

Press Release

Six Bangladeshi RMG factories take the lead on eliminating workplace violence against women

Dhaka, November 22, 2018 – This year's International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, 25 November, coincides with a week in which business leaders and government officials met in Dhaka to discuss the launch of an exciting new project to empower women.

The Shobola Project, launched in September this year, will impact over 3,000 women through training that will improve their career prospects and make them aware of their legal rights. It will be rolled out from January 2019 in six Ready-Made Garment (RMG) factories, four in Dhaka and two in Chattagram.

85% of garment workers in Bangladesh are female. The vast majority of them work in the lowest industry positions and workplace violence remains a pervasive issue. The Shobola Project will provide skills, leadership and confidence training to women, boosting women workers' ability to take on supervisory roles.

In addition, communication and conflict resolution training will target factory management, traditionally men, sensitising them to issues facing women and educating them on the benefits of more equitable work environments.

Expected benefits of the project include more women in supervisory positions and a reduction in workplace discrimination, in particular sexual harassment and gender-based violence.

From a business perspective, reducing such inequalities has been shown to reduce absenteeism, increase productivity and improve overall sustainability. The positive effects could also extend far beyond the factory floor; women have been shown to invest a higher percentage of their earnings back into their families and communities. Empowering women means empowering society.

On 20 November 2018, amfori organised a meeting among business leaders, government officials and other stakeholders in Dhaka. Attendees discussed the breadth of the Shobola project and its potentially transformational impact on the lives of women and communities across Bangladesh.

Speaking at the meeting, Christian Ewert, President of amfori, said: "Gender equality can only be achieved by educating and empowering women inside and outside the workplace. It is the responsibility of government and business to ensure such progress."

The Shobola project is an initiative of amfori, the leading business association for open and sustainable trade, in partnership with CSR Centre and DBL

Group. It's part of amfori's broader Women's Empowerment Programme, which encompasses similar projects in China and India.

amfori is a global business association representing over 2,300 retailers, importers, brands and national associations with a combined turnover of 1,6 trillion euros. As such, the association hopes to use its leverage and convening power to scale up the project across the target countries.

For further information on the programme and background figures:

Visit amfori's dedicated web page on women's empowerment

<https://www.amfori.org/content/women's-empowerment>

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amfori believes in a world where all trade delivers social, environmental and economic benefits for everyone. We call this Trade with Purpose. We offer our members a practical framework and world-class tools that enable them to manage the social and environmental performance of their supply chains and anticipate trends. We also advocate for progressive policy and collaborate with impactful stakeholders to achieve common aims. www.amfori.org

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