



# DECENT WORK FOR GARMENT WORKERS IN BANGLADESH

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## Project overview:

The readymade garment industry in Bangladesh employs 4 million people, contributing to 83% of the country's export revenue. However, workers face low wages, exploitation, restricted freedom, and poor workplace conditions, which intersect with gender inequality, gender-based violence, and workplace harassment, posing significant concerns for women's rights.

The catastrophic events at Rana Plaza in 2013, where 1,132 workers died and 2,500 were injured, and the Tazreen Fashion factory fire that claimed 112 lives, highlighted these issues. Despite government policy revisions after these events, implementation remains a challenge, with many workers unaware of their rights, perpetuating vulnerability and exploitation in the industry.

This project aims to empower women workers by advancing the decent work agenda and advocating for the ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 (C190)<sup>1</sup>. It also aims to enhance workplace conditions, ensure decent work for all, and provide skills development for people with disabilities, including survivors of Rana Plaza and Tazreen Fashion, to connect them with income opportunities.

## Key project activities and outputs:

The overall goal of the project is to strengthen the individual and collective power of women workers in the readymade garment industry by:

- Training garment workers on labour rights, policies, and workplace harassment, including specific programs for women and people with disabilities.
- Skills development and job linkage for persons with disabilities.
- Establishing and operating a workers' café<sup>2</sup> for training and rights engagement.
- Conducting studies on laws and safety, with findings shared through events and awareness raising sessions.
- Holding regular stakeholder meetings (with Government, the public and factory owners) to advocate for better working conditions and workers' rights.

## Project duration:

July 2021–June 2024

## Supported by:

Australian Aid under the Australian NGO Cooperation Program

In partnership with: Karmojibi Nari and ActionAid Bangladesh

## Location:

Dhaka, Bangladesh

## Project objectives:

- Worker leaders engage with 20 readymade garment factories to operationalise the decent work agenda, particularly on safe work environment, social security, stability and security of work and to ratify ILO C190.
- Person with disabilities working in the readymade garment sector and secure jobs

## Impact:

- 40% of selected factories are developing action plans for decent work, with initiatives including separate washrooms for women, sanitary napkins, prayer rooms, daycare facilities, and restrooms for pregnant workers.
- 1,285 workers, including women in leadership roles, receive training, empowering them to address workplace injustices.
- Readymade garment workers are advocating for ILO C190 through discussions, events and Labour Day celebrations.
- Skill development training enable 100 persons with disabilities to pursue income-generating activities, with 11 receiving seed capital support.
- Enhanced workplace conditions and active worker participation in improving rights and safety measures.