

Highlighted figures

89% of garment factories in Jordan pay workers correctly for overtime.

14 out of 16 factories that have been assessed more than once by Better Work Jordan have shown measurable improvement in their overall compliance with Jordanian labour regulations and international labour standards.

Workers in **over 40%** of garment factories in Jordan are adversely affected by recruitment fees charged by third parties.

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Better Work Jordan

Newsletter

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BETTER WORK
Jordan

Stakeholders discuss future of Jordan's garment industry at Better Work Jordan's 4th International Buyers' Forum



Above (left to right): US Ambassador to Jordan, Minister of Labour, ILO Regional Director for Arab States

This April, Better Work Jordan (BWJ) hosted its Fourth Annual International Buyers' Forum, a two day event bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders to reflect on the progress made by the BWJ programme and the challenges still faced by the Jordanian garment industry. It was attended by the Jordanian Minister of Labour, the US Ambassador to Jordan and the ILO Regional Director for the Arab States in addition to representatives of the Jordanian garment workers' union, garment factories and the eight key international buyers sourcing garments from Jordan.

The two key issues raised by stakeholders were the sustainability of the Jordanian garment industry and the industry's impact on Jordan's economic development. All stakeholders expressed a clear desire to promote the sector's role in the country's economic development by increasing the number of Jordanians employed by the industry. The Jordan Garments, Accessories, & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE) emphasized the issue of the sector's sustainability and the importance of ensuring that the sector is able to compete globally, especially in light of the increase made to Jordan's minimum wage earlier this year. In February 2012, the minimum wage for Jordanians was raised by more than 25% from 150 JD (212 USD) to 190 JD (268 USD), although all migrant workers in the country were excluded from this increase. The monthly minimum wage for migrant workers in the garment industry remains at 110 JD (155 USD). Both employers and international buyers raised concerns regarding the ability of the apparel sector to absorb the recent wage increase.

Despite concerns about the competitiveness of the sector, all stakeholders expressed a strong commitment to improving working conditions in the industry. International brands remain concerned about issues related to human (continued on next page)

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(continued from page 1) trafficking, especially in the context of the large number of migrant workers in Jordan and California's new Transparency in Supply Chains Act. The brands aim to work more proactively with BWJ and all stakeholders to address migrant labour issues so the industry can continue to operate and expand in Jordan.

The International Buyers' Forum provided BWJ with a valuable opportunity to continue building on its partnerships with stakeholders and highlight stakeholder support for the Better Work programme.



Above: Participants at BWJ's Fourth International Buyers' Forum

Better Work Jordan sets out vision and strategies for 2012-2013

Better Work Jordan (BWJ) has set out a vision and key strategies for the for the last phase of the programme's first five year plan. The vision and strategies aim to build on the progress made by BWJ in two ways- firstly, by strengthening the quality and consistency of core services provided at the factory level and secondly, to further extend BWJ's impact beyond the factory level.

At the factory level, BWJ aims to provide assessment, advisory and training services to every factory involved in exporting garments from Jordan by 2014 as well as introducing a systems approach to continuous improvement in these factories. At the sectoral level, BWJ's key strategies over the coming eighteen months include facilitating a process with key stakeholders to develop a model for the apparel sector that is more stable and long-term, contributes more to the Jordanian economy and society, and provides decent work opportunities for an increasing number of Jordanian workers, particularly those most vulnerable to chronic unemployment. Over this period, BWJ will also

be developing a workers' center in least one industrial zone to improve workers' access to legal, psychosocial and educational services and improve apparel workers' well-being by providing access to recreational facilities.

According to this vision, during its first five years BWJ will have measurably improved the lives of at least 35,000 workers and many more family members by driving sector-wide, sustainable improvement in adherence to Jordan labour law and core labour standards, as well as enhancing the business competitiveness of the apparel sector in Jordan within the global supply chain. BWJ will have also identified and implemented a business model that firstly, aims to recover the operational costs of its core service delivery in order to achieve long-term financial viability and secondly, builds the capacity of constituents to play an increasingly larger role in the management and ultimately the governance of the BWJ programme.

Better Work Jordan training services enter new phase

After a year of developing and piloting five training courses customized to the needs of the Jordanian garment industry, Better Work Jordan (BWJ) is preparing to enter a new phase in the provision of its training services.

Starting in August, BWJ will be offering a regular schedule of monthly trainings. This training programme aims to enroll around forty factory employees in its training courses each month, in addition to holding short training sessions for workers on the factory floor.

These services will be provided by a specialized training team that combines extensive experience working with the Jordanian garment industry with a strong background in adult education. BWJ intends to start charging factories and international buyers



Above: Better Work Jordan Supervisory Skills Training

for its training services as of September 2012, as part of its strategy to recover the operational costs of its core service delivery.

Strengthening relationships with Burmese migrant garment workers

As part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen relationships with migrant workers from different nationalities, Better Work Jordan (BWJ) hosted a Burmese consultant specialized in labour issues this August. The consultant, Aung San Myint, conducted visits to the six garment factories in Jordan that employ Burmese workers.

There are currently around three thousand Burmese workers employed in the Jordanian garment industry, almost ninety percent of whom are young women. The Burmese worker community in Jordan is relatively new, with most of these workers having arrived in Jordan over the past six months.

Mr. Myint conducted extensive individual and groups in-

terviews with Burmese workers during his visit. His discussions with Burmese workers suggested that these workers face similar issues to other migrant worker groups in Jordan. The most widespread concern cited by Burmese workers was that of long working hours. Some workers also complained of paying recruitment fees and of differences between the contracts they signed in their home country and those given to them by factories upon their arrival in Jordan.

Mr. Myint also assisted BWJ in setting up mechanisms to establish ongoing communication with Burmese garment workers in Jordan.



Above (left and right): Aung San Myint meets with groups of Burmese garment workers in Jordanian factories

Garment workers share their aspirations for the Al-Hassan Industrial Zone workers' center

In June, Better Work Jordan (BWJ) conducted a series of ten focus groups with migrant and Jordanian garment workers, aimed at better understanding their expectations of the workers' center that BWJ is helping to establish in the Al-Hassan Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ).

The workers' center is an innovative initiative intended to provide garment workers with a safe and accessible space for recreation and targeted programming to increase the quality of their daily lives as well as their ability to care for their own well-being. The center will provide workers with low-cost or free access to recreational facilities, training, legal services, and mental health and psychosocial services. BWJ is coordinating the establishment of this center with support from USAID, the Al-Hassan QIZ Authority and several international brands.

Workers in the focus groups expressed enthusiasm about the idea of the center, with many even showing interest in supporting the center by helping to organize celebrations and recreational activities, preparing food for events and cleaning the center.

Migrant workers in the focus groups felt that the is-

sue that affects their psychological and emotional well-being most is that of homesickness and hoped the center could play a role in helping them deal with homesickness by connecting them with their home countries.

Popular suggestions for the center included providing a television to watch the latest news about their countries and a small library containing some magazines from each country. Workers also suggested the establishment of a small store selling goods from their home countries such as spices to be used in cooking and fabrics that can be used to make their traditional clothing.



Above: Garment workers at Al-Hassan Industrial Zone

Raising awareness of sexual harassment issues in Jordan's garment factories

Research conducted in numerous developing countries on sexual harassment in the export-oriented garment industry indicates that sexual harassment is faced by women workers in the industry all over the world. Tackling such harassment is a key to the ILO's mission and an important part of the Better Work programme's mandate.

To help garment factories address the issue of sexual harassment more effectively, Better Work Jordan (BWJ) will be piloting a sexual harassment training package for garment factories which will then be rolled out by the Better Work programme worldwide. This package will deliver training to senior managers, middle managers, supervisors and workers. The training will be tailored to the needs of each of these four groups and aims to ensure factory managers and employees understand the concept of sexual harassment, the adverse impact of such behavior on workers and on the enterprise and how to respond to incidences of sexual harassment. The manager training will also aim to build managers' capacity to develop robust and effective policies and procedures to prevent, identify and deal with sexual harassment in factories. The training will be complemented with an awareness-raising kit containing posters and brochures.

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Al Masera Textile
Al Tafilah Apparel Co. Ltd.
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Marks & Spencer.
New Balance.
Patagonia, Inc.
Sears Holding Corporation.
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
Li & Fung
Target
Hanesbrands
Ann Inc.

UPCOMING PUBLIC TRAINING

Better Work Jordan offers a range of targeted training programs to managers, supervisors and workers, both in the classroom and at the factory. Our trainings focus on improving compliance with labour standards, productivity and quality through building effective workplace cooperation. Our upcoming training courses are scheduled as follows:

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT

About the course:	This course helps participants understand that OSH should be an integral part of factory management. The training gives guidance on how to improve safety and health within factories to meet both national and international standards. Participants will engage in a series of practical activities that will not only benefit safety and health within the enterprise, but also offer low-cost suggestions for improving working conditions and increasing productivity.
Target participants:	Factory management, OSH committee members and trade union/worker representatives
Duration:	2 days

INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

About the course:	This course is designed to help factories overcome non-compliance in human resources and bridge the gap between BWJ standards and current practices in garment sectors. The training programme covers: Human Resources roles, workplace cooperation, compliance with national labour legislation and personnel administration. Factories are guided to create concrete action plans, and encouraged to implement them. BWJ Enterprise Advisors monitor factories' progress through regular visits.
Target participants:	Human resource managers, Human Resource Officers, Compliance Officers
Duration:	5 days

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT FOR COMPLIANCE

About the course:	This course provides participants with in-depth training on the following human resource management topics: » Conflict resolution and industrial relations » Performance appraisal » Continuous improvement » Training/capacity building of employees » Competency mapping and job descriptions » Succession planning » Compensation and benefits
Target participants:	Human resource managers, Human Resource Officers, Compliance Officers
Duration:	5 days

SUPERVISORY SKILLS TRAINING

About the course:	This course enables participants to gain valuable leadership and management skills to further enhance dialogue between the company and its employees. The content of the course will cover the following topics: » How to be a professional supervisor » Building good relationships » Influencing skills » Managing people » Videotaped practice
Target participants:	Factory supervisors and managers
Duration:	4 days, split into 2 x 2 day courses

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For more information about Better Work Jordan, visit www.betterwork.org/jordan or contact us at jordan@betterwork.org