



Moving the Needle: Protecting the Rights of Garment Factory Workers

A Report Commissioned by the Levi Strauss Foundation

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**LEVI STRAUSS
FOUNDATION**



ABOUT BSR

A leader in corporate responsibility since 1992, BSR works with its global network of more than 250 member companies to develop sustainable business strategies and solutions through consulting, research, and cross-sector collaboration. With six offices in Asia, Europe, and North America, BSR uses its expertise in the environment, human rights, economic development, and governance and accountability to guide global companies toward creating a just and sustainable world.

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Introduction

COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS FOR WORKER RIGHTS: A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LEVI STRAUSS FOUNDATION

We invite you to join Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) and the Levi Strauss Foundation (LSF) on a pioneering journey to “move the needle” on protecting the rights of apparel factory workers.

In 1991, Levi Strauss & Co. became the first multi-national apparel company to develop a comprehensive code of conduct to ensure that individuals making our products anywhere in the world would operate in safe and healthy working conditions and be treated with respect. The company’s support for workers’ rights continues strongly today in close collaboration with suppliers, trade unions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments, and other brands.

The Levi Strauss Foundation supports the company’s commitment to responsible sourcing by providing grants to innovative local and international NGOs to advance the rights and well-being of apparel workers in communities where our products are made. Since 1999, paying special attention to the needs of women in apparel factory settings, these grant partnerships have benefited more than 1 million workers in 16 countries.

This grant initiative seeks to influence both business practice and the underlying social system in local communities by:

- Educating workers and factory management on labor rights and responsibilities;
- Enhancing worker-management communication and factory-level dispute resolution mechanisms;
- Improving the health of workers;
- Providing asset building opportunities for workers; and
- Supporting legal aid and arbitration channels to build local capacity to enforce labor laws.

In the course of building this grant program, we have learned:

- NGOs are invaluable local partners in meeting the critical needs of apparel workers—both at the factory and community levels. Building the capacity of this sector to deliver at greater scale and impact is an important priority.
- An informed workforce of workers and managers, aware of labor rights and responsibilities, is a crucial lynchpin to a “new generation” of social sustainability practices that are owned and managed at the factory level. As such, it is a top priority of this grant program.

- For reasons outlined in this report, collaboration between brands, NGOs, and contractors on the factory floor remains incredibly challenging. Cultivating track records of trust and mutual benefit in this space requires time and sustained commitment.
- If our goal is greater scale and sustainability, it is simply not enough to support factory-level training programs because “it is the right thing to do.” It is essential to take a rigorous and honest look at how the success of these programs is uniquely defined among workers, trainers, supervisors, factory owners, and buyers.

In August 2009, the Levi Strauss Foundation and BSR brought together key stakeholders in a roundtable discussion on factory-level partnerships to advance the rights of apparel workers. These included six grantees—from China, Egypt, Peru, Turkey, and Vietnam—that have carried out rights and responsibilities trainings for workers and managers but largely in isolation from one another. This roundtable represents an opportune moment to examine the challenges to replicating and scaling this work, collect and share best practices and learning, and develop measures of success and impact.

We hope you find this report as illuminating as participants found the dialogue robust and stimulating—and that this publication may serve as an “entry point” for concrete and productive collaboration among brands, suppliers, NGOs, and funders. We look forward to working together to develop the next generation of sustainable supply chain practices and advancing the rights of workers.

Sincerely,



Daniel Jae-Won Lee
Executive Director, Levi Strauss Foundation

WORKERS' RIGHTS ON THE LINE: A LETTER FROM BSR

A leader in corporate responsibility since 1992, BSR works with its global network of more than 250 member companies to develop sustainable business strategies and solutions through consulting, research, and cross-sector collaboration. A key tenet of our work within the apparel industry is around improving the lives and the surrounding environment of workers in global supply chains—many of whom are vulnerable young women.

Over the years, we have seen our member companies evolve from creating codes of conduct and monitoring their supply chains to recognizing the need to move beyond monitoring to really understand and address the root causes of poor working conditions. Many of our member companies have shifted from monitoring to capacity-building, including investments in trainings at the factory level that provide workers with a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

Despite these investments, however, there remains a lack of decent jobs within the apparel industry. It is not uncommon for young women—often the first in their families to take jobs in the formal sector—to migrate from rural to urban factory environments, only to be subjected to

unsafe working conditions, excessive overtime, discrimination, and harassment. And although more and more brands are collaborating to monitor working conditions within shared factories, there is little to no coordination when it comes to their training efforts to improve workers' rights and responsibilities.

Against this backdrop, the global recession has hit the apparel sector hard. As consumer demand has declined, millions of people have lost their jobs, and some garment workers have fallen into the informal economy. Never has the need been so great for apparel brands, their suppliers, and NGO partners to collaborate on strengthening worker rights.

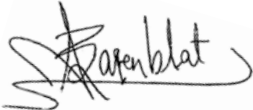
At this time of urgent need, BSR is honored to partner with the Levi Strauss Foundation (LSF) to bring together LSF's most innovative and thoughtful grantees from around the world and identify concrete ways to advance the rights and well-being of workers.

This report includes some of the best thinking on and real-life examples of how brands can further workers' rights and responsibilities in difficult factory environments. Specifically, this report aims to:

- Highlight current innovations in workers' rights and responsibilities programs;
- Outline concrete ways to measure the business case and program impact; and
- Provide actionable advice on scaling efforts through brand collaboration and additional partnerships.

It is my hope that this report serves as a call to action for our member companies to join together and move the needle forward in protecting the rights and well-being of workers in supply chains around the world.

Sincerely,



Ayesha Barenblat
Director, Advisory Services, BSR

LEVI STRAUSS FOUNDATION'S MISSION

To advance the human rights and well-being of underserved people where Levi Strauss & Co. (LS&Co.) has a business presence by taking courageous risks, supporting innovative community partnerships, and promoting the practice of good corporate citizenship.

BACKGROUND

Since 1999, the Levi Strauss Foundation (LSF) has directed US\$8 million toward workers' rights programs in 16 countries. These grants have funded the efforts of 25 grantee organizations that have altogether benefited more than 1 million people across the world. In an effort to drive systematic, community-level change, LSF programs not only target workers at LS&Co. factories, but also a wider group—workers at other factories and those in the broader community. LSF



programs educate factory workers and management about workers' rights and responsibilities to ensure that workers have the opportunity and resources to become aware of their rights, understand health issues, and develop both life and professional skills.

There are major global efforts underway that play a critical role in promoting the systemic changes needed to protect workers' rights: many government organizations work on policy change; several brands drive capacity building programs; and a diverse set of NGOs run unionization and media campaigns. Within this broader context of workers' rights activity, LSF and its grantees are running programs with a unique contribution to the field: **driving multi-stakeholder solutions that promote holistic, sustainable solutions on the factory floor, an approach which begins with the insight that the realization of workers' rights must happen in the workplace.** LSF grantees are developing innovative on-the-ground approaches to workers' rights and responsibilities that forge partnerships and open channels for dialogue among policy-makers, NGOs, brands, and factory managers, ultimately allowing workers' voices to be heard in factories and communities (where LS&Co. has a presence) worldwide.

LSF program strategies and grantee organization activities aim to:

- Train workers and managers about **labor rights and responsibilities.** Topics may include labor law, compensation calculation, discrimination, and harassment.
- Promote **professional development and workplace cooperation** through trainings on job skills (such as supervisory and communication skills), dispute resolution, and strike aversion.
- Promote **health** of workers by providing trainings and access to resources. Topics may include basic hygiene, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, child care, and occupational health and safety.
- Provide opportunities to develop **asset building and life skills** through financial literacy, income management education, and access to financial services (including micro-credit).
- Support policy change, legal aid, and multi-stakeholder initiatives to advance labor standards and oversight.

THE CHALLENGES

Although training workers about their rights and responsibilities is a program priority, both LSF and its grantees face significant challenges—within and outside the factory walls, including:

- Limited track record of successful multi-stakeholder collaboration in apparel industry, especially at factory level
- Deep, historical distrust between NGOs and contractors
- Freedom of association challenges in different countries
- Limited capacity of labor NGOs
 - Restricted funding to sector
 - Training capability
 - Administrative and project management issues
- Monitoring and effective evaluation of programs
- Building sustainable programs, replicating them, and determining appropriate scale

THE LSF GRANTEE ROUNDTABLE AND PROJECT METHODOLOGY

In August 2009, the Levi Strauss Foundation and BSR brought together key stakeholders in a first-of-its-kind roundtable discussion to:

- Collect and share grantee best practices and knowledge
- Deepen understanding of challenges to replicating and scaling this work
- Establish a community of practitioners and gather suggestions for growing this network

With participants from more than 10 countries, the roundtable, held in Vietnam, was facilitated by BSR and attended by representatives of the Levi Strauss Foundation, Levi Strauss & Co., the Asia Foundation, Life Centre (Vietnam), Land Center for Human Rights (Egypt), Verité, AKUT (Turkey), and the ILO/IFC Better Work Program.

Prior to the meeting, BSR spoke with grantee organizations as well as with factories and workers in China (4), Vietnam (2), and Bangladesh (2) that had received trainings. These conversations provided initial insight into the topics and approach of the factory trainings and how they were received by factory management and workers. The common themes and challenges that emerged became the baseline for deeper discussion and collaborative exploration during the roundtable discussion—this report is the outcome of the highlights and insights.

LSF and BSR are honored to present the stories and lessons of these innovative organizations and our collective ideas on what it will take to truly further workers' rights and responsibilities in factories worldwide.

Current State | Innovations and Challenges

WHAT WORKS: SHARED BEST PRACTICES AND COMMON THEMES

The potential for innovation in the field is tremendous. The roundtable brought together pioneers and leaders from across the world to discuss their latest thinking on how to drive workers’ rights programs. Despite the fact that the grantee organizations operate in vastly different cultural and geographic contexts, their approaches to design and delivery, and factory engagement incorporate similar ideas, tips, and themes. Figure 2.1 below provides a road map of current best practices in workers’ rights and responsibilities programs around the world.

Figure 2.1

Current Best Practices for Workers’ Rights and Responsibilities Programs

I. Management Support	II. Understand the Factory Context	III. Program Implementation	IV. Sustainability
Build trust with factory management	Understand current management systems and gaps	Prepare easily understood materials	Leave behind materials for workers to use after training
Leverage external influences: brand cooperation, government support, and industry best practice	Identify professional and personal needs of all stakeholders	Use participatory exercises	Create peer networks
Continuously seek feedback and support	Design topics to appropriate level and interest	Establish a safe environment	Encourage factory management to integrate programs into their own management approach
Leverage external experts and resources			

I. Management Support

Grantees emphasized that senior-level buy-in and support are critical lynchpins to the success of rights and responsibilities trainings. Moreover, with deep-seated historical distrust between NGOs and factory management, building trust takes time. Grantees employed multiple strategies to develop productive, collaborative relationships with factory management:

- Collaborative attitudes.** It is imperative that NGOs are empathetic to the challenges facing factory management when designing workers’ rights and responsibilities programs. A collaborative attitude will over time help shift the relationship between factories and NGOs—from adversaries to partners.



- **Leverage external influences.** Grantees can work with brand representatives and local labor officials to introduce workers’ rights and responsibilities programs to factory management. Programs can be constructively positioned as a way to ensure adherence to both corporate codes of conduct and labor law.
- **Share industry best practice.** It is invaluable to share the success of workers’ rights and responsibilities programs conducted in other factories. Part of the reason factory management may find these programs hard to accept is because they are new—seeing or experiencing the success from peer companies go a long way in building trust. During the roundtable discussion, two grantees shared that they frequently invite managers from prospective partner factories to observe successful programs being run at other factories in their region.
- **Ensure continuous management feedback.** It is critical to keep lines of communication open between grantees and factory management. This allows grantees to design programs

“Senior level buy-in and support are critical lynchpins to the success of rights and responsibilities trainings.”

that better suit factory needs—and for factory management to feel comfortable with a program’s progress and direction. Communication can happen through both formal and informal reporting structures, but it must be planned and consistent throughout program implementation. As one grantee shared during an interview, “I run many community programs for migrant workers, but running them inside of a factory requires that I have a much stronger grasp of factory management challenges. It has taken hours of conversation with factory managers over the course of a year for me to really understand how to design a program that met factory needs.”

II. Understand the Factory Context

All grantees identified the importance of understanding factory interests, needs, and context before running workers’ rights and responsibilities programs. This process is crucial for designing program methodology, topics, and materials. Prior to initiating a program, grantees work to do the following:

- **Understand management needs.** Grantees running successful in-factory workers’ rights and responsibilities programs are acutely aware of the daily operational challenges facing factory management. As part of building trust, programs need to be designed with an eye toward creating holistic solutions to a factory’s cost, human resources, or production challenges. For example, instead of only creating labor law training for workers, strategic grantees will complement labor law training for workers with labor dispute resolution training for human resources staff.
- **Learn about worker needs.** In addition to learning about the needs of management, grantees seek to understand the personal and professional needs of workers at each site. This can be done through a series of formal and informal interviews and focus groups held with workers.
- **Review existing management systems.** Grantees emphasized the importance of understanding what systems are already in place and building upon those to ensure sustainability. As one grantee pointed out during the roundtable discussion, “You can’t go in there with your own system—there are systems already in place, and the factory will not readily or easily adopt a completely new system.” Adopting existing systems is “a lot less daunting for management to take on.”
- **Conduct formal baseline assessments.** Many grantees conduct formal baseline assessments before programs begin, consisting of a questionnaire and in-depth interviews. These assessments are critical in helping grantees measure program impact.



III. Program Implementation

Regardless of the program topic or region, grantee experience reflected several key common approaches to running successful programs:

- **Keep the training interactive, participatory, and fun.** This approach keeps workers more actively engaged and reinforces the key takeaways. For example, as an icebreaker for its worker empowerment trainings in Mexico, Verité uses a workers' rights themed cartoon puzzle. Participants are asked to fit the puzzle pieces together, and the exercise becomes a good platform for discussing issues such as labor law, workplace disputes, and harassment.
- **Start with training topics that are interesting to workers and supported by factory management.** Because it is less contentious, health training tends to be a good "in" for trainers. Many grantees end up bundling topics such as labor law and freedom of association into a series of training programs with topics like health because the latter is "safe" for managers and attractive to workers.
- **Create a safe environment for participants.** Whether within or outside of the factory walls, participants need to feel reassured that they can ask questions and express their opinions without negative repercussions. If they believe that management might be spying, they will not be as forthcoming. One grantee noted that in-factory trainings actually prompted him to wonder, "Why are we talking about labor rights inside the facility? How is management allowing this?" However, as his training program progressed, he saw that instead of stifling conversation, having in-factory discussions can open dialogue between management and workers. "Having training inside the facility helps workers see that management thinks it's okay to talk about rights," he concluded.
- **Ensure a diverse representation of workers.** Ideally, workers will volunteer to participate in trainings, but more often factory management selects workers. In either scenario, the participant group should be a diverse group of workers, who will be more effective at creating a strong peer network and will bring a wider variety of perspectives to the discussion. Grantees typically conduct trainings with 30–50 (at most) participants—a size that allows for a productive dialogue.
- **Create incentives for participation.** One grantee shared during interviews that "most workers have never experienced this type of learning, have never been asked their opinion." Trainers need to recognize that participants may not be comfortable sharing their opinions—and may never have been asked to do so. They should seek low-pressure ways to encourage

"You can't go in there with your own system—there are systems already in place, and the factory will not readily or easily adopt a completely new system."
Adopting existing systems is "a lot less daunting for management to take on."

Grantee Comment

“A successful program means that we are providing practical solutions that address the everyday challenges facing workers, managers, and the community. Knowing our audience is the start and end point for getting this right.”

Grantee Comment

workers to share ideas and build confidence. Having workers role-play and providing opportunities for them to co-facilitate are popular techniques for encouraging active involvement. Functioning peer-to-peer training models depend on workers being comfortable with the information and confident communicating their ideas. Innovations in this area include running contests and offering prizes.

- **Leverage external experts and resources.** Inviting external representatives to discuss their areas of expertise, such as labor officials to explain labor laws, allows workers to become familiar with local resources and feel more comfortable using them.
- **Schedule trainings to minimize production disruption.** Trainings typically ranged from three to eight hours in length. An ongoing challenge for trainers is to avoid disrupting production, while scheduling the trainings for a time and duration that allow workers to be focused and engaged. Workers prefer longer trainings, but factory management does not. One best practice by the ILO/IFC Better Work program is to have a soap opera on worker rights shown during lunch break. This does not disrupt factory production schedules and catches workers at a time when they are not too tired.
- **Motivate middle management.** Without education and training for middle management on how to respond to concerns from more empowered workers, a program runs the risk of creating conflicts in the workplace. It is thus critical that efforts to educate workers are paired with programs that build the capacity of middle management. Training for middle management needs to emphasize the benefit of worker trainings and the crucial role managers can play in changing factory culture.
- **Empower human resources staff.** Human resources departments play a crucial role in ensuring that factory communication channels are functioning, and that policies, trainings, and behaviors are mutually reinforcing. Moreover, engaging human resources staff is critical to ensure long-term sustainability: Getting human resources staff on-board early on will help them become better equipped to conduct future trainings and encourage them to integrate workers' rights training into the factory's human resources management systems

IV. Sustainability and Distribution

Because not all workers are able to attend trainings, not all information is retained, and worker turnover continues to pose a challenge, trainers recommend several strategies for sustaining impact:

- **Leave materials behind for workers.** Materials, such as booklets, brochures, newsletters, or comic books, can help workers remember key ideas from trainings, and can also be made available to all workers—not only those who attended the training. At one factory visited for the project, workers' rights posters and pamphlets created by a grantee were placed near every workstation, ensuring that even workers who did not attend training had access to valuable information.
- **Create a peer network.** Given turnover and limited worker participation in trainings, a peer-to-peer training model where workers become confident enough to educate their peers effectively expands the reach to both current and future workers. During an interview, one grantee shared that a peer network model is “an effective tool for changing the mind-sets of workers, community managers and senior factory leaders. Because they share real experiences, peers are very credible and are the most effective and innovative program advocates.”

- **Factory ownership.** Participants at the roundtable in Vietnam emphasized that LSF and the grantees play a role in catalyzing efforts that protect workers' rights, but that ultimately, success and sustainability require factories to take ownership of the programs. Engaging factory management in program design, management and review ensures that the program is run in a way that brings real value to the factory; this will also facilitate “factory ownership,” where a factory sees the program as their own and internalizes the practices as part of its regular management.

Case Study: Verité's Mobile Vans

Verité is an independent non-profit organization focused on international workers' rights in global supply chains. LSF works with Verité in China and Latin America.

The Challenge: Providing Training without Disrupting Production

It can be difficult for trainers to find a time and location to engage workers. Arguing that trainings disrupt production, factory managers are often unwilling to allow the time requested for trainings. Trainers seeking to avoid this disruption find that trainings conducted outside of working hours are often poorly attended, or that workers are too exhausted to actively participate or absorb the information. It can be difficult to catch workers at a time when they are relaxed, open, and willing to talk.

The Innovation: Using Mobile Vans in China

Verité has launched a mobile van program in China, which has so far reached 120,000 workers. The vans make regular visits to factory dorms, bringing topic experts and materials to workers living on-site. Vans visit factories every six weeks, and during each visit trainers focus discussion on a single, specific topic. In addition to bringing experts, such as a nurse or doctor to speak about nutrition and health, and materials to leave behind for workers, the vans are stocked with food and snacks—an additional way for them to attract workers. Vans also come equipped with a projector or TV, so that the trainers don't need to rely on management to secure space, time, or resources.

Key Lessons

- **Environment:** By visiting the workers' dorms (away from the factory), the mobile van trainings are able to engage workers in a more relaxed, comfortable environment, where they feel safe to express concerns and ask questions. *This “safe” environment may vary from region to region, depending on the worker demographic, but these are often the best opportunities for getting candid responses from workers.*
- **Accessibility:** The mobile vans offer workers the opportunity to come and go as desired and to pursue information as it interests them. This pressure-free setting allows workers to engage as much as they are interested—and *also allows many workers to stop by (more than typically would attend a single training).* In this setting, it is particularly important that leave-behind materials are concise and easy to grasp.
- **Avoiding Burden on Factory:** *Arriving with all equipment needed, and making visits outside of factory working hours* allows trainers to bypass typical factory management concerns about production disruption.
- **Worker Interest:** It can be difficult to get workers' interest outside of the factory, particularly when they are relaxing and resting. *Providing food is one way the mobile van attracts workers' attention.*

Case Study: Life Centre: A Friendlier Environment for All

The Challenge: Building Trust

A frequently cited challenge in the area of workers' rights and responsibilities is the historical mistrust between NGOs and factory management—it can sabotage a great program before it even starts. Below is an example of how an environment of mutual understanding can be built between management, workers, and worker rights NGOs.

“It takes time to get factory staff to trust us, but over six months, trust has been built, and now the relationship continues to blossom.”

Nguyen Nhu Trang, Director of Life Centre

LS&Co. selected Acme Company* as a pilot factory for a workers' rights and responsibilities program which was implemented in partnership with Life Centre, a Vietnamese NGO.

Before the program began, Acme's performance against LS&Co's terms of engagement was unsatisfactory. Results from Acme's compliance assessments were poor and Acme was in jeopardy of losing orders unless

it demonstrated marked improvement. Nguyen Nhu Trang, Director of Life Centre recalls, “When we provided information about Life Centre and the project, representatives of the factory were polite but a bit cautious. Although they did not make any promises or commitments, they said they would try their best to implement the project—especially to ‘please the client.’”

The initial interactions between management and Life Centre were tepid, despite encouragement and support from Le Tien, a LS&Co. compliance officer. Momentum started to build, however, after the program hit its first milestone: the factory's baseline assessment. The Life team presented baseline findings in an objective and non-threatening manner. The tone and content of the presentation clearly demonstrated that Life spent significant time learning from workers and management staff about the daily challenges facing the factory. Life's constructive feedback helped spark a more collaborative and open spirit amongst factory management.

Program Approach: Engaging Workers, Supervisors, and Management

The Life Centre recognized that the project would only succeed if they could build trust and demonstrate the benefits of the project for factory management, line supervisors, and workers. The rights and responsibilities program was thus designed with specific components in place aimed at creating buy-in at all levels.

The Innovations:

- **Project Management Team.** A key mechanism that helped build a collaborative relationship was the “Project Management Team” (PMT). The PMT included representatives from factory management, line supervisors, workers, and the Life project team. The PMT was responsible for developing the project work plan, major activities, and ultimately tasked with addressing issues and needs identified during the baseline assessment. This intensive collaboration helped to create a sense of factory ownership from the start. The PMT was essential in catalyzing a fundamental shift in how the management valued its factory workers.
- **Management Training.** Getting management support and approval for the work was the first big step in moving the project forward. To ensure continued success, it required the factory to improve its management capabilities. In supporting factory capability building, the roles of brand compliance officers and Life representatives changed: from “police” and monitor to management consultant, trainer, and partner. The management training included the following components:

* This case is based on a real situation, but names of factory and factory staff have been changed.

- Basic supervisory skills training, with a strong emphasis on communication;
- Technical management skills training, such as improving efficiency and increasing savings on the production line; and
- Training on LS&Co.'s terms of engagement and labor standards.

- **Workers' Initiative Program (WIP).** A contest was run where workers submitted ideas on improving factory processes. Management judged submissions, implemented great new ideas, and awarded prizes (in some cases financial compensation) for workers with winning submissions. For example, one worker idea was to combine two steps of a pocket-stitching process into one, which contributed to an increase in productivity. Another worker idea resulted in energy savings.

This initiative built worker confidence; facilitated teamwork and cohesion among workers; and demonstrated to factory management that workers can be a valuable partner in improving factory efficiency and productivity. Moreover, the program has become a channel for regular communication between workers and management. The success of this initiative allowed Life, LSF, and LS&Co. to introduce additional rights and responsibilities programs at Acme. In many ways, Acme became model for other factories in the regions—they were a “live example” of why workers' rights and responsibilities programs make practical sense.

Making the Business Case

From 2006 to 2007, Acme Company's workforce dropped from 1,500 to 1,400. Throughout 2007, the average turnover rate was approximately 6 percent. In 2008, after the Life Centre's program was implemented, the turnover rate decreased to approximately 3 percent, and Acme maintained an employee base of 1,400 throughout the year. This improved retention rate went hand in hand with increased productivity and reductions in excessive overtime. Moreover, Levi Strauss staff no longer suspected Acme management of running “double books” on worker compensation and hours.

Mr. Pham, Head of Personnel, attributes many of these changes to the “Friendlier Environment for All” program run by Life Centre. He believes that the improvements in productivity from the Workers' Initiative Program meant that workers made more money. He shared that at the peak of 2008, a worker at Acme earned between three to four million Dong a month—whereas industry average was two million.

Over time, Life Centre and Levi Strauss staff observed a dramatic shift in how management views their workers. As the benefits of the program began to manifest, instead of managers seeing their workers as merely “cost centers,” they began to see workers as valuable and critical partners.

- **Edutainment.** Making “dry” information about labor laws, labor codes, and workers' rights and responsibilities accessible and tangible for factory workers is always a challenge. Rather

continued next page

than conducting these trainings in a didactic classroom setting, Life Centre used a variety of fun, interactive and inclusive communication methods including mock counseling, Q & A sessions, “quiz shows,” and inviting a dynamic labor lawyer as a guest trainer. A factory manager noted that he had never seen such a “hearty and enthusiastic reception from workers” for training programs in the past.

Key Lessons

- **Inclusion and Collaboration.** From the onset, Life Centre ensured that factory management and workers were included in the process. This set a collaborative tone that enabled trust and understanding to develop over time.

Measuring Effectiveness | Business Case and Program Impact

A clear business case for workers' rights and responsibilities will make a program easier to introduce, implement, and sustain for any factory. A clear emphasis on program impact, on the other hand, ensures programs are sharply focused on improving the lives of workers.

Much of the discussion at the roundtable in Vietnam—as well as the research and interviews conducted—focused on how LSF, LS&Co., and the grantees think about the business and social return on investment of workers' rights and responsibilities programs. Highlights from this research and discussion include the following:

- Organizations need to consider both the business and social return on investment in order to sustain and scale impact;
- Definitions and metrics for program success vary greatly based on audience; and
- The field of measuring impact has tremendous opportunity.

Both the business case and program impact vary significantly based on the audience involved and both are important factors in defining program success.

THREADING THE NEEDLE: MUTUALLY REINFORCING APPROACHES TO DEFINING SUCCESS

Defining program success requires that organizations look at both the hard-line “business case” for workers' rights—as well as whether or not programs have improved workers' lives. Different stakeholder groups instinctively make the case for workers' rights and responsibilities programs on different grounds. NGOs tend to be “mission driven,” measuring success against the baseline of development outcomes, while industry tends to reflect key decisions in terms of the business case. Against this backdrop, it's not enough simply to say “it's the right thing to do.”

Although the approaches to workers' rights may be different, the key point is that we recognize that these conversations are mutually reinforcing. The best partnerships and outcomes are informed by each group having a nuanced, multifaceted understanding of how success is defined. As illustrated in Figure 3.1, both approaches have their strengths and limitations.

Finally, perhaps because the topic protecting the rights of garment workers falls into a category somewhere between “development” and “social compliance,” grantees realize that seed funding for this work will require



“We need to speak to the language of factory managers (the business case) and at the same time, we need to speak the language of basic human decency: the rights of workers are not optional. They should not in any way be contingent on whether or not a business case can be made...

When thinking ‘beyond the business case,’ we must be especially rigorous about measuring impact: what is the actual value of these projects? How can we measure it? And how can we make sure the impact of these projects on workers’ rights programs is as or more convincing as a benefit to the bottom line?”

Grantee Comment

a blended approach: “fee for service,” based on providing services for factories and brands, and “fee for impact,” based on running programs that meet a foundation’s funding priorities. Moving beyond seed capital, however, grantees are also keenly aware that replicating workers’ rights programs in new regions and ensuring the sustainability of existing initiatives will likely require more of a market-driven, business-friendly approach: a business model that makes and embeds a clear business case for factories and brands.

Figure 3.1
Approaches to Defining Program Success

Business Case		Program Impact	
Strengths	Limitations	Strengths	Limitations
Eases process of getting factory and brand support	Can be difficult to prove	Sharply focuses programs on improving lives of workers	Can be challenging to gain factory and brand support
Eases replication of business-friendly models across value chains	Runs the risk that workers’ rights are seen as “optional” and contingent on business performance	Considers the systemic changes needed to protect workers’ rights long-term	Requires major funding support
Benefits the bottom line for factories	May lead to short-term thinking	Gives program credibility to workers and NGOs	May be difficult to see program impact in the short-term
Encourages sustainable funding models			

SUCCESS VARIES SIGNIFICANTLY FOR DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

The interests of all key stakeholder groups vary and must be aligned for long-term program success. Factory managers and brands need to be able to justify these programs to their boards, but, as discussed extensively during the roundtable discussion in Vietnam, this is not enough. Workers and line supervisors also need compelling reasons to engage in workers’ rights programs. Figure 3.2 reviews some of the key incentives of a workers’ rights and responsibilities program for different audiences.

Figure 3.2

Defining Success for Different Stakeholders

Stakeholder Group	Program Impact
<p>Workers: “What’s in it for me?”</p>	<p>Convenience. Programs must be held at times that don’t interfere with workers’ personal lives (e.g., some workers have families to attend to).</p> <p>Skills Building. Training should demonstrate opportunity for career advancement or (life) skills building.</p> <p>Income and Quality of Life. Workers want to increase their incomes—but income is ultimately a means to a better end: improved quality of life. Any program should directly address this need.</p>
<p>Line Supervisors: “Using workers’ rights as a chance for skills building.”</p>	<p>Missed Opportunity for Training. Line supervisors are often promoted from positions as workers and seldom have an opportunity to receive further training. As one participant put it, “Children with bad parents become bad parents.”</p> <p>Improve Supervisory Capability. Workers’ rights programs can be seen as an opportunity to provide new supervisors with concrete tools that will enhance supervisory capacity: good disciplinary practices and negotiation and communication skills, among others.</p> <p>Prevent Serious Work Challenges. Programs can also be designed to help supervisors prevent labor issues (strikes, fights, low productivity, etc.) that negatively affect their job performance and pay.</p>
<p>Factory Managers: “Getting ownership.”</p>	<p>Cost. Productivity and quality improvements through training and the creation of management systems.</p> <p>Lower Turnover. Programs can improve worker loyalty, thereby reducing turnover and decreasing costs.</p> <p>Reputation. Through brand and factory forums that build a local network of factories dealing with labor challenges, factories can develop a reputation for strong or poor labor practices.</p> <p>External Pressures. Government pressure, media coverage, and a “moral case” for corporate social responsibility can each play a role in persuading factory leaders.</p>
<p>Brands: “Deeper programs with wider impact.”</p>	<p>Traditional Reasons. Risk management, maintaining brand value, and stability across the supply chain are all “traditional” business reasons brands engage in this work.</p> <p>Beyond an Immediate Business Case. LSF staff shared that although the foundation is funded by LS&Co., its mission is aimed at improving workers lives. LSF is therefore not overly focused on an immediate business case and return on investment and can wield “patient capital” focusing on long-term benefits.</p>

CHALLENGES REMAIN: MEASURING PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Although measuring impact is a key part of assessing whether a program or organization's vision is being met—and whether or not workers benefit from programs—few organizations do this well. The discussion about measuring impact was perhaps the most challenging of the roundtable. During the pre-convening interviews and the meeting itself, a few themes emerged:

- **Causation is Hard to Prove.** Because outcomes are often “soft” (increased awareness, better communications skills) and there can be a host of external factors that impact working conditions, it is difficult to establish causation.
- **Skepticism.** Many organizations are skeptical of the value of measuring impact. Experts are not convinced that the amount of time it takes to comprehensively measure impact is worth the time required to do it.
- **Measuring for the Sake for Measurement.** Measuring impact is an area of limited innovation. Most trainers rely on standard tools like baseline and post-training surveys that don't adequately assess program impact.

POTENTIAL FOR INNOVATION: USING MEASUREMENT TO CREATE REAL VALUE

A few grantees expressed that they sometimes see Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and other mechanisms for measuring impact as “chores” that are of limited value when it comes to mission-delivery. This attitude points to a compelling need to fundamentally change existing approaches to measuring impact. Rather than measuring for its own sake, measurement needs to add tangible value to the program. Although we saw limited examples of this in practice, during the roundtable discussion and the interviews a few innovative ideas were raised by grantees.

Potential Innovation: Patient Records, Measuring Impact, and Health Services

During one interview, a grantee offered an idea of how she thought measuring impact would add value to the health services provided by her NGO. Whereas baseline surveys and post-training questionnaires are separate from mission-delivery efforts, the idea below tangibly benefits program participants.

“We do a lot of work on health, providing education and basic medical advice to migrant workers. It's hard to say what impact these programs have—other than taking a tally of total number of people served. However, in a perfect world, we could improve our health services if we did a better job around documentation. If we could have a simple database that recorded health data for all of the people we served, our program staff could use these records to follow up with these workers—the records could give us a better sense of our impact, prevent us from asking the same background question every time we talk to a worker, and serve in some ways as a medical history.”

Potential Innovation: Standardizing Worker Engagement Metrics

Many workers' rights and responsibilities programs address topics like grievance management, harassment, discrimination, and worker communication. These issues are fundamental for worker rights programs, but success for these issues is hard to quantify. Success is often expressed through indicators of worker and management "awareness," "satisfaction," and "level of engagement." Moreover, despite the fact that many organizations take similar approaches, there is no "gold standard" methodology for measuring impact.

A real opportunity exists to streamline this measurement process. Creating a common, systematic tool for assessing worker and management engagement, satisfaction, and awareness could add distinct value to projects:

- For factory managers, if this data were created in a "business-minded fashion," the data could provide a good "temperature check" on the state of staff engagement and awareness;
- For grantees, having such a tool at their disposal could allow them to get their workers' rights in the door as a way to assess and improve human resources management;
- For LSF, LS&Co., and grantees, a more quantifiable and consistent way to measure impact could improve program management and provide a consistent framework for communicating about program impact; and
- For workers and other program beneficiaries, such a tool could be a formal mechanism to ensure that grantees continuously seek their feedback during program design, implementation, and evaluation—ultimately ensuring that their needs are met.

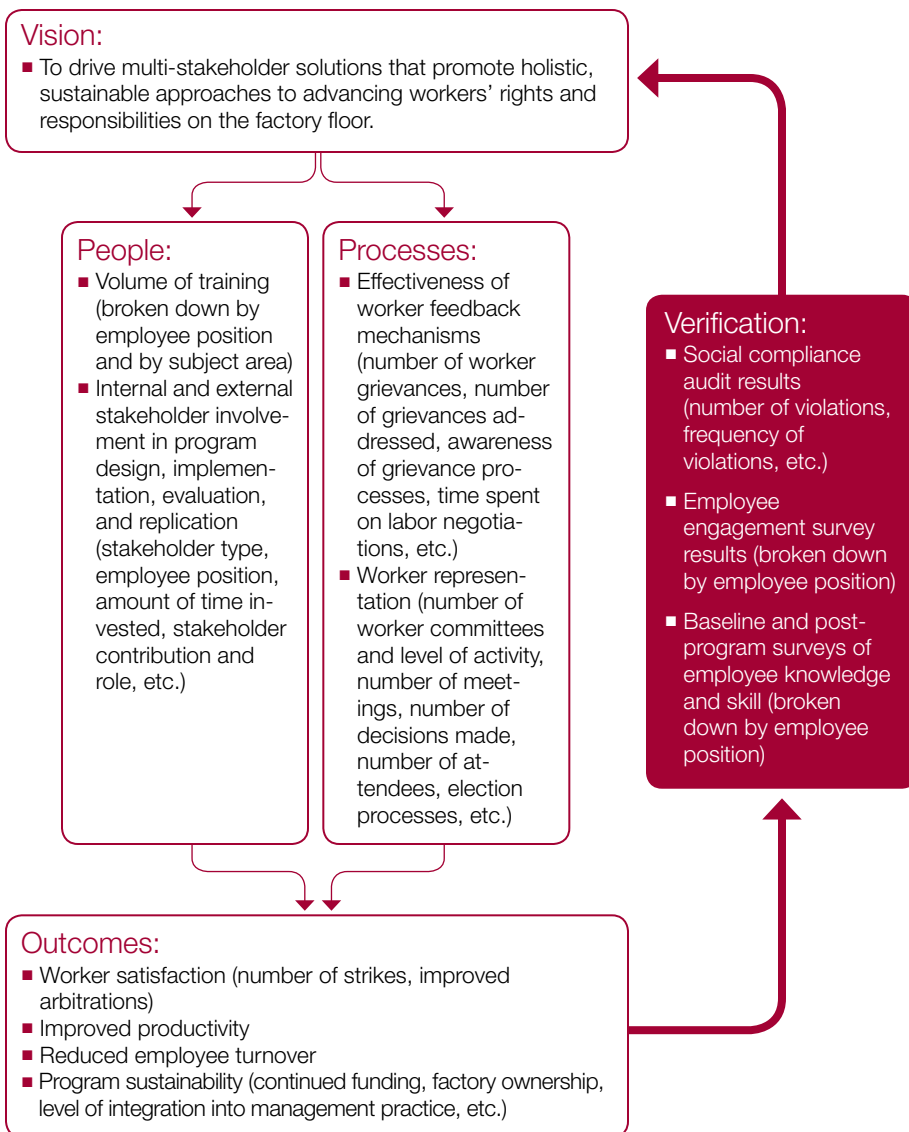
WORKERS' RIGHTS IMPACT INDICATORS

Figure 3.3 lists indicators that could be used to assess the impact of worker rights programs. Although not exhaustive, it represents current best practice and thinking in the field. Indicators are separated into the following categories:

- **Vision:** What is the vision for the work?
- **People:** How can grantees assess whether the "right people" are involved in the program and their level of engagement? (e.g., is management supportive of a program, and, if so, to what degree?)
- **Processes:** How much time has been invested in building systems and processes to support workers' rights and responsibilities? How effective are these systems? (e.g., are there grievance systems in place; if so, how well do they work?)
- **Outcomes:** What metrics might define a successful program?
- **Verification:** What approaches are being undertaken to measure and verify impact?



Figure 3.3
Measuring Program Impact



Scaling Up | Partnerships that Raise the Bar

4

Much of the discussion at the roundtable and during interviews focused on how LSF and its grantees can use their programs as catalysts for large-scale change. With community support, industry engagement, participation from policy-makers, and publicity from media outlets, a workers' rights program can multiply its impact and promote positive change in other regions, industries, and even countries.

REALIZING THE POTENTIAL FOR PARTNERSHIPS

Workers' rights programs need to go beyond factory walls. The impact of one successful pilot—or even a dozen successful initiatives—is limited. This is not to discount their impact, but to highlight tremendous and largely unmet potential: to drive systemic, social and political change in support of workers' rights. There are a few organizations using workers' rights and responsibilities programs to demonstrate the need and possibility for larger-scale change, but much more is possible.

Designing a program that incorporates both on-the-ground advocacy and changes in policy requires planning and persistence. These goals must be clearly reflected in program design—and pursued throughout program implementation. Figure 4.1 describes different ways how the integration of influential stakeholders into the design, implementation, and sustainability of a workers' rights program can have a “multiplier” effect.

Figure 4.1

Engaging Partners in Workers' Rights Programs

Stakeholder	Program Design	Service Delivery	Sustainability
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create program goals to align with policy priorities ■ Identify and engage political officials responsible or interested in workers' rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use official government channels (industry associations, unions, labor departments) to increase participation ■ Leverage government platform to attract international expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Position workers' rights programs as pilot initiatives that promote or test effectiveness of policy reform ■ Apply for national and international funding to sustain workers' rights programs ■ Scale up successful programs using government resources and networks
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Find opportunities for workers to interact with the local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Connect workers with community resources: migrant integration services, libraries, schools, legal clinics, medical facilities, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase public awareness and goodwill around workers' rights ■ Build permanent networks that allow community groups to provide support to workers
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify ways that media can recognize and promote good practice—and challenge poor examples of workers' rights protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use media channels to increase public awareness ■ Experiment with new media (online, mobile) to reach workers and the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improve quality and quantity of workers' rights reporting by local journalists ■ Build media-savvy grantee organizations
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Plan ways to share learning from workers' rights and responsibilities programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Learn from successes and failures from projects conducted in similar factories ■ Leverage industry groups to gain access to new participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establish a network of peer factories focused on workers' rights programs ■ Integrate components of workers' rights and responsibilities programs into industry standards

Case Study: The Asia Foundation (TAF) and Policy Change

Since 1999, LSF has worked with the Asia Foundation (TAF) to fund a program in China that works at the grassroots level through local women's organizations and the trade union to deliver services directly to workers. To date, more than 900,000 migrant women workers have participated in LSF-funded programs in more than 1,000 factories in 22 cities in the Pearl River Delta, over 50 factories in Jiangsu and Zhejiang, and four other municipalities and provinces.

The Challenge: Connecting Programs to the Government Agenda

In China, workers' rights programs face a double-edged sword. Because programs focus on issues that are priorities for the government (e.g., labor disputes, labor rights, labor arbitration, and non-administration behaviour of local government officials), TAF is able to align its program objectives with the government priorities of most concern. This allows TAF to leverage top-notch government resources to support program design and delivery. However, at the same time, due to political sensitivities, TAF must carefully monitor its activities to ensure that programs remain closely aligned to government objectives.

Innovations

■ **Aligning Program Objectives with Government Networks and Resources**

TAF built several public-sector partnerships to advance its program. These partnerships allowed TAF to: use existing government networks and resources to drive programs forward; increase the number of program beneficiaries; place the labor issues on government agendas; and, because implementation partners are government-based, these partnerships help TAF allay political sensitivities. Labor unions are one of TAF's key partners in China. According to Pei Bin, TAF's former China Senior Program Officer, "Working with the union gives us real access and enables us to effectively push this program on four levels: province, city, district and factory. Through the project and with their support we reach over 1,000 factories all over the Pearl River Delta. In an occupational health and safety supervisory skills session, for example, we brought together more than 800 labor union representatives from 400 factories to help us build our program."

■ **Engaging Pioneering Government Officials**

To align workers' rights programs with government objectives, TAF actively sought the support of influential advocates within the Chinese government. Pei Bin attributed much of TAF's success in building public-private partnerships to the strong support TAF received from Huang Shumei, Vice Chairwoman of the Guangdong Provincial Labor Union and the Director of Women Workers' Committee of the Labor Union. Huang's leadership helped TAF complement in-factory capacity building on topics like health and safety and supervisory skills with a parallel set of programs targeting public sector capacity building, focused on training provincial, city, and district officials.

"Working with the union gives us real access and enables us to effectively push this program on four levels: province, city, district and factory. Through the project and with their support we reach over 1,000 factories all over the Pearl River Delta."

Pei Bin, former China Senior Program Officer, the Asia Foundation

Profile: Huang Shumei, Vice Chairwoman of the Guangdong Provincial Labor Union and the Director of Women Workers' Committee of the Labor Union

With more than 30 years' experience working in the government, Huang was promoted as the Deputy Director-General of the Children's Protection Department in her late

continued next page



twenties and became the youngest leader in the Guangdong Women's Federation in 1976. Since 2000, Huang has been at the cutting edge of policy and legal aid discussions in China regarding migrant worker rights. Under her leadership, the Guangdong Women's Federation hosts regular workers' rights seminars that result in policy recommendations to protect migrant workers. For example, a seminar focused on the "Draft Labor Contract Law" directly resulted in the submission of 17 revision recommendations for the benefit of women workers. To ensure that policy recommendations are practical and grounded in a local context, Huang and her team have mobilized local Women's Federations in the Pearl River Delta to represent and handle more than 700 legal aid cases with strategic social impact.

■ **Technical Assistance: International and Local Partnerships**

TAF found that for training and building awareness, the Chinese government is highly effective at reaching massive audiences through large-scale street fairs and lecture-style training sessions. To deliver direct services to migrant workers, however, TAF relied on a mix of partners: local grassroots NGOs, government agencies, academics, businesses, and international experts. Over the years, TAF's local partners included the Women Workers' Committee of the Guangdong Labor Union, the Guangdong Women's Federation, the Guangdong Women's Professional Technical College, Sun Yat-sen University, the Foshan City Labor Union, the Sanxiang Women's Federation, the Sanxiang Labor Bureau, and the Panyu Migrant Workers' Document Handling Center. International partners included groups like UNAIDS, Marie Stopes International, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Melbourne University. According to Pei Bin, "This combination of partners creates synergies beyond what any individual organization can do alone. It allows programs to go 'broad and shallow,' reaching massive, broad audiences, while also going 'narrow,' providing in-depth, direct services for migrant workers."

Case Study: Innovative Use of Media, Better Work's Soap Opera "At the Factory Gates"

Better Work is a unique partnership between the International Labor Organization and the International Finance Corporation. The program was launched in August 2006 in order to improve labor practices and competitiveness in global supply chains.

Challenge: Developing Innovative, Entertaining Training Curriculum

Many grantees shared that it can be challenging to make workers' rights and responsibilities training interesting for workers. Many workers have never been asked to share their opinions and, without a skilled facilitator, participatory training can be difficult to manage. Television and soap operas have become ubiquitous; leveraging this medium as well as partnerships developed with the BBC and government agencies in Cambodia and Vietnam, Better Work developed a soap opera series, "At the Factory Gates," that combines entertainment with important messages on workers' rights and responsibilities.

Innovation: Building Widespread Awareness using Workers' Rights-Themed Soap Opera

Developed in Cambodia and currently being tailored to the Vietnamese market, Better Work has created "At the Factory Gates," a six-episode soap opera series that address topics including grievance management, dispute resolution, theft, health and safety, and underage workers. Episodes covering overtime and life skills are currently being produced.

In Cambodia, the program has been broadcast on national television with high-level support from the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Labor, and the Ministry of Information. Better Work estimates that more than 100,000 workers have seen the series on television. Additional screenings are held in factories—both in canteens and dormitories—as a tool to engage workers in conversation about their rights and responsibilities. In addition to the soap opera, Better Work has commissioned a series of workers' rights-themed comic books to complement the series. The comic books are left for workers to read at their leisure.

5

Brand Collaboration | A Call for Action

WHY BRANDS SHOULD CARE

The need for concerted action to educate and empower garment workers on their rights within the workplace is clear and urgent. Garment workers tend to be vulnerable young women, very often the primary breadwinners for their families. They migrate from rural to urban settings with low levels of education, limited awareness of their rights, and insufficient access to social services within their new factory environments. Within factories these women face a variety of challenges, including being placed on short-term contracts, making below minimum wage, excessive and frequently unpaid overtime, occupational safety and health hazards, limits to freedom of association, low levels of trade union representation, and sexual harassment and discrimination (such as forced pregnancy testing).

National labor laws within most developing countries are strong, but enforcement is weak. Furthermore, post-MFA production shifts and the recent rash of factory closures due to softening consumer demand have increased these workers' vulnerability. According to the International Textile, Garment, and Leatherworkers Federation, approximately 11.5 million jobs have been lost in the first months of 2009, with losses expected to increase another 3 million in 2010.

Workers' rights and responsibilities programs play a key role in ensuring that brand supply chain practices do not exacerbate the current challenges, but instead contribute to creating a workplace where workers are empowered and responsible. Working together, brands have an opportunity to advance toward many common goals:

- **Risk Mitigation.** Investment and collaboration in workers' rights and responsibilities trainings is the right thing to do and makes business sense. A lack of focus on workers' rights and responsibilities can open up a host of reputational and legal risks for brands.
- **Articulating a Clear Business Case.** There remains a need to build a stronger, more coherent business case to convince suppliers to agree to this work, from quantifying productivity gains, reducing turnover and absenteeism, and to building a more loyal and harmonious workforce.
- **Investing in Worker Well-Being.** Investment in this particular population of workers, many of whom are their households' primary financial support, helps advance the Millennium Development Goals and ensures that in the current economic crisis these young women do not fall back into the informal sector.
- **Reducing Duplication, Creating Synergy.** While a variety of brands invest in factory and community-based rights and responsibilities trainings, these efforts are currently ad hoc and non-complementary.

This approach has meant few “nodes of learning” in this inchoate field, with brands struggling internally to replicate or scale successful trainings. In the current economic crisis, many brands are also grappling with reduced resources, both in terms of funds and staff time, to invest in this type of work, as well as resistance from suppliers to invest in any initiatives that take time away from staying in business. Individual brand efforts to solidify a business case of rights and responsibilities work for suppliers is both a time-intensive and costly exercise wherein success has thus far proven elusive.

- **Building Local Capability.** Finally, there is a dearth of credible and adequately resourced on-the-ground service providers in the various countries from which brands source. The lack of investment in this sector ultimately makes it difficult for any one company to take this work to scale.

Much like the lessons the garment sector has learned around reducing duplicative in-factory monitoring efforts, so too is there a need to collaborate on workers’ rights and responsibilities work. Brand collaboration is key to creating a replicable, scalable model. Only by pooling resources and building upon one another’s tailwinds will this work move from “one-off” micro-experiments to a proven model of success.

Figure 5.1
How Brands Can Collaborate

Current Shortfalls	Collaborative Solution	Next Steps
Lack of resources	Share best practices about innovative training models and credible service providers to build upon one another’s successes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Map and make open-source a list of workers’ rights and responsibilities trainers by specialty and geography. ■ Create a master curriculum and compendium of innovative training techniques and programs.
Supplier resistance and limited buy-in	Share lessons learned and successes for building the business case for workers’ rights and responsibilities with suppliers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Building on the examples shared by LSF, develop additional case studies by other brands that contribute to a clear, credible business case. ■ Invest in trainings collectively in shared facilities to assure that suppliers hear a coherent, consistent message.
Limited success metrics and impact measurements	Share current metrics and measurements used and strive to include and build upon the impact-based indicators recommended in this report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop and agree upon a common set of indicators to measure success in terms of factory managers, line supervisors, and workers.
Lack of service provider capacity	Share and endorse successful service providers and invest jointly in building capacity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Create a database of vetted and credible service providers by specialty and geography. ■ Building upon LSF’s grantee convening, create workers’ rights and responsibilities trainer and brand roundtables aimed at sharing innovations, refining impact measurements, and creating a community of practice.

Moving the Needle Together: Four Ways Brands Can Take Action Now

- **Strengthen Capacity of Workers' Rights and Responsibilities Groups.** Finding experienced partners to help run workers' rights programs can often be the first obstacle to success. Brands can collaborate to create a shared "white pages" for workers' rights and responsibilities trainers arranged by specialty and location. To further catalyze progress in the field, brands could create a compendium of innovative training techniques and curriculum and facilitate practical dialogue among workers' rights organizations. A starting point in creating such a community of practice is available here: <http://workerr.crowdvine.com>.
- **Collaborate on Joint Programs.** Given the reality of limited resources, jointly investing in programs at a shared site can go a long way. Brands can work to jointly create new workers' rights programs or complement workers' rights programs with other capacity-building efforts focused on management capability. Practically, brands can start by identifying countries and suppliers of long-term strategic importance (likely to be the same suppliers where shared monitoring efforts are already taking place).
- **Collect Examples of Success.** Brands can work together to communicate success stories in the form of metrics and testimonials from factory owners, supervisors, and workers. Brands can explore both traditional and new media as means to dynamically document and share the reasons for and evidence of program success.
- **Develop Common Approaches for Measuring Impact.** Developing a rigorous and consistent approach for assessing the impact of workers' rights programs can help brands better design, manage, improve, and communicate progress. Brands can work together to develop a common framework for measuring the impact of worker empowerment efforts.

On the Horizon | Moving Beyond Brand Collaboration to Cross-Sector Partnerships

6

The LSF grantee roundtable made clear that investment within factory gates is ineffective without engagement in local communities. Furthering workers' rights and responsibilities needs to be a partnership among government, brands, suppliers, and service providers, as illustrated by the Asia Foundation case study. To deepen and broaden the impact of rights and responsibilities programs, brands need to identify champions within relevant government agencies and create a shared vision and goals. This relationship would help draw public and private contributions toward this work in a more coordinated fashion. Moreover, this type of dialogue and engagement would help ensure enforcement of labor standards, and, when needed, changes in policies and regulations to create better, more socially sustainable factory workplaces.

“Even amid the challenges outlined in this report and our limited resources at hand, commitment to and creativity in collaboration can move the needle meaningfully toward better workplaces for garment workers and a more socially sustainable industry.”

Daniel Jae-Won Lee, Executive Director, Levi Strauss Foundation





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