



Women's Cafés

Capacitating Workers to Claim their Rights

More than four million people work in the Bangladesh ready-made garment sector. Around 80 per cent of these workers are women, often uneducated or semi educated. While the sector shows remarkable growth rates, the workers have yet to fully benefit from this development. To improve working conditions in the sector, it is essential that workers are empowered to raise their collective voice and demand their rights. In support of this process, a simple and yet extraordinary idea has emerged-Women's Cafés, facilitated by partner NGOs of the Promotion of Social and Environmental Standards in the Industry (PSES) project, implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Garments workers, mostly women, come to Women's Cafés to relax and talk after a hard day's work. The workers here also learn about their rights and responsibilities. While they share their problems from the workplace, the women receive information on key elements of Bangladesh's Labour Law. The training is conducted to improve workers' leadership capabilities, communication and problem solving skills. Workers also learn through “infotainment”, e.g. via the popular boardgame Ludo, customised to include questions on labour law, fire safety and gender issues. Additionally, legal advice and help on labour and family disputes are provided by visiting legal advisors. The women see it as an opportunity for a more independent, confident and dignified life, while social norms and cultural traditions are gradually being transformed.



Garment workers learn about key elements of labour law, fire safety, and gender while playing Ludo in a Women's Café in Chittagong

Every week, on an average **200** garments workers, especially women, visit one of the **19 Women's Cafés** in Dhaka and Chittagong

More than **200,000 workers** and more than **20,000 peer educator** group leaders have been made aware in the ten key elements of the labour law

More than **8,600 labour disputes** have been **amicably resolved** through intervention of trained workers and mediation of legal advisors

Sustainability of Women's Cafés: Becoming Social Enterprises

- Two day care centres have been established to provide childcare for working mothers
- Two computer centres have been established



অগ্নিকাণ্ডের কারণ

- সর্কিউরি শেটের খিঁচা ঝড়তে সংঘর্ষ কর।
- প্রাথমিক চিকিৎসার ধাপসমূহ
- জেট/স্ট্রীম কর্তীকত হাটির অফেইক্সন করতের স্ট্রেই কর।
- স্ট্রীক টায়ে অফু হাটিন কই/সুস্থো শিকারো বহা কর।
- অঝো হাটিন অফু হাটান হেজের সাজের হাটো অসগডো ব ষ্ট্রীকি ফুজের কর।

শ্রম আইনে প্রাথমিক চিকিৎসা ব্যবস্থা

- প্রতি ১০ জন শ্রমিকের ক্ষয় দিগির সমাজসেবাসে রাখতে একটি প্রাথমিক চিকিৎসার কম ব ষ্ট্রীকি বহা রাখবে।
- প্রতিটি বহু ব ষ্ট্রীকি একজন প্রাথমিক চিকিৎসার প্রশিক্ষণ প্রেরে হাটিন হাটতে থাকবে।
- প্রতিটি প্রেরে হাটিন সনল কর্ন সয়ে কনজার টাউতে রাখবে।
- প্রতিটি প্রেরে হাটিন রান নব স্ট্রেই কামের হাটো টাউতে হবে।
- সয়ে সুরত কর্ন হাট প্রত্যেক হাটতে প্রেরে হাটো রাখবে।



“With my husband and three children, I moved from Noakhali to Chittagong for work. My husband's salary wasn't enough to pay all of our expenses, so I started working in a garment factory. I worked hard and was able to contribute financially, but still it wasn't enough. After seven years in the factory, I started visiting Women's Café, where I learned about the Bangladesh Labour Law. There I learnt that I – just like every other garment worker – had the right to enjoy a minimum wage fixed by the government. I started negotiations with the factory management, and as a result my contract was terminated. After receiving legal advice through the Women's Café, I continued fighting for my job. I succeeded! The management re-hired me and I received better payment. The minimum wage was established in my factory. Being a peer group leader, I am helping other women now, fighting for change in our factory!”

Noor Nahar, Chittagong

Way Forward

To address challenges faced by workers, mainly women, the success of the Women's Cafés could be replicated in different industrial zones and sectors, such as in the leather industry. The peer educator approach allows a large group of garments workers to be reached and educated. The Women's Cafés will soon be able to financially support themselves by incorporating new services.

Are you interested in a partnership with GIZ to establish more Women's Cafés and support the workers of Bangladesh? If so, then please contact us.

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