

The HERproject

The majority of workers in the garment industry in developing countries are young women – migrant workers that have moved from the countryside to work in the factories. Low wage female factory workers often suffer from anaemia, poor hygiene and other health problems, due to very low educational level. Through the education programme HERproject, they are provided with information on how to improve their situation.

HERPROJECT IMPROVES HEALTH
Business for Social Responsibility (BSR), a business membership association with 300 member companies around the world, has initiated the HERproject, a factory-based education programme targeting young women working in factories in Asia and Africa. HERproject works together with 21 multinational participants in eight countries.

The purpose of the project is to bridge the gap between female factory workers and health NGOs, and to make sure that the women receive training on topics such as hygiene, family planning, maternal health, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS and food and nutrition. The training is given by other factory workers that have been trained by local NGOs.

BUSINESS VALUE

The factory programmes are co-funded by the multinational brands and the factory owners. Overhead costs such



as capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, the development of training resources etc, are funded by Sida and the Levi Strauss Foundation.

One of the participants is the Swedish fashion retailer Lindex, which earlier this year launched the project in one of the factories that the company uses in Bangladesh. The project has improved the health of the employees and proved to have business values such as reduced absenteeism as well as turnover and higher productivity. Another Swedish company participating is H&M, through factories in Indonesia.

RESULTS

Since the HERproject was started in 2007 the programme has reached more than 200,000 female workers and more

than 25,000 males in factories around the world. An average of 80 percent of workers also report sharing the health information outside the factory walls. The methodology is being expanded to Sub-Saharan Africa, targeting industries like flower farms and vegetable farms that are also dominated by young female workers.

EXAMPLES OF HEALTH IMPACTS:

- In China, the percentage of workers who use condoms with irregular partners has increased from 61 % to 86 %
- In Pakistan and Bangladesh, familiarity with Hepatitis B has increased from 19 % to 68 %



GRI'S VISION

A sustainable global economy where organisations manage their economic, environmental, social and governance performance and impacts responsibly and report transparently.

MISSION

To make sustainability reporting standard practice by providing guidance and support to organisations.

Global Reporting Initiative

Having companies measure, manage and report their impacts on the economy, environment and society, and their governance practices, is an important step towards a sustainable global economy.

To enable companies and organisations to report their sustainability performance and impacts, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) produces a free Sustainability Reporting Framework, which includes its widely-used Reporting Guidelines. As a not-for-profit network-based organisation, GRI's mission is to make sustainability reporting standard practice.

In 2010, GRI adopted a Sustainable Development Strategy entitled 'Towards Sustainable Development: Multi-stakeholder Engagement and ESG Reporting in Developing Countries', to integrate the developing country focus into its main work agenda.

The strategy aims to strengthen companies' governance of sustainability in the countries where they operate and to increase transparency for investors and stakeholders. The core support which Sida has provided to GRI has, among other things, helped to increase the involvement of developing country actors in the continuing improvement of GRI's Framework, supported training programmes and capacity building in developing countries, and helped finance the translation of GRI's Guidelines into more languages.

SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING FRAMEWORK

GRI's Sustainability Reporting Guidelines and supporting Sector Guidance enable companies and organisations to measure and report their sustainability performance based on more than 140 economic, environmental, social and governance disclosure items. Thousands of entities of all sizes and sectors report

with the Framework. It is continuously developed in consultation with GRI's network partners and stakeholders, with the fourth generation of GRI Guidelines – G4 – being launched in the spring of 2013.

The G4 Guidelines focus specifically on making reporting more user-friendly, improving technical quality, aligning more with other reporting mechanisms, and reviewing how companies and organisations may improve reporting on their supply chains. All these elements can have a direct or indirect impact on peoples' livelihoods and poverty.

CONTACT

For queries regarding the projects or more information on the Sida programme, please contact either the relevant Swedish embassy, or the Sida team directly at www.sida.se/private-sector