

Newsletter

ISSUE 2, 2019 | STORIES FROM THE SUPPLY CHAINS & BEYOND

BetterWork
Bangladesh

DRIVING SUSTAINABLE CHANGE IN THE RMG SECTOR

How BWB is creating ownership of the improvement process at the factory level

ADVANCING GRIEVANCE MECHANISM

BWB's Integrated Advisory Workshop focuses on a more systematic approach to handle grievances in the workplace

STORIES OF IMPACT

A closer look at the growth and triumph of a BWB partner factory over the past few years

PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS PRACTICES

A high-level meeting led by the Ministry of Commerce discussed the way forward for responsible and efficient business practices

LAUNCH OF GAP-SDIR PROJECT

A joint initiative of the ILO and GAP Inc. to further strengthen social dialogue and industrial relations in the garment sector

CAPACITY BUILDING OF UNIONISED FACTORIES

A two-day capacity building workshop for the unionised partner factories of BWB in Chittagong

Dear friends,

We hope you enjoy our updates on some of our and the industry's latest work and achievements. The focus on the sustainability of the Bangladesh garment sector and how industry stakeholders can support this, is ongoing and evolving. BWB's increasingly sharpened approach towards 'sustainability thinking' is aimed at improving the national regulatory and institutional environment for better labour market governance. We are working closely with our tripartite and brand partners on the country's institutional and legal structures and capacity, including effective social dialogue, to sustain and further advance the programme's work as well as a more self-regulated industry.

In this newsletter we have outlined some of the latest initiatives we have taken in the past few months.

Thank you and enjoy the read!

Anne-Laure Henry-Greard

Programme Manager
Better Work Bangladesh



230
FACTORIES



25
INTERNATIONAL BRANDS
AND RETAILERS



530K
WORKERS



54%
FEMALE WORKERS

Driving Sustainable Change in the Garment Industry

Five years into its existence, BWB's sustainability agenda is derived from its extensive in-country experience and commitment to creating ownership of the improvement process at the enterprise level to help build a self-regulated industry.



“With the help of Better Work, we should define sustainability by ourselves and start working on self-sustaining, self-monitoring and self-implementation tools to adapt and replicate the best practices.

Dr Rubana Huq
President, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)

As part of a new capacity-building initiative, BWB organised a daylong training for compliance officials of BGMEA and BKMEA on 25 June in Dhaka to help drive sustainable improvements in compliance practices. A similar workshop was held for compliance officials from BWB partner factories during a two-day stakeholder engagement event in Chattogram on 29-28 August. A BWB delegation led by its Programme Manager Anne-Laure Henry-Gréard discussed ways to strengthen the existing collaboration with the industry stakeholders in Chattogram.



Three focuses of our **2018-21 Strategic Phase** to promote sustainability:

1. Workplace safety
2. Policy and business environment that protects rights and boosts competitiveness
3. Women empowerment

STORIES OF IMPACT

Partner factories of Better Work Bangladesh (BWB) are taking on new challenges and making progress faster than they could on their own. A closer look at the growth and triumph of Chorka Textile Ltd over the past few years shows how BWB's factory services are benefiting workers and business alike.

FACTORY PORTFOLIO

Name of the factory: Chorka Textile Ltd

Location: Palash, Narsingdi

Number of workers: 4,965

BWB partner factory since: June 2017

Number of advisory visits: 15

Number of assessments: 2

Number of training received: 30 person-days and seven industry seminars

A better way to do business

Better Work's core services comprising Advisory, Assessment and Training helped Chorka improve in key compliance areas while boosting productivity and turnover by 98% and efficiency by 32% over the past few years.



After joining Better Work in June 2017, Chorka recently entered the third cycle of our core service. Typical to other third-cycle factories, Chorka has seen a major transformation in the way it handles workplace issues closely linked to its growth ambition. Worker-management relations, working conditions, Workplace Health and Safety, worker retention and staff capacity development were among the areas covered by Better Work's Factory Service and Training Programme to help the factory develop and implement its improvements plans. The improvements in Chorka Textile is benefiting the workers in many ways— the most notable one being the introduction of service benefits for workers in August this year.

“ The factory management recently introduced service benefits for the workers. It has been our long-cherished dream and I would say it was the biggest success of our PC.

Tania Islam
Operator and a PC member
Chorka Textile Ltd

CHORKA TEXTILE'S PERFORMANCE

FISCAL YEAR (JUNE-JUNE)	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	
PRODUCTION	29.4 M PCS.	42.35M PCS.	58.3M PCS.	98.29%
TURNOVER	\$35.23 M	\$50.83 M	\$69.96 M	98.58%
EFFICIENCY	46%	52.70%	60.86%	32.30%

PROJECT UPDATES

A quick overview of the project activities as BWB continues to collaborate and work more closely with its tripartite constituents.

Integrated Advisory Workshop on Grievance Mechanism

Better Work Bangladesh organised the workshop on 17-16 June to strengthen its collaboration with the partner factories and contribute to the establishment of a conducive institutional setting for improved compliance and industrial relations. The two-day workshop looked at the ways and means to help more systematically and pre-emptively manage grievances in the workplace—helping to prevent, mitigate and address issues in the factory, and more importantly, harness the advantage of a happier – thus far more productive – workforce in garment factories. Around 100 participants from 10 BWB partner factories attended the workshop. The workshop was an opportunity to focus on supporting factories to develop systems that underpin the resolution of conflict through grievance procedures, while enhancing the capacity of both workers and management to create a culture which ensures workplace issues and conflicts can be addressed in a sustainable way.

Launch of GAP-SDIR Project

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and global apparel retailer, Gap Inc., launched a joint initiative on 27 June to further strengthen social dialogue and industrial relations in Bangladesh's garment sector. The three-year initiative will be implemented in Gap supplier factories in Bangladesh. BWB in partnership with the ILO's Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations (SDIR) project will implement activities under this initiative.

Workshop on Responsible Business Practices

The Government of Bangladesh, led by the Ministry of Commerce, and the ILO at the initiative of BWB held a high-level meeting in Dhaka on 30 April 2019 to look at the need for ongoing responsible and efficient business practices in the country's \$30 billion Ready-Made Garment (RMG) industry. High on the agenda was progress under the third pillar of the Bangladesh Sustainability Compact – Responsible Business Conduct – with participants discussing ways to ensure the future sustainability of the Bangladesh RMG industry. The meeting brought together 40 stakeholders including brands and industry representatives from the RMG supply chain.

Capacity Building of Unionised Factories

BWB organised a two-day capacity building workshop for the unionised partner factories in Chittagong to help all stakeholders contribute more to the efforts to create sound industrial relations—both in factories and the garment sector. Representatives from trade unions, factory management and Department of Labour, National Coordination Committee on Workers Education (NCCWE), IndustriALL Bangladesh Council (IBC), Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) attended the workshop.

Better Work Bangladesh continues to work with industry stakeholders to engage **400** factories by 2021.

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

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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.



Better Work Bangladesh is supported by the following donor partners:

