

Synopsis of Capacity Building on climate change for the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) Sector Workers - Training 1



Location: Mirpur, Awaj Foundation's Training Center
Date: 11th of September 2025

Acknowledgement

The International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) expresses its sincere appreciation to all participants who engaged in the training. This publication presents a comprehensive summary of the training sessions and key findings. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Awaj Foundation for their invaluable support in facilitating the training. Special thanks to the project team for their exceptional commitment and effort towards the design and execution of this training. Special appreciation to Nishat Tasnim and Maliha Momotaj Himu for their active support as rapporteurs.

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Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the first training on nexus of climate change adaptation, labor rights, and just transition, delivered to a cohort of garment workers of the ready-made garment (RMG) sector in Mirpur at Awaj Foundation's training center.

Given the sector's growing exposure to climate risks, including heat stress during summer and water logging during the monsoon, the training was designed by ICCCAD, with support from the Laudes Foundation, in a contextual and interactive format. The sessions engaged a diverse cohort from Tier 2 and 3 factories—factories that have yet to transition toward greener practices through a combination of lecture, animation, theatre, and art-based activities.

Group exercises highlighted workers' key priorities during climate crises, including enhanced ventilation, medical facilities, childcare, cooling systems, community adaptation measures, and social safety nets. The training was well-received, with participants demonstrating high levels of engagement and comprehension of the topics. Recommendations for future sessions include better time allocation to the sessions, gender-balanced and tier-specific participant selection, and improved technological support to enhance both delivery and inclusivity.

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Message from the Project Manager



The devastating threats of climate change are impacting the workforce and marginalized communities extensively in Bangladesh. Hence, capacitating and empowering the workers on climatic impacts is an imperative for the ready-made garment (RMG) sector, which employs a substantial proportion of the country's workforce and is a major part of Bangladesh's gross domestic product (GDP) earnings. The green transition is needed for both the economy and people.

Therefore, this training mainly aimed to capacitate the RMG workers through an interactive training module and enhance their knowledge on the basics of climate change; adaptation strategies at the factory and household level; and discussed workers' negotiation skills with management to build a climate-resilient workplace. The future trainings will follow a flexible, learning-by-doing approach and aim to contextualize for benefiting the workers' adaptive capacity.

Introduction

Background

Bangladesh's ready-made garment (RMG) sector, employing nearly 4 million workers and contributing to 85% of the country's export earnings, is increasingly at risk due to climate-induced stress particularly from extreme heat. Heat waves threaten not only workers' health but also reduce productivity and profitability of the RMG sector. Without adaptation measures such as improved ventilation, cooling systems, and better workplace design, the sector could face significant job and export revenue losses by 2030.

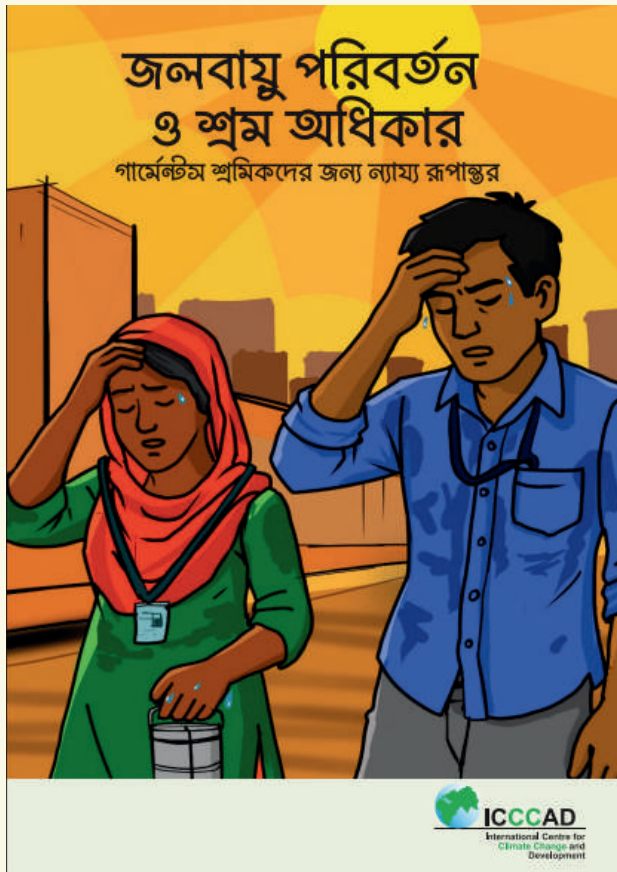
To address this, ICCCAD, with support from the Laudes Foundation, is implementing a 3-year project titled *“Capacitating the Garment Industry Workers for a Greener Climate Transition in Bangladesh.”* As part of this initiative, pilot training is being launched to strengthen RMG workers' understanding of climate change, labour rights, and just transition.

Objective of the training: This training aims to deliver a contextualized and interactive training module for the garment workers that resonates with their lived realities amidst the climate crisis.



Training Overview

Training Materials Distribution



In addition to the interactive sessions, a basic climate change booklet was distributed to strengthen the participants' understanding of the topics discussed during the training. This booklet has been designed in Bangla with detailed illustrations to make the content accessible to all. With the help of these, participants were encouraged to share their newly gained knowledge with families, relatives, friends, and neighbours to extend the impact beyond the factories.



Training Overview



Target Audience

The climate change training strategically engaged a cohort of approximately 20 factory workers, selected based on age, occupational role, and factory type to ensure diverse representation and effective knowledge transfer. Participants spanned three age groups—young workers (18–28) adept in social media, mid-career staff (25–35) who influenced workplace norms, and experienced workers (35–40+) who mentored others. Occupational roles included machine operators, technicians, floor managers, helpers, and committee members, fostering peer learning and sector-wide improvement. Workers were drawn from Tier 2 and 3 factories, which typically lacked LEED certification and climate awareness, to promote standardisation and uplift compliance.

Training Methodology:



Short Lecture Session



Climate Animation Videos



Theatre Session



Artwork Session

Training Overview



Short Lecture Session

The titled “Climate Change and Labor Rights: A Just Transition for Garment Workers” has been designed for participants, comprising six chapters covering the basics of climate change and its impacts, heatwave-related illnesses and prevention strategies, adaptation strategies, and the nexus between just transition and labor rights. Through a short lecture, the main points of each chapter were explained to build interest and prepare participants for the upcoming sessions. To make the session more interactive, a brief exercise from chapter one was conducted, encouraging participants to engage with the material and apply their learning. This approach aimed to spark curiosity, motivating participants to explore the booklet further, complete the exercises independently, and use it as a reference whenever needed after the training.



Climate Animation Videos

The training module consisted of 2 short animations; the first one is a 6-minute video focusing on the impacts and adaptation strategies of climate change inside and outside factories, drawn from lived experiences of the garment workers. It also discussed ways of involving higher management to implement some of the strategies inside the factories, as well as collective initiatives which can be led by communities for household level adaptation. The second animation provided an introduction to the concept of climate change, exploring key topics such as the distinction between weather and climate, the definition of climate change, the ways in which the climate is shifting, and its specific consequences for Bangladesh.

Training Overview



Theatre Session

This module unfolded in two compelling acts, highlighting the impact of climate change on garment workers and their pathway to adaptation. The first act followed a climate migrant family's move to Dhaka and entry into the RMG sector, portraying the emotional and physical toll of factory life due to the heat, long hours, and unsafe working conditions. Interactive moments helped the audience connect deeply with the story. The second act focused on practical adaptation strategies such as preventing heatstroke and managing illness. It showcased workers' demands for better facilities including cold-water stations, improved ventilation, cooling vests, and day-care centres, while emphasising the role of Participation Committees in negotiating these improvements.



Artwork Session

To foster discussion, share ideas and creatively apply the knowledge they have gained from the earlier modules, the final module was a collaborative art session, where participants were divided into 4 evenly sized groups of 5. Each group received a factory layout chart along with a set of icons representing climate-friendly solutions. Their task was to place these icons in areas of the factory they felt needed improvement. In addition to using the provided icons, participants were encouraged to draw their own symbols or write down ideas that could contribute to creating an ideal and climate-resilient workplace.

At the end of each session, a few minutes were set aside for participants to engage in reflective discussions, allowing moderators to assess their understanding of the module content.

Ice Breaking Session




During the icebreaking session, the researchers from the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) introduced themselves and briefly shared the nature of their work, with the intention of creating trust and setting a collaborative tone. Building on reflections from previous training, they also reflected on how climate stresses such as excessive heat, unpredictable rainfall, and frequent waterlogging are increasingly affecting life offering an entry point for participants to share their own realities.


Participants were then invited to introduce themselves and share their personal understanding of climate change. This led to a rich exchange of lived experiences highlighting how summers have become intensely hotter and stretching for a much longer duration, winters harsher, and monsoon rains more erratic. These climatic shifts have made day-to-day mobility especially difficult during extreme weather.

Workers reported that illnesses such as flu, cough, fever, and various skin infections have become increasingly common, and many suspect these are linked to changing climatic conditions. Several women also shared that fertility-related health complications are becoming more frequent, which they believe could be associated with prolonged exposure to heat and stress. During heatwaves, when factory conditions become nearly unbearable, maintaining productivity and meeting targets is a major challenge. Even at home, excessive heat and waterlogging often make daily life equally intolerable.

Key Findings of Artwork Session

Factory Zone	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Production Zone 	<p>Recommend ed use of insulated materials, worker-led climate adaptation plans, peer collaboration for hydration, and separate heat adaptation strategies.</p>	<p>Recommend ed hydration facilities and cooling center within the factory.</p>	<p>Recommend ed insulated materials, community-led adaptation efforts, additional exhaust fans, reduced lighting to lower heat, and masks for machine operators.</p>	<p>Recommend ed hydration facilities, insulated materials, and heat-adapted uniforms.</p>
Ironing & Fusing Section	<p>Suggested cooling vests and improved ventilation systems.</p>	<p>Put forward cooling vests and proper ventilation.</p>	<p>Suggested proper ventilation, insulated materials, cooling center, and reduced lighting.</p>	<p>Suggested hydration facilities, proper ventilation, cotton clothing, and cooling vests.</p>

Key Findings of Artwork Session

Factory Zone	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
<div>Dining Zone</div> <div></div>	Introduced cooling center and hydration facilities.	-----	Advocated for day care centers.	Introduced expanded eating space and gender-segregated dining areas.
<div>Medical Facilities</div>	Outlined improved medical support.	Outlined improved medical support.	Outlined improved medical support and climate-related medical allowances.	Outlined discussions on worker health and improved medical support.

Key Findings of Artwork Session

Factory Zone	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
General/ Overall Area	Presented solar panel installation, green infrastructure, and day care centers.	Presented solar panel installation, green infrastructure, and day care centers.	Recommended solar panel installation for power backup.	----- -
Machinery Area	Put forward cooling vests and air coolers to reduce noise pollution.	-----	Put forward cooling vests and air coolers to reduce noise pollution.	Put forward hydration facilities, cooling center, and first aid kits.

Key Findings of Artwork Session

Factory Zone	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Meeting Room	Advocated climate-related medical allowances, worker-led adaptation plans, and tailored heat adaptation strategies.	Introduced day care centers, climate-related medical allowances, insulated materials, worker-led and community-led adaptation initiatives, and capacity-building programs.	Introduced worker capacity-building, collaboration, and discussions on health security and workplace risks.	Introduced worker capacity-building, collaboration, and discussions on health security and workplace risks.
Toilet	Recommended provision of hygiene essentials including soap, napkins, water, and sandals.	Suggested increase in toilet numbers.	Presented cleanliness maintenance and storage solutions.	Presented cleanliness maintenance and storage solutions.

Key Findings of Artwork Session

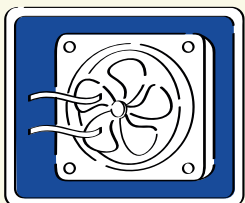
Factory Zone	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Storage	Suggested clear walkways and spacious movement areas.	-----	-----	-----
Community Level	Recommended community adaptation funds, reflective roof paint, community-led initiatives, insulated materials, solar panels, green infrastructure, tree planting, and clean surroundings with proper water drainage.	Suggested indoor plants, green infrastructure, reflective roof paint, community adaptation funds, cotton clothing, hydration practices, and clean surroundings with maintained drainage.	Advocated insulated materials, green infrastructure, expanded social protection schemes, indoor plants, and tree planting around the area.	Suggested reflective roof paint, community adaptation funds, social protection schemes, insulated materials, and indoor plants.

Groupwork Discussion

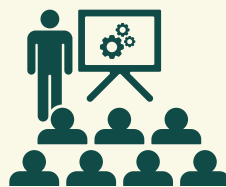
Across all four groups, participants envisioned a climate-resilient and worker-friendly factory environment. A number of common priorities emerged across the groups, including the need for improved ventilation in production and ironing/fusing zones to reduce heat stress, and the provision of hydration facilities and cooling centers throughout the factory to ensure comfort during long shifts. All groups highlighted the importance of medical support, including well-equipped medical rooms, health allowances, and access to specialised care. Daycare facilities and educational support for workers' children were also emphasised as essential to reduce absenteeism and support working mothers. Participants consistently recommended capacity-building and training programs to equip workers with knowledge and skills for climate adaptation and heat management, while also advocating for social protection, fair wages, and respectful treatment in the workplace.

Several group-specific suggestions complemented these common priorities. Group 1 focused on peer collaboration for hydration, worker-led climate adaptation plans, hygiene essentials in toilets, and green infrastructure with solar panels in general areas.

Priority adaptation measures from the participants:



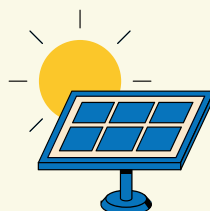
**Proper
Ventilation**



**Worker-led adaptation
planning & capacity
building**



**More water
stations**



**Solar panel
installation**

Groupwork Discussion

Group 2 emphasised community-led adaptation initiatives, reflective roof paint, expansion of toilet facilities, and collaborative practices for building community level climate resilience. While Group 3 recommended additional exhaust fans, reduced lighting in production areas, masks for machine operators, specialised doctors in the medical centre- specially gynaecologist and improved storage solutions. This group also suggested personal and community level measures such as cotton clothing, indoor plants, and proper drainage. Group 4 proposed heat-adapted uniforms; hydration and cooling facilities in heavy machinery and ironing/fusing zones; gender-separated dining and toilet facilities, alongside community-level initiative like tree planting and adaptation funds.

The session participants emphasized that a climate-resilient factory must integrate workplace improvements, establish social protection facilities, and community-level interventions to address both environmental risks and worker well-being.

Priority adaptation measures from the participants:



**Specialised
doctors
(especially
gynaecologists)**



**Comprehensive
health insurance
schemes**



Daycare support



**Community-level
adaptation funds
& reflective roof
paint**

Group Discussion



Key Learnings from the Pilot Training

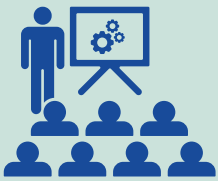
Training Conduction and Cohort Selection:

Within the participant cohort, it is important to ensure gender balance and greater representation from lower-tier factories, where workers often have limited access to training opportunities and lower levels of formal education. Ensuring gender balance allows for the exploration of gender-specific perspectives, while including individuals from these settings helps ensure that the training reaches those who are most in need, fostering more equitable capacity-building across the sector. To support this, the Awaj Foundation will be requested to support more effective and inclusive cohort selection.



Session Specific Feedback

Lecture:



To ensure participants are fully engaged with the training, the lecture on the booklet is a critical entry point to the subsequent sessions. It is essential to allocate sufficient time to this session, as many of the terms and concepts presented will be new to participants and will form the foundation for understanding later modules. Providing adequate time will allow participants to grasp the core concepts, connect them to upcoming sessions, and enhance the overall effectiveness of the training.



Session Specific Feedback

Animation



From the participants' responses and level of engagement, it was clear that they had successfully absorbed the key lessons from both the first animation and the theatre performance. During the discussion, many were able to relate the content to their own lived experiences, demonstrating a strong understanding of the concepts. Their ability to recall specific examples and connect them to real-life factory situations well confirmed that these learning tools were effective in deepening their comprehension.



Session Specific Feedback

Theatre: All the recommended revisions from the pilot training were incorporated into the theatre session to enhance its alignment with the educational goals. The script was updated to explicitly include key terms such as climate change, labour rights, and just transition, ensuring that the core concepts were clearly communicated. Performers wore black to distinguish themselves from the audience, and the performance was delivered in one continuous segment without breaks to maintain narrative flow. Gender balance was ensured by including more female actors, while excessive improvisation was minimised to keep the session within the allocated time and focused on the main messages. The scene depicting heat stroke, its prevention, and precautions, along with the adjusted scene of the pre-discussion of the PC meeting, delivered a strong message on workers' health, while the labour rights theme was emphasised more prominently. As a result, the session effectively conveyed the intended messages, and participants remained highly engaged throughout, confirming the theatre's continued value as an impactful and effective teaching tool.



Session Specific Feedback

Art Session: The factory layout was revised according to the pilot training's suggestion to include a meeting room, medical room, and rooftop, along with the use of two chart papers and smaller icons to provide participants with more space to add their own ideas through writing and drawing. This revisions allowed participants to appropriately position adaptation measures and differentiate between factory-specific and community-specific actions. The session ran smoothly and effectively achieved its purpose, enabling participants to clearly understand the task, engage actively, and successfully apply the concepts learned in earlier sessions, particularly in relation to climate change adaptation strategies.



Feedback on Logistics and Evaluation

The quality of the sound system should be improved at the training centres to ensure that participants can clearly understand the content and remain engaged throughout the sessions. Greater attention must be given to these technical aspects, as they play a critical role in facilitating effective communication and maintaining focus during the training.

It was recommended to conduct a follow-up evaluation approximately two months after the initial training- to assess the extent to which participants have retained the information. During this visit, the cohort may be engaged in a brief discussion over tea, providing an informal yet effective setting for reflection and assessment. This session will also offer an opportunity to review whether the participants have completed the exercises included in the booklet and to get an idea of their understanding of the materials. Additionally, feedback on the booklet itself can be collected to inform future improvements and ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

Conclusion



This training effectively introduced the garment workers to the interlinkage between climate change, workplace safety, and labour rights, using interactive formats such as lecture, animation, theatre, and collaborative art sessions. Participants demonstrated strong understanding and enthusiasm, identifying practical adaptation strategies including improved ventilation, cooling systems, medical support, and social protection measures. Their contributions reflected a clear desire for safer, more equitable, and climate-resilient working conditions.

To build on this success, future sessions should focus on more gender balanced and inclusive participant selection especially from lower-tier factories alongside improved logistics, technical setup, and session design. With continued collaboration and refinement, this training model can serve as a powerful tool for empowering workers and advancing a greener transition across Bangladesh's RMG sector.

Snapshots from the Training



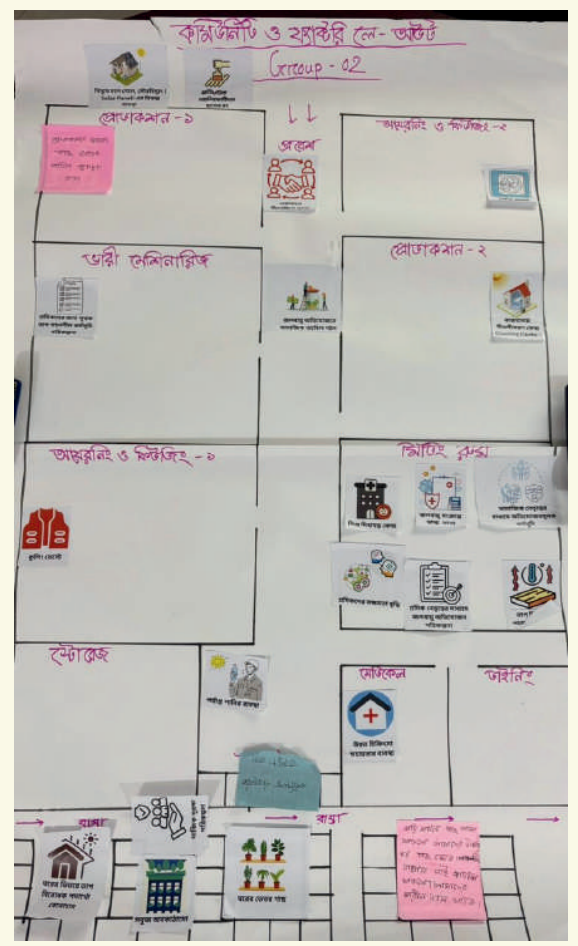
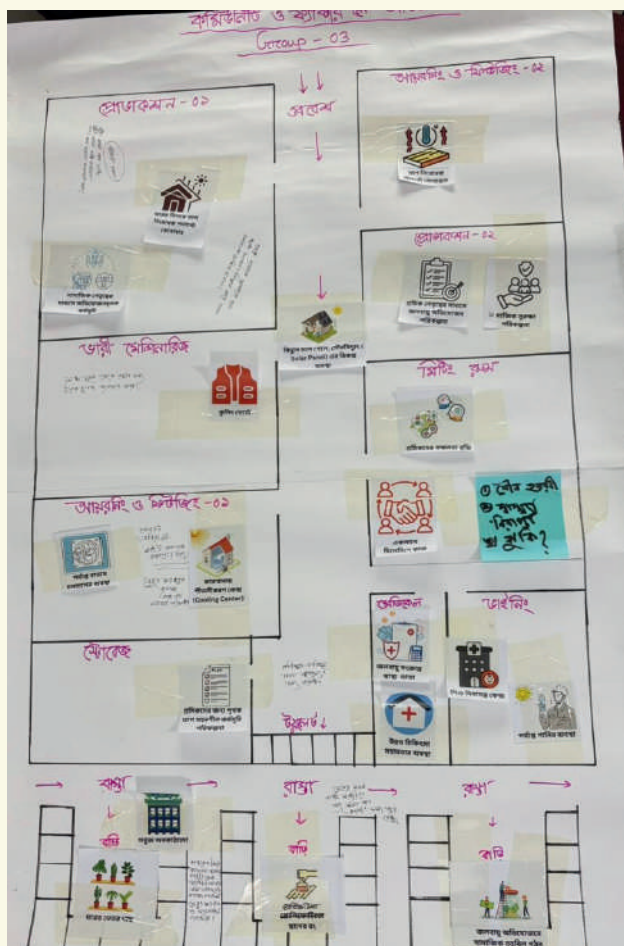
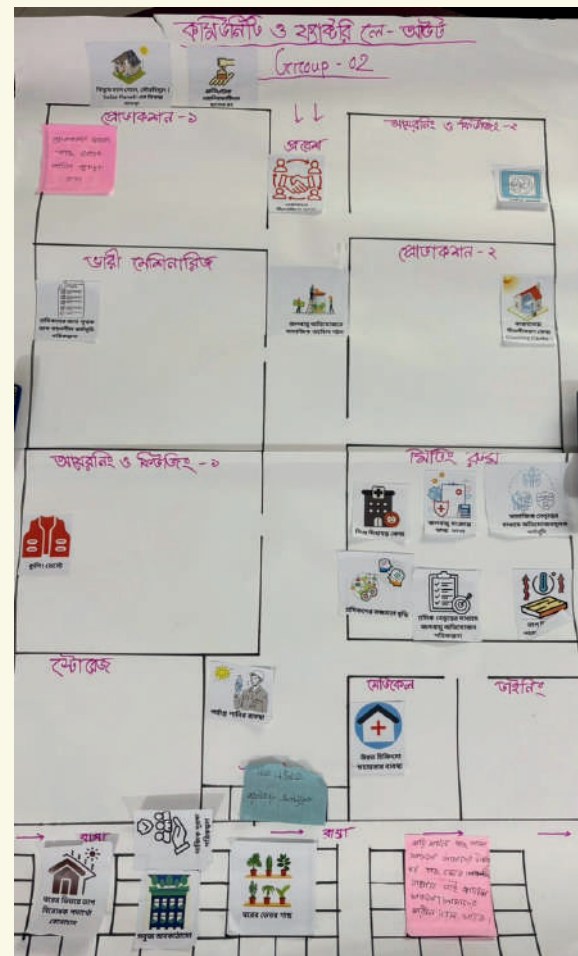
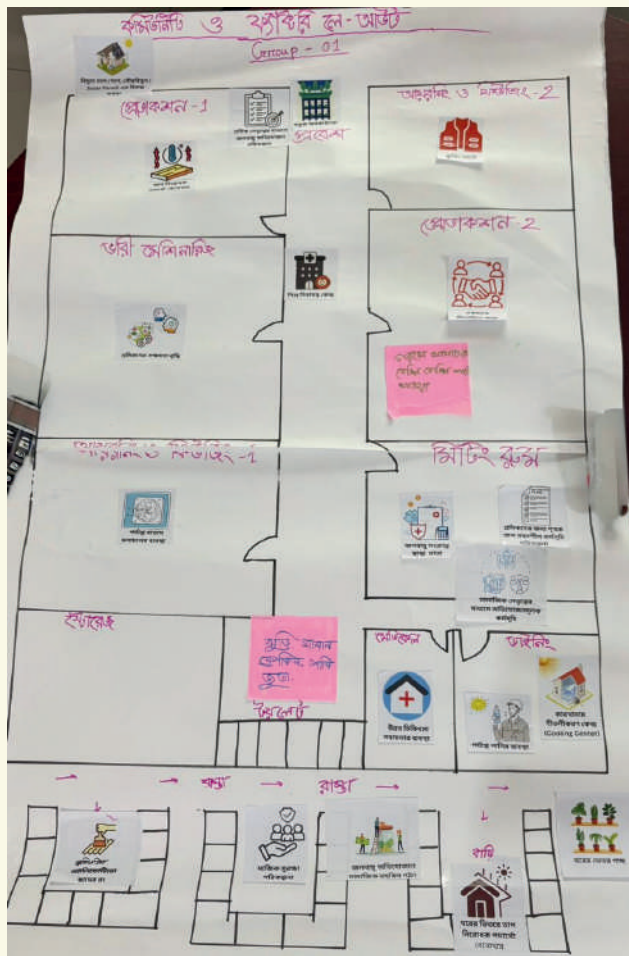
Annex : Agenda

Activity	Description	Session Coordinator	Time
Welcome Remarks and Ice-breaking Session	Message from Project Manager (Afsara Binte Mirza) and Introduction of Participants and Trainers	Awaj Foundation and ICCCAD Team [Rapporteur: Nishat Tasnim]	6:00 PM to 6:15 PM
Climate Change Booklet Dissemination and Animation on Climate Change	A short lecture on introducing the Booklet and animated video on climate change impacts and adaptation strategies in factory taken from lived experiences followed by discussion	Maliha Himu, Dharmachandra Tonchongya and Mahzabeen Mahfuz Rapporteur: Nishat Tasnim	6:15 PM to 6:40 PM
Animation on Climate Change Impacts	Focusing on climate change impacts and adaptation strategies in factory and community taken from lived experiences	Mahzabeen Mahfuz Note taker: Nafia Saddam	6:40 PM to 6:50 PM

Annex : Agenda

Activity	Description	Session Coordinator	Time
Theatre Session	The performance featuring the climatic impacts and adaptation strategies the garments worker can take to have a better lifestyle. Followed by a discussion.	Gayen Dohar Theatre Team Discussion Facilitator: Dharmachandra Tonchongya & Nishat Tasnim Rapporteur: Maliha Himu	6:50 PM to 7:15 PM
Artwork Session	Groupwork involving the participants to create an ideal workplace for them) utilising the the provided icons.	Discussion Facilitator: Nafia Saddam	7:15 PM to 7:50 PM
Concluding Remarks	Concluding remarks followed by feedback Q&A session and distribution of motivational materials	Maliha Himu will conclude Motivational Material distribution: Nishat Tasnim & Nafia Saddam	7:50 PM-8:15 PM

Annex : Artwork Session





Contact for more information:

**Project Info
Website**



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