

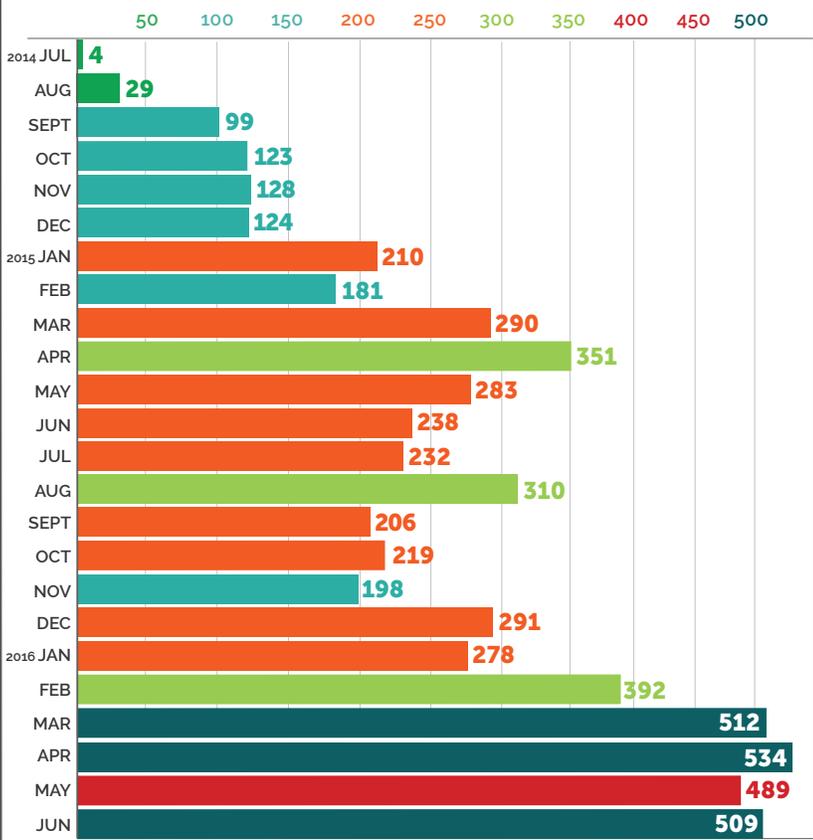
## ★ Q2 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

The Amader Kotha Helpline was available to 919,163 workers in 739 factories by the end of the second quarter of 2016. 1,532 substantive issues were shared with the Helpline from workers at Alliance factories during this period, of which 317 were related to safety. Workers continued to have access to a toll-free number that is available nationwide.

Interactive Voice Response (IVR) surveys continued to be deployed to determine worker satisfaction. Worker satisfaction with the Helpline remains at high levels at 82%.

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 HEADLINES: PERSPECTIVES OF FACTORY MANAGERS

**Editor's Note:** In the last two editions of *Our Voice* (Vol. 2, No.7 and Vol. 3, No. 1), this column was dedicated to the view of a buyer and the view of workers who have used the Helpline. In this edition, the views of factory managers help explain the ways the Helpline is used to improve factory safety and other conditions. These experiences are drawn from conversations that Amader Kotha has had with managers at several factories.

**Amader Kotha:** Can you give us an example where the Helpline benefited factory management?

**Factory Compliance Manager:** From the Helpline we learned that workers and mid-level managers occasionally gathered to smoke just outside the main production building. We were not aware of this behavior. Though the location was outside the main building, the building is adjacent to a warehouse where flammable materials are stored. We understood right away that this posed a fire risk. Immediately, we appointed two security guards there for the day and night shifts and also posted a written 'No Smoking' notice to prevent future smoking there. I am grateful to the Helpline for bringing this safety issue to management's attention and for helping us take necessary steps to prevent a major fire incident.

**AK:** Have you made any other improvements as a result of the Helpline?

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## HELPLINE HEADLINES

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***“The Helpline has helped us to make our internal reporting channel stronger and effective to resolve workers’ different types of problems.”***

**Factory compliance manager:** After the launch of the Helpline in our factory, we found that some issues were being regularly reported by our factory workers to the Helpline without first trying internal channels. So, we made our internal reporting channel stronger and made workers feel more comfortable to use the internal channel to resolve their problems. We arranged an ‘Open Discussion’ program for workers and management. We assigned a designated person that each worker can report to and seek help. We increased the frequency of floor visits by the welfare and compliance officers. At the same time, management is seeking new ways to reach workers and understand their issues. After taking all these initiatives we found that we have been closer to the workers and they comfortably raise more concerns through our internal channels. The Helpline has helped us to make our internal reporting channel stronger and effective to resolve workers’ different types of problems.”

**AK: Have you been able to use the Helpline to substantiate information that you have not been able to verify using internal channels?**

**Factory Chairman:** In the month of April, we received several anonymous complaints from female workers against their [male] supervisor through the factory’s complaint box. Each of the [complainants] reported the supervisor had tried to touch female workers especially during lunchtime.

None of the victims were ready to submit evidence against the supervisor; therefore, management was unable to take any actions against him. We transferred the supervisor to another section but we learned through the Helpline that workers were still dissatisfied. Then, Helpline officers convinced the callers [complainants] to submit evidence by informing them about the confidentiality of their identity. After getting the assurance from the Helpline, victims began submitting evidence to us and we were able to prove the

workers’ cases. The supervisor was terminated and now the female workers are happy and can work freely without any hesitations. We are always ready to resolve workers’ concerns but sometimes due to lack of evidence we are unable to take proper actions. In such cases workers sometimes feel comfortable to share with the Helpline by keeping their identity anonymous. If the Helpline passes this information and evidence to management, the management authority can take proper steps.

**AK: What steps did you take following this incident?**

**Factory Chairman:** To make the workers more comfortable to report their issues or concerns, management has made existing internal reporting channels stronger and effective. We sat for a meeting with the Participation Committee to get new ideas. We also increased the awareness among the workers of ways to report issues via the complaint box anonymously or directly to the mid- or top- level management. We had also informed them to seek assistance from the Helpline if the internal channel is unable to resolve their issue(s). Personally, I had distributed my personal cell phone number among the workers and asked them to communicate directly with me if they feel uncomfortable to report to their immediate supervisors...now our internal reporting channel is more active and strong enough to receive and resolve issues or concern of workers.

***“From my personal experience and opinion, the Helpline is working as a “Third Eye” for the factory authority to get information about which the authority was not informed previously.”***

**AK: What do you see as the benefits of the Helpline?**

**Factory General Manager for Human Resources and Administration:** From the very beginning the Helpline team has worked as a bridge between management and workers. It is also a great source of information getting and information sharing. The Helpline also helped us to make the factory internal reporting channel more effective by convincing callers to communicate

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# HELPLINE HEADLINES

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directly with internal channels and also helped workers to keep faith on internal channels. The Helpline is one of the greatest initiatives that has ever been taken in the garments industry. From my personal experience and opinion, the Helpline is working as a “Third Eye” for the factory authority to get information about which the authority was not informed previously.

**AK: Are there any other learnings that you can share?**

**Factory General Manager for Human Resources and Administration:** One particular thing that we have experienced is that via the Helpline it is also possible to pass

the management’s thoughts to the workers: this ultimately helps management to minimize conflict and avoid unpleasant circumstances. Helpline activity also helps workers keep faith in factory management and increases the strength of the internal reporting channel.

**AK: What are your hopes for the future of the Helpline?**

**Factory General Manager:** ...we have already benefitted from the Helpline’s initiatives so we think that the Helpline should be sustained in the long run to support workers, factory management and the garment industry as a whole. 🎧



## AMADER KOTHA HELPLINE WORKER SATISFACTION SURVEY

### ONE YEAR UPDATE

The Helpline project team has collected Helpline satisfaction data from workers over the past year via a monthly mobile survey. This anonymous, interactive voice response (IVR) survey poses automated questions and answer options to workers who call the Amader Kotha Helpline with substantive issues or inquiries within the prior month. The 890 survey responses collected over the past year have reflected consistently positive feedback from workers and have helped to shed light on why workers appreciate the Helpline and even recommend it to others.

**Q: Are workers generally satisfied with the Helpline?**

**A: YES!**

At least 8 out of 10 workers are satisfied with the Helpline, would use it again in the future, and would recommend it to colleagues.

**Q: What drives worker satisfaction with the Helpline?**

**A: Ease of use, primarily**

“Promptness of connection to Helpline Representative” and “Comfort discussing issue(s) with Helpline Representative” also influence workers’ experience with the Helpline; however, these factors do not correlate with overall user satisfaction as strongly as “Ease of Helpline use.”

**Q: Why is it important that workers are satisfied with the Helpline?**

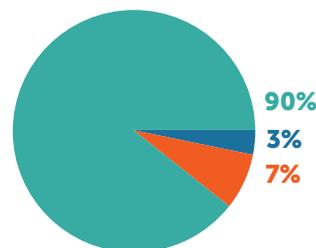
**A: Worker satisfaction with their Helpline experience is a major driver of referral to other workers**

88% of workers who are satisfied with their Helpline experience are “very likely” to recommend the Helpline to others, while only 51% of unsatisfied users say the same. In addition to Alliance training sessions through which workers are introduced to the Helpline, workers themselves can be effective Helpline advocates to their peers. 🎧

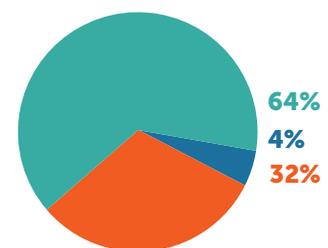
#### Worker Satisfaction vs. Ease of Helpline Use

Reported Ease of Use: ■ Easy ■ Neither easy nor difficult ■ Difficult

SATISFIED HELPLINE USERS



UNSATISFIED HELPLINE USERS

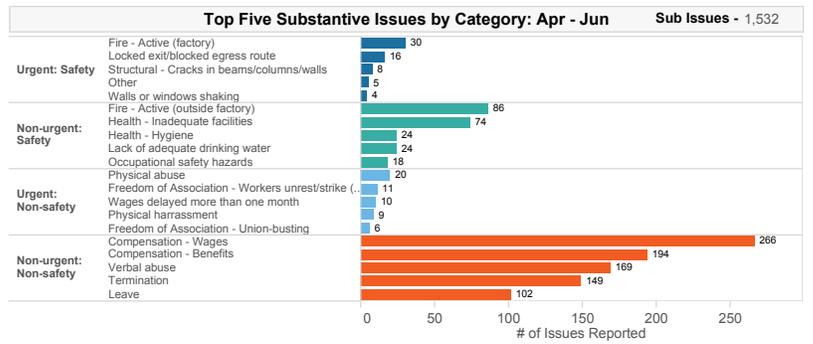
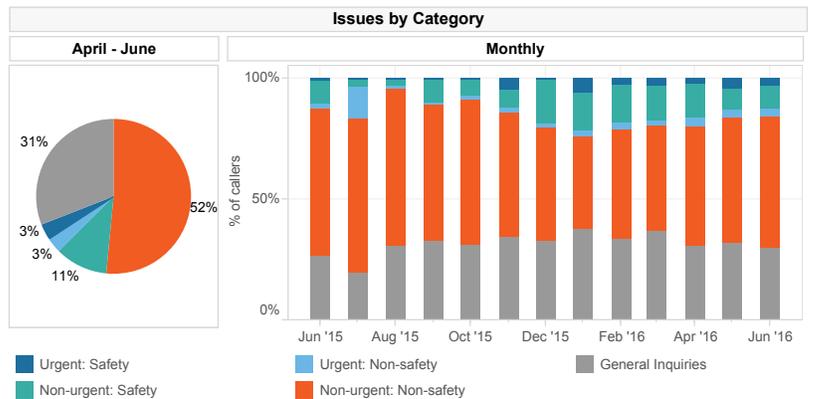
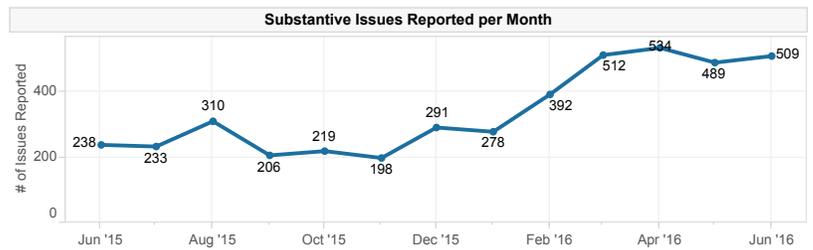
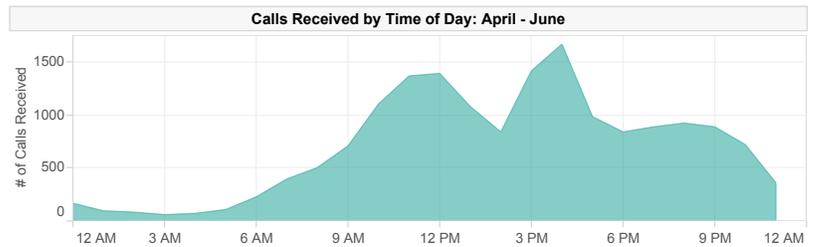
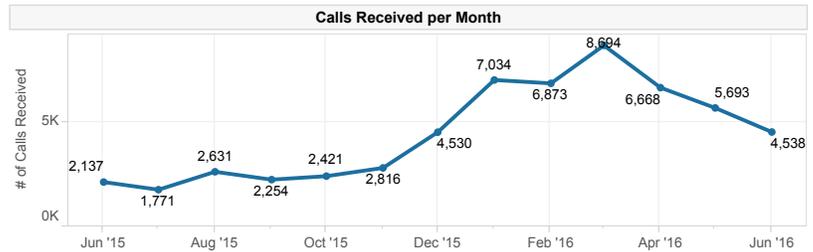




# FIRST QUARTER 2016 FINDINGS

## KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- **16,899 calls were placed to Amader Kotha this quarter from April through June**, for a total of 76,777 calls received to date.
- **The peak call times this quarter were around noon and 4pm**, consistent with previous quarters and reflecting call volume due to Helpline (refresher) trainings.
- **317 safety issues were reported to Amader Kotha this quarter**, of which 73 were urgent and 244 were non-urgent. Among factory-related safety issues, active fires and inadequate facilities were those most frequently reported by workers, a trend continued from the previous quarters.
- **General inquiries comprised 31% of issues this quarter**, disregarding missed or test calls. The majority of these inquiries pertained to Helpline support capabilities, factory policy, and labor law.
- **1,532 substantive issues were shared with the Helpline from workers at Alliance factories this quarter**. The most commonly-reported issues were related to compensation, verbal abuse, and termination.





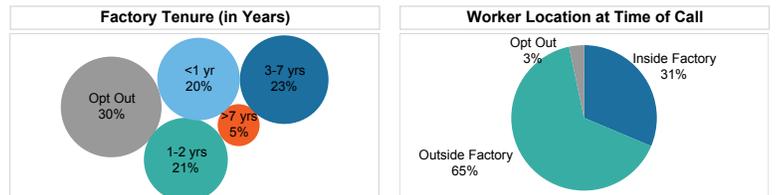
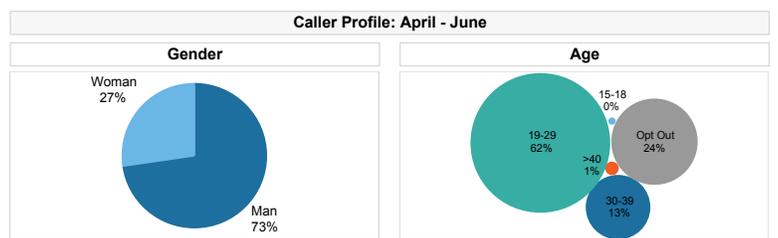
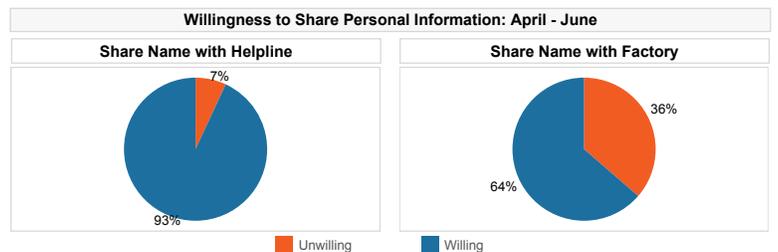
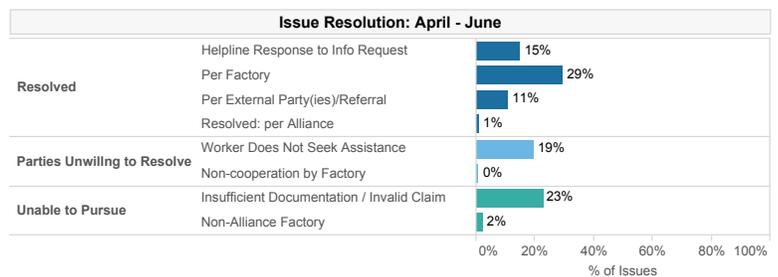
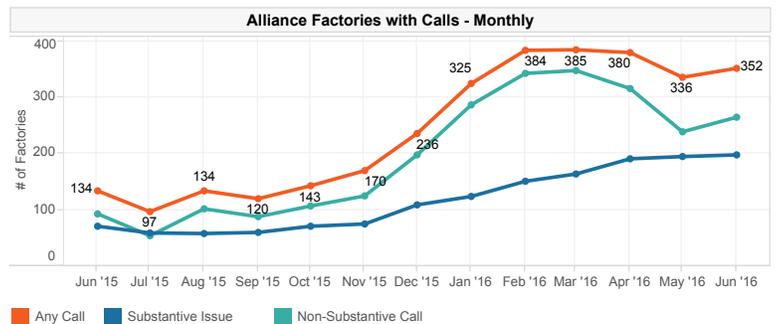
# FIRST QUARTER 2016 FINDINGS

## KEY FINDINGS CONTINUED:

- **75% of issues reported by workers were resolved this quarter,** disregarding missed or test calls. 25% 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 64% would allow their name to be shared with the factory.
- **Of the 739 Alliance factories that have received training on the Helpline, workers from 515 factories (70%) placed calls to the Helpline between April and June 2016.** Workers from 342 Helpline-launched factories (46%) reported substantive issues this quarter.
- **Workers from 204 non-Alliance factories called the Helpline this quarter.** Most calls pertained to compensation and general inquiries.
- **95% of the urgent safety issues reported this quarter were resolved and closed by the end of June.** Remaining unresolved issues (both urgent and non-urgent) are in the process of being closed in accordance with Alliance protocol.

### NOTES:

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: 76,777	Alliance factories: 6,231	# workers: 919,163
# outbound: 41,565	Non-Alliance factories: 699	# factories: 739

**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 204 factories not listed as Alliance factories in Q2. 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.



Top: Helpline officers respond to calls from workers. Center right: Call reports are analyzed for clarity and comprehensiveness. Bottom: Workers demonstrate that they have a Helpline card with contact information on it and listen to an in-factory Helpline orientation.

## 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 Good World Solutions (GWS), a non-profit organization whose flagship tool—Labor Link—has reached over 200,000 workers. 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