

A Step Towards Sustainability

# Factory-Based Resource Person as a Sustainable Approach

ETI Bangladesh

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The factory was established in 2007. The migration rate of the workers throughout the years have become a challenge for the factory as whatever skills and knowledge was disseminated to the workers, those would leave and the knowledge created by different project interventions in the factory would be obsolete.

As a sustainable approach, ETI Bangladesh developed the institutional capacity of the factory by training resource personnel's who would be rolling out trainings on gender sensitivity and gender sensitive workplace for the general workers to ensure mass awareness and knowledge dissemination to combat knowledge gap.

## Previous Context

The HR and Compliance department reported that the initial efforts of the Factory based resource person intervention, which involved training of the SHCC committee by ETI, faced challenges in promoting mass awareness among the workers. The large number of workers in the factory made it difficult for the committees to effectively educate them on gender discrimination and equality. The male workers lacked knowledge and understanding of their own gender-discriminatory and sexually harassing behaviors, and the female workers were often afraid to speak up about their experiences. This resulted in a persistent problem of frictions between male and female workers and a culture of silence, where the reporting head of the workers took advantage of the workers' unwillingness to speak up.

Despite these challenges, the ETI program team recognized the need for a systematic and institutionalized mechanism to educate the workers on gender issues. Gender equality was not part of the ongoing curriculum of the factory and the internal resources of the factory were limited in their capacity to run such learning sessions. The project-driven initiatives, while effective in the short-term, could not ensure a continuation beyond the project period. To address this issue, the program team emphasized the importance of continuous advocacy and engagement with the management to promote a gender-sensitive workplace and to build the capacity of the internal resources to sustain these efforts in the long-term.

## Intervention

In November 2021, a cohort of 10 (5 male, 5 female) workers were selected to onboarded as factory-based



resource persons. These individuals underwent a comprehensive training, including a Train-the-Trainer (ToT) and on-the-job training support as needed. These resource persons were equipped with knowledge on gender discrimination and equality and peer awareness facilitation

method through flip charts designed by ETI Bangladesh. After completing their training, the master trainers

facilitated 8 sessions, providing training to a total of 446 workers. They have further planned to continue rolling out trainings in 2023.

One of the trainers noted the initial challenges they faced in facilitating the trainings, including lack of engagement and attention from the participants. However, they leveraged the facilitation techniques taught by the ETI program team, which included the use of flip charts and interactive methods such as storytelling and asking questions. The trainer stated, *"In the beginning I was unsure and unconfident about facilitating the trainings as the participants would not engage with me or concentrate. I adopted the methods of the trainers of ETI, received added guidance over the phone and started telling stories and asking questions which helped me in facilitating the trainings effectively."*

## Impact



**Institutional Capacity:** The management of the factory has already taken a comprehensive training planning initiative by adjusting the allocation time of the resource persons and the workers who will receive such learning sessions. This shows the commitment and dedication of the management towards promoting gender equality and creating a more inclusive work environment. The adjusted allocation time for the resource persons demonstrates the importance placed on the institutional capacity of the factory to continue these learning sessions internally. By ensuring that these sessions can be planned and conducted on gender sensitivity related issues within the factory, it allows for a better balance between the demands of production and the importance

of addressing these issues. This not only gives the factory greater flexibility, but it also shows the commitment to promoting gender equality and creating a more positive and productive work environment.

**Creating a Sensitive Workplace:** HR and compliance have reported that the friction in the factory floor has lessened as the workers are now aware of their rights and have a better understanding of what kind of actions and behavior are appropriate and inappropriate. The of the factory HR reported, supervisors and line managers used to be very rude and hostile with the workers and did not think there would be any repercussion of their actions as the workers did not raise any voice. But after the workers received trainings, they know

whom to go to, to report complaints and raise their voice against inappropriate behavior. The supervisors and line managers act responsibly to ensure no complaint against them are coming.

## Challenges

**Multiple Subject Matter Learning Sessions:** The management at the factory has a strategic aim of maximizing the impact of the learning sessions by incorporating them into various projects and creating widespread awareness on important subject matters such as mental well-being. The implementation of multiple subject matter trainings presents a significant challenge to the factory management in terms of effectively coordinating the efforts of the specialized resource persons who prefer to specialize in one subject area. Despite this, the management is committed to utilizing the skills and knowledge of these resource persons to create a more informed and aware workforce and is finding creative solutions to overcome the difficulties posed by coordinating specialized resource persons and delivering comprehensive and effective learning sessions.

**Time Constraints:** The delivery of comprehensive and effective gender learning sessions on the respective chart (the sessions being a series of four flip charts) by the resource persons presents a considerable challenge. The one-hour training sessions can be difficult to ensure worker comprehension. The limited time also hampers interactive discussions and question-answer sessions, which are essential components of effective learning sessions. As a result, most of the time, resource persons have to sacrifice their lunch hour to answer any additional questions or concerns raised by the session participants. Despite the time constraints and ongoing challenges, the resource persons are continuously improving their skills and methods through facilitating the one-hour learning sessions. While the time constraints present difficulties in facilitating interactive discussions, the resource persons are persevering and adapting their methods to successfully complete the training within the given timeframe.

## Sustainability

**Work Flexibility of Resource Persons:** Factory management is giving compensation incentive to the resource persons to encourage them to continue their additional responsibility. As compensation incentive they minimize the production targets for them on the learning session days so that they do not have to work extra hours to finish their job responsibility.

**Multiple Subject Matter Learning Sessions by Resource Persons:** The management has agreed to utilize the resource persons as an added asset for any project that comes in their factory. They are now going to be utilized in the factory as knowledge ambassadors who will raise awareness on each topic of any upcoming projects. To ensure the willingness of the resource persons, the management is creating a comprehensive



learning session timeline/routine where these resource persons will be compensated by their work load for any sessions that they will be giving.

**Comprehensive Coordination Approach:** Management, HR, compliance officers, production manager, supervisors all coordinate together to ensure that the resource= persons are smoothly giving the sessions. Selecting workers, managing workers time, replacing workers who are going to receive sessions with other workers to ensure the production is not being affected, selecting the space and organizing the sessions each week has become a comprehensive coordination approach.

The HR Manager stated, *"If the management was not aware and supportive, this initiative would not be a continuous process and would be extremely hard for us to organize such an initiative for all the workers which is a big task."*

## Project Learnings

**Alternative Training Approaches & Techniques:** During the training process, the project team recognized that the resource persons were facing challenges in managing the participants effectively and ensuring their comprehension of the training content. To address these issues, the project officers provided them with alternative training methods and techniques that they can implement in case of unforeseen situations during the training sessions. These techniques include interactive learning activities, visual aids, and hands-on demonstrations, among others, which have proven to be effective in enhancing participant engagement and understanding.

**On-the-Job Training Support:** The project team also recognized the importance of providing on-the-job training support to the resource persons. This involved providing real-time guidance and support to them via phone during their learning sessions. The project team observed that those who received more on-the-job training support showed a significant improvement in their session facilitation skills compared to others.

**Impact of Management Training:** Initially, the management at the factory was wary of creating in house resources for facilitating learning sessions, as they feared that it would have a negative impact on their production. However, the project team realized that conducting advocacy meetings after the initial management training would help the management understand the incentives of the in-house resource program. The impact of management training on the factory was profound and far-reaching. It helped to overcome the initial reluctance of the management and created a more open and supportive environment for learning and development. By providing the management with the necessary tools and insights, the training program helped to lay the foundation for a culture of continuous improvement and success. The team also

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observed that after participating in the management training, the management became more open to the idea of creating trainers and realized the potential benefits that this would bring to their workforce.