



Better Work, a unique partnership programme of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), brings together government, employers, workers and international buyers to improve labour standards compliance and competitiveness in global supply chains.

Better Work seeks to realize increased respect for workers' rights, better working conditions, greater opportunities for workers' voices and input into addressing problems identified at the workplace, and a place for unions in sectoral- and national-level discussions.

WORKERS' RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Better Work country programmes combine independent enterprise assessments with enterprise advisory and training services to support practical improvements through workplace cooperation. Better Work advisory and training services help workers gain a greater understanding of their rights and responsibilities using innovative techniques, such as:

- soap operas with local actors
- comic books
- tailored, classroom-based and factory-based instruction.

STRENGTHENING INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

Better Work is contributing to the development of strong industrial relations structures and processes in its country programmes in the following ways:

At the sectoral level: In each Better Work country programme, the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) brings ministries of labour and trade together with sectoral and national trade unions, industry and investor associations, to advance social dialogue in practical ways. The PAC provides an opportunity for trade unions to actively participate and advocate for changes for their members and workers across the industry.

At the factory level: A workplace committee of 8–10 individuals (with an equal number of management and worker representatives) is formed to address compliance gaps and oversee an improvement plan of action. This committee provides a way for management and workers to share responsibility and accountability for developing solutions to a wide variety of non-compliance and management issues.

International retailers and brands are active participants in Better Work, at both global and national levels. Many of these buyers sign Better Work's Buyer Principles, according to which they agree to reduce their own auditing over time, to not make sourcing decisions based on the outcome of assessment reports (per Better Work's continuous improvement process) and to engage strategically with industry at a national level to maximize the competitiveness of the country's apparel industry. Buyer engagement supports the Better Work process to improve workplace conditions and cooperation.

BETTER FACTORIES CAMBODIA: AN EXAMPLE

Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) is the flagship ILO project that led to the development of the Better Work programme. BFC helped Cambodia establish a strong reputation as an ethical sourcing country, leading to a significant increase in the size of the apparel industry as a provider of jobs and an engine for growth for the national economy. BFC has been able to impact and measure improvements in the following:

- The number of factories correctly paying minimum wages and correct overtime rates, among other pay issues, as well as paying on time.
- Respect for and enforcement of labour laws and regulations.
- Compliance with maternity leave, sick leave and other leave entitlements.
- Occupational safety and health, proper use of protective equipment and access to sanitary facilities, and emergency preparedness.
- Respect for fundamental rights including the freedom to join unions, non-discrimination against union members and other aspects of freedom of association.
- Workplace relations using joint labour/management processes.
- Improved supervisor and management conduct towards workers.
- Negotiation of collective agreements between unions and management, as well as increased capacity to address contracting procedures.
- Greater awareness of workers' rights.
- Joint training of supervisors and union representatives.
- Increased number of workers represented by unions.

WHAT UNIONS ARE SAYING ABOUT BETTER WORK

"Better Work supports the empowerment of workers in some of the poorest countries of the world. Through achieving real freedom of association the lives of workers and their families will be improved."

Sharan Burrow
General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation

"Vietnam General Confederation of Labor is very happy that the Better Work program is launched in Vietnam to be a premise of a stronger improvement for living and working standards for workers in the garment industry."

Dang Ngoc Tun
President, Vietnam General Confederation of Labor

"Our union is supportive of Better Work Jordan...It paves the way for us to have a higher reach in the factories and helps improve workers' conditions and productivity."

Fathallah Omrani
President, General Trade Union of Workers in Textile, Garment & Clothing Industries (Jordan)

"Better Work provides a real opportunity to advance the global cause of responsible competitiveness by improving conditions and rights for workers."

Patrick Itschert
General Secretary, International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation



BETTER WORK

www.betterwork.org