

## **BENETTON GROUP'S COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT WOMEN STARTS IN BANGLADESH AND PAKISTAN**

*Under the umbrella of its Women Empowerment Program, Benetton launches two concrete projects aimed at granting sustainable livelihood to women who work at home or in the Ready Made Garments sector in Bangladesh and Pakistan*

26 October 2016. Benetton's Women Empowerment Program (WEP) launches the Sustainable Livelihood Project with a two-year calendar of concrete initiatives aimed at empowering home-based female workers in Pakistan and women in the RMG (Ready Made Garments) sector in Bangladesh.

Presented in October 2015, the WE Program is the focus of Benetton Group's current sustainability strategy. Based on the Sustainable Development Goals set by the UN for 2020, its objectives - attaining gender equality and women empowerment - will be achieved through five key efforts: **sustainable livelihood, non-discrimination and equal opportunities, access to health, quality education and the end of every form of violence against women** around the world.

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WOMEN  
EMPOWERMENT  
PROGRAM

A fundamental step to empowering women worldwide is giving them the possibility to enjoy decent, fairly paid jobs in adequate workplaces, with additional measures to support them so that they can attain social and economic sustainability for themselves and their families. The focus on women explains why Benetton has decided to launch the Sustainable Livelihood Project under the umbrella of its WE Program.

The project starts in Bangladesh and Pakistan, where over the next two years Benetton will support the activities of UN Women, the United Nations organization for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Funding is aimed at improving the conditions of female garment workers and reducing their vulnerability, both at home and in the workplace.

In Bangladesh, we will support some 5,000-6,000 women currently employed in the RMG sector. We will organize training courses that will help them strengthen their professional skills. We will help them sign up for basic financial products at local banks, such as loans, insurances and savings accounts. We will start a dialogue with their employers aimed at increasing their safety at the workplace and in its surroundings.

In Pakistan, we will support around 1,500 women living in the manufacturing district of Sialkot. Priority will be given to the unemployed, those working at home or in the fields and those belonging to ethnic and religious minorities. We will help each of them obtain an ID, which is necessary to vote, open a bank account and get access to training courses. We will illustrate to them and their families what their rights are as women and workers and we will stress the fact that they

must be involved in decision-making processes, at all levels. We will also help them obtain formal employment and we will work together with the local textile factories to make workplaces more welcoming to women.

The Benetton Women Empowerment Program is rooted in the Italian fashion brand's **long history of social commitment** and moves on to recognize that gender equality and the empowerment of women are not only human rights, but necessary steps toward building a peaceful, prosperous and more sustainable world for all.

For further information: [we.benetton.com](http://we.benetton.com)

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## **About the WE Program:**

The WE Program (Women Empowerment Program) is a long-term, Benetton Group sustainability initiative aimed at supporting the empowerment of women worldwide.

To fulfill the goal of gender equality and women empowerment, Benetton Group has identified five key priorities in accordance with the UN agenda:

- ✓ Sustainable livelihood: ensure that women have access to decent work in safe places so that they may gain social and economic independence.
- ✓ Non-discrimination and equal opportunities: all forms of discrimination must be ended. Women and girls must be granted equal opportunities with men and boys in employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels. They must play a role in peace building and state-building and have full access to information and communications technology.
- ✓ Quality education: all girls and women must be granted access to affordable and quality education at all levels, including technical, vocational and university education.
- ✓ Healthcare: women and girls must be granted access to affordable and adequate healthcare. In particular they must be granted universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.
- ✓ Fight against violence: by 2030, all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres must be eliminated. This includes trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation and harmful practices such as genital mutilation and child marriage.