

★ THIRD QUARTER 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

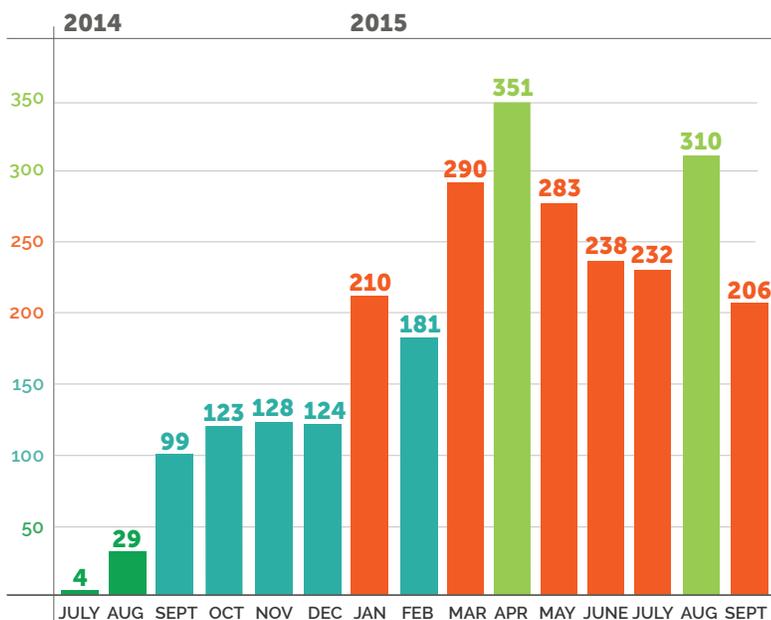
Planning, growth in project team capacity and 24/7 response to over 6,000 calls (including over 750 substantive calls), marked the key activities for the Amader Kotha Helpline in July, August and September 2015.

In addition to *Third Quarter 2015 Findings* (see pages 2 and 3), this edition's *Closer Look* focuses on the results of worker satisfaction surveys that are routinely conducted after workers call the Helpline to report concerns (see page 6). The surveys, which capture information using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology from workers' mobile phones, provide insight into how the Helpline is perceived along with areas of potential improvement.

Case Studies provide insight into the issues that workers are reporting to us and the process used to resolve them (see page 4 and 5). Information about Amader Kotha project partners is found on page 7.

Finally, let us have your thoughts and suggestions! We can be reached by email at: workerhelpline@afbws.org.

SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES REPORTED TO HELPLINE



Only issues that occurred in Alliance factories are shown.

HELPLINE HEADLINES:

Helpline accessibility to expand. In its first year of operations, the Amader Kotha Helpline was introduced to workers in more than 300 factories. By the end of July 2016, 100% of Alliance factories are expected to have access to the Helpline, beginning with an expansion this fall. The Helpline will participate in training for the Alliance Master Trainers, who will then train the factory training representatives (who will in turn train their workforce). The intended result—all workers will receive a card with the toll-free Helpline number on it together with instructions on what to expect when reporting safety or other concerns.

Refresher training planned. Experienced Helpline training teams led by Phulki will begin visiting selected factories this fall to gain further insights into perceptions of the Helpline and to remind management and workers of its benefits. As part of these factory visits, Phulki will meet with management, convene focus groups of workers and distribute an audio disc that can be played over a factory's public address system to remind workers about Amader Kotha.

Worker surveys deployed. Good World Solutions has created worker opinion surveys using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) mobile technology to capture worker insights for the benefit of the Alliance, its member companies, and related factories.

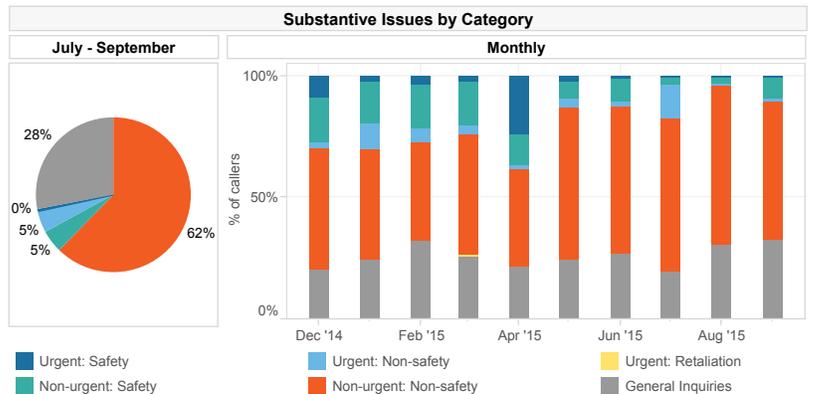
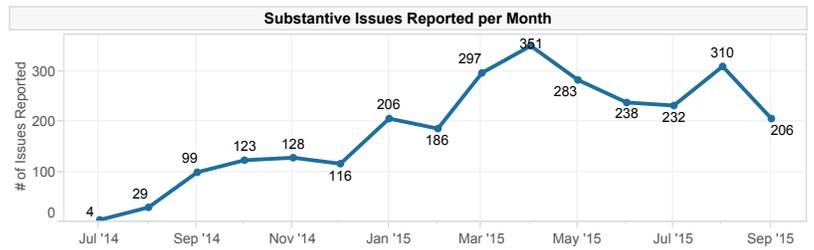
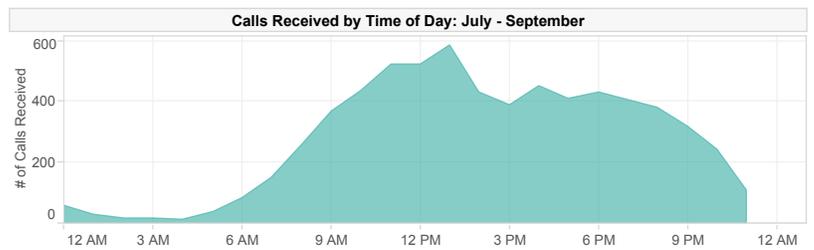
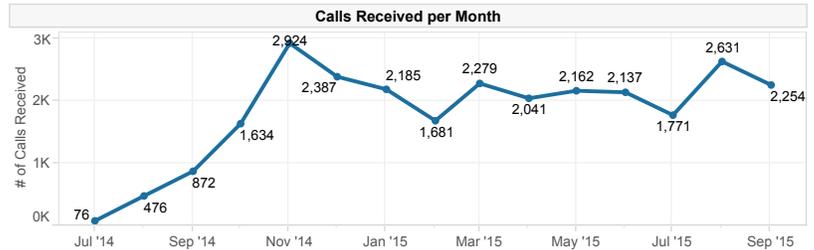
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THIRD QUARTER 2015 FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- **6,656 calls were placed to Amader Kotha this quarter from July through September, for a total of 27,510 calls received to date.**
- **Calls were often placed by workers during lunchtime hours, with a peak around 1pm of 585 calls.** This can be attributed to test calls during and just after Helpline training, as well as workers making use of their personal break to call the Helpline.
- **54 safety issues were reported to Amader Kotha this quarter, of which 5 were urgent and 49 were non-urgent.** The majority of safety issues pertained to fires that occurred outside factories. Concerned workers called the Helpline upon observing the fire, and the Helpline directed them to the local fire brigade in all cases.
- **748 substantive issues were shared with the Helpline from workers at Alliance factories this quarter.** The most commonly-reported issues were related to compensation, termination, and verbal abuse.
- **General inquiries comprised 28% of issues this quarter, disregarding missed or test calls.** The majority of these calls were Helpline inquires and factory policy inquiries.
- **94% of workers who called to report a substantive issue this quarter were comfortable sharing their name with the Helpline, but only 80% would allow their name to be shared with the factory.**



Category	Issue	# of Issues Reported
Urgent: Safety	Fire - Active (factory)	2
	Locked exit/blocked egress route	1
	Structural	1
	Unattended / bare electric wires	1
	Fire - Active (outside factory)	38
Non-urgent: Safety	Inadequate facilities/hygiene	15
	Lack of adequate drinking water	3
	Occupational safety hazards	2
	Fire - Danger (outside factory)	1
Urgent: Non-safety	Workers unrest/strike	36
	Physical abuse	6
	Bribery or corruption	2
	Freedom of Association (Threat of) retaliation for Helpline use	1
Non-urgent: Non-safety	Compensation - Benefits	263
	Compensation - Wages	178
	Termination	92
	Verbal abuse	46
	Leave	26



THIRD QUARTER 2015 FINDINGS

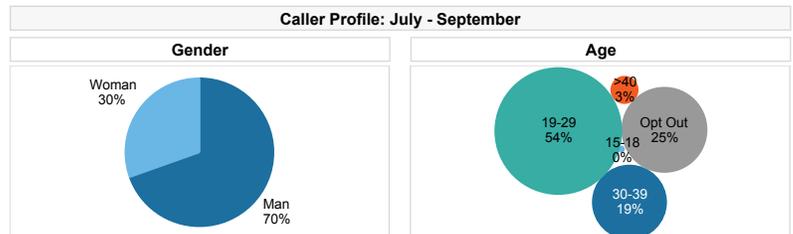
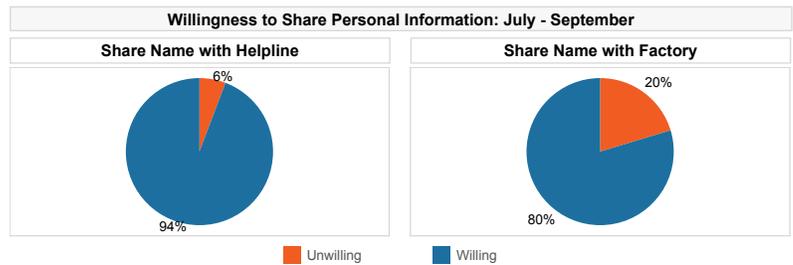
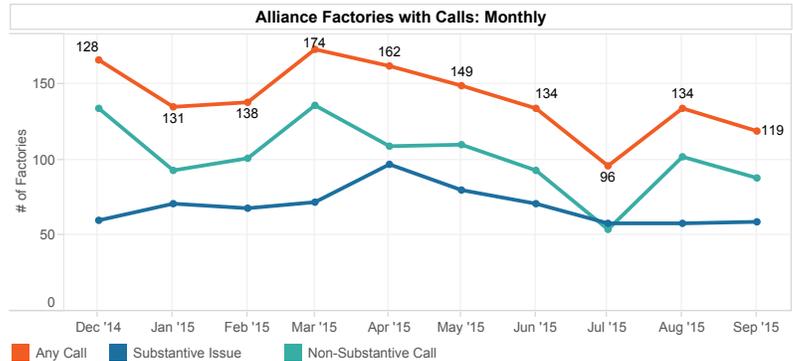
KEY FINDINGS CONTINUED:

- Of the 385 Alliance factories that have received training on the Helpline, workers from 305 factories have placed calls to the Helpline. **Workers from 203 factories called to report substantive issues.** This is based on data from December 2014 to date.
- **Workers from 89 non-Alliance factories called the Helpline this quarter.** Roughly one quarter called with general inquiries, but the majority called with substantive urgent and non-urgent concerns.
- **92% of urgent issues reported this quarter were resolved and closed by the end of September.** The few remaining unresolved urgent issues are non-safety related except one, which is on-track to be resolved by the beginning of October.

NOTES:

Detailed call data is provided to the Alliance for distribution to Alliance member companies after factories have had the opportunity to verify and respond to information provided by workers.

Total number of calls may reflect multiple calls about the same issue.



Progress to Date (from July 2014 Onward)

Total Calls	Substantive Issues	Helpline Launched Factories
# inbound: 27,510	Alliance factories: 2,808	# workers: 650,349
# outbound: 20,914	Non-Alliance factories: 290	# factories: 385

Notes:

- Graphs do not include calls from "General Inquiry", "False", or "No category" issue categories, except graphs on calls received and calls by time of day and where otherwise stated.
- Calls have been received from non-Alliance factories. For example, calls were received from 89 factories not listed as Alliance factories in Q3. These calls are included in the call volume, call time, and factories with calls graphs above, but are not included in the issue or caller profile visualizations.
- Substantive issues per month graph may not match historical newsletters due to changes in issue categorization over time.
- # of workers and # of factories where the Helpline has been launched are based on information provided by the Alliance.

Case Studies

In addition to the presentation of statistical data and analysis in *Our Voice*, we seek to highlight the impact workers who use the Amader Kotha Helpline are having on workplace conditions through case studies.

Safety issues. Safety issues are of paramount importance to Amader Kotha since the Helpline was established to respond to the concerns of workers about the risk of safety deficiencies in the ready-made-garment sector. In the case studies that follow, examples of safety-related calls received during the third quarter of 2015 are explored.

The case of no alarm during fire.

A sewing operator called to report that during a small fire earlier in the day no alarm had sounded and workers were prevented from leaving the production room. Alliance staff was immediately informed. The alarm may have been disconnected during the installation of a fire door, according to management and it was not immediately clear what the circumstances were that led to preventing workers from egress. Factory management committed to a thorough investigation. Alliance staff confirmed that the alarm system is active and working and workers are allowed to exit. The case was closed.

The case of a crack in the wall.

A worker called to report a crack on one of a factory's top levels had gone untreated,

despite concern expressed by the worker to her supervisor. Alliance staff was immediately informed. The factory was also an Accord factory and, in this case, safety experts associated with the Accord determined that the crack did not present any risk since it was not on a weight bearing wall. Management was asked to plaster over the crack. A Helpline officer informed the worker of this news. An hour later, the worker called the Helpline to report that management was repairing the crack. The case was closed.

Another case of no fire alarm during fire.

A worker called to report a fire in the packing section around 11 p.m. caused by an electrical spark from a fan. No fire or smoke alarm had sounded. Alliance staff was immediately informed. The fire was quickly extinguished but, when safety experts arrived, they determined that the alarm had been covered with cloth. A number of electrical deficiencies were also found that had led to excessive heat and, ultimately, to the fire. During an Alliance spot check that followed, the fire detection system was found functional and the case was closed.

The case of locked exits.

A knitting section worker reported that emergency exits were locked from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. Alliance staff was immediately informed. The factory management was informed

and responded by saying that there had been a shortage of security guards during this period and that two other emergency exits were available to workers. The factory agreed to retain additional security guards for the night shift so that all emergency exits could remain open. Helpline officers phoned a number of workers in the factory who all reported that the exit door was now kept unlocked. The case was closed.

Non-safety issues. Non-safety issues continue to be reported to Helpline officers, as well. In this issue, we explore reports of rude, offensive or harsh words used by managers in recent months. In these cases, Helpline officers were able to convey workers' concerns to factory management with positive results. In the case studies below, examples of reports of verbal abuse are explored.

The case of the packing department worker.

A worker called to explain that his manager was using abusive language with workers, including the caller. The information was reported to the factory's compliance manager who took the issue seriously and promised to take appropriate action. With the knowledge that his concern had been reported to management, the worker who filed the report observed the behavior of the offending manager over the next several days. The result—the manager's behavior improved and the case was closed. ▶

The case of the sewing operator.

A worker called to report that her floor manager regularly uses offensive language. Upon receiving this news, the Helpline attempted unsuccessfully to reach the factory contact person three times. With the assistance of the Alliance staff, the Helpline staff identified another factory manager who was out of the office but, upon returning, promised to look into the matter right away. When the Helpline officer called the worker back to provide an update, a family member answered the phone and said he would pass a message to call the Helpline to the sewing operator when she returned home. When the sewing operator called the Helpline officer on duty, she reported that the manager's behavior was now satisfactory and the case was closed.

The case of the cutting section worker.

A worker called to report that the manager in charge was using language that was viewed as very

disturbing and offensive. After a number of days had passed, the worker reported back to the Helpline that the behavior had not changed and the factory had closed for the Eid holiday. When the factory re-opened, the worker called once again – this time to say that the offending manager had been dismissed because of his behavior and was no longer employed at the factory. The case was closed.

Lessons learned

Workers continued to report safety and other concerns that, when communicated to management, were addressed in a timely manner.

Reports of verbal abuse were common. The experience of Amader Kotha project partners is that workers who are free from threatening or offensive language in the workplace are more likely to have open communications with management about potential safety and other problems. This in turn leads to safer and more respectful factories and that's good for everyone. 🧡

HELPLINE HEADLINES

continued from front page

Through one survey, satisfaction is gauged among those workers who use the Amader Kotha Helpline. Through another survey, the Helpline project team captures broader awareness and usage patterns of the workers. Together, these IVR surveys help all parties better understand and respond to workers' concerns. The surveys will continue through the fall.

Training for Helpline officers.

Training for Helpline officers covered critical areas of competency including basic knowledge about workplace compliance, how to accurately capture information using Helpline software, and proper procedures for protecting anonymity while still obtaining useful, actionable information. All staff participating in the training were required to pass a rigorous exam. 🧡

PROJECT TEAM VISITS FACTORY AND WOMEN'S AGENCY

At a Helpline planning meeting in Bangladesh in July, senior representatives from the project partners met with Dhaka-based staff, and paid a visit to a factory and to a government-run agency that works with women who have been victims of violence.



L-R: 1) Suraiya Haque (Phulki) and Doug Cahn (Clear Voice) visit the National Helpline Centre for Violence Against Women and Children to learn about this initiative. The Centre offers counseling and medical assistance to victims of violence. 2) Helpline officers are trained on updated reporting call handling protocols. 3) Factory worker demonstrates how her mobile phone could be used to place a call to Amader Kotha during a project team visit to a factory.



A CLOSER LOOK: IVR Survey of Worker Satisfaction with Helpline

Workers who report substantive issues to Amader Kotha are asked for feedback on their Helpline experience. This is done monthly via an interactive voice response (IVR) survey sent directly to their mobile phone. The survey is voluntary, anonymous and free to workers, and includes multiple choice, voice-recorded questions workers can answer with their telephone keypad. Survey responses are used to drive improvement to Helpline operations, as well as validate existing best practices.

The Amader Kotha team has collected 100+ "Helpline satisfaction" surveys from workers over the past three months. This represents ~ 20% of the total number of workers who have reported substantive issues to the Helpline since July. Surveys results are shared below.

WORKER SATISFACTION

Survey participants are generally pleased with the Helpline. Eight out of ten workers are satisfied with the Helpline, and nine out of ten workers will use it again and/or recommend it to other workers.

POSITIVE WORKER FEEDBACK for HELPLINE

% of Helpline Callers



*Represents those who are very or somewhat likely to recommend

DRIVERS OF WORKER SATISFACTION

Helpline satisfaction is largely driven by workers' 'user experience' with the Helpline. Eight in ten workers who express satisfaction with Amader Kotha, also say they have a high-level of comfort discussing issues with Helpline officers, appreciate the promptness of the officers' responses, and feel the Helpline is easy to use.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR HELPLINE IMPROVEMENT

Workers' perception of issue resolution and recurrence appears to be a key driver of worker dissatisfaction with

the Helpline. Among unsatisfied Helpline users (15%), ~70% claim their issue was not resolved, and ~50% claim their issue recurred. That said, those variables do not cause dissatisfaction, as only about a quarter of workers with "unresolved" issues were unsatisfied with the Helpline. More data in the future will help better clarify correlations between factors.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

All Alliance factory workers reporting safety and urgent non-safety issues said their issues were resolved and would use the Helpline again in the future.

More than a quarter (27%) of workers report that they are either hesitant or unsure about how to report issues within their factory. This suggests the Helpline is filling a gap and giving a voice to workers who may otherwise be ignored. It also suggests that factories can improve grievance handling procedures.

The gender ratio for these survey participants (80% male, 20% female) is representative of the ratio among Helpline callers (~70% male, ~30% female). However, it is important to note that this gender bias among Helpline callers does not accurately reflect the gender ratio within the workforce, which is closer to 60% female and 40% male. We are currently looking into the cause(s) of this gender disparity, with the ultimate goal of increasing female usage of the Helpline.

NEED for HELPLINE



The Helpline team will continue to disseminate this survey monthly and report results in subsequent Quarterly Newsletters. The statistical significance of these survey findings will increase as the dataset grows, as will our understanding of how to maximize the benefit of the Helpline to workers. 📍

WHO ARE WE?

Amader Kotha, or "Our Voice" in Bangla, is a unique collaboration among three project partners—Clear Voice, 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 200,000 workers. Each partner brings years of experience building innovative, best-in-class labor compliance programs in supply chains.

কিভাবে হেল্পলাইনে যোগাযোগ করবেন?

আপনার ফোনটি কল করার জন্য প্রস্তুত করুন

হেল্পলাইন নাম্বার ডায়াল করুন

আপনার কথা আমাদের জানান। আপনার পরিচয় গোপন থাকবে।

নিরাপদ কর্মপরিবেশ আপনার আমার লক্ষ্য

ফোন করুন

[hotline number]

নিরাপদ কর্মপরিবেশ আপনার আমার লক্ষ্য

(Safe working environment is our goal)

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ফোন করুন

[hotline number here]

Clear Voice Hotline Service

Phulki

Good World Solutions

Information about Amader Kotha is publicized in factories