Multi-actor partnership for improved due diligence implementation in the textile sector via worker- and communitybased monitoring





















Preamble

The Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector is Bangladesh's leading industry, employing around 4 million workers, most of whom are women—and contributing significantly to national GDP and export earnings. Despite its global reputation, the sector continues to face serious challenges, including weak enforcement of human rights, labour rights, and environmental standards. Ashulia, a major industrial hub of RMG, exemplifies these challenges with growing concerns around workplace safety, toxic waste, and limited trade union capacity. In this context, it is crucial for all relevant stakeholders to collaborate and address these issues comprehensively.

To support the duty bearers in complying with their due diligence obligations and protecting workers, communities, and the environment, a consortium is formed with Bangladesh-based ESDO, BILS, and BLF, Germany-based FEMNET, SÜDWIND, INKOTA -netzwerk, and HEJSupport, and Netherlands-based WageIndicator and Mondiaal FNV. Together, these consortium members have initiated the MAP (Multi-Stakeholder Partnership) approach, and have launched a joint initiative to promote decent work, strengthen trade union advocacy, and address environmental and social risks in the RMG sector. These local and international organizations are jointly working to accomplish the project goal and objectives.

Project objectives

- Local project partners, trade unions and residents of communities are empowered to use CBM or WBM approaches to demand accountability from local authorities, factories and purchasing companies.
- A multi-actor partnership (MAP) has been formed, involving local partners, trade unions, communities, and key stakeholders (business, government, academia) to address environmental damage and labor rights violations in the RMG sector.
- Dialogue structures in Germany have been strengthened and expanded with new networks. Companies and standard organizations now recognize CBM/WBM as effective best-practice models.





Worker-Based Monitoring- WBM

Worker-Based Monitoring (WBM), which uses DWC as a tool, refers to an approach to workplace compliance monitoring that actively involves workers themselves in assessing, reporting, and improving working conditions.

Decent Work Check-DWC

Concept and principles behind DWC:

- Designed to assess workplace compliance with labour standards and rights
- DWC data strengthens evidence -based social dialogue and advocacy
- Available globally, including in Bangladesh

Aim of Decent Work Check-DWC

- Promote awareness about labour rights among workers and employers
- Empower workers with knowledge about their legal entitlements
- Encourage employers to maintain fair working conditions







Factory Mapping

Steps to mapping:

- Factories from Ashulia
- Factories with 1000 Workers and Above
- Primary focus on factories with German and Dutch brands. (PST brands as well)
- Factories with an Active Trade Union presence
- Factories that had undergone audits by BSCI and Fair Wear
- Some factories with outdated Trade Unions to assess their current state
- Factories in close proximity to each other
- Clustered factories where ESDO community initiatives were taken



Data collection methodology and coverage

- Assessed labour law compliance using the Decent Work Check (DWC) survey directly with workers
- Covered 8 labour topics: Employment Security, Working Hours, Minimum Wage, Maternity and Work, Health and Safety, Social Security, Fair Treatment, and Freedom of Association
- 10 skilled enumerators and 5 local trade union leaders as volunteers conducted interviews
- Representative sample of minimum 30 workers per factory proportional representation across gender and employment status
- Surveyed 51 Ready-Made Garment (RMG) factories in Ashulia
- Interviewed a total of 1,580 workers with their consent
- Worker anonymity and confidentiality were assured

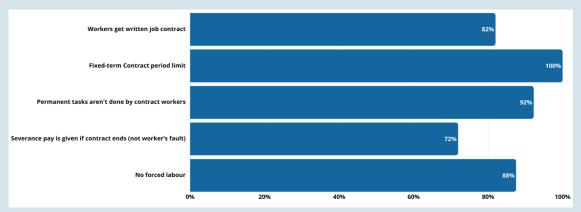


- Continuous cross-checking and coordination among partner organizations
- Active involvement of stakeholders via dialogues/ meetings, particularly trade unions
- Feedback sessions and consensus-building meetings to ensure shared understanding

Key Findings

Employment Security

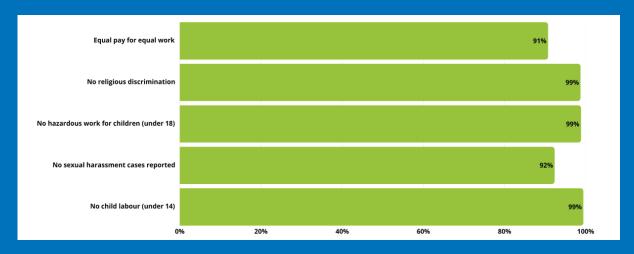
% of sub-topic in the employment security category in 51 factories



- Only 72% of employers provide severance pay upon contract termination.
- Nearly 1 in 3 workers may not receive fair financial compensation after losing their job. Indicates a gap in employment security and worker protection.

Fair treatment

% of sub-topic in fair treatment category in 51 factories

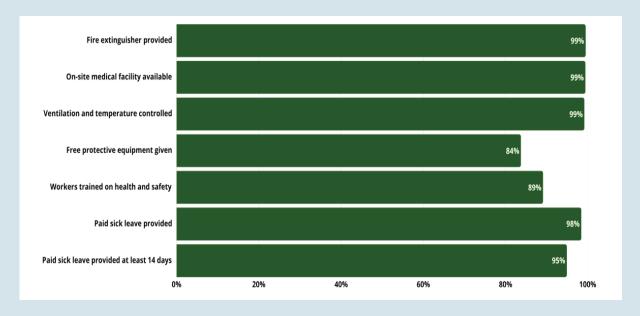


- Equal Pay Compliance is the lowest among Fair Treatment metrics at 91%.
- Points to possible inequities in compensation practices.



Health & safety

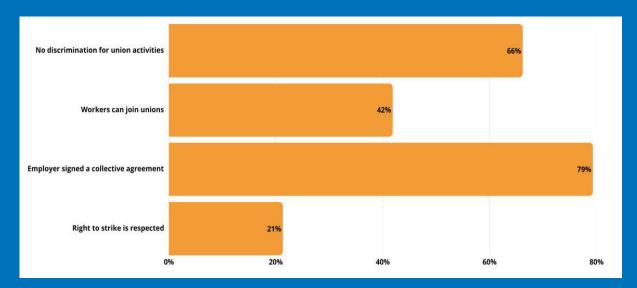
% of sub-topic in health & safety category in 51 factories



- Only 84% of employers provide free Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- PPE shortfall can lead to, Increased risk of workplace injuries, Legal and compliance issues, Lower employee morale and trust.

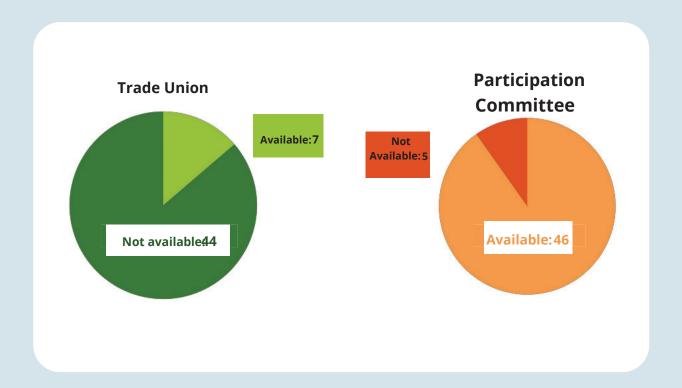
Right to organize

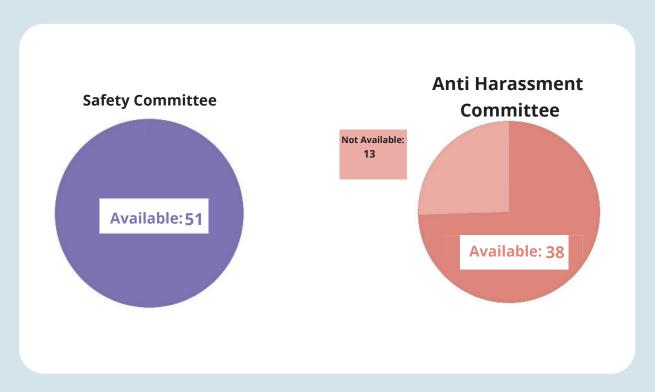
% of sub-topic in right to organize category in 51 factories



- Only 21% means 1 in 5 employers recognize the workers' legal right to strike.
- Represents a major gap in labor rights and negotiation power.
- Significantly weakens the ability of workers to collectively bargain for better conditions.

Trade Union and Other Committees in Factory Level

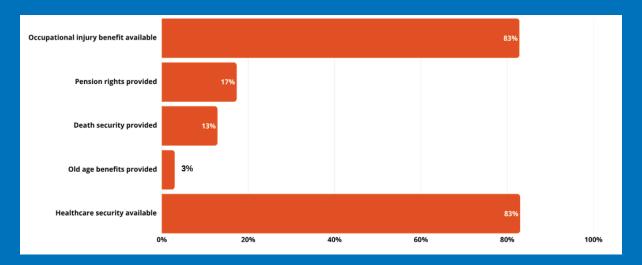






Social security

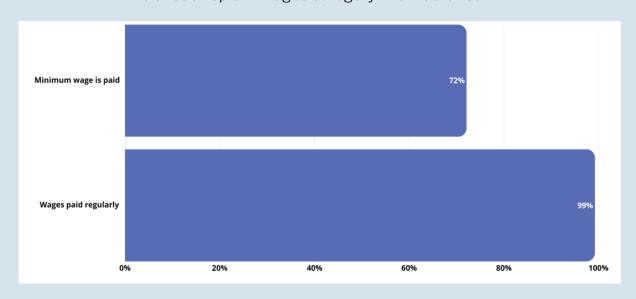
% of sub-topic in social security category in 51 factories



- Only 3% employers provide post-retirement / old age protection
- There is inadequate support for families in case of employee death 13%, exposing a significant gap in social safety nets.
- Fewer than 1 in 5 employers offer pension benefits (17%), indicating a lack of financial stability for workers after employment ends.

Wages

% of sub-topic in wages category in 51 factories

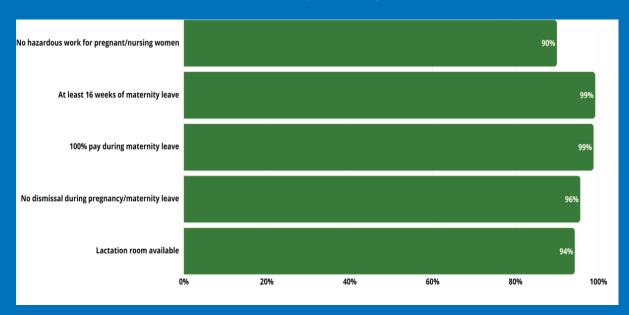


Over 28% of employers fail to pay employees the legally required minimum wage



Women rights

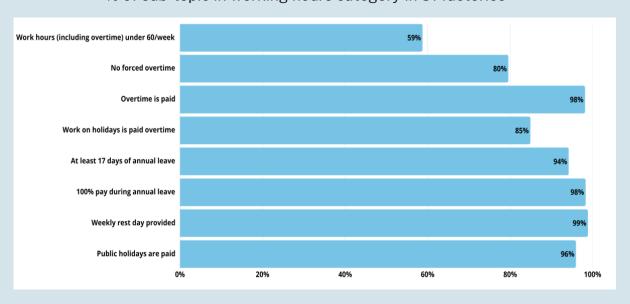
% of sub-topic in women rights category in 51 factories



 Around 10% of the employers still expose on workers in pregnancy to unsafe conditions, posing serious health risks to both mother and child.

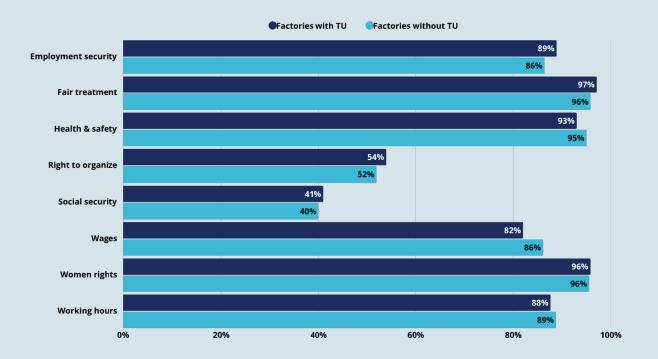
Working hours

% of sub-topic in working hours category in 51 factories



Only 59% of employers comply with the 60-hour weekly limit, meaning over 40% risk potential consequences such as worker fatigue, health issues, and work-life imbalance.

Compliance with Local Regulations (%) – TU and Non-TU Factories

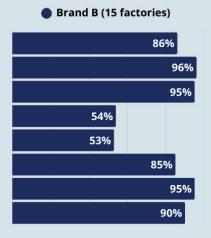


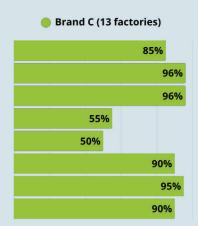
Keypoints:

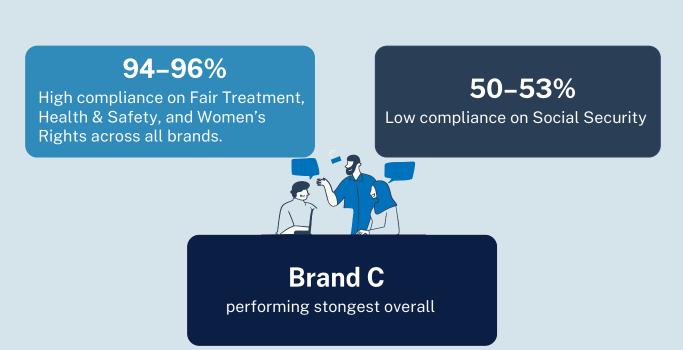
- Social security compliance is low across the board this signals a critical gap in protection for workers
- Right to organize remains fragile. Even where unions exist, freedom of association is not fully guaranteed.
- Fair treatment and women's rights are the strongest performing areas. Over 95% compliance in both TU and non-TU factories, suggesting progress on dignity and gender equity at work.
- Trade union presence enables better compliance

Worker Rights Compliance by Brand











Recommendations

- Use data gathered using the WBM approach to monitor the situation at factories and advocate for better working conditions
- Involve more factories, brands and its suppliers using this WBM approach
- Support local trade union in using DWC data to drive evidence -based social dialogue and create lasting improvements





Way Forward & Future Actions

- The data will be accessible for stakeholders, where it can be used to trigger social dialogue within a factory. We can monitor and track progress over time and see real change happen.
- The worker-based monitoring model allows trade unions and companies to engage in more equitable and productive negotiations.
- This approach encourages all parties trade unions, companies, and brands – to be transparent and accountable for improving working conditions.
- A 2nd phase of data collection will be conducted.
- Data from the 1st and 2nd phases will be compared to assess the improvement
- Factory-specific Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) will be developed and shared with the respective factories.











For DWC Data and findings related Information



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