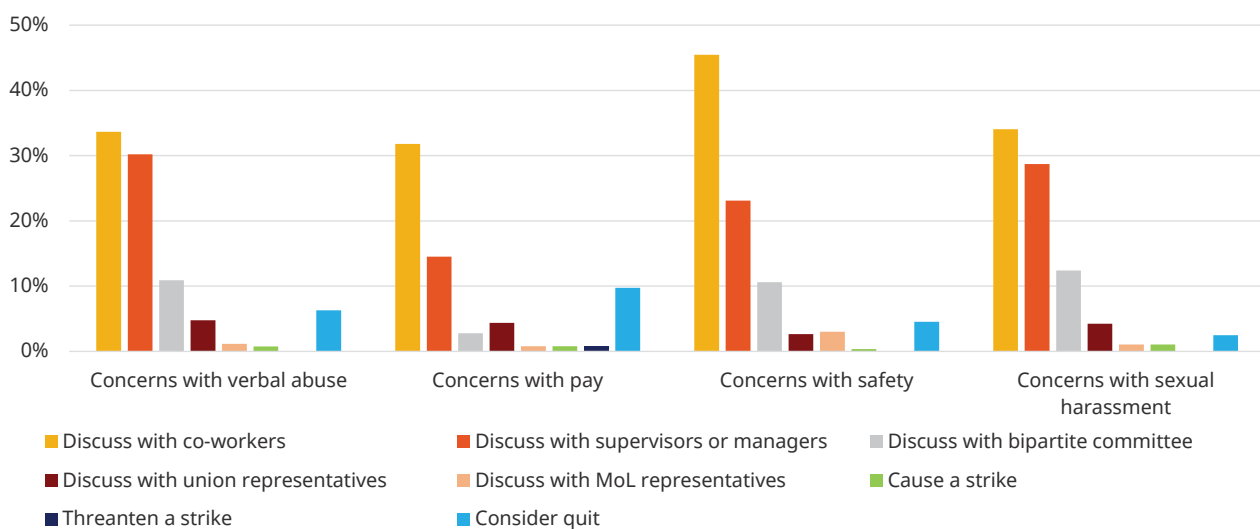
3 For more information about the wage structure and history of working hour and wages in the sector, see Better Work Jordan: [Working Hours and Wages in the Jordanian Garment Sector](#).



When it comes to specific actions taken, workers are mostly likely to talk to their co-workers about concerns they have, followed by discussing with their supervisors. Workers are also more willingly to take their concerns with safety, verbal abuse, and sexual harassment to the bipartite committee (around 11 per cent) compared to pay-related

concerns (3 per cent). At the same time, the percentage of workers expressing their intention to take their concerns to the trade union or the Ministry of Labour remained very low, with trade union mentioned by roughly 5 per cent of workers and the Ministry of Labour by less than 2 per cent.

Figure 3. Proportion of workers who took an action in response to their concerns (2023)



► Worker perspectives on resources

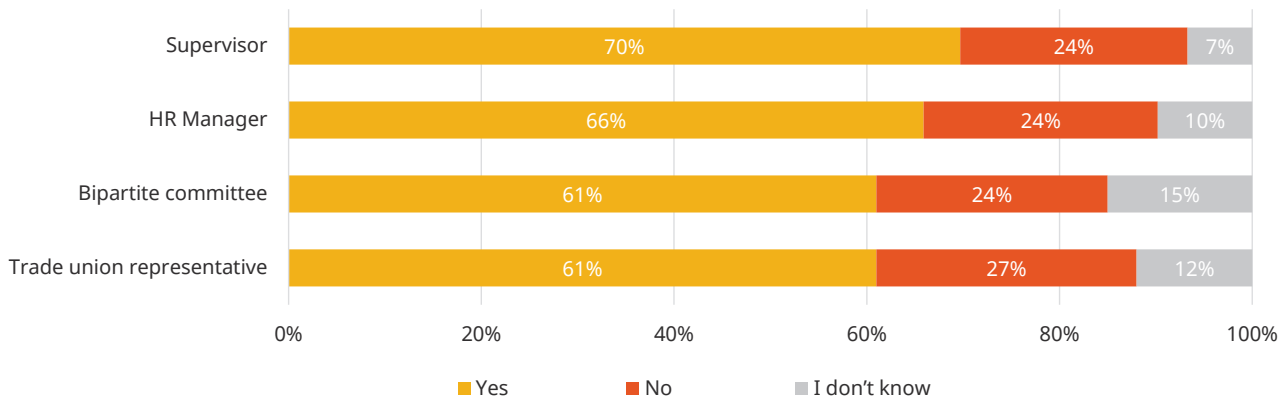
There are various resources for workers to address their workplace issues. While workers are more familiar with internal resources within the factory, particularly with supervisors and HR officers, it is important to note there are other options available, both within the factory (such as bipartite committee) and externally (such as the trade union, the Ministry of Labour, and legal aids). However, workers may not always be aware of these resources or feel uncomfortable using them.

Around 78 per cent of workers indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with available grievance mechanisms at the workplace. This percentage has been rather consistent over the years,

indicating an overall satisfaction with grievance mechanisms in the garment sector. However, the results are less positive when workers were asked about their comfort level with specific channels for conflict resolution. Workers indicated feeling most comfortable approaching someone inside of the factory for help, especially with their supervisors (70 per cent), and the least comfortable seeking assistance from the trade union (61 per cent). In fact, more than one quarter of workers reported that they would not feel comfortable going to trade union if they encountered issues at workplace. This finding raises concerns because while many workplace issues can and should be managed and adjudicated within the factory, workers' unwillingness to seek assistance from the union representatives indicates gaps in grievance handling, especially in cases of more complex issues.



Figure 4. If you were having a problem at work, for example with your pay, working time, work safety, or treatment at work, would you feel comfortable going to the following for help? (2023)



When workers were asked about their opinions on the effectiveness of the worker-manager bipartite committee, over two third of them say that the committee would be effective if there was a conflict between managers and workers. This perception varies across nationalities, with migrant workers indicated a more favourable impression of the committee's effectiveness compared to Jordanian workers (Figure 5b).

not know about the effectiveness of the bipartite committee (Figure 5a). This lack of awareness could arise from two potential reasons: a) workers have limited awareness of the committee; or b) the existing committee have limited involvement in resolving significant disputes between employees and management. Both factors point to a gap in the functionality of bipartite committees, suggesting the need to further enhance the capacity of committee members and increase awareness of the committees.

Yet, 20 per cent of workers reported that they did

Figure 5a. Effectiveness of bipartite committee

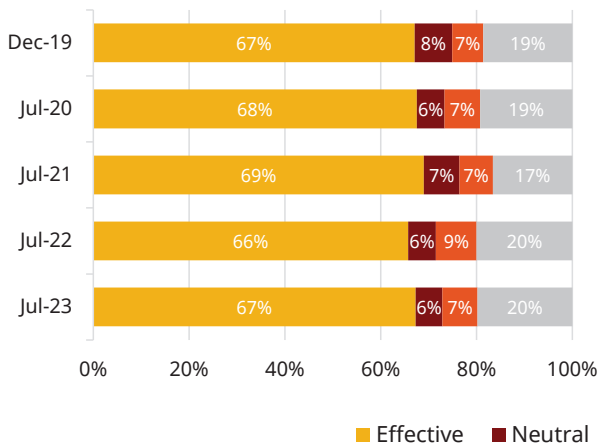
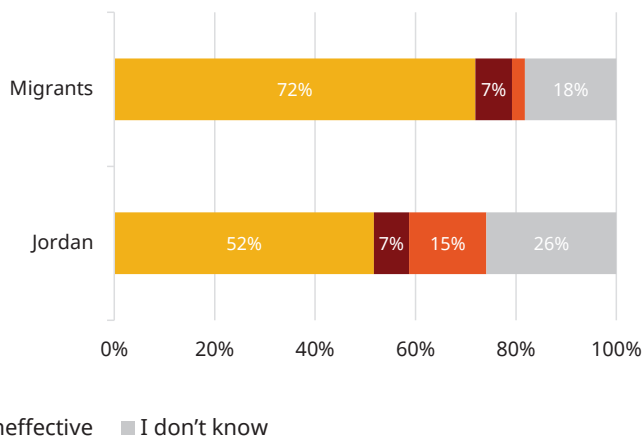


Figure 5b. Effectiveness of bipartite committee, by migration status (2023)



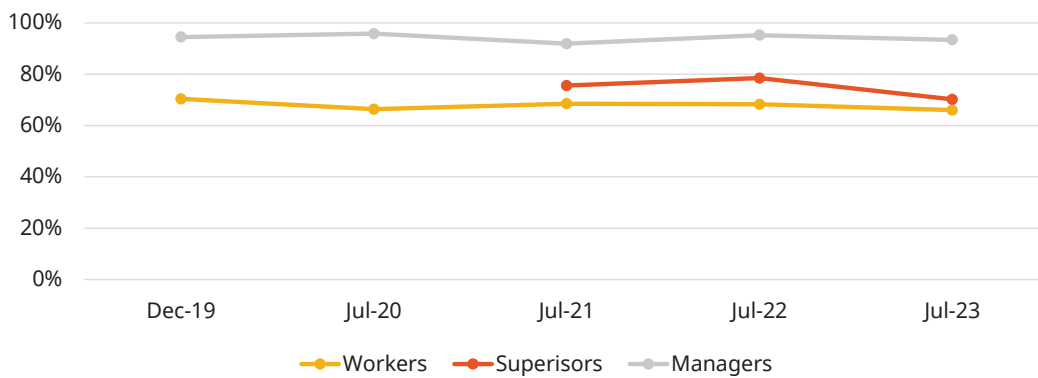


► Trust between workers and managers

Building workplace trust is a key factor in the BWJ factory improvement model and plays a critical role in a factory's success. A high level of trust at workplace is often associated with improved job satisfaction ⁴, better mental health⁵, and

increased productivity ⁶. In our survey, workers, supervisors, and managers were asked about their perceptions of mutual trust at the workplace. As power at workplace increases, they are more likely to believe there is mutual trust, with nearly all managers (93 per cent) indicated so, compared to 70 per cent of supervisors and 66 per cent of workers.

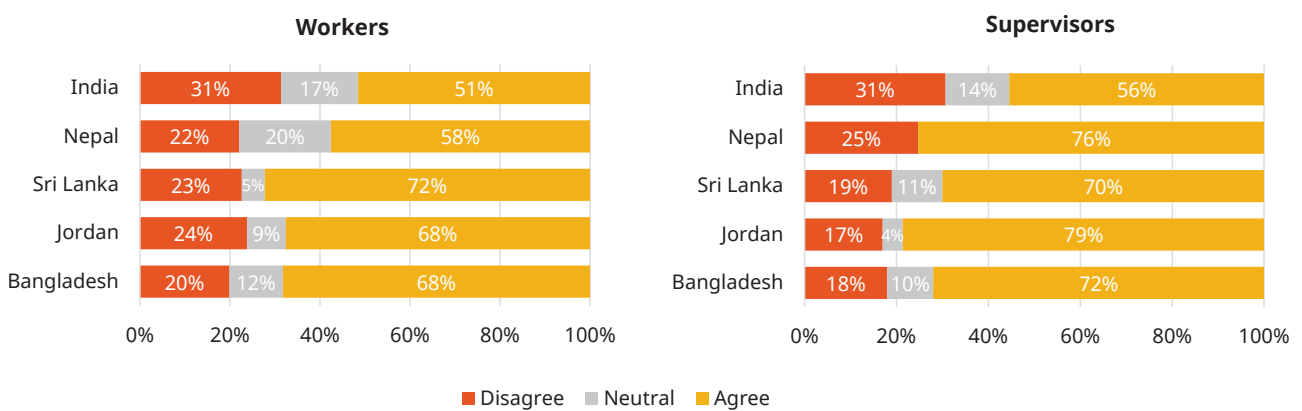
Figure 6. Percentage of responses who think there is mutual trust between workers and management in the factory.



Variations by nationalities is also observed in this question. Indian workers and Indian supervisors are the least likely to think there is mutual trust in

the factory. Bangladeshi workers and Jordanian supervisors, in contrast, were the most likely to perceive mutual trust.

Figure 7. Do you think there is mutual trust between workers and managers in your factory? (2023)



4 Artar, M., & Erdil, O. (2017). Relationship between job satisfaction, organizational trust and work alienation. European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences, 34.
 5 Bulińska-Stangrecka, H., & Bagieńska, A. (2021). The role of employee relations in shaping job satisfaction as an element promoting positive mental health at work in the era of COVID-19. International journal of environmental research and public health, 18(4), 1903.
 6 ILO (2023). Business Resilience in Retrospect: Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic.



▶ Worker engagement with the union

There is only one trade union – the General Trade Union of Workers in Textile, Garment and Clothing Industries – in the Jordanian garment sector which represents all workers. Workers can join the union by paying a monthly contribution of 0.5 JD (US\$0.71). The union negotiates sectoral Collective Bargaining (CBA) on behalf of workers with representatives from the employers’ association. Moreover, the union offers additional services including providing training and help to resolve collective or joint disputes.

In 2023, 30 per cent of surveyed workers indicated that they were members of the union (Figure 8a). Migrant workers are more likely to indicate their union membership (35 per cent) compared to Jordanian workers (20 per cent). However, workers’ awareness of their union membership remains low. The percentage of workers indicating that they are members of the union is substantially lower than the percentage of workers who claimed to pay union dues – 64 per cent of workers indicated that 0.5 JD was deducted from their monthly salary for union dues (Figure 8b).

Figure 8a. Are you a member of the union?

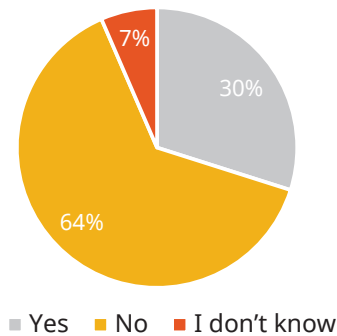
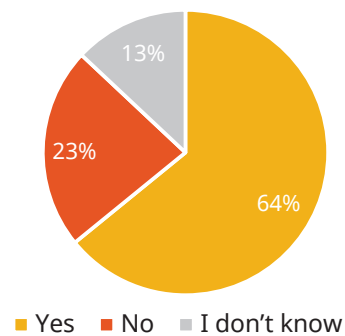


Figure 8b. Do you pay union dues?

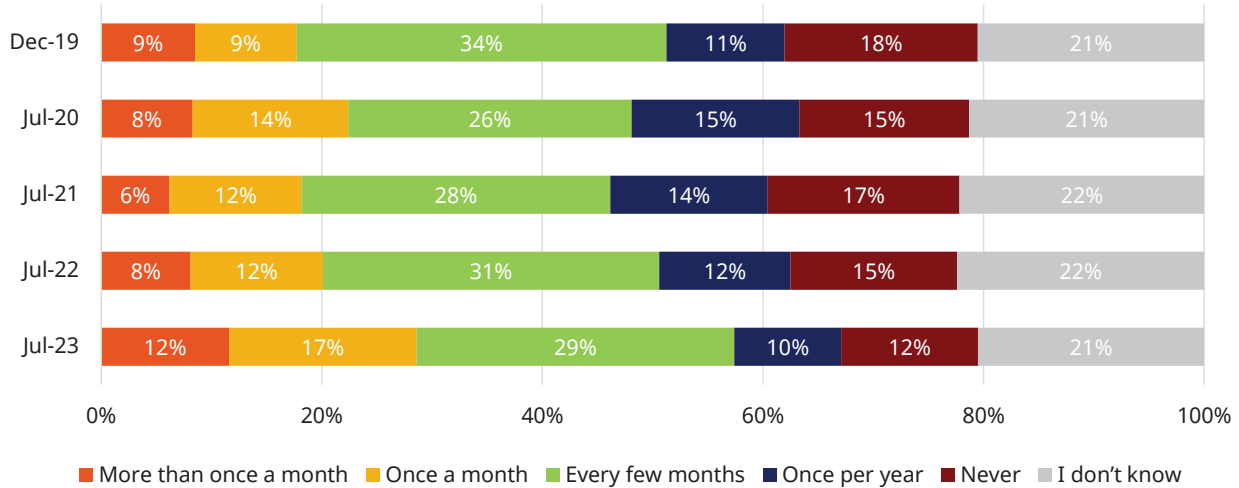


In April 2022, BWJ initiated its first implementation agreement with the trade union. One of the key objectives of this accord is to develop union capacity by hiring new union representatives to cover all industrial zones and extend their reach to other governorates. As per the agreement’s stipulation, union representatives are required to visit their respective factories at least 15 times a year. The tangible impact of this increased union presence has been mirrored in the survey results.

When workers were asked about how often they have seen union representatives in the factories, the latest findings reflect a raise in awareness of union presence, with 67 per cent noticing their presence in 2023 compared to 61 per cent in 2021. Moreover, a notably higher percentage of workers reported that they saw union representatives in their factory once a month or more, with this figure raising from 18 per cent in 2021 to 29 per cent in 2023.



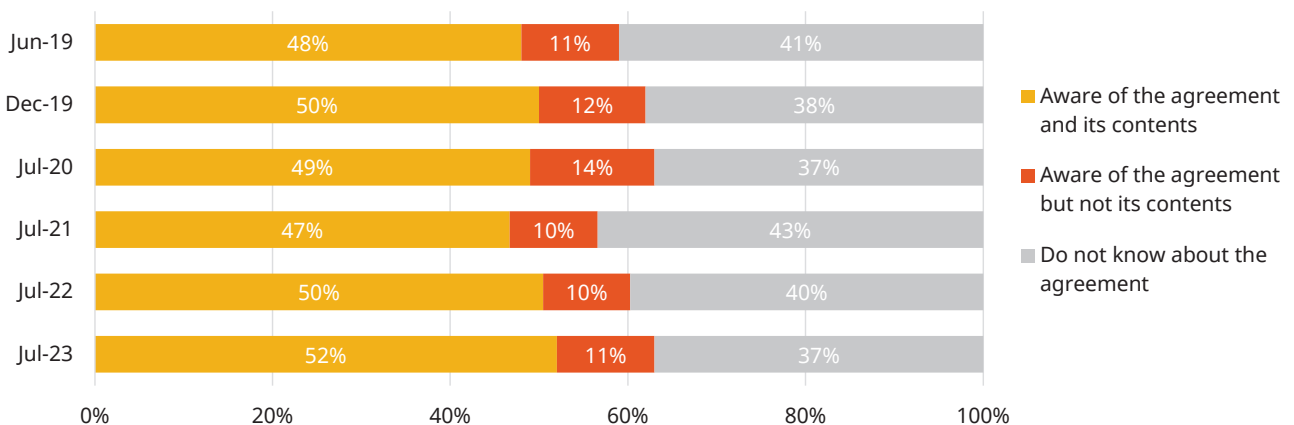
Figure 9. How often have you noticed a trade union representative visiting your factory?



Worker and employer representatives negotiate a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) applying to all workers in the garment sector. Starting in March 2023, BWJ initiated a series of intensive training sessions through the union for garment sector workers on the most recent CBA, aiming to provide them with a good understanding of their rights under the sectoral CBA.⁷ These efforts

have led to limited impact, with 52 per cent of workers saying that they are aware of the CBA and its contents in 2023, compared to 50 per cent from 2022. There remains a notable gap in sector-wide understanding of CBA, with 37 per cent of workers indicating their lack of awareness about the agreement (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Are you aware of the sector-wide collective bargaining agreement (CBA) for the garment sector in Jordan?



⁷ The trainings were conducted based on the 2022 CBA, which was the latest CBA at the time of the survey. However, it should be noted that a new sectoral CBA was introduced in August 2023.

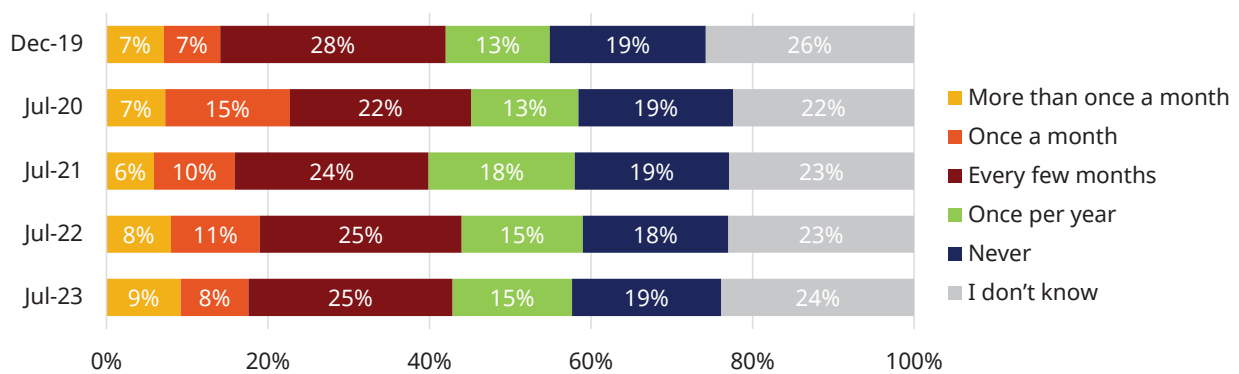


► Worker engagement with the government

In general, workers are less familiar with the Ministry of Labour compared to the trade union, with 42 per cent of workers saying that they did

not know or had never seen a labour inspector from the Ministry of Labour visiting their factories. This lack of familiarity can be attributed to the fact that labour inspectors from the Ministry of Labour mostly work with factory management and have minimum interaction with workers.

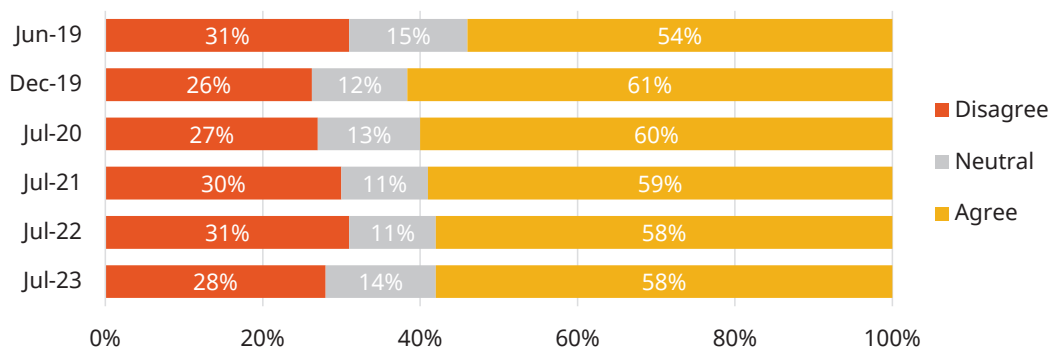
Figure 11. How often have you noticed a Ministry of Labour representative visiting your factory?



Labour inspectors from the Ministry of Labour play an important role in enforcing the labour law, which 58 per cent of the workers reported they

had knowledge of. There is no salient difference between Jordanian workers and migrant workers in their knowledge of labour laws.

Figure 12. I have sufficient knowledge about the Jordanian Labour Law and how it affects my job and working conditions.



Since March 2021, the Ministry of Labour has been utilizing the Hemaya platform as an online tool to gather and address grievances directly from workers. The ministry's latest update in September 2023 indicated that 95 per cent of grievances submitted through this platform were resolved. While this development might suggest

progress in providing a direct channel for workers to voice their concerns and seek resolution, it is crucial to highlight that this information is pending verification, and the satisfaction level of workers with the resolution process remains undisclosed.



► In focus: Sustaining impact

As part of its ongoing commitment to sustaining the programme impacts, in February 2022, BWJ launched the Factory Ambassador Programme (FAP). The programme is designed to empower key factory representatives, providing them with the capacity to take ownership of the compliance process. The goal is for these factory representatives to be able to drive positive and sustainable change within their workplaces, even without Better Work’s presence.

The managers’ survey touched base on the

approaches adopted by factories to enforce labour standards and working conditions. Overall, the most common approach is through an internal assessment process within the factories, as reported by 80 per cent of surveyed factories. Internal improvement efforts, including regular worker-manager dialogue, have become increasingly more important for labour standard and working condition enforcement, with 64 per cent of surveyed factories adopting this approach in 2023, compared to 59 per cent in 2022. Meanwhile, there is a decreased dependency on Better Work, with only 49 per cent of surveyed factories reporting this mechanism in 2023, down from 60 per cent in 2022.

Figure 13. In this factory, how are labour standards and conditions of work enforced? (2023)



However, while fewer factories reported their dependency on Better Work, this has not necessarily been replaced with national stakeholders or self-monitoring. Instead, there has been an increase in third-party auditing. The third-party audit is one key aspect of factory-buyer relationships. Buyers request their suppliers to undergo third-party audits to ensure compliance

with buyer’s code of conduct or other industrial standards. Many factories produce for multiple buyers, often leading to several third-party audits every year with different requirements. One goal of the Better Work programme is to reduce the number of duplicate audits by enabling factories to share their Better Work assessment with multiple buyers.



The increase in third party audits can be seen across multiple questions in the managers' survey. Around 40 per cent of managers reported that they have between three and five third-party audits a year, while 22 per cent of managers

indicated that they have six or more (Figure 14a). At the same time, most managers (58 per cent) reported that this number remained similar to the previous year, while 17 per cent reported an increase (Figure 14b).

Figure 14a. Number of third-party audits conducted

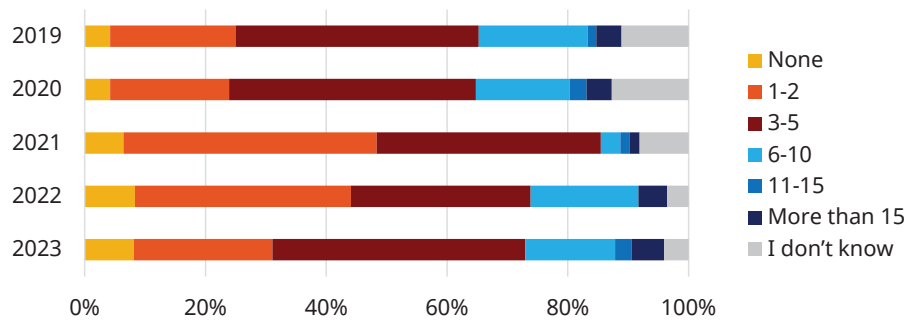
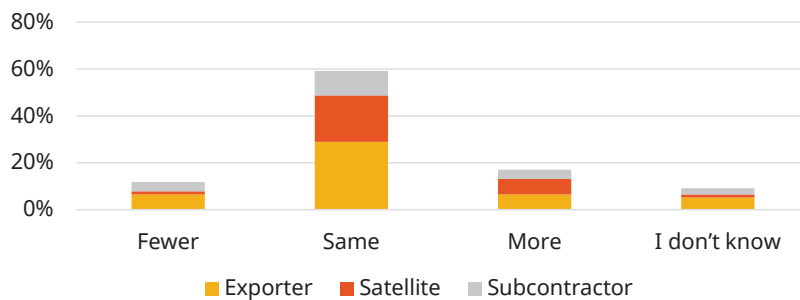


Figure 14b. Change in third-party audits in the past year (2023)





► Conclusion

The findings from the surveys conducted among workers, supervisors, and managers provide resource for stakeholders to gain insights into workers' perspectives of their jobs. Additionally, it provides essential information regarding working conditions, worker concerns and the channels through which workers seek to address these issues, as well as the roles played by various stakeholders in this process.

The role of the trade union is a significant aspect of this landscape. Efforts to increase the capacity of the union have shown promise, with increased visibility and engagement noted in recent surveys. However, there is still room for improvement, especially in raising union membership awareness and addressing CBA knowledge gaps among workers. The fact that over a quarter of workers would not feel comfortable bringing workplace problems to the trade union raises concerns.

The Ministry of Labour also plays a vital role in labour law compliances. However, the current survey results suggest that workers are lacking familiarity with labour inspectors probably due to limited interaction between labour inspectors and workers. The utilization of the Hemaya platform potentially offers a more accessible channel for grievance resolution, but the effectiveness of the platform is yet to be evaluated.

Factories reported reduced reliance on Better Work for enforcing labour standards, yet this shift has not been entirely replaced by increased capacity among national stakeholders. Instead, a notable rise in third-party audits has taken place.

► Next step

The recurring survey is one tool BWJ uses to monitor working conditions in the garment sector and is especially important for tracking sustainability of the programme. The BWJ worker, supervisor, and manager survey data feed into the monitoring and evaluation of the Better Work Jordan programme and into the programming developed by BWJ, enabling the team to monitor workers' and factories' needs and adapt program services and approaches as necessary. The survey data enable also stakeholders to see and track how workers perceive them and provide important information to employers about specific worker concerns and who workers turn to in order to address these concerns.

Several upcoming reports will expand on the information provided here and take it in new directions. For example, Better Work Jordan is planning to look deeper at issues of working condition and grievance handling from a migrant workers' perspective. In addition, BWJ will partner with academic institutions to evaluate the programme's recent and upcoming efforts to sustain its impact by empowering key factory representatives and national stakeholders and providing them with the capacity to take ownership of the compliance process.

These worker and manager surveys are an ongoing project spearheaded by the Better Work Global research team and carried out in conjunction with Better Work Jordan and a local research partner. The next round of data collection will occur in July 2024.

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