

Garment Industry Project Interventions

The Proyash project has the objective to strengthen existing risk reduction practises in urban settings by building the capacity and skill set of potential actors of risk reduction at family, community and institutional levels, thereby creating a greener, cleaner and safer environment for those that are vulnerable. Those in the garment industry are major actors of risk reduction.

As an initiative of this project, Save the Children, in collaboration with the Fire Service & Civil Defence (FSCD) and with support from project partner SEEP, conducted a two-day training and simulation workshop with the compliance team of Epyllion Group – a notable garments group – dealing with safety and security of staff.

The aim of the training was to increase the capacity of the compliance team and in turn the workers, making them more resilient against risks in the workplace and thus decreasing vulnerability. Mock drills for earthquake and fire preparedness were also conducted after the completion of training. The first drill took place on 19 November, 2016, at one of the Epyllion factories located in Mirpur, Dhaka. A second drill was conducted on 27 November, 2016, in a different location, though nearby, at Epyllion Knitweaves Ltd.

Mock Drill 19 November 2016



Community volunteers conducting first aid simulation and assisting with evacuation



A community volunteer firefighter dousing a controlled fire

The first mock drill was successfully conducted according to plan. The exercise included a simulated evacuation procedure of workers in the factory, where they exited the building calmly via a safe route after an alarm sounded. FSCD officers guided the process, simulating smoke from the factory, and community volunteers in the role of firefighters and first aiders, tended to those acting as the wounded and assisted with dousing controlled flames. Many members of the public came from nearby to spectate after hearing the commotion - most assumed there was an actual fire and later became aware that it was a simulation exercise.

Mock Drill 27 November 2016

The second mock drill was on a considerably larger scale, and took place at a location where three Epyllion Group factory buildings are situated side by side on the same road. The crowd consisted of workers that had evacuated the factories and also members of the public who came to spectate from nearby. The road was found to be significantly narrow, so there was some difficulty in conducting the drill since the number of people gathered outside gradually increased and lack of space became a safety concern. This reflects the difficulty that could be faced in an actual emergency. A representative from the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) was also present to assess the limitations of building structure and space during evacuation, and had suggested that the doorway from which the workers exit from is significantly narrow and if it were made wider, it would be safer during emergency evacuations.

Simulation exercises similar to the previous drill were conducted including first aid and fire hazard control, with the assistance of community volunteers. An FSCD Officer and a Save the Children Senior Officer gave instructions and information to the crowd through loudspeakers, which could be heard clearly in the surrounding area.

Staff members, factory workers and local members of the public became more knowledgeable on disaster risk reduction and preparedness and expressed how they are now able to react more accordingly during a potential earthquake or fire incident, thus increasing their capacity and resilience.



Evacuation taking place and Fire Service engines arriving



FSCD practise using a crane lift to rescue trapped workers on higher floors



An FSCD Officer informing the crowd on safety procedures



Discussions between Epyllion Group, SEEP & SCI on the success of the mock drill



FSCD Officers performing first aid simulation on a garment worker