

# Final Evaluation Report

## UP!+ Project



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for

**C&A Foundation**

**FINAL**

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## Acknowledgments

The evaluation team would like to express their gratitude to those who participated in this evaluation process. The evaluation team would firstly like to thank the C&A Foundation Effective Philanthropy team for their guidance and support ahead of this evaluation and to C&A Foundation staff for taking the time to participate in Skype interviews.

Thanks also to Awaj, Impactt and the DSI team for sharing their very good insights and overview of the evolution of the project. They patiently answered our questions and made themselves available for Skype discussions to help us grasp the core findings from the project.

The evaluation team would finally like to thank the other respondents (training participants and trainers from Awaj) for taking time from their busy schedules to participate in this evaluation.

## List of Acronyms

BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
C&AF	C&A Foundation
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreements
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DPS	Deposit Pension Scheme
DSI	Development Synergy Institute
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
FDGs	Focus Group Discussions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
IBC	International Business Cooperation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KIIs	Key informant interviews
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MJF	Manusher Jonno Foundation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RMG	Readymade Garment
ToC	Theory of Change
ToT	Training of Trainers

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## Executive Summary

This evaluation assesses the performance and contribution of the UP! + Initiative, a garment worker training programme delivered by Awaj Foundation and Impactt Limited and funded by C&A Foundation (C&AF). The UP!+ Initiative is focused on improving the lives of workers in the readymade garment (RMG) sector by providing them with training on essential life-skills as well as the individual and collective skills required to mitigate workplace risks and strengthen worker rights.

This evaluation was based on the data included in the Development Synergy Institute (DSI) endline report, project documents and additional interviews with project stakeholders, including the Awaj, Impactt and C&A Foundation teams.

## Main Findings

Overall the project has been successful across the four criteria of analysis. Feedback on the project and the organisation is extremely positive, and Awaj has made significant progress in terms of building organisational capacity since the first phase in 2014.

The project is aligned with the needs of the context and participants, as well as the strategy of the C&A Foundation, and has achieved its training objectives, producing some significant outcomes, particularly at the individual level. Success at a collective, factory level has also been achieved but to a lesser extent. Although the project includes a focus on women's empowerment, participation of women lessens (whilst still being in the majority) as workers progress through the training levels.

Awaj Foundation's motivation, flexible management and consistent communication with workers has been fundamental in securing project success, of which other key enablers were the incremental training approach and development of appropriate content. The project is largely efficient, having been achieved on time and on budget, although some improvements in terms of budget allocation and M&E could be made. The evaluators note also that organisational capacity building is not necessarily a natural outcome of a partnership and will not be achieved by osmosis alone but rather through specific project components which should be built into the design.

Sustainability is built into the strategy of the UP!+ initiative, and its design is constantly evolving toward a more strategic "systemic change" objective, through greater participation of workers (especially women) in improving working conditions, and the increased presence of UP!+ graduates in committees, forums and unions available to them.

## Relevance

<b>Good</b>	The UP!+ initiative is considered highly relevant to the context, responding to the identified needs of the context and beneficiaries and aligned with C&A Foundation's working conditions theory of change (TOC), as well as Awaj Foundation's goal and mission. Awaj, as a grassroots RMG workers organisation with high outreach capacity is complementing the work of other
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	workers' rights initiatives. The pyramidal/stepped up model approach is quite original and appropriate to achieve change at factory level.
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**Effectiveness**

<b>Good</b>	The UP!+ initiative is considered highly effective with 4 out of 5 training output targets having been achieved at 100% or over. Overall, around 15,000 workers have been trained, including more than 5,100 in this phase of the initiative, and 150 leaders have been created since 2014.
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**Outcomes**

<b>Good</b>	The most notable successes in terms of outcomes are found at the individual level, in terms of behaviour change relating to health and finance and improved confidence resulting in an increase in the individual raising of disputes at the workplace. Although fewer changes have been witnessed in terms of collective outcomes at the factory or sector level, improvements in working conditions have been made in 74 out of the 75 factories where trainees work.
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**Efficiency**

<b>Average</b>	The UP!+ initiative is considered efficient, though the evaluators have adjusted the rating, reducing it to 'average' from the DSI endline evaluation rating of 'good'. The project was delivered on time and on budget, despite obstacles. Cost effectiveness is relatively good and is improving with each phase of the initiative. However, the budget allocation between the grantee and subgrantee and the fact that insufficient capacity has been built to handover grant management/reporting activities to Awaj hampers efficiency. Although Awaj and Impactt have demonstrated a good ability to integrate learning and respond to feedback when available, the project lacked a mechanism to track and document the progress of learning and more regular monitoring feedback would have been useful.
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**Sustainability**

<b>Good</b>	The evaluators have revised the rating provided by the endline evaluation to raise it to a 'good' level of achievement since sustainability is built into the strategy of the UP!+ initiative. In addition, the organisational development Awaj has achieved, thanks to the C&A Foundation's targeted support in capacity building, has rendered the organisation more autonomous and capable of sustaining its work, and increasing its outreach and impact over the coming years. Room for improvement in terms of sustainability is to be found in the need to better plan and explicitly frame the transition strategy of Awaj's international partners (exit strategy of C&A Foundation and Impactt).
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## Missed Opportunities

Most of the missed opportunities stated in the report were identified in both the DSI endline report and final initiative report from Impactt, and the majority are addressed in the UP!+ 2019 proposal. By building on the previous UP!+ stages and adding further components (community sensitization, factory management training, RMG forum, building the capacity of Awaj on advocacy) the evaluation team finds that a great effort to consider challenges and missed opportunities was made in the proposal for the next phase of the project, rendering the initiative even more relevant and effective.

## Recommendations

Below are compiled strategic, programmatic and process level recommendations building on the past evaluations and on this round of additional interviews. Recommendations are aimed at the C&A Foundation, Awaj and Impactt Limited, to enhance and refine the intervention strategy (and potentially that of other, similar initiatives), programmatic approach and processes for a third phase.

### Strategic Recommendations for C&A Foundation

1. **More strategic relationship planning between the three partners; C&A Foundation, Impactt, and Awaj.** Clear objectives, vision and an exit strategy for the partnership should be defined in order to avoid misalignment and to manage expectations.
2. **Continue support for the organisational development of Awaj.** To ensure the possibility of Awaj fulfilling its potential, it is recommended that C&AF support the creation of an organizational assessment and development plan for Awaj.

### Programmatic Recommendations for C&A Foundation, Impactt and Awaj

1. **Systematic change in working conditions should be the priority**, and thus the focus should be on allowing more workers to reach the higher UP!+ levels, where the skills for real systematic change are more likely to be built and where there is the most need for the number of trained workers to reach critical mass.
3. **Address the barriers of management and community hostility to ensure that UP!+ can reach its full potential impact by creating an enabling environment for workers to fully enact the learnings of UP!+.**
4. **Put a greater focus on advocacy objectives:** In order to ensure the learnings and capacity built in UP!+ contribute to systemic level change in the RMG sector, strengthen the advocacy and communications activities in future stages of the UP!+ programme. This can be done in multiple ways:

- **More workers should be able to move up the higher levels of UP!+:** increasing the intensity of promotion at the higher levels of UP!+ to increase the number of workers' upskilled on more complex negotiations.
  - **Promoting advocacy training for workers' rights committee:** The 35 members Worker Rights Committee has been formed with the aim that the committee would carry out lobbying and advocacy in favour of garment sector workers as a whole and so some parts of training should focus on this.
  - Through **Awaj advocacy capacity building**, by supporting the organisation and its staff on how to set up an advocacy strategy, and advocacy skills.
  - By **using learnings from previous phases to fine-tune the advocacy strategy**, defining, for example, the top 3-5 changes to be advocated for.
5. **Leverage relationships and formalise collaboration with other key stakeholders in the RMG sector to raise the profile of Awaj and increase the impact of UP!+.** Systematically engaging high-profile, relevant and powerful stakeholders in the RMG sector to support the programme will increase the recognition of Awaj and the credibility of the UP!+ graduates.
  6. **A reflection on the outcome indicators for improving working conditions should be undertaken for the next phase.** Some indicators could be further defined in order to provide more specific and measurable information on outcomes for beneficiaries.
  7. **Actively work on metrics related to women's empowerment.** Pay close attention to indicators specifically related to women, which have not performed as well as others, and make efforts to ensure the participation of women does not fall as workers rise through the UP!+ levels.

## Processes Recommendations for Awaj Foundation

8. **Training content and methods should:**
  - Ensure that risk identification and mitigation is hard-wired into all training materials to protect workers and increase positive outcomes in real world negotiations.
  - Use high levels of direct in-person contact with participants in the trainings to build relationships that allow for support and adjustments in case of any problems arising and consider using tools to track progress in learning and behaviour change.
  - Use a bottom-up approach for training design and planning.
9. **Strengthen the M&E system and develop a mechanism to track progress:** Awaj should put in place a mechanism to regularly capture results as well as continuing to use evaluation as a tool for learning.

10. **Institutional knowledge gained through phases needs to be secured.** For this to happen Awaj should:

- Document feedback, challenges and lessons along the course of the project.
- Keep written record of actions.
- Awaj should in the future own or at least drive the M&E and reporting process (by hiring internal human resources or contracting ad hoc consultancy expertise on this matter).

11. **Capitalise on impact and share successes:** the UP!+ project has a strong learning potential due to its long-term scope that is not yet exploited. With the help of an improved M&E system, Awaj could capitalise on its positive impact and do more to share the successes of the programme, enabling other programmes to learn from what worked in UP!+ as well as raising the profile of Awaj and the UP!+ programme.

# Introduction

## Context

The apparel industry in Bangladesh has experienced extremely rapid growth since the 1980's and is now the second largest industry of its type in the world, second only to China. Clothing exports now account for 81% of the country's export earnings and the sector directly employs around 4 million workers, of whom more than half of whom are women. The garment sector has thus become a key driver of the national economy, increasing Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employment opportunities, and providing unprecedented opportunities for Bangladeshi women to work outside the home for wages.<sup>1</sup>

The Bangladesh RMG industry has however been described as engaging in a 'race to the bottom' in terms of labour conditions as squeezed margins fuel poor working conditions, low wages and maltreatment of workers. Garment workers suffer from a plethora of issues at the workplace including lack of leave, insufficient provision of drinking water and animosity towards worker organisations which affects the potential of workers to organise and force change. Despite Bangladesh having ratified the three main International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions on social dialogue, there remains a fragmented and relatively weak union landscape which suffers from low membership (only around 10% RMG factories are unionised) and lack of recognition.<sup>2</sup> Workers also face more general problems related to poverty such as low literacy, lack of access to financial products and poor housing.

Whilst the RMG boom has provided employment opportunities for women, they are most often found in the lowest level jobs and women's working conditions are characterised by low pay and an unsafe environment. Women encounter specific workplace issues such as discrimination, harassment, lack of maternity related rights and insufficient toilet facilities, and are also lacking representation in the various channels of negotiation and bargaining (trade unions, committees, etc.). Importantly, women are subject to patriarchal norms both at the workplace and domestically, affecting their ability to make independent decisions and assert themselves as leaders.

## Project Background and Logic

Delivered by Awaj Foundation and Impactt and funded by C&A Foundation (C&AF), the UP!+ Initiative is a community-based training programme focused on improving the lives of workers in the readymade garment (RMG) sector by providing them with training on essential life-skills as well as the individual and collective skills required to mitigate workplace risks and strengthen worker rights. An additional and parallel aim was the capacity building of Awaj Foundation staff by Impactt in project skills.

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<sup>1</sup> International Labour Organisation, "Improving working conditions in the ready made garment industry: Progress and achievements" (September 2016): [https://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Projects/W/CMS\\_240343/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Projects/W/CMS_240343/lang--en/index.htm) and BGMEA, "About Garment Industry of Bangladesh": <http://www.bgmea.com.bd/home/about/AboutGarmentsIndustry> and Rosey Hurst "Humanizing the garment workers", TEDxDhaka (February 2015): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxrYJfo8zH8>

<sup>2</sup> Fair Wear Foundation: <https://www.fairwear.org/country/bangladesh/>

The UP+! Initiative ran from August 2016 to July 2018 (with an extension until the end of 2018) and built upon the success of the previous phase, the UP! Initiative delivered from 2014 to 2016. The project’s logical framework lays out the following objectives:

<b>GOAL</b>	Workers gain improvements in working conditions across the garment factories through the negotiation, bargaining and claiming rights of worker at workplace.
<b>OUTCOMES</b>	1) Workers raise and gain a positive resolution for an increased number of disputes, leading to improvements in the workplace.
	2) Increase in capacity of channels, forums and committees to represent workers effectively.
	3) Women workers leading efforts to improve working conditions (as part of the workers’ committee formed as the training is complete).
	4) Workers are better to identify and mitigate risks posed to them and their workplace.
	5) Workers have improved eating and healthy living habits.
	6) Female workers have taken more control over their finances and household financial decisions.

Key output objectives included:

- 5500 workers trained in finance, health and leadership;
- 1450 of these move on to receive training on negotiating workplace issues;
- 145 of these graduates to receive advanced negotiation and advocacy training.
- A select group of 30 trainees make up a workers rights committee, absorbed into Awaj.

The approach of the project is based on some key pillars, namely that it is a community- based intervention, provides front line workers in the garment industry with international best practice in negotiation techniques and uses a stepped training approach (starting with simple life-skills and building up to more complex negotiation and leadership training). Workers are also linked to trade unions and trainings take place outside of the factory setting.

The incremental approach comprises 4 levels of trainings which sees the most able and motivated workers move up through the stages, as shown in Figure 1 below:



Figure 1: UP!+ Training Stages

The project is based on a holistic approach which views poor workplace conditions as part of larger structural difficulties. The approach is one of social psychology, the logic of which lies in the belief that in order to improve working conditions, workers first need to be 'rehumanised' in the eyes of factory management before they can successfully negotiate with them. The idea is that lifestyle changes can help to set the conditions for this 'rehumanisation' and that empowering workers will ultimately allow them to agitate negotiate for the changes they wish to see in their homes and workplaces.

As female workers comprise the majority of the RMG sector, all stages of UP!+ focus on enhancing and developing the domestic and working situations of women in particular.

## Evaluation framework

### Evaluation Rationale and Objectives

This evaluation has been mandated by C&A Foundation and comes within the transition between phases 2 and 3 of the project. Building on an endline evaluation report completed by Development Synergy Institute (DSI), the objectives of this evaluation are to assess the performance of the UP!+ Initiative, generating learning which can inform programming in the project's third phase (whilst recognising that the proposal for phase 3 has already been approved) and providing actionable recommendations.

### Evaluation Questions

The evaluators have referred to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance to evaluate the partnership's performance, focusing on the criteria of **relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, outcomes/results and sustainability**.

Using the evaluation questions which guided the endline report, the evaluators have highlighted those which were given additional focus in this evaluation as well as including additional questions seen as pertinent (in bold, please see Annex 1).

### Evaluation Methodology

The methodology for this evaluation report relied on qualitative methods, coupled with a re-analysis of quantitative data contained in the endline report. Key informant interviews (KIIs) were carried out with the project teams from Awaj and Impactt, two project beneficiaries, the endline evaluation team, and C&A Foundation stakeholders. A desk review of project documents and relevant secondary literature was undertaken.

The Development Synergy Institute endline report, the data from which nourishes this evaluation, employed a mixed methods approach, surveying a sample of 550 (10%) training recipients and conducting 3 focus group discussions (FDGs), 6 Key Informants Interviews (KIIs) and 5 case studies. DSI provided their notes from the FDGs, which were translated

from Bengali to English. Please see their report in Annex 1 for a more detailed explanation of the methodology.

## Limitations

There are some key limitations related to this evaluation, as detailed below.

### ➤ **Memory of respondents**

The DSI endline evaluation was completed in September 2018 and this phase of the initiative ended almost six months ago, in July 2018. This may thus have an impact on the ability of project stakeholders and the DSI team to accurately recall information.

### ➤ **Remote evaluation approach**

The scope of this evaluation mission does not include a field visit or direct data collection with beneficiaries of the initiative and is dependent on data already collected by Development Synergy Institute, meaning the evaluators were not able to look as deeply into the initiative as with a more traditional evaluation approach. Additionally, the evaluators have not been able to carry out any face-to-face interviews which provide an opportunity for richer feedback. The evaluation team has attempted to mitigate these limitations by conducting in-depth KIIs with project stakeholders as well as speaking remotely to two workers who participated in training and one UP!+ trainer.

## Main Findings

Overall the project has been successful across the four criteria of analysis. Feedback on the project and the organisation is extremely positive, and Awaj has made significant progress in terms of building organisational capacity since the first phase in 2014.

The project is aligned with the needs of the context and participants, as well as the strategy of the C&A Foundation, and has achieved its training objectives, producing some significant outcomes, particularly at the individual level. Success at a collective, factory level has also been achieved but to a lesser extent. Although the project includes a focus on women's empowerment, participation of women lessens (whilst still being in the majority) as workers progress through the training levels.

Awaj Foundation's motivation, flexible management and consistent communication with workers has been fundamental in securing project success, of which other key enablers were the incremental training approach and development of appropriate content. The project is largely efficient, having been achieved on time and on budget, although some improvements in terms of budget allocation and M&E could be made. The evaluators note also that organisational capacity building is not necessarily a natural outcome of a partnership and will not be achieved by osmosis alone but rather through specific project components which should be built into the design.

Sustainability is built into the strategy of the UP!+ initiative, and its design is constantly evolving toward a more strategic "systemic change" objective, through greater participation of workers (especially women) in improving working conditions, and the increased presence of UP!+ graduates in committees, forums and unions available to them.

## Relevance

<b>Good</b>	The UP!+ initiative is considered highly relevant to the context, responding to the identified needs of the context and beneficiaries and aligned with C&A Foundation's working conditions theory of change (TOC), as well as Awaj Foundation's goal and mission. Awaj, as a grassroots RMG workers organisation with high outreach capacity is complementing the work of other workers' rights initiatives. The pyramidal/stepped up model approach is quite original and appropriate to achieve change at factory level.
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### (++) Improving working conditions: a relevant project filling a gap in the sector

As described above, the RMG sector in Bangladesh is characterised by poor labour standards, a situation compounded by the relatively weak union landscape and the difficulties of organising collective worker action through formal channels. Garment workers face a catalogue of problems both inside and outside of the workplace and women, who make up the majority of RMG workers, additionally suffer from intersectional layers of poverty and exploitation due to patriarchal norms at work and at home.

The UP!+ initiative, with its focus on individual and collective bargaining in both the domestic and work spheres, along with the concentration on promoting female empowerment, is clearly based on a strong analysis of the project setting and is highly relevant to the national and sectoral context. Considering the lack of systematic structural change in the apparel industry over the past 20 years, the project goal of gaining improvements in RMG working conditions through the negotiation, bargaining and claiming of rights by workers at their workplace is rational and fitting for the needs and priorities of the Bangladesh RMG context.

The promotion of female leaders within the garment worker community with the idea that they will ultimately lead on achieving improvements in the workplace is highly relevant to a sector which is majority female staffed but male led, and where women are less likely to be involved in negotiation and bargaining channels.

Although there are many workers' rights initiatives in Bangladesh (currently active projects are being implemented for example by the ILO or CARE), most of these interventions take place within the factory setting and focus on life skills or worker rights alone rather than an integrated approach or capacity building in best practice negotiation techniques. **This project therefore fills a gap and is complementary to other organisations and workers' rights initiatives.**

#### (++) Relevance of the incremental approach for achieving change

As well as being relevant to the context, the project approach and strategy devised by Impactt is also evaluated as being highly appropriate. Firstly, the community-based approach, led by Awaj Foundation who are truly embedded in the community and are able to convene workers in open access worker cafés, is a strong added-value of this project. **Workers are engaged outside of their workplace, enabling freer interaction in neutral spaces** and also helping to avoid the bias towards engagement of workers only from more open, willing and compliant factories.

**A unique element of the UP!+ Initiative is its incremental approach**, viewing the situation of working conditions in a holistic manner and so starting with building life skills at an individual level and eventually leading to the strengthening of negotiation skills at a collective level. The first modules of UP! 1 begin with fairly basic life lessons on subjects such as financial and time management, daily routine, diet and healthy practices. Participants then progress to how to address practical issues in everyday life situations, learning tips for communicating with management. After this, a percentage of the most committed and skilled workers move up through the levels of UP!+.

**This stepped method has proven to be a key driver of the success of the project according to trainer, worker and project stakeholder feedback.** The first modules on health and finances generated high levels of interest from workers and secured attendance for the successive modules as participants increase in confidence and knowledge and see the value of the trainings in their everyday lives.

**The wide diffusion approach of UP! is also considered relevant.** The idea is that programme reach should be extended to a large number of workers so that those who undergo training are not seen as outliers or troublemakers in their workplaces, lacking support from colleagues and then easily victimised or penalised by management. This approach also

allows for the identification of talented people from the bigger pool, who can be mentored to become leaders.

**However, FGD and Impactt feedback suggests that more workers would be keen to move up through the UP! levels than numbers have allowed**, and that some felt 'left out'. Since the higher-level negotiation and leadership training seems to be where UP!'s real added-value lies and where real change in working conditions is most likely to be driven from, it would be perhaps be worth focusing on increasing the numbers of workers who can access higher UP! levels. This is further discussed in the sustainability section below.

### (++) A relevant and flexible approach adapted to participants needs and expectations

The project design is based on a strong and thorough analysis of the context and on consultation with participants about the proposed training modules. This was demonstrated by the adaptation of training which occurred when participants expressed their desire to also cover labour law, which was then included in the UP! 3 modules. However, this adjustment was made during the life of the project and Awaj provided the content in kind since there was no budget planned for additional content development. **A consultation period and needs analysis exercise before content development may thus have been useful.**

The DSI endline study evidenced the relevance of training for participants with **95% respondents considering the training to be 'good' and 97% it was useful in their work and personal lives**. Workers reported that training was useful in several spheres; personal, home and family life as well as in the community and at the workplace. Financial advice, time management, diet, how to communicate with management and negotiate in work and domestic settings seem to have been the most relevant elements.

*"All the issues of the training are relevant for us...it has captured our day to day events and experiences." (DSI endline FGD participant, Dhaka)*

*"The stories which have been told in this training these really happen in our life." (Trainee feedback, Impactt final report)*

The endline study also showed that the **training methods and style were considered especially appropriate for participants** and that trainees found the stories and role plays related to real-life situations very effective. The long process of content development undertaken by Impactt, in consultation with Awaj project and cafe staff, has produced content which is appropriate and engaging for participants (although further consultation with workers may have avoided the need for UP!+3 module adjustments later in the process).

### (++) Relevance of the Awaj partner: a grassroots organisation with wide outreach

Impactt Limited and Awaj Foundation brought complementary skills and strengths, rendering the partnership relevant for the needs of the project. Impactt developed the UP! and UP!+ concepts and content and has brought strategic direction to the project whilst Awaj has been responsible for project implementation.

The choice of Awaj Foundation as a partner for this project has been very relevant and is a key strength of the initiative. **Awaj being a grassroots organisation created by and for RMG workers gives them a legitimacy within the community they work and a deep understanding of the issues RMG workers face.** Their wide network of over 500,000 RMG workers means they have a significant outreach capacity which has enabled the gathering of workers to participate. Awaj's leadership is cited by many workers as inspirational, and the commitment and motivation of the Awaj team to providing support and guidance to workers was clearly a fundamental driver of the success of the project.

*“Awaj are the biggest player in labour rights space – everybody knows them. They have the biggest reach of any NGO in RMG sector in Bangladesh. Nobody else can convene the number of workers that Awaj can.” (External consultant- Bangladesh)*

### **(++) Relevance of UP!+ to the C&A Foundation Strategy**

The C&A Foundation Theory of Change (ToC) lists improved livelihoods and fair wages and just conditions for apparel workers as two of their three key impacts, and amplifying workers voices and advancing the rights of women as key principles.

The C&AF Working Conditions group in terms of their goal as set out in the Working Conditions ToC of improved working conditions and wages for every man and woman in the apparel industry. By building worker capacity, focusing on women and building the skills of Awaj, the initiative also directly contributes to the following intended results:

- Increased number of collective bargaining agreements
- More women leading the way to better working conditions
- Improved capacity of organisations promoting improved working conditions

The project is well aligned with the overall strategy and objectives of C&AF, as well as the aims of the Working Conditions portfolio which it falls under. C&AF's partnership with Awaj Foundation is one of their oldest in Bangladesh and the two organisations have witnessed a common growth and development during the time of their collaboration. **Stakeholder interviews suggest there is a real sense of win-win partnership rather than a donor and grantee relationship.**

*The project has pivoted more towards C&AF KPIs, which C&AF have solidified since the beginning of the partnership. The project itself became fundamental to Awaj's work, much more focused on collective bargaining and more strategic. (C&A Foundation respondent).*

## Effectiveness

<b>Good</b>	The UP!+ initiative is considered highly effective with 4 out of 5 training output targets having been achieved at 100% or over. Overall, around 15,000 workers have been trained, including more than 5,100 in this phase of the initiative, and 150 leaders have been created since 2014.
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### (++) Training outputs achieved or exceeded

Awaj has achieved a significant amount of work during the UP! and UP!+ initiatives, having reached and even surpassed their targets in terms of training numbers.

**This high attendance and retention rate**, as well as high levels of female participation (around 81% across the four UP!+ levels), in despite of obstacles including strikes and cafe closures, is testament to the effectiveness of Awaj’s adaptive management techniques and constant communication with workers.

As seen below, the five output targets related to training numbers have been achieved (or very nearly in one case) and even exceeded, as below.

#### Training output targets and status of achievement

Output Target	Status	% Achieved
5,500 workers trained on Stage 1 UP! content	5111	93% <sup>3</sup>
425 PEG leaders trained to recruit workers, act as leaders in their communities and support training	448	105%
1,450 workers trained in negotiation and advocacy	1484	102%
145 workers trained in advanced negotiation and advocacy	150	103%
30-person worker rights committee formed	35	116%

### Enabling or Impeding Factors

The table below summarises the factors which enabled success and factors which had a negative impact on effectiveness.

<sup>3</sup> DSI suggested this target was not achieved by 100% due to logistical issues related to getting participants to cafes, linked to labour unrest and resulting café closures. There was also a drop-out rate of 15% for UP!+1.

Which main factors enabled effectiveness?	What main factors negatively affected effectiveness ?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inspirational Awaj leadership with motivated and skilled staff including project teams, cafe managers and trainers.</li> <li>- Impactt's strong content development processes which have produced appropriate and relevant <b>interactive trainings</b>.</li> <li>- Awaj's outreach capacity and ability to organise and motivate workers, linked to their good communication with workers who trust and respect the organisation.</li> <li>- Capacity to adapt; learning has been used, when available, to adjust project and to plan future phases. This has resulted in successful adjustments to the strategy, e.g. initially in 2014-16 phase, found that needed to make groups out of same factories. Have been able to adapt the design.</li> <li>- Key enabler has been the <b>incremental training</b>; the gradual style of starting with practical skills and then working towards harder negotiation skills is reported to have been much more effective than other training approaches which begin with distant-seeming concepts of negotiation/unionisation straight away.</li> <li>- Community-based approach outside of factories.</li> <li>- C&amp;AF long term support has allowed for stability and longer-term planning as well as organisational capacity building.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of support of family or community and migration were cited as the two main reasons for drop-out<sup>4</sup>.</li> <li>- The non-conducive environment (in factories and the sector/country more widely) for negotiation and collective bargaining. Context where unionisation is still seen badly, and the union movement remains relatively weak.</li> <li>- Minimum contact with factories in this phase meaning management was potentially less open to ideas and negotiation (planned for next phase).</li> <li>- Attendance affected by long working hours. Less attendance on weekdays, weekend trainings were often easier for workers to attend.</li> <li>- Attendance was also affected by external factors such as labour unrest which closed cafes, and weather conditions for example in the rainy season.</li> <li>- Lack of capacity to manage project data.</li> <li>- Insufficient monitoring feedback during the life of the project to track progress and adapt.</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> The overall drop-out rate for UP!+ 1 between recruitment and training completion was nearly 15%, according to Awaj figures reported in the Impactt final report. For women, the rate was 13.5% while for men it was 23%. By UP!+ 2, the overall drop-out rate fell to around 4%. Across all UP!+ levels the overall drop-out rate was around 11%. Awaj had however used a strategy of recruiting more participants than necessary for the first UP!+ phase, in order to try to mitigate against this majorly affecting their achievement of objectives.

## Outcomes

<b>Good</b>	The most notable successes in terms of outcomes are found at the individual level, in terms of behaviour change relating to health and finance and improved confidence resulting in an increase in the individual raising of disputes at the workplace. Although fewer changes have been witnessed in terms of collective outcomes at the factory or sector level, improvements in working conditions have been made in 74 out of the 75 factories where trainees work.
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*“Comparing the endline to the baseline, they have performed very well” (DSI evaluation team)*

### (++) Many notable successes and achievements are to be found at the individual level

Stakeholder and worker feedback, as well as endline survey results, suggest that workers have found the life skills lessons very relevant and have incorporated them into their everyday lives, resulting in positive outcomes at the individual level.

#### Key success: behavioural changes in health and financial management

Life skills training has produced outcomes such as improved dietary habits and time management skills. In terms of finance, many workers have now started to budget their income and expenditure, and more are now linked to the banking system, with a 15% increase in workers saving money.

<p><b>Health - positive behavioural changes and healthy practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proportion of training participants eating a balanced diet (colourful plate) has increased by around 70%</li> <li>• More than 90% trainees are now drinking 2 or more litres of water per day, an increase of 40%</li> <li>• Training on time management and daily routine has stressed the importance of getting adequate sleep and making time for breakfast, which has anecdotally had a positive impact on health as well as relationships at the workplace, as well as improving punctuality and helping workers to secure attendance bonuses.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Case Study: example of healthy practice</b></p> <p>“I used to be late going to bed at night. Very often I used to go to factory without taking my morning meal as I could not wake up early enough to prepare and take food. At the factory, I could not concentrate fully on my tasks as I used to feel sleepy. For this reason, supervisor used to scold me a lot and always kept me under watch as if I was always sleeping without doing any work. However, the training of UP! has changed me. Before the training I did not know that at least 7-8 hours of sleep is needed. But now I know that well. I have tried to follow the learning of training. I go to bed early, rise early, and get time to have my meal in the morning. I do not feel sleepy in factory and do not face misbehaviour from my supervisor” (FGD, DSI Endline Report).</p>
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#### Key success: the building of workers’ confidence resulting in individual raising of disputes

Importantly, there has been an **increase in worker self-confidence**, with 94% workers stating they feel a sense of confidence in communicating with management, an increase of 21% from the baseline, and the perception of 98% trainee respondents that their negotiation and bargaining skills have improved. This is reflected in over two thirds of workers (77%) saying

they had individually raised a dispute at the workplace, of which 72% were satisfactorily resolved. Out of 1,484 workers who took part in UP+! 2, 1,094 disputes have been resolved at the workplace, and 346 at the community level. The DSI endline reports workers mostly negotiating on issues of leave, overtime, wages and festival bonuses.

#### Key success: the building of worker-employer trust in a hostile atmosphere

By training workers on how to talk effectively to management and encouraging behaviour change such as good time management, **UP!+ has contributed to improved relationships between workers and supervisors/employers** and increased cooperation on issues in the workplace.

#### Key success: increasing membership of different channels

The proportion of workers involved in the various channels, forums and committees has increased from around 8% to nearly 20% and there has been a 66% increase in cases of disputes being taken up on behalf of members by a channel, forum or committee (although the percentage of these disputes reaching a positive resolution saw little change between the baseline and endline).

#### Key success: peer support

The DSI endline report found several instances of trained workers providing assistance to neighbours or colleagues based on the skills acquired in the UP!+ trainings. FGD participants have, for example, reported helping neighbours to open savings accounts and manage their expenses, as well as advocating for colleagues' rights at the workplace. However, it is important to note that this peer support may also have had some negative consequences, whereby workers have been viewed as troublesome or interfering for supporting colleagues.

*“In one case, for example, an UP!+ worker felt empowered to defend a worker who had been denied annual leave and appealed to management on her colleague’s behalf. The worker reported that management became angry with her ‘interfering’ in a problem that did not concern her and then victimised her.” (Impactt Final Report)*

#### (+) Success at a collective level has also been achieved, to a lesser extent

Although the ultimate goal of the project is the improvement of working conditions, the perception of beneficiaries and stakeholders is that the biggest changes have so far been made at an individual, life skills level, where there are much fewer barriers to success. This demonstrates also the need for the long-term, scaled approach of UP!+ in order to begin seeing more collective and structural change.

#### Finance - increases in planning and saving

- More than 72% of respondents are now saving money, an increase of around 15%
- Deposit Pension Scheme (DPS) use has increased by around 8%
- FGD data suggests a key change has been workers learning to manage their income and expenditure and create a family budget.
- Around 20% of all trained workers opened a bank account and there was an 11.4% percentage increase between the endline and baseline in women opening their own accounts or DPS.

### Key collective successes

- Approximately 16,500 workers benefiting from improved conditions agreed by 145 UP!+3 graduates in their workplaces, covering 74 out of the 75 factories where trainees work.
- Awaj negotiated 6 out of 10 collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) signed in the RMG sector in Bangladesh in 2017 (an indirect outcome of the initiative).<sup>5</sup>

### (-) Weakest outcomes are those specifically related to women

Despite qualitative and anecdotal evidence to the contrary, the comparison of endline and baseline data, as well as reporting from Impactt, demonstrates that the weakest changes in outcomes are for those related specifically to women workers, reflecting the patriarchal norms of the context and the additional challenges experienced by women. For example, there has been an increase in 18.3% of men who are members of a channel, forum and committee, but only a 9.8% increase in women for the same indicator. The indicators with the lowest level of change between endline and baseline both concern women: “% of channel forum and committee representing workers in the garment industries with a woman leader” (9.8% increase) and “# of women leading efforts to improve working conditions” (10.6% increase). It is also interesting to note that participation of women lessens, whilst still being in the majority, as workers go up through the training levels.<sup>6</sup>

### (-) Fewer benefits in terms of freedom of association

DSI reports from FGDs suggest that there is still fear amongst workers about openly discussing the freedom of association issue. For many, if their factory authority knows that workers are involved with any type of workers’ association, they are likely to come under various pressures from the factory authorities.

### (-) A reflection on KPIs: Improving working conditions indicators could go further

The indicators developed in the logical framework are highly relevant (such as the raising of disputes leading to improvements in the workplace), but additional specific indicators which are even more linked to working conditions, and which provide further information on changes for beneficiaries, could also have been measured as a direct outcome of the project. These could include, for example: % wage change, amount of savings, and/or qualitative indicators on wellbeing at work. The development of additional indicators could be further investigated in the next phase.

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<sup>5</sup> The 6 CBAs variously resulted in wage and holiday allowance increases above minimum requirements, ultrasound check-ups paid for by the employer and concessions related to union membership, including paid leave to attend meetings, the allocation of space for union meetings and improved mechanisms for dealing with disputes and sexual harassment cases.

<sup>6</sup> Female participation: UP!+ 1 (88%), 2 (83%), 3 (77%) and the RMG Forum (77%)

## Efficiency

<b>Average</b>	The UP!+ initiative is considered efficient, though the evaluators have adjusted the rating, reducing it to 'average' from the DSI endline evaluation rating of 'good'. The project was delivered on time and on budget, despite obstacles. Cost effectiveness is relatively good and is improving with each phase of the initiative. However, the budget allocation between the grantee and subgrantee and the fact that insufficient capacity has been built to handover grant management/reporting activities to Awaj hampers efficiency. Although Awaj and Impactt have demonstrated a good ability to integrate learning and respond to feedback when available, the project lacked a mechanism to track and document the progress of learning and more regular monitoring feedback would have been useful.
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### (++) Timely completion despite obstacles thanks to Awaj's management

Overall the efficiency of the UP!+ Initiative can be considered good. Activities and outputs have been delivered on time and within budget allocation, despite obstacles such as the delayed start of the project (due to approval processes of the Bureau of NGO Affairs) and labour unrest in 2016 which saw trainings temporarily suspended, including for several months in the Ashulia/Norshihopur areas. **Awaj kept up support for workers during the suspension of trainings**, which helped to ensure they returned to the UP!+ programme when possible.

Another obstacle to the efficient completion of activities was **labour migration and the working hours of training participants which consistently impacted the ability of workers to attend trainings** and the ability of Awaj to deliver according to the agreed schedule. It is testament to Awaj's motivation, flexibility and adaptive management skills that they were able to manage this by adapting schedules to fit workers and by maintaining direct communications with them to ensure continued engagement.

### (++) Efficient training delivery

The DSI endline report, citing café visits carried out during training sessions as part of their monitoring activities, demonstrated that trainings were efficiently delivered and followed the set structure and schedule. DSI monitoring activities also suggested that the selection of trainers was carried out well and that sessions were thus managed appropriately by trainers who were skilful in their delivery. Over 96% of endline sample respondents reported that the trainers' preparation, presentation and management skills were 'good' or 'very good'.

### (-) Budget allocation between the grantee and subgrantee

The budget allocation between Awaj and Impactt saw Impactt paid a 35% share of the EUR 695,200 budget for this phase.<sup>7</sup> The expectation would have been to see a more accelerated reduction of Impactt's share of the funding by this point in the partnership. Although the contribution of Impactt, especially in terms of content development and Trainings of Trainers (ToT) content, should not be underestimated, the daily rate of Impactt staff has been rather high and contributed to elevated management costs.

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<sup>7</sup> This refers only to the portion of the budget shared between Awaj and Impactt, and not the full budget including other project elements such as DSI's support.

The evaluators note that although the budget share for the next phase UP!+ 2019 is increased for Awaj (roughly 75% of the amount allocated to the two partners will be allocated to Awaj), Impactt still retain a quarter share of the budget. This is despite the bulk of training content having now been developed and Awaj taking on the lion share of activities, as well as Impactt moving to a “mentorship” role, supporting Awaj with a “learn by doing” approach rather than carrying out reporting and documentation themselves. Efficiency could be improved by Impactt supporting Awaj in the first two years with Awaj taking ownership in the second half of the multi-year grant.

### (+) Steadily improving cost effectiveness looking at cost per beneficiary

However, despite the relatively high costs of Impactt’s services, it is noted that the cost per beneficiary per training module per year has decreased by 29% in this phase as compared to the previous 2-year phase, from around EUR 9.2 to EUR 6.5. The evaluation team has not had access to the overall budget and beneficiary numbers from the 2014-2016 phase but the DSI team evaluated that there was a significant decrease in cost per beneficiary per year between the first two phases. The cost per beneficiary (including those receiving multiple trainings) per year in the phase 2016-18 was around EUR 53<sup>8</sup>. For the phase 2019-22, this will be reduced to EUR 40<sup>9</sup>, a decrease of nearly 25%. Based on stakeholder feedback, this is cost-efficient for the type of training to be delivered, compared to other comparable initiatives.

The wide diffusion approach whereby the same trainings are to be used with a large number of trainees will also benefit the cost effectiveness of the project in the future as content development will no longer be necessary (although some updates and adaptations will always be required).

### (+) Strong financial management capacity of Awaj

Awaj Foundation, whilst still having work to do in terms of organisational development, is cited by several stakeholders as having solid financial management skills. This was confirmed by an audit during the first phase of UP! commissioned by the C&AF, which “found no significant issues”. They have a large budget with multiple funders, including EUR 1 million in unrestricted funds from one donor alone, and manage several offices and dozens of staff.

### (-) Insufficient capacity built to handover grant management/reporting activities to Awaj hampers efficiency

Despite Impactt being charged with improving the skills of Awaj in terms of project management and reporting, after four years of collaboration with Impactt, Awaj are not yet deemed to be of sufficient capacity to undertake these tasks for the next phase and support is planned to continue over the next four years. This can be seen as an inefficiency of the project as the continued involvement of Impactt pushes up the overall budget for the future phase of the initiative, despite cheaper alternatives for reporting existing (such as internalising this role to Awaj through recruitment of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) officer or use of ad hoc consultancy services).

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<sup>8</sup> Total budget (762,755) / beneficiaries of total training activities including 425 PEG leaders (7,193) / years (2)

<sup>9</sup> Total budget (1,601,766) / planned beneficiaries of total training activities (9,785) / years (4)

It is, however, important to note that **capacity building for these types of skills is not necessarily a natural outcome of a partnership and will not be achieved just by osmosis but rather through specific project components which should be built into the design.** Despite being a main objective of the initiative, few project activities were designed for this purpose and the objective was not measurable (the target of improvement was too vague as an indicator).

### (-) M&E and Learning Management

The capacity of Awaj to compile, monitor and analyse project data was fairly weak at the project outset, which is why a Bangladesh-based external M&E partner was brought in. Impactt were responsible for monitoring the budget and providing mid-term and final reports, whilst the M&E partner selected (Development Synergy Institute) was responsible for delivering an M&E framework, training design assessment, monitoring activities throughout the life of the project as well as a baseline and endline study.

**However, due to reported issues with the M&E budget being squeezed,** DSI did not provide any written monitoring deliverables, meaning that other project stakeholders had little visibility over project results until delivery of the endline report. **Awaj reported that the feedback given orally was useful but that they would have liked it to be more regular.** This lack of documented and regular monitoring feedback negatively impacted on the learning management and retention of knowledge. Several stakeholders thought that a mid-term evaluation would have been useful, although a mechanism to capture and analyse results on a regular basis could also have fulfilled this role and provided increased visibility. The lack of documentation of monitoring also presents a missed opportunity in terms of capitalisation and communication.

**As highlighted by the DSI evaluation team, the project maintained an attendance tracker to monitor training participation but was lacking a mechanism to track the progress of learning** and its application by participants during the life of the project (although the endline/baseline was commissioned to provide an overview of this after the end of the project) or the progression towards project objectives. As well as this quantitative element, qualitative data such as case studies were collected to meet an immediate need (such as for reporting done by Impactt) **rather than systematically.** Pre and post training Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) tests, for example, could have been a useful monitoring tool.

Awaj and Impactt have however demonstrated a good ability to integrate learning and react to feedback when available, as they did between the first and second phases and in the planning of the third phase.

An additional weakness of the M&E methodology is perhaps the lack of an evaluation control or comparison group which makes it difficult to attribute change directly to the UP!+ Initiative: evaluators cannot be sure if change is due to a general trend towards more negotiation and bargaining within the sector, is linked to other trainings received, or if it is directly related to UP!+ training.

## Sustainability

<b>Good</b>	The evaluators have revised the rating provided by the endline evaluation to raise it to a 'good' level of achievement since sustainability is built into the strategy of the UP!+ initiative. In addition, the organisational development Awaj has achieved, thanks to the C&A Foundation's targeted support in capacity building, has rendered the organisation more autonomous and capable of sustaining its work, and increasing its outreach and impact over the coming years. Room for improvement in terms of sustainability is to be found in the need to better plan and explicitly frame the transition strategy of Awaj's international partners (exit strategy of C&A Foundation and Impactt).
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### (++) Sustainability embedded in the design of a cascading staged model

The pyramidal model of UP!+ was conceived to provoke structural changes in working conditions (at factories), and change in individual workers' lives, by adopting new behavioural practices. Training benefits, particularly of the UP! 2 and UP! 3 modules, were planned to go far beyond individual level life improvements and outlive the programme by making institutional changes at factory and even RMG sector level. **In that sense, the real added value for the sustainability of the initiative is to be found in the higher-up levels of UP!+ (UP+! 3; Advanced Negotiation and Leadership with Labour Law, and UP!+ 4; the RMG Workers Forum Committee).**

The creation of a 35-member **Workers Rights Committee** – the culmination of the UP!+ programme for workers with particular aptitude or potential in leadership and negotiation - is designed to sustain the grassroots empowerment of workers driven by Awaj Foundation and support other advocates in the garment sector, **whilst also decentralizing the 'top heavy' advocacy capacity of Awaj Foundation** (due to the personality and visibility of Awaj's founder and director).

To increase the impact and sustainability of UP!+, more workers should be able to attend UP!+ trainings, and particularly UP!2 and UP!3. Currently, UP!+ trained workers are seen as anomalies in the workforce. There is need for UP!+ to increase the concentration of UP!+ graduates in the workforce, to ensure more workers put UP!+ lessons into practice so that these become the norm. **Workers themselves raised that they feel 'left out' when they were not able to continue into the advanced stages of the UP!+ modules.**

### (++) Positive outcomes of the initiatives are here to last: change in mentality and attitude, change in behaviour and factory-level change

The positive outcomes described in the previous section are long lasting types of outcomes:

#### Lasting change in mentality and attitude

From the different outcomes of the project, the already noted change in mentality and attitude from the beneficiaries is deemed to last. **What is particularly interesting is the before and**

**after change in workers' attitude and thinking about the possibility that things can actually change for real at factory level.** In the baseline, the majority of workers did not mention anything with regard to expected change at workplace and some even claimed that nothing would change. Workers held this attitude due to their long experiences of deprivations and a sense of powerlessness of change in the factory. After the UP! and UP!+ initiative, their expectations are higher, they are now more informed and aware about the opportunities and options available to raise their concerns and grievances, and have built their capacity in terms of demanding action and taking an active role in their own safety and well-being. **This is contributing to a long-term sense of empowerment.**

#### Changes in behaviour

The greater participation and membership of women in established channels/ forums/ committees and trade unions on issues like welfare, canteen, occupational safety, participation, and anti-harassment is also considered a sustainable outcome of the project. **Retention of workers in these committees and their level of motivation and engagement is very high.** This will in turn enhance the likelihood of positive outcomes with regards to negotiations and collective bargaining agreements, including the specific needs of women.

#### Sustainable changes in conditions of employment

Due to 6 Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) signed by Awaj, although an indirect outcome of the project, the results of the positive changes at workplaces will continue. The CBAs included many issues covering annual wage increase of the workers, attendance bonus, festival bonus, maternity leave, annual leave, medical facilities, day care, prayer room, canteen, snacks allowance and night duty allowance.

#### (+) Awaj's capacity to sustain the follow-up of the workers once training phase is over

Even after the completion of training, participants will continue to be supported by Awaj's membership services, and graduates of higher levels of the programme will have the opportunity to continue to engage more formally with Awaj, guaranteeing a quality follow-up support to the trained workers if needed. This is possible due to Awaj's structure and network (NGO and sister trade unions organisation). However, a good follow-up also requires strong monitoring and tracking capacities, which has already been identified as a needed improvement from Awaj.

#### (++) Growing autonomy and independence: Awaj organisational capacity has been strengthened thanks to C&A Foundation support

The ability of Awaj to reach and empower the greatest number of workers in the long term depends very much on its organizational and structural strengths. Thanks to the support in organisational development from the C&A Foundation, Awaj grew over the years as an effective membership organization with a clear theory of change and a more strategic thinking which delivers real benefits to its members and the sector as a whole.

Awaj Foundation currently has around 80 full-time employees as well as better financial, management and communication skills, and is close to being capable of directly receiving grants, rather than being a subgrantee.

Awaj's growth also attracted international funding from a number of sources including: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Action Aid, KIK, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), and Solidarity Center, **contributing to financial sustainability of the organisation.**

*Awaj has changed remarkably in the last 4 years, its staff have been professionalised and empowered  
(C&A Foundation staff).*

C&A Foundation's role in this tremendous growth has been crucial. C&A Foundation has for objective to help its historical partner Awaj to exert more influence at policy level too.

*C&A Foundation has been amazing. They have stuck around for 8 years. C&A Foundation's patient funding has been uniquely valuable. They could be a lead internationally in workers' rights (Impactt respondent)*

**However, there are still existing gaps in capacity development, particularly around the governance structure in place.** The top management and executive direction still exert a large influence over decision making. Gaps in capacity development also revolve around yearly planning processes (systemic work plans for employees), accountability systems so that Awaj can manage the field staff better.

#### **(-) Lack of clear transition strategy**

After 4 years of involvement, and in the perspective of another long-term partnership with Impactt for the next 4 years, it seems that there could have been a stricter plan for Impactt to hand full ownership over to Awaj. A clear transition plan regarding Impactt's role in reporting and grant management should exist with explicit milestones. These types of activities could also be internalised or at least driven by Awaj (for example through an external expert consultant under the leadership and management of Awaj).

## Missed Opportunities

Most of the missed opportunities stated below were identified in both the endline report and final report from Impact and the majority are addressed in UP!+ 2019 proposal. By building on the previous UP!+ stages and adding further components (community sensitization, a factory management training, RMG forum, building the capacity of Awaj on advocacy) the evaluation team thinks that the proposal for the next phase of the project made a great effort to consider challenges and missed opportunities to propose an even more relevant initiative.

1. **Systemic change vs. questioning the massive training of UP1:** Whilst the wide diffusion approach is relevant, there is need for UP!+ to increase the concentration of UP!+ 2 and 3 graduates in the workforce, so that these workers become the norm rather than outliers, as this will be the driver of real change on a collective level rather than UP! 1. In addition, feedback from workers themselves raised that some felt 'left out' when they were not able to continue into the advanced stages of the UP!+ modules and more would be keen to continue than numbers have allowed so far.
2. **Geographical reach:** UP!+ also currently only reaches workers in Dhaka, and does not touch those in Chittagong, Bangladesh's second most important garment export hub, location of 15% of the sectors' workers and 13% of factories.
3. **Awaj advocacy capacity development:** Respondents of this evaluation felt that Awaj's advocacy capacity was not leveraged to its full potential. Awaj has asked C&A Foundation for support on this. Awaj could have further leveraged the profile of its top leadership to create a strong advocacy strategy with policy objectives. Up until now, advocacy capacity at the national level has been too focused on a single person leadership and this capacity should now also be built at the organisational level, amongst other staff. This aspect has been considered in the UP!+ 2019 proposal but no budget has yet been assigned to it, which is considered a real missed opportunity for both Awaj and C&A Foundation.
4. **Learning management, capitalization and dissemination:** This long-term project has produced a massive amount of information and learning during the past four years. The endline report reported a lot of information on positive impact but that **Awaj hadn't been able to capitalise on or disseminate in the form of best practices in the sector.** Awaj found the integrated monitoring from DSI useful as they provided feedback during participatory seminars. However, the outcomes of these were not always documented or shared publicly and more regular feedback would have been useful. The more anecdotal/narrative side of the reporting is also needed to help answer bottleneck questions such as: how to incorporate a collective sense of leadership? How to tackle misperception from factory management on workers? Where is the initiative working very well? Are there any differences depending on location or factory types?
5. **Enlarged training focus for the Workers' Rights Committees:** Training content was limited to labour law and negotiation skills but there is a need to enlarge the content in order to provide an overall holistic understanding of sector landscape nationally and globally to the trainees. Training could touch upon the greater RMG sector context in

Bangladesh, the functioning of the global supply chain, how Bangladesh sector is integrated globally, etc. This will allow participants to identify pressure points they can push on for negotiation and better advocacy outcomes.

6. **Analysing the reasons for differences in project achievements (primary vs secondary factories):** Workers targeted by the training work in very different types of factories (some in primary factories in the RMG sector which are more compliant than secondary factories), with therefore very different working conditions and facing different vulnerabilities and difficulties when raising issues or negotiating. This difference of working conditions between compliant and non-compliant factories has not been analysed throughout the project life. Despite the overall high relevance of the UP!+ Initiative design and approach for the context and participants, an opportunity may have been missed to further increase relevance by targeting efforts according to factory types and collecting data on any potential difference in outcomes dependent on this.
7. **Collaboration and partnerships in the sector:** Awaj has good connections with other workers' rights associations and NGOs working in the RMG sector. Strategic collaborations with stakeholders such as Federatie Nederlandse Vakbonden (FNV) and International Business (IBC) have not been formalised although this would be beneficial in achieving ultimate structural aims, which Awaj cannot achieve alone.

*“Awaj alone will have little dent in working conditions. They should also collaborate with research organisations to disseminate workers knowledge” (DSI evaluation team)*

8. **Scalability and replication:** The final report produced by Impactt (using Awaj data), indicates that the programme is not only successful but also scalable within Bangladesh, and that scaling the programme would in fact enhance its success. As the content has already been developed, it can now be delivered at a more efficient cost per head, meaning scaling of the project will be economical as well as effective. The scalability of the programme in Bangladesh will depend highly on the capacity of Awaj to develop and structure its network in the other regions of Bangladesh, such as Chittagong. In Bangladesh, many potential stakeholders including brands and other worker's rights organisations are interested in learning from and potentially applying the lessons and the methodology of the UP!+ programme. Replication of the model therefore seems feasible (in Bangladesh but also potentially in other countries). Replication would however require an implementing partner who shares similar characteristics with Awaj, e.g. a workers-led, grassroots organisation with a wide outreach capacity, recognition and the potential to closely support workers.

## Lessons Learned

The proposal for the next stage of UP!+ 2019 has drawn on lessons from the earlier phases of UP!+ to ensure it is as effective and relevant as possible. These lessons included:

### At programme level:

- **Training outside factory:** By holding the trainings outside of factories, workers are able to benefit from a safe environment to share their thoughts, without being manipulated either by managers or family members. Workers get to meet fellow workers who are from different factories and so exchange experiences. This also helps them to make their negotiation case stronger because they can give examples of practices at other factories.
- **Addressing barriers at the factory level:** The culture of animosity towards trade unions amongst government and business limits workers' ability to gain more power over their working and living conditions. UP! participants report that some management members are suspicious and even hostile towards workers seeking to communicate and negotiate in the factory. This is why also engaging management at factory level, through training and dialogue, is needed to increase mutual trust, cooperation and commitment between workers and management/employers to improve working conditions.

*In the latest evaluation, 78.7% of workers still found they were unable to claim their rights to freedom of association, largely as workers are fearful to discuss freedom of association issues. (from Awaj proposal)*

- **Community pressure:** Women workers face challenges from community pressure and lack of support from family. Since attitudes of family members in some cases, affected the participation of women in training it is now realized that having incorporated a component to engage and sensitize family members could have had a positive impact on the participation of women and their retention in the training activities.

### At organisational level:

- **Capacity building does not happen just through osmosis of being in partnership with another organisation.** It is important to note that capacity building is not necessarily a natural outcome of a partnership and will not be achieved simply by being in contact with a partner but rather through specific project components and objectives which should be built into the initial design or the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- **The objective of 'improvement' is too vague and not measurable** as an indicator of progress in terms of capacity building.

## Recommendations

Below are compiled strategic, programmatic and process level recommendations building on the past evaluations and on this round of additional interviews. Recommendations are aimed at the C&A Foundation, Awaj and Impactt Limited, to enhance and refine the intervention strategy (and potentially that of other, similar initiatives), programmatic approach and processes for a third phase.

### Strategic Recommendations for C&A Foundation

1. **More strategic relationship planning between the three partners; C&A Foundation, Impactt, and Awaj.** As the partnership involved a trio of organisations who have been engaged now for a relatively long time, there is the potential for miscommunication and a lack of understanding between partners to arise, which may previously have been an issue for this project. Clear objectives, vision and an exit strategy for the partnership should be defined in order to avoid misalignment and to manage expectations.
2. **Continue support for the organisational development of Awaj.** To ensure the possibility of Awaj fulfilling its potential, it is recommended that C&AF support the creation of an organizational assessment and development plan for Awaj. Despite progress, there are still many areas of improvement including their governance structure, reporting, documentation and publication, as well as developing/managing IT skills (including using social media website, twitter, Facebook). Activities and markers of success for organisational capacity building objectives should be further defined.

### Programmatic Recommendations for C&A Foundation, Impactt and Awaj

3. **Systematic change in working conditions should be the priority.** The overall target for numbers of workers trained by Awaj is huge, and this is part of the relevant strategy of wide diffusion. Although the strategy of increasing the numbers trained was prioritised over a more targeted and tailored response to beneficiaries' specific needs and some quality improvements could be looked into (how to improve the close follow-up of workers, analysis of "reasons why" achievements or non-achievements, understanding the main barriers for a specific group or specific types of factories how to improve the support to the most vulnerable workers, etc.) the focus should be on allowing more workers to reach the higher UP+! levels, where the skills for real systematic change are more likely to be built and where there is the most need for the number of trained workers to reach critical mass.
4. **Address the barriers of management and community hostility to ensure that UP!+ can reach its full potential impact by creating an enabling environment for workers to fully enact the learnings of UP!+.** For this, Awaj can leverage good relationships with management and workers' communities to be well positioned to engage these leaders for the next UP+! phase.

5. **Put a greater focus on advocacy objectives:** In order to ensure the learnings and capacity built in UP!+ contribute to systemic level change in the RMG sector, strengthen the advocacy and communications activities in future stages of the UP!+ programme. This can be done in multiple ways:
- **More workers should be able to move up the higher levels of UP!+:** increasing the intensity of promotion at the higher levels of UP!+ to increase the number of workers' upskilled on more complex negotiations. In particular, we agree with Impactt's recommendation of increasing the number of workers in the RMG Forum to 300. The RMG Forum will provide a unique worker-led body which is able to resolve workplace issues with management to improve working conditions and advocate for sector-wide change.
  - **Promoting advocacy training for workers' rights committee:** The 35 members Worker Rights Committee has been formed with the aim that the committee would carry out lobbying and advocacy in favour of garment sector workers as a whole. However, the committee has not received training on advocacy techniques and skills. This type of training is an urgent need for this committee. Training content should also go further by also providing an overall holistic understanding of sector landscape nationally and globally, touching on the greater RMG sector context in Bangladesh, the functioning of the global supply chain, how Bangladesh sector is integrated globally, etc.
  - Through **Awaj advocacy capacity building**, by supporting the organisation and its staff on how to set up an advocacy strategy, and advocacy skills. This will require specific funding support for UP!+ 2019.
  - By **using learnings from previous phases to fine-tune the advocacy strategy**, defining, for example, the top 3-5 changes to be advocated for.
6. **Leverage relationships and formalise collaboration with other key stakeholders in the RMG sector to raise the profile of Awaj and increase the impact of UP!+.** Leverage relationships with other key stakeholders including trade unions and industry associations such as the BGMEA and BKMEA, in order to raise the profile and impact of the UP!+ programme. Systematically engaging high-profile, relevant and powerful stakeholders in the RMG sector to support the programme will increase the recognition of Awaj and the credibility of the UP!+ graduates.
7. **A reflection on the outcome indicators for improving working conditions should be undertaken for the next phase.** Some indicators could be further defined in order to provide more specific and measurable information on outcomes, which goes beyond 'improvement of working conditions' and looks more deeply at the real changes for beneficiaries. These could include: % of wage change, amount of savings, and/or qualitative indicators on wellbeing at work. This should be investigated in the next phase.

8. **Actively work on metrics related to women's empowerment.** Play close attention to indicators specifically related to women, which have not performed as well as others, and make efforts to ensure the participation of women does not fall as workers rise through the UP+! levels.

## Processes Recommendations for Awaj Foundation

9. **Training content and methods should:**

- Ensure that risk identification and mitigation is hard-wired into all training materials to protect workers and increase positive outcomes in real world negotiations.
- Use high levels of direct in-person contact with participants in the trainings to build relationships that allow for support and adjustments in case of any problems arising. Awaj should additionally consider using pre and post training surveys (such as Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) tests), which would be a useful monitoring tool to follow progress in learning and behaviour change amongst participants.
- Use a bottom-up approach for training design and planning. Training should be based on the felt need of the beneficiaries and active involvement of beneficiaries is needed in the process of content development, helping to avoid the need for adjustments.

10. **Strengthen the M&E system and develop a mechanism to track progress:** Awaj should put in place a mechanism to regularly capture results. Awaj should be able to monitor progress of the individual participants while s/he is receiving training and analyse this data throughout the course of the project. It will be helpful for example to understand the learning challenges of individual participant and take corrective measures accordingly. Evaluation should continue to be used as a mechanism to capture results, and mid-term or more regular evaluation should also be considered for the next phase in order to provide further opportunities for feedback from evaluators, important for projects of this size and complexity to allow for learning and adaptation throughout the programme.

11. **Institutional knowledge gained through phases needs to be secured.** For this to happen Awaj should:

- Document feedback, challenges and lessons along the course of the project and reflect on the collected material in order to adjust the project accordingly. The material can also be used for communication purposes.
- Keep written record of actions. As yet, there is no formal documentation of actions, follow-up or accountability structures. This will be prioritised in the next stage of the programme with committee members taking minutes, sharing agendas and approving minutes, with the support of Awaj staff. The toolkits and templates developed by the external consultant who provided parallel capacity-building support to Awaj could be used for this purpose.

- Awaj should in the future own or at least drive the M&E and reporting process (by hiring internal human resources or contracting ad hoc consultancy expertise on this matter).

12. **Capitalise on impact and share successes:** the UP!+ project has a strong learning potential due to its long-term scope that is not yet exploited. With the help of an improved M&E system, Awaj could capitalise on its positive impact and do more to share the successes of the programme, enabling other programmes to learn from what worked in UP!+ as well as raising the profile of Awaj and the UP!+ programme. Awaj's increased communication abilities (particularly in English) with a new member of staff, including social media and a web presence for advocacy and stakeholder engagement will help with this.

# Annexes

## Annex 1: Evaluation Questions

CRITERIA	QUESTIONS
<b>Relevance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>To what extent are the initiative strategies and objectives aligned to the C&amp;A Foundation’s current vision and mission as well as to improving working conditions in garment supply chains in Bangladesh?</b></li> <li>● To what extent was the initiative design – including the cascading training model - appropriate in achieving the intended objectives               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To what extent was the initiative successful in identifying and engaging the ‘most appropriate’ workers for improving working conditions in the RMG factories in Bangladesh?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Whether UPI+ intervention (training) was consistent with the needs of participant RMG workers (dependent on selection process of beneficiaries)</li> <li>● Whether training modules/contents incorporated issues of RMG workers adequately and appropriately</li> <li>● To what extent training strategies, methodologies, and processes were relevant?</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional questions: to what extent are the partners (Awaj and Impactt) the correct ones? What is the added-value of the partnership, for the project and for C&amp;AF?</b></p>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To what extent training structure was followed and whether the training resources were managed in efficient manner?</li> <li>● Whether the selection of trainers was appropriate and to what extent they provided quality support?</li> <li>● To what extent have the initiative modalities been executed in an efficient manner? Were the initiative targets achieved on time? Were the targets realistic given the scale of operations?</li> <li>● To what extent has the initiative been cost-effective?</li> <li>● Did the initiative track outputs and outcomes in a credible, systematic manner? If yes, how?</li> <li>● <b>What mechanisms (formal or informal) had been put into practice to capture and use results, experiences and lessons (allowing for adaptive management)?</b></li> <li>● To what extent has Awaj been able to transfer learning and knowledge from the previous phase?</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Is the division and allocation of costs and tasks between Awaj Foundation and Impactt efficient?</b></li> <li>● <b>Have the M&amp;E methods put in place been effective?</b></li> <li>● <b>Which M&amp;E alternatives might have been more cost-effective?</b></li> </ul>

## Effectiveness

- Did the initiative meet the targets as per the log-frame?
- What evidence emerges from the initiative in building worker agency (knowledge, capacity, strength) and collective skills to strengthen worker rights for improving working conditions? Which of these strategies and processes, if not all as a whole, can be replicated?
- **What has been the positive and negative perceptions and evidence regarding the initiative in terms of the processes followed?**
  - Did the initiative sufficiently involve/engage with relevant beneficiaries, actors and stakeholders? If so, how?
  - What has been the effectiveness of the cascading staged model employed by the initiative?
- What external and internal factors as well as challenges and risks have influenced the initiative delivery, successes and failures? And why?
- What are the drivers (both positive and negative) that influencing worker agency and working conditions?

### Additional questions:

- **What are the drivers influencing the achievements or otherwise of the project? Is this the same across the different locations (geographic location of cafes but also the different factory types where workers are employed)?**
- **What could be changed?**

## Outcomes

- What were the outcomes (economic and social, direct and indirect, positive and negative) generated by the program including unintended outcomes, if any.
- What were the areas of under-performance?
- **What were the overall impacts (economic and social, direct and indirect, positive and negative) generated by the program including unintended outcomes, if any.**

**Additional questions: What were the key successes of the initiative? What worked well and didn't, and why?**

## Sustainability

- **What are the main factors and/or risks that promoted and/or reduced the sustainability and results of the programme?**
- What measures that have been put in place to sustain program results
- Is there an existence of any multiplier and spillover effects? To what extent can the initiative be scaled and/or replicated
- **What were the missed opportunities?**
- What are the social, economic, political, and institutional and other conditions for sustainability of the program?

**Additional questions: To what extent is sustainability embedded in the partnership between C&AF, Awaj and Impactt?**

- Annex 2: DSI Endline Report
- Annex 3: Inception Report
- Annex 4: List of Stakeholders Interviewed