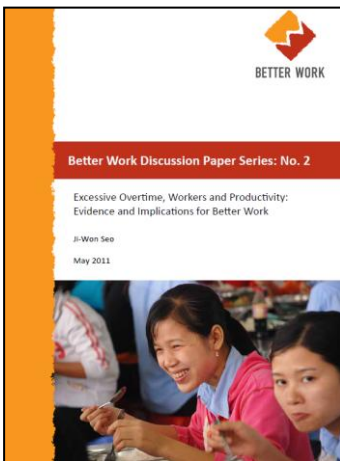


Programme Update

May/June 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

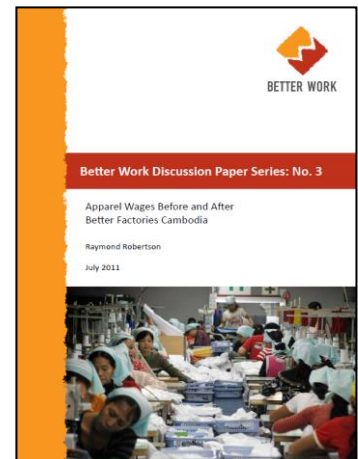


New Publications in the Better Work Discussion Paper Series Available

Better Work has released two new publications in its Discussion Paper Series, a peer-reviewed research series analyzing key aspects of labour standards compliance and competitiveness in global supply chains. In May, the programme published “Excessive Overtime, Workers and Productivity: Evidence and Implications for Better Work,” which reviews the literature on working time and its impact on workers’ health, safety and social life. Excessive overtime, which has long been a concern in the global garment industry, is regularly identified as an area of non-compliance in Better Work assessments. This paper focuses in particular on the impact that long working hours can have on productivity and factory performance. Findings show that excessive overtime can lead to reduced efficiency and higher worker turnover, among other

outcomes. To download a copy, please [click here](#).

In June, Better Work released its third Discussion Paper Series publication, “Apparel Wages Before and After Better Factories Cambodia,” which analyzes apparel wages in Cambodia before and following the establishment of Better Factories Cambodia. This paper notes that during the time Better Factories Cambodia has been in operation, apparel wages have been significantly higher than the average wage in the country (41% in 2007), and the wage gap between men and women has declined over time. To download a copy, please [click here](#).



Update on Better Work Feasibility Study in Bangladesh

Following the completion of a feasibility study regarding a Better Work programme in Bangladesh, which involved a variety of national and international stakeholders over a period of five months, the Better Work Management Group has cautiously endorsed proceeding to full programme design. The decision taken by the Management Group means that Better Work will enter a 6–9 month participatory design phase in Bangladesh. Better Work has not, at this stage, committed to proceed with implementing a programme in the country. Based on the outcome of the design phase, the Management Group will assess the opportunity for successful programme implementation against identified entry criteria and take a decision on future activities.

Country Activities

Cambodia

In response to an industry that frequently sees foreigners managing local workers, Better Factories Cambodia recently offered a new training on Managing Across Culture. The course addresses factory improvement in terms of workplace cooperation, and the goal is to enhance productivity through the better understanding of cultural differences and how they can play a role in the day-to-day work of the factory. The one-day training course involved 17 participants from 10 factories, including administration staff, compliance officers, a communications officer and supervisors.

In June, Better Factories Cambodia hosted a meeting together with Sears Holdings Corporation for supplier representatives including compliance, operations, production and personnel officers and managers from 24 garment factories. Presentations included updated information on Better Factories Cambodia's monitoring process, and training and advisory services. The meeting also underscored the importance of suppliers' active participation with the programme to ensure better working conditions and labour law compliance.

For more information on Better Factories Cambodia, please visit their web site at www.betterfactories.org.

Haiti

On 8–9 June, Better Work Haiti hosted a Buyers' Forum for participating international brands. Among the topics discussed were the challenges of assessing freedom of association in the Haitian context, as well as weak capacity in the Ministry of Labor to engage in inspection activities. Better Work Haiti staff also noted that the current service schedule, which calls for two assessments per year, can limit the amount of resources focused on remediation and training. The programme expects to secure funds soon in order to hire additional Enterprise Advisors, to help ensure that each factory receives effective advisory services to promote continuous improvement.

Indonesia

Over the last two months, Better Work Indonesia has received excellent support from brands sourcing in the country, who have helped facilitate informational meetings with over 100 suppliers. To date, 20 factories have registered to participate in Better Work Indonesia's assessment and advisory services, which will start in July.

On 28 June, Better Work Indonesia hosted its first Buyers' Forum in Jakarta. Thirty-four regional and local representatives from 19 international apparel brands participated in the one-day meeting to confirm the partnership between buyers and Better Work Indonesia, as well as discuss the roles and responsibilities of each. Peter van Rooij, Director of the ILO Indonesia Office, opened the meeting and acknowledged that buyers play an important role in the protection of workers' rights as well as in improving the productivity of factories in Indonesia. Participating buyers provided feedback on the programme, and representatives from adidas, H&M and Nike shared their experiences and lessons learned regarding current opportunities and challenges present in Indonesia.



Participants at the Better Work Indonesia Buyers' Forum.

Jordan

On 31 May, Better Work Jordan held the second in a series of quarterly meetings with the Ministry of Labor's Inspection Directorate. These meetings, a key component of the collaboration plan between Better Work

Jordan and the Ministry, provide an opportunity for the exchange of information and best practices. The May meeting covered systems and procedures for collecting and reporting data on non-compliances, as well as a session on mediating disputes between workers and management in the garment sector.

Throughout May and June, Better Work Jordan has continued to implement various training initiatives to complement its advisory services. In May, the programme completed a pilot of its Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) for Management training course, which was attended by participants from 10 factories. In addition, hazard analysis training was conducted in six factories during May. Better Work Jordan has begun to deliver OSH training for workers, a project piloted in March 2011. As of June 2011, the programme had delivered OSH training to over 350 migrant and Jordanian workers.

Better Work Jordan has begun development of a series of animated video clips to raise awareness about workers' rights and responsibilities. The first clips in this series will focus on OSH issues and will be used to train workers about their OSH responsibilities in the workplace. The animated clips provide an innovative approach to share messages with workers who may have low literacy levels. And because of the diversity of workers' languages, the animations will illustrate these issues clearly without words.

The programme has recently welcomed a Finance and Administrative Manager. The expansion of the Better Work Jordan team is part of the strategy to meet the demands of the programme's scale-up to industry-wide participation.

[Click here](#) to download a copy of the latest Better Work Jordan newsletter.

Lesotho

In May, Better Work Lesotho organized its third Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting. Agenda topics included a programme update for members, a discussion on the status of subscriptions and an introduction to the programme's advisory services. Better Work Lesotho welcomed a representative of the Lesotho National Development Corporation as a new PAC member.

In the same month, Better Work Lesotho supported the ILO Pretoria Office to implement a workshop on "Building a Modern and Effective Labour Inspection System." The workshop, for representatives of the Ministry of Labour, aimed to increase Labour Inspectors' knowledge of state-of-the-art inspection techniques. In addition, Better Work Lesotho presented its approach to continuous improvement, combining factory assessments, advisory and training services.

Nicaragua

With the selection of Enterprise Advisors, a Training Officer and an Administrative Assistant, the Better Work Nicaragua programme expects to have a complete team by the end of July. Enterprise Advisors will participate in training in August to prepare them to begin Better Work assessments in the fall. In addition, the first two clusters of the Compliance Assessment Tool have been completed and are under review.

A Buyers' Forum will take place in Managua at the end of July. Among the topics to be discussed are the preparations for the start of service delivery, and effectively engaging buyers and suppliers to make the programme a success. In addition, a representative from Nicaragua involved in the recently released study "Benchmarking the Competitiveness of Nicaragua's Apparel Industry" will present findings and discuss challenges and opportunities in the country's garment sector.



Vietnam

On 29 June, Better Work Vietnam launched its “Guide to Vietnamese Labor Law for the Garment Industry.” The handbook, prepared in consultation with the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA), aims to help workers, employers and international buyers in the apparel sector better understand their rights and obligations stipulated by the law. The guide, which is available in both English and Vietnamese, integrates all major areas of Vietnamese labour law and related government regulations into one easy-to-use handbook. To download a copy of the guide, [click here](#).



Representatives from MoLISA, ILO and Better Work Vietnam answer questions at the launch event.

The end of June also marked some changes for the Better Work Vietnam team. With the addition of new recruits, the team now has 23 Enterprise Advisors. The expanded team will provide services for the 116 factories and 30 buyers that have registered to date with Better Work Vietnam. In addition, Better Work Vietnam has moved to a new location: 149B Truong Dinh Street, Ward 9, District 3, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

[Click here](#) to download a copy of the latest Better Work Vietnam newsletter.

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 >>](#)

The Better Work global programme is supported by the following (in alphabetical order):

- Australian Government
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany (BMZ)
- International Finance Corporation (funds provided by IrishAid and The Walt Disney Company)
- Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Switzerland (SECO)
- United States Council Foundation, Inc. (funds provided by select USCIB member companies)