

CREATING SAFER WORKPLACES

IMPROVING THE LIVES OF WORKERS IN THE PUBLISHING SUPPLY CHAIN

A PROJECT BY



Executive summary

Creating Safer workplaces is a 2-year project by the Book Chain Project that aims to increase health and safety in print factories in China.

Phase one ran from September 2018 until August 2019. 11 different print companies were involved. We delivered a webinar for factory managers, created a guidebook collating best health & safety practices, recorded 3 best-practice case study interviews and ran a WeChat group to support managers. Plus, we conducted an end-of-project survey to understand individual needs and to give us an indication of the project's impact.

The project received overwhelming interest from managers. 115 print suppliers have downloaded the Health and Safety guide via the Book Chain Project system and some suppliers are already using it internally to improve their H&S management.

This project has highlighted the barriers to managing health and safety in the print industry but also the opportunities to improve. Companies were able to explore better managerial practices through learning from their peers.

Phase 2 of the project will focus on supporting managers to engage workers directly, empowering them to lead in improving H&S on the factory floor.

Why health and safety?

The Book Chain project is a collaboration of leading publishers that have been working together to drive social and environmental responsibility in their product supply chain. The BCP Labour & Environment Programme (PRELIMS) is underpinned by the Code of Conduct (COC). The COC commits suppliers to uphold certain standards at their factories, it also commits the publishers to support suppliers to deliver those standards. All the participating publishers have agreed on a [Code of Conduct](#) for labour and environmental standards and expect all their product suppliers to commit to working towards it. Health and safety is one of the key topics in the code of conduct, yet health and safety related issues are amongst the most common non-compliances in audits uploaded on the Book Chain Project system for Chinese print suppliers. This includes issues related to fire safety, electricity and machinery, correct PPE usage, building and infrastructure, management systems and chemicals handling. 6 out of 9 managers interviewed during the social insurance project last year said that health and safety was the area they would most appreciate support with. Besides this, the Chinese government are starting to crackdown heavily on health and safety issues – [21 printers](#) in Shenzhen were fined in 2018, and government safety inspections of factories have dramatically increased this year in factories in [Jiangsu](#) and [Zhejiang](#).

What we were aiming to achieve?

Creating safer workplaces was developed to support factory managers to better handle health and safety issues on site through best practice sharing between peers, and to raise worker awareness on health and safety. This is a two-year project:

Phase one (September 2018 – August 2019) focused on managerial engagement with the aim of improving health and safety management mechanisms through engaging with factory managers/H&S managers.

Phase two (September 2019 – August 2018) will focus on raising worker's awareness on health and safety, empowering them to be part of its management.

This report is a summary of the project in Phase One.

Timelines & activities

Activity started in September 2018. 11 print suppliers participated in the project.

- C & C Joint Printing (Shanghai)
- C & C Joint Printing (Shenzhen)
- Hung Hing Printing (Heshan)
- Hung Hing Printing (Shenzhen)
- RR Donnelley China (Dongguan)
- Toppan Leefung Packaging & Printing
- Wing King Tong Holdings
- Guangdong Greencolor Printing
- Dongguan Golden Cup Printing
- Dongguan Cheongming Printing
- Sheck Wah Tong Printing

In order to fully understand the specific health and safety issues at printing suppliers in China, and to create a guide that is simple, clear and practical, we conducted a number of one-to-one interviews with Health and Safety managers and also ran a survey and factory visits. We then invited specific managers to share case studies via a manager webinar, bringing together all 11 participating suppliers, and set up a WeChat group for managers to continue their conversations. The best-case studies went into the final '[Health and Safety Guidebook](#)' which was published in Mandarin on the Book Chain Project website. The guidebook walks managers through national regulations around H&S, how to set up good management systems, how to engage workers, including through health and safety training, and how to measure the impact interventions to support continuous improvement. Finally we recorded short interviews with managers at C & C Joint Printing (Shenzhen) and Dongguan Golden Cup Printing and shared the audio files via the system for non-participating suppliers to listen to.

Oct 2018 – Nov 2018

Understanding health and safety issues in the printing industry:

- *Pre-project surveys*
- *Factory interviews*
- *Factory visit*

Jan 2019 – Feb 2019

Share best practice between managers:

- *Analyse surveys*
- *Project webinar to share best practice*
- *Set up H&S WeChat support group*

Feb 2019 – Jun 2019

Collate case studies and develop a H&S guidebook:

- *Follow-on interviews*
- *Review H&S training materials from participating printers*
- *Desktop research into H&S best practices at print sites*
- *Develop guidebook*

Jul 2019 – Aug 2019

Finalise and launch H&S guidebook and audio case studies on the database:

- *Collect feedback from 11 participating suppliers*
- *Share guidebook with all Chinese suppliers via the system*
- *Survey for gathering feedback*

Key Achievements (2018-2019)

11 Participated print suppliers



9 H&S managers joined the kick-off webinar to share best practice



15 managers joined the H&S WeChat support group



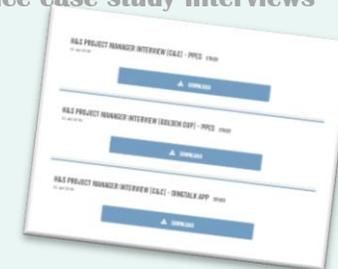
115 downloads of H&S guidebook via the Book Chain Project website



30 print suppliers responded to the guidebook feedback survey after downloading the guide



20 downloads of the audio best practice case study interviews



Impact assessment

30 people from 20 suppliers (including the 11 participating print suppliers) completed the project's closing survey, which asked:

- How useful the guidebook has been for them;
- Which topics are the most useful for them;
- Which type of content has been most helpful for them;
- Whether there was any additional content they'd like to see more of.

66% of respondents said they found the guidebook extremely useful. 59% respondents found the section on management systems to be particularly useful, while 49% surveyed people found the topic related to increasing worker engagement to be the most helpful.

Regarding the content under each subject illustrated in the guidebook, 83% of respondents found the case study sections throughout highlighting what other suppliers are doing to be extremely helpful. The audio recordings were also popular with those who have downloaded them – managers' report that these have inspired them to improve their own practices.

Two specific requests include publishing an English version of the guidebook and providing more detail on how to engage workers. Both requests will be addressed in the second phase of the project.

What we have learnt

There is real benefit in providing platforms for managers from different suppliers to talk to and learn from one another, both directly through webinars, but also indirectly through case study examples in guidebooks and audio recordings of manager interviews. All the feedback received through Phase one points towards managers valuing and wanting more of this. It builds knowledge and awareness, but it also helps to inspire teams internally and get internal buy-in.

Engaging workers directly, empowering them to be part of the solution for good H&S management, remains an area where suppliers would like more support. Our conversations with managers have taught us that, while suppliers do provide H&S training for their workers, management remains quite top-down and issues on the factory floor are mainly detected during manager inspections. Some factories have started to build reporting systems to empower and motivate workers to directly report hazards and actively promote safety with some success. Next year we want to build on this, working with suppliers to continue to share best practice around good worker-manager dialogue and to develop innovative worker engagement tools that inspire and empower workers.

“The guidebook is very useful. We really like the parts on what good practice looks like and the next steps *section*. We organised an internal meeting to go through the guidebook with the senior team and discussed how we could learn and apply some of the practices & suggestions in our own factory...”

Feedback from one participating