

Manual

How to set up a community platform for women garment workers



Implemented by

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FABRIC Asia

3

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List of abbreviations

- BGMEA** Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BMZ Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
CTUM Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar
DFID Department for International Development
EU European Union
FLC Future Light Centre
GIZ FABRIC Fostering and Advancing Sustainable Business and Responsible Industrial Practices in the Clothing Industry in Asia
GIZ Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH
GTF Garment Textile Footwear
HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO International Labour Organisation
KN Karmojibi Nari
MADE Multi-stakeholder Alliance for Decent Employment in Myanmar
M&E Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS Management Information System
MOI Ministry of Interior
NGO Non-Governmental Organisation
ONOW Opportunity Now Myanmar
OWDEB Organisation for Women's Development in Bangladesh
PEG Peer Education Group
PSES Promotion of Social and Environmental Standards in the Industry
RBM Results-based monitoring
RMG Ready Made Garment
SLSG Social and Labour Standards in the Textile and Garment Sector in Asia
STD Sexually Transmitted Disease
SMART Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound
STILE Sustainability in the Textile and Leather Sector
USAID United States Agency for International Development
WE HOUSE Women Empowerment House
WUN Women Union Network

Foreword

“The uniqueness of a women’s café lies in its commitment to providing a safe space where women feel valued, supported, and empowered.”¹

The global textile industry is a driving force in many Asian economies, contributing up to 80% of export income in this region.² Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Myanmar exemplify this trend, with the garment industry being a cornerstone of their economies. However, this rapid growth brings significant challenges—including ensuring fair working conditions—especially for women garment workers and minimizing the environmental impact of production.

This manual, *“How to set up a community platform for women garment workers”*, serves as a practical guide for individuals, organisations, and stakeholders who aim to build community-based platforms for women in the garment industry. The term “community platform,” as used here, refers to both “women’s café” and “women’s centre”, acknowledging regional variations in terminology, such as “women’s centres” in Cambodia and “women’s cafés” in Bangladesh. The manual focuses specifically on the experiences of community platforms for women workers in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Myanmar, demonstrating how such platforms can serve as crucial tools for advocacy, empowerment, and support.

Drawing from the experiences of colleagues involved in various GIZ projects and initiatives, including GIZ FABRIC Asia and STILE, this manual offers a detailed blueprint. The insights and best practices shared are drawn from practical implementations of community platforms

in these three countries, highlighting both their unique and shared challenges.

The vision of this manual is to support those who are committed to creating spaces where women garment workers can voice their concerns, improve their working conditions, and gain access to the resources they need. The manual encourages further collaboration among key stakeholders—production companies, business associations, governments, trade unions, civil society, and international fashion brands. By fostering such platforms, these efforts contribute not only to the well-being and resilience of workers but also to the development of a more socially just and environmentally sustainable textile industry.

Background: Women’s cafés were introduced by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH in July 2010 as part of the “Empowering Women RMG Workers” project under the “Promotion of Social and Environmental Standards in the Industry (PSES) Programme. These community platforms for garment workers have since been implemented through various GIZ projects in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Myanmar as part of the broader initiative FABRIC Asia commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

FABRIC ASIA The GIZ project FABRIC Asia (*Promoting Sustainability in the Textile and Gar-*

1 Quote from an internal GIZ document

2 <https://www.ilo.org/publications/wages-and-productivity-garment-sector-asia-and-pacific-and-arab-states>

ment Industry in Asia), funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), supports the development of a competitive, fair and environmentally responsible garment and textiles industry. By connecting factories, ministries, civil society, and international brands, FABRIC Asia drives a shared vision of sustainability, creating a regional knowledge hub and promoting global standards for sustainable production. FABRIC Asia operates in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Vietnam, while also engaging with China. In 2024 FABRIC Asia launched the Women's Centres Network Exchange workshops to promote gender-equitable working conditions in the garment industry, bringing together community platforms from Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Myanmar.

FABRIC Cambodia integrates FABRIC Asia's regional initiatives with a bilateral focus on Cambodia. Launched in 2021, this project emphasizes improving the textile supply chain through fair production, social and environmental standards, and cooperation among key stakeholders. FABRIC Cambodia aims to balance quality growth with competitiveness, advancing a sustainable industry in Cambodia. The Women Empowerment House (WE House) in Cambodia, was established in 2021 as a joint initiative by the GIZ project FABRIC, Solidarity Centre, and Women Union Network (WUN) to support women textile workers in Cambodia.

The Sustainability in the Textile and Leather Sector (STILE) project, led by GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), promotes sustainable practices in Bangladesh's textile and leather sectors. GIZ assisted four partner-NGOs to establish Women Cafés in Dhaka and Chattogram (Agrajatra, Awaj Foundation, Karmojibi Nari, and OWDEB). Currently, approximately 50 women's cafés are operating in Bangladesh under various names, managed by different NGOs. These cafés foster social dialogue and empower workers. STILE also

enhances the capabilities of labour and environmental inspection authorities and provides guidance to companies on compliance. The first phase (July 2020 - June 2024) focused on improving social, economic, and environmental standards, with STILE II set to continue from July 2024 to June 2027.

In 2016, **GIZ and sequa gGmbH** partnered in Myanmar to promote fair and safe working conditions in the garment industry through the Social and Labour Standards in the Textile and Garment Sector in Asia (SLSG) project (predecessor project of FABRIC Asia). This collaboration led to the first women's centre in Yangon, providing a safe space for women garment workers to learn about their rights and build confidence to advocate for fair treatment.

Following the 2021 military coup, GIZ handed the project management to sequa gGmbH. In 2023, ONOW launched the pilot Hlaing Tharyar women's centre in Yangon. ONOW, known for empowering female migrants through financial capability and entrepreneurship training, utilized its expertise to provide targeted support for garment workers. Later that year, the Khit Mate Swe Women's Centre opened in Patheingyi, operated by the local NGO Pyi Gyi Khin. Equipped with solar power, the Patheingyi centre is resilient to power cuts and is scheduled to run until December 2025, continuing to support and empower women in Myanmar's garment sector.

Empowering garment workers in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Myanmar

CASE STUDIES



The story of garment workers in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Myanmar

The Asian region remains the world's largest garment manufacturer, accounting for over 55% of global garment and textiles exports in 2019. The garment, textiles, and footwear (GTF) sectors are vital to Asian economies, employing approximately 60 million workers.³ Of these, 35 million are women who face significant challenges, including lower wages than men for the same work, short-term contracts, and workplace discrimination, harassment, and violence.⁴ At home, they shoulder the burden of unpaid care work, affecting their health, well-being, and chances for career progression. This is the reality for millions of women who sustain one of the world's largest industries, balancing factory labour and home life with little recognition or reward.⁵

BANGLADESH

Every day, women in Bangladesh, many with little or no formal education, step into one of the country's 3,925 garment factories, often taking on their first formal job.⁶ However, the proportion of women in the sector has been steadily declining over the last decade, with more women leaving than entering. Over 70% of garment and textiles workers are under 29, and most women enter the sector to support their families. Nearly three-quarters of these women are married, balancing household responsibilities with long hours at work, yet they are often stuck in low-paying roles. Despite their vital contributions, opportunities for advancement remain scarce, and women's representation in managerial positions has seen little improvement. The income they earn is crucial for their families' survival, but true economic independence for these women remains a distant goal. Factors like motherhood, lack of affordable childcare, and changing hiring practices that favor men continue to push women out of the workforce. Harassment and violence are persistent issues, with pregnancy being a leading cause for women to leave the sector.⁷

3 https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/40%asia/40%ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_848624.pdf

4 https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@asia/@ro-bangkok/documents/genericdocument/wcms_793065.pdf

5 https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_dialogue/@sector/documents/publication/wcms_732095.pdf

6 <https://bgmea.com.bd/page/member-list>

7 https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@asia/@ro-bangkok/@ilo-dhaka/documents/publication/wcms_754669.pdf

CAMBODIA

In Cambodia, young women from rural areas are an essential part of the garment industry's workforce. The number of employed workers in this sector stands at 925,000 in 2024 (75% of them women) who have migrated to the city in search of better opportunities.⁸ With limited education and coming from low-income households, these women see factory work as their best chance to earn a living and support their families. The income they send home is crucial for their families' survival, yet the challenges they face are significant. Living away from their support networks, they must manage long factory hours and household responsibilities on their own. Many encounter harsh working conditions, low wages, and lack of knowledge about their rights, making them vulnerable to exploitation and debt. Despite these difficulties, the garment, textile and footwear (GTF) sector is the largest formal employer in the country and has helped lift millions out of poverty.⁹

MYANMAR

In Myanmar, thousands of young women leave their rural homes every day in search of work. The garment industry, which employs around 500,000 workers, offers one of the few opportunities for economic independence.¹⁰ Of these workers, 82.8% are women, many between the ages of 16 and 27.¹¹ For the majority, factory work is their only means of supporting their families, particularly as Myanmar's poverty rate stands at 49.7%.¹² While the income they earn is critical for their families' survival, the challenges they face are immense. Separated from their family support networks, they must navigate long hours in harsh factory conditions while managing the hurdles of daily life on their own. Many are unaware of their legal rights, leaving them exposed to exploitation, unsafe working environments, and debt. For these young women, factory work offers hope, but the road to financial security is filled with obstacles.

The military coup on the 1st of February 2021 significantly worsened the situation of women in the garment sector. After the sector already faced challenges due to COVID-19, the local industry suffered massive job losses, with women disproportionately affected. Besides the still heightened risk of job insecurity, the instability of the government and military takeover has also put women workers at a higher risk of experiencing harassment and repression.¹³

8 <https://asiagarmenthub.net/resources/2024/cambodia-gft-sectoral-brief-issue3-.pdf>

9 <https://commerce-cambodia.com/26/09/2023/sector-brief-issue-2sep-2023-cambodia-garment-footwear-and-travel-goods-gft/>

10 <https://www.myanmargarments.org/wp-content/uploads/01/2022/MGMA-Survey-Report-31-Jan-2022-V2.pdf>

11 [https://webapps.ilo.org/infostories/en-GB/Stories/discrimination/garment-gender#the-global-garment-industry-a-bird%E9%80%2s-eye-view-\(1\)](https://webapps.ilo.org/infostories/en-GB/Stories/discrimination/garment-gender#the-global-garment-industry-a-bird%E9%80%2s-eye-view-(1))

12 <https://www.undp.org/press-releases/middle-class-disappearing-and-poverty-deepening-myanmar#:~:text=Poverty20%headcount20%as20%a20%percentage,a20%higher20%income20%per20%capita>

13 https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/40%asia/40%ro-bangkok/40%ilo-yangon/documents/publication/wcms_835900.pdf

What is needed to empower women workers in their workplace?

Empowering women garment workers across Asia requires addressing workplace and social barriers that limit their opportunities. Though the GTF sector provides economic independence, challenges remain. In Cambodia, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, ensuring workers know their rights is the first step. The next is equipping them with the tools to advocate for themselves. This is the mission of the regional project “Promoting Sustainability in the Textile and Garment Industry in Asia” (FABRIC).

LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPPORT

Local NGOs and partners actively manage and operate community platforms, ensuring programmes are tailored to the specific needs of women workers in each country.

BANGLADESH

Since 2006, GIZ has supported Karmojibi Nari (KN), a Bangladeshi NGO, in establishing Women’s Cafés. KN continues to run the Café by mobilizing resources from donors and private stakeholders. As of January 2022, KN operates six Women’s Cafés under the GIZ STILE project and is working on new business plans for their sustainability.¹⁴ In 2010, GIZ also supported four partner NGOs (Agrajatra, Awaj Foundation, OWDEB and KN), in setting up Women’s Cafés in Dhaka and Chattogram, as part of its “Promotion of Social and Environmental Standards in the Industry (PSES)

Programme” under the project “Empowering Women RMG Workers”.¹⁵

CAMBODIA

The WE House (Women Empowerment House), opened in June 2021 in Phnom Penh/ Cambodia. The Centre was created through a partnership between the Women Union Network, the Solidarity Centre, and GIZ FABRIC Asia. WUN brought insight into workers’ struggles, while the Solidarity Centre provided expertise in labour rights. The WE House is currently developing a future plan aimed at expanding their network through community engagement and factory collaboration, collectively referred to as the WE Network. To achieve this, WE House is seeking additional partners to join their steering committee.

MYANMAR

In 2016, GIZ and sequa gGmbH initiated a collaboration in Myanmar with the goal of empowering women garment workers. This partnership led to the establishment of the first women’s centre in Yangon, providing a safe space for women garment workers to learn about their rights. After the 2021 military coup, sequa took over project leadership. In 2023, ONOW established the pilot Hlaing Tharyar Women’s Centre in Yangon, leveraging its expertise in empowering female migrants through financial and entrepreneurship training to offer targeted support for garment workers. Later that year, the Khit Mate Swe Women’s Centre opened in Patheingyi, managed by the local NGO Pyi Gyi Khin. The Patheingyi centre is set to

¹⁴ Internal GIZ documents

¹⁵ Internal GIZ document

operate until December 2025, continuing its mission to support and empower women in Myanmar's garment sector. Additionally, two more centres in Yangon and Bago are operated by the Future Light Centre (FLC), with support from the MADE project, a multi-stakeholder alliance. FLC is a local organisation that focuses on protecting workers' rights and helping those who have experienced rights violations.

COMMUNITY PLATFORMS ESSENTIALITY FOR WOMEN WORKPLACE EQUITY AND ADVOCACY

Providing access to community services:

Women's community platforms operate at the heart of communities, providing a localised and accessible platform for education, entertainment, support, and networking. This community-centric approach enables targeted interventions to address specific challenges faced by women in the garment industry while fostering sustainability through community engagement.

Offering knowledge & capacity building:

Community platforms serve as hubs for continuous learning, offering training programmes, workshops, and resources that empower women with the skills and knowledge needed to navigate and challenge systemic inequalities, contributing to the long-term sustainability of these platforms.

Providing networking spaces: Community platforms have the potential to become key networking spaces. By fostering partnerships and collaboration, networks can share resources and thus avoid duplicating efforts, and collectively tackle industry-wide challenges, ensuring their long-term impact. Trade unions

play a vital role in this collaboration, amplifying advocacy efforts and making sure workers' voices are heard.

Empowering women in the workplace: Community platforms play an important role in empowering female workers by providing a supportive and safe environment that fosters self-confidence, skill development, and leadership. This empowerment contributes to dismantling gender stereotypes and promotes women's active participation in decision-making processes and skill development.

Creating inclusive workspaces: Community platforms contribute to the creation of inclusive workplaces by addressing the needs and challenges faced by women in the garment industry. This inclusivity extends beyond gender, embracing diversity in all its forms and thus slowly changing societal perceptions of gender roles and traditional roles.

Advocating for policy change: The role of community platforms as advocates for policy changes and influencers at both organisational and industry levels is underlined, emphasizing the need for proactive engagement.¹⁶

¹⁶ Internal GIZ document

Facts & figures...

BANGLADESH

- How many workers have been trained? **34,954** in **12** women's cafés during January 2022 and October 2023.
- How many conflicts have been solved with workers? **207**
- Workers received counselling support to resolve **1,252** conflicts.
- Under its current project, STILE in Bangladesh, GIZ is supporting **13** women's cafés in Dhaka and Chattogram managed by four NGOs.
- Currently about **50** women's cafés are operating in Bangladesh by different NGOs under various names.¹⁷

CAMBODIA

- **64** workers from the GTF and the informal sector received legal and mental health counselling between October 2021 and July 2024.
- **151** training courses were conducted on labour law, gender issues, and social awareness.
- **15** batches of computer and English courses have been conducted.
- Up to **400** workers and job seekers participated in job-employment training.
- A new mini-library was set up and is actively used by visitors at the centre.
- Safe spaces were provided for union and worker meetings.
- **8,500** workers accessed services at the WE House and indirectly thousands more have been reached through its network.¹⁸

MYANMAR

- Around **705** female garment workers from over **100** factories in Yangon, Bago, and Patheingyi participated in the centre's activities between 2023-2024.
- **217** women received nutritional tele-counselling, and **17** had in-person counselling.
- **720** garment workers attended **65** peer group sessions on topics like nutrition, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, safe migration, and gender-based violence and harassment, with about 6% male participation.
- **159** female workers completed vocational training in sewing, basic computer skills, cooking, and administration, with 11% male participation in transferable skills.¹⁹

¹⁷ Internal GIZ document

¹⁸ Internal GIZ document

¹⁹ Internal document sequa gGmbH

CAMBODIA

Sreydet Samnang's story



“Before the WE House, I didn’t know where to go. Now I have a space to learn, relax, and be myself without spending a dime!”

Sreydet Samnang, a young woman from Cambodia, skillfully navigates her motorcycle through the busy streets of Phnom Penh on her daily commute. She comes from a rural area three hours from the capital. As the second eldest daughter of six children, she tries to financially support her family in the countryside. After 9th grade (early high school), she moved to Phnom Penh in search of work. Dreams of further education had to be abandoned, and the well-being of her family was prioritized. Phnom Penh has been her home for some years now.

From Monday to Saturday, Sreydet drives through the crowded city to her place of work – a garment factory. She is employed as a textile worker and sews countless garments, often 10 hours a day. Her salary averages \$300, half of which she sends to her family. There are few opportunities for advancement in the factory, working conditions are often precarious and wages are low. But Sreydet wants more than that – she wants to acquire knowledge and educate herself.

One day, her friend Pisey tells her about the women’s centre WE House. The WE House serves as a meeting place for textile workers and offers a range of services and trainings to improve the living conditions of workers. The training takes place on Sundays, which is the only day off for them. Beside the different trainings, the WE House advises female textile workers on psychological and legal issues. Sreydet is enthusiastic about the trainings that are offered and has been attending computer courses regularly to further extend her education. “Before the WE House, I didn’t know where to go. Now I have a space to learn, relax and be myself without spending a dime”, she says. But the WE House isn’t just about acquiring skills; it’s also about empowering women workers to stand up for their interests and rights. The Sunday training sessions have given Sreydet and her colleagues a new understanding of complex issues such as social protection, access to pensions or how to deal with labour disputes. Sreydet says that through the trainings, she has a better understanding of her rights as a textile worker. With the newly acquired knowledge from the computer courses, she would like to carry out an office job in the future.

BANGLADESH

Happy's story



“I am grateful to Karmojibi Nari for standing by me and supporting me in my fight for my rights.”

In 2022, due to financial hardship, I came to Tongi from Jamalpur with my husband in search of work. On December 1, 2022, I joined PRS Limited as a sewing operator. After a few days of working, I learned about the Tongi women's café run by Karmojibi Nari through a colleague. Whenever I could, after factory hours, I would visit the café with my colleague Rozina. During this time, I participated in training sessions organised under the STILE project, covering topics like labour law, environment, leadership, and communication, which gave me insights into workers' rights—knowledge I didn't have before. My interest in learning more grew after the training, and I would often visit the women's café to discuss various issues and seek advice from the café manager and lawyer.

At that time, I was pregnant. I learned through the training that if I worked in any factory for over six months, I would be entitled to four months of paid maternity leave. However, my factory management started pressuring me to resign, citing an inability to provide maternity benefits. I was aware of my rights and was determined to claim them, as I had already completed two years at the factory. By then, I was seven months pregnant. After submitting all necessary documents to the HR department for my maternity leave, they continued to deny my request and were attempting to terminate

me under false accusations, treating me poorly to pressure me into resigning.

On March 11, 2024, the factory management finally informed me that they would not provide any maternity benefits. They used intimidation tactics to force me to sign a resignation letter and pushed me out of the factory. I then approached Mominur Rahman, the manager at the Tongi women's café run by Karmojibi Nari, and shared the entire situation. He listened attentively and spoke to the administrative manager of my factory. However, the manager kept making excuses to avoid granting me leave.

Following Mominur Rahman's advice, I filed a complaint at the Tongi police station. When I received no satisfactory outcome.

I submitted a formal complaint to the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments in Gazipur. Subsequently, under immense pressure, PRS Limited finally granted me my entitled paid maternity leave. I am grateful to Karmojibi Nari for standing by me and supporting me in my fight for my rights.

MYANMAR

Soe Myat Kyaw's story



“The women’s centre gave me a satisfying and safe space to learn new skills and make friends.”

Soe Myat Kyaw, 24, began working in the garment industry in 2017. Her parents were farmers, and she was the youngest daughter in her family. She was excited and passionate about her new role at the newly established Myanmar Knitting Factory in Patheingyi, the largest city in the Ayeyarwaddy delta. Trained as a sewing operator, she quickly adapted to her role. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Myanmar’s garment industry faced severe challenges due to the global economic downturn, and her factory was hit hard when international buyers cancelled large orders, leaving the company with substantial financial liabilities. As a result, nearly 3,000 workers, including Soe Myat Kyaw, were laid off.

Although she received severance pay and additional support from the European Union’s “Myan Ku” pandemic assistance programme, finding a new job was difficult. The situation worsened after the military takeover in February 2021, tightening the job market further in Patheingyi and surrounding areas. During her job search, she learned about the Khit Mate Swe centre through a friend. There, she found a welcoming community that included some of her former colleagues, which provided her with comfort and encouragement. “The women’s centre gave me a satisfying and safe space to learn new skills and make friends”,

says the 24-year-old. She decided to enroll in the centre’s free computer skills training for unemployed individuals, hoping to reskill and explore new career paths.

Through this training, she learned valuable skills in spreadsheets, web browsing, and typing, which opened new job opportunities. She also attended the Khit Mate Swe centre’s “Sunday Cafés,” where she gained knowledge on health topics such as HIV/AIDS and STI prevention. Today, she works as an administrative staff member at the Linda Knitting Factory, using her new computer skills in a safer, more comfortable work environment with shorter hours than her previous sewing role. Soe Myat Kyaw is grateful for her new position and enjoys the stability and satisfaction it provides.



Planning

CHAPTER I

This chapter covers the essential elements of planning and preparation required to establish and operate a women's community platform. It emphasises identifying target groups, defining operational structures, selecting an ideal location, and addressing key questions beforehand.

WHO ARE THE TARGET BENEFICIARIES?

As the title suggests, the target group is supposed to be women working in the garment sector. However, there are questions that arise from this:

Core target group

- » Do you want to include non-workers?
- » Which industry are you serving?
- » Are you targeting garment workers only?
- » Do you want to include women union members?
- » Are you prioritising members of a specific role or job function within the sector?
- » (Female) home workers?
- » Workers who are currently job-seeking or have recently been fired?
- » Workers with different abilities?
- » Younger girls and/or men?

Others

- » Is there an age limit for participants?
- » Do you consider different income levels within the target group when planning activities?
- » Do you account for language barriers or cultural differences within the target group?
- » What criteria should be used to prioritise participants if demand exceeds capacity?

HOW TO DETERMINE THE LOCATION AND OPENING HOURS?

Location is key in setting up a women's community platform that serves its target beneficiaries. The right location not only enhances accessibility but also maximizes engagement, relevance, and safety for the participants. Choosing a convenient spot can significantly increase participation and can create a strong sense of community among workers.

To understand the needs of your target beneficiaries, and find the ideal location, consider the questions below:

- » Are most of the target beneficiaries working near industrial zones or living in residential clusters?
- » What are their preferred locations for visiting a community centre?
- » How far are they willing to travel to attend the centre's activities?
- » Is the location easily accessible by public transport, or is it within walking distance of factories and workers' dormitories?
- » What are the safety considerations for participants travelling to and from the centre, especially during late hours?
- » Does the location align with the daily routines and schedules of the target beneficiaries?
- » Can the centre's hours of operation be synchronised with the workers' shift timings to ensure maximum attendance?
- » Does the chosen location have the potential to expand as the centre's services and the number of beneficiaries grow?

Suggested pre-activities to identify the best location

- » Design a survey to find out the preferred location of the community platform from the target beneficiaries.
- » Conduct the survey in at least three different areas to get a comprehensive view.

Once the location is determined, find a building or a space that fits your budget and make sure to assess:

- » Ideally, the centre is within walking distance from factories and workers' dormitories.
- » Safety and security of the building itself, as well as entrances and exits.
- » Can the location accommodate planned activities without overcrowding?
- » Suitable for people with different abilities.
- » Total running costs of the location.
- » Easy transportation options for visitors.
- » Enough space for complementary income generation through social enterprises (e. g. catering, dormitories for workers, day care, rent out the space for events, design and sewing workshops, etc.) aiming at a projected income that compensates fixed costs in the long run.
- » It should be noted that special safety measures must be considered when setting up day care facilities.

HOW TO DETERMINE YOUR MULTI-LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS?

For sustainable, scalable, and effective change, engage multi-level stakeholders (MLS)—public and private sectors, civil society, and workers. Involving these groups broadens resources, strengthens advocacy, and supports policy changes that benefit women workers in the garment sector. Integrate stakeholders in relevant activities and keep them informed about your work to build a strong support system and community trust.

Examples of beneficiaries at different levels are given below:

Community level:

- » Target beneficiaries such as women garment workers and their family members
- » Hostels or living communities of workers
- » Local community leaders
- » Women union leaders

Local level:

- » Factory-level trade unions
- » Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)
- » Factories and employers
- » Factory committees (i.e. work councils)
- » Local police
- » Local government authorities

National level:

- » Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training
- » Ministry of Commerce, Industries and Textile
- » Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
- » Ministry of Immigration²⁰
- » National Trade Union Federations
- » Business owners and manufacturer associations
- » Buyers' representatives

20 Can vary depending on each country and NGO network

Regional level:

- » Country coordination groups can be created if the objectives are aligned.
- » A good example is the regional network supported by GIZ in close cooperation with sequa gGmbH between Myanmar women garment workers with the objective to exchange experiences and lessons learned to increase the capacity of the NGOs implementing the cafés and centres.
- » Regional networks and partnerships
- » Regional NGOs and advocacy groups

International level:

- » International trade union federations
- » International civil society platforms or networks
- » Global brands and buyers
- » International women's rights organisations
- » International development agencies
- » International Women's Day community

WHAT TYPE OF LEGAL REGISTRATION DO YOU NEED?

Addressing the legal registration and long-term planning strategies for a women's community platform is crucial to ensure legitimacy, access to funding and sustainability. Legal registration establishes compliance with regulations and eligibility for grants as well as building trust with stakeholders. The registration details can differ from country to country.

WHAT PLANNING STRATEGIES ENSURE LONG-TERM IMPACT FOR A COMMUNITY PLATFORM FOR WOMEN GARMENT WORKERS?

Diversify income streams: In addition to traditional funding sources, consider establishing diverse income-generating activities within women's centres. This approach enhances financial sustainability and reduces dependence on a single funding channel.

Strengthen collaborative networks: Foster partnerships and collaboration, particularly with trade unions, worker organisations, and the private sector. This collaborative approach amplifies advocacy efforts and broadens the impact of initiatives, ensuring a more comprehensive and inclusive approach.

Incorporate sustainable practices from the inception: Develop and implement sustainable practices within women's centres to ensure their long-term impact at the very beginning of their implementation. Consider environmentally friendly initiatives, efficient resource management, and practices that contribute to the overall well-being of the community and the women's centres themselves.

Continuous knowledge exchange: Sustain knowledge exchange and capacity-building programmes for women in the garment industry as well as for staff members running the centres, particularly through regional exchanges. These ongoing initiatives contribute to the continuous empowerment of women, providing them with the necessary tools and skills to develop their professional environments effectively.²¹

21 Internal GIZ document

WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU HAVE/NEED?

The effective operation and sustainability of the community platform relies on having the right resources. Both internal and external resources are vital to meet the needs of target beneficiaries and provide impactful services. Internal resources, like those listed below, will support daily operations, while external resources and partnerships will strengthen the centre's capacity.

Internal resources

Which internal resources do you have? Some examples of internal resources are:

- » Human resources
- » Staff for daily operations, e.g. managers, facilitators, trainers and supporting staff
- » Consultants for specific expertise e.g. business planning, financial management or legal compliance
- » Volunteers for outreach or event organisation and support
- » Funds as available capital to cover operational expenses, salaries, rent, utilities, programme costs and emergency reserves
- » Office space including administrative space for coordination activities
- » Equipment and furniture including desks, chairs, office supplies
- » Technological resources including computers, software, internet connectivity
- » Library and resource centre
- » Training materials including books, guides, training on skill development
- » Social Media presence including website and online platforms relevant to the country of operation (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter)
- » Grievance redress mechanisms, including channels for reporting issues, sharing feedback or seeking support for other concerns.

External resources

The external resources you need will depend on the activities and the expected results that you are looking to achieve as well as the partner that you are intending to work with. You can start with as little as one person managing the part time position in a small hostel room to a big centre with all sorts of facilities to provide the target beneficiaries with life skills and entertainment space with a big team.

Depending on the NGO that you partner with, you can benefit from their internal knowledge resources. For example, labour unions can teach labour laws as well as conflict resolution and are able to consult. On the other hand, NGOs may be specialised in soft skills training such as leadership, personal finance management etc.

Are planning tools available?

Effective planning tools are critical to ensure smooth operations, monitor progress and achieve your long-term goals:

- » Detailed operation plans and/or Gantt charts (see [annex 1](#))
- » Budget sheet (see [annex 2](#))
- » Concept notes (see [annex 3](#)) and business plans
- » Break-even analysis, Results Based Monitoring (RBM) or Management Information Systems (MIS) for internal/external monitoring [Google sheet link](#) to download format.



Human resources and capacity building

CHAPTER II

This chapter focuses on identifying personnel needs, defining job roles, and building essential skills needed for a strong team. Investing in clear job descriptions, capacity building, and training will help your community platform develop a capable and motivated workforce to meet participant needs effectively.

WHAT KIND OF STAFF AND HOW MANY WILL YOU NEED?

What are their job descriptions? How are they delineated from each other and who reports to whom?

- » What kind of staff (and how many full-time or part-time) do you need?
- » What essential and desirable skills should staff have for their roles?
- » What additional skills could enhance team effectiveness?
- » What is the staffing budget, and how should it be allocated to support financial sustainability?
- » What training and capacity-building initiatives are necessary to prepare staff effectively?

Depending on the budget and activities planned, you may need as little as a part-time manager position. A key knowledge pre-requisite for employees are topics related to the target group. For example, if you are targeting migrant garment workers, you might want to hire a manager with a similar background who has more experience in this field than the target audience. If you want to hire a lawyer, find a firm or an individual that has the right background to be able to support your target audience.

If budget allows, it is best to hire someone who can take care of all the reporting and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), which will be advantageous for the grant's application process. Reporting should be undertaken in a systematic way from the start of the process, to be as efficient as possible.

While managers primarily focus on administrative tasks, consider hiring a recruitment or marketing officer to ensure the target audience remains actively engaged with the community platform.

Finally, a community platform should have a strong base in the community it is serving. To achieve this, you could build up a strong volunteer network. Volunteers can act as multipliers of information, disseminate messages, or even act as leaders or organisers. Ideally, these volunteers stem from the same background as the target audience, share the same goals as the community platform and have received training in your key awareness-raising topics as well as an understanding of the community platform for women garment workers. Their role should be to get people to know about the community platform and get them to attend to share knowledge.

WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO INVEST TIME IN MAKING JOB DESCRIPTIONS FOR ALL STAFF WORKING FOR THE COMMUNITY PLATFORM?

The typical personnel needed for community platforms are:

- » Legal advisor (e.g. on labour and family disputes)
- » Café/centre manager
- » Technical staff

- » Organisers
- » Trainers
- » Admin and finance team
- » Community leaders (can be further engaged to carry out awareness raising beyond the project).

Ensure that the local NGO carefully considers the job description, qualifications, and competencies before hiring, as this will streamline staff orientation for new recruits and clearly define the tasks and responsibilities of each team member.

[Annex 4](#) provides an example of a job description for a community platform manager.

DO YOUR STAFF HAVE THE CAPACITY AND SKILLS NECESSARY TO RUN THE COMMUNITY PLATFORM? WHAT KIND OF TRAINING AND SKILL SUPPORT WILL THEY NEED?

To ensure staff effectiveness and quality, all employees should receive training tailored to their job requirements. Training will cover crucial topics such as:

- » Advocacy skills
- » Day care management
- » Legal counselling (national laws)
- » Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) and reporting
- » Nutritional counselling
- » Psychosocial counselling
- » Psychological counselling
- » Safeguarding practices
- » Communication skills
- » Mediation and negotiation skills

Timing: Training can be provided either before or during the deployment phase to ensure staff are well-prepared for their roles.

Volunteer training needs: Volunteers also require tailored training. They should be:

- » Resourceful in assisting community platform employees and visitors.
- » Professional and aware of their limitations, especially in areas where specialized knowledge (like legal advice) is required.

Quality assurance: Annual performance appraisals conducted by NGOs are essential to maintain high standards and ensure continuous staff development. This ongoing evaluation will help uphold the quality of services provided.



Advocacy and coordination

CHAPTER III

This chapter covers key factors in planning advocacy for a community platform. Advocacy amplifies marginalised voices and influences decision-makers. The section outlines selecting effective tools and developing evidence-based strategies to maximise impact and reach.

Factors to be considered

First, determine who is your target group for the advocacy initiative:

- » **Advocacy initiatives are most effective when a multi-level stakeholder approach is adopted, engaging stakeholders from the government, private sector, and civil society.**
- » **Engage diverse stakeholders** to maximise impact, including policymakers, business leaders, trade unions, and NGOs.
- » **Assess the scope for evidence-based advocacy.** Use data, testimonials, and research to highlight the challenges faced by women garment workers and advocate for better conditions.
- » **Ensure advocacy efforts are supported by solid evidence.** By presenting concrete data, community platforms can influence policy, raise public awareness, and drive meaningful change.
- » **Explore alternative solutions.** Identify different advocacy approaches, such as policy recommendations, awareness campaigns, or industry collaborations, to achieve your objectives.

HOW

What tools and ways of communication are suitable for advocacy to your target group?

- » Do you want to share a study paper at a seminar?
- » Does your target group include Facebook users who are more likely to respond to a

video?

WHAT

- » Use an **emotional, rational, or logical appeal**—or a mix of all three for greater impact.
- » **Evidence-based advocacy is key:** Support your argument with credible studies on living wages or minimum wage comparisons.
- » If **data gaps** exist, consider **commissioning a study.**
- » **Firsthand experiences and case studies** add a powerful, human perspective to your advocacy.

SAMPLES OF ADVOCACY ANALYSIS TOOLS

Steps for stakeholder analysis

- » Identify who your stakeholders are.
- » Work out their power, influence, and interest, so that you know who to focus on. This can be done in a subjective or qualitative manner through team consultation.
- » Develop a good understanding of the most important stakeholders, so that you know how they are likely to respond, and how you can win their support on issues that are important to your advocacy.

WHICH DIGITAL TOOLS CAN HELP PROMOTE COMMUNITY PLATFORMS FOR WOMEN GARMENT WORKERS? – CASE STUDIES FROM...

BANGLADESH

The use of digital tools significantly enhanced the effectiveness of the [COVID-19 awareness campaign](#) among workers in Bangladesh. The campaign featured “Nargis,” a fictional garment worker who educated others about COVID-19 through engaging comic series and animation videos. Utilising social media platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and [YouTube](#), the campaign reached thousands of workers with accessible and engaging content. Regular quizzes, live sessions with doctors, and digital hubs further supported learning and participation. The campaign also addressed dengue and general health, with community leaders spreading awareness and promoting the campaign’s resources. This multi-faceted digital approach not only informed workers but also helped built a strong sense of community and ongoing support.

In the context of community platforms for women garment workers, this means:

- » This approach through social media can also be used to effectively promote women’s community platforms and their services.
- » Likeable characters like “Nargis” can establish a personal connection and inspire women to get involved in health, education and women’s empowerment initiatives.
- » Social media platforms can be used to reach a broad and diverse audience, making information about women’s community platforms easily accessible.

- » These platforms provide the opportunity to provide real-time support, resources, and community-building activities.
- » Interactive features such as quizzes, polls, and live sessions can actively engage women and encourage participation.
- » By increasing visibility and engagement, social media can raise awareness of women’s community platforms services and benefits.

CAMBODIA

Digital tools are essential for promoting women’s centres and effectively reaching workers. In Cambodia, the [WE House Facebook page](#) serves as a central hub for engagement, while separate online panel discussions focus on topics such as gender equality, women’s empowerment, stress management and sexual harassment prevention. Influencer campaigns on Facebook, TikTok and Instagram further amplify these messages. Social media giveaways, including Q&A sessions with prizes like WE House-branded tumblers and bags, help boost interaction. Additionally, promotional videos featuring testimonials from key stakeholders raise awareness and highlight the centres impact.

MYANMAR

In Myanmar, digital tools like Facebook and Viber play a crucial role in promoting women’s centres and supporting workers. These platforms are used for networking, raising awareness, providing chatbot consultations, and offering matchmaking services to connect workers with resources. Additionally, workshops and forums with partners and labour rights organisations help identify workers’ needs and facilitate matchmaking. Posters and flyers in local languages are also distributed to ensure key information reaches a wider audience. These tools, combined with community events and digital campaigns, effectively raise awareness among workers and promote their rights and well-being.

DEVELOP TOOLS AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR YOUR KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Figures 1 and 2 show Stakeholder Power-Interest Grid and Sample Stakeholder Power-Interest Grid for an Issue

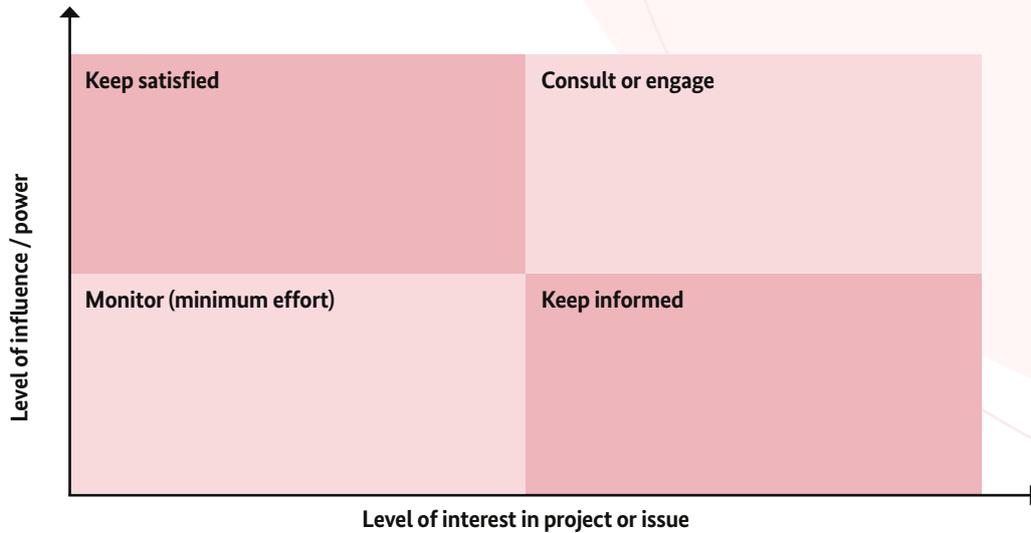


Figure 1: Stakeholder Power-Interest Grid

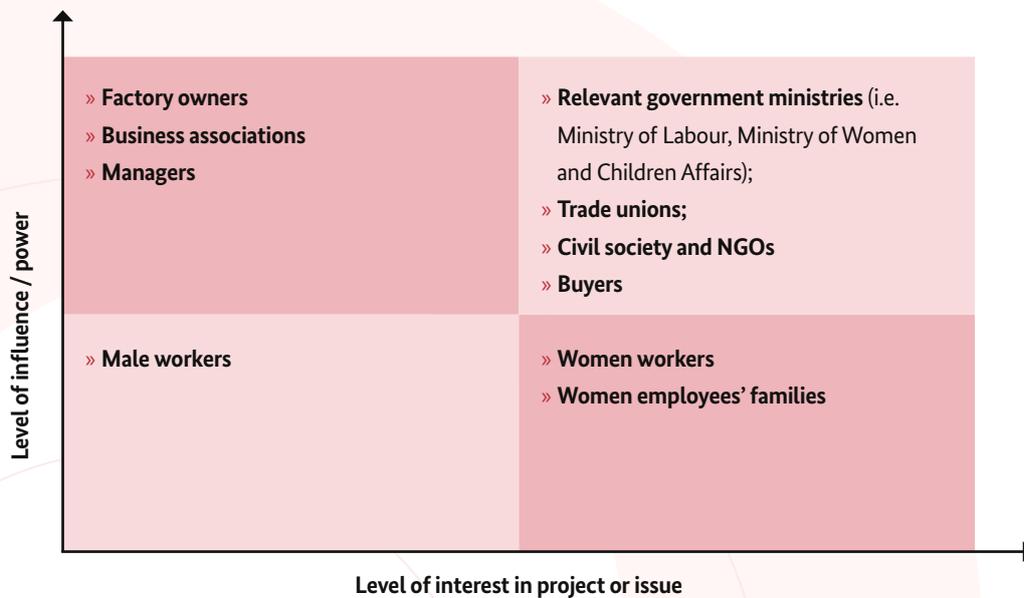


Figure 2: Stakeholder Power-Interest Grid for - Anti-Gender-Discrimination Law for Workplace Advocacy



Monitoring and evaluation

CHAPTER IV

Factors to be considered

Factors to consider

- » What are your key performance output and outcome indicators?
- » Are your indicators SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound)?
- » Do you have baseline values?
- » Set your targets (quarterly or annual figures and expected timelines for achievements).
- » Should the data be monitored quantitatively or qualitatively?

Evidence and knowledge management (what to preserve) - sample

- » NGO reports
- » Attendance sheets of trainings
- » Legal registers
- » Help line logbook
- » Training manuals or toolkits
- » RBM or MIS database
- » Factories list
- » Beneficiaries (workers) list
- » Documents produced
- » Training reports

What to monitor (sample data)

- » Visitor number at community platform per week/month
- » Number of workers aware of specific focus topics e.g. key labour law provisions (ideally: sex-disaggregated data on workers by sector)
- » Number of workers who have completed a training programme in a given period
- » Number of awareness sessions, trainings, or workshops by topics
- » Number of disputes filed
- » Number of disputes settled/resolved
- » Percentage of disputes resolved
- » Amount of money recovered on behalf of workers due to legal cases
- » Number of peer educator groups involved in activity
- » Number of factory committee (work council) workers' representatives who received training
- » Number of factory committee (work council) management representatives who received training
- » Number of factories covered (i.e. No. of factories from which workers and/or management are utilizing trainings, legal advice and/or other services)
- » Number of downloads of videos, articles, apps, documents

How to monitor (examples to be agreed on)

- » Based on donor or tax office requirements
- » Monthly, quarterly, bi-annual or annual reports for stakeholders, donors and sharing
- » Data for case studies
- » RBM or MIS based data monitoring
- » By using QR codes
- » Training feedback forms
- » Service feedback forms
- » Recommended: An external evaluation once every two years

SAMPLE M&E TOOLS

- » RBM [Google sheet link](#) to download format
- » Training & service feedback form ([Annex 5 & 6](#))



Setting up a community platform for women garment workers: Challenges & solutions

CHAPTER V

Challenges

When setting up a community platform, there may be challenges that you did not anticipate from the very beginning. The problems and suggested solutions listed here are based on the experiences of community platforms in Bangladesh, Cambodia and Myanmar. They are provided as examples to help you identify and address problems efficiently.

Challenges	How to overcome
» Workers are often overloaded with tasks in their own roles, making it difficult for them to attend meetings or training sessions.	» Try scheduling most of the training on holidays, ensuring all workers can participate.
» Many trainees bring their children with them, which disrupts their focus during training.	» To solve this, a children's corner should be arranged where children can stay. » Providing better play facilities can improve their experience.
» Most trainees are uncomfortable training in locations located on the 4th or 5th floor.	» In response, training should be set up on the ground or 1st floors for easier access.
» The migration of workers poses a challenge, as it results in the loss of trained and competent PEG leaders who leave their leadership roles.	» A system of mentorship and leadership succession can be implemented. Current leaders could train and mentor others before migrating, ensuring continuity of leadership. » Additionally, creating an online network or platform would allow former leaders to stay connected and continue contributing remotely, helping to spread knowledge even after migration.
» Community platform managers struggle to gather workers for training, as they often have to go door to door or make multiple phone calls. This leads to delays, preventing training sessions from starting on time.	» To streamline the process, establish a more efficient communication system such as a group messaging app or platform that allows managers to send reminders and updates in bulk. » Introducing a fixed training schedule with advance notice can help workers plan and reduce last-minute coordination. » Offering incentives for punctuality could encourage timely participation.

- » Owners and senior management often pressure workers to put in extra time without overtime pay. When workers attempt to speak up, they are threatened with being forced to work or risk losing their jobs.
- » As a result, workers face constant pressure, which leads to delays and difficulties in being on time for training or continuing education.
- » Workers hesitate to complain because they are concerned that their information in a central database could affect future job prospects.

- » Establish clear policies that ensure fair compensation for any additional hours worked, in line with labour laws.
- » Implement a grievance mechanism where workers can report such issues confidentially and without fear of retaliation.
- » Collaboration with trade unions or worker rights organisations can help protect workers from unfair practices and ensure a healthier work environment that promotes punctuality.
- » Implement an anonymous reporting system and ensure clear communication about data privacy. Building trust with management and stakeholders can further encourage workers to share concerns without fear.

- » Worker illiteracy presents a significant challenge.

- » Develop training materials that rely less on text and more on visual aids, such as diagrams, videos, and demonstrations, to ensure all workers can participate effectively.
- » Offering basic literacy programmes as part of the workplace training can help improve long-term communication and skill development among the workforces.

- » Limited access to mobile phones, smartphones, and the internet among many workers causes delays in mobile-based activities.

- » Provide alternative communication channels, such as group meetings, printed notices, or public bulletin boards.
- » Setting up shared access to Wi-Fi, smartphones or digital devices could help workers participate in mobile-based activities more efficiently.

- » When workers visit the community platforms, the factory management issues them a show cause notice, questioning why they are attending an NGO space.

- » Engage in dialogue with factory management to raise awareness about the purpose and benefits of the community platform, emphasising that it provides vital support services for workers, such as training and well-being programmes.
- » Establish formal agreements or partnerships between the community platform and factory management to reduce suspicion and encourage collaboration, ensuring workers can access these spaces without fear of repercussions.

- » In countries with conservative and patriarchal structures, some women are restricted from participating in non-work activities outside their home.
- » In some cases, workers in factories are directed to avoid any interaction or association with NGOs or federation members, restricting their access to the resources and support available through the women's community platform and limiting opportunities for social dialogue.

- » Engage with community leaders and family members to highlight the importance of women's participation in these programmes for their personal and professional growth.
- » Organising activities within the community can help reduce barriers, allowing women to attend without conflicting with cultural norms.
- » Promote social dialogue between management, workers, and external organisations to highlight the benefits of collaboration.
- » Build partnerships with factories and foster open communication to establish trust in NGOs and federations.
- » Educating both parties on the value of support networks ensures workers can access resources without fear of retaliation.

- » Women workers are burdened with managing both household duties and factory work, which limits their ability to participate in activities at the community platform.

- » Offering support services like on-site childcare, on-site laundry machines, time management training, or stress-relief programmes can ease their workload and improve overall well-being.
- » Encouraging shared household responsibilities through community awareness programmes could also contribute to a more balanced lifestyle for women workers.

- » A lack of commitment from key stakeholders, including brands, factory management, NGOs, civil society organisations (CSOs), and government representatives, can restrict the women's community platform from delivering comprehensive support and resources to female workers.

- » Strengthen communication and collaboration among stakeholders by organising regular meetings, workshops, and information-sharing sessions.
- » Develop partnerships and formal agreements to align the interests of all parties and demonstrate the value of supporting community platforms.
- » Involving these stakeholders in decision-making processes can enhance their commitment and improve the overall impact of the platform, ensuring it becomes a well-supported resource for women workers.

- » Limited resources and rising inflation reduce the ability of the community platforms to provide adequate services and support to workers.
- » This impacts the platform's operations, limiting the range of programmes and resources available to the community.

- » To address this, seek funding from NGOs, government grants, or corporate sponsors.
- » Implement cost-saving measures, prioritise essential services, and collaborate with local organisations to bundle resources and expand offerings.

- » Current political instability and safety concerns create challenges for the community platform, affecting its ability to operate consistently and provide a safe environment for workers.
- » These issues can limit participation and reduce the effectiveness of its programmes.

- » Establish contingency plans to ensure continued operation during periods of unrest, such as virtual sessions or relocating activities to safer areas.
- » Strengthen security measures at the centre and collaborate with local authorities and community leaders to enhance safety.
- » Providing workers with clear safety guidelines and updates can help maintain engagement despite political challenges.

- » Limited stakeholder engagement reduces the effectiveness of the community platform, restricting access to resources, partnerships, and support needed to run programmes and initiatives successfully.

- » Increase efforts to actively involve key stakeholders such as brands, factory management, NGOs, and local authorities.
- » Regular meetings, clear communication, and showcasing the community platforms impact can foster stronger relationships.
- » Building strategic partnerships will enhance resource sharing, improve programme quality, and ensure long-term sustainability.

- » The departure of brands from countries like Myanmar and the shutdown of factories have significantly impacted the community platform reducing worker participation and limiting funding and resources needed to sustain its programmes.

- » Diversify funding sources by seeking support from local and international NGOs, government agencies, and alternative brand partnerships.
- » Expanding the community platforms focuses to include upskilling and job-transition support for affected workers, helping them adapt to the changing economic landscape.
- » Building connections with remaining businesses can also ensure continued engagement and resource flow for the centre.

- » High unemployment and increased migration to other countries can reduce the number of workers engaging with the community platform, impacting its ability to run programmes and maintain active participation.

- » Adapt the platforms services to offer job search support, skills training, and entrepreneurship programmes.
- » Partner with local businesses and international organisations for remote training for migrants, ensuring the community platform remains relevant despite unemployment and migration.

- » Conflict of interest with stakeholders

- » Work cooperatively with stakeholders in the same sector to address competitive concerns.



Funding mechanism and sustainability

CHAPTER VI

EXTERNAL RESOURCES MOBILISATION

a) Infographic donor map

Donors and international organisations either previously or currently supporting workers' platforms include:

- » German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
- » EU
- » USAID
- » DFID
- » GIZ
- » STILE
- » ILO
- » C&A Foundation
- » Lindex
- » Action Aid
- » Care
- » Solidarity Centre

b) Fundraising tools

- » Best practice case studies and stories
- » Business cases
- » Targeted videos
- » Online fundraisers (through websites, social media/Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok etc.)
- » Checking calls for proposals and bidding if needed
- » Preparing concept notes and proposals
- » Networking
- » Digital campaigns/hubs
- » Crowdsourcing
- » Fundraising events
- » Getting affiliated as charities or NGOs to which personal donations can get tax returns
- » Lotteries
- » National TV

INTERNAL RESOURCES MOBILISATION

a) Income generation or cost subsidisation avenues

- » Social business/social enterprises models
- » Cooperatives
- » Membership fees from workers
- » Membership fees from corporates
- » Venue rentals
- » Service fees
- » Resource sharing with factories (i.e. training venues)
- » Office sharing with other projects
- » Training or consultancy fees
- » Sales of research data as facilitators or access points for researchers

b) Factors to consider for social enterprises

- » What are the legal requirements to be followed to generate income?
- » Ps of Marketing:
 - » Who are your target customers?
 - » What is your value proposition?
 - » Consider the marketing mix: Product, people (customers), place (location), price, promotion, packaging, positioning
 - » Plus, supply chain and distribution channels

c) What are your revenue streams, fixed or variable costs?

- » Example fixed: rent, utilities and staff salaries
- » Example variable: production costs, sales commissions

d) Conduct a break-even analysis

- » What is the minimum you need to earn or to sell, to at least recover your fixed costs?

Innovative plans/concepts to support the long-term sustainability of community platforms for women garment workers

- » Fair price shops for workers
- » (Community-based) day care centres for children of garments workers
- » Establishment of a pre-school for children with a minimal admission fee
- » Offering cultural activities for children
- » Workers' dormitories (hostels)
- » Computer training centres
- » Cosmetic corner-shop & beauty parlor
- » Second-hand clothes shops, where clothes from various sources are sold by redundant/unemployed/retired employees.
- » Installation of washing machines/laundry facilities that can be used by employees and the surrounding community. The workers receive the service at a subsidised rate.

USEFUL TOOLS

To view PPT via Google Slides

- » [Business Plan](#)
- » [Marketing Plan](#)
- » [Ps of marketing](#)
- » [Gantt Chart](#)
- » [Breakeven analysis](#)
- » [Blue Ocean Strategy](#)



How to form an implementer's network?

CHAPTER VII

WHAT

Set the objective(s) of your network i.e. knowledge sharing, collective fundraising, stronger regional advocacy, etc.

WHO

- » Determine who the network membership is open to e.g. specific organisations or types of organisations or individuals, etc.
- » Determine whether membership is open to all, or if prospective members need to apply based on certain criteria or a questionnaire?

HOW

VIRTUAL PLATFORMS

You may wish to form national, regional or international communities of practice, or interest or advocacy networks through leveraging social media i.e. Facebook pages, WhatsApp groups to communicate and exchange. It is usually helpful to moderate groups to foster positive exchanges. Web-based structured forums and discussion threads may also be made available if web hosting secretary and funding is available. Funding for such may be raised from individual or corporate membership fees, subscriptions, etc.

FACE TO FACE WORKSHOPS AND EXCHANGE VISITS

Meet in person at least annually to exchange ideas, promote social cohesion and build on the social capital of the network. Pre-plan and fundraise ahead to make the event a success.

From local efforts to regional impact: How the Women's Centres Network Exchange workshops can drive change – A Case Study

GIZ FABRIC Asia created the Women's Centres Network Exchange workshops in 2023 to promote gender-equitable working conditions in the garment and textiles industry by fostering collaboration between women's centres from Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Myanmar. These workshops respond to the growing need for collective action and innovative approaches to gender equity in the global garment sector.

The Network Exchange workshops serve as a platform for cross-regional learning and cooperation. Through this collaboration, participants can explore strategies for promoting gender equity, improving working conditions, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of community platforms. These exchanges also provide a space for discussing practical solutions like diverse income streams, multi-use spaces, and safeguarding measures to sustain the platforms. Additionally, the workshops support the development of resources, digital tools and union collaboration. Ultimately, they help building strong networks that can implement sustainable models for supporting women garment workers, ensuring lasting impact across the industry.

HOW CAN THE KNOWLEDGE GAINED FROM THE WOMEN'S CENTRES NETWORK EXCHANGE WORKSHOPS ASSIST IN BUILDING A NETWORK OF IMPLEMENTERS?

- » **Cross-regional learning:** Sharing successful strategies and challenges across different regions helps implementers adapt and refine their approaches.
- » **Collaboration:** Engaging diverse stakeholders—Centres, trade unions, and industry leaders—fosters collective action and shared goals.
- » **Sustainability focus:** Addressing long-term

sustainability challenges, such as diverse funding sources and multi-use spaces, is critical for lasting impact.

- » **Capacity building:** Providing training on labour rights, gender equity, and worker empowerment strengthens the network's ability to support women workers.
- » **Digital tools integration:** Utilising digital platforms and tools, like social media and chatbots, for awareness-raising and worker engagement enhances outreach.
- » **Trade union partnerships:** Collaborating with unions amplifies workers' voices and secures gender-equitable workplace conditions.
- » **Replication and scalability:** The model's

success shows it can be scaled or replicated in other regions, with localised adaptations.

- » **Inclusive approach:** Ensuring the involvement of workers, especially women, in decision-making processes leads to more effective and relevant outcomes.
- » **Hands-on experience:** Site visits and practical sessions provide deeper insights into real-world challenges and solutions.
- » **Actionable recommendations:** Concrete steps, such as developing concept papers or additional (digital) resources, guide future implementations and strategic improvements.





Excursus: Expanding women's community platforms to Pakistan

CHAPTER VIII

While this manual focuses on community-based platforms for women workers in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Myanmar, it is worth considering an example from Pakistan, where a new initiative is taking shape under the GIZ-funded project ‘Promoting Environment by Strengthening the Role of Women.’

WHY INCLUDE PAKISTAN?

Pakistan’s textiles and garment industry, primarily based in Punjab, is the country’s largest industrial sector, contributing 8.5% to GDP and 62% of export revenues.²² It employs 15 million people (25% of the workforce), with 3 million in garment factories.²³ The percentage of women employed in the garment and textiles industry is between 6–8 %.²⁴

Unlike in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Myanmar, where entirely new women’s cafés and centres were built, Pakistan already has a network of over 160 women’s centres operated by the Social Welfare Department and the Women Development Department. However, these centres provide general vocational training (e.g., IT skills, tailoring, and handicrafts) but are not designed specifically for women workers in the textiles and garment industry.

The Women Mentorship Programme, one of the initiatives under the GIZ Pakistan project “Promoting Employment by Strengthening the Role of Women (WE)”, is in its early stages and aims to address this gap by adapting and integrating industry-specific training into existing women’s centres.

The Women Mentorship Programme provides the structure and content, while WE House Pakistan aims to offer the physical space for these activities. If successfully implemented, WE House Pakistan could function similarly to WE House Cambodia, creating a sustainable support system for women garment workers.

The Women Mentorship Programme is currently focusing on:

- » **Career guidance:** Pairing ~30 female mentors from the textile industry with mentees for career guidance and leadership training.
- » **WE House Pakistan:** Aims to provide dedicated spaces for mentorship activities.
- » **Government & NGO partnerships:** Collaboration is also important for the sustainability of the initiatives, and ongoing negotiations are in place to embed training within existing centres through government and NGO partnerships.
- » **Industry-specific training:** Courses developed with LUMS University and other institutions to equip women with relevant skills.
- » **Collaboration with WE House Cambodia:** Potential exchange of best practices to strengthen the model.
- » **Training of trainers:** Women mentors will receive additional training to enhance their leadership and mentoring skills.

The programme is planned for 2-3 years with the potential for expansion if partnerships succeed.

EXISTING WOMEN’S CENTRES & PRIVATE INITIATIVES IN PAKISTAN

While government-run women’s centres already exist, they primarily cater to widows, orphans, and women in need, providing them with basic vocational skills rather than industry-specific training. These centres do offer

²² <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.KD?locations=PK>

²³ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1753276>

²⁴ GIZ internal document

some textile-related skills (e.g., tie-dye, tailoring, and fabric painting), but they are not directly linked to employment pathways in the garment sector.

Additionally, several private initiatives and NGOs are working in this space, including:

- » **Kashf Foundation:** Provides industry-relevant skills training (e.g., football stitching, tailoring, and recycling) in Lahore, Sialkot, Karachi, and other cities.
- » **WISE (Women in Struggle for Empowerment):** Operates ten community-based centres that offer legal awareness, gender-based violence prevention, and worker rights education.

While these initiatives provide valuable training and empowerment programmes, none specifically address the needs of women textile workers in a structured, long-term way. This is where the initiative seeks to make an impact—by focusing on the garment sector and ensuring that mentorship, training, and support are integrated into existing platforms.

LESSONS FROM PAKISTAN

Pakistan's example demonstrates how existing infrastructure can be repurposed to support women garment workers, contrasting with countries that had to build platforms from scratch. The Women Mentorship Programme and WE House Pakistan serve as a scalable blueprint for integrating mentorship and skills development into pre-existing networks, offering a replicable model for other regions.



Lessons and achievements from community platforms for women workers to guide your implementation

CHAPTER IX

One advantage of the existing community platforms for women workers is that their collective experiences offer valuable insights, allowing important conclusions to be drawn before project implementation. The challenges that arise in this process are discussed in Chapter 5. In the following section, you'll find a summary of the key achievements these platforms have made, drawing from examples in Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Myanmar.

- » The community platform for women workers is more than just a place for learning; it's a safe space where women can exchange ideas, enjoy indoor games, find entertainment, and openly share their concerns and fears with others who understand and support them.
- » The workers recognized the importance of knowing their rights and have a solid understanding of labour laws and their responsibilities and are also aware of issues such as sexual harassment and workplace safety.
- » The community platform serves as a space where workers also gather to celebrate various occasions, such as birthdays, anniversaries, and iftar parties. These events, organized by the workers themselves, foster a sense of community and boost morale within the group.
- » The rate of discrimination between men and women has decreased.
- » Workers are mentally more relaxed.
- » Workers have become more conscious of environmental protection, now ensuring proper disposal of household waste in designated areas and being mindful of their use of gas, electricity, and water.
- » Workers frequently exchange information about salary scales with each other.
- » After receiving training at the community platforms, workers actively discussed these topics within their community, coming together with fellow workers to share and spread the knowledge they have gained.



Annex

Annex 1: Detailed operation plan (example)

Month	Key activity	Responsible	Deliverable/Reporting
Nov17– Dec17	Concept and contract developed and agreed to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » sequa drafts the concept » CTUM provides input and feedback » CTUM calculates the budget, sequa provides template 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Contract between sequa and CTUM » Concept “Empowerment of Women Workers in the Myanmar Garment Industry” » Job description Project Coordinator
Nov17– Dec17	Search for location	CTUM with support from sequa	Photos of the potential location listed with the asking price
Nov 17	Elabouration of work plan for 2018	CTUM and sequa jointly	Work plan
Dec 17 – Jan18	Negotiation on lease agreement	CTUM with support from sequa	Lease agreement signed
Jan–Feb18	Building renovation	sequa with assistance from CTUM	Photos
	Set up the Centre with furniture and all necessary equipment	sequa with assistance from CTUM	Provide staff CVs
Latest April 18	Official launch	CTUM with support from sequa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Press release » Pictures of CTUM president and Khaing Zar cutting ribbons » Sign Board » Participation list

From Feb 2018 to June 2019	Operation of the Centre and monthly reporting	CTUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » List of CTUM organizers identified » Needs assessment conducted » ToT training materials designed and tested » ToT training conducted » Participation lists and agendas for each workshop, seminar or other event with original signatures » Short monthly report produced on workshops and events conducted monthly providing a brief overview of activities » Photos to illustrate the implemented activities
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Annex 2: Budget Sheet (example)

COMMUNITY PLATFORM BUDGET (DD/MM/YYYY – DD/MM/YYYY)

No	Budget Position	Definition of Unit	Number of Units	Unit cost (€)	Total amount (€)
1	Salary National Long-Term Experts (NLTE)				
1,1	Platform Manager (100%)	per month			
1,2	Administration Assistant (100%) per month	per month			
1,3	Accountant (20%) per month	per month			
1,4	Office Staff (plus hotline) (100%) per month	per month			
1,5	Legal Advisor (100%) per month	per month			
1,6	Cleaner (100%) per month	per month			
1,7	Security (night shift) per month	per month			
1,8	Travel expenses local staff per month traveling to and from meetings excluded are travels to and from workplace	per month			
	Sub Total 1				0.00
2	Short term experts for consultancy and training services				
2,1	Marie Stopes – women’s healthcare - per service	per day			
2,2	ToT on industrial relations each training 2 days with 3 persons; complaint handling, leadership & communication, social dialogue - CBA, complaint handling, sexual harassment)	per day			
2,3	Design training	per day			

2,4	English class and report writing	per day			
	Sub Total 2				0.00
3 Equipment					
3,1	Equipment and furniture for the Centre	per item			0.00
	Sub Total 3				0.00
4 Trainings, workshops and events including development of training material:					
4,1	Workshops/seminars/trainings	per day			
4,2	Sunday activities/Trainings at the Centre	per month			
4,3	Basic computer training	per participant			
4,4	Design training three (3) months 10 participants	per participant			
4,5	Other events (e.g. centre launch, anniversary, international women day, May day)				
4,6	Rent of Centre				
4,7	Repairs and maintenance				
4,8	Recurring cost (like office supplies, telephone, internet, electric/water bills)				
4,9	Coffee ingredients (instant coffee, milk, sugar..etc)				
5 Communication					
5,1	Promotional materials (poster, flyers, booklet..etc)				
5,2	Tumblers, t-shirts, tote bags..etc with Centre-branded logo				
5,3	Digital materials: video production				
5,4	Social media: Boosting and influencers				
	Sub Total 4				0.00
	Total Cost				0.00

Annex 3: Concept (example)

Empowerment of women workers in the garment industry through a community platform

BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

This project aims to establish connections with women workers in the garment industry and provide essential services through a community platform. The initiative will collaborate with local NGOs and trade unions, leveraging their organisation and experience in the sector.

The community platform will empower women by educating them about their rights and labour laws.

Through direct involvement of local unions, women visiting the centre will receive support in resolving conflicts in their workplaces. The community platform will serve as a space for women to voice their concerns, with referrals made to local textile and garment unions for further assistance when necessary.

At the community platform, women garment workers can share their challenges in a supportive environment, fostering discussions to identify potential solutions. Training will be provided on workplace rights and responsibilities, including labour laws and occupational safety and health, along with legal support as needed.

The centre will also function as a safe space for relaxation and entertainment (such as radio, television or make up room etc.), and facilities for skill development, including topics related to healthcare.

To amplify these efforts, the project employs a ‘snowball approach,’ where a group of trained women organizers will disseminate knowledge about key elements of labour law. In the Training of Trainers (ToT) programme, topics covered will include wages, overtime calculation, employment contracts, identification documentation, working hours, timely wage payments, maternity benefits, holidays and leave, payment deductions, occupational health and safety, trade unions, and dispute resolution mechanisms. These organizers, selected from among the members of local unions, will lead self-help groups of 15–20 participants, conducting group training sessions.

Additionally, income generation activities at the centre will contribute to its sustainability. This may include small fees for training sessions, rentals for event spaces, catering services, and the sale of handmade products.

Objective and results:

Overall objective	» Employees, employers, and NGOs and unions in the X garment sector apply mechanisms and processes to increase compliance with sustainability standards in the textile and garment industry on a pilot basis.
Project objective	» Women workers in the garment sector know their rights in the areas of labour legislation and Occupational Health and Safety and are capacitated to participate in improvement processes of working conditions in garment factories.
Results	<p>» 2,800 women workers in the garment sector know their rights in the areas of labour legislation and OHS and are enabled to participate in improvement processes of working conditions.</p> <p>» 200 women workers have received legal advice on the resolution of at least 50 disputes.</p>

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Preparation phase

The organisation shall:

- » Identify and collaborate with local partners whose objectives are in line with the community platform.
- » Scope and assess new locations in collaboration with local partners.
- » Rent a facility to operate the community platform and establish a lease agreement.
- » Provide support for building renovations, offering technical assistance to meet the needs of workers. Funding for these renovations will be sourced from project resources.
- » Set up the building's interior, including decoration and furniture, which will be purchased with allocated project funding.
- » Identify and train site managers with technical assistance, ensuring that CVs and employment contracts for all project staff are provided.
- » Aim to open the community platform by X at the latest, accompanied by an official launch ceremony.

The funding organisation will:

- » Collaborate with local partners to scope and assess new locations.
- » Oversee renovations of the facility to ensure it meets the needs of the workers.
- » Purchase necessary equipment, furniture, and decorations to properly equip the community platform.

2.2 Operation phase

The organisation will operate the community platform to achieve the following objectives:

- » **Capacity building for organisers**
- » Identify 20 organisers and conduct a needs assessment.
- » Develop training materials and aids (toolkits, handbooks, posters) based on the needs assessment for a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme on labour law and occupational health and safety (OHS) in the local language. The costs for these training materials will be funded separately from the primary project funding.
- » Provide ToT training sessions for organizers based on the needs assessment.
- » Ensure that organizers establish self-help groups of at least 15 to 20 workers each, with groups meeting monthly to discuss issues or receive training based on their needs.
- » Facilitate bi-monthly meetings for organizers to provide input to the Implementation Committee at the women centre, helping to design demand-based training programmes for women garment workers.
- » On-going feedback and monitoring on topics needed/interested by women workers.
- » **Women Empowerment**
- » Develop training materials and aids (toolkits, handbooks, posters) in the local language.
- » Educate women workers on local labour laws, occupational health and safety, social awareness, and gender issues, focusing on problem-solving skills until mid-20XX.
- » Operate a resource library for women workers.
- » **Legal Support**
- » Provide legal advice on labour law issues at least once a week at the women centre.
- » Establish a hotline service for labour law-related inquiries.
- » Provide mental counselling and support structures.

» **Skill Development**

- » Offer skills development programmes to enhance current skill sets, such as computer training.

The supporting organisation will assist with:

- » Initial setup of the resource library.
- » Connecting with relevant NGOs or legal professionals to address issues of domestic violence or sexual harassment and conducting ToT training on non-labour law topics for organizers (e.g., women's health, family planning, and domestic violence).
- » Initial establishment of hotline services for labour law-related inquiries.

2.3. Monitoring, reporting, and visibility

The organisation will:

- » Establish and participate in quarterly steering committee meetings, which will include representatives from the organisation, women committee members, and relevant stakeholders.
- » Attend regular biannual meetings with supporting partners.
- » Provide data and success stories for promotional materials.
- » Ensure visibility for supporting partners, including a plaque or signboard at the facility stating, "Support for this women centre has been provided by [Supporting Organisation]."

Reporting requirements:

- » Provide attendance lists and agendas for each event using the templates provided.
- » Compile a list of supported legal aid cases, detailing the number of workers assisted, their gender status, and topics covered.
- » Provide brief monthly reports on workshops and events related to women's empowerment and legal education in English, including photos to illustrate the activities conducted.
- » Share and update information on training modules regularly.
- » Provide CVs and employment contracts for project staff and legal advisors.
- » Provide the lease agreement for the facility.
- » Conduct occasional interviews to assess the impact of the women centre.

The supporting organisation will:

- » Coordinate with steering committee members for quarterly meetings.
- » Organize regular meetings and distribute meeting minutes.
- » Develop and disseminate promotional materials, such as fact sheets, success stories, videos, and articles, based on an impact evaluation survey of the centre.
- » Train the project coordinator in reporting procedures.

3. POSSIBLE LOCATIONS FOR THE NEW WOMEN WORKER CENTRE

Target industrial areas/zones

4. IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

The project will start in X and conclude in X, aligning with the end of the project.

5. EXPECTED RESULTS

By mid-X, approximately X workers in the garment sector will have received training in labour legislation and occupational health and safety (OHS), enhancing their capacity to participate in improving working conditions through the Women Centre.

- » X workers visiting the community platform or participating in workshops or events will be informed about grievance mechanisms available under local law.
- » X workers will receive legal advice, leading to the resolution of at least X disputes.

Sources of Verification: Attendance lists and reports from the community platform, attendance lists from workshops and events, a list of supported legal cases, and documentation of successful conflict resolutions.

Outputs

The organisation will establish a new community platform and operate it with income-generating services, training, and counselling programmes. The operation period of the platform is expected to last X months, concluding in X.

- » At least X organizers will be trained to work with groups of workers, with an average of at least X women in each group. Each organizer will facilitate at least X groups, aiming to represent a total of at least X women.
- » Monthly individual or group counselling sessions will be held at the community platform, with an average attendance of X workers per session, ideally grouped by their workplace. From X to X, a minimum of X women (X months multiplied by X = X workers) will receive advice on grievance mechanisms and conflict resolution.
- » Four needs-based events will be designed and implemented each year, with an average attendance of at least X women per event until X.
- » A survey will be conducted with X women workers who visit the centre

Annex 4: Job description of project manager community platform (example)

ABOUT COMMUNITY PLATFORM FOR GARMENT WORKERS

The Women's Café/Centre provides a safe space for women workers in the garment and textile industry. In the Café/Centre, the garment workers can meet their friends. They can talk about their problems at work and learn more about their rights through trainings, games, and exchanges of experiences. To generate income for maintaining the community platform and to further support the workers, the platform offers hostel facilities for young women arriving in x from the villages and rents the community centre space on occasion to the workers for family celebrations. An offer to provide healthy food for the workers is also being explored, along with other income-generating activities to be explored. The efforts made in the centre are complemented and amplified by easy access to information on labour legislation and a legal counselling and mediation service for workers to solve their problems, with legal experts helping workers, monthly. Visiting lawyers will give legal advice for conflicts at work or within the family. The consultation mainly focuses on mediation with the aim of resolving conflicts at an early stage, supporting the women to be independent and self-reliant.

Jointly with x to empower women to know and claim their rights.

The project manager of the community platform is based at x office to strengthen their links to women workers in a centre.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES/TASKS:

a) Preparation phase community platform

- » Scope and assess new locations together with x.
- » Rent a building to run the community platform.
- » Assist x in building renovation, i.e. technical assistance to meet the needs of the workers
- » Set up the building decoration/furniture which will be provided by x
- » Identify and train site manager with technical assistance
- » Open community platform with an official launch ceremony
- » Set up an operations plan for x jointly with x and x treasurer

b) Operation of the new community platform with the following features:

- » Capacity building for factory motivators:
- » Prepare and contribute to develop training material and training aids for a Training of Trainers (ToT) for factory motivators in the x language.
- » Work with trainers who train up to x factory motivators.

- » Ensure that factory motivators meet once per month at the centre
- » Ensure that the factory motivators organise self-help groups
- » Plan income generating activities jointly with the factory motivators and plan their implementation (catering, handicrafts, rent out facilities etc.).
- » Direct support for women garment workers through the factory motivators in the centre:
- » Establish dormitory
- » Organise educational programmes for women workers on (insert corresponding country) labour laws, occupational health and safety and gender aspects with a focus on problem solving skills.
- » Mobilise legal advisors and offer legal advice on labour law issues at least once per month within the women's café/centre.
- » Receive requests for individual counselling and make appointments.

c) Monitoring, reporting and visibility

- » Cooperate to develop and distribute promotional material
- » Ensure visibility of the platform and its promoters
- » Reporting
- » Provide attendance lists; agendas; list of supported legal aid cases; short monthly reports
- » Photos to illustrate the implemented activities
- » Share and update information on training modules
- » Cooperate with x and x to assess the impact of the platform by providing possibilities to occasionally interview women workers who participated in the centre.

EXPERT PROFILE:

Required:

- » At least 5 years of professional work experience
- » Labour law knowledge
- » Strong communication skills, with the ability to persuade, friendly and open and willing to learn.
- » Able to establish good relations and communication with partner organisations
- » Experience to use Excel, Word, PowerPoint and similar programmes
- » Organisational skills and good time management
- » Female or ability to take on a position in a female dominated workplace
- » Respect for gender equality
- » Willing to work on Sundays and other holidays (maximum: 5.5 days/week or 40 hours/week).
- » Willing to commute to industry zones and to travel

Desired:

- » University Degree
- » Able to read and write English
- » Coordination skills
- » Experience working in garment factory

The position starts (insert date). It is a full-time contract until (insert date).

Annex 5: Training evaluation template (example 1)

Training on: Name of Training

Organised by: Name of funder or organisation

Venue: Name of venue (e.g. x **community platform**)

Dates: Date of training dd/mm/yyyy

Training evaluation

SI	Subjects	Poor 	Fair 	Good 	Very Good 
1.	Course Content				
2.	Training Methodology				
3.	Quality of Faculties / Resource Persons				
a.	Name of the Trainer				
b.	Name of the Trainer (if more than one)				
c.	Name of the Trainer (if more than one)				
4.	Course Duration				
5.	Venue and Facilities				
6.	Food, Refreshment				
7.	Effectiveness of Training in relation to your Profession				

Evaluated on dd/mm/yyyy





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