



LEADERSHIP EMPOWERMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY (LES) INT



**LEADERSHIP
EMPOWERMENT
SUSTAINABILITY**

<https://lesil.org/>

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About the Leadership, Empowerment, and Sustainability (LES) Int

LES Int is a global development firm, which started its journey in response to a rapidly evolving development funding tightening and shrinking NGO-led initiatives. In one side, Bangladesh transitions from a Least Developed Country to a Middle-Income Country, on the other hand, the private sector faces increasing pressure to uphold gender equality and empowerment, climate resilience, and human rights in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), International Labor Standards (ILS), Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. LES Int bridges this gap, equipping businesses with the tools to drive both social impact and economic success.

With expertise from organizations like ILO, IFC, UNDP, GIZ, international and national NGOs, global brands and manufacturing enterprises, LES Int works directly with workers, management, and business owners, to create sustainable, high-impact solutions. Founded in 2023 by Bina Akter, LES Int is shaping the future of responsible business—driving growth while making a meaningful impact locally and globally.

LES Int's strengths are advisory, training, and project leadership. For the last 7 years, LES Int Team has served 100+ RMG factories in collaboration with international apparel brands such as M&S, VFC, H&M, Ralph Lauren, Target USA, Regatta, PUMA, Fast Retailing, Levi's. LES Int trainers and experts served 30+ manufacturing groups such as Epyllion, Standard, Babylon, PRAN, Debonair, Palmal, Hameem, SQ, Bitopi, MNJ, Ananta, Armana, Dekko, Young One, KDS, Four H, Asian, Clifton, etc.

Executive Team



Bina Akter, *Managing Director*

Bina Akter is the Founding Managing Director of LES Int. Ltd. With an MBA in Management, she specializes in strategic planning, operational leadership, program design, and organizational development. Her research on women's leadership was published in Management and Labour Studies. She leads LES Int to position the firm as a premier business development partner in Bangladesh and globally.

Ashrafun Nahar, *Program Coordinator and IR Lead*

Ashrafun Nahar is a seasoned expert with 20+ years of experience in the RMG sector, having worked with the ILO, global brands, NGOs, and government projects. A master trainer and program strategist, she has led initiatives on industrial relations, grievance management, gender based violence and harassment and promoting respectful workplaces (GBVH) in over 300 factories, training 5,000+ workers and managers. Former employee of H&M and current Soft Skills Trainer of the GEAR program at ILO's Better Work Bangladesh.



Dr. Asma Abbasi, *Governance And Human Rights Lead*

Dr. Asma Abbasi is a specialist with over 20 years of experience in human rights, governance, social inclusion, capacity building, and gender mainstreaming. Holding a PhD in Social Science, she worked with ILO, UNDP, USAID, and GIZ. As part of ILO's Better Work Program, she facilitated 50+ advisory sessions and workshops, focusing on women's leadership, team building, workplace communications and inclusive labor practices.

Mr. Moniruzzaman, *Enterprise Sustainability Lead*

Mr. Moniruzzaman is a seasoned expert with over 15 years of experience in labor rights, human rights due diligence, and global supply chain sustainability. As Advisory Lead at LES Int and External Collaborator with ILO's Better Work Bangladesh. He has led initiatives on CSR, environmental and climate adaptation, grievance mechanisms, and wage management at Ralph Lauren, and VF Asia Ltd. Moniruzzaman holds an MBA, MSc in Computer Science, and Lead Auditor certifications in ISO 14001 and ISO 45001.



Ms. Saima Akther, *Women Leadership and Mental Health Specialist*

Ms. Saima Akther is a practicing psychologist and Lead Soft Skills Trainer for the ILO Better Work -IFC GEAR Program, with 5+ years of experience advancing women's leadership and mental well-being and psychosocial counselling services in the RMG sector. Since 2019, she has conducted 100+ sessions across 50+ factories. She also contributed to designing and delivering training for Standard GEAR, GEAR Advance, and Training of Trainers (ToT) programs. She holds a master's degree in clinical psychology from the University of Dhaka.

Eng. Anwar Hossain, *Productivity and Workforce Development Lead*

Eng. Anwar Hossain, an Industrial Engineer from BUET with an MBA from DU, has 15 years' experience in the RMG sector. A Lean Manufacturing expert and GEAR Technical Skills Trainer (ILO), he specializes in apparel and sweater production, module development, and delivering impactful technical skills training across multiple national and international programs.



Helena Perbiz, *Workplace Education Trainer*

Helena Perbiz brings 15+ years of experience in workplace education and social compliance. As an Enterprise Assessor with ILO's Better Work Bangladesh and Master Trainer for the P.A.C.E. Program and Buyers' Code of Conduct, she blends legal expertise and social science insights to promote ethical, inclusive, and rights-based workplaces.

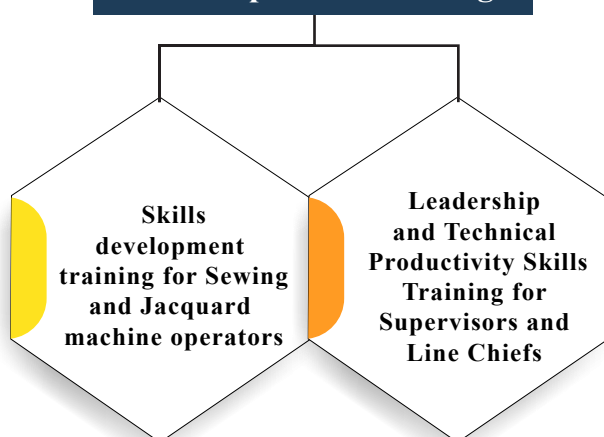
Focused sectors



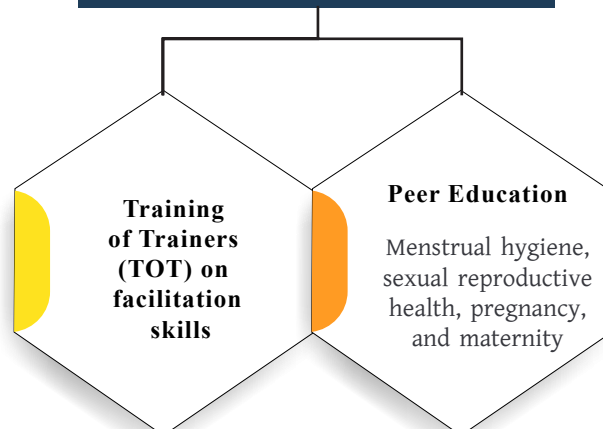
LES Women Empowerment Program



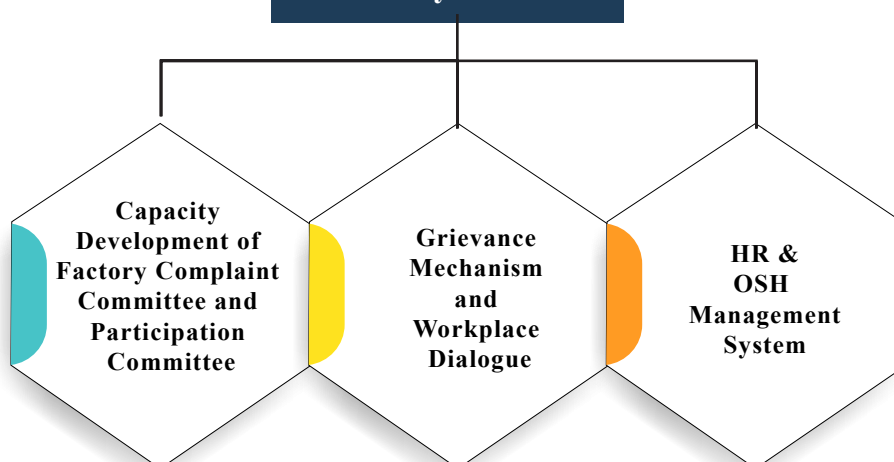
Productivity & Workforce Development Training



Capacity Building Training



Advisory Services



01: Women Leadership and Career Advancement Program - BEENA

BEENA: Boosting Equality & Empowering New Aspirations. This initiative accelerates women's leadership and career advancement (workers to supervisors, supervisors to line chiefs), addressing underrepresentation in leadership roles, particularly in the growing sectors such as apparel, footwear, textiles, pharmaceuticals, IT, electronics, and agro-business.

Objectives

To enhance women's leadership and career advancement opportunities.

To foster and embrace organizational change by transforming mindsets, systems, and workplace practices.

To replicate and integrate the model into internal promotion systems.

Engagement: 14-16 days direct engagement at factory premises within 8 to 12 months periods includes:



Women Leadership & Career Advancement Impacts



► Multiple Leadership Model



Batch size: 10 Trainees, Large factories can enroll up to 15 trainees.



02: Respectful Workplace Program

Respectful Workplace Program: Fostering Gender Leadership under IE, Production, HR/Complaintce & addressing gender-based violence and harassment and promoting a respectful workplace culture.

Objectives

Ensure top management's active commitment to a respectful workplace with zero tolerance for gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH).

Train employees, managers, and Gender Ambassadors through targeted programs and develop Master Trainers for lasting impact.

Strengthen the Complaint Committee to create a safer, more supportive work environment.

Why GBVH is a concern for the workplace?

- 45% of RMG workers experienced GBVH
- 22% psychological harassment
- 17% verbal abuse
- 7% physical violence
- 89% suffered mental breakdowns
- 83% lost interest in jobs.

- 49% more accidents
- 60% more errors and defects
- 50 % higher absenteeism
- 50% higher voluntary turnover
- 45% decreased employee engagement

Benefits of Respectful Workplace Program



Engagement: 12-15 days direct engagement at factory premises within 12 months periods (as follows):

01

Commitment from top management and conduct need assessment

- Kick-off at factory
- Gender Assessment
- Identify and train key staff to be focal points for GBVH (Gender Ambassadors)

02

Addressing GBVH and creating respectful workplace

- Capacity of Gender Ambassadors: Production, Industrial Engineers, HR/Compliance Management
- Develop GBVH and respectful workplace policies and procedures
- Develop Master Trainers (ToT) on Respectful Workplace Program

03

Addressing GBVH and creating respectful workplace (cont.)

- Engagement sessions with workers, supervisors, and middle management
- Functionality of the Complaint Committee, including survivor-centered approach, non-retaliation, grievance redressal system

04

Monitor and Sustain Respectful Workplaces

- Review progress and conduct end line survey
- Disseminate findings
- Establish a gender responsive policy framework and promote a culture

3. Mental health and Psychosocial Counselling Services in the workplace

Objectives

To equip social welfare personnel with the skills to identify, support, and manage initial psychological crises among workers, using CBT and SFT principles.

To effectively decrease absenteeism and turnover rates among workers by eliminating organizational factors that contribute to poor mental health.

To improve the productivity of the business by providing better emotional support to workers after critical incidents.

To minimize the disability of workers by ensuring that mental health problems are recognized at early stages and effective treatment is available.

To develop a culture of trust, support, and mutual respect in the workplace.

Implementation Approach

Inception Phase: Commitment from top management and conduct mental health services need assessment

- Kick-off at factory
- Conduct need assessment
- Identify and train key staff to be focal points for mental health and counseling services

Implementation phase: Develop SOPs and capacity building

- Facilitate workshops to draft mental health standard operating procedures
- Capacity development training for mental health focals and social workers
- Mental health awareness
- Workshops on defining responsibilities matrix (Focal points, HR, counselors, medical staff)

01

03

02

Implementation phase: Addressing mental health and counseling services and Psychosocial Support

- Introduction to Mental Health, Basic counseling skills, and introduction to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Systemic Family Therapy (SFT)
- Skill Development, Applied Skills, Family counseling
- Group therapy, trauma management, substance dependency
- Crisis Intervention & Supervised Practice
- Evaluation & Continuous Learning
- Supervision & Ongoing Support



4. Peer Education Program on Menstrual Hygiene, Nutrition, Sexual Reproductive and Maternity Health

Objectives

Equip garment workers with knowledge on menstrual hygiene, maternity care, and related health practices through peer education.

Ensure proper usage of sanitary products and promote maternal health-friendly workplace policies.

Create an open environment for discussing health concerns, reducing absenteeism through better awareness and self-care.

Training module and sessions

Each educator will undergo a comprehensive training program, which will include:

Module	Sub-topics	Time
1: Personal and Menstrual Hygiene Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal hygiene, Hygiene practices and Nutrition Menstrual cycle Managing menstrual health in the workplace 	2 and a half hours
2. Sexual Reproductive Health: Pregnancy and Maternity Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding Sexual Reproductive Health Pregnancy and maternal health Understanding maternity rights Managing maternity leave Pregnancy care: breastfeeding, pre and postnatal care 	2 and a half hours
3. Communication Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is Peer Education Essential skills to be a good Peer Educator Planning and preparation for Peer Education sessions Conducting Peer Education sessions (practice by topics) 	2 and a half hours


Timeline: The program will run for 12 months.




05. Gender Assessment (Audits)

This initiative aims to unlock the full potential of workers, fostering a fair, inclusive, and equitable workplace. Grounded in ILO conventions, international human rights and women's rights frameworks, Women's Empowerment Principles, and sustainable business practices, the audit provides a structured approach to advancing workplace gender equality.


Objectives




Assess gender integration in policies, practices, and workplace culture.




Identify barriers to gender equality in recruitment, retention, and career growth.



Evaluate policies on equal pay, maternity leave, women health and GBVH.



Provide recommendations for a respectful, inclusive workplace.



Strengthen leadership commitment and accountability.

Leadership Empowerment and Sustainability Int Ltd

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