NUTRITION INTERNATIONAL | NLIFT

NUTRITION LEVERAGE AND INFLUENCE FOR TRANSFORMATION

PARTNERING WITH THE READYMADE GARMENTS SECTOR TO IMPROVE NUTRITION FOR WORKERS IN BANGLADESH

Opportunity

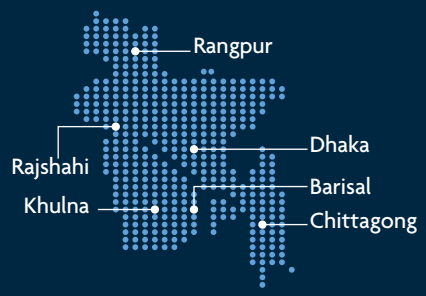
The readymade garments (RMG) sector is the largest contributor to Bangladesh's economy, employing about 4 million people, most of whom are young women. In Bangladesh, over 40% of women suffer from anaemia, which can affect their overall health and wellbeing. The RMG factories provide a platform for reaching a large number of women and men with nutrition interventions that will both improve their health and contribute to improving gender equality in the workplace. A healthy workforce will ultimately improve the overall productivity and development of the sector, which is the driving force of Bangladesh's economy.

Investment

With NLIFT's support — and in collaboration with factory owners, managers, and workers — the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), the trade body that represents the knitwear sector of Bangladesh, will develop and implement a workplace nutrition program called *Nutrition of Working Women* (NOWW). This program aims to prevent and control anaemia by improving the iron status among women, as well as to improve nutrition knowledge among male and female workers in Dhaka and Narayanganj regions. Key interventions include: weekly iron-folic acid supplementation (WIFAS) for women, dissemination of information on a balanced diet, hygiene and the importance of WIFAS to all workers, and government and private sector advocacy for better nutrition for RMG sector workers. In total, 240,000 workers will benefit from the program, including 180,000 female workers who will be reached with WIFAS. 60,000 male workers will be provided with nutrition education. Girl Effect's Technology-Enabled Girl Ambassadors (TEGA) will also be brought in to conduct interviews with workers. Input from these interviews will inform the workplace nutrition education content that will be developed for the workplace.

Innovation and leverage

This investment will leverage a non-nutrition platform, the RMG sector, to extend nutrition services to a group of women whose need for improved nutrition is likely high, but who have limited ability to obtain such services due to cost, accessibility issues and lack of awareness of nutrition. In addition to benefitting women, the program will also reach male workers, factory supervisors and line chiefs with nutrition education.



INVESTMENT AT A GLANCE

Duration
2019-2020

Partners
Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) and its members

Reach
workers benefitting from a work place nutrition program

240 K

Investment ($ CAD)

$ 554 K

Dollars leveraged ($ CAD)

$ 1.4 M

Expected outcomes

- Increased awareness of the importance of implementing appropriate policies and programs for improving the nutrition of the workforce among private and public sector decision-makers
- Better access to quality health and nutrition education for men and women in RMG factories
- Increased consumption of, and adherence to, WIFAS by female RMG workers

All of this will ultimately lead to improved health, nutrition and well-being of RMG factory workers, especially women, as well as increased productivity and further development of the RMG sector.

BKMEA

Working Today to Shine Tomorrow

About BKMEA The Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) was formed in 1996 through the efforts of a few knitwear manufacturers. It is now one of the largest trade associations consisting of about 2,200 knitwear factories. BKMEA received the South Asian Business Excellence Award 2017 for Occupational Health Safety. It has made tremendous contributions to Bangladesh's economic development within a short span of time. Recently, BKMEA has given the highest priority to maintaining a healthy workforce for the knitwear sector.

About NLIFT

Nutrition Leverage and Influence for Transformation (NLIFT) is a pioneering initiative that seeks to integrate nutrition interventions into existing development programs, platforms or networks that do not already focus on nutrition. With a $25 million anchor investment provided by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada, this Nutrition International-led initiative collaborates with exciting new partners in health, education, agriculture and other newcomers to the nutrition landscape, leveraging their strengths, reach and resources to develop investments that ensure more people have access to proven nutrition solutions.

For more information:
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About Nutrition International

Founded in 1992, Nutrition International is a global organization dedicated to delivering proven nutrition interventions to those who need them. Working in partnership with countries, donors and implementers, our experts conduct cutting-edge nutrition research, support critical policy formulation, and integrate nutrition into broader development programs. In more than 60 countries, primarily in Asia and Africa, Nutrition International nourishes people to nourish life. **NutritionIntl.org**

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Nourish Life