

★ FEATURE

Factory Trainings Ramp Up

In collaboration with factory managers and Alliance staff, project team trainers are fanning out across factories in Bangladesh to teach workers how to use the Alliance Worker Helpline. Called Amader Kotha, or “our voice” in Bangla, the Helpline serves as a business intelligence tool for managers and a communication channel for workers to report safety and other concerns. It relies on the simple use of mobile phone technology.



Phulki trainer, Monjury Benerjee, introduces Amader Kotha to lead trainers in factory.

In addition to direct training of workers conducted by Phulki, 63 lead trainers and 248 peer trainers had completed a concise introduction to Amader Kotha by the end of July. In each session, the purpose of the Helpline and how to use it is described. As one approach to creating broad awareness during the pilot project, lead trainers are instructed to enlist 4 peer trainers who will in turn reach out to groups of up to 25 workers at a time to introduce Amader Kotha. This system of spreading the word in factories has proven effective with other

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AMADER KOTHA: What Does Success Look Like?

I am often asked how many calls to expect to receive from helplines, like Amader Kotha.

If there are no calls, is it right to conclude that factories are free of problems and that workers have no concerns? Or, alternatively, perhaps no calls means that workers are not familiar with or comfortable calling the helpline.

What if there are many calls? Should we conclude that factories have lots of problems? Or, alternatively, perhaps many calls mean that workers have a high level of confidence in the helpline system and the factory management welcomes expressions of concern.

It is generally understood that the number of calls received by itself is not a useful barometer of success. But it can provide insight when taken together with other indicators, such as the number of concerns raised by workers that have been resolved within a defined period of time or the satisfaction of all parties to the grievance.

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Worker receives card with Amader Kotha contact information after completing Helpline training session.

are using role play, and a highly interactive teaching style to let workers know what Amader Kotha can mean for them. 

factory-based initiatives, such as Business for Social Responsibility's HERproject. The result of this approach is that more than 90 percent of the workforce become aware of the Amader Kotha through in-factory training.

"We have been able to benefit from our own experience and to learn from the experience of the Alliance safety staff to create an approach to introducing Amader Kotha that we think will work well," said Suraiya Haque, executive director and founder of Phulki. "We

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Experience with hotlines around the globe has led me to conclude that worker trust may be the most useful metric of success. If worker trust is high, workers are likely to use the helpline when they have a safety or other concern. If trust is low, then the likelihood that they will use a helpline is also low. This is one of the reasons why we will be asking workers who call Amader Kotha what they think about their experience when they call. When it comes to helplines, the perception of workers matters.

-Doug Cahn
Clear Voice

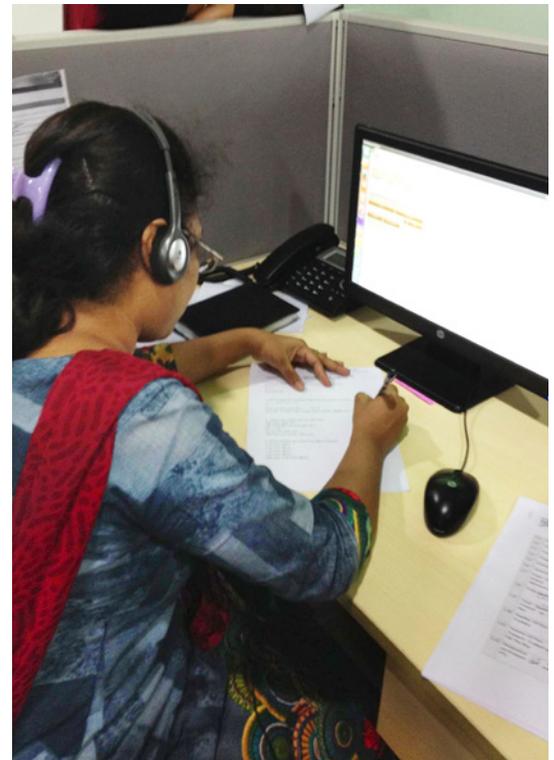
WHO ARE WE?

Amader Kotha, or "Our Voice" in Bangla, is a unique collaboration among three project partners—ClearVoice, a project of The Cahn Group that operates hotlines and builds effective grievance mechanisms in supply chains; Phulki, a respected civil society organization working to improve the lives of workers and their families in Bangladesh; and Good World Solutions (GWS), a non-profit organization whose flagship tool—Labor Link—has reached over 100,000 workers. Each partner brings years of experience building innovative, best-in-class labor compliance programs in supply chains.

MEET THE TEAM

Humayera Rahman joined the project team in June as interim project director for Bangladesh. Rahman is a highly valued senior Phulki staff member. In the short time that Rahman has been supporting the Helpline, she has added organizational focus and renewed energy to the Helpline team. As an example, the factory training schedule for August is fully booked due to renewed efforts to engage factory managers, with the close cooperation of Alliance staff.

For more information, see <http://www.bangladeshworkersafety.org/programs/worker-helpline> or contact us by email at workerhelpline@afbws.org. 



Humayera Rahman, Interim Helpline Project Director at Phulki, recording results of a call to a lead trainer to assess effectiveness of Helpline awareness training.

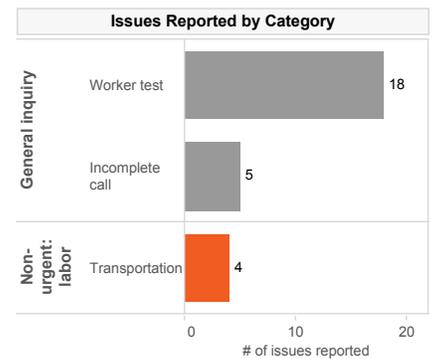
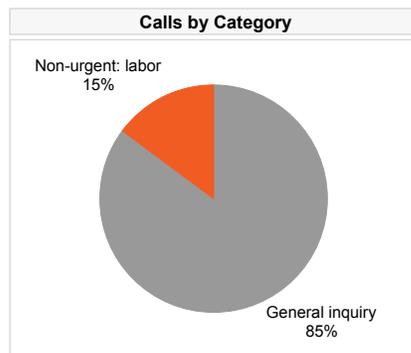
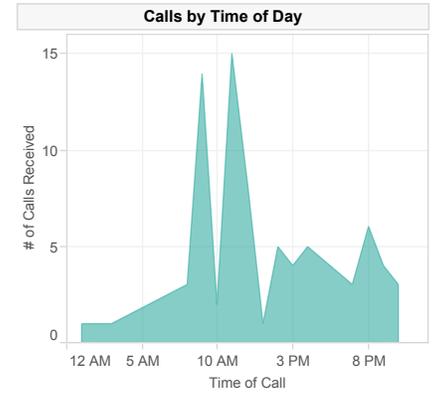
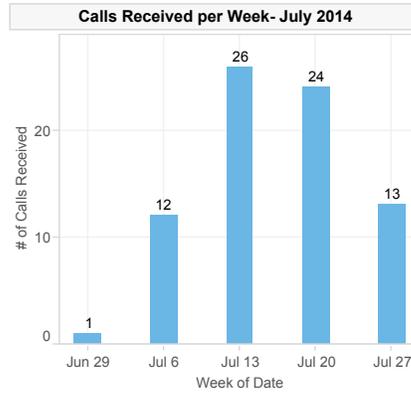


THIS MONTH'S FINDINGS

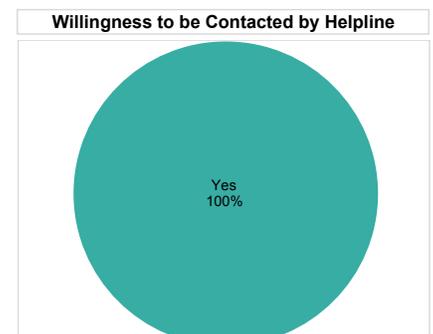
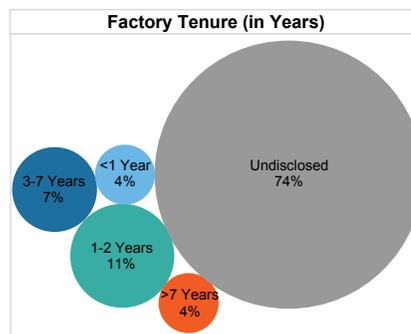
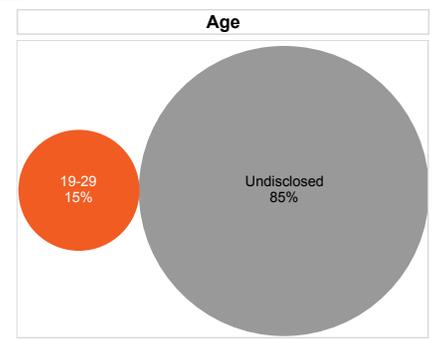
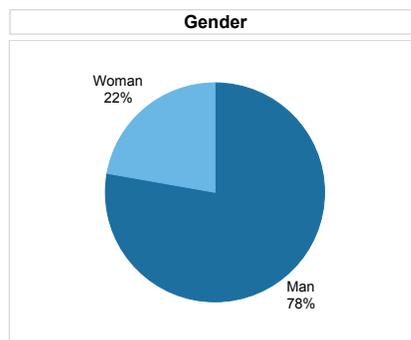
KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- Access to Amader Kotha was provided to **more than 12,000 workers** at four factories in July.
- A total of **76 calls were made** to the Helpline this month. Most calls were received during business hours.
- The majority of calls made in July were from **workers curious to test the Helpline and see how it works**. Many of these callers dialogued with Amader Kotha representatives, providing their demographic information. However, others simply hung-up after verifying that the Helpline operated as advertised during Amader Kotha training.
- Four workers called to report a **non-urgent labor issue** regarding the discontinuation of the transportation facility at their factory. Factory management was notified of the issue.
- All workers who were asked about their **willingness to be contacted by Amader Kotha** in the future answered positively. Some workers hung-up before they could be asked that question.
- The majority of Amader Kotha callers were men. **Men made up 78% of all callers** in the month of July.

Please see the adjacent visualizations for further information on Helpline usage.



Caller Profile



Progress to Date

<u>Provided Access to Helpline</u>	<u>Calls</u>	<u>Scheduled Next Month</u>
# workers: 12,347	# calls received: 76	# workers: 39,979
# factories: 4	# factories: 4	# factories: 11



TECHNOLOGY BRIEFING

After months of preparation, the Amader Kotha platform processed its first batch of worker calls in July. The platform performed to expectation, providing workers with a positive user experience—over 80% of callers rated their Helpline experience as “good”—and Amader Kotha representatives with an interface to easily capture and record callers’ information. The platform achieved nearly 100% up-time, despite several power interruptions and increased mobile operator congestion during the Eid holidays.

A LOOK AHEAD: PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Monitoring and evaluation is a critical part of the Amader Kotha, especially during pilot project period. With learning as a core project objective, the project team is testing the value and effectiveness of different programmatic approaches to building trust with managers and workers to support the Helpline.

A current three-tiered assessment framework for worker training consists of:

- Calls to randomly selected lead and peer trainers to test their knowledge about the Helpline;

All workers who phoned Amader Kotha received an automated text message (SMS) following their call. The message thanked them for contacting the Helpline and let them know an Amader Kotha representative was looking into their issue (if any). This small yet meaningful platform feature provides a first step towards “closing the loop” with callers—something necessary to build trust in Amader Kotha. Automated voice surveys will soon be integrated into the platform for this purpose as well, allowing thousands of workers to provide anonymous feedback on Amader Kotha services. 

- Calls to randomly selected general workers to test their knowledge about the Helpline; and
- After completion of the peer training, visits to the factory by Phulki staff to directly test worker knowledge and awareness.

After analysis, the results of the evaluation system will be used to guide approaches to the expansion of Amader Kotha to a larger number of factories. 