



Good World Solutions and its Labor Link Tool

Using mobile technology to give the global workforce a voice and access to life-changing information



The issue

Factory workers and farmers don't have a confidential channel to communicate with companies that sell what they produce, while companies that rely on these laborers don't have reliable information about their working conditions or quality of life.



Quick Facts

Timeline

Labor Link first tested in Peru and Cisco partnership began in 2010

Region

Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Colombia, El Salvador, India, Mexico, Peru, Sri Lanka, and Uganda

Cisco Investment

US\$680,000 in cash and product grants

People Impacted

95,370 factory workers, farmers, and artisans (as of April 2014)

CSR Focus Area

Economic empowerment

Technology Used

Mobile technology, Interactive Voice Response, Cloud, Internet

Human Network

Factory workers and farmers, corporations, NGOs/social enterprises, suppliers (factories, farms, etc.)

Contact

csr.cisco.com/contact

According to the International Telecommunications Union, there are almost as many mobile subscriptions (6.8 billion) as there are people in the world (7.1 billion). Good World Solutions taps into the growing power of mobile technology with its Labor Link initiative.

Labor Link uses mobile phones to connect factory workers and farmers directly with the companies that buy or sell the products they make. All interactions are anonymous and confidential -- promoting transparency, accuracy, and participation. Companies use Labor Link to learn about conditions at factories or provide workers with information on health, safety, education, and finances. Factory managers use Labor Link to deliver health and financial literacy education and workplace safety training, assess the effectiveness of this training, and evaluate job satisfaction. Labor Link benefits workers by giving them a way to report anonymously on working conditions and other topics, and to receive valuable information that could improve their lives. Companies and factories that adopt Labor Link can use the data they gather to design programs that support communities and improve working conditions.

Cisco has provided US\$680,000 in cash and product support since 2010 to help Good World Solutions design, implement, and scale Labor Link. Since then, Labor Link has scaled from 100 sweater artisans in Peru to more than 95,000+ factory workers in 10 countries—from Asia, Latin America, and Africa—and through multiple sectors, from apparel and agriculture to ICT and electronics.

you + networks = impact^x



Impact of Good World Solutions

Giving factory workers and farmers a voice and better access to life-changing information

Labor Link Surveys Inform Worker Education



The U.K. retailer Marks & Spencer used Labor Link to promote financial literacy among low-income female factory workers in India. The company sent a multiple-choice survey to workers through their mobile phones, asking if they had money saved and/or a bank account. Through the anonymous responses, Marks & Spencer learned that more than half of the respondents kept their money at home. With this data, Marks & Spencer and its local partner in India were able to tailor a financial education program to the specific needs of workers. By the end of the first phase of the program, there was a 33 percent increase in the number of workers with bank accounts.

Anonymous Surveys Increases Visibility into Supply Chain



In 2012, Cisco piloted Labor Link to disseminate a confidential, anonymous mobile phone survey with 450 workers at one of its suppliers. Workers answered questions about worker-management communication, training, community needs, and demographics. The survey revealed that 78% of workers were comfortable with their supervisor, 37% of workers had suggestions for improving factory production, and 74% had a clear understanding of the company's labor policies. It was a unique opportunity to identify opportunities for improvement, particularly with worker satisfaction, validate best practices, uncover opportunities for improvement, and validate supplier audit findings.

Labor Link Improves Financial Literacy



In 2013 Good World Solutions partnered with Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) to assess financial literacy among workers at 11 factories in India and deliver financial education via BSR's HERfinance initiative. Using Labor Link they delivered mobile surveys to learn if workers had bank accounts, saved money, or discussed finances with their families – which can all contribute to financial independence. They developed customized training modules based on the results; after every two modules, they distribute another survey to assess the impact. Early results show workers are now more comfortable talking about finances with their families and more have opened bank accounts. A manager at a participating factory said, "Labor Link mobile surveys are the easiest and best way of taking worker feedback. We've seen a reduction in turnover since our financial literacy training started."

Metrics

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10 countries now have access to Labor Link, up from 1 in 2010
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35% of operating expenses covered by earned income for Good World Solutions, up from 8% in 2012
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1000X growth in number of workers using Labor Link, from 100 in 2010 to 95,000 in 2014

Cisco Corporate Social Responsibility

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We create opportunities to transform lives, communities, and the environment through the combined power of human collaboration and networked connections. We call this "impact multiplied." Together with others, we apply technology to unlock the intelligence and fuel the innovation needed to address some of the world's most pressing problems.

Our Corporate Social Responsibility efforts focus on five areas: improving the well-being of people and communities around the world; using our technology to improve environmental sustainability; conducting our business ethically; creating a workplace where our employees thrive; and maintaining our high standards for ethics, labor rights, health, safety, and the environment throughout our supply chain. Learn more at csr.cisco.com