

★ 2015 HIGHLIGHTS

At the beginning of 2015, the Amader Kotha Helpline was available to workers in 287 factories; by the end of the year that number had swelled to 535 resulting in Helpline coverage for 640,900 workers. A total of 26,723 calls were received including over 3,000 substantive calls.

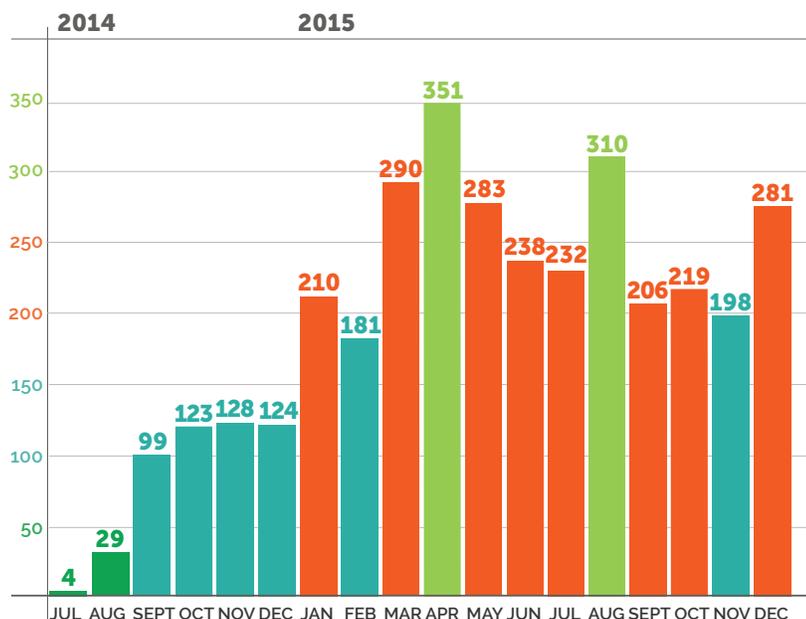
The largest single jump in calls came after the powerful Gorkha earthquake that rocked Nepal on April 25th. 83 urgent calls were received from workers in 54 factories. The Helpline contributed to identifying urgent safety concerns during this difficult and stressful time in Bangladesh.

In a major improvement in the Helpline service for workers, a toll free Amader Kotha number became available nationwide. Workers may now use their mobile phones to call the Helpline without incurring any airtime costs.

Site visits began to assess the adequacy of Helpline implementation in factories. One-on-one interviews, focus group discussions and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) surveys are being deployed and will result in better information about worker and management attitudes toward the Helpline. The assessments will continue into 2016.

As always, 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: A BUYER'S VIEW

Editor's Note: In this edition, Marcus Chung, Vice President, Social Responsibility & Vendor Compliance at The Children's Place, offers a perspective of the Amader Kotha Helpline. Factories manufacturing clothing for The Children's Place were among the first to participate when the Helpline was launched in 2014.

The Role of the Amader Kotha Helpline: A Buyer's View

by Marcus Chung

At The Children's Place, our social responsibility program centers around workers in our supply chain. One critical component of our efforts is listening to and understanding workers' concerns. As a member of the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, we fully support the Amader Kotha Helpline as one important channel for workers to share their concerns and experiences in factories.

While the Alliance is focused on structural, fire and electrical safety concerns raised through the Amader Kotha Helpline, we have seen workers begin to use the Helpline as a resource to express other critical issues. This additional worker feedback provides information about issues such as excessive overtime, delayed wage payments and unacceptable disciplinary practices. We view this information as complementary to information we obtain through our Social Responsibility program—and it is informative

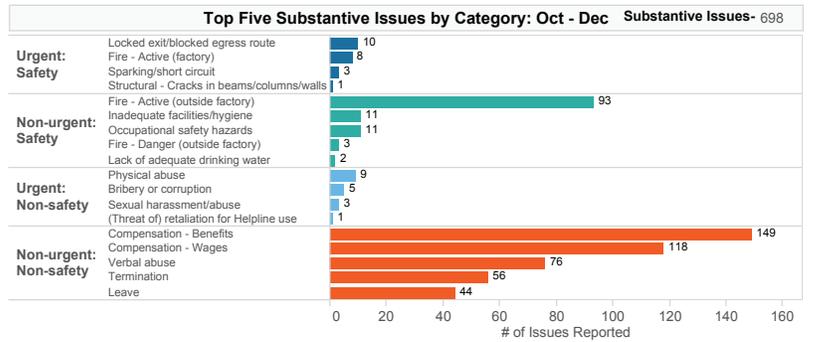
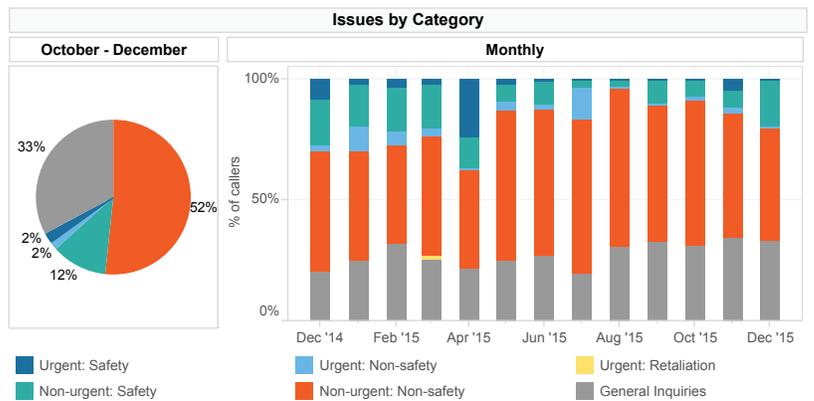
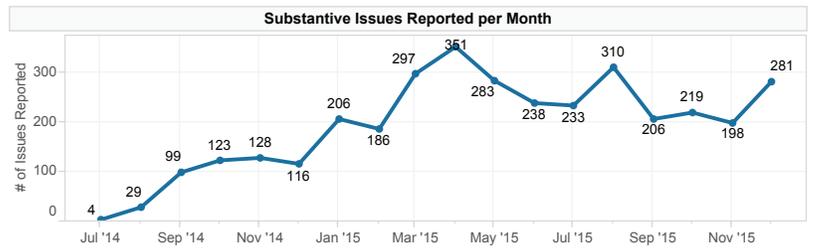
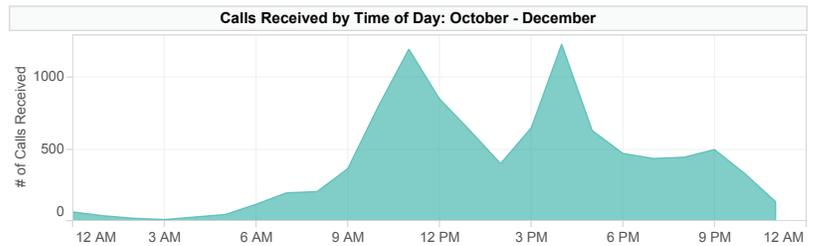
continued on page 5



FOURTH QUARTER 2015 FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- **9,767 calls were placed to Amader Kotha this quarter from October through December**, for a total of 37,277 calls received to date.
- **Peak call times this quarter were 11am and 4pm**, likely as a result of renewed Helpline trainings in November and December.
- **698 substantive issues were shared with the Helpline** from workers at Alliance factories this quarter. The most commonly-reported issues were related to compensation, non-factory fires, and verbal abuse.
- **143 safety issues were reported to Amader Kotha this quarter**, of which 22 were urgent and 121 were non-urgent. The majority (65%) of safety issues pertained to fires that occurred outside of factories. Concerned workers called the Helpline upon observing the fire, and the Helpline directed them to the local fire brigade in all cases.
- **General inquiries comprised 33% of issues this quarter**, disregarding missed or test calls. The majority of these calls pertained to factory policy and Helpline support capabilities.





FOURTH QUARTER 2015 FINDINGS

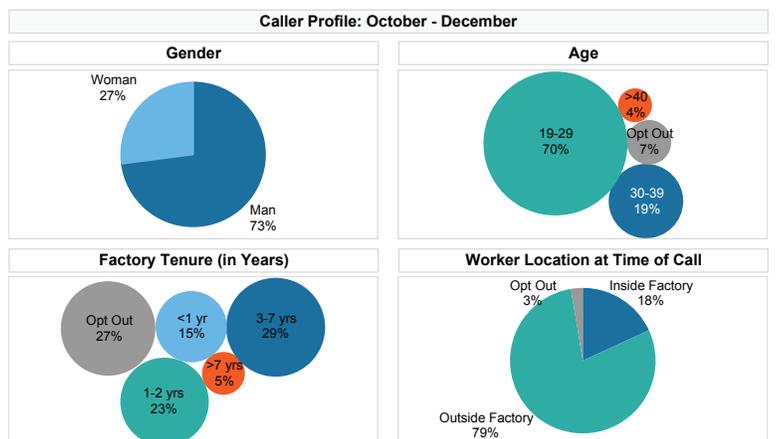
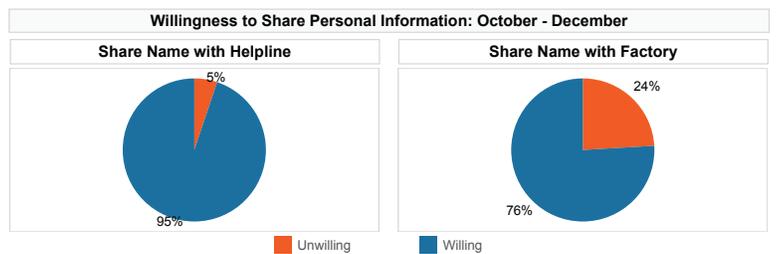
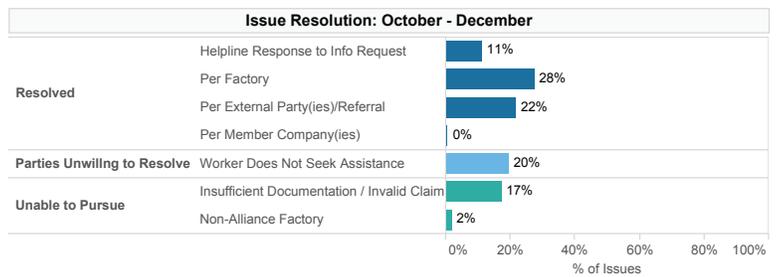
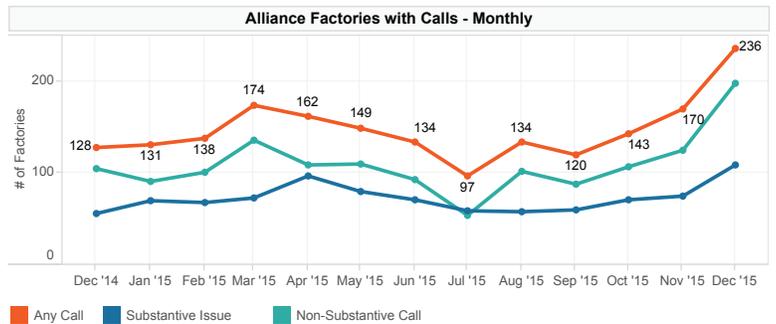
KEY FINDINGS CONTINUED:

- **61% of issues reported by workers were resolved this quarter.** 39% were unable to be resolved due to workers not seeking resolution assistance or the Helpline and/or Alliance not being able to pursue issues further.
- **95% of workers who called to report a substantive issue this quarter were comfortable sharing their name with the Helpline,** but only 76% would allow their name to be shared with the factory.
- **Of the 535 Alliance factories that have received training on the Helpline, workers from 255 factories (48%) placed calls to the Helpline between October and December 2015.** Workers from 151 of these factories (28%) reported substantive issues this quarter.
- **Workers from 107 non-Alliance factories called the Helpline this quarter.** More than one quarter of calls were general inquiries, but the majority of calls pertained to substantive urgent and non-urgent concerns.
- **All but one of the urgent issues reported this quarter were resolved and closed by the end of December.** The remaining unresolved urgent issue is pending a brand report related to an in-factory fire.

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: 37,277	Alliance factories: 3,507	# workers: 640,900
# outbound: 26,277	Non-Alliance factories: 375	# factories: 535

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 107 factories not listed as Alliance factories in Q4. These calls are included in the call volume and call time and factories with calls graphs above, but 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.

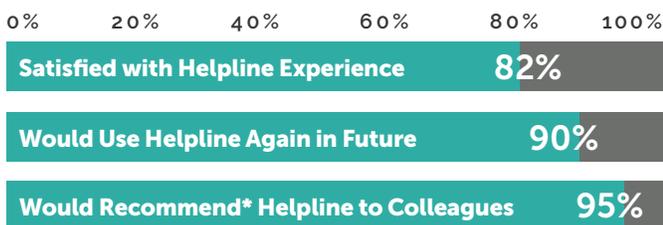
WORKER SATISFACTION with HELPLINE

As detailed in the previous quarterly newsletter, the Helpline project team conducts a monthly interactive voice response (IVR) survey to gauge the user experience of workers who call the Amader Kotha Helpline with substantive issues or inquiries. Survey responses from the past three months have been added to last quarter's findings, resulting in the following highlights:

- **255 "Helpline satisfaction" surveys have been collected from workers over the past six months**
 - This is 20% of the total number of workers who were sent the survey, representing those who called the Helpline with substantive issues or inquiries since July 2015
- **Survey respondents have an overall positive view of 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

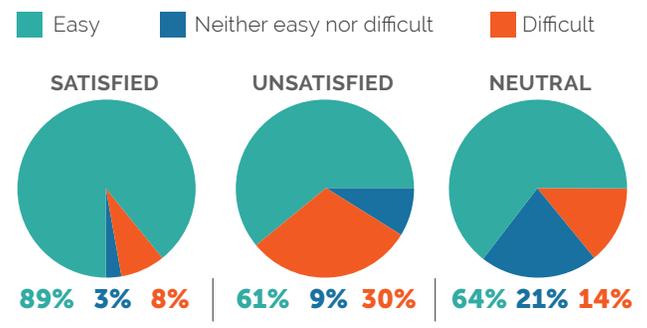
% of Helpline Callers



*Represents those who are very or somewhat likely to recommend

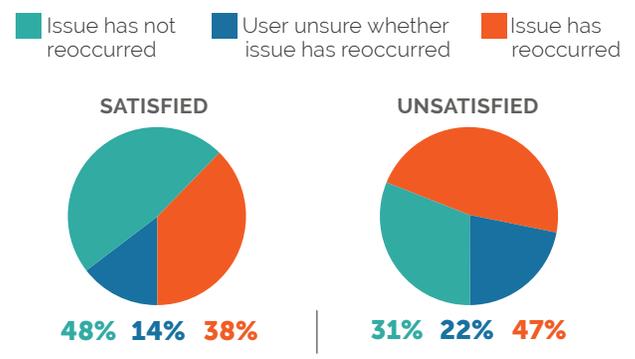
- Ease of Helpline use appears to be the strongest driver of user satisfaction. Nine out of ten satisfied users report that the Helpline is easy to use, while only six out of ten dissatisfied workers (both Unsatisfied and Neutral) say the same
- Worker satisfaction with their Helpline experience is a major driver of referral to other workers – 87% of those satisfied with their Helpline experience are "very likely" to recommend the Helpline, while only 55% of unsatisfied users say the same
 - Despite this, even those who say they are unsatisfied with their Helpline experience are likely (76%) to use the service again

Worker Satisfaction vs. Ease of Helpline Use



- **Issue resolution and reoccurrence does not appear to influence Helpline user satisfaction as much as anticipated.** This may suggest that workers understand Helpline Officers cannot guarantee issue mitigation, but still appreciate the availability of the Helpline
 - Between the two factors, issue reoccurrence seems to be a slightly stronger driver of user satisfaction; 48% of satisfied users reported that their issue had not reoccurred after their call, while only 31% of unsatisfied users reported the same

User Satisfaction vs. Issue Reoccurrence



- **The gender gap among survey respondents (84% male, 16% female) continues to be a concern.** Though Helpline callers typically have a male to female ratio of 7:3, the general factory workforce ratio is closer to the opposite: 30% male and 70% female. Efforts are being made (through trainings, etc.) to ensure that if issues need to be reported, women are just as empowered as men to report them.

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.



Information about Amader Kotha is publicized in factories

HELPLINE HEADLINES

continued from front page

for factories in addressing non-compliances with our Vendor Code of Conduct.

We have seen the Amader Kotha Helpline serve as a "real time" warning system for urgent situations. In one instance, a worker called the Helpline to report a supervisor who used unacceptable disciplinary practices. Thanks to the Helpline, this issue was addressed quickly and the factory was able to intervene with the supervisor in question. The factory was also able to use the worker's feedback to develop a broader supervisor training program in order to prevent similar situations from occurring in the future.

Not only does the Helpline provide a channel for workers to raise immediate concerns, it also helps workers understand how to raise concerns productively. The training provided by the Alliance as it introduces Amader Kotha to factories is often the first time workers are taught about constructive dialogue with management. Learning to raise concerns—and developing self-confidence to express opinions—is an important first step toward stronger worker-management relations.

The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety is viewed as an industry initiative that has made progress on the important issues of structural, fire and electrical safety in Bangladesh garment factories. With the Amader Kotha Helpline, we see the Alliance additionally as a positive force for improved industrial relations—and enhanced worker empowerment overall.

-Marcus Chung is Vice President, Social Responsibility & Vendor Compliance, The Children's Place