

Promoting Jobs, Protecting People

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Centre of excellence for Bangladeshi apparel workers - Certified training within the national skills development framework: Public-Private Partnership

The Centre of Excellence for the Bangladesh Apparel Industries (CEBAI) is a replicable model of an industry-driven training and support service that aims to meet the sector's labour force needs. The initiative seeks to increase both the employability and wages of the working poor. This initiative is a part of a global ILO-H&M partnership, which draws on the company's considerable expertise in providing training to its workers.

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Facts and figures	
Partners	Hennes & Mauritz (H&M) AB, The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)
Beneficiary Countries	Bangladesh
Timeframe	1 January 2014 - 31 December 2016
Budget	USD 1,547,276 (as per November 2013 exchange rates) with H&M's contribution amounting to approximately 50 per cent of the overall budget

Since the 1980s the ready-made garment (RMG) sector in Bangladesh has experienced exceptional growth. Today the sector is the largest generator of foreign income for the country and employs around 4.2 million people. However, most of the people who work in the industry are low-income women. In this sector, there is a high turnover of employees and an acute skills shortage at all levels. Meanwhile, 45 percent of the population of Bangladesh are underemployed or unemployed, giving rise to a large number of working poor.

The training available to workers in the garment industry is neither market-responsive nor industry-driven. There is a lack of implementation of the 'National Skills Standard' and there are gaps in both coordination and capacity to this end.

The response

The goals of the project are to:

Establish a 'Centre of Excellence' that enhances employers' engagement in training;

Increase the capacity and effectiveness of technical training centres, technical schools and colleges, NGOs and enterprises;

Increase the use of assessment and certification in RMG, linked to better documentation generally;

Improve access to training and higher wages for the working poor.

The Centre brings together key industry associations and relevant stakeholders, including brands and buyers, workers' representatives and the Government. It acts as the main agency for skills development, research and planning, to create a stronger and more efficient ready-made garment sector.

The Centre of Excellence can be seen as a sustainable, self-funded approach to training, labour market expertise and investment among a group of enterprises and training providers. The approach builds on a number of successful examples in training and inclusion of persons with disabilities, for instance.

Results

The project aims to benefit almost 5,000 women and men in Bangladesh:

3,480 new entrants will be trained and placed in operator-level positions within the industry;

60 supervisors will be trained in key leadership skills and responsibilities (including occupational safety and health, disability inclusion and

workers' rights);

800 workers will be assessed with a view to improve their wages;

10 enterprises are going to directly benefit from the project by starting 'Enterprise Based Training (EBT)' on factory premises. Three technical institutions and three NGOs will be given EBT so they can deliver competent operators in clusters.

Most of the project beneficiaries will be women, considering they make up most of the labour force within the RGM sector and there is a target of ensuring that at least 5 per cent of beneficiaries are people with disabilities.

The centre was opened in December 2014 by the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturing Exporter's Association (BGMEA) in Ashulia, a major RMG cluster area close to Dhaka. The operational costs have also been secured – mainly by the industry. In addition to this, the Bangladesh Skills for Employment and Productivity (B-SEP) Project, the International Finance Corporation, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SIDA), the ILO-IFC Better Work Programme, and the University Grant Commission have come together to fund training activities, a placement cell, a knowledge repository unit, and research activities, to provide support for apprenticeship programmes and boost industrial relations.

The Enterprise Based Training (EBT) component of the project is currently under way. So far, a total of 34 trainers and appraisers have received competency-based training and assessments. Some 60 women and men have been trained as part of the EBT and, as a result, all have been promoted to operators – where they can earn higher wages.

In-house training at the Centre of Excellence started in March 2015.

Tags: promotion of employment, working conditions, international labour standards, labour standards, public private partnerships, corporate responsibility, clothing and textile industries

Regions and countries covered: Bangladesh

Benefits of Partnering

Access to cross-sectoral knowledge on child labour issues from other companies with experience in dealing with similar challenges;

20 years of experience in technical expertise, field work, and policy advice from the ILO International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, including a members-only website as a repository of publications, communities of practice, and an events board;

Regular updates on changes to child labour legislation, including hazardous work lists sets at the country level;

Enhanced linkages with national tripartite structures and processes to eliminate child labour. Resultantly, efforts are better linked to nationally-owned policies and programmes; and as a corollary, the sustainability of such efforts is increased;

Access to annual high profile CLP conferences, ad hoc training workshops and meetings and webinars.

Tools



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Quick facts on ILO PPPs

1. Between 2008 and 2015, the ILO had 136 partnerships with the **private sector** (56%), 41 with **foundations** (16.9%), 32 with **academia** (13.2%), 23 with **other non-state actors** (9.5%), and 11 with **social partners** (4.5%), making a total of 243 partnerships.
2. In this period **most partnerships focused on promoting [employment](#) > , [social dialogue](#) > and [standards](#) > .**
3. Most of the ILO's partnerships have a **global focus**, with **Africa being the highest priority** region.

Learn more: Go to the latest ILO [public-private partnership overviews](#) > .