

#Occupational Health and Safety

#Bangladesh

## Made in Asia

### Good practices on the way to a sustainable textile and garment sector

#### Improving workers health and happiness through health care facility

AUKO-TEX Group

Knitwear

4,200 employees

#### **AUKO-TEX Group**

Dr. Farabi Abdullah Al Qufi

Deputy Manager

Head of Child and Medicare

farabi@eequitex.com

+880 (0) 19 55 55 00 78

#### **The Challenge**

The garment and textile industries in Asia are facing high absenteeism and turnover rates, affecting productivity and competitiveness. Therefore, the knitwear factory AUKO-TEX aimed at initiating a program to reduce absenteeism and worker turnover.

The turnover rate and absenteeism are directly linked to employee satisfaction, workers' health and stress levels at work and at home. This especially holds true for female workers, as they have the double burden of earning money and taking care of elders and children. Initiatives to reduce absenteeism and worker turnover have to tackle these challenges that are affecting workers and their families.

#### **The Initiative**

In 2002 AUKO-TEX introduced an on-site health care service for its employees and their families; in 2011 the health care facility was professionalized. Now, the factory employs two male and one female doctor as well as nurses and pathologists. At the health care facility, employees can receive free medical advice, check-ups and treatment on six days per week, 24 hours a day.

Focusing not only on medical treatment but also on prevention, AUKO-TEX arranges annual health check-ups for every single worker and for the staff to spot and screen diseases. Besides receiving

medical advice, workers are given practical information on how to stay healthy. Training sessions are conducted by the safety committee's subsection for occupational health and safety as well as by the environmental health and safety committee. They inform the workers about health hazards and how to prevent or identify them. Parts of the suggested precautions are measures on hygiene and nutrition.

Another focus area of the initiative is women's health. As women sometimes lack confidence to express their health concerns and in particular gynecological problems with male doctors, AUKO-TEX hired a female gynecologist. This allows female workers to speak openly and therefore enabling them to receive medical advice from an expert. Furthermore, AUKO-TEX jointly with the NGO AWAJ foundation introduced in 2013 the project "HER+". It aims at increasing awareness of female workers on health, hygiene, sanitation and HIV/AIDS and provides workers with sanitary napkins to prevent infections.

However, as accidents can always occur, workers receive first aid training in case of an emergency. As of today, AUKO-TEX conducts monthly first aid trainings and has 94 first aiders.

### **The Benefit**

For more than ten years, AUKO-TEX is providing medical treatment to its employees. Since the program started in 2002, the health care facility treated 34,649 patients, mostly by providing health check-ups. More than 2,000 health check-ups have been provided in 2016 alone.

There are two main benefits generated from this initiative: Firstly, by preventing diseases and treating diseases properly, absenteeism was reduced by one third between 2014 and 2016. Secondly, by providing health care, AUKO-TEX gains attractiveness as an employer, leading to reduced recruiting costs and turnover rates. The turnover rate was reduced by around a quarter between 2014 and 2016.



"Our medical centre provides 24-hours medical services through adequate doctors and nurses. All disease related tests are performed free of cost for me and my family members. With these effective treatment plans and training, me and my family members are free of illness and happy."

*Razia Khatun started working for AUKO-TEX in 2013*

*Fotos siehe nächste Seite*

