Training Report

General Information

The FLA initiated supplier level training in India with its first training held on 23rd April 2011 in Gurgaon, outside of New Delhi. Social Sustainability Awareness is a basic module for factory managers from HR and compliance designed to create awareness regarding the basic concepts of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and FLA code of conduct implementation. This training was conducted with the following objectives.

Objective:

- Participants will understand the basic concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), its trend and development.
- Participants will realize the reasons why CSR is beneficial to factory operations and ways of adopting CSR practices in the factory.
- Participants will review the FLA Compliance Benchmarks and understand FLA requirements in each code element.
- Participants will discuss challenges and possible solutions for creating good working conditions and living conditions.

Abstract: An interesting and participatory first training conducted by the FLA. The participation was low with only 10 participants, however the training sessions and the discussions were quite comprehensive, and related the training to the practical day-to-day problems faced by the factories. The training included a basic orientation on FLA social compliance benchmarks and the ways to reach and maintain compliance.

Key outcomes:

The training was conducted in a participatory manner and based on the participants' expectations. The key questions and expectations of the participants from the SSA training are listed below. Each of the questions were discussed at length to find ways and means to address the practical problems faced during implementation of FLA code of Conduct

1. How to control overtime?
2. How to plan mass workers' training with high labor turnover?
3. How to retain contractual employees?
4. Why are some NGOs negative about business?
5. How to deal with high absenteeism?
6. How to share worker information with the management after an audit?

7. How to convince workers to wear PPE?
8. How to deal with worker demands during audits?
9. Sometimes it is challenging for the workers to provide appointment letter and proof of age on the first day of work, how can we address this?
10. What is multiple facility protocol of the FLA?

Participants: Ten participants took part in this training. All the participants were from a social compliance, HR, Personnel or Administration background. There were two participants from South India, two others from Gujarat and six from Gurgaon-based factories. One participant was from the buyer's side and another participant was from a buying agent, the remaining eight participants were from garment factories.

Two of the participants left the training immediately after lunch.

Trainers / observers:

- A FLA trainer was Ms Monica Ramesh, Program team member from Association for Stimulating Know How

Agenda

A. Review of the concept of CSR and its benefits

B. Role of the HR/ Compliance Manager or Mid-level Management to convince the factory owner or the top management of the key benefits of adopting good or best practices in the Industry

C. Review the FLA code of Conduct and discuss ways to strengthen its implementation

Key Activities & Highlights

The highlight of the training was the discussion regarding the role of the HR managers and compliance officers in convincing the top-level management to invest in CSR practices that will lead to better working conditions and improved business. It was discussed that often the managers does not have adequate data, facts or information and on some other occasions, there are problems and conflicts between the HR Department and the production team. The participants exchanged their experiences and best practices with each other, which was helpful for everyone involved. The role-play where participants had to convince a "worker" to wear the PPE was very well received.

Reviewing the FLA compliance benchmarks was another important part of the training as none of the participants were aware of the compliance benchmark document.

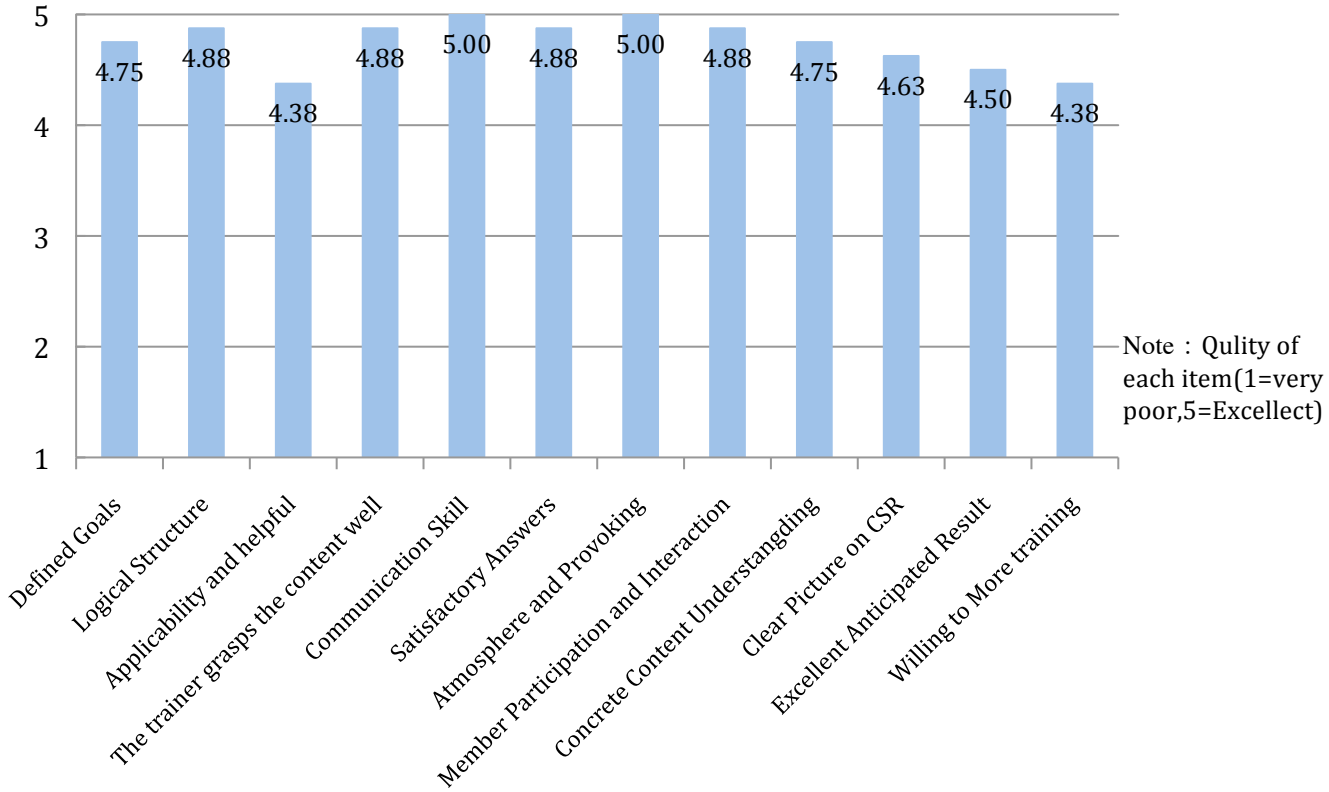
Figure 1 One of the participants during the role play on PPE

Figure 2 Another group proposing another way to address the PPE issue

Participant Feedback

A total of 8 participants provided feedback on the training, and the average scores summarised in Chart 1 below. The questionnaires asked participants to assign each aspect of the training a numbered score between one and five, one (1) signifying that the quality of that aspect is 'very poor' to five (5), signifying that the quality of that aspect is 'excellent'.

Chart 1: Feedback on Training:



Conclusion

The training session was a basic level module, which worked as a refresher for the participants to review social compliance requirements. The experience sharing among factories provided some practical learning points, for example, methods to conduct mass training for workers, and preparing personnel files with all the required records on the first day of worker's admission. Three-quarters (74%) of the participants rated the training as 'excellent'. One of the buyer's representatives from Gear for Sports requested that this training be held in South India, in Tirupur in particular, as the factories are located there.

Feedback from the participants also suggests interest in more advanced trainings in the future, and trainings on environmental protection, grievance procedures and child labor. Participants wished they had more time to discuss overtime policy, freedom of association and health and safety issues.