



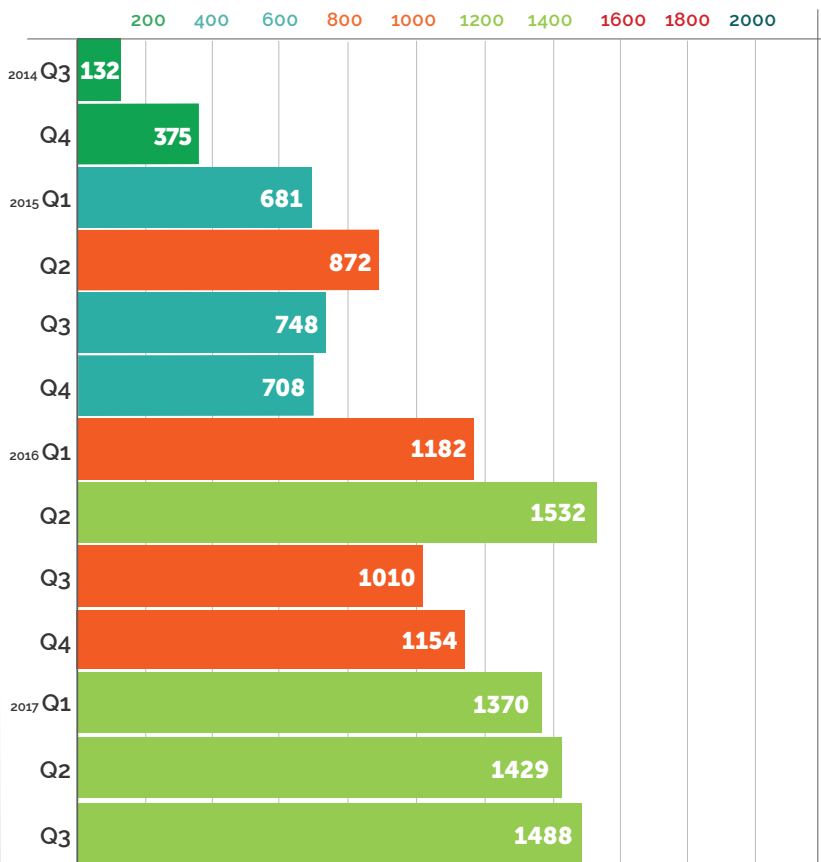
## Q3 2017 HELPLINE HEADLINES

The Amader Kotha Helpline was available to 1,369,886 workers in 933 factories by the end of September, 2017. In the third quarter of the year, 1,488 substantive issues were shared with the Helpline from workers, of which 375 were related to safety.

Workers continue to have access to a toll-free number that is available nationwide, and worker satisfaction with the Helpline remains high according to Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and live surveys among Helpline callers.

As always, let us have your thoughts and suggestions. We can be reached by email at: [workerhelpline@afbws.org](mailto:workerhelpline@afbws.org).

### SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES REPORTED TO HELPLINE



Only issues that occurred in Alliance factories are shown.

## HELPLINE IN FOCUS: HOW DO WE KNOW WHEN WORKER CONCERNS ARE RESOLVED?

With over 400 substantive calls being received by the Helpline every month, it is fair to ask the question: "How do we determine when issues raised by workers are resolved?"

### SAFETY ISSUES

The answer to that question is easy when it comes to fire and structural safety—issues are resolved when the experts say so. Trained Alliance engineers conduct onsite inspections following reports of serious safety concerns to determine whether the factory is safe. From time to time, workers will report a crack in a wall, for example, that is cosmetic and does not pose a risk. Nevertheless, safety experts will visit the factory and determine whether the crack is a structural issue or not.

*At the heart of the Amader Kotha process is the perspective of the worker.*

### NON-SAFETY ISSUES

But what about non-safety issues? After all, in the last quarter 1,113 of the 1,488

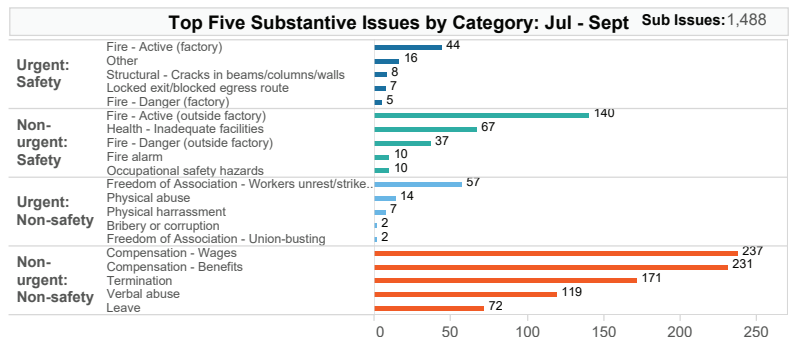
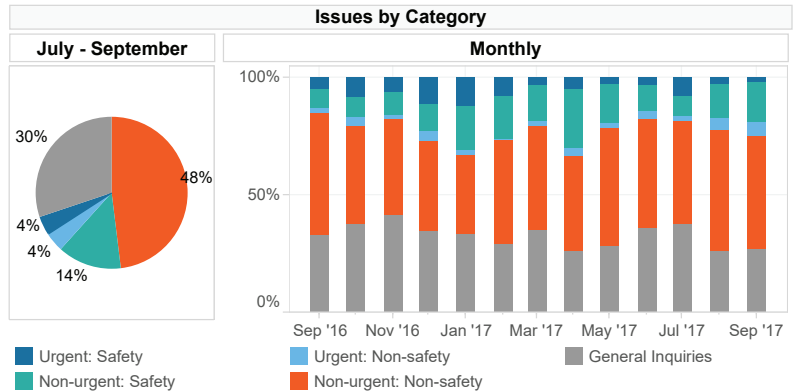
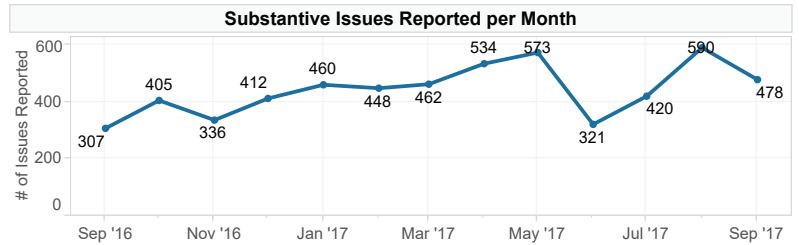
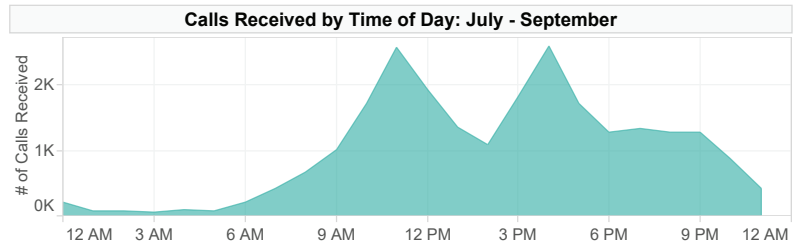
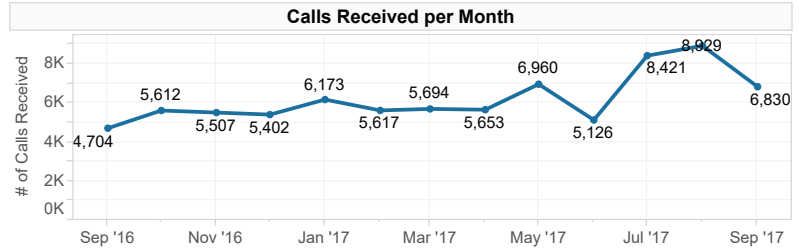
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# THIRD QUARTER 2017 FINDINGS

## KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- **24,180 calls were placed to Amader Kotha this quarter from July through September**, for a total of 168,892 calls received to date.
- **The peak call times this quarter were around 11am and 4pm**, consistent with previous quarters and reflecting test call volume due to Helpline (refresher) trainings.
- **375 safety issues were reported to Amader Kotha this quarter**, of which 85 were urgent and 290 were non-urgent. Among safety issues reported by workers, those most frequently mentioned were fires and fire dangers (both inside and outside of factories) and inadequate facilities.
- **General inquiries comprised 30% of issues this quarter**, disregarding missed or test calls. The majority of these inquiries pertained to Helpline support capabilities and labor laws.
- **1,488 substantive issues were shared with the Helpline from workers at Alliance factories this quarter.** The most commonly-reported issues were related to compensation, termination, and fires outside of factories.





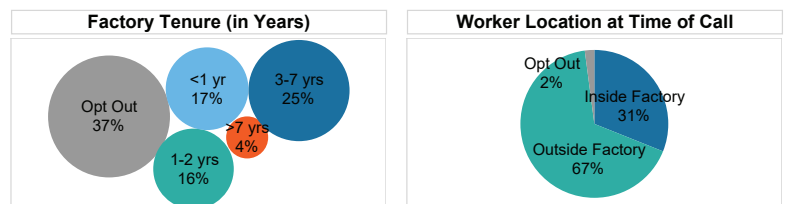
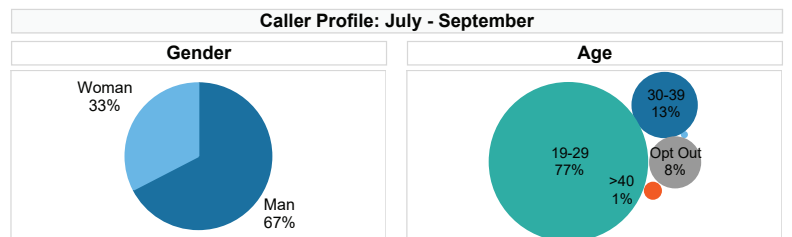
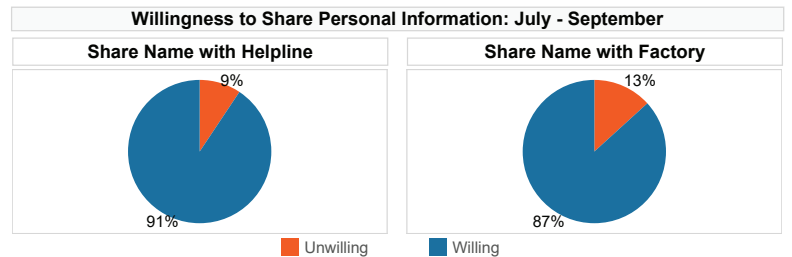
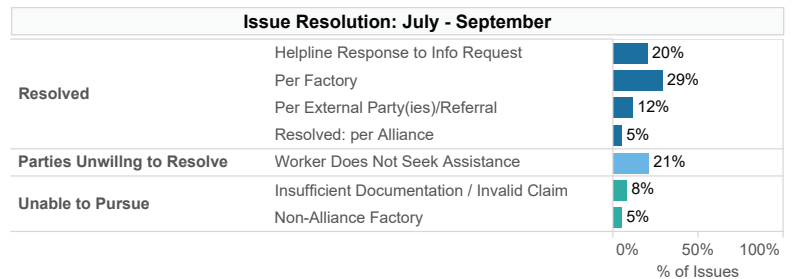
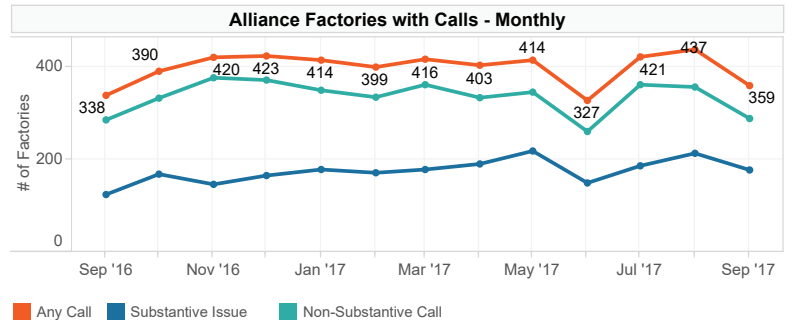
# THIRD QUARTER 2017 FINDINGS

## KEY FINDINGS CONTINUED:

- Among the substantive issues reported by workers from any factory this quarter, 66% were resolved. The remainder were unable to be resolved due to workers not seeking resolution assistance or to the Helpline and/or Alliance not being able to pursue issues further.
- 91% of workers who called to report a substantive issue this quarter were comfortable sharing their name with the Helpline, but only 87% would allow their name to be shared with the factory.
- Of the 933 Alliance factories that have received training on the Helpline, workers from 586 factories (63%) placed calls to the Helpline between July and September 2017. Workers from 368 Helpline-launched factories (39%) reported substantive issues this quarter.
- Workers from 150 non-Alliance factories called the Helpline this quarter. Most calls pertained to compensation and termination.
- 88% of the safety issues reported this quarter from workers at Alliance factories were resolved and closed by the end of September. All remaining open issues are in the process of being closed in accordance with Alliance protocol.

### NOTE:

Detailed call data is provided to the Alliance for distribution to Alliance member companies after factories have had the opportunity to verify and respond to information provided by workers.



### Progress to Date (from July 2014 onward)

Total Calls	Substantive Issues	Helpline Launched Factories
# Inbound: 168,892	Alliance factories: 12,678	# Workers: 1,369,886
# Outbound: 71,628	Non-Alliance factories: 1,449	# Factories: 933

### Notes:

- Graphs do not include calls from "General Inquiry", "False", or "No category" issue categories, except graphs on calls received and calls by time of day and where otherwise stated.
- Calls have been received from non-Alliance factories. For example, calls were received from 150 factories not listed as Alliance factories in Q3. These calls are included in the call volume and call time and factories with calls graphs above, but not included in the issue or caller profile visualizations.
- Substantive issues per month graph may not match historical newsletters due to changes in issue categorization over time.
- # of workers and # of factories where the Helpline has been launched are based on information provided by the Alliance.
- In all cases, workers are informed of management and/or Alliance responses. When workers are not satisfied with the result or the condition re-occurs, the case remains open or is re-opened for further action.

## WHO ARE WE?

Amader Kotha, or “Our Voice” in Bangla, is a unique collaboration among three project partners—Clear Voice, a project of The Cahn Group that operates hotlines and builds effective grievance mechanisms in supply chains; Phulki, a respected civil society organization working to improve the lives of workers and their families in Bangladesh; and ELEVATE, the new parent company of Laborlink, the leading business risk and sustainability solutions provider. Each partner brings years of experience building innovative, best-in-class labor compliance programs in supply chains. 📞



Information about Amader Kotha is publicized in factories

## HELPLINE FOCUS

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substantive calls, or 75% percent, were related to wages and compensation, harassment, termination or other non-safety related issues. In those cases, who decides whether the issues raised have been resolved?

At the heart of the Amader Kotha process is the perspective of the worker. Non-safety issues raised by workers are relayed to factory management who then have the opportunity to respond. Once factory management has taken what it deems to be appropriate steps, Helpline officers call the worker to learn whether the steps have been completed and whether the steps satisfactorily responded to the worker’s concern. When the worker confirms the issue is resolved, Helpline officers record the issue as closed “per factory”, meaning that the factory took action deemed appropriate to the worker. Examples of this kind of call resolution are workers who were wrongly terminated and want their job back, cases of verbal abuse and withholding of salary and overtime pay.

### REFERRALS, INFORMATIONAL CALLS

In cases where workers are referred to third parties e.g., when Helpline officers receive reports of a community fire outside a factory and the local fire brigade is notified, we report the case closed when the fire brigade has responded and the fire is out.

If callers are seeking information about wage rates or other basic aspects of labor law, the issue is closed when the worker has received the information they need.

In some cases, workers will report an issue and then when we follow up with them by phone, they are not available. Since we already know what the issue is, we attempt to verify whether the issue is still relevant by calling other workers in the same factory to cross-check the reported concern. After 15 days, if the issue cannot be verified and the initial complainant remains unavailable, the issue is closed. Of course, the issue can be re-opened if the worker calls the Helpline again.

In still other cases, workers share a concern with Helpline staff but are not looking for any specific assistance. These calls are closed after confirming that there is no requested action and it is noted that the worker does not seek assistance.

So, who determines whether worker concerns are resolved? At the end of the day, it is workers or third parties such as the local fire brigade operating on workers’ behalf who determine when cases are closed.

We hope you find this issue of **Our Voice** informative. Please continue to let us have your questions and concerns.

*-Doug Cahn, Amader Kotha Project Director*