December 2018

**Newsletter**

A monthly publication from Working with Women Phase 2

---

**End of 2018, and Kickoff 2019**

During 2018, we have shown resilience when removing the hindrance in implementing the health insurance for a large number of RMG workers; and resolving the issues for smooth implementation of the program. We have shown optimum patience by adopting the best practices, and changes for good; using cutting edge tools and knowledge to achieve our goals at Working With Women II project. We appreciate all the opportunities which are given within the project and their ability to make the most desirable change on SRHR for RMG workers.

Looking ahead to 2019, we want to accomplish innovative activities in the RMG sector on the horizon of SRHR. To kick off the new-year SNV’s Working With Women II project will announce SRHR Media Awards 2019 for the journalists to recognize and encourage the efforts in promoting SRHR issues in the media. In addition to that a National Conference on SRHR; seminar on inclusive business and a Sustainable Apparel Summit will be organised to promote health & wellbeing in RMG sector in Bangladesh.

---

Working With Women II Project of SNV Netherlands Development Organisation has completed the year 2018 with remarkable success. We are grateful to our partners who have inspired us with their tremendous efforts, and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for funding the project and other stakeholders who have allowed us to do the work about which we are so passionate. We could not have done it alone without your support.

As we look back in 2018, we see many achievements of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in Bangladesh. Many values that have been on display throughout the year, particularly launching of the Working With Women II project; organising the International Conference on Inclusive Business; National Conference on SRHR; and the seminar on ‘End Gender-Based Violence in the World of Work’ come to the front.

---

Using the success of a pilot initiative, SNV launched the second phase of the Working with Women project on 11 March 2018. The second phase of the project will set the stage for a sectoral change in the RMG sector in Bangladesh through improved health and well-being of workers, with a special focus on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).
Working with Women-II organised a series of training to enhance the capacity of BGMEA Institute of Fashion & Technology (BUFT) on inclusive business from March to July 2018, with a special focus on the RMG sector in Bangladesh. The training was a part of a partnership between SNV and BUFT for building systems to support garment factories and private companies in implementing Inclusive Business solutions. Five faculty members from BUFT attended the training facilitated by colleagues from Inclusive Business Sweden. The training discussed a wide range of theories and best practice for designing sustainable inclusive business solutions that can succeed in doing business with markets at the base of the pyramid (BoP).

Working with Women-II facilitated a panel discussion on ‘Shifting Compliance into Responsible Business Practices. A new business model for sustainability and women empowerment’ at the National Compliance Carnival on 20 April 2018. Representatives from different sectors including RMG industry, international brands, private sector, NGOs and education sector shared their works and insights in the area of ethical business practice and how these can support sustainability and women empowerment in the garment sector in Bangladesh.
SNV Bangladesh organised a three-day workshop on 24-26 July 2018 for partner organisations under the Working with Women-II project to improve their capacity in designing and implementing Inclusive Business practices in garment sector. The workshop focused on the current situation in the garment sector for introducing SRHR services and products to identify mechanisms to integrate IB initiatives in a holistic and feasible manner.

On November 26, 2018, Working with Women II of SNV Netherlands Development Organization organized a seminar at the National Press Club Dhaka on ‘End Gender-Based Violence in the World of Work’ to observe the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

SNV’s Working with Women-II project organised a seminar on ‘Role of the Private Sector to meet the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) needs and priority of RMG Sector’ in the capital Dhaka on November 5, 2018. The seminar was the part of a multi-stakeholder approach to sensitize the private sector for incorporating the SRHR needs in the ready made garment sector.

On the occasion of Menstrual Hygiene Day 2018, SNV Bangladesh organised a week-long awareness campaign for garment workers from 28 May – 2 June to build awareness about the importance of proper menstrual hygiene practices and the taboos surrounding menstruation.
Department of Population Sciences of Dhaka University and SNV Netherlands Development Organisation jointly organised the 1st National Conference on SRHR at Workplace at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban, University of Dhaka on 19 September 2018. The conference marks the beginning of a groundbreaking initiative to leverage greater policy support, collaboration and knowledge generation to help improve access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) at workplace, especially in garment sector.

The International Conference on Inclusive Business held on 30 September in Dhaka looked at the insights and opportunities for creating sustainable business models for serving the lowest-income communities and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Bangladesh.

ABOUT THE PROJECT
The Working with Women-II aims to set the stage for a sectoral change in the RMG industry through improved health and well-being of the workers, with a special focus on SRHR. For more information please visit http://www.snv.org/project/working-women-II or contact fichan@snv.org