

Programme Update

January/February 2011

Welcome to this edition of Better Work's Programme Update, designed to keep you up-to-date with Better Work activities across the globe. If you would like more in-depth information on any of the topics below, contact Chandra Garber at garber@ilo.org.

Global Activities

Better Work Sharing Impact Assessment and Research

On 2 February, Better Work hosted an event at the ILO in Geneva to launch its Discussion Paper series. Professor Drusilla Brown (Associate Professor of Economics and Director of the International Relations Program at Tufts University), the lead researcher for Better Work's impact assessment team, presented findings from Better Factories Cambodia, showing the role of reputation-sensitive buyers and public disclosure in improving compliance with labour standards. She also offered insights on how factories with higher compliance were more resilient during the financial crisis. To view the full paper, please click [here](#).

A call for papers has been distributed for the first Better Work research conference, "Workers, Businesses and Government: Understanding Labour Compliance in Global Supply Chains," which will be held on 26–28 October at the IFC in Washington, D.C. The conference will look at lessons learned to date by Better Factories Cambodia and Better Work, as well as the implications of improving labour standards compliance for supplier competitiveness, worker wellbeing and broader development goals. Click [here](#) to view the call for papers, including submission requirements.

Bangladesh Feasibility Study Underway

A feasibility study is underway in Bangladesh to assess whether Better Work can develop a successful project in the country's ready-made garment industry. An independent consulting firm, Adam Smith International, in association with the local firm NUK, has been selected to carry out the study. In February 2011, ILO/IFC representatives traveled to Bangladesh to launch the feasibility study and present Better Work approaches and country-selection criteria. Preliminary findings of the study will be presented in late March and more detailed outcomes are expected by late May.



ILO/IFC delegation to Bangladesh

Country Activities

Cambodia

In January, Better Factories Cambodia released its study, "Women Working in Factories and Maternal Health—Focus on the Nutrition Component". The research, part of ILO's participation in the Joint Programme for Children, Food Security and Nutrition in Cambodia, looks at the current situation of nutrition and maternal health in garment/shoe factories. Click [here](#) to view the complete study.



Participants at the Garment Workers Open University 2011

Nearly 2,000 garment workers from 80 factories attended a special training on the Cambodian labour law as part of Better Factories Cambodia's Garment Workers Open University 2011. In addition to training on employment contracts, occupational safety and health, labour dispute and resolution, working conditions, and rights and responsibilities in the workplace, workers had the opportunity to get information about social protection issues, such as reproductive health and access to financial services. For the full story, please click [here](#).

On 21 December, 152 enterprises were awarded for their good practices in carrying out HIV/AIDS response measures in the workplace. The ceremony, organized with support from Better Factories Cambodia's Social Protection and Gender team, was attended by over 200 participants from government, employers' and workers' organizations, garment factories, and representatives of the hospitality, banking and telecommunications industries.

Haiti

Better Work Haiti organized its third training—"Become More Efficient Managers"—which was provided by IFC's Business Edge. The course reached 10 participants representing seven factories. Better Work Haiti is currently working with IFC's Business Edge to provide a 5-day training package on human resources management during the first half of 2011.

In February, a team of internal and external researchers travelled to Port-au-Prince to launch the Better Work Haiti impact assessment surveys. Using mini-computers provided to managers and workers, the team will collect baseline data on productivity, human resources systems, quality, working conditions and worker wellbeing. During the trip, the group of external researchers from Tufts also carried out case studies in five factories, focusing on innovation systems and occupational health and safety.

Indonesia

In December 2010, Better Work Indonesia recruited seven national staff, including four Enterprise Advisors, a Knowledge Management Officer and two Finance and Administrative Assistants. In addition, Better Work Indonesia is pleased to announce that Simon Field, formerly of UNDP, joined Better Work in February as Programme Manager. The newly formed team has been working closely with ILO and Better Work legal experts to adapt the Compliance Assessment Tool to the Indonesian context.

Staff from other Better Work programmes have recently been in Indonesia to provide technical support. Tareq Abu Qaoud, Technical Officer for Training and Capacity Building from Better Work Jordan, provided two weeks of training on Better Work assessment techniques. And Tuomo Poutiainen, Chief Technical Advisor for Better Factories Cambodia, joined the new Programme Manager to meet with international buyer representatives and to brief the Labour Inspectorate of the Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration on Better Work.

In late January, Better Work Indonesia, together with the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities and the International Textile, Garment & Leather Workers' Federation, organized a meeting at the ILO Jakarta office to update the garment-sector trade union federations on recent programme developments, as well to identify the capacity development needs of the trade unions.

Jordan

In early December, the Government of Jordan issued a regulation making participation in Better Work Jordan compulsory for all garment manufacturers exporting to the United States and Israel, and their subcontractors. The United States Agency for International Development has increased its grant to Better Work Jordan by an additional 2.1 million USD to fund the scale-up to industry-wide participation. Better Work Jordan is also strengthening its partnership with the government by holding a series of quarterly meetings with the Ministry of Labour's Inspection Directorate to facilitate the exchange of information and best practices.



Better Work Jordan meeting with the Ministry of Labour

In January, Better Work Jordan piloted the first module of its country-specific “Introduction to Human Resources Management” training. Over 20 participants from eight factories and the Ministry of Labour attended the session.

The Better Work Jordan team has been increasing its own capacity, welcoming three new staff members—a Finance Assistant, a Knowledge Management Officer and a Driver—over the past several months.

Lesotho

In February, Better Work Lesotho held its second Project Advisory Committee meeting. Members discussed the overall progress of the project, particularly the status of factory subscriptions, and worked on drafts for a PAC Memorandum of Understanding and guidelines for factory-level Performance Improvement Consultative Committees.

Programme stakeholders are reaching out to the industry in a collaborative effort to increase the number of registered factories. Since January 2011, Lesotho's Minister of Labour has been visiting the country's garment factories to introduce herself to factory management and workers and to promote Better Work Lesotho. The employer associations and trade unions have also been working to engage their respective constituents in the programme. Better Work Lesotho will begin assessments in March and hopes to have at least 12 factories registered by the end of the month.

Nicaragua

Better Work Nicaragua is moving steadily forward with preparations to begin service roll-out in June 2011. New country Programme Manager Elena Arengo has completed her induction in Managua and will be recruiting and training staff in the coming months. The Better Work Compliance Assessment Tool is being adapted to Nicaraguan legislation and factory registration will begin in June, with factory assessments expected to start in the second half of 2011.

Vietnam

Better Work Vietnam is currently moving into its second year of advisory services. Building on the first year of services, the second year of the service cycle puts an emphasis on supporting factories to address systematic issues. Advisors will work with factories to establish systems, including compliance and management systems, that support sustainable improvement, address more complex issues and increase utilization of training services.

Coming in March, Better Work Vietnam will release its second public synthesis report and the “Guide to Vietnamese Labor Law for the Garment Industry”, and will hold a local Buyers’ Forum to strengthen relations between the programme and local buyer representatives in the country.

In addition, to mark the World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2011, Better Work Vietnam will hold its second Safety Fun Run campaign for garment workers on April 24. The event, which will continue the theme of worker protection and prevention of injuries, is planned to draw approximately 3,000 workers from more than 20 factories. More information about opportunities to participate will be sent out in the coming weeks. To see highlights from last year’s successful event, please click [here](#).

Highlights

Documentaries about the Cambodian Garment Industry Show at International Asian Film Festival

A series of four documentary films about the Cambodian garment industry screened at the International Asian Film Festival in Vesoul, France, in February 2011. The films, produced by Better Factories Cambodia, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung and Meta House, cover a variety of perspectives, including those of factory owners, union representatives and workers, street vendors and enterprise managers. “We chose the documentaries amongst hundreds of others because of the perfect direction, original tone and giving insight within different aspects of present Cambodian lives. The audience’s feedback has been tremendous, with many people asking interesting questions and telling us they loved it,” said Mr. Bastian Meiresonne, one of the film festival organizers. Click [here](#) to view the trailer for the series.

Jobs

Better Work is continually looking for qualified professionals to work with the global and country programmes.

All available posts are listed on our web site. [See vacancies and tenders >>](#)

About Better Work

Better Work is a unique partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). It unites the expertise of the ILO in labour standards with that of the IFC in private-sector development. Better Work brings together local enterprises, international buyers, governments, and workers' and employers' organizations to improve labour standards and promote competitiveness in global supply chains. [See our brochure >>](#)

Better Work is supported by the governments of Australia, Canada, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States.



International
Labour
Office



International
Finance Corporation
World Bank Group