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# Keeping an Eye on Labour Rights and Environmental Impacts: Improving Due Diligence through Rights Holders' Voices

## A Multi-Stakeholder Partnership in the Garment Sector in Bangladesh

The textile and garment sector is fraught with significant risks to human rights and environmental integrity. In Bangladesh, these issues are particularly pronounced, with widespread violations including the suppression of freedom of association, gender discrimination, harassment, low wages, inadequate social benefits, and overtime. Environmental concerns are also prevalent, especially related to wet processes that can heavily pollute water catchment areas with persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals, microplastics, and other industrial waste, posing severe health risks to residents in the vicinity of textile factories.

In this context, it is crucial for all stakeholders – including local organizations, workers, communities, trade unions (and worker's representatives), civil society organizations, authorities, ministries and especially factory management and international brands – to collaborate and address these issues comprehensively. The recently implemented German Supply Chain Act and the recently approved EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) emphasize the necessity of reliable risk analyses in textile supply chains and incorporating the perspectives of rights holders.

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## Our Approach and our Methods

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To support stakeholders in fulfilling their due diligence obligations, protecting workers, communities and the environment, a consortium of the local organizations ESDO and BILIS in Bangladesh, the German NGOs FEMNET, SÜDWIND, INKOTA-netzwerk and HEJSupport, and other international organizations has initiated this multi-stakeholder partnership. Addressing existing risks and preventing violations requires an evidence-based approach that includes the perspective of rights holders and is regularly updated. This project employs two monitoring procedures, initially focused on the Savar sub-district (Dhaka, Bangladesh), which can be scaled up:

**Worker-Based Monitoring (WBM):** This approach involves collecting data on labour rights violations directly from workers through representative surveys conducted outside factory premises by a team consisting of independent researchers and trade unions. The surveys provide reliable information on working conditions and (inter)national labour standards, enabling trade unions to use the data in bipartite negotiations with factory management to improve wages and working conditions. At the same time, this approach serves as an awareness tool to inform workers about their rights, and for trade unions to scale up organizing. This method ensures that the voices and experiences of the workers, who are the rights holders, are central to the monitoring process.

**Community-Based Monitoring (CBM):** This approach focuses on the environmental impacts of textile production on surrounding communities. By documenting and analysing negative



environmental effects with the active involvement of local residents, the project collects comprehensive data on pollution and health hazards. This data is then used to advocate for both government and corporate action, and to improve environmental regulations. The inclusion and training of community members ensures that those most affected by industrial activities have a direct role in monitoring and mitigating these impacts.

These monitoring processes will be published in a comprehensive and detailed publicly available data tool that can be used for risk analysis, complaint procedures and remedy. Through ongoing dialogue between factory management, rights holders and other key stakeholders, issues can be identified and addressed collaboratively.

Additionally, the project establishes a publicly available list of evidence-based incidents and violations from production countries, available under [www.Textile-Incidents.info](http://www.Textile-Incidents.info). This resource will help stakeholders derive further information and determine necessary actions to meet their due diligence obligations.

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## Our Goal

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The ultimate goal of this Multi-Stakeholder-Partnership is to build sustainable structures that improve working conditions in factories and reduce health and environmental hazards for local communities. A solution-oriented, regular dialogue between all relevant stakeholders at local, national, and international level will be based on the collected data. The initial results will be implemented through a joint pilot project. This pilot involves trade unions, local communities, factory management, and international brands working together to create and test effective monitoring and remediation strategies.

### Contact us:

Would you like to learn more about the project and explore cooperation opportunities?

Please contact

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## Project Partners and Support:

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*The WBM approach is built on the 'Decent Work Check' (DWC) created by [WageIndicator Foundation](#) (WageIndicator) and [Mondiaal FNV](#) (MFNV), in partnership with local trade unions in production countries. In Bangladesh, they partner with [Bangladesh Labour Foundation](#) (BLF). WageIndicator and MFNV support the project's goals with financial and technical resources.*



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