



Pillars In Practice

GLOBALIZATION HAS LED to economic growth but has entailed human rights abuses at work in many places. For Bangladeshi women, over 80% of the 4 million garment workers, employment in garment factories is one of the few ways to support their families. And so they have little power in the face of human rights abuses such as intimidating threats and sexual harassment from male bosses and factory owners and dangerous work conditions in facilities. Often they don't even know they have the right to speak up.

The story of human rights abuses is not so different in Zimbabwe, where conflict between mining companies and government about control of businesses deeply impacts workers lives. Salaries have been slashed, payments withheld for months; the resulting abject poverty has led to illegal diamond panning and other practices conducted at extreme risk of injury or even death. And, across oceans in Nicaragua, agricultural workers are paid the lowest minimum wage in the country and one of the lowest wages in Latin America. Children in Nicaragua are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, carrying heavy loads, using dangerous tools, being exposed to hazardous pesticides and fertilizers and working long hours.

In all three countries, governments, multi-national businesses and civil society organizations lack adequate understanding of the necessary regulations for globalized business and of what to do when laws are poorly enforced or absent. The worldwide response has varied from country to country, and the response of governments, business and civil society organizations lacks consistency from place to place.

To address these issues, **Social Accountability International (SAI)**, in partnership with the **Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR)**, created **Pillars in Practice (PIP)**, a program funded by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights & Labor. PIP was designed to advance the use of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) to **RESPECT** human rights, **PROTECT** human rights and **REMEDY** human rights abuses, and contribute to the social and economic sustainability of the garment, agriculture and mining industries in Bangladesh, Nicaragua and Zimbabwe respectively.

From September 2012 to September 2014, SAI and DIHR ran PIP with local partners—CSR Centre in Bangladesh, Unión Nicaragüense para la Responsabilidad Social Empresarial (UniRSE) in Nicaragua and Zimbabwe Environmental Lawyers Association (ZELA) in Zimbabwe. The project successfully built the skills of the local partners to promote and assist in the implementation of the UNGPs by various actors in their respective countries. Through PIP, the local partners created awareness, sparked dialogue and promoted organizational growth.

UNGP PILLARS

The State Duty to PROTECT	The Corporate Responsibility to RESPECT	Access to Effective REMEDY
against human rights abuses committed by third parties, including businesses, through appropriate policies, regulation and adjudication.	human rights means acting with due diligence to avoid infringing on the rights of others, and addressing harms that do occur.	Even where institutions operate optimally, adverse human rights impacts may still result from a company's activities and victims must be able to seek redress.
PROTECT	RESPECT	REMEDY

Building capacity of SAI's local program partner, the CSR Centre in Bangladesh, led to an immediate incorporation of the UNGPs into the national CSR Guidelines for Bangladesh and the National CSR Policy for Children. These policies are an enormous multiplier in awareness raising across Bangladesh, creating two new tools where human rights abuses are discussed and dealt with from the framework of the UNGPs.

AWARENESS

The Centre for Research and Development (CRD), a CSO focused on Zimbabwe's mining sector, struggled to engage companies and government until it participated in PIP's multi-stakeholder advisory committee meetings (MACs). There were many more participants than expected, indicating openness to discussing human rights using the UNGPs framework.

In Zimbabwe, ZELA reports that PIP was transformational. Though ZELA had been working in the mining sector since 2009, the Executive Director had never engaged directly with mining companies out of fear of compromising ZELA's principles.

After PIP, the ED attended the Chamber of Mines annual general meeting and felt capable of talking competently about the UNGPs and training stakeholders

DIALOGUE

In Nicaragua, a number of small producers want to improve working conditions and asked their trade union representatives to negotiate with companies on following UNGP guidelines. This created a new dialogue within a set conversational framework to talk about prevalent human rights abuses. In line with the UNGPs, they reached beyond the company responsibility to respect and to the government's duty to protect, with the banana workers trade union inviting government representatives to the meetings with the companies. All of this was with the intent of changing company behavior, and shifting government policies that impact human rights through constructive dialogue

GROWTH

In each country, the partners developed handbooks as a tool to provide companies with written guidance for implementing the UNGPs. Each handbook was validated by local stakeholders to ensure accuracy and relevance for the country and industry. An executive overseeing CSR and HR in Bangladesh used the handbook with trainers in all the company's factories. Within the next year, five factories will know how to protect against human rights abuses and provide remedy to those who have been abused. The handbook was used to initiate dialogue with the community, and the company developed an outreach initiative to find out how it is perceived. These are strategies it could employ to more fully respect the community and provide remedy where necessary. Through discussions, the company learned that the community wanted a scholarship and better sanitation, so the factory developed an effluent treatment plan to implement.

The banana workers union in Nicaragua adopted the language from the UNGPs and created its own manual, a summary of the UNGPs; it also organized training sessions with its own funds for participants representing all five main banana workers unions.

Though businesses in Zimbabwe are more open to initiatives that make a business case for business and human rights, CRD originally lacked the skills to do so. By participating in PIP, it built capacity to assess mining company human rights management systems, enabling it to increase future engagement with businesses.

