

AIHce 2016

→ Inner Harbor, Baltimore



Progress in Protecting Workers in Bangladesh's Garment Industry

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Support Network

Pathways to Progress

May 21-26, 2016

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Rana Plaza: April 24, 2013



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Rana Plaza



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Aftermath – Forward Motion in OHS

- **International Labor Organization**
- **Bangladesh Accord for Fire and Building Safety**
- **Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety**
- **National Tripartite Action Plan**
- **International clothing brands**
- **National factory owners and associations**

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Continuing “boom” in exports

→ July 2015 to March 2016:

- 9% increase year-over-year

→ October 2015 – January 2016:

- 14% increase year-over-year

→ December 2015:

- 16% increase year-over-year in exports to US
- 2015 calendar year total = \$26 billion

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Positive Results

→ Factory inspections completed:

- 3,768 factories altogether
- 1,552 factories by the Accord
- 677 factories by the Alliance
- 1,549 factories by BGD govt/ILO

→ Buildings closed:

- 39 closed completely
- 42 partially closed

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Positive Results

→ Hazards identified:

- 103,800 in Accord factories
- 48,500 in Alliance factories

→ Hazards corrected:

- 60% of Accord identified hazards
 - 75% of electrical – 36% of fire – 15% of structural
- 49.5% of Alliance identified hazards
- BGD govt/ILO: only 50 CAPs underway

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Positive Results

→ Factories completed all corrections:

- Accord: 7 factories
- Alliance: 24 factories

→ Factories “suspended” for non-action

- Alliance: 77 factories
- Accord: 100s of “warning letters” sent

→ Factories “terminated” for non-action

- Accord: 23 factories
- Alliance: 60 factories

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Positive Results

→ Health & Safety Committees:

- Accord: 52 unionized factories in pilot program
- Alliance: 14 factories in pilot program

→ Worker training:

- Alliance: 1.2 million initial; 420,000 refresher
- Accord: rights training; H&S Committee trng

→ Complaint hotlines:

- Alliance: 643 factories; 55,000 calls, 2,800/month

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Positive Results

→ ILO programs – govt, employer, worker

– Inspectors

- June 2013 = 92 DIFE inspectors (10% women)
- April 2016 = 284 inspectors (20% women)
- Fire Service inspectors grew from 50 to 268

– Budget allocation

- From \$900,000 to \$4.1 million (2013-2016)

– Training

- 40-day ILO course for DIFE inspectors (160 inspectors)

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Positive Results

- **ILO programs – govt, employer, worker**
 - Developing National OSH Program
 - Training programs with employers and managers
 - Training programs with unions and workers
 - “Better Work” program
 - Assessment, tech assistance, training
 - 101 garment factories supplying 18 international clothing brands
 - 196,000 workers (54% women)

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Positive Results

→ National government

- H&S committees, health clinics required
- National OHS Profile under development

→ Factory Owners

- Recognize priority for effective OHS programs

→ International brands

- Now include fire and building safety in audits

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Unprecedented Attention

- Unprecedented for Bangladesh
- Unprecedented for any garment supply chain
- Unprecedented for any global supply chain, anywhere in the world
- Key lessons:
 - Competent, public inspections
 - Mandatory hazard correction paid by brands
 - Requires meaningful worker participation

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Continuing Challenges

→ Hazard correction “way behind” schedule

- Accord’s 1,660 factories in April 2016:
 - 1,388 factories behind schedule (84%)
 - 522 factories with less than 40% corrections done
 - Only 7 factories complete and 57 “on track” (4%)
 - 186 factories with incomplete CAPs (11%)

→ Financing not available

- Brands failing to provide funds, long term orders
- Loan guarantee programs not working

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Continuing Challenges

→ Status of “terminated” factories

- Still operating in unsafe conditions
- BGD govt unable to provide oversight

→ Viability of H&S Committees

- Key to maintaining gains, expanding OHS scope
- “Democratic selection” in real-world context
- Need for training and release time
- Need for authority to act

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Obstacles to Progress

→ “Sweatshop business model”

- “Iron triangle” of sourcing trumps CSR
- “Race to bottom” in annual price cuts
 - Brand payments lower today than at Rana Plaza
- Deliberate overloading suppliers leads to “unauthorized sub-contractors”
- Uncertainty in orders to suppliers
- Unfunded CSR mandates

Obstacles to Progress

→ Failed CSR monitoring system

- Ineffective and incompetent
- Subcontracted factory inspections
- Corrupt at all levels

→ Govt inability to play critical role

- Lack of political will
- Lack of resources – human, technical and financial

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Obstacles to Progress

→ Workers not able to play key role

- Only 2-4% of factories unionized
- Employer hostility widespread
- Vulnerable workforce
- Low levels of formal education
- Lack of knowledge and experience in OHS
- Plenty of interest – but difficult circumstances

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Role for IHs and OHS Professionals

→ Sharing experience and expertise

- Government: ILO projects
- Employers: OHS center programs
- Workers: OHS Initiative for Workers and Communities
- Professional: university programs

→ Donating time and money

- Join roster of OHS Professionals

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