

#Women's empowerment

#Myanmar

Made in Asia

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

Women's empowerment and increased productivity through training school

Lat War Garment (Yangon & Yeni)

Knitted and woven garments

1,100 workers

Lat War Garment

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The Challenge

Myanmar's economy is growing fast with the garment industry as one of its drivers. International brands are increasingly sourcing in Myanmar which leads to new factories openings every month. With higher numbers of factories especially around Yangon a fierce competition has started.

Having the choice of different factories, workers are more likely to change their workplace, if employment conditions seem to be better elsewhere. Hence, one of the results of the increasing number of factories are high turnover rates. At the same time the recruitment of skilled workers is crucial for a factories' economic sustainability.

Whereas a lack of qualified workers is a challenge for factories, lack of qualification can be a problem for female workers. If women especially from rural areas have no access to vocational training, they are often prevented from finding decent employment, making it difficult to be economically independent and to support their family and children. Even if they manage to find a job in the garment sector, the unskilled women will start working as general helpers with very little payment.

The knitwear and woven garments producer Lat War Group in Myanmar was looking for a way to support recruitment of skilled workers and prevent workers from factory hopping.

The Initiative

In the beginning of 2017, Lat War introduced a training school for unskilled workers from rural areas. The idea was to compensate drop out and improve efficiency of the workers and production quality. The school targets unskilled workers who receive free training for one month to become sewing machine operators. Thus, the mostly female workers have done their first step for better payment even before starting their job in the factory.

The training is mostly advertised in nearby villages and townships. Students have to register themselves at the school for the training. At the end of the four weeks course, students have to pass an exam to get a certificate. To take part in the course, students have to pay 10,000 Kyats as a deposit. The money is fully reimbursed after the students have completed the training.

The training curriculum includes training on garment production and efficiency and basics on labour rights, such as the workers' right to take leave, social security, freedom of association and also the duties and responsibilities of the employer and the employee. There is no contractual obligation for the students to work for one of Lat War's garment factories as Lat War Group has no obligation to employ the trainees. However, if there are open positions in Lat War factories, the students are usually recruited.

The Benefit

The training in the school of the Lat War Group helps women to find a job as skilled workers in the garment sector and to generate a better income for them and their families. The importance of the training school for economic empowerment of women is shown by an enormous demand of women from rural areas to receive the training. For the first two cycles, around 1,000 women applied to take part in the course.

Also the Lat War Group benefits strongly from the school. The Group was able to open a new factory with workers only recruited from the training school, creating more than 300 new jobs. In addition the drop-out rate in Lat War factories, which has significantly decreased, could be filled up with the newly recruited workers. Moreover, the certified trainees contribute to the efficiency gains of the factories. Benefiting from its skilled workers, the newly set up factory is now running with the same efficiency as a factory working for more than three years.

Lat War is complementing this measure with an attractive remuneration model. It combines a salary based on the minimum wage with a piece rate. Thus Lat War becomes even more attractive as employer.