



Annual Report 2019-2020

awajfoundation.org

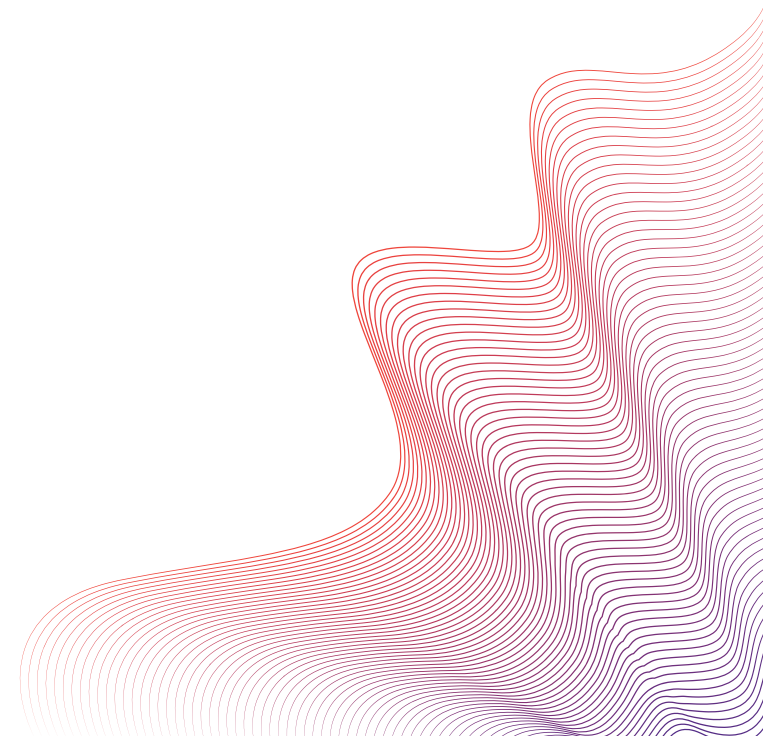




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Executive Director's statement



Watch the Executive Director's statement video on our website

[Click here](#) or scan the QR

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an unprecedented disaster for the workers of the RMG sector in Bangladesh. With suppliers worldwide refusing to accept or pay for completed orders, factories have needed to let go of many workers. Others suffered from lost wages during the lockdown period. According to our studies, only 71% of workers were paid during this period, in part or in full.

Once lockdown measures were relaxed, our workers then had to choose between the risks of dying from starvation, or from COVID.

I am thankful for all the support we have from our donors, labour union partners, technical advisors, volunteers, and friends across the world. Your support for our workers as they struggle to meet the most basic needs has been vital in raising funds, awareness, and perhaps most importantly, giving a voice to the voiceless.

Awaj is delighted to report many highlights during this time period, in spite of the setbacks.

- We started fundraising activities from March 2020, in order to provide relief to RMG workers who were affected by the pandemic. Many organisations supported our efforts to help these workers, and were able to mobilise funds very quickly. These included our partners from the Laudes Foundation who supported 2,013 workers and their babies, Foundation for a Just Society who supported 360 workers, GoodWeave international who supported 1,563 workers, Arteryx who supported 1,145 workers, and Indigo Proof LLC who supported 23 workers
- We also joined many activists around the world for Remake's PayUp campaign. The campaign was incredibly successful and raised over \$22 billion
- Red Carpet Green Dress ran a fundraising campaign for us. Following the end of the campaign, we were able to support 148 workers and their children from the funds raised
- During this period, many individual donors, advisors, and supporters came forward to support RMG workers. Ms Theresa Lankes and Ms Celia Franceschi supported 8 workers, for example

- Our friends at Shimmy Technologies raised over \$20,000 for workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Our migration programmes have been busy throughout the year with COVID-19 support and other forms of support and advocacy for migration workers rights. We were able to bring back 7 suffering migrant workers to Bangladesh. We resolved monetary disputes for 7 workers, fraudulent cases for 5 workers, and passport issues for 3 workers. We also managed to provide medical support to 5 workers
- Awaj received grants from three new donors during the pandemic. Our new partners are: the Global Fund for Women, Plan International, and GoodWeave International
- The pandemic reiterated the overwhelming need for social safety nets for workers, and stronger enforcement of the provisions laid down by Bangladesh's labour laws
- We successfully facilitated the signing of a Collective Bargaining Agreement between Hop Lun Apparels Ltd and Hop Lun Apparels Ltd Somnilito Sramik Union

Awaj is committed to reach our goals of strengthened labour laws, strengthened unions, and equal bargaining power for RMG workers in Bangladesh. We are confident that we will get there. We must press on, and not lose sight of an equal world for everyone.

Join us in solidarity.

Nazma Akter



Awaj Foundation in the time of COVID-19

The RMG sector in Bangladesh was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, and lost over \$1.5 billion worth of business. This, in turn, affected the livelihoods of over 1.2 million garment workers.

Many workers in the sector were not paid from March 2020 to May 2020. Factories laid off workers, resulting in their loss of livelihoods. Workers faced starvation or death.

Their meagre incomes were barely able to sustain themselves, and they often had no savings to tide them over difficult times. Most workers were uncertain about how they would live in the coming months. They were worried that they would not be able to afford the treatment or medication of coronavirus afflicted family members.

As a grassroots organisation with an extensive network amongst garment workers and their families, Awaj witnessed the impact of the pandemic first-hand, and worked on relief efforts, advocacy, and awareness campaigns for the workers to support them and their families. While some factories recommenced operations in April, they opened only partially, as they did not have enough orders to justify a full reopening. Most factories remained closed during this time for the same reason. This resulted in the retrenchment of many workers. Many factories laid off a large number of workers, and most workers were not paid in full.

On 24 March 2020, Awaj Foundation took the initiative to stand by garment workers from the very start of the pandemic. Most notably, the organisation collected emergency relief funds following quick pleas for support from partner organisations and their networks. The immediate response from our supporters made it possible for Awaj to help workers who had lost their livelihoods. Awaj also reached out to a wider network of supporters during this time through our online platforms and was able to raise funds from new supporters. This support was also overwhelming and allowed us to continue supporting RMG workers.

Till June 2020, Awaj reached out to all our partners and networks for funding support and heard back from 8 partners who all agreed to support Awaj's relief activities:

- Shimmy Technologies, who raised funds through a GoFundMe campaign from individual donors
- Laudes Foundation
- Red Carpet Green Dress (RCGD)
- Fair Wear Foundation (FWF). Individual donors reached out FWF to donate money to Awaj's work on behalf of the foundation
- Foundation for a Just Society (FJS)
- Indigo Proof LLC
- Theresa Lankes (Individual Donor)
- Celia Franceschi (Individual Donor)

With the support of these donors, Awaj undertook emergency relief support in Dhaka, Chittagong (Chattogram), Gazipur, and Narayanganj:

- Emergency relief package distributed to 2675 workers
- 338 children of 338 workers received child food package support
- 1,350 workers received free healthcare support including consultation, diagnostic, and medicine support
- 461 workers received free COVID-19 testing service

The funds were distributed, and relief was undertaken, from August 2020, following the approval of the NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB).

Overview of the upcoming relief distribution program

Awaj's strategic plan involved identification of the most vulnerable groups for relief support. The criteria to select individuals falling within these groups included:

- Retrenched workers
- Pregnant women workers
- Single mothers
- Widowed workers
- Physically challenged workers
- Child labourers
- Informal workers
- Single bread winners
- Low salaried workers/those who had been partially paid

Also, under this initiative, according to plan, Awaj Foundation will distribute relief packages, healthcare support and COVID-19 tests to around 4,600 RMG workers, and distribute food packages to 338 children in Dhaka, Chittagong (Chattogram), Gazipur, and Narayanganj.

Challenges faced

- There was a request for relief from a large number of workers, as so many had lost their jobs. There was immense pressure on the team to meet demands for relief and assess priorities. Many workers in the sector met the criteria, but the funds raised were not sufficient to meet their demands. This issue was somewhat resolved, thanks to Awaj's close connection to workers. It allowed us to prepare relief plans according to the urgency of needs
- Awaj had to reorganise its strategic organisational plans in order to accommodate this unprecedented relief work
- Many individual foreign donors asked to donate via PayPal or other international money transfer platforms. Awaj did not have access to any of these, and received the support of Shimmy Technologies and Fear Wear Foundation in collecting these donations for dissemination to workers

Lessons learnt

- A well-planned, effective team approach makes the difficult task of relief distribution much easier
- Forecasts of efficient planning upon consideration of challenges and risks would be beneficial in future work like this in order to meet 100% of the goals
- Strong planning and teamwork, along with consistent guidance of the senior management team meant all relief efforts were organised, coherent, and ensured maximum coverage

Donors supporting Awaj's COVID-19 relief efforts



Shimmy Technologies, raising US
\$20,155 from individual donors through a
GoFundMe campaign

Laudes —
— Foundation

Laudes Foundation

RCCD

RED CARPET GREEN DRESS™
Red Carpet Green dress



Fairwear Foundation



Foundation for Just Society

Indigo Proof LLC

Theresa Lankes
Individual donor

Celia Franceschi
Individual donor



Awaj says #PayUp to international brands

After apparel brands worldwide cancelled clothing orders worth \$40 billion in March 2020, labour activists across the globe joined forces to have them #PayUp. Awaj was a crucial part of the campaign in Bangladesh.

The \$40 billion worth of cancelled orders equalled the salaries of Bangladesh's four million garment workers for the next eight years.

On March 30th, advocacy nonprofit organization Remake stepped up to help mitigate the crisis through the launch of this simple hashtag, and the campaign #PayUp. The idea was to expose the brands that cancelled their orders and never paid for them.

PayUp Fashion and the website is led by Remake and Ayesha Barenblat – founder of Remake, author and #PayUp organiser Elizabeth L. Cine, and garment workers organizers Ashila Niroshi, founder of Stand Up Lanka and Awaj Foundation's Nazma Akter.

Pay Up comprised a coalition of:

- garment workers
- labour organisers
- researchers
- citizen activists

The coalition believes that workers and the planet are central to the future of fashion.

Through 2020 and 2021, PayUp galvanised citizen and worker action to generate concrete changes in how brands treat manufacturers and workers in the supply chain.

Awaj contacted 780,000 workers for this campaign, of whom 225,339 workers mentioned that they had not been paid during the pandemic. 38,250 workers reported being paid only a portion of their wages. 15,114 of these workers were retrenched. The PayUp campaign was a crucial force in pressuring brands to pay up for all orders, to ensure workers' livelihoods.

By March 2021, PayUp had secured \$22 billion from brands who had initially refused to pay, and laid bare the exploitation fundamental to the global supply chain. It was one of the most successful labour rights campaigns in the fashion industry in modern times.

Pay Up is a non-hierarchical coalition. Anyone is invited to participate by signing the petition or supporting the campaign on social media.

Through 2020 and 2021, Pay Up's main priorities were to focus on 1) ensuring brands remunerate workers, and 2) keep workers safe.

The movement has a number of long-term campaigns planned for other action points. The ultimate goal is to see legal and political reforms in fashion and binding agreements that uphold garment workers' rights and dramatically improve working conditions.

Pay Up's 7 action points

- **#PayUp**
- **Keep workers safe**
- **Transparency in all production processes**
- **Give workers the centre stage**
- **Sign enforceable contracts that prioritise workers needs**
- **End starvation wages**
- **Help pass pro-worker legislation**



Our work

Awaj Foundation takes a comprehensive approach to improving the lives of workers. We provide support to workers both inside the factories and their communities, and through our campaigns. We work with stakeholders such as brands, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the government, and other policymakers to improve structural conditions for workers in the garment sector and beyond.

Awaj works in the following areas to improve workers' lives:

- **Improving wages**
- **Strengthening workers rights**
- **Harmonious industrial relations**
- **Increasing women's leadership**
- **Decent working conditions**
- **Life skills beyond the factory**
- **Services for workers**
 - » Legal aid
 - » Health services
 - » Schools and daycare centres
- **Migrant workers' rights**
- **Research and advocacy**

Improving wages

Since its inception, Awaj has worked to ensure living wages for all workers in the RMG, knitwear, and clothing sector in Bangladesh through:

- Increased awareness amongst workers on minimum wage laws, and the benefits to which they are entitled under Bangladesh's labour laws
- Improved negotiation skills of workers
- Facilitation of Collective Bargaining Agreements

Awaj Foundation continues to be active in national advocacy campaigns to ensure workers receive living wages, and can enjoy the benefits provided to them by Bangladesh's labour laws.

Strengthening workers rights

RMG workers have rights that they are often unaware of, or which their factories deny them access. Awaj trains workers to recognise and enforce their rights on working hours, paid annual leave, and sick leave.

To strengthen demands of the enforcement of these rights, Awaj helps set up committees for workers to collectively raise their demands with factory management:

- Participation committees
- Safety committees
- Anti-harassment committees

A trade union is the strongest mechanism for workers to demand their rights. Awaj actively trains workers on the formation and operation of trade unions, with emphasis on women union leaders.

Hanifa works to ensure stronger safety nets for her colleagues and herself

Hanifa (pseudonym) is an operator in 4A Yarn Dyeing (Jacket) Limited. She has been working at the factory for the past 8 years.

Before coming to Awaj Foundation Hanifa was unaware of the benefits of being part of a union. She visited Awaj in 2019, where she learnt of the healthcare, day care, and legal support services provided by the foundation. Awaj trained Hanifa on various key skills including:

- Leadership and negotiation skills
- Conflict resolution skills
- Methods of organising and forming trade unions
- Facilitating Collective Bargaining Agreements

Following the training sessions, Hanifa was able to successfully set up a union in her factory in December 2019. In 2020, Hanifa and her colleagues in the union were in the process of negotiating a Collective Bargaining Agreement with their factory management.

Harmonious industrial relations

Awaj promotes harmonious industrial relations through constructive social dialogues between workers and factory management. This is achieved through training workers in negotiation skills.

The foundation has also trained 2,000 members of factory management on workers rights under national and international legal frameworks.

Awaj also facilitates the formation of Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) between workers unions and factory management. Awaj's sister trade union federation, Sommilito Garments Sramik Federation (SGSF), plays a crucial role in providing technical and legal guidance to unions during these negotiations.

In 2019, Awaj Foundation facilitated the renewal of 2 CBAs for Natural Denims Ltd Sommilito Sramik Union and Donglian Fashion BD Ltd Sommilito Sramik Union. In 2020, Awaj facilitated the signing of 2 CBAs for Hop Lun Apparels Ltd Unit 2 Sommilito Sramik Union and the Fun Factory Ltd

Increasing women's leadership

Awaj Foundation believes that when women take the lead, they can transform the workplace into a fairer, more equitable workplace. In order to create women leaders, Awaj develops their capacities in the following areas:

- Rights awareness
- Communications
- Negotiation and bargaining
- Computer literacy
- Paralegal training

Awaj also mentors union members and leaders from SGSF following their capacity development, and supports their professional development and increased leadership initiatives.

Awaj started with the will and determination of one woman leader. The foundation is thus developing the next generation of women leaders who will work for the welfare of workers at both national and international levels.



Our work

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Decent working conditions

Ensuring decent working conditions is a cross-cutting focus for all Awaj programmes. This ranges across Awaj's work in:

- occupational safety and health
- fighting gender-based violence
- raising awareness of rights
- leadership development
- fostering harmonious relationships
- research advocacy

Accomplishments over 2019 - 2020

- 60 workers in Chittagong were trained on GBV and anti-harassment measures
- 1 anti-harassment committee (AHC) set up in Chittagong
- **As a member of Gender Platform, Awaj Foundation has contributed a significant role in submitting a draft law named "Prevention and protection of Sexual Harassment", which has been submitted to Law Ministry Bangladesh in light of high court verdict.**
- 5,020 workers trained on GBV and identification and tackling of harassment in the workplace
- **17 OSH training sessions, 510 workers trained on OSH measures**



Program highlight

Strengthening civil society and public institutions to address gender-based violence

July 2017 – September 2021

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)

80% of Bangladesh's 4.5 million-strong RMG workforce is composed of women. Anti-harassment and gender-based violence laws have not evolved at the pace of the sector itself.

Awaj Foundation's project with MJF is working to reduce these instances of gender-based violence. The project is directly targeted to 800 individuals, and indirectly to 1,800 individuals to:

- Reduce the prevalence of violence against women workers in the RMG sector
- Reduce the prevalence of violence against women RMG workers in their personal lives
- Improve access to services by making institutions more accountable and responsive
- Strengthen public institutions and factory management to address complaints of gender-based violence

Program highlight

Strengthening civil society and public institutions to address gender-based violence

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Activities under the programme over 2019 - 2020

- 1 advocacy session with factory management, policy makers, and factory owners to form Anti Sexual Harassment Committees inside the factory per the High Court of Bangladesh guidelines
- 30 women workers groups with 600 members, and 10 men worker groups with 200 members formed to raise awareness of harassment in the workplace, and to build anti harassment committees
- Local Government Elected Body trained on gender, rights, and labour issues
- Regular liaison with factory management and service providers, and monitoring of complaints redressal mechanism for VAW
- 12-day training on gender harassment against women and GBV
- 11-day refresher training on gender, harassment against women, and GBV
- 1 transformative leadership training for women workers
- 11-day orientation training with men workers
- 1 preparatory meeting with the factory management of Glitters Fashion Ltd
- 1 day-long orientation of an Anti Harassment Committee (AHCs) in 1 factory with 10 workers, of whom 8 were women
- 4 quarterly meetings with AHCs
- 1 workshop on future plans for 1 AHC with 8 women leaders and members of the AHC
- 1 dialogue with service delivery institutions to conduct sensitisation sessions on GBV issues. Participating factories and service delivery institutions included Baizid Bostami Thana, Panchlaish Thana, Victim Support Centre, DIFE, BLAST, Mamata, BRAC, Shishu Academy, Aparajeyo Bangladesh, UCEP Bangladesh, Clifton Textile and Apparels Ltd, Clifton Apparels Ltd, and Glitter Fashion Ltd
- Special day observation for International Women's Day, May Day, Human Rights Day, and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (VAW)
- 6 monthly meetings with the ward commissioners of Jalalabad Ward 2 and Shulokhobor Ward 8, and representatives of their offices



Life skills beyond the factory

In the interest of promoting a healthy and well-balanced life beyond the workplace, Awaj trains workers on important life skills. These include financial management and well-balanced diets. These training sessions are disseminated through women's cafes, where participants share their experiences and knowledge with their neighbours for the holistic development of the community.



Program highlight

UP! – Improving livelihoods and quality of life for women workers in Bangladesh RMG sector

January 2019 – December 2022

Donor: Laudes Foundation

UP! + 2019 is a community-based training programme implemented by Awaj Foundation with the support of Impactt Ltd and funded by Laudes Foundation for RMG factories in Dhaka and Chittagong.

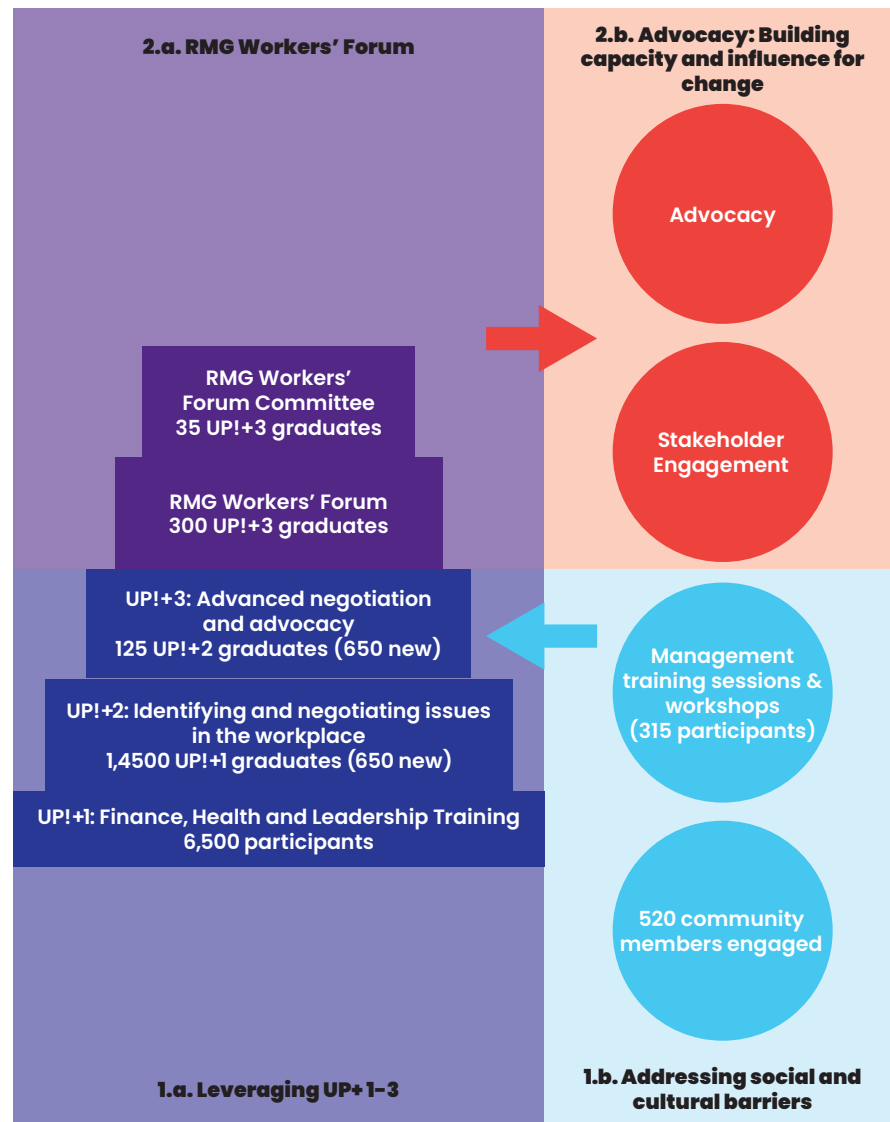
UP! July 2019 to June 2020

- Better outcomes for workers through a bargaining agenda. This was evidenced by the Natural Denim factory management who committed to the payment of BDT 500 per ultrasound for female employees
- 15,000 UP! +1 and 1,550 of UP! +2 graduates trained in more sophisticated bargaining skills
- Awaj established as an effective membership organisation delivering concrete benefits to members. Awaj advocated for effective freedom of association and collective bargaining. It enabled the voices of workers to be heard by key local and international audience
- 1,560 workers were recruited for the programme. Of these, 1,401 were women and 159 were men
- All 1,560 workers were trained in all UP! +1 modules
- 319 workers from the previous UP! phase were trained on negotiation and rights. Of these, 260 were women and 57 were men. 1,450 workers will be trained on these modules in total
- 98% of all workers recruited for the programme over three phases were trained on the negotiation and rights module
- 315 members of the community participated in sensitisation meetings. The project will train 520 members of the community in total, by December 2022
- 77 women who had participated in the UP! +1 programme joined savings schemes within 3 months of having received their training. The programme aims to have at least 40% join formal savings programmes by December 2022
- 151 women who had participated in the UP! +1 programme reported to have an increased say in household financial decisions. The programme aims to have at least 50% participants report the same by December 2022

Program highlight

UP! – Improving livelihoods and quality of life for women workers in Bangladesh RMG sector

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Sima's story

24-year-old Sima moved from Barisal to Dhaka in 2015. She has four younger siblings in Barisal. Her father, a farmhand, supported his family for decades, but had started showing signs of his age.

In order to support him, and the rest of her family, Sima decided to join the workforce, and ended up finding a job at a garment factory. She started sending half her monthly salary to support her parents, but found it difficult to pay her own living costs in Dhaka. Sima started taking loans from her colleagues and friends to pay her way, but realised that she was sinking deeper into debt. She could not find a way out, nor could she recognise corners that she could cut herself to reduce her personal expenses.

UP! Change in thyself

Sima recognised she was spending too much on clothing and expensive food items, and was not saving what she could feasibly save. UP! +1 trained Sima and her colleagues on monthly income and expenditure analysis and budgeting techniques. Sima was surprised to find that with proper budgeting, she was actually able to save some money, even after she had sent half of it to her family in Barisal.

Sima joined a savings scheme in January 2020. While she was not able to save much before the pandemic hit, it was important that she had some savings to tide her through.

Sima was also able to bring about changes in her factory with UP! +2 training. She learned negotiation skills, and advised her colleagues and the factory itself on illegal practices within the factory. Conditions in the factory changed over a series of meetings, and she feels that her life has improved as a result.



Our work

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Services for workers

Awaj provides three core services to further its mandate of improved labour conditions for garments and leather workers in Bangladesh:

- Legal aid
- Health services
- Schools and daycare centres

Legal aid

Awaj Foundation is one of the largest legal aid providers in Bangladesh. The foundation supports workers in workplace disputes, family law issues, and in personal legal matters. Over 2019 - 2020:

- Awaj provided legal support to 658 workers across Bangladesh
- 55 disputes were resolved through arbitration
- 278 cases were filed to the labour court
- Workers were able to recover BDT 1,530,991 in back pay, severance pay, and other benefits that they were deprived of from their employers



Program highlight

Improved health for workers and their children

January 2015 – December 2021

Donor: KiK Textilien und Non-Food GmbH

Since 2015, KiK Textilien und Non-Food GmbH has been funding Awaj's work in the improved wellbeing of RMG workers and their children. With their support, Awaj has been operating 7 healthcare centres, daycare centres, and pre-schools in the Bagherbazar, Sreepur, Gazipur, Ashulia, and Savar industrial areas in the Dhaka division.

Garment workers and their children receive free healthcare consultation, diagnostic support, and urgent surgical support in these centres. Their children have access to a safe, warm, and caring environment for them to learn and play in, in the daycare centre and pre-school.

Healthcare services under the programme

- 7 healthcare centres running in Rasulbagh, Mirpur, Hemayetpur, and Ashulia in Dhaka, Malekerbari and Bagerbazaar and Gazipur, and Naryanganj
- Services to workers from full-time women doctors and nurses
- Services included free diagnostic tests, urgent surgeries, subsidised medications

RMG workers are often deprived of access to healthcare services offered by Government service providers, as they are unable to visit those centres during work hours. Awaj's healthcare services are modelled around the workers' schedules, allowing them to visit doctors beyond their own work hours.

Awaj's healthcare centres provide free health consultations and subsidised medicines to RMG workers.

Services from July 2019 to June 2020

- 8,258 women workers, 2,589 men workers, and 719 children received healthcare services
- 2,076 women workers received sanitary napkins
- 13 workers received financial aid for urgent life-saving surgery and long-term treatment

Preschool and daycare centre

According to Bangladesh labour laws, RMG workers are privy to daycare for their children. But most factories are still not equipped to provide adequate or quality care for children. In response to this, and with the support of KiK, Awaj has launched a community daycare centre and preschool programme in Bagherbazar, Gazipur for garment workers in the area.

Awaj's daycare centres and preschools provided quality care for children of workers in the garment sector. This allowed female workers to work without worrying about care for their children.

Awaj had 20 children in its daycare centres from July 2019 to June 2020. The children received healthy, nutritious meals every day and had access to a range of healthcare services. There are 40 students from Classes 1 to 4 in Awaj's schools.

Eyecare support to RMG workers

Awaj Foundation, with the support of Fred Hollows Foundation and Australian Aid, has been providing eye care support to RMG workers and their families since 2018 in 7 women's cafes in Dhaka and Chittagong. The programme aims to train workers on eye diseases and to raise awareness on the prevention of these diseases. In 2019–2020, Awaj provided eye care support to 1368 workers.



Migrant workers rights

Awaj Foundation's work with migrant workers stemmed from the need of its members. These members were migrating abroad for RMG and domestic sector work. Awaj's overseas migration program has assisted migrant workers through 2019 – 2020 by:

Subject	Counselling	Abuse	Financial	Support
Pre-decision/ departure support	111			
Sexual abuse support		12		
Physical support		10		
Salary dispute support			9	
Monetary exploitation support			8	
Money refund support			6	
Bank loan support	4		4	
Death compensation support			2	
Victim Repatriation support				18
Passport fraud support	5			5
Disappearances	1			1
Support for being cheated by migration support organisations OF	12			12
Finger print problem				4
Medical support				10
Covid-19 support	25+	5	3	3
Dead body repatriation support				8

Amplifying workers' rights: safe migration and anti-trafficking programmes

The remittance from migrant and garment workers is the principal source of foreign currency in Bangladesh. The country has over 12 million migrant workers in 165 countries. In spite of their contribution to the Bangladesh economy, these migrant workers suffer from a series of legal and humanitarian injustices without finding a resolution.

Awaj Foundation provides a range of services to migrant workers at all stages of the migration process to ensure safe and legal migration. Awaj:

- Provides support and advocates for better conditions for migrant workers
- Provides a platform for legal support, education, and the opportunity to interact with other migrant workers
- Advocates and lobbies with national, regional, and international government organisations, NGOs, INGOs, and UN agencies to ensure the well-being of migrants
- Provides support with repatriation and reintegration
- Supports victims receive compensation through arbitration
- Empowers migrant workers and their families through awareness campaigns

Awaj project for migrant workers

- Initiative to improve access to justice for the female migrant workers of Bangladesh, December 2019 to December 2021
- From June 2019 to June 2020, Awaj received requests for support for 101 migrant workers. 60 of those cases were settled during that period



Case study

Win for Bangladeshi workers in Jordan!

“When I started working here, my employer did not give me a valid work permit. They said the process would be long and complicated. He asked me to file a General Diary with the police, saying that that would in fact keep me protected. I agreed, not realising that he would use that same GD to coerce me to work for him in untenable circumstances. We started a strike against the employer, and went to the labour court to seek help. On the way back from court, our employer had me arrested by the police on false charges.”

Solaiman, Bangladeshi migrant worker at Rich Door Textile Factory, Jordan

Every year, over 700,000 workers from Bangladesh migrate abroad to secure a better future for themselves and their families. A significant portion of these workers joins the garment sector in other countries, with Jordan appealing to many of them. The workers are often unfamiliar with immigration and migrant workers' laws and rights and cheated by their employers.

From 1 January 2020 to 7 January 2020, 15 Bangladeshi workers in Jordan decided to protest against the Rich Door Textile Factory in Al Hassan free trade zone outside Irbid.

The workers of the factory sought support from the Sommilito Garments Sramik Federation (SGSF), led by Executive Director of Awaj Foundation Nazma Akter. Nazma immediately contacted local and international labour rights authorities to rescue these workers and ensure they received justice.

While this was going on, Awaj Foundation contacted the Embassy of Bangladesh in Jordan to ensure the safety and protection of these workers. The foundation also kept a close watch over the situation to ensure the safety of all workers concerned. Awaj and our labour rights partners sued the employer on behalf of the 15 Bangladeshi workers at the Jordanian labour court. Our concerted efforts ensured justice for the workers, and Mr Solaiman's freedom.

The employer conceded to the demands of the workers, and promised to ensure they were compensated.

Research and advocacy

Research

Awaj's research follows a ground-up agenda that responds to the actual needs of workers. This has led to The Worker's Voice series that provides an in-depth look at the working and living conditions of workers. In partnership with the Asia Pacific Forum for Women, Law and Development (APWLD), Awaj has also commenced a participatory action research project on contractual workers in the country. Findings of the research include:

- Women workers require support in primary healthcare, reproductive health, and education
- Contractual workers suffer from a lack of ID cards, appointment letters, service books, and any form of contractual agreement with employers. They are not privy to minimum wages or paid and maternity leave
- Over 80% of informal workers interviewed mentioned that they were dissatisfied with the payment system
- 100% of interviewees reported that they did not receive any benefits under Bangladeshi labour laws and faced unjust treatment at work

The findings from this research will be followed by:

- Advocacy meeting with employers associations
- Advocacy meetings with factory management and contractors
- Advocacy meetings with representatives of the labour ministry
- Observation of labour and women's rights days
- Training programme on labour laws and women's rights for contractual workers



National advocacy

Awaj's work in national advocacy over 2019 – 2020 included:

- Ratification of ILO Convention 190
- High Court verdict on anti-harassment policies in the workplace
- Legalisation of the rights of informal workers
- Regulation of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) database
- Promotions of CBAs
- 4 webinars on the effects of the pandemic with IndustriALL

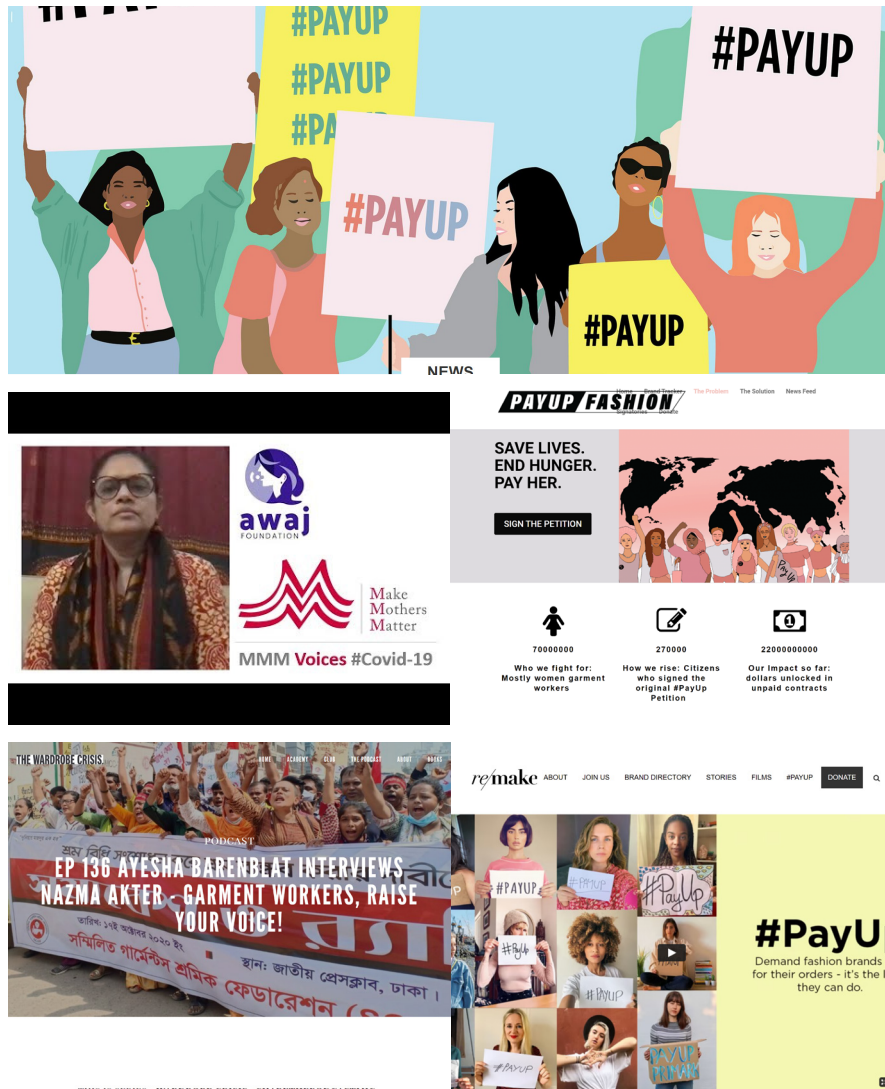


Awaj in the media





- **PayUp Fashion initiative launches to secure industry's future, Fashion United UK**
- **Garment workers win historic victory in effort to transform the fashion industry, Waging Nonviolence**
- **The new movement to reform fashion, Vogue Business**
- **Are Garment Workers Being Paid in Bangladesh?, Remake**
- **Introducing PayUp Fashion: Why the Future of Any Fashion Sustainability Efforts Must Be Worker-Centric, Remake**
- **Grassroots campaigning can change fashion, just ask "Pay Up", High Snobility**
- **Remake initiative looks ahead to broader industry action, Ecotextile**
- **Thousands of Bangladeshi garment workers struggle amid job loss, Al Jazeera**
- **Thousands of jobless Bangladeshi garment workers fear for future, Reuters**
- **The Hands That Stitch Our Clothes Need Help, Blom Agency**
- **COVID-19: Fashion Supply Chain Workers are More Vulnerable than Ever, Peacock Plume**
- **Bangladesh's New Generation Of Women-Led Labor Unions Confronts The Pandemic, Forbes**
- **3 Organizations Helping Garment Workers in Bangladesh, Borgen Magazine**



THIS IS SERIES 'WARDROBE CRISIS' - SHARETHEPODCASTMIC
YOUR GUEST HOST THIS WEEK IS AYESHA BARENBLAT, AND SHE'S

Videos

- **MMM (Make Mothers Matter)**
- **BANGLADESH: Awaj Foundation Direct Relief Fund, Remake**
- **The problem, PayUp Fashion**
- **Remake's May Community Call, Remake**

Podcast

- **The Wardrobe Crisis podcast, Ep 136**

Financial report



Financial report


The expenditure amount
of 2019-2020

Awaj Annual Report 2019-2020

Particulars	Notes	General Fund June 30, 2020	KiK Project June 30, 2020	UP Project June 30, 2020	SC (NEW) June 30, 2020	AAB (SRAMIC) June 30, 2020	GIZ (PSD) June 30, 2019	FNV June 30, 2020	MJF (SCSPI) June 30, 2020	FJS June 30, 2020	ILO June 30, 2020	Grand Total June 30, 2020
EXPENDITURE												
Sound System										9,974		9,974
Day Care Activities Cost												
Food for Children										102,826		102,826
Parents Visit Days & Feedback Session										6,436		6,436
Administrative Cost												
Administrative Cost										109,069		109,069
Depreciation										65,850		65,850
Staff Costs												
Case Management Officer										-	120,000	120,000
Project Admin Cost												
Communication (Mobile Bill)										-	6,000	6,000
Stationery										-	10,365	10,365
Direct Cost												
Activity 1.1.1 Case Management												
Case Received-Case Management										-	3,000	3,000
Follow-Up- Case Management												
Food Cost-Case Management										-	4,900	4,900
Victim Transportation										-	12,100	12,100
Total Expenditure		62,796,890	20,855,662	19,214,192	4,787,373	3,522,997	3,026,384	4,285,534	2,849,368	2,626,035	156,365	124,120,799
Excess of Income over Expenditure		468,805	(9,912,720)	5,234,604	991,263	602,055	(230,438)	(2,765,423)	791,967	4,064,781	508,385	(246,720)
		63,265,695	10,942,942	24,448,796	5,778,636	4,125,052	2,795,946	1,520,111	3,641,335	6,690,816	664,750	123,874,079

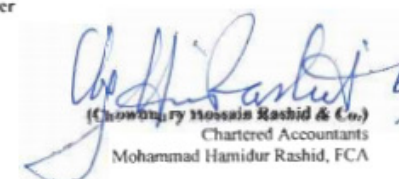
The annexed notes form an integral part of these accounts.


President


General Secretary


Treasurer

Dated : Dhaka
November 12, 2020


(Chartered Accountant)
Chartered Accountants
Mohammad Hamidur Rashid, FCA



Chartered Accountants

AWAJ FOUNDATION (AF)
Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income
For the year ended June 30, 2020

Particulars	Notes	General Fund June 30, 2020	KiK Project June 30, 2020	UP Project June 30, 2020	SC (NEW) June 30, 2020	AAB (SRAMIC) June 30, 2020	GIZ (PSD) June 30, 2020	ENV June 30, 2020	MJF (SCSPI) June 30, 2020	FJS June 30, 2020	HLO June 30, 2020	Grand Total June 30, 2020
INCOME												
Local Donation		16,994,673	-	-	5,778,636	4,125,052	1,395,946	-	3,641,335	-	664,750	32,600,392
Foreign Donation		46,271,022	10,942,942	24,448,796	-	-	-	1,520,111	-	6,690,816	-	89,873,687
Local Donation from AAB		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Setting up costs		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fund from Mondiaal ENV		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fund from GIZ Dhaka Office		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fund from Awaj Foundation Contribution		-	-	-	-	-	1,400,000	-	-	-	-	1,400,000
		<u>63,265,695</u>	<u>10,942,942</u>	<u>24,448,796</u>	<u>5,778,636</u>	<u>4,125,052</u>	<u>2,795,946</u>	<u>1,520,111</u>	<u>3,641,335</u>	<u>6,690,816</u>	<u>664,750</u>	<u>123,874,079</u>

Particulars	Notes	General Fund June 30, 2020	KiK Project June 30, 2020	UP Project June 30, 2020	SC (NEW) June 30, 2020	AAB (SRAMIC) June 30, 2020	GIZ (PSD) June 30, 2019	ENV June 30, 2020	MJF (SCSPI) June 30, 2020	FJS June 30, 2020	HLO June 30, 2020	Grand Total June 30, 2020
EXPENDITURE												
Salary		2,450,911	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,450,911
Festival Allowance		211,714	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	211,714
FES Training Program Cost (Old)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fund Transfer to Project Account		54,171,103	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	54,171,103
Treatment & Other Cost		458,750	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	458,750
Accommodation		36,800	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36,800
Advertisement		120,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	120,000
Bank Charge		11,203	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11,203
Child Labour Program Cost		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Communication		32,990	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32,990
Entertainment		155,534	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	155,534
Fuel & Gas		213,920	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	213,920
Fund-GBV Project		600	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	600
Fund-GIZ Project (Awaj Contribution)		1,400,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,400,000
FWF Program Cost		151,722	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	151,722
Hotel Research & Workshop Cost		42,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42,000



Current Awaj projects



Current Awaj projects

and list of donors

Awaj Annual Report 2019–2020

Project	Dates	Donor
UP! – Improving livelihoods and quality of life for women workers in Bangladesh RMG sector	2014– now	Laudes Foundation, Switzerland
Strengthening civil society and public institutions to address gender-based violence	July 2017– June 2021	Manusher Jonno Foundation, Bangladesh
Combating sexual violence and harassment in the garment sector	January 2020– present	Foundation for a Just Society (FJS), USA
Educate Workers about Freedom of Association	March 2014– present	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Germany
Awareness training for workers in the ready- made garment sector	2010– present	Fair Wear Foundation (FWF), Netherlands
Empowering female garments workers (GIZ, PSES)	January 2015 – May 2020	GIZ, Germany
Improved Health for the Garments Workers and their children	March 2008 – present	KiK Textilien, Germany
Improving Industrial Relation & Workplace cooperation in RMG	January 2019 – present	Mondial FNV, Netherlands
Amplify Awaj Communication	May 2020– April 2022	Laudes Foundation

Project	Dates	Donor
Aware Women's Action for Justice	June 2018 – present	Solidarity Centre Bangladesh
Labour Rights Feminist Participatory Action Research for Change	November 2017 –Current	APWLD, Thailand
Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA)	July 202 – Nov 2020	Plan International Bangladesh
"Hidden Supply Chains in Bangladesh – Bringing agency and resiliency to Informal Workers"	August 2020 – July 2021	GoodWeave International, USA
Supporting RMG workers' voice in the aftermath of COVID 19	September 2020 – January 2021	UNDP Bangladesh
Initiative to improve access to justice for the female migrant workers of Bangladesh	December 2019 – December 2021	ILO, Bangladesh

