

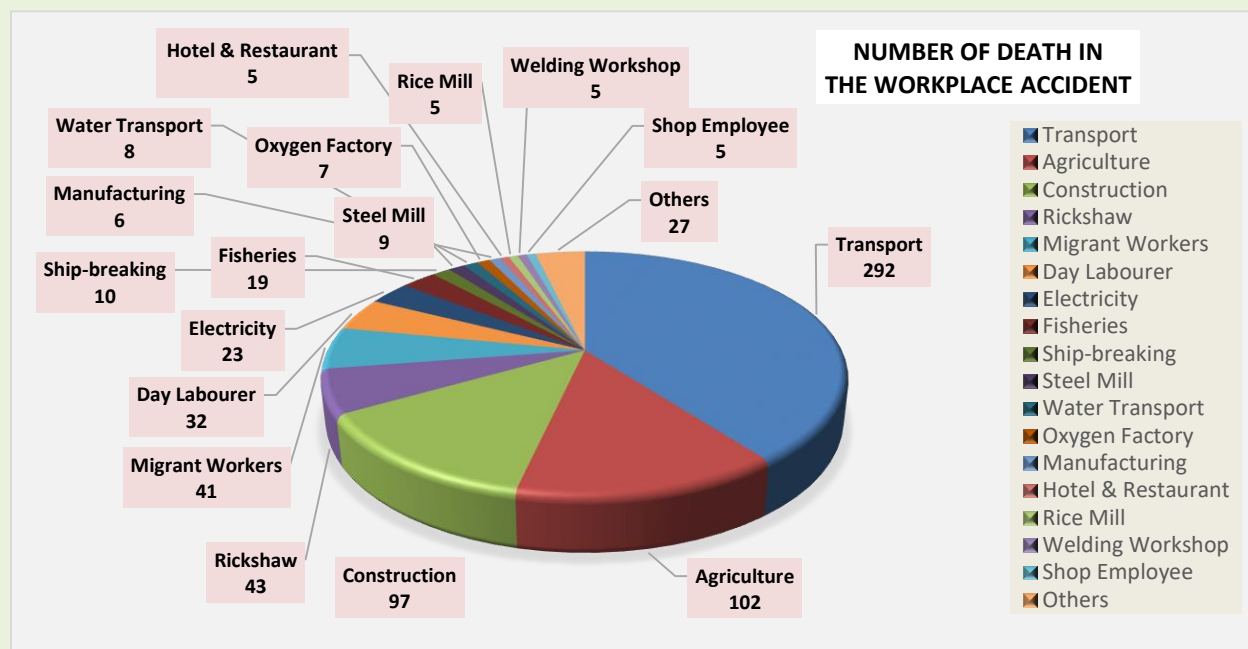
Bills Survey on Workplace Situation-2024

At least 736 workers killed and 300 injured at workplace in Bangladesh

In 2024 at workplace in Bangladesh, at least 736 workers killed and 300 injured in different kind of accidents. This information revealed from national newspaper survey conducted by BILS in 2024. It is also found in the survey that 119 workers also killed and 100 injured due to workplace torture. There were 501 labour unrest in various sectors, out of which 406 labour unrest occurred in the garment sector. The survey highlighted accidents, torture, labour unrest and related issues.

second-highest toll with 102 (13.9%) fatalities, followed closely by the construction sector, which saw 97 (13.2%) worker deaths.

Beyond these primary sectors, the figures for 2024 include 43 (5.8%) deaths among rickshaw pullers and 41 (5.6%) fatalities involving migrant workers. Furthermore, there were 32 (4.3%) daily labourers, 23 (3.1%) electrical workers, and 19 (2.6%) workers in the fisheries sector killed during this period. Smaller numbers were reported in other industries, including 10



According to survey data, 736 workers died in workplace accidents in 2024 (0.81% less than in 2023), of which 734 (99.73%) were men and 2 (0.27%) were women workers. By sector, the highest number of deaths occurred in the transport, where 292 (39.7%) workers lost their lives. The agriculture sector recorded the

(1.4%) in shipbreaking, 9 (1.2%) in steel mills, 8 (1.1%) in water transport, 7 (1.0%) in oxygen factories, and 6 (0.8%) in manufacturing. Additionally, 5 (0.7%) workers died in each of the hotel and restaurant, rice mill, welding workshop, and retail sectors, while 27 (3.7%) deaths were attributed to various other sectors.

In 2024, a total of 300 workers were injured in workplace accidents. The highest number of injuries occurred in the fisheries sector, with 47 (15.7%) workers affected. The transport sector saw the second-highest toll with 41 (13.7%) workers injured, while the construction sector followed as the third largest, where 31 (10.3%) workers sustained injuries.

Beyond these primary sectors, the figures for 2024 include 24 (8.0%) workers injured in oxygen factories, 23 (7.7%) in the water transport sector, and 20 (6.7%) working as day labourers. Furthermore, there were 18 (6.0%) injuries in the manufacturing industry, 16 (5.3%) in the readymade garment (RMG) sector, 13 (4.3%) in hotels and restaurants, and 11 (3.7%) in paper mills. Smaller numbers were reported in other industries, including 10 (3.3%) among shop employees, 9 (3.0%) in agriculture, and 6 (2.0%) each in edible oil factories and the ship-breaking industry. Additionally, 5 (1.7%) electrical workers were injured, while 20 (6.7%) injuries were attributed to various other sectors.

Road accidents, wall/roof collapses, electrocution, fire incidents, cylinder explosions, lightning strikes, toxic gas, maritime accidents, falling from heights, being hit by falling objects, explosions, sea storms/cyclones, boat/trawler sinkings, and attacks by wild animals are among the primary causes of workplace accidents.

According to the records for 2023, a total of 742 workers were killed in workplace accidents. Among the deceased, 739 (99.6%) were men and 3 (0.4%) were women workers. Additionally, 489 workers were injured in workplace accidents during this period.

According to the survey based on newspapers, 264 workers were victims of workplace torture in 2024. Among them, 226 are men and 38 are women workers. Of these 264 people, 119 were

killed, 100 were injured, 38 went missing, 1 was reported as a suicide, and 6 were recovered.

The highest number of victims was in the auto-rickshaw sector, where 44 workers were targeted, resulting in 43 deaths. The second highest involved 38 workers in the agricultural sector, of which 5 were killed and 33 were abducted (with 5 later rescued and 28 still missing). The third highest number of victims occurred in the readymade garment (RMG) sector, where 35 workers were victims of violence, including 5 deaths, 29 injuries, and 1 suicide.

Besides these, 28 workers in the transport sector were tortured, resulting in 22 deaths, 4 injuries, 1 missing, and 1 recovered. 22 security personnel were tortured, of which 13 were killed and 9 were injured. Additionally, 21 media workers were subjected to torture, resulting in 2 deaths and 19 injuries. Domestic workers also faced significant violence, with 16 total victims, of which 9 were killed and 7 were injured.

Types of workplace violence include physical torture, rape, stabbing, murder, mysterious death, kidnapping, and beating.

According to a newspaper-based survey, 306 workers were victims of workplace violence and harassment in 2023. Among them, 278 (91%) were men and 28 (9%) were women workers. Out of these 306 individuals, 157 were killed, 127 were injured, 16 went missing, and 3 committed suicide. Additionally, 3 kidnapped individuals were later rescued by the police; all three of the rescued victims were construction workers

In 2024, a total of 501 incidents of labour unrest occurred across various sectors. The highest number of incidents, 406 (81%), occurred in the garment sector. The second-highest incidence of labour dissatisfaction occurred in the textile industry with 22 (4%) cases, followed by the

beedi and jute industries, which each recorded 10 (2%) incidents. Apart from this, 9 incidents occurred in transport, 6 in pharmaceuticals, 6 in the tea industry, 5 in hotels and restaurants, 4 in railways, 3 in coil factories, 3 in fertiliser factories, and 19 in other sectors.

According to the survey, the highest number of cases, 156 (31%), occurred due to salary arrears. Additionally, 95 (19%) cases occurred due to demands for opening closed factories, 93 (19%) were due to the realisation of various demands, 47 (9%) due to lay-offs, 33 (7%) due to demands for salary increases, 7 due to overtime payment demands, 6 due to bonus demands, 2 in protest of worker deaths, and 22 due to other various demands.

During these protests, 5 workers were killed, comprising 2 women and 3 men. Furthermore, 174 workers were injured, including 102 men and 72 women. Of the injured, 152 were garment workers and 22 were from the textile industry.

Patterns of labour unrest included demonstrations (234, 47%), highway blockades (110, 22%), vandalism (97, 19%), human chains (21, 4%), sit-in strikes (13), work abstentions (10), rallies, distribution of memorandums, hunger strikes, and general strikes.

Orientation Programme of Advocacy for Green Development for RMG in Bangladesh

In a discussion with youth and women trade union leaders of the Tongi area at the orientation programme titled Advocacy for Green Development for RMG in Bangladesh, organised by the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies - BILS in collaboration with the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), the speakers said that the government, owners, and workers must work together to improve the environment of the factory and residential area community and address the impact of climate change. Stating that trade unions must play a leading role in this regard, they said that youth and women trade union leaders can play a successful role in raising awareness among the workers and community living in labour-intensive areas.

The event, organised on 11 February 2025 at a local community centre in Tongi under the chairmanship of a senior trade union leader and General Secretary of Bangladesh Mukto Sramik Federation, Md. Mojibur Rahman Bhuiyan was addressed by GSKOP Coordinator Naimul



Orientation Programme of Advocacy for Green Development for RMG in Bangladesh

Ahsan Jewel, BILS Director Nazma Yesmin, Senior Trainer ABM Sazzad Hossain, Senior Manager (Ethical Trade) of Ecotex Ltd. Nahidun Nabi, Assistant Manager of Masco Industries Ltd. Kamrun Nahar, Cultural Activist Shekanul Islam Shahi, Project Coordinator Yousuf Al-Mamun, Program Officer Jhakia Begum Neelima, and others.



Orientation Programme

The speakers at the event said that it is possible to advance the work of protecting the environment through proper use of ETP, saving electricity through the construction of solar panels, recycling production materials and waste through proper waste management, utilising liquid waste in the production of other products, etc., and at the same time reduce carbon emissions by reducing the use of fossil fuels. In addition, maternity leave for workers, provision of lunch, childcare centres in factories, etc., can help reduce worker fatigue and reduce family stress. They commented that young leaders can, through their initiatives, make factories that are not careful about waste management advocacy and lobby with them. In this case, they can highlight good examples of LEED-certified factories. The speakers emphasised that environmental development work should be taken forward at the community level as well as the factory level. In this regard, they mentioned that young and women trade unionists need to work at the front line.

It is worth noting that the aim of this project is to increase the capacity of young and women trade unionists to maintain improved environmental and social standards in the ready-made garment sector. This programme will try to solve problems by encouraging garment workers and local communities to demand environmentally friendly production processes through the promotion of environmental development practices. As a result, it will be possible to increase awareness about environmental and climate change laws, improve emergency preparedness, and increase the skills and capacity of workers and trade unions. This project will also help expand the network of women and youth trade unionists to popularise the demand for environmental development practices. After the successful completion of the programme, it is expected that the involvement of trade unions in environmental development practices for workers and the public will be further strengthened.

Sharing Project Progress and Orientation of Additional Activities with NCCWE Leadership

In a significant step towards formalising the care economy in Bangladesh, BILS organised a strategic orientation meeting with the leadership of the National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education (NCCWE) held on 26



Sharing Activities with NCCWE Leadership

February 2025 at the BILS Seminar Hall in Dhanmondi, the session served as a platform to share critical project milestones and unveil an expanded roadmap for the initiative titled "Support to enhance TU capacity to engage care workers for recognition and representation towards effective participation of workers in social dialogue, skills, and entrepreneurship development for decent work." The meeting brought together 17 influential labour representatives, including 13 male and 4 female leaders, to align on the future of care-sector advocacy.

During the proceedings, BILS officials presented a revised project framework developed in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO). This updated plan introduces a suite of new activities designed to bridge the gap between care workers and formal trade union (TU) structures. By emphasising recognition and representation, the project aims to empower these workers to participate effectively in social dialogue while fostering skills and entrepreneurship. The leadership discussed the necessity of these changes, noting that the care sector remains a vital yet underserved component of the national workforce. To accommodate these more robust objectives, a revised implementation timeline was also introduced and approved by the stakeholders.

The session was marked by an interactive dialogue where NCCWE leaders sought clarification on the newly planned activities and their long-term impact on the labour movement. BILS representatives addressed these queries in detail, ensuring that the leadership was fully orientated on how these additions would streamline the transition towards "decent work" for care providers. By the close of the meeting, there was a unified consensus on the way forward, with leaders reaffirming their

commitment to bringing care workers into the mainstream labour fold. This collaborative effort signals a renewed push to ensure that those who care for society are themselves protected by the principles of social justice and organised representation.

Working Group Meeting to Monitor the Progress of the Action Plan

BILS convened a strategic meeting with its Project Advisory Members on February 24, 2025, at the BILS Library in Dhanmondi to monitor the progress of the BILS-ILO Care Work Project. During the session, eight participants—comprising six male and two Female reviewed the current action plan and



Working Group Meeting

shared upcoming project milestones. A primary focus of the meeting was the formalization of a new support structure for the care sector.

The working group reached several key decisions regarding the establishment of a Care Worker Platform, which will initially operate as an informal body under the umbrella of SKOP:

- The platform's initial meeting will feature 10 care workers drawn from 12 different areas and 5 sectors.

- Selected participants must be articulate and possess a strong interest in motivating peers to join the platform and advocate for their professional rights.
- The structure includes 12–13 youth representatives (one from each federation) and 12 national-level leaders acting as advisors.
- Management will be overseen by two joint convenors serving on a yearly rotation basis.

Looking ahead, BILS clarified that while it will not act as the permanent secretariat, it will support youth leadership and SKOP as they take the lead in eventually formalizing the platform. Additionally, under the "Work Wise Youth" initiative, BILS will soon coordinate with its trainer's pool and working committee to select specialised trainers for an upcoming toolkit.

Trade Unions and Organisers Strategise on Outreach and Capacity Building for Enhanced Social Dialogue

On January 14, 2025, BILS, with the support of the ILO, organised a workshop with youth Trade Union leaders titled "Identifying key areas for outreach, capacity building and organising for participation in social dialogue process." Total number of participants was 28. Among the participants, 14 were female, and 14 were male. The meeting was held at the auditorium of Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Dhanmondi, Dhaka, and was facilitated by Ahasan Habib Bulbul, General Secretary, SLF and Nargis Jahan, Member, BILS Executive Council.



Workshop with the TU Leadership

With the support of the facilitators, the youth leaders identified the outreach areas and strategies to orient care workers of their rights. BILS also oriented the leaders to conduct outreach sessions with care workers. Each leader will take a session with 15 care workers. 26 youth leaders are expected to reach a total of 390 care workers from different occupations.

Tannery Workers Mobilise for Social Protection and Environmental Sustainability



Factory-level meeting with the Tannery Workers

On 14 February 2025, BILS convened a strategic factory-level meeting at the BILS Seminar Hall. Bringing together 34 participants from 13 different tanneries, the session focused on the critical protection of vulnerable groups and the advancement of gender equality within the leather industry. Led by the BILS Project Coordinator and the Tannery Workers Union Trainers Team, the discussions provided an essential platform for addressing maternity

benefits, the total elimination of child labour, and the prevention of Gender-Based Violence (GBV). To ensure long-term impact, participants recommended a strategic roadmap involving more frequent campaigns and the recruitment of women facilitators to lead future dialogues on women's rights under the Bangladesh Labour Act.

Tannery Sector Leaders Unite to Combat Gender- Based Violence and Promote



Workshop on Gender-Based Violence

In a significant move to safeguard the rights of women in the leather industry, BILS hosted a specialised workshop on 19 January 2025 focused on preventing gender-based violence (GBV) and fostering gender equality. The event, held in collaboration with the Tannery Workers Union, brought together 32 participants—including 22 men and 10 women—representing 14 different tanneries.

The workshop aimed to ensure basic legal rights for women workers while promoting the principles of decent work and discrimination-free environments. Project Coordinator Chowdhury Borhan Uddin opened the session by outlining the broader objectives of the Sustainable Leather Project and the critical role of stakeholder collaboration.

Advocacy for Cultural and Workplace Change

Prominent leaders, including Mr Abul Kalam Azad (President of the Tannery Workers Union) and Mr Abdul Malek (General Secretary), emphasised that achieving women's rights requires collective action starting from the family unit. Key industry figures, such as Mr Golam Shahnewaz, Managing Director of Dhaka Tannery Industrial Estate Waste Treatment Plant Company Limited, also lent their support to the initiative.

Speakers highlighted that while women are increasingly working alongside men, there must be a concerted effort to increase their overall participation in the tannery sector while ensuring they are protected from high-risk roles.

Empowerment through Education

Under the guidance of resource person A.B.M. Sajjad Hossain, participants engaged in deep-dive sessions on the following topics:

- Understanding the fundamental differences between sex and gender, and the nuances of gender empowerment.
- Identifying areas of gender discrimination and strategies for gender mainstreaming within the industry.
- Valuing gender roles and women's contributions to the workforce.

The session concluded with a formal commitment from all participants to stand against gender-based violence in their respective workplaces.

Strategic Roadmap for Improvement

To ensure the workshop's lessons translate into long-term change, the following recommendations were put forward:

- Increasing the recruitment and active participation of women in the tannery sector.
- Enforcing strict protections to prevent women from being assigned to physically risky work.
- Ensuring the active and fair implementation of maternity leave policies.
- Launching dedicated campaigns to prevent discrimination and violence against women at the factory level.
- Organising frequent similar workshops to maintain awareness and build leadership capacity.

Strategic Core Group Set to Bolster Due Diligence in Bangladesh Textile

BILS with the support of FEMNET e.V., convened its third Core Group meeting on 8 January 2025 at the BILS Seminar Hall in Dhaka to strengthen due diligence implementation within the textile industry. The



Workshop on Gender-Based Violence

meeting was attended by prominent labour leaders, including BILS Vice Chairman and Jatiya Sramik Federation (JSF) General

Secretary Amirul Haque Amin, BILS Advisory Council Member Naimul Ahsan Jewel, and SBGSKF President Al Kamran, alongside representatives from various garments and workers' federations. During the discussions, Amirul Haque Amin and Naimul Ahsan Jewel provided their formal consent to represent the initiative as designated speakers and panel discussions at the upcoming international OECD side session in February 2025. The senior leadership specifically emphasised that for the project to achieve its best results in the Ashulia area, mid-level leaders must move beyond standard collective bargaining and actively support one another in the collaborative effort to form new unions in unrepresented factories.

Furthermore, the leaders highlighted the critical role of international brands, noting that field-level experience shows suppliers cannot be effectively reached without direct support and cooperation from buyers, particularly on workplace improvement issues. To ensure the safety of those involved, the core group insisted that any data made public must be handled with care to ensure that workers' affiliation with the project does not pose any harm to their employment and that the information does not negatively impact a supplier's orders. The session also included insights from Nazma

Yesmin (Director, BILS) and Khairul Mamun Mintu (General Secretary, BGTWTC Savar-Ashulia), who contributed to the strategy for reconfirming active trade union lists. The meeting concluded with a commitment to a virtual exchange with the Trade Union Rights Centre (TURC) in Indonesia, ensuring that the

Bangladeshi leadership remains connected to global best practices in workplace monitoring.

Youth Trade Unionists Equipped with Due Diligence and Environmental Advocacy Skills



Capacity-building workshop for youth TU Leaders

In a strategic move to modernise labour advocacy, BILS with support from FEMNET e.V., hosted a day-long capacity-building workshop for youth trade union leaders on 11 March 2025. Held at the CCDB HOPE Foundation in Ashulia, the event focused on the intersection of European Due Diligence obligations and environmental justice, drawing 22 participants from G-SKOP and IBC-affiliated federations.

The workshop's primary objective was to deconstruct complex international regulations—specifically the **German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act**—and demonstrate how youth leaders can leverage these laws to safeguard worker rights in the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector.

The session was inaugurated by BILS Director Nazma Yesmin, followed by a detailed presentation from Project Coordinator Syaduzzaman Mithu. A key highlight was the introduction of the Worker-Based Monitoring (WBM) approach, which included sharing successful case studies and lessons learned from the TURC Indonesia Team.

Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmed, Executive Director of BILS, addressed the participants via a recorded message, stressing that the WBM approach is vital for the future of the labour movement. He urged youth leaders to adopt these monitoring tools not only in the RMG sector but across all industrial landscapes in Bangladesh to ensure corporate accountability.

Md. Aurongajeb Akond, Assistant Professor at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University (MBSTU), led intensive sessions on the evolution of Human Rights Due Diligence. He provided a focused breakdown of the German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act, specifically teaching unionists how to:

- Identify fundamental human rights violations within the supply chain.
- Utilise established methods to lodge formal complaints.
- Integrate trade union oversight into the due diligence processes of multinational brands.

The workshop also broke new ground by linking environmental degradation to labour welfare. Ahasan Habib Bulbul, General Secretary of the



Capacity-building workshop for youth TU Leaders

Socialist Labour Front (SLF), conducted a session on how environmental changes impact workers at multiple levels. Participants identified critical gaps in current legal instruments and brainstormed the role of trade unions in advocating for "Environmental Justice," ensuring that factories remain safe from pollution and climate-related risks.

The effectiveness of the programme was reflected in a post-workshop evaluation, where participants achieved an average score of **70%**. While expressing high satisfaction with the trainers, the youth leaders voiced a strong demand for more intensive, three-day residential workshops. They noted that mastering these global legal frameworks and environmental strategies is essential for the next generation of labour leadership to navigate the complexities of the modern global economy.

partners to create a rare platform for direct communication between employers and the workforce. Presided over by the President of the Tannery Workers' Union and BILS Secretary, the session opened with a call for unity to address the systemic challenges facing the sector.

The discussions underscored a critical link between worker satisfaction and industrial productivity. Speakers emphasised that ensuring fundamental rights and decent working conditions is not merely a legal obligation but a strategic necessity for the industry's survival. Resource persons highlighted the importance of cultivating mutual respect and establishing formal communication channels to preempt disputes. The session concluded with a preliminary roadmap focusing on the immediate need for improved welfare officers within factories to mediate grievances and oversee worker well-being.

Stakeholders Convene to Bridge Industrial Gap in Tannery Sector

BILS initiated the first of a series of high-level dialogues at the Tannery Estate in Hemayetpur on 25 January 2025, aimed at fostering industrial harmony and improving labour rights within the leather industry. The meeting brought together tannery owners, trade union leaders, and project



Workshop on Gender-Based Violence

Health and Wage Reforms Take Centre Stage at Tannery Dialogue

Building on the momentum of previous discussions, BILS organised a second consultative meeting at the Hemayetpur Tannery Estate on 23 February 2025. This session



Consultative Meeting

focused heavily on the physical well-being of the workforce and the implementation of fair compensation. Trade union leaders and factory representatives engaged in a transparent debate regarding the health hazards inherent in leather processing, particularly for those handling hazardous chemicals.

A primary recommendation arising from the meeting was the implementation of mandatory medical check-ups every six months for all floor-level workers. Furthermore, participants advocated for the establishment of dedicated clinics or hospitals within the estate to provide specialised healthcare. On the economic front, the dialogue turned towards the officially announced minimum wage, with both parties agreeing to commence immediate negotiations to ensure its full implementation. The General Secretary of the Tannery Workers' Union noted that financial security is the cornerstone of a stable and motivated workforce.

Workshop for Assessing Gaps in the Bangladesh Labour Act Regarding Care Work

BILS in collaboration with the ILO, hosted a strategic consultation with its national trainers' network on 23 March 2025 at the BILS Seminar Hall in Dhanmondi, Dhaka. The workshop was designed to refine the toolkit titled “Work-Wise Youth: A Guide to Youth Rights at Work” in preparation for a nationwide rollout.

This initiative is part of the broader BILS-ILO project aimed at enhancing trade union capacity to represent care workers and foster effective social dialogue. A key component of the project involves developing a pool of 20 master trainers across five divisions—Chittagong, Khulna, Sylhet, Barisal, and Rajshahi—to facilitate the toolkit's delivery. The consultation brought together 12 participants, including 4 women and 8 men, to ensure the translated materials are practical and impactful.

During the session, Deputy Director Yousuf Al-Mamun presented the translated toolkit, which led to a technical discussion on how to best structure the training. To ensure a more logical flow for participants, the trainers decided to merge specific modules: Session 3 will be integrated with Session 7, and Session 4 will be combined with Session 5.



Consultation Meeting

Responsibility for refining these tailored sessions was assigned to four lead trainers: Ahasan Habib Bulbul (General Secretary, SLF), Nargis Jahan (Vice President, Women's Committee, BJSD), ABM Sajjad Hossain (Trainer, BILS), and Shakil Akhter Chowdhury (General Secretary, BLF). The revised toolkits are expected to be submitted by 10 April 2025, providing a robust framework to empower young workers and strengthen the care economy in Bangladesh.

Labour Leaders Strategy Workshop Sets Roadmap for Factory-Level Outreach

BILS with the support of FEMNET e.V., convened a strategic Strategy Development Workshop on 24 March 2025 at the BILS Seminar Hall in Dhanmondi to refine outreach



Strategic strategy development workshop

methods for trade unions and organisers operating at the factory level. Under the guidance of BILS Director Nazma Yesmin and Project Coordinator Syaduzzaman Mithu, the session focused on scrutinising Decent Work Check (DWC) data and finalising implementation plans for the textile sector. The group identified a critical need for more precise

translations and clearer phrasing regarding sensitive topics such as forced labour, pensions, and workplace harassment, while also deciding to incorporate the age of respondents into future surveys for a more organised view of the workforce demographic.

In a proactive move to expand the labour movement, the leadership team, supported by the insights of the consultant for training materials, decided to prioritise interventions in non-unionised factories, with plans to host three significant meetings in April to begin direct engagement. Key strategies finalised during the workshop include a targeted selection process where two organisers will be engaged from each factory, with a strict requirement that at least one representative must be female. These participants must be self-motivated, articulate, and already active or identified as potential leaders within their workplaces. To spearhead

these interventions, a front-line team of four leaders—comprising two representatives from **G-SKOP** and two from the **IBC**—was formed, with a commitment to maintain strict confidentiality regarding current DWC data while verified lists of union statuses are updated by the end of March.

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies-BILS

House 20; Road 11 (New) 32 (Old); Dhanmondi R/A Dhaka-1209

Telephone: +880-2-41020280-3; E-mail: bils@citech.net; Website: www.bilsbd.org