



# EVALUATION REPORT

**Research, Advocacy and Action to Combat GBV in the Apparel  
Sector: October 2017 - April 2019**

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## Executive Summary

In 2017, the Solidarity Center began a pilot program, in cooperation with Just Associates<sup>1</sup> and funded (between October 2017 and April 2019) by the C&A Foundation, which aimed to contribute to reducing gender-based violence (GBV) against workers in the apparel sectors of Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand. This initiative also aimed to connect the International Labor Organization's process to grassroots, women apparel workers and vice-versa. It intended to:

- Strengthen women workers' voices, organizing and leadership to combat gender-based violence in the world of work in Cambodia and Indonesia (Objective 1), and
- Strengthen the capacity of women garment workers, in Cambodia, Indonesia and the broader regions, to participate in the ILO process establishing an international standard to address gender-based violence at work (Objective 2).

This report presents the findings of an evaluation conducted in November and December 2019, which includes desk studies and preparations made in August and September 2019. The purpose of the evaluation was to **a)** assess the extent to which the initiative achieved its intended objectives, **b)** gather the lessons learnt about the extent to which the pilot initiative's design and implementation contributed to intended outcomes<sup>2</sup> and **c)** provide recommendations for similar programs.

### *Impact<sup>3</sup>*

The evaluation team finds the pilot program's impact adequate. The pilot program contributed to strengthening women's agency for preventing and confronting gender-based violence in their working worlds in apparel supply chains in Cambodia and Indonesia. The program has also contributed to strengthening women's understanding of what gender-based violence is. They learned how to identify and systematically document gender-based violence as well as how to confront perpetrators and employers and to demand justice for women who have been subject to violations. The evaluation team finds that this has contributed changed practices in one factory (it no longer terminates the employment of pregnant and lactating women) and to a general behavioral change among men in another factory in Cambodia. The pilot program has also inspired factory-level trade unions in Indonesia to include GBV in their collective bargaining agreements and to sign agreements with management, in more than eight factories, that establish GBV-free zones.

Workshop participants have – to some extent – conveyed a basic understanding of what gender-based violence is and where and how workers can seek support if they are subject to violations. However, those who were interviewed or who participated in sharing sessions reported that the transfer of knowledge, from the women who were trained to their co-workers, was limited by a lack of confidence among some of the trainees about passing on their knowledge to others. There were also contextual challenges related to time, workers' interest and the difficulty of finding suitable venues, especially in Cambodia.

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<sup>1</sup> The Solidarity Center partnered with Just Associates (JASS) to reach out to social movements (especially feminist movements), to facilitate workshops and strategy, and to expedite connections to other social movements. It used its proven methodologies, to make collective and feminist analyses and to build common ground, as well as to join workers and women's rights organisations in a collective process of reflection, analysis, and strategic action.

<sup>2</sup> Annex II includes the proposed evaluation rubric for the evaluation.

<sup>3</sup> See Annex I for a full overview of the outcomes planned versus the outcomes achieved and Annex II for a rating of the project's impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

Despite this, the evaluation team concludes that the program fulfilled its first objective: to strengthen women workers' voices, through organization and leadership that combatted gender-based violence in the world of work in the program's target area (Objective 1).

The evaluation team finds that the program contributed to strengthening the capacity of women garment workers, in Cambodia and Indonesia, to participate in the ILO process about the establishment of an international standard to address gender-based violence at work (Objective 2). Four women participated in the International Labor Conference (ILC) in 2018 and shared their testimonies in the preparation meeting for the workers' group's members of the drafting committee. The program also inspired participants to spread awareness among trade unions in Indonesia and Cambodia about ILO Convention 190, which was adopted in June 2019. It also led participants to realize that GBV is not only a Cambodian or Indonesian problem but that, as workers, they are part of a broader movement to fight GBV. This reinforced their motivation to continue working to strengthen other workers' awareness of GBV.

Participation in the ILC also enabled trade union leaders from Cambodia, who were nominated through the program, to meet with Cambodian government delegations, and the Indonesian participants were included in the official Indonesian delegation. As such, the program contributed to create a momentum and an opportunity for trade union representatives to engage with national decision makers. This evaluation could not determine the extent to which the program's documentation of cases of gender-based violence and, indirectly, the workers' testimonies have influenced discussions concerning the ILO Convention 190. The access created to national governments may contribute to future, national, discussions about ratification and implementation of the Convention in Cambodia and Indonesia, however.

So far, the workshops, documentation and collection of women's testimonies has not led to the creation of a regional network or consolidated actions to address or prevent GBV. If they wished to achieve this goal, Solidarity Center could support alliance building, such as in Indonesia to make it easier for groups of women (and men) to develop joint advocacy strategies on GBV that target national and sector-specific authorities and employers' groups.

### *Relevance*

This evaluation finds the program's relevance is adequate. Reliable national data on the prevalence of gender-based violence is scarce in Cambodia, as previous research efforts have done little to inform workers about what GBV is, before asking them to answer a questionnaire. Therefore, previous efforts – amongst others by Better Factories<sup>4</sup> – have not succeeded in exploring the issue in depth<sup>5</sup>. Notwithstanding this, data from Care in Cambodia, Better Factories, Better Work Indonesia, local NGOs in Indonesia and Solidarity Center, itself, suggest that GBV's prevalence is high in the apparel sector.

Most attempts to address the phenomena took a top-down approach (Better Factories and Better Work) and sought to mobilize management (Care) to address the issue without first facilitating an enhancement of the skills and confidence that were required to confront acts of GBV among the workers themselves. Few initiatives addressed gender-based violence, globally, from the perspective of power or disempowerment.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Better Factories, Cambodia.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Better Factories, Cambodia.

For these reasons, the evaluation team finds that the evaluated program's focus, its bottom-up approach and its emphasis on workers' empowerment are highly relevant and potentially complementary to other initiatives in the region that respond to gender-based violence in the apparel supply chain.

The evaluation team finds the participatory research approach less relevant to influence national and international decision makers. The participatory research approach has helped strengthen participating workers' understanding of what gender-based violence is. Yet the quality of the research reports can be questioned and may not be an effective input into discussions with national decision makers in the years to come.

### *Efficiency*

The evaluation team finds that the program's efficiency was poor, as the budget was not commensurate with the direct target beneficiaries reached (approx. sixty women trade union leaders). This equals a per unit cost of 6.900 EUR per woman who participated in the workshops if the calculation is based in the total budget and 4.200 EUR if the calculation is based on the actual spending. This is a high figure, even after considering the participating women's actions to address GBV after the workshops. Twenty-five percent of the budget was allocated to salaries in the Solidarity Center's Washington DC head office, of which a big part was left unspent. High HQ office costs is justified in a pilot phase that – potentially – requires additional start-up support to national staff, follow-up and reflections on lessons learnt. Yet with the clear exception of the GBV expert, who conducted/co-facilitated the workshops in Indonesia and Cambodia, the evaluation team was unable to find justification in the budget for the significant allocations at HQ level. The evaluation team was unable to determine the reasoning behind the planning and budgeting, as none of the persons involved in the planning work with the Solidarity Center or C&A Foundation anymore.

The evaluation team recommends that, for future interventions, Solidarity Center explore low-cost strategies to increase the number of direct beneficiaries and opportunities to rationalize program implementation further. Such strategies might include a decentralization of program implementation, to include more human resources in Cambodia and Indonesia directly, and a strengthening of the trade unions' use of social media, such as Facebook and WhatsApp, for awareness raising about gender-based violence and information about where victims can seek help. Awareness raising through social media can never be a 'standalone' initiative but can be a supplementing tool for knowledge transfer that assists women trained when they share knowledge and mobilize workers in their factories.

### *Effectiveness*

The evaluation finds the program's overall effectiveness is adequate. The facilitated workshops about gender-based violence conducted for union leaders were very effective and made a significant contribution to improving the participants' ability to identify, document and respond to cases of gender-based violence.

It was also relevant and effective to involve workers and their trade unions in participatory research when the aim was to document and facilitate that workers understood the character of gender-based violence at their place of work. As a pedagogic approach, the participatory research helped strengthen workers' understanding of the situation as well as their ability to engage in fact-based negotiations with the management of their factory.

However, the evaluation team finds that the participatory research approach was little help when the purpose was to produce a research product that could be used for international and national advocacy with decision makers. The participatory research may have contributed to shed light on what GBV is in the apparel sector in a Cambodian and Indonesia. The selection of informants was questionable however, and the research sample was too small to represent a convincing case for negotiations with employers or

national authorities. For these reasons it could be easy for advocacy targets, who oppose the cause of preventing GBV, to dismiss it. They could potentially argue that the women who were interviewed were not representative of the workers in the apparel sector, in general.

Furthermore, the evaluation team finds that the data collection for the research was a time-consuming process that required substantive support and verification from the program's staff, especially in Cambodia.

Based on the above, the evaluation team recommends that products of future participatory research interventions are used internally or to engage factory management in discussions about gender-based violence in their workplace. Research for national advocacy usually requires a quality and an accuracy that participatory research processes can rarely deliver or only deliver ineffectively.

The national or sectoral-wide effectiveness of the research and legal analysis that was carried out was also affected by the limited consideration of, and plans about, how and when the research should be used for advocacy or awareness raising. This was a missed opportunity, as the legal analyses were of a good quality. The interviewed informants were still waiting for Solidarity Center to publish the research in Cambodia and Indonesia, whereas the Solidarity Center staff who were interviewed reported that that the use of the research – and its release – was to be decided by the workers and their unions, themselves. A planned launch in Indonesia was postponed because of the Solidarity Center's gender expert's tight schedule.

### *Sustainability*

The evaluation team finds the program's potential for sustainability adequate. The intervention's focus on empowerment has the potential to lead to sustainable results, as workers acquire new skills, perceptions and attitudes towards fighting GBV, and as they take ownership of the fight against GBV and continue it on their own.

The program's sustainability could have been strengthened, if the program has supported the existing alliance in Indonesia (Alliance for C190) more actively and if it had supported the establishment of a similar alliance in Cambodia. The Alliance for C190 includes more than fifty human rights and women CSOs as well as all major trade unions.

When the program moves from a pilot to a regular program sustainability can be strengthened further, if the program relies *less* on experts from Washington DC and more on national experts, for legal and policy analyses. In this way, the program will also contribute to strengthening the national pool of experts on labor market issues and will probably strengthen the program's cost-efficiency in the future.

### *Recommendations (prioritized)*

Based on these findings the evaluations team recommends, in prioritized order, that future interventions:

1. Develop training programs for women agents of change and include a systematic accompaniment to the participants to strengthen the likelihood that women trained have the skills and courage to pass on knowledge to their co-workers.
2. Allocate more human resources to Solidarity Center's national offices in the implementing countries, so they can support and accompany trade union leaders and workers according to their needs.

3. Develop a Facebook page<sup>6</sup> with explanations about what gender-based violence is, with (anonymous) testimonies that describe the most frequent cases of GBV so that readers can identify with the case(s), and with information about how and where to seek help. The Facebook page can support trainers in their work at factory level.
4. Build capacity among workers to collect documentation on the prevalence of GBV at their place of work, which they can use for bargaining at a factory-level and conduct research for sector-wide or national advocacy as a separate process, possibly with the support of professional researchers.
5. Include professional back-up from, or referrals to, a psychologist, in situations where cases of trauma are brought up during interview sessions and in situations where interviewers are unable to cope with the stories they are told by victims.

It is further recommended that future research interventions:

1. Distinguish between participatory research as an approach to learning and mobilization (of women directly involved in the research) and research as a product for national and international advocacy.
2. Distinguish between documentation and research.
3. Clarify the purpose of the research, so that sampling and data collection methodologies can be developed accordingly, and the quality and credibility of the research can be assured.

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<sup>6</sup> Or similar social media platform that is popular and commonly used by workers

# Research, Advocacy and Action to Combat GBV in the Apparel Sector October 2018 –April 2019

## Program Evaluation

### 1. Background

Gender-based violence (GBV) at work<sup>7</sup> is a global problem that affects tens of millions of women workers across all sectors. It causes them economic, emotional and physical harm. Whereas both men and women can be victims of GBV at work, GBV against women is more prevalent. It is deeply harmful to individual victims, and GBV at work reflects and perpetuates the skewed gender power relations that are at the root of much social and economic inequality. Gender-based violence at work erodes women’s agency and voices and hinders their efforts to improve their working and living standards.

For instance, research from Cambodia that was commissioned and published by Care International in 2017, found that sexual harassment was a regular occurrence for workers<sup>8</sup>. In the workplace of those workers, interviewed for the Care research, 28.6 per cent – or nearly one in three – of female garment factory workers reported experiencing sexually harassing behavior over the past twelve months. Outside of the workplace, women and men in the garment industry also perceived a regular and daily risk of sexual harassment. Sixteen-and-a-half percent of women and 7.6 percent of men had experienced sexual harassment outside the factory during the past year<sup>9</sup>. Many found it difficult to protest or to leave their workplace, since they depended on the salary for their livelihoods.

Research conducted in two Indonesian communities, by the Indonesian women’s rights’ NGO, Perempuan Mahardihika, found that 56.5 percent of the interviewees (a sample of 773 women from 45 factories in the Industrial zone, Chacum) had experienced sexual harassment and 90 percent of them had never reported the incidents. Only six to seven factories turned up to the presentation of the findings, although all of the factories were invited. The Fair Wear Foundation, Better Work Indonesia, all the trade union federations organizing in the garment sector, and the management of the industrial zone were all present at the presentation<sup>10</sup>.

According to the informants, interviewed for this evaluation, sexual harassment occurs in situations where dependency or unequal power relations are combined with a lack of accountability. This is typically where female workers depend on machine repairers to repair their sewing machine or when a ‘team’ manager asks a ‘favor’ of a female worker in exchange for the renewal of her contract. Other cases could be when male security guards body-search female workers on their way from the factories. Workers rarely complain as they

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<sup>7</sup> The ILO uses the concept of “the world of work” to encompass (a) the workplace, including public and private spaces where they are a place of work; (b) places where the worker is paid, takes a rest break or a meal, or uses sanitary, washing and changing facilities; (c) work-related trips, travel, training, events or social activities; (d) through work-related communications, including those enabled by information and communication technologies; (e) in employer-provided accommodation; and (f) when commuting to and from work.

<sup>8</sup> The findings of this research corroborate previous studies that examined sexual harassment within the garment industry, which suggested high levels of sexual harassment amongst workers (Human Rights Watch, 2015; Stanford WRC et al., 2013; CLEC and CCC, 2012).

<sup>9</sup> Care International, 2017

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Perempuan Mahardihika, December 2019



risk – or fear – that their contracts will not be prolonged or that they will be denied overtime. Women’s employment is often terminated when they are pregnant or lactating.

The CARE study concluded with the estimation that the cost to productivity of sexual harassment in the garment industry in Cambodia was USD 89 million per annum. This comprised staff turnover, absenteeism, and presenteeism related to sexual harassment. High turnover leads to increased training costs for new employees and therefore reduced productivity. Of the workers interviewed in the Care report, 13.5 percent stated that their productivity was significantly affected by sexual harassment, with that same group estimating that they were able to work 47 percent less effectively, on average<sup>11</sup>.

As a response to the widespread problem of GBV at work, in November 2015, the ILO Workers’ Group – led by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and its affiliates - succeeded in putting a standard-setting discussion, on violence against women and men at work, onto the agenda of the ILO’s 2018 International Labor Conference (ILC). The conference provides a tripartite structure for negotiations of international labor standards by workers, employers and governments.

The rationale behind this was that a comprehensive convention, accompanied by a recommendation, would support and encourage workers to speak out, and to advocate for social norm changes, to negotiate collective agreements and to support labor law reforms, in order to stop and prevent violence and harassment in the world of work, with a focus on GBV. At the same time, it would help workers and employers to agree to policies to prevent and address GBV in the workplace and would provide governments with critical guidance in creating national legal frameworks that could prevent and remediate GBV at work. The new convention was eventually adopted by the 2019 ILC, as Convention 190.

## 2. The Program

In 2017, the Solidarity Center began a pilot program, in cooperation with Just Associates<sup>12</sup> and funded (between October 2017 and March 2019) by the C&A Foundation, which aimed to contribute to reducing gender-based violence (GBV) against workers in the apparel sectors of Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand. This initiative also aimed to connect the International Labor Organization process to grassroots, women apparel workers and vice-versa. It intended to:

- Strengthen women workers’ voices, through organization and leadership that would combat gender-based violence in the world of work in Cambodia and Indonesia (Objective 1), and
- Strengthen the capacity of women garment workers, in Cambodia, Indonesia and the broader regions, to participate in the ILO process through the establishment of an international standard to address gender-based violence at work (Objective 2).

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<sup>11</sup> A small study by Solidarity Center (comprising 105 respondents in Indonesia) , which was developed for the project, indicated that the problem of gender-based violence in the workplace might be higher. Of the 105 respondents, in Indonesia, 48 percent had experienced gender-based violence in the form of verbal abuse; 33 percent in the form of sexual abuse (33 percent); 13 percent in the form of psychological abuse (13 percent); and 5 percent in the form of physical abuse (5 percent).

<sup>12</sup> The Solidarity Center partnered with Just Associates (JASS) to reach out to social movements (especially feminist movements), to facilitate workshops and strategy, and to expedite connections to other social movements. It used its proven methodologies, to make collective and feminist analyses and to build common ground, as well as to join workers and women’s rights organisations in a collective process of reflection, analysis, and strategic action.

The program was based on an ‘advocacy through empowerment’ approach, which facilitates a transformation of participants’ perception and knowledge about a certain topic (here gender-based violence), which moves from participants’ lack of awareness and passivity, or belief that they can do nothing to address the problem themselves, into awareness, critical reflections and trust that they can actually play an active role in protesting violations and challenging the norms and practices that lead to violations of their rights. Furthermore, the approach engages participants as allies in the process of prioritizing and shaping advocacy strategies and messages, aimed at changing their situation.

As such, the program’s rationale was:

**If** women workers and their allies are actively engaged in analyzing the causes and consequences of gender-based violence in their countries and discuss successful prevention and mitigation strategies with other women, and

**If** women workers are engaged in participatory research teams, and collect and analyze data about their own situation collectively,

**Then** their voices, organisational and leadership skills will be strengthened, in combating GBV and contributing to the ILO process of establishing an international standard to address GBV at work. This will lead to a situation where women can influence a tripartite structure for negotiations of international labor standards by workers, employers and governments, which in turn will contribute to a reduction of GBV.

This is so **because** the joint analysis, reflections and data collection will contribute to strengthening participants’ understanding of GBV, and their self-esteem, skills and commitment to addressing GBV in their own workplaces, both nationally and regionally. Their understanding and cooperation would stimulate women to produce joint action plans and campaign messages, which they would use to influence discussions at the 2018 International Labor Conference in Geneva, and which could be used to facilitate cooperation in a regional network of GBV work activists.

In line with this rationale, the program:

- Trained trade union leaders in Cambodia and Indonesia to enhance their understanding of and ability to act on GBV at work.
- Supported trained women to undertake participatory research, in Cambodia and Indonesia, that explored the incidence of GVB in their workplaces in the garment and footwear sector and engaged other women in discussions about gender-based violence.
- Produced two reports, containing testimonies from female apparel workers (one for Cambodia and one for Indonesia) about GBV.
- Facilitated the participation of women workers from Indonesia and Cambodia in discussions at the 2018 International Labor Conference about gender-based violence.
- Hosted a regional meeting, in Thailand, of women union leaders from countries in the Asia region (including two representatives from the women participating in the initiative in Cambodia and two representatives participating in the initiative in Indonesia) to share experiences of GBV.

## 2.1 Program Planning

The regional program’s framework was initially developed as a pilot initiative by a representative of Solidarity Center, in Washington DC, in dialogue with a staff member from the C&A Foundation. National

staff was involved after the framework had been approved and asked to contextualize it to their own national context. This may explain why the program document, outcomes and indicators, which form the basis of the evaluation, have a subordinate character that makes them applicable in both Indonesia and Cambodia, but which does not consider the context and the exact stakeholders. Therefore, they are open to interpretation. Key stakeholders, including the participating trade unions and their networks were also not described in the program documents.

The fact that the framework was developed by Solidarity Center in Washington DC, and that the implementation approach (see Section 3.1 below) was new to most staff members, is likely to have contributed to a situation where the program was termed ‘the Washington program’ in the countries of implementation. There was a feeling among some local staff members that the program was ‘owned by Washington’. The team was unable to determine whether, or to what extent, this affected the program’s implementation.

## 2.3 Purpose

The purpose of this summative evaluation was to **a)** assess the extent to which the initiative achieved its intended objectives, **b)** gather the lessons learnt about the extent to which the initiative’s design and implementation contributed to intended outcomes<sup>13</sup> and **c)** provide recommendations for similar programs.

### More specifically the evaluation aimed to:

- Review the success of the approach and design that Solidarity Centre and Just Associates implemented in achieving progress towards outcomes;
- Assess any factors (in design and implementation) that may have contributed to or impeded the achievement of results, allowing the process of learning from success and failures;
- Examine the overall relevance, (cost) efficiency, effectiveness, impact (including unintended outcomes) and sustainability of the initiative;
- Determine any actionable and strategic recommendations and lessons from the findings that could be fed into future, similar operations.

## 2.3 Methodology

The evaluation team used an outcome harvesting approach to assess the program’s impact, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. This approach enables evaluators and managers to identify, formulate, verify, and make sense of all outcomes (changes) – positive or negative, planned or unplanned – to which the intervention has contributed, and to determine *how* the intervention contributed to these outcomes.

As a part of this approach, the evaluation team conducted outcome harvesting workshops with Solidarity Center staff and the implementing partners in both Indonesia and Cambodia. The purpose of the workshops was to provide a space where staff could identify outcomes and reflect on their (the outcome’s) significance. The latter was achieved through the joint development of a scale that measured the degree of the beneficiaries’ ability to conduct program activities without the support of the program. In addition, the participants discussed the factors and actors that had challenged the implementation and achievement of the

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<sup>13</sup> Annex II includes the proposed evaluation rubric for the evaluation.

program's outcomes, as well as factors and actors that facilitated progress towards the program's planned outcomes<sup>14</sup>.

To substantiate the outcomes, the evaluation team conducted semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with the trade union leaders, who had been trained by Solidarity Center, directly, and with the workers who had participated in the knowledge sharing sessions organized by trained women from their own factories. The findings were further substantiated through semi-structured interviews with staff, implementing partners, external observers and trade union representatives as well as through a desk review of the research documents, legal research documents and narrative reports that were submitted by Solidarity Center. A total of six focus group discussions were conducted with trained women and co-workers in Cambodia (totaling twenty-four workers). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with Solidarity Center Staff, Jass Associates, trade union representatives who had participated in the ILC and external informants (a total of 10 informants). One focus group discussion and one more in-depth discussion in a workshop were conducted with women who had participated in the workshops and sessions in Indonesia, comprising nineteen women workers. The total number of informants in Indonesia was forty-four<sup>15</sup>.

Focus group informants were selected by Solidarity Center staff in Cambodia and Indonesia based on the following criteria:

- Women workers who had participated in workshops and were mobilized as agents of change. These included both women who had participated in the first workshop and women who had participated in the research workshops and activities too
- Women workers who had been interviewed, trained and mobilized by women agents of change. These were all young women (below 25) working full time as sewers and with embroidery. They had fixed contracts and were members of unions that participated in the program

### 3. The Program Design

The program adopted a bottom-up approach to addressing gender-based violence among women workers in the garment sector. Under this approach, the program-holders work directly with workers. They empower workers to defend their own rights and to represent their interests and concerns to their employers and authorities, locally, nationally and internationally. This approach implies that program implementers leave the initiative to the workers and serve as mentors and advisors, so that the workers can build their own capacities and learn from their own successes and mistakes. This approach is often time-consuming, slightly unpredictable and, at times, frustrating, because the initiative is left to the beneficiaries themselves and project staff can only coach and support. However, the approach increases the likelihood that beneficiaries will own the process and that the initiative will lead to sustainable results.

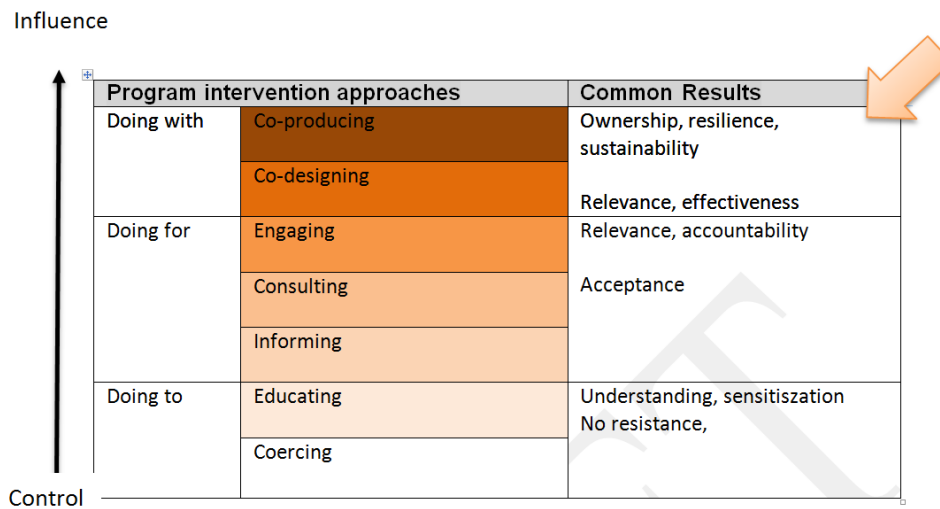
The approach differs from a top-down process of change. In the latter constituencies' perspectives and views are reflected through questionnaires and focus group discussions, but dialogue mainly serves to inform the advocacy process of the advocate or implementing organization itself. This is less about empowering the constituency to critically reflect on their situation and identify strategies for action for themselves.

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<sup>14</sup> However, only six of the thirteen invited participants attended the workshop in Indonesia.

<sup>15</sup> See annex II for a list of informants

Figure 1 below illustrates different approaches to program implementation and the evaluation team’s perception of the SC program’s approach.



**Figure 1: Participation ladder**

While the bottom-up has some clear advantages and strengths in terms of facilitating sustainability and empowerment, the approach is new to Solidarity Center – or at least to the local staff – according to some of the interviewed staff members. Implementing it was therefore not without difficulty and it was far more time-consuming than anticipated in the program design. As one staff member explained: *“One word that describes this program is ‘frustration’. We cannot control the workers. But this is the only way.”* The reward for staff’s (sometimes hard earned) patience was apparent, however: *“When they grow, we feel proud too.”*

At the same time, the GBV issue was new to the interviewed staff members. As one informant explained to the evaluation team: *“With this program we built a foundation to work from. We strengthened cooperation with unions on the topic; we strengthened our knowledge about GBV, its causes and consequences and we got experience with participatory research as an empowerment approach”*.

The evaluation team finds that the program’s bottom-up approach was highly relevant to a program that aimed to strengthen workers’ ability to identify GBV, to seek help and to respond to gender-based violence **at factory level**. Additionally, we find that, at factory level, it is more likely to lead to sustainable results than other approaches offered. At factory level, the approach provides an opportunity to understand and address gender-based violence within a broader context of the gender and unequal power relationships between male and female workers and between supervisors and workers. It also provides an opportunity for female workers to develop the agency to address such (unequal) power relationships and to address abuse through their local trade unions, without relying on the support of international actors or national human rights’ NGOs.

However, a bottom-up approach is also – as described above and as reflected in the interviews with staff – often a slow and cumbersome process. It generally requires significant accompaniment from program implementers, as workers implement what they have learnt and learn from their mistakes.

The evaluation team finds that neither the program’s timeframe<sup>16</sup> (eighteen months), nor the local resources and time that were allocated for supporting the trained women, as well as the follow-up and facilitation, complied with the challenges and needs usually associated with a bottom-up approach. As a consequence, the local staff in Cambodia worked overtime, to respond to the workers’ needs, and they were often called from their factories to request support for knowledge sharing among co-workers. Considering the underspending on other budget lines this is an issue that could have been addressed during the program’s implementation. The problem was less evident in Indonesia, as that country has relatively well-functioning unions in place to support individuals and their local unions.

The evaluation team finds that the bottom-up and participatory research approach had limited relevance, where the program’s aim was to influence *international policy processes* such as the ILC. This was because influence at this level required:

- The skill and experience to participate in negotiations with an international audience
- Access to the platforms and meetings where negotiation takes place
- Documentation/research of a quality that cannot be easily questioned.

Generally, grassroots workers did not possess any of these requirements and were unlikely to gain them within the timeframe of an eighteen-month program<sup>17</sup>, or even a nine-month period, which – according to local staff – was the actual implementation period.

### 3.1 Program planning, administration and management

The program document was designed by Solidarity Center in Washington DC. The country offices in Indonesia and Cambodia mainly became involved after the grant was approved and they were asked to participate in the actual country level planning and implementation.

Despite the best intentions, this seems to have led to a situation where Solidarity Center in Indonesia and Cambodia perceived the program as a ‘Washington program’<sup>18</sup> where they mainly waited for and acted on instructions from Washington. This waiting for instructions from SC, in Washington DC on an ongoing basis, may have affected the program’s implementation.

Centralized decision making reduces any intervention’s agility and hampers the communication flow. This was the case in the program under evaluation. The Solidarity Center’s GBV expert and trainer was responsible for most of the communication. Her schedule was extremely busy as she was conducting workshops all over the world and, therefore, she was difficult to gain access to.

### 3.2 Grant design and expectations

The C&A Foundation’s grants are shaped and provided with a strong expectation that grants will contribute to tangible outcomes in terms of changes in stakeholders’ (e.g. employers’, brands’ worker leaders’, alliance partners’ or trade unions’) behavior, skills, attitudes, policies, institutional practices and align with global key

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<sup>16</sup> Which is often guided by C&A Foundation

<sup>17</sup> Under Solidarity Center’s program, ‘grassroots workers’ included workers in factories, shop stewards, and factory union leaders. Whereas a few of the latter may have possessed the skills required to participate in international negotiations, the greater majority was unlikely do have them, as stated by women workers interviewed by the evaluation team.

<sup>18</sup> This is what the interviewed staff called the project.

performance indicators spelled out in the document ‘Working Conditions, KPIs, sub-indicators and definitions’ which all partners and grant applicants must reflect in their proposals.

Applicants and grant holders are further requested to explain how their initiative will address the central problem that the intervention has defined and the *activities, results and any assumptions on the strategy depends*. Grant applicants and grant holders are not asked to clarify how and why they think the chosen activities are feasible to reach the intervention’s main results, however. Yet such requests can contribute to quality assure program design and stimulate reflections about an intervention’s implicit assumptions about how proposed activities leads to tangible results. This would include considerations about how training of women and joint research in a limited number of factories would enable worker representatives to influence international policy making.

### 3.2.1 Outcome formulations

Like other initiatives addressing poor and marginalized population groups, the program was shaped by a strong intention and interest to address structural causes for – and create structural solutions to – promote workers’ rights. And like many other initiatives, these intentions shaped the goal formulation and lead to the formulation of outcomes and objectives, partly in the program’s sphere of interest and thus partly outside of the program’s actual influence.

Yet, as much as planners and development practitioners are motivated by a strong wish to promote rights for all, the reality is that change happens one step at a time, one soul at a time. For interventions to be realistic, outcomes must be tangible and within an intervention’s sphere of influence.

The evaluation team finds that both C&A Foundation and Solidarity Center could have paid more attention to the program’s design, and further specified the target groups and the situation that the program aims to achieve:

A worker’s ability to influence international policy processes will for instance depend on his or her previous experience with such processes, understanding of the policy making process, language and negotiation skills. The planned support and accompaniment of workers will depend on these previous experiences, knowledge and skills.

‘Participation’ in an international conference like the ILC can be anything from physical presence to shaping a resolution. And ‘capacity can mean anything from ‘understanding an issue’ to ‘proactively promoting an idea and engaging others in the work. Such key nuances and differences in interpretation matters when planners are to define realistic and effective strategies and when funders are to assess the quality of a proposal.

For future programming C&A Foundations and grant applicants are therefore recommended to:

1. Distinguish between spheres of interests and spheres of direct and indirect influence: In as much as planners would like to promote workers’ rights, this remains within their sphere of interest and not their sphere of direct influence. ‘Workers’ rights’ is shaped by so many other factors and actors that the contribution of one program is difficult to trace, even if one tries.
2. Be specific: ‘Workers’ are not just ‘workers’ and many words and terminologies are ambiguous and open for all sorts of interpretation. To ensure the quality and realism of a program it is therefore important that objectives and planned outcomes remain specific and precise.

3. Consider ‘how and why’: Training women or conducting research can lead to active participation and mobilization to prevent GBV under the right circumstances. Yet, in other situations it may not. To test an intervention’s, implicit assumption about activities will lead to change, it is recommended that planners describe how – and why – they think that a specific activity or intervention can lead to a desired change.

## 4. Achievements

### 4.1 Women’s agency to prevent or oppose gender-based violence

The program exposed sixty female trade union leaders (federation, province and factory union levels) to three consecutive workshops. The workshops’ purpose was to strengthen participants’ understanding of what gender-based violence is, so that they could recognize it in their own world of work, and to train (some of) them to participate as researchers and data collectors in the program’s research component. Twelve trade union leaders and shop stewards were selected and trained as researchers by Solidarity Center in Indonesia and nine in Cambodia.

The workshops combined information about what recognizing gender-based violence is with participants’ own work to define it (first workshop), introduction to participatory research methodologies (second workshop) and discussion of research findings (third workshop). The workshops included an introduction to the legal provisions around GBV, and covered the knowledge and skills required to document cases of gender-based violence as well as how to interview co-workers. It also encompassed training on the power analysis and negotiation techniques required to present cases (of GBV) to employers and managers.

The workshops and sessions were conducted by a GBV expert from Solidarity Center in Washington, together with long-time training partners, ‘Jass’ in Cambodia and FAMM in Indonesia. Jass was established in Indonesia, in 2007, and expanded from there to Cambodia as well as other countries. In 2012, Jass Indonesia was renamed FAMM and branded as an organization for young feminists.

#### **Gender based violence as defined by the Cambodian participants**

*Gender-based violence is a continuum of unacceptable behaviours and practices that are likely to result in physical, psychological or sexual harm or suffering. Gender-based violence is violence that is directed against an individual or group of individuals based on their gender identity.*

*Gender-based violence includes violence against women and girls as well as against men and boys, people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI), and other individuals who do not conform to dominant perceptions of gender. Gender-based violence includes sexual harassment, domestic violence, and sexual violence.*

The women, who were trained and interviewed by the evaluation team, all reported that the workshops had helped them to understand what gender-based violence was and to recognize it in their own workplaces. As one informant explained: *“Before, I used to see the situations where women workers were touched on their butt or kissed as acts of teasing. Now, I understand that it is actually harassment”*.



Based on their new-found knowledge, both about what gender-based violence was as well as its causes, the women in the focus group discussions explained that the workshops had given them the confidence to confront those men, whose behavior was inappropriate or a direct violation of their integrity and rights as women.

In one factory, the women's repeated complaints about the behavior of a male supervisor led to the termination of his employment. The supervisor wanted the women to sleep with him in 'exchange' of a renewed contract. That supervisors' employment termination, in addition to that of a few other male employees, contributed to a situation where all male employees restrained their behavior, according to one informant who was interviewed by the team.

*"I used to suffer from GBV myself. Every time I went to the administrative office I was touched. I am a married woman, so I kept silent, because I felt ashamed and was afraid that my husband would be jealous and blame me. The training taught me to speak up, so I went to the employer and complained." Female factory union leader, participating in the training.*

Another informant told the team that her complaints to the local factory trade union and the trade union's intervention convinced her employer to stop firing pregnant and lactating women.

Most of the interviewed Cambodian informants had shared their knowledge with other workers in their factories. Those among the participants who were shop stewards/union representatives had used their legal rights as shop stewards to call for weekly meetings<sup>19</sup>, and others had invited co-workers to their own houses or had carried out the knowledge sharing in the workers' compound or in the factory during lunch breaks.

According to interviewed informants, the program also led to some trade unions in Indonesia's taking initiatives to raise awareness about GBV and to include GBV prevention in their collective bargaining agreements. This was not the case in Cambodia, where trade unions are less established and weaker. Some plant-level unions in Indonesia included GBV issues in their Letters of Demand for new CBAs. Other plant-level unions conducted training on GBV through their committees on occupational health and safety, using awareness-raising sessions and banners. In the Batan region, the unions and management from eight factories jointly signed special declarations on GBV-free zones. Typically, a GBV-free zone would be the territory of a factory or industrial zone where there would be zero tolerance towards GBV (in some cases this was limited to sexual harassment) and where a mechanism existed for handling complaints. The signed statements were printed on banners that were placed in public areas around the factories' sites. One trade union in Batan province, is now implementing a pilot program on GBV in four factories.

At the national level, in Indonesia, a trade union federation has included GBV into their National Working Plan and has through IndustriAll initiated negotiations with some brands on GBV, this initiative was inspired by Solidarity Center's workshops as part of the current program. They have also established collaborations with other social movements through the Alliance for ILO Convention No. 190, which is facilitated by Solidarity Center, in order to advocate for the elimination of GBV and ratification of C190.

### *Agency among trained co-workers*

The evaluation team finds that the program has had some 'spillover effect' among co-workers in some of the targeted factories in both Indonesia and Cambodia. The workers from some factories that the evaluation team interviewed reported that they had participated in meetings where union leaders, trained within the

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<sup>19</sup> Cambodian Labour law

program, had told them about GBV. However, workers from other factories had not participated in any meetings. Workers who had been part of the knowledge sharing gave the impression that they were aware – at least at a superficial level – that GBV was more than just physical violence. They seemed to understand that they had the right not to be abused and that they could report violations or inappropriate behavior to their union. In Indonesia the participants showed a good knowledge of a broad spectrum of different types of GBV as well as those related to male victims.

The interviewed workers expressed their appreciation for the feeling of ‘being protected’ by their union and that someone would stand up for them. The fact that unions can intervene in cases of GBV was new to most of those interviewed in Cambodia.

However, the fear that contracts will not be renewed remains a barrier that workers must overcome, to report cases of violence. The interviewed workers told the team that they would report violations, only when the situation was intolerable for them. Yet, workers feel encouraged to report cases of violence when they experience how other workers report a situation and receive support from the union. The workers, interviewed in Cambodia, estimated that a significant minority of 20-30 percent of workers would not report violations due to fear of repercussions.

*“The knowledge sharing taught me ...*

- *That I have the right to protest if my rights are violated.*
- *That I can report cases of GBV to my union.*
- *How to protect myself and my rights.*
- *That the union will always be there for me.”*

*Workers’ testimonies about the benefits of the sharing events they were part of in their factory.*

#### 4.1.2 Drivers

The workshops that were provided by Solidarity Center’s GBV expert, in cooperation with the local NGOs, without doubt contributed to the women’s new understanding of what gender-based violence was and strengthened their skills and courage to confront cases of GBV. The workshop participants spoke about the skill and charisma of the SC gender expert several times during interviews and requested the workshops be continued in the future.

The positions of the trained women were also a driver. The fact that all the trained women were union activists and leaders at either at factory or branch level gave them the flexibility to find various ways of informing their co-workers and the interviewed persons about GBV. All the interviews that were conducted for data collection began with a short introduction to GBV.

Another key driver that was reported in Indonesia was that, over recent years, more women have been elected as trade union leaders. This, in combination with support from IndustriAll, have contributed to strengthening trade unions’ focus on GBV – and the understanding that GBV is a concern for women and men. As one Indonesian informant explained: *“Previously we thought that GBV was only related to women, but now we understand that males are also shouted at”.*

#### 4.1.3 Barriers

Although the workshops also encouraged participants to share their knowledge with other women, there were several obstacles linked to context, the women and the intervention itself, which – so far – hampered a significant scaling up of the program as well as the sharing of the participants’ knowledge with other workers. These included:

### *Time and space*

Indonesian and Cambodian employees work long hours and many female workers believe that the limited time they have for themselves and their families is often better spent at home. The temptation to stay at home is reinforced by social norms, which restrict women's movement. They fear breaking these norms and becoming the subject of gossip among their neighbors, if they start attending meetings outside their living space. Therefore, some of the workshop participants, who were interviewed in Cambodia, considered that even recruiting women for a first, introductory meeting about GBV was a key obstacle. This was not the case in Indonesia where a slightly different and more flexible approach to awareness raising was chosen and where both joint and individual introductions to GBV were used. A major barrier in Indonesia was that male family members often did not allow women to join meetings or to participate in interviews such as those planned by the program.

Factory union leaders/elected shop stewards partly overcame this challenge as, according to Cambodian labor law, they are entitled to arrange one two-hour meeting a week. However, it is a requirement that they register the participants and share the information with management, which meant that many workers preferred to meet during the lunch break, instead.

Workers who had participated in such sharing sessions at a factory, particularly during lunch breaks, confirmed the difficulties associated with these meetings. Too many participants and participants not paying attention and talking to each other during the sharing made it difficult to hear what was being discussed. One informant explained it in the following way: *"We only pay attention when we have a problem, so I didn't pay attention at that time when the sharing took place. I also sat in the back of the room, so I couldn't hear what was said"*.

### *Sensitivity of the topic*

The women felt that the delicacy of the subject and its related need to create an intimate space for women to learn and – perhaps – share their stories was a barrier to a scaling up the workshops and awareness raising. One trade union leader, who is a shop steward as well, told the evaluation team that she preferred not to invite more than fifteen workers – male and female – at a time, so as not to destroy any chance of creating an intimate space for discussions. With 1800 workers in her factory she would have had to conduct 120 meetings – equal to two-and-a-half years of weekly meetings – to cover all the workers, and then only if no workers left the factory and were replaced by others. In response to this problem, some of the interviewed workers suggested that Solidarity Center create a Facebook page, with information about what GBV is, women rights and what to do if a woman is subject to gender-based violence. A Facebook page would not replace face-to-face meetings and dialogue but could be a supplemental support tool in factories where unions work to combat GBV, and for workers who would prefer to explore a Facebook page before they decide to go to a meeting.

### *Capacity for knowledge sharing*

In Cambodia some of the interviewed workshop participants said that they did not feel comfortable or qualified to conduct training and knowledge sharing, and that they would rather prefer to mobilize workers for training and meetings, where Solidarity Center could facilitate the meetings. Those participants explained their hesitation by the fact that the workshops did not include a component on meeting facilitation and training. They felt this would be a precondition of their willingness to share their knowledge with others.

The difficulties of sharing and passing on information to other workers were confirmed by the co-workers interviewed by the evaluation team. Some of them had been exposed to knowledge sharing

whereas others seemed not to have been exposed at all. Some co-workers told the evaluation team that they didn't gain much from the sharing, because the union leader who facilitated the meeting used English words and abbreviations such as 'gender' and 'GBV' which were unknown to them. One informant expressed the challenge in the following way: *"The union representative told me she had gone to study with ACILS<sup>20</sup>, but I don't know what ACILS is. And we don't know what GBV is, will you tell us"?*

Poor capacity or confidence to pass on knowledge to others was further aggravated by a general perception in Cambodia that training sessions – in general – are best if carried out by 'foreign experts'; a belief that the current program –unintentionally – contributed to reinforcing. For this reason, some trained local trade union leaders shy away from knowledge sharing, as they don't feel sufficiently informed themselves and would prefer 'an expert' to do it.

### *Follow-up, accompaniment and support*

The program budget allocated limited funds and time for local SC staffs to support trade unions' sharing of knowledge or of addressing cases of GBV at the factory level. However, requests from the women who contributed in the program's workshops led to a situation where local staff spent significantly more time – and weekends when they were supposed to be off – meeting workers, visiting their factories and supporting their interventions at a factory level. According to staff members interviewed, the program officers in both Indonesia and Cambodia were responsible for projects, other than the GBV program, and the salary contribution of the GBV program was small.

### *Male exclusion*

The exclusion of men from the program is likely to have been a barrier as, in Indonesia, men's exclusion was interpreted by them as an attempt to mobilize women to stand up against their spouses. Such a misunderstanding risk create a situation where the program's intentions and efforts to understand and address power structures – of which men may also be victims – is falsely presented as a 'men versus women' battle. For this reason, several of the informants, who were interviewed in Indonesia, were in favor of including male workers as the targets of awareness raising also, either separately for specific groups (e.g., mechanics on ethics, behavior and sexual harassment) or jointly on GBV, in general. Recognizing men as potential victims is also important as, in Indonesia; men have been reported as being the victims of financial or psychological harassment by their wives.

### *Partner selection*

The partner selection – in Indonesia in particular – is also an issue for consideration, although not a barrier per se. Whereas the informants interviewed felt that FAMM's participation in the workshops had enriched the discussion, all the informants – including FAMM itself – agreed that FAMM had benefited more from the cooperation than the trade unions had. The cooperation strengthened FAMM's insight into the work of unions and labor-market-related issues. It also gave them an entrance point for working with trade unions in the future. Such an (unexpected) outcome can contribute to reducing the barrier between trade unions and feminist organizations and to strengthening future cooperation. However, such cooperation can only be sustained if both parties benefit.

Although the trade union representatives interviewed pointed to the fact that they personally had benefited from talking to feminists and to a trans person (for the first time), no one mentioned that FAMM's participation had benefited the workshops themselves. A similar challenge was not identified in Cambodia.

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<sup>20</sup> ACILS is the local name for Solidarity Center in Cambodia

## 4.2 Participatory research and advocacy

The program has adopted a participatory research approach. This implies that research is considered a product as well as a process. As a *product*, the research – consisting of qualitative interviews with workers in Indonesia and Cambodia – was intended to contribute to documenting the ‘*extent of gender-based violence at work*’<sup>21</sup> for workers in the garment industry in the two countries. The research should have contributed to strengthening workers’ voices in the international debate about GBV and informing recommendations to employers and authorities.

As a *process*, the research should contribute to strengthening workers and worker researchers’ understanding of what GBV is, as well as its causes and links to the unequal distribution of power and privileges. This should mobilize them to act.

During the program’s implementation period, Solidarity Center trained nine interviewers in Cambodia and twelve in Indonesia to conduct interviews and to collect testimonies among garment and footwear workers. Given the short duration of the program, worker interviewers were not able to conduct research independently. The interviewed staff assessed that most of the women who had been trained as interviewers had understood the concept of research but that had not yet been able to conduct research and analyze the findings on their own. This is equivalent to Stages 2 and 3 (becoming and being active) as outlined in Table 2, below.

The staff’s assessment matches the evaluation team’s findings. The level of understanding and agency gained, by workshop participants proactively to address GBV through knowledge sharing with other workers and through data collection and research, varied significantly.

**Table 2: Scale for assessing researchers’ capabilities to conduct research<sup>22</sup>**

Passive	Becoming active	Active	Becoming proactive	Proactive, independent
Workers don’t know what GBV is	Workers understand what GBV is but are afraid to talk about it	Workers know what GBV is and the reasons for it as well as its links to power and employment status	Workers can inform other workers about GBV (but cannot facilitate a power analysis or a deeper reflection about the causes of GBV)	Workers can inform other workers about GBV and can facilitate a power analysis or a deeper reflection about the causes of GBV
Workers blame themselves for harassment	Workers seek more information	Workers want change, but don’t know how to bring it about themselves	Workers conduct research with support and accompaniment	Workers can conduct research themselves (with some support)
Workers can’t identify cases of GBV	Workers listen but don’t actively participate in sessions	Workers know it is important to explore and document the situation in their factory	Workers solve some cases of GBV – and refer others to SC	Workers proactively shape the research design
Workers fear to speak about GBV or censor themselves if they do				
GBV is considered normal				

<sup>21</sup> Summary of research documents

<sup>22</sup> This scale was developed by SC staff during the evaluation workshops in Cambodia and was used to facilitate a discussion about the progress made in the researchers’ capabilities to conduct research.

The level of capacity for research, which was developed during the program implementation period, is satisfactory given the limited training provided and the difficulty of the process for workers who had never collected data, carried out an interview or analyzed information before. However, the program did not produce its two pieces of research, documenting the prevalence of GBV among workers in the two countries, without significant support from SC's staff in Cambodia and Indonesia.

### *Sampling and data collection*

Following the workshop on data collection and interview techniques, the women who had been mobilized through workshops conducted interviews with 205 women workers Indonesia and 83 in Cambodia. This resulted in the creation of two reports (one for Cambodia and one for Indonesia) containing information about the workers' experiences of GBV. The research is available in English, Khmer and Bahasa. The reports were published on Solidarity Center's web page. No further efforts were made to create awareness about the reports and their findings were made in Cambodia. A launch of the report with the national union leaders in Indonesia planned for October 2019 was postponed on the request of SC.

The selection of informants was left to the women themselves. Thus, one informant, who was interviewed by the evaluation team, had selected women whom she knew had been victims of GBV (pushed, shouted at and touched, including in genital area etc.). Another asked a woman she knew was a victim and asked her to recommend others. One asked the local trade union president to find twenty people, but many of the members were afraid to speak out as perpetrators are not normally punished. One (she was not part of the workshops) was asked to conduct interviews, by SC, and she asked a contact person in a factory to find someone who had problems with GBV.

Lastly, in one case, an interviewer in Indonesia asked the management and the local trade union to select the women to be interviewed. They came up with three batches, totaling sixty women but only twelve came forward for an interview.

The data collection and interviews were not without their difficulties. The interviewed women were largely unaware of what GBV is. This hampered the interviews, as workers did not know what the researchers were talking about when they talked about GBV. Another major challenge for the research was that it was difficult to find a physical place to conduct the interviews. It was also difficult for the interviewees to find time, during the day, so in many cases the interviews were conducted after work. The research results were forwarded to SC by e-mail.

The participants' reactions also challenged the interview situation. Some women became upset and re-traumatized when telling their stories, according to the narrative reports prepared by Solidarity Center, and the researchers were largely unprepared to deal with this situation. For this reason, some of the informants interviewed recommended that future interviewers were properly trained and equipped in how to tackle/mitigate situations in interviews (the mental breakdown of both of interviewers and the interviewees).

An expected mobilization of those workers, who had been interviewed and sensitized to GBV, did not materialize. The victims filed complaints in a few cases only, but the partner unions did not keep records on the complaints. They did indicate that they knew of practically no cases where the women who had been interviewed had filed a complaint, however.

### *Sharing the research findings*

The research findings have not been published yet (except from the SC webpage) and has so far had not shaped any advocacy initiatives by the workers themselves. The interviewed informants are still waiting

for Solidarity Center to publish the research, whereas the Solidarity Center staff interviewed said that the use of the research – and its release – was to be decided by the women who had participated in the workshops. In Indonesia the plan was to launch the report at a meeting with the leadership of the three major trade union confederations, but the launch had to be postponed because of the Solidarity Center’s gender expert’s tight schedule.

Workers who participated in the ILC on Convention 190, in Geneva, had very different perceptions about their participation and their contribution to the discussions at the conference.

One Indonesian informant, who participated in the ILC in both 2018 and 2019, told the evaluation team that she had contributed a concrete proposal to change the text on handling of complaints in 2019. The program is likely to have contribute to this as the informant had participated in the three workshops and discussions on GBV offered by the program. The proposal was reflected in the final text of the Convention. The informant was clearly very proud of this. The informant felt she had learned a lot, personally, about international tri-partite structure and about the importance of preparing meetings and consolidating the positions of trade unions in advance, to avoid fragmentation/differences in front of different stakeholders. She also recommended that Solidarity Center considered properly preparing translated documents and that they provide standby interpreters for the ILC sessions, so that non-English speakers could participate more effectively in the sessions.

*“The experience in Geneva was the best experience of my work. It was an honour to be appointed [by my federation] and I started sharing my knowledge with workers and unions only three days after my return.” Federation leader, who participated in the ILC.*

A Cambodian informant did not appear to perceive her apparent contribution to the ILO Convention. She informed the evaluation team that the biggest experience and ‘take away’ from the conference was that it had helped her in her own work. She had learned a lot from the discussions on the ILO Convention 190 and had shared this information with trade unions in her own federation. The most important ‘take away’ for another local union leader in Cambodia was the realisation that GBV was not a Cambodian phenomenon only. She also said that she was very inspired to be part of an international movement and gained new energy to fight GBV, after she returned.

None of the Cambodian and Indonesian informants spoke English at a level where interpretation was unnecessary. Even SC provided interpretation, it was hard for them to participate actively in the worker planning sessions where all worker delegates are permitted to participate. The language barrier motivated the Cambodian participants to concentrate their efforts on a meeting with the Cambodian governments’ delegations. For the Cambodian women, the aim became to convince the delegation to attend the GBV session and to raise awareness about GBV in Cambodia. After the meeting, the Cambodian women received an oral commitment that the government would ratify the Convention.

#### 4.2.1 Drivers

The evaluation team finds that the research and documentation approach, as a pedagogical tool, has been a relevant and important driver of women trade union leaders’ understanding of what GBV is and why is it important to address the issue.

There is no doubt that the gender expert’s access to ILO committees was a precondition for the program’s apparent ability to influence passages of the ILO convention<sup>23</sup>. The fact that she was/is very familiar with

<sup>23</sup> This assessment is based on SC’s feedback to the evaluation team and was not verified.

the way the ILO operates was also of key importance to the program’s potential for influencing the ILO convention.

#### 4.2.2 Barriers

Although participatory research, as a process, was of key importance to strengthening the union leaders and workers’ understanding of what GBV is, there were a number of barriers that hampered its efficiency, as well as the effective use of the collected data and, thus, the relevance of the research component as a product and input to advocacy.

#### Capacity to conduct research

*First*, the workshops offered to the women researchers seems to have been insufficient – at least in Cambodia. It did not provide them with the skills required to conduct interviews in a way that ensured the quality of the research, according to Solidarity Center staff interviewed, and which enabled the interviewers to consider and handle the ethical and emotional challenges associated with those interviews. One interviewer was recorded to have conducted 20 interviews in one day. A situation that Solidarity Center’s staff clearly found problematic. For this reason, support and quality assurance from staff was of key importance to validating the collected data and staff seemed to have invested significantly more time in supporting workers than was originally planned. These difficulties undermined the efficiency of the data collection.

#### Selection criteria

*Second*: The interviewers in Indonesia and Cambodia were asked to select informants themselves, and the women they identified were mostly women whom the interviewer knew to be victims of GBV. Therefore, the sample’s representativeness, in terms of the prevalence of GBV violence, is questionable. This affects the relevance and effectiveness of the research component as an input of advocacy. It is therefore also problematic that the country studies leave the *impression* that they provide information about the prevalence of GBV and that they don’t mention how informants were selected. The textbox below is an extract from the Indonesia research.

##### **SUMMARY**

While studies have shown the prevalence of violence against women at home and in their communities, no comprehensive data exists to document the extent of gender-based violence (GBV) at work. Therefore, to understand GBV in the world of work, 17 activists and female leaders of workers in three Indonesian unions— FSB Garteks, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions (GSBI) and the National Workers’ Union (SPN)— conducted a series of GBV action research activities in the world of work. Below is the report they prepared with the research team.

##### **Majority of Respondents Experienced GBV at Work**

Of the 75 respondents who were subject to GBV, 71 percent experienced gender- based violence in the world of work in the form of verbal abuse (48 percent); sexual abuse (33 percent); psychological abuse (13 percent); and physical abuse (5 percent). One respondent indicates she was sexually harassed at a union’s secretariat office. • Of the 20 respondents who had not experienced GBV at work, 12 had heard about and/or witnessed GBV, and eight people had neither heard about nor seen GBV at work.

Written translations are a bigger challenge, however, although Solidarity Center does have initial text translated into local languages in advance of committee negotiations. However, any subsequent changes and amendments during the committee negotiations often result in a significant volume of documents produced each day for review the next day. It is not possible for Solidarity Center to translate that volume of documents into non-official UN languages in such a short time period.



## Use of Research Findings

*Fourth:* The program seems to have done little to consider how the research findings will be used, over and above the oral representation of findings during ILC. So far, it remains unclear who ‘owns’ the data and who will be responsible for its use. Trade unions partners are waiting for Solidarity Center to release the research and Solidarity Center says is the workers /unions’ responsibility to decide how the data will be used.

Solidarity Center has facilitated and hosted an alliance of over fifty members in Indonesia, covering NGOs, trade unions, media and others (the three big trade union confederations also participate in the alliances’ work). The alliance held three preparation meetings with the Indonesian delegation, before the ILC. In Cambodia, Solidarity Center also works with a trade union women’s network.

Provided that the conducted research has the enough quality, it could be used by the Indonesian alliance and Cambodian network to influence policy making that could prevent or criminalize GBV in the two countries. The program’s short duration explains and justifies why this has not happened, so far. However, the evaluation team finds that joint strategizing is now a first, natural step to follow-up on the research that has been conducted. This can be covered by a no-cost extension of the program

## 5. Recommendations:

To strengthen the impact and effectiveness of similar programs in the future, Solidarity Center, is recommended to consider the following recommendations:

### 5.1 Outreach, knowledge transfer and sustainability of workshop activities

To strengthen outreach, knowledge transfer and sustainability of training and workshop activities it is recommended (in prioritized order) that SC:

#### *Develop training for agents of change and/or a systematic accompaniment of training and workshop participants*

Most learning happens outside the classroom. This is when the knowledge and skills acquired during workshops and training sessions are put into practice, and where confidence and experience are gained, and skills refined and built upon. To support this process of learning, it is recommended that the program accompany workshop participants in their efforts to share knowledge with other workers. Such accompaniment may be supplemented by training in facilitation, if necessary.

#### *Allocate enough human resources to support and accompany workers at a country-office level*

In order to meet the workers’ needs for accompaniment and support in their efforts to share knowledge and to address cases of GBV in their workplaces, it is recommended that a potential new phase of the program allocates significantly more funds and time in Cambodia, so that local staff can respond to workers’ needs without having to work overtime and so they can be compensated for working during hours where they are supposed to be off.

### *Develop a Facebook page to strengthen reach out and awareness raising*<sup>24</sup>.

Factors such as fear of neighbors' gossip, tiredness, being busy, not being allowed by family or simply wanting to use scarce spare time differently are all barriers that prevent workers seeking information about GBV and their rights. To overcome these barriers and to reach a substantially higher number of workers, SC is recommended to develop a Facebook page<sup>25</sup> in local languages. This could contain explanations about what GBV is, and (anonymous) testimonies that describe the most frequent cases of GBV, so that readers can identify with the cases, and get knowledge about how and where to seek help or more information.

### *Including men as targets for awareness raising at factory level*

To reduce the risk that the SC initiative is falsely understood and presented as an initiative for mobilizing women against men, per se, and not as an effort to address power structures and injustice, the evaluation supports Solidarity Center's decision to include men in awareness raising at factory level in a possible next project phase.

### *Include professional back-up when conducting interviews*

Finally, the evaluation supports Solidarity Center's decision to include professional back up from, or referrals to, a psychologist for women interviewers and informants. This should be made available, in situations where cases of trauma are brought up during an interview session and/or in situations where interviewers are unable to cope with the stories they hear from victims.

## 5.2 Research and documentation

To strengthen the effectiveness, impact and quality of the participatory research component it is recommended (in prioritized order) to:

### *Distinguish between participatory research as an approach to learning and mobilization (of women directly involved in the research) and research as a product for national and international advocacy.*

The evaluation team finds that participatory research as a *process* was instrumental in strengthening workers' understanding of what GBV is. Some trade union leaders appeared to have used the skills they acquired during the workshops to document the problem of GBV in their workplace, so that they could conduct fact-based advocacy with their employers.

As the quality of the *product* of the participatory research is questionable – amongst others because women researchers mainly targeted women whom they know were subjects to gender based violence – and as the data collection was time consuming and cumbersome, the program is recommended to distinguish between participatory research as an approach to learning and research as a product for national and international advocacy. To ensure the necessary credibility of any research that will be used for national and international advocacy it is recommended to involve professional researchers who – as a minimum – work alongside workers.

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<sup>24</sup> Or similar social media platforms that are popular with, and commonly used by, the workers.

<sup>25</sup> 85percent of all the workers use Facebook, according to workers interviewed by the evaluation team.

### *Distinguish documentation from research*

To strengthen the research components' effectiveness, the evaluation team further recommends that a clear distinction is made between documentation for local factory bargaining (which workers can do on their own) and research for national and international advocacy, which require additional support and contributions from professional researchers to be credible, representative and scientifically correct.

### *Clarify the purpose of the research*

To strengthen the quality and credibility of the research and to avoid research data being easily dismissed because of unclear or biased sampling methods, it is recommended that the purpose of the research is clearly defined in advance as well as how it should be used. Additionally, sampling and questioning should also be defined and developed accordingly.

## 6. Conclusion

Gender-based violence is a key issue and concern in the apparel sector in Asia. Most efforts to reduce or eliminate the problem take a top-down approach, wherein international trade union representatives, authorities and employer representatives take the lead in addressing the issues. This leaves the grassroots workers, who are the victims of GBV, voiceless and – in most situations – without the skills and knowledge to identify situations where they are victims of GBV or to demand their own rights and interests.

In response to this, and in order to connect grassroots workers with the international ILO process to develop a convention on gender-based violence, Solidarity Center initiated a pilot program to strengthen women workers' voices, organization and leadership, to combat GBV in the world of work. It also aimed to increase their capacity to participate in the ILO process of establishing an international standard that addresses GBV at work.

This evaluation finds that the bottom-up approach as piloted in this program has a strong potential to strengthen workers' understanding of what gender based violence is, to mobilize and empower them to take action or seek support when they or their colleagues are subject to gender based violence, and to facilitate that they engage in national and international policy processes aimed to prevent or criminalize gender based violence.

Yet, the evaluation of the pilot program also finds that for a bottom up empowerment approach to be effective and sustainable, more time than 18 months and follow-up support is needed to empower women as agents of change who can act on their own, address individual acts of gender based violence or through CBAs *at the factory level*, and who can mobilize their trade union *federations* to address the issue. More time is needed in particularly in a context where trade unions are weak, or women engaged in the program are not part of the trade union's management. The program has therefore also had a stronger impact in Indonesia than in Cambodia because Indonesian trade unions are stronger, and more women have leadership positions in trade unions here.

The evaluation of the pilot further finds that while participatory research can help strengthen women workers' and trade union leaders' understanding of what gender based violence is and boost their motivation and ability to react against GBV in their *own* world of work, the approach falls short when the research outcome from the participatory research is to be used for advocacy *nationally and internationally*. With the program's current level of training, support and follow-up to women researchers, the pilot was not able to produce a research product with strong credibility. This is due to biased selection criteria of informants and difficulties ensuring the quality of the data collection itself. The knowledge gained through the participatory research has contributed to strengthen women's understanding of gender-based violence and prepare some of them for their participation in the ILC in Geneva, however.

Despite four women's participation in the ILC, the evaluation team finds that the pilot program, as currently planned and implemented, has had a stronger effect close to women's own world of work, in their own factories, in discussions with employers and within their own federations than nationally and internationally. Workers mobilized and empowered to address gender-based violence in this pilot program is therefore now better prepared to contribute to ensure the *implementation* of national legislation and the ILO Convention 190 on a day to day basis. The complexity of policy processes nationally and internationally and the number of factors and actors that work to influence such processes hampers' women's ability to substantially influence international policy processes, however.

Does this mean that grassroots workers should abstain from engaging in international and national lobbying with all the difficulties and barriers that this entails? The evaluation team would answer no. The evaluation did find examples of how the workers mobilized has approached their national government delegations at the ILC and one worker had also contributed to shape a paragraph in the convention text. But the evaluation's findings do suggest that for grassroots women to influence national and international policy making, significantly more technical advocacy and research support and more time than 18 months allocated for this pilot program is needed. In particular if workers are to make a substantial impact on legislative frameworks that affect their world of work.

## Annex I: Planned vs Realized Outcomes

<b>Objective 1: Strengthen women workers' voices, through organization and leadership that would combat gender-based violence in the world of work in Cambodia and Indonesia and regionally</b>		
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Outcome Indicators</b>	<b>Evaluation findings</b>
Enhanced understanding of, and action on, GBV at work, and its relationship to workers' rights and power-building for women workers and their allies.	Sixty female workers participated in rights and empowerment programs.	Forty-five workers in Cambodia and up to fifteen women in Indonesia participated in workshops provided by SC and demonstrate an enhanced understanding of, and action on GBV.
Women workers gained the skills to undertake participatory research.	Twelve of the women participated as researchers in each country.	Nine women in Cambodia and twelve women in Indonesia participated as researchers, collecting testimonies from workers.
Fifteen workers, union leaders, and social movement activists worked together in the participatory research teams (PRTs) to explore the incidence and scope of GBV at work, in the garment sector, leading to increased buy-in and support for efforts to stop GBV at work.	Fifteen of the women in PRT led efforts to improve working conditions in their factory and sector.	Some of the women, who participated in the research and workshops, responded to cases of GBV, after workers complained and asked for help. They did this as local trade union leaders.
New data was produced that strengthened women's understanding of the nature, incidence and scope of GBV in the sector.	Two hundred women reported an increased understanding of GBV at work.	The focus group discussions indicated that more than 200 women have gained an increased understanding of GBV at work, through knowledge sharing sessions and interviews.
New information was used to develop more targeted and impactful strategies for addressing GBV at work.	Five actions were identified by participants to prevent and stop GBV at work .	Some of the interviewed informants reported that they had acted, after being presented with cases of GBV at their workplace. Actions to prevent GBV proactively were not identified, in Cambodia. In Indonesia, several initiatives were taken to prevent GBV.
Stronger, more united and more informed social movement advocates were created.		Women have worked individually – so far – and not as a movement, in Cambodia. In Indonesia, the unions are working within the Alliance for ratification of C190.

<b>Objective 2: Strengthen the capacity of women garment workers, in Cambodia, Indonesia and the broader regions, to participate in the ILO process through the establishment of an international standard to address gender-based violence at work.</b>		
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Outcome Indicators</b>	<b>Findings</b>
<p>Two reports – one each in Cambodia and Indonesia – contributed to an enhanced awareness of GBV issues by workers, policymakers, media and social partners.</p> <p>Women’s voices are part of international policymaking at the ILO (two grassroots women from Indonesia and Cambodia attend the 2018 ILC).</p> <p>A regional network of GBV at work activists was created.</p>	<p>Five newsletters, blogs, or other media covering the reports.</p> <p>Documentation about women apparel workers’ positions was discussed in the Workers’ Group and/or included in the final document of the ILC. (2)</p> <p>Thirty-five women led efforts to improve working conditions in their workplace and sector.</p> <p>One hundred female workers participated in rights and empowerment programs.</p>	<p>So far, the Cambodian and Indonesian report has only been published on SCs website. The reports have not been used systematically to enhance awareness of GBV issues among policy makers, workers, media and social partners.</p> <p>Personal testimonies were shared in the workers’ group preparation meeting for the drafting committee at the ILC. This – in combination with inputs from other grassroots workers – have contributed to shaping the definition of GBV in the final document of the ILC, in 2018. During the 2019 ILC, one advisor to the Indonesian delegation, who had also been trained within the program, suggested concrete changes that were later reflected in the final text of the Convention.</p> <p>Some trained women are leading efforts to respond to GBV in their workplace (factory union level). The evaluation team was unable to identify any sectoral-wide or regional efforts to create a regional network of GBV activists</p> <p>The evaluation team did not find evidence for this.</p>

## Annex II – List of Informants<sup>26</sup>

### Annex III Literature

Grant Agreement; Research, Advocacy and Action to Combat GBV in the Apparel Sector: October 2018 – March 2019

Solidarity Center: Women Workers Address Gender-Based Violence in Garment Factories in Cambodia

Solidarity Center: Women Workers Address Gender-Based Violence in Indonesian Garment Factories

Solidarity Center: Review of Gender-Based Violence Laws in Indonesia

Solidarity Center; Legal review of GBV laws and Cambodia

Solidarity Center: 12 Month Monitoring Progress Report for C&A Foundation. October 1, 2017 –September 30, 2018

Solidarity Center: End of Project Evaluation from Solidarity Center. October 1, 2017 –April 30, 2019

Solidarity Center: GBV questionnaire for participatory research

Solidarity Center: Guided Questions on GBV in the Workplace and Organization Action Research in Indonesia

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<sup>26</sup> List of informants has been removed to ensure confidentiality



## Annex II Evaluation Matrix

Component aspect	Ranking for the component and program's objectives, outcomes or activities		
	Poor	Adequate	Good
<b>Relevance</b>	The program's objectives, outcomes or activities are <i>poorly</i> suited to the priorities, policies and needs of the targeted works/worker leaders, partners and working conditions TOC, including the theme of GBV.	Parts of the program's objectives, outcomes or activities suit the priorities, policies and needs of the targeted workers/worker leaders, partners and C&A Foundation's calls for proposal and working conditions TOC.	All of the program's goals, outcomes and activities suit the policies, priorities and needs of the targeted workers/worker leaders, partners and C&A Foundation's calls for proposal and working conditions TOC.
<b>Efficiency</b>	Insufficient results were achieved for the effort and money spent within the program period.	The achieved results were commensurate with the effort and money spent within the program period.	The achieved results exceeded expectations for the effort and money spent within the program period.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	The planned and implemented activities did not, or are unlikely to meet, the program's objectives and longer-term outcomes.	The planned and implemented activities are partially achieved, or are partially likely to meet, the program's objectives and longer-term outcomes as outlined in the LFA.	The planned and implemented activities achieved, or are highly likely to meet, the program's objectives and longer-term outcomes as outlined in the LFA.
<b>Impact</b>	<p>The program has achieved less than 35 percent of its pre-defined outcome indicators and/or majority of qualitative indicators are poorly achieved.</p> <p>Possible unexpected results identified are unlikely to contribute significantly to the program's objectives and longer-term outcomes.</p>	<p>The program has achieved 35 – 65 percent of its pre-defined outcome indicators and they have been achieved in an adequate manner.</p> <p>Possible unexpected results identified are likely to contribute to the program's objectives and longer-term outcomes.</p>	<p>The program has achieved 65 – 100 percent of its pre-defined outcome indicators and a majority of indicators are achieved in a substantial manner.</p> <p>Possible unexpected results identified are likely to contribute <i>significantly</i> to the program's objectives and longer-term outcomes.</p>
<b>Sustainability</b>	The results, achieved in the field of the program's outcome categories (individual and collective agency, support from decision or opinion makers), are unlikely to contribute to progress towards the program's long-term goal after the funding ends.	<i>Some of</i> the results, achieved in the field of the program's outcome categories (individual and collective agency, support from decision or opinion makers), are likely to contribute to progress towards the program's long-term goal after the funding ends.	All results achieved, in the field of the program's outcome categories (individual and collective agency, support from decision or opinion makers), are likely to contribute to progress towards the program's long-term goal after the funding ends