

Newsletter

ISSUE NO. 9

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OSH Event and Award Ceremony Factory Clinic Program with Share Hope

EVENTS

The 28th April marks the International Day for Occupational Safety and Health. On the occasion of this special date, Better Work organized an event in Bldg. 48 in SONAPI on the theme:

“Sante nan faktori-Nou tout ladan”.

The program for the day was manifold including theatre performances, panel discussions and an award ceremony for all ten factories that participated in the factory clinic improvement program implemented by Share Hope since 2016.



Marie-Lyne Thomas (Team Leader, BWH) plays a pregnant woman on a factory floor in a Theatre performance presented by Better Work Team.

The Haitian social security institutions ONA (National Insurance Office) and OFATMA (Office of Labor Insurance, Sickness and Maternity) also participated in the event and made important contributions in terms of information shared about the services of their respective organizations.

A more comprehensive package of social services for factory workers would be beneficial for workers and factory managers alike. A workforce that has

sufficient social services will feel more cared about and less stressed about potential challenges related to their personal needs such as medical needs for family members (which would be covered by Ofatma's health and maternity insurance) or financial needs (which could be catered to through ONA's system of lending money to its insured).

Another important part of the event focused on the factory clinic improvement

program which Share Hope has designed and has implemented since 2016. Factory managers, nurses and workers alike applauded this successful program for improving factory clinic services and procedures as well as nurses' knowledge about treatment of and assistance to workers. Share Hope is continuing this program in 2017.



Dr Silveira Mathelier, OFATMA Social Security Director, answers participants questions on OFATMA services.



Share Hope - Factory Clinic Award Ceremony to Cleveland Manufacturing S.A



Panel discussion on Health and Safety services in the garment sector.

Worker involvement in PICC contributes to better workplaces

ADVISORY SERVICES

Judith is a young mother of baby boy who is almost one year old. Every morning she takes the bus for about 7.6km to go to work at one of the garment factories in Port-au-Prince. Her job allows her to earn a regular salary to take care of her son and other family members.

When she was younger, she was obliged to leave school just before the last grade, due to lack of financial means after the death of her mother. She started to sell Haitian street food to survive. Later, her cousin referred her to a factory where she now has been working for 7 years as a machine operator.

also some provided by Better Work Haiti on topics such as Grievance Mechanisms, Workplace Corporation and Communication and Occupational Safety and Health, Fire and First Aid. Since she has been a member of the PICC,

Judith has learned a lot of things which are useful in her work. She now feels that she can communicate better with her co-workers but also with management including discussions about issues in the factory or even complaints or requests from workers.

“When there is an issue or a complaint, workers can talk about it to us, the worker



Judith at her workstation

At the creation of the first PICC in her factory, she quickly understood the positive meaning and importance of this bipartite committee. So she became an active member of the committee. *“I was inspired by the idea of such a platform inside of the workplace which provided many opportunities to make positive changes for me and my co-workers”.* Judith has participated in trainings organized by her factory and

representatives on the PICC. We then can bring it up during a PICC meeting and discuss the issue with management and find a solution together. For example, there was a complaint from the majority of workers, especially women about the quality of the food which is sold by the factory to help workers not having to leave the work area during their break. During a PICC meeting this was then discussed with management and

they took our concern very serious and addressed and solved the problem.”

“PICC members are like managers’ eyes and ears on the floor and the result of what we do is beneficial for both workers and managers. Our PICC is a very useful institution and as long as I’m in the factory, I’m willing to be a member of it”. – Judith



Mr Mathias Beris, Plant Manager at Go Haiti S.A

FACTORIES STORIES

Go Haiti S.A. – How strong management systems contribute to high levels of compliance with labour standards.

Go Haiti is a new company which was founded in 2016. Several key management staff have many years of experience in Haiti’s apparel industry and they are familiar with Better Work’s services. They are also very knowledgeable of legal requirements with regards to international and national

core labour standards. Mathias Beris, Plant Manager at Go Haiti, says: *“Go Haiti is committed to being a company that respects legal requirements. We believe that creating a safe and compliant working environment is not an option for us but our highest priority.”*

Go Haiti currently mainly produces active wear and they offer full package service through a joint venture with a partner company. The factory employs almost 400 workers. During the annual Better Work labor compliance assessment in November 2016, the factory placed first in terms of compliance rate among all assessed garment factories in Haiti, Go Haiti had a non-compliance rate of only 3%. Only two other factories have ever reached or undercut such a low non-compliance rate since the inception of the Better Work program in 2009. Caribbean Island Apparel had a non-compliance rate of 3% in 2012 and 2015 respectively. Horizon Manufacturing has also had consistently low non-compliance levels (2012: 2%, 2013: 3%, 2014: 1%, 2015: 2%). What all of these factories have in common is strong management systems that are built into the company culture and structure. Joceline Garraud, Compliance Manager at Go Haiti, explains: "From the onset, we have set up strong systems in the company to avoid falling in non-compliance, in particular in the area of Occupational Safety and Health in which most factories have high levels of non-compliance. We have an OSH committee which includes workers and meets on a monthly basis. We also do internal OSH inspections on a weekly basis which helps to identify any existing or potential future non-compliance issues. We then discuss these issues with management and workers and come up with realistic and sustainable solutions to OSH challenges. The OSH committee is helping to communicate any relevant information to the workforce. This collaboration between management and workers has proven to be a very well-working mechanism for us."

During Better Work's assessment, the Enterprise Advisors verify a factory's management systems in the area of OSH and Human Resources. Although these questions are not compliance questions since they do not correspond to legal requirements, a total of thirteen questions are included in Better Work's

assessment tool to measure the maturity of a factory's systems. Go Haiti fulfilled all requirements with regards to those thirteen questions and has set up all necessary systems Better Work currently examines.

The factory also emphasizes the importance of regular trainings, not only for workers, but also for management staff. New workers undergo an induction training which includes a video that explains company policies and procedures to newly hired workers. Twice a year, the factory then organizes joint trainings for the entire workforce and all management staff to go through the company policies and procedures. The fact that this training is repeated, underlines the commitment to continuous learning at the heart of the company culture.

"We believe in learning and improving through regular follow up, regular meetings, regular internal inspections and verifications and through inclusion of all members of the company in the process. In our factory, 100% of our workers are making at least 350 Gourdes per day which is higher than the minimum wage for this sector. Better Work's assessment was done in November 2016. We are now working on remediation of the non-compliance issues identified during the last Better Work assessment. The goal is to be the first factory in Haiti that is found 100% in compliance by Better Work." - Joceline Garraud.

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Ms Joceline Garraud at the BWH Multistakeholders' Forum 2016

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For a fair and open-minded dialogue – The work of the Office of the Labour Ombudsman (Special Mediator) in the garment sector in Haiti

PARTNERSHIPS



Mrs Claudine Francois, Country Manager Better Work Haiti (second from left), Mrs Beatrice Ilias, Executive Director of ADIH, Mrs. Josseline Colimon Fethière Special Ombudsman, Mr Suresh Kumar, Plant Manager, Vald'or Apparel Mfg (right).

Thanks to the Mediator's intervention methods, the integration of mediation in the textile sector has become a new way of managing relations between employers and workers – a way based on harmony, cohesion and consensual dialogue. According to the spirit of the Hope / Help law, one of the main responsibilities of the Special Ombudsman for the garment sector (OMBUDSMAN) is to manage tensions and conflicts between employers and workers.

These responsibilities are specifically structured around four pillars:

- ♦ Facilitating social dialogue between employers, workers, government institutions and other partners involved in the Hope Legislation;
- ♦ Measures to protect the rights of workers ;
- ♦ The development and implementation of programs to improve working conditions in the sector and the strengthening of dialogue between the different parties
- ♦ Supporting the parties involved in the learning and application of the principles of conflict prevention through consensual dialogue

and the use of friendly dispute settlement methods.

Since her appointment on 3 April 2012, Ms Josseline Colimon FETHIÈRE, the Special Ombudsman for the garment sector, is committed to seeking and / or instilling a new climate of relations between the various actors in this sector – a climate of harmony and cohesion. With this approach, she has carried out several interventions, either to calm tensions, to defuse strikes, to manage conflicts that have already broken out or other situations. Her methods are simple, practical and rapid.

The Mediator intervenes through telephone conversations, guidance and advice, observation visits in companies, meetings at factories or at her office;

sometimes separately, sometimes in groups or in whichever way is desired by the parties concerned. From referral to conducting the mediation process, a whole set of tools is used, allowing to investigate the complaints of any party, and to conduct and report on each case. The intervention of the Mediator is simple and fast. Any employee or employer can directly solicit her intervention, either by telephone call, visit to her office, by e-mail or any other possible means. If a worker belongs to a trade union organization, the trade union is usually representing him or her. When called, the Ombudsman contacts all parties concerned to propose solutions and / or to invite them to a dialogue meeting on the issues at stake. Sometimes she



Ms Josseline Colimon FETHIÈRE, Special Ombudsman for the garment sector

also intervenes based on observations by BETTER WORK, the MAST and sometimes also other union or employer representatives.

During her five years in office (April 2012-April 2017), the Mediator has managed about three hundred interventions (more than fifty on average per year) aiming at improving relations between employers and workers. These various interventions have resulted in the establishment of improved working conditions, a better climate of dialogue in the factories, a better framework for dialogue in general, and the acknowledgement of the importance of peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms.

The Ombudsman maintains excellent relations with MAST, which is the regulating authority for work relations in the sector. In this sense, mediation meetings are often held in the presence of either the inspectors of the conciliation office or the MAST Director of Labour. These two entities are regularly informed about the activities of the Ombudsman in the prevention and management of

conflicts in factories.

The Mediator is recognized as a resource person who can help the parties resolve their differences through communication. She fulfills her role based on three orders which define the legitimacy of her role:

- ♦ Confirmation by its Presidential Decree nominating her based on the HOPE / HELP Act;
- ♦ Competence through experience and availability;
- ♦ Legitimacy due to acceptance by the parties of the relevance of her intervention before any other recourse.

With all these considerations, the interventions of the Ombudsman in the textile sector can be described as a new method of intervening and regulating, a method favoring rapprochement, the emphasis of common grounds and the redefinition of relations between the various categories of actors involved in the process.

MEET BETTER WORK HAITI



Wedzer Blaise (Driver)

Wedzer Blaise

Wedzer has worked at Better Work Haiti as a full time driver since June 2015. He has similar previous experience with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). He works closely with Better Works logistics officer to organize the transport of staff in the field and provides support to management on messaging and purchasing.

He is a hard-working person and is concerned about protection and safety of the equipment that is under his responsibility. Wedzer makes sure he has the latest UN radio security updates for travel by road. To add to his value to BWH, he aims to improve his English language skills.

Practical guide to the Haitian Labor Law in 5 languages

Better Work Haiti in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor has developed the Practical Guide to Haitian Labor Law which is a useful tool in helping employers, workers, international buyers and other stakeholders better understand the rights and responsibilities set out in Haitian labor law.

The Guide covers all major areas of Haitian labor law as covered in the Labor

Code, laws on Trade Unions and Social Insurance, governmental regulations, international labor standards that have been ratified by Haiti, and the Haitian Constitution. The guide is currently available in 4 languages: Creole, French, English, Spanish with the Korean version coming soon.

Find it under this link:

<https://goo.gl/m4tSFz>



Public reporting: Transparency Portal

Better Work promotes public reporting of compliance information. The Haiti country program has been the frontrunner among all Better Work country programs in terms of publicly reporting factory's compliance performance data.

Due to the HOPE legislation, every single factory's compliance information is regularly updated in a report that is published twice a year.

The other Better Work country programs are now equally moving to this transparent way of showing this information to the general public. However, in the other country programs, only compliance data on a list of pre-selected compliance issues will be published. This will be done through an online database.

Factories can directly post responses to non-compliance issues published

on the website. The Haiti compliance information will gradually also be made available on the online database. Eventually, it will also include compliance of union organizations with legal requirements.

Access to the portal will be possible as of mid-July 2017 under the following link: www.portal.betterwork.org/transparency



New Better Work Haiti office in the North

Better Work Haiti is setting up a new office in Cap-Haitien in the North of Haiti, with the aim of strengthening its presence and facilitating its activities in collaboration with its partners. This office will soon be in operation and will provide the same services to the participating plants of the program.

CORE DONORS TO BETTER WORK

Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Swiss State Secretariat for Economics Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

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