



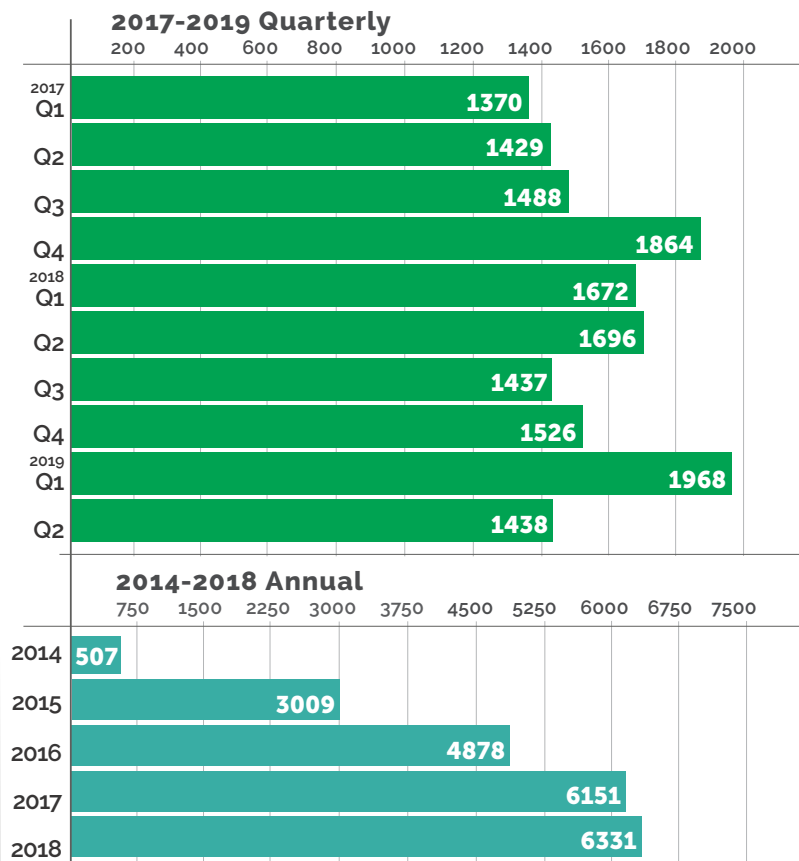
## Q2 2019 HELPLINE HEADLINES

The Amader Kotha Helpline was available to approximately 1.5 million workers in 1,083 factories by the end of June 2019. In the second quarter of the year, 1,438 substantive issues were shared with the Helpline from workers, of which 279 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.

The Amader Kotha Helpline Center marked its first year of operations at renovated Phulki offices in Dhaka, marking a significant milestone in the evolution of the Helpline as a valued initiative serving Bangladesh's RMG sector.

### SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES REPORTED TO HELPLINE



## IN FOCUS: RESEARCH FOR LEARNING AND IMPROVEMENT

Over the Helpline's five years of operations, we have periodically invited academics and other credible third parties to assess the effectiveness of the Helpline operations with a view toward learning and improvement. The results to date have been both informative and useful.

In 2017, the Ethical Trading Initiative published several case studies to promote practical guidance for companies considering how best to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, with a particular focus on access to remedy for workers. The Helpline was selected for study for the importance of partnerships in effective grievance handling.

*“Amader Kotha is a successful grievance mechanism that...has grown to reach more than 1.35 million workers. The success of Amader Kotha highlights the importance of partnering with local NGOs for worker training, provision of remedy, and impact assessment; examples of transparent communication with stakeholders and the public; and the profound impact of mobile phone usage on the utilization of grievance mechanisms.”*

(See: *NGO Leadership in Grievance Mechanisms*)

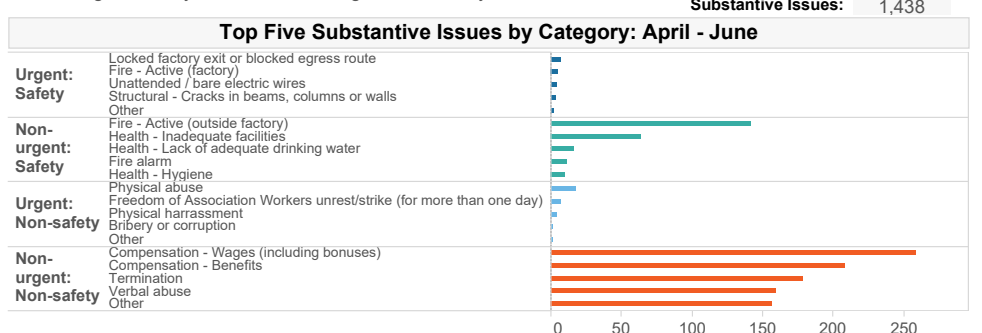
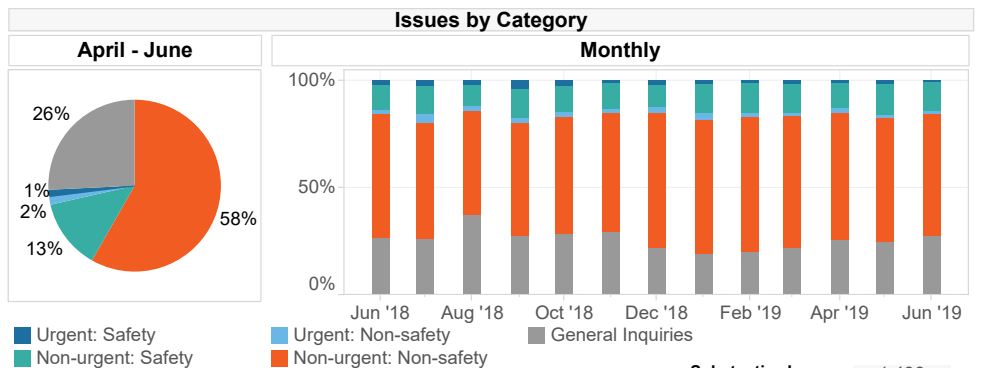
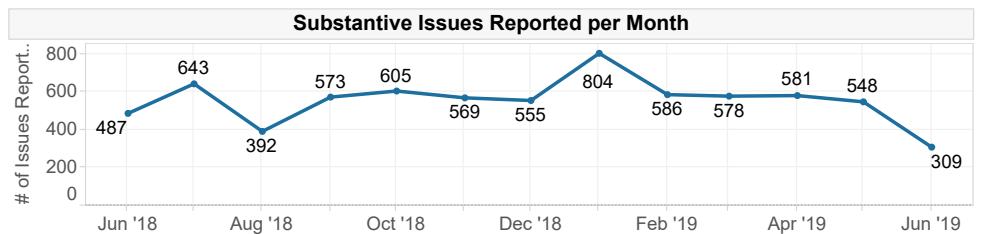
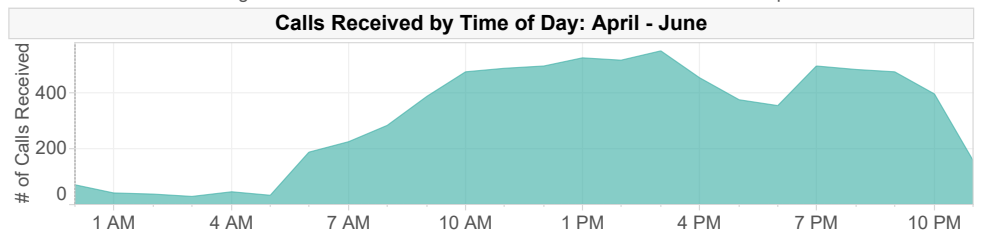
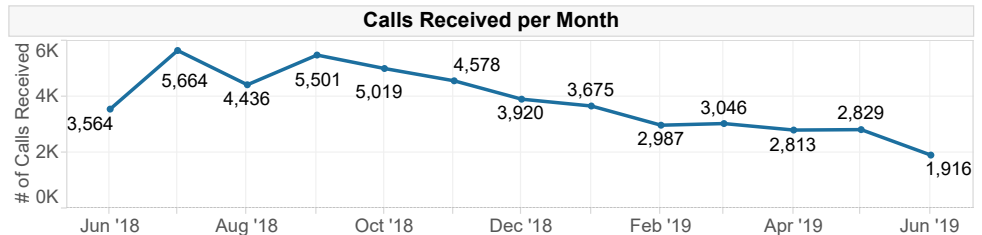
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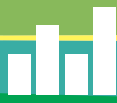


# SECOND QUARTER 2019 FINDINGS

## KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- 7,558 calls were placed to Amader Kotha this quarter from April through June, for a total of 272,251 calls received to date. Call volume was lower this quarter due to Eid.
- The peak call times this quarter were between 10am and 4pm and between 7pm and 10pm, suggesting workers are more comfortable calling throughout the day now.
- 279 safety issues were reported to Amader Kotha this quarter, of which 23 were urgent and 256 were non-urgent. Among safety issues reported by workers, those most frequently mentioned were fires outside factories, inadequate facilities, and lack of adequate drinking water.
- General inquiries comprised 26% of issues this quarter, disregarding missed or test calls. The majority of these inquiries pertained to Helpline support capabilities and labor laws.
- 1,438 substantive issues were shared with the Helpline from workers at Brand factories this quarter. The most commonly-reported issues were related to compensation, termination, and verbal abuse.

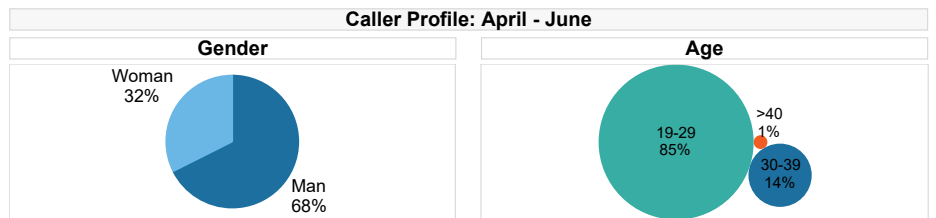
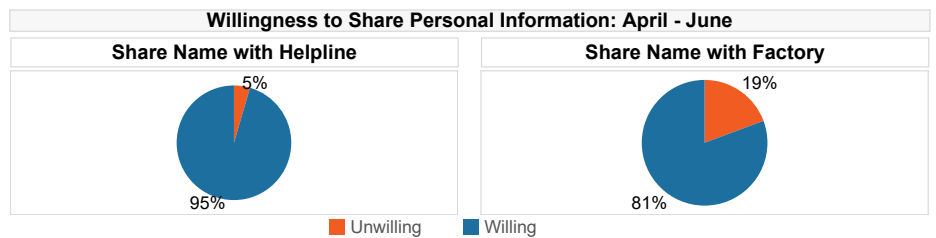
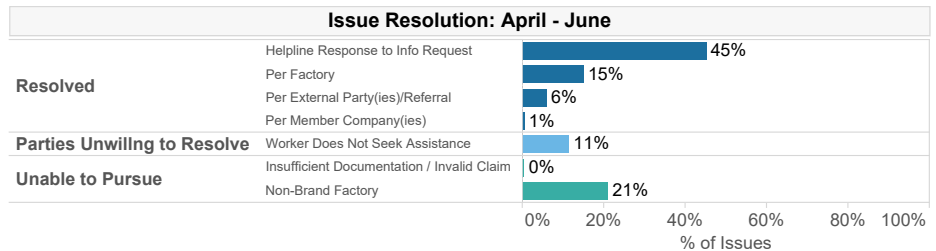
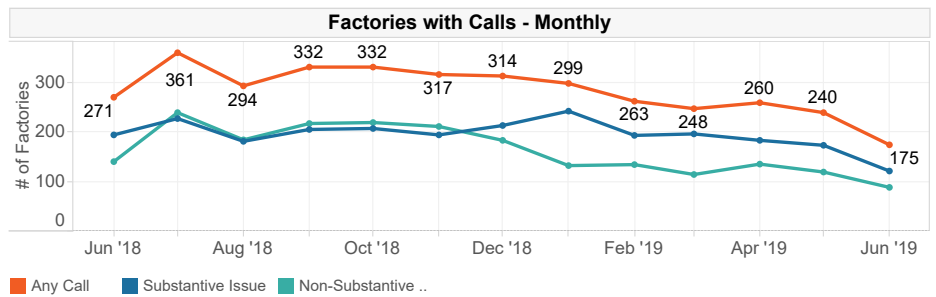




# SECOND QUARTER 2019 FINDINGS

## KEY FINDINGS CONTINUED:

- Among the substantive issues reported by workers from any factory this quarter, 67% 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.
- 95% of workers who called to report a substantive issue this quarter were comfortable sharing their name with the Helpline, but only 81% would allow their name to be shared with the factory.
- Of the more than one thousand factories that have received training on the Helpline, workers from 403 factories (37%) placed calls to the Helpline between April and June 2019. Workers from 307 Helpline-launched factories (28%) reported substantive issues this quarter.
- Workers from 1 non-Brand factory called the Helpline this quarter.
- 93% of the safety issues reported this quarter from workers at factories were resolved and closed by the end of June. All remaining open issues are in the process of being closed in accordance with Amader Kotha protocol.



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

	Total Calls	Substantive Issues	Helpline Launched Factories
Inbound	272,251	26,292	Factories: 1,083
Outbound	208,376		Workers: > 1.5 million

**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-Brand factories. 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.

**NOTE:**  
Detailed call data is provided to brands after factories have had the opportunity to verify and respond to information provided by workers.

## HELPLINE FOCUS

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Phulki, a well-established Bangladeshi organization with a track record of positive engagements with managers and workers, provides in-factory training and skilled call handling at the organization's 24/7 Amader Kotha Helpline Center created specifically to respond to concerns of workers in the Bangladesh RMG sector. Public reporting through newsletters like this one and on the [Helpline's website](#) provide the public with up-to-date tracking information about call volumes, issues, and aggregated caller profiles.

Last year, the Helpline was selected for study by researchers associated with the WEST Principles, a new initiative focused on worker engagement supported by technology. The research sought to "... promote broader – and meaningful – adoption of digital tools (phones, tablets, and web sites accessed via SMS, smartphone apps, hotlines, polls, social media, or other methods) used to gather information from workers in global supply chains about their needs, working conditions and experiences." The research concluded:

***“The Amader Kotha Helpline’s success is underpinned by three core operational principles: awareness (in-factory trainings, test calls), accessibility (24/7, toll-free), and accountability (clear protocols for reporting concerns to responsible parties and public transparency). All three have proven critical to maintaining the helpline’s success.”***

*(See: WEST Principles White Paper)*

In particular, the study noted the Helpline demonstrates WEST Principle 3 to Build Trust with Workers by reporting back to all workers who request follow-up, WEST Principle 7 to Inform Decisions & System Changes, and WEST Principle 8 to Collaborate & Share Learnings.

Research conducted by Laura Boudreau, Ph.D., now a postdoctoral researcher in economics at Columbia University School of Business, studied a number of features of the Helpline. One in particular was the relationship of workers carrying Amader Kotha Helpline contact cards, or badges, in their ID lanyards to the use of grievance channels, including the Helpline. The survey was not designed to constitute a statistically relevant random sample but the results are nonetheless instructive.

- Factories' compliance with the requirement for workers to wear Amader Kotha Helpline badges is strongly **positively** correlated with workers' reporting of safety issues through **any** channel.
- Factories' compliance with the requirement for workers to wear Amader Kotha Helpline badges is also strongly **positively** correlated with workers' **actual use of the Helpline**, both for safety and non-safety related issues.

Dr. Boudreau notes that these findings raise the concern that workers at factories with less frequent use of Helpline badges may be those most in need of empowerment to report issues in general and through the Helpline. We agree and see this an area for more learning about how best to demonstrate the value of the Helpline in strengthening communications between workers and managers.

In another area of Dr. Boudreau's research, in-factory train-the-trainer sessions for workers were found to increase call volumes for the first 20 weeks, after which call volumes tend to decline. She notes that second round or refresher training appears to support continued calls to the Helpline. Identifying the most effective interval and approach for in-factory Helpline training to sustain Helpline awareness is an area for further research and consideration as well.

We look forward to bringing you the results of future research as we consider what is working well and what can be improved upon going forward.

*-Doug Cahn, Amader Kotha Project Director*

## 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 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.