

COUNTRY Bangladesh

LABOUR STANDARDS Freedom of Association and the right to collective bargaining, No discrimination in employment, Safe & healthy working conditions.

QUESTION How can first steps be made towards worker representation and access to remedy?

MAIN STEPS

1. Look into the high risk issues specific to the country
2. Commit to setting up access to remedy for workers, and a grievance system where workers can complain and discuss their right, at all factories in Bangladesh
3. Get the commitment of top and middle factory management
4. Ensure all workers go through WEP training, and that management also receives training
5. Ensure that anti-harassment committees are set up at every factory where there is production. Continuity: there should be meetings at least every two months. Openness: the anti-harassment committee can also discuss job dissatisfaction and ideas on how to improve working conditions.
6. Monitor the anti-harassment committee's activities and the outcome of cases presented to them
7. Get feedback from factories about the changes the programme has brought about

A ROCKY ROAD

A broad definition of harassment:

'Anti-harassment committees are required by law in Bangladesh and of course, when thinking about harassment, what is generally meant is sexual harassment. "The Anti-harassment committee is a platform that gives workers an opportunity to talk to management about issues that not only deal with sexual harassment, but also more broadly with working conditions and reasonable hours of work, among other topics.'

SIDE EFFECTS

- More involvement from the brand: 'Our vendors always share their ideas with us and ask for best solutions regarding problems they face. We seek a solution together.'
- Management is less rigid regarding discussion with workers.

FUTURE THOUGHTS

- Of course there still a need to evaluate how this fits into the overall strategy of worker involvement at factories

