



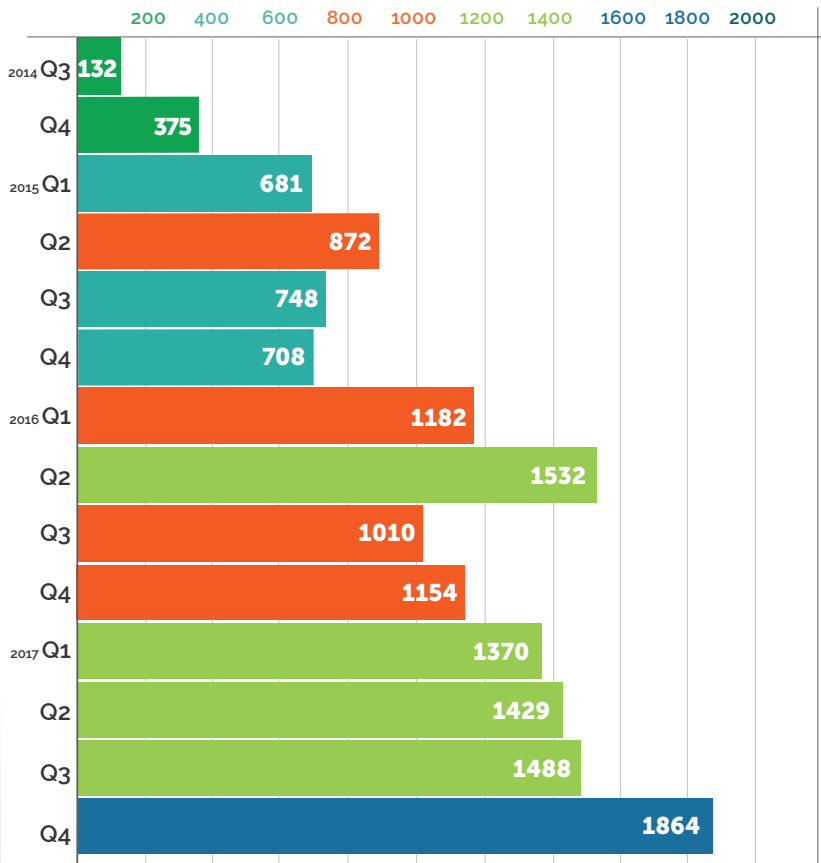
## Q4 2017 HELPLINE HEADLINES

The Amader Kotha Helpline was available to 1,426,672 workers in 954 factories by the end of December 2017. In the fourth quarter of the year, 1,864 substantive issues were shared with the Helpline from workers, of which 489 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: Worker Representatives Join in Using Helpline to Advocate for Improved Workplace Conditions

In four notable cases, representatives of workers reached out to the Amader Kotha Helpline in Q4 2017 to seek assistance in solving workplace problems.

### **Participation Committee Requests More Training**

A member of a Participation Committee called the Helpline to report that the factory's training center does not adequately prepare workers for tasks on the production floor. As a result, many workers are terminated shortly after they begin work on the lines. This causes

*After the Helpline's intervention, trainees are now provided greater training time, allowing more attention to skill development.*

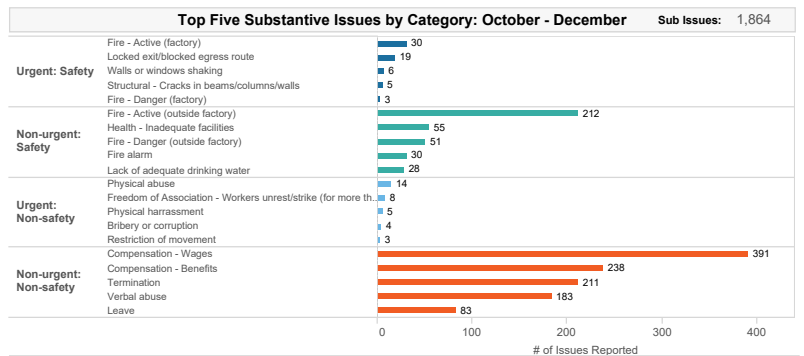
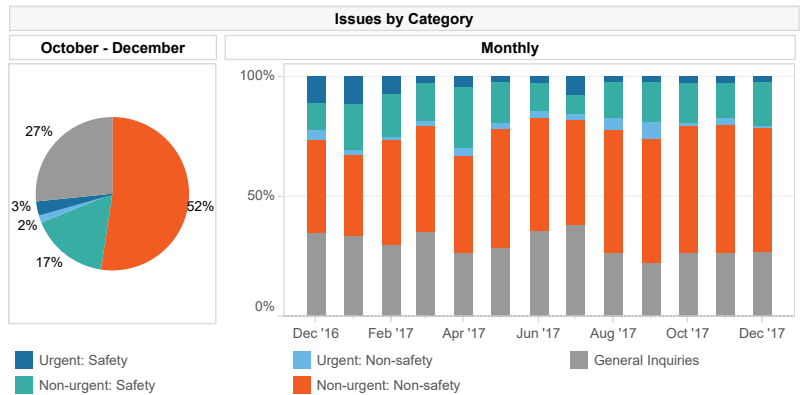
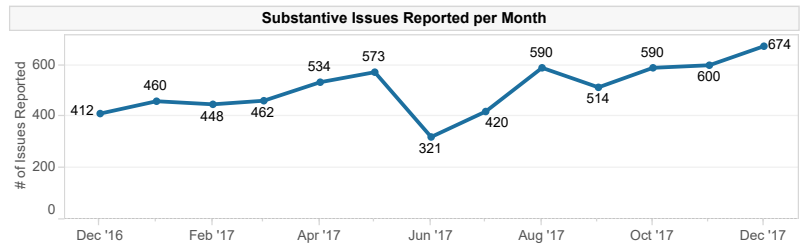
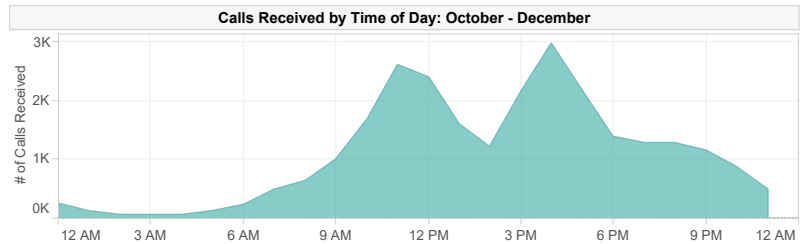
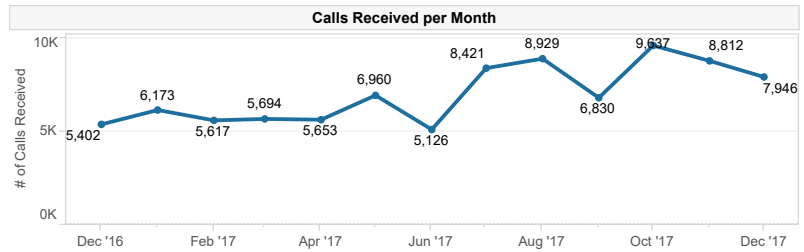
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# FOURTH QUARTER 2017 FINDINGS

## KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- **26,395 calls were placed to Amader Kotha this quarter from October through December**, for a total of 195,287 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.
- **489 safety issues were reported to Amader Kotha this quarter**, of which 70 were urgent and 419 were non-urgent. Among safety issues reported by workers, those most frequently mentioned were fires (both inside and outside of factories); inadequate facilities; and fire dangers outside of factories.
- **General inquiries comprised 27% of issues this quarter**, disregarding missed or test calls. The majority of these inquiries pertained to Helpline support capabilities and labor laws.
- **1,864 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.





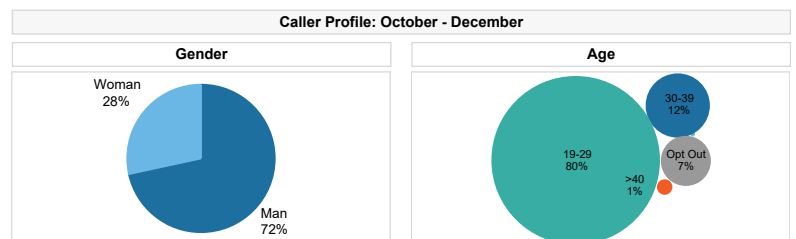
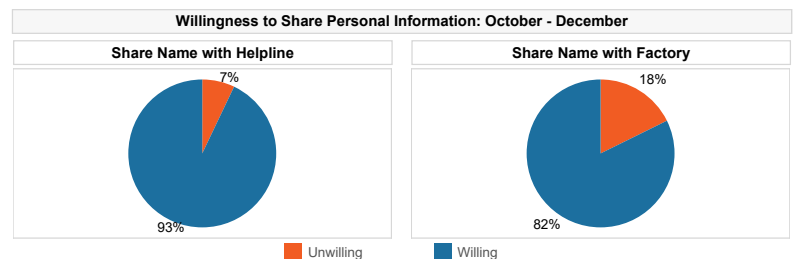
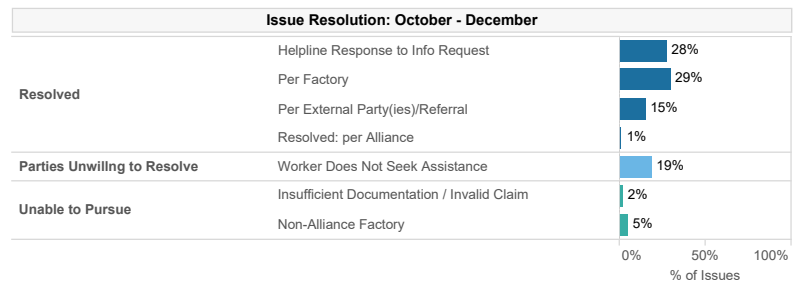
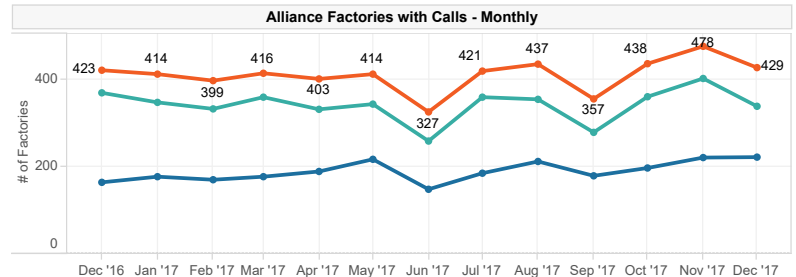
# FOURTH QUARTER 2017 FINDINGS

## KEY FINDINGS CONTINUED:

- Among the substantive issues reported by workers from any factory this quarter, 73% 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.
- 93% of workers who called to report a substantive issue this quarter were comfortable sharing their name with the Helpline, but only 82% would allow their name to be shared with the factory.
- Of the 954 Alliance factories that have received training on the Helpline, workers from 442 factories (46%) placed calls to the Helpline between October and December 2017. Workers from 223 Helpline-launched factories (23%) reported substantive issues this quarter.
- Workers from 180 non-Alliance factories called the Helpline this quarter. Most calls pertained to compensation and termination.
- 97% of the safety issues reported this quarter from workers at Alliance factories were resolved and closed by the end of December. 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.



	Total Calls	Substantive Issues	Helpline Launched Factories
Inbound	195,287	Alliance: 14,578	Workers: 1,426,627
Outbound	79,933	Non-Alliance: 1,644	Factories: 954

**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 180 factories not listed as Alliance factories in Q4. 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.



## HEARD AND SEEN

- **Heather Franzese**, Vice President for Worker Engagement at LaborLink by ELEVATE, provided an update on the progress made in identifying and solving concerns of workers at a meeting of the Social Responsibility Committee of the American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA) and Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA). The Amader Kotha Helpline was presented as a model program and example of innovation in CSR. Over 50 representatives of North American companies attended the session in New York City.
- **Doug Cahn**, President of Clear Voice, a project of The Cahn Group, and Project Director of the Amader Kotha Helpline, gave remarks at the annual Bangladesh Development Conference at Harvard, organized by the International Sustainable Development Institute (ISDI). Attendees were informed about the daily problem solving work that is at the heart of the Helpline's success.
- The Amader Kotha Helpline was the subject of remarks by **Beth Holzman**, Director of Worker Engagement at Laborlink by ELEVATE, at the UN Business and Human Rights Forum in Geneva. This year's Forum focused on approaches to remedy when human rights violations occur. Beth made her remarks on a panel discussing the role of technology in promoting worker voice.
- In a meeting with a representative of the Dutch Embassy in Bangladesh, Phulki CEO **Suraiya Haque** and **Doug Cahn** briefed staff on the widespread availability of the toll free line in the RMG sector and the 24/7 Helpline operations. 🗣️

## HELPLINE FOCUS

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distress for the poorly trained workers and contributes to inefficient management of the factory's workforce. The Participation Committee member, who preferred his name be withheld, hoped that factory management would invest more time for workers to achieve the required skill level before placing them on the lines. After the Helpline's intervention, trainees are now provided greater training time allowing more attention to skill development before workers begin working in production areas. The Participation Committee member confirmed that the problem has been resolved to the Committee's satisfaction and the case was closed.

### **Safety Committee Calls Reports Foul Smell**

A member of a factory's Safety Committee called the Helpline to report foul smelling drinking water. Management had been previously informed about the problem but it had continued to persist. Management reported that the relevant water quality test had been performed and concluded there was no problem with the drinking water. Still, workers were reporting

bad smelling water. As a result of the repeated concern, the drinking water supply was checked by management a second time at which point it was determined that the problem rested with the drinking mugs and not the water itself—a situation which was easily resolved by thoroughly washing the mugs. Management committed to continuing to monitor the situation in the event that the problem reoccurs and the case was closed.

### **Participation Committee Advocates for Child Care**

A Participation Committee member, who preferred that her name be withheld, called to say that workers were asking for a fully operational child care center to be established in the factory. When this concern was previously reported to management, management responded that a day care center was in fact in place. Still, the worker representative explained, the day care center accommodated only four or five children and there was no caregiver to provide supervision. Therefore, if a worker wanted to bring their child to the factory for breast feeding during the day, it would not be practicable. Management informed the Helpline that

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## 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, a 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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construction of a large childcare center would be completed in the next 18 months. On behalf of the Participation Committee, the Helpline is requesting further information from management with the hope that a fully operational childcare center with proper supervision can be completed sooner.

**After conversations between management and the union, the affected worker, and the Helpline, the worker was allowed to return to his job and the case was closed.**

### Senior Union Member Reports Worker Complaint

After inquiring about the operations of the Helpline, a union leader took the opportunity to report that a worker had been threatened with termination for losing a sample garment in the sewing section. Ultimately, the worker found the garment in the washing section and returned it; still, management sought to terminate the worker. The union leader asked the Helpline to assist in getting the worker’s job back (or at least full compensation). The Helpline reported the concern to management and, after conversations between management and the union, the affected worker, and the Helpline, the worker was allowed to return to his job and the case was closed.

These examples, along with the over 1,800 other substantive issues reported in the last quarter of 2017, demonstrate that workers and their representatives continue to find value in the Helpline as a tool for communicating concerns and finding solutions. As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions at: [workerhelpline@afbws.org](mailto:workerhelpline@afbws.org).

-Doug Cahn, Amader Kotha Project Director