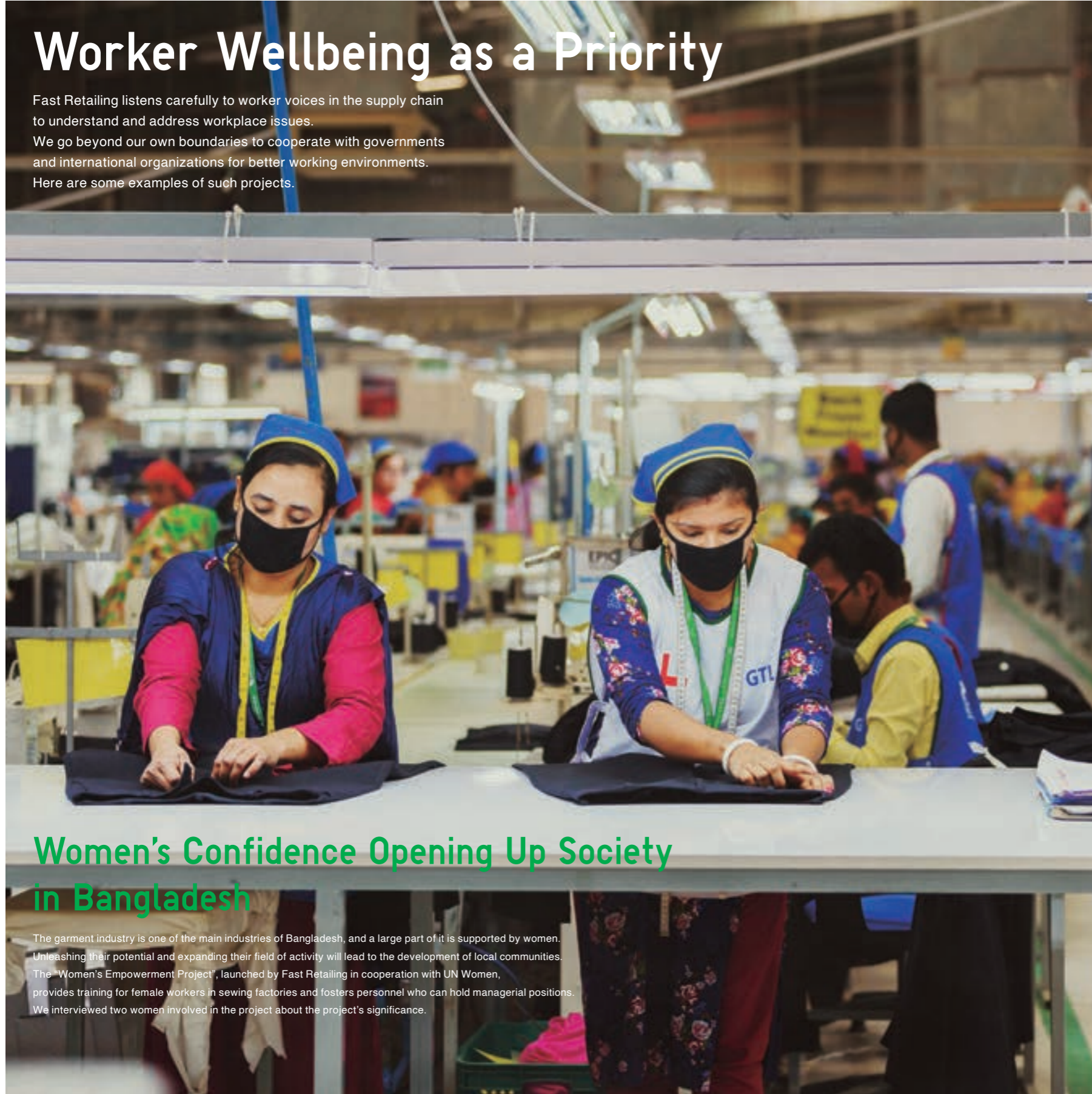


Worker Wellbeing as a Priority

Fast Retailing listens carefully to worker voices in the supply chain to understand and address workplace issues. We go beyond our own boundaries to cooperate with governments and international organizations for better working environments. Here are some examples of such projects.



Women's Confidence Opening Up Society in Bangladesh

The garment industry is one of the main industries of Bangladesh, and a large part of it is supported by women. Unleashing their potential and expanding their field of activity will lead to the development of local communities. The "Women's Empowerment Project", launched by Fast Retailing in cooperation with UN Women, provides training for female workers in sewing factories and fosters personnel who can hold managerial positions. We interviewed two women involved in the project about the project's significance.

For more information



Eliminate stereotypes and build confidence in women workers

Ambia Akter
Supervisor, Green Textile Limited (EPIC Group)

"The greatest thing I have acquired in this training is confidence", said Ms. Akter, who works at Green Textile's sewing factory. After attending the training, she was promoted to supervisor and now oversees a line with 30 machines. At 8 am each day, she confirms the sewing line does not have any problems, reviews reports, checks the attendance of members, and sets the goals for the day.

"I feel satisfied with my work when I consider how I can cooperate with all of my team members to achieve our goals", Ms. Akter said. Now 27 years old, Ms. Akter has been with the company for six years, starting out as a sewing machine operator. One year ago, she attended Women's Empowerment training, introduced by Fast Retailing and UN Women, where she learned about leadership and communication. Through the training, Ms. Akter realized she had been under the misconception that "women are incapable of taking up managerial positions," and then shifted her mindset to believe she is capable. This also affected her surroundings. "Most supervisors used to be men. At first, I was told women were incapable of being supervisors, but when I showed my achievements, male employees changed their attitudes." Since then, there have been some female workers who wish to be promoted to supervisors like Ms. Akter. "In Bangladesh, the idea is still prevalent that women are less capable both at work and at home. But if we are offered an appropriate and supportive environment where we can make our best efforts, women can be promoted to leadership positions and boost their careers. We ourselves have to change our own mindset that we cannot do something just because we are women," she said.

After her promotion, Ms. Akter receives a stable income that is enough to support her parents' household, and she is confident she can further improve her life through her own volition. "Now I can believe I am capable of doing things which I had never dreamed of achieving when I started working. My next aim is to move up in my career to become a production manager." Embracing her newfound self-confidence, Ms. Akter continues to challenge herself and tries to achieve new things.



Female supervisors increased tenfold after introducing the in-house training project

Zahara Ashraff
President, Human Resources at EPIC Group

EPIC Group, Green Textile inclusive, is a global company with factories all over the world, which puts effort into supporting women, who make up 85% of its 30,000 employees. "In the garment industry, a patriarchal view of work has long persisted, namely, that men take roles as managers, whereas women work as factory workers. It has been one year since the company started offering its Women's Empowerment training, originally introduced by Fast Retailing and UN Women, through which the number of female supervisors has increased from nine to 92. Since the training began, it has become easier for female workers to talk to their supervisors about issues common to women, such as family problems or physical conditions, and this has brought about greater levels of cooperation in the workplace. Male employees also welcome the training, as it has helped them recognize the potential of women and eliminate prejudices that hinder female achievement. Now that female workers have the confidence in themselves to play more active roles in the company, the overall productivity at our workplace has also improved. By providing women with confidence and technical acumen, I hope to draw on our strengths, such as empathy and the cultivation of human resources to operate the company. I will continue to support workplaces where both men and women have equal opportunities to show their maximum performance."



Worker Wellbeing and Beyond, Indonesia

Fast Retailing has been cooperating with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to strive for better working environments around Asia. After entering into a partnership in 2019, we have worked together to help establish a new national employment insurance system in Indonesia and conduct a comparative study of social security systems in nearby countries where Fast Retailing has manufacturing operations. Here, we take a look at the past initiatives and future prospects, with Ms. Michiko Miyamoto, Director of ILO Country Office for Indonesia and Timor-Leste.

For more information



Left: Job fair in Jakarta, December 2021.
Right: An international conference conducted by the ILO and the Ministry of Manpower to learn about unemployment benefit programs implemented in five Asian countries, March 2020.

A historical first: Worker support system, established by Fast Retailing and ILO



Michiko Miyamoto
Country Director for Indonesia and Timor-Leste International Labour Organization

A new employment insurance system in Indonesia is due to come into effect in 2022, which was technically supported through the partnership between Fast Retailing and the ILO. As a private company, Fast Retailing contributed a total of approximately 190 million yen—the largest cumulative contribution by a private company—to our joint project to help envision and establish a social security system to better protect Indonesian workers at times of sudden unemployment. Although apparel brands often do not have employment contracts with factory workers, they autonomously make efforts to protect the human rights of workers in their supply chain and ensure occupational health and safety in workplaces. In this project, Fast Retailing played a pioneering role to support workers, even beyond its own supply chain or the garment industry. Through its partnership with the ILO, Fast Retailing has contributed to improving the working environments of all Indonesian workers by advancing the country's social security system. This is a significant achievement that represents strong leadership from a corporation. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, like many other countries in Asia, Indonesia did not have an employment insurance system as advanced as those in Japan and elsewhere. They faced challenges to provide income security for their unemployed workers. While the country suffered from surging unemployment caused by the pandemic, the implementation of the new employment insurance system will help Indonesia's workers. When the system goes into effect, workers who have lost their jobs due to factory bankruptcy, dismissal or other unexpected reasons can receive benefits for up to six months during their period of unemployment. In addition, job seekers will be entitled to receive job search assistance that will help them find new work as quickly as possible. This includes training to upgrade skills or reskilling to improve employability in different growth industries. In the consultation process around labor and social security issues, it is always important to reflect the views of the government, workers and employers to develop an effective and sustainable system. The ILO values and promotes such dialogues among the three parties. We worked together to understand the issues related to the employment insurance system. With the significant achievement of this partnership in Indonesia, the ILO has been receiving requests from other countries in Asia seeking ILO's technical assistance to improve their own unemployment protection systems. I believe that Fast Retailing leadership and this pioneering initiative in Indonesia will catalyze efforts of the private sector and help promote decent work for all workers in the world.



Respecting human rights and labor environments in the supply chain

Fast Retailing strives to ensure human rights are respected throughout the supply chain and that production is carried out in good working environments. Here, we outline some key initiatives.

01 Code of Conduct for Production Partners

Fast Retailing established its Code of Conduct (CoC) for Production Partners in 2004 to protect worker and human rights and to ensure decent working environments. Fast Retailing contracts only with partners who pledge to comply with our CoC, which formally stipulates labor standards such as working hours and prohibits against child labor, forced labor and harassment. In some cases and regions, the terms of our CoC go beyond minimum local legal requirements in accordance with international labor standards. It is reviewed regularly and updated whenever necessary.

02 Monitoring the working environments where people make our clothes

Fast Retailing monitors working environments and confirms CoC compliance status at key facilities such as garment factories, subcontractors and fabric mills. Whenever necessary, we request that facilities implement improvement initiatives according to the nature and severity of any risks we discover. We have established hotlines for factory employees, so they can consult with Fast Retailing directly and anonymously in their local languages. We are also implementing preventive measures to stop human rights violations, including harassment, child labor, exploitation of migrant workers and unfair or unlawful wages and benefits. We continue to pursue traceability down to the raw materials stage, and confirm working environments in order to ensure human rights due diligence and prevent human rights risks in the entire supply chain.

03 Responsible purchasing

Responsible purchasing helps protect and improve the rights of workers employed by our suppliers. Accordingly, our procurement teams purchase responsibly. When placing an order, we develop a purchase plan based on the production equipment and capacity of the factory, with quantity and delivery dates agreed in advance with no changes to be made without factory consent. Moreover, we take care not to abuse the dominant bargaining position brands have when negotiating on prices and payment terms. Fast Retailing has developed guidelines on responsible purchasing and provides training to all employees involved in procurement.

04 Disclosure of major production partners

Since 2017, Fast Retailing has been publishing and maintaining a list of major production partners to increase the transparency of our supply chain, and to ensure good labor conditions and working environments. By March 2022, we plan to publish a list of all garment factories that we have ongoing dealings with and are working to expand the scope of our disclosure to also include non-garment factories.

05 Third-party partnerships and engagement

To help solve global social issues that cannot be addressed by any single company, we work proactively with respected NPOs, NGOs and industry groups, including UN Women, the International Labour Organization (ILO). By engaging a diverse range of stakeholders across industries and geographies, we aim to improve working environments everywhere.