

GAI principles: Case studies of good practice

Principle 2. Businesses commit to prevent GBVH and ensure their business partners do the same. They conduct gender-responsive human rights due diligence, promote collaboration and share responsibility, risks and costs fairly.

Safeguarding human rights and preventing GBVH across the supply chain requires cooperation among all relevant actors. Businesses must collaborate, share resources and, where necessary, jointly fund interventions and support. Each business has an individual and non-transferable responsibility to respect human rights. They should work with partners to conduct GRHRDD, mitigate GBVH and fulfil their responsibilities. When purchasing, businesses must promote collaboration and support partners — including service providers (e.g. cleaners, recruiters) and product suppliers — through responsible purchasing practices.

The Dindigul Agreement

Following a high-profile case of sexual harassment and the alleged rape and murder of a 20-year-old Dalit worker, Jeyasre Kathiravel, in South India, the Dindigul Agreement was signed in 2022 following sustained advocacy and campaigning by a local trade union and global partners.

This enforceable binding agreement (EBA) was comprised of inter-locking bilateral legal agreements between an employing business (supplier), Eastman Exports; a local trade union, the Tamil Nadu Textile and Common Labour Union (TTCU); global labour rights organisations (Asia Floor Wage Alliance (AFWA) and Global Labor Justice – International Labor Rights Forum), and purchasing businesses (buyers), H&M Group, Gap Inc. and PVH Corp¹. Its aim was to eliminate GBVH at two specific Eastman sites: a spinning mill and Natchi factory by leveraging buyers' business relationships with the supplier to support a union-led programme, based on AWFA's [safe circles approach](#).

Key changes

The Agreement introduced coordinated mechanisms from boardroom to shop floor to identify, prevent, and address GBVH, and governance of the entire process:

¹ Whilst all three businesses had sourced from Eastman Exports, only H&M directly sourced by the factory.

- **An oversight committee** provided accountability and enabled buyers, global labour stakeholders and the supplier to resolve issues before agreements were breached.
- **An implementation committee** comprised of the supplier’s corporate management, local trade union and a global labour organisation provided support to local site management and enabled the development of a working relationship between local management and the union.
- **Independent programme staff** monitored and reported cases, ensuring trust in the grievance mechanism by the union and management.
- **Training and counselling to workers and managers** strengthened understanding of GBVH and awareness of reporting channels.
- **Union-trained shop-floor monitors** identified risks and resolved low-level GBVH concerns.
- **An Internal Complaints Committee**, as required by Indian law, investigated cases and used reduced caseloads to reflect on lessons and improve future prevention.

The leadership of TTCU and Eastman Exports was central: TTCU’s leader is widely trusted due to longstanding work supporting survivors in workers’ communities, while Eastman’s senior management prioritised GBVH prevention and FoA.

Impact

A 2024 end-term evaluation² found the Agreement to be a strong example of implementing ILO Convention No. 190 and promoting FoA. Workers reported higher safety, dignity, and confidence, while management experienced fewer conflicts and reduced business risk.

Notable outcomes included:

- Increased awareness of GBVH and workers’ rights.
- Significantly higher grievance reporting due to improved trust in mechanisms, rather than increased incidences.
- Rapid resolution of GBVH complaints, often within days.
- A transformed workplace culture, with declines in harassment, “moral policing”, and fear-based silence.

These outcomes resulted from investment by the supplier, union, labour organisations, and buyers, which has been funded by buyers. However, sustainability of the model has yet to be proven by stronger business for the supplier, such as increase in orders from as a result of stronger human rights performance. Stakeholders believe the model is highly replicable where there is local trust, strong unions, an overriding commitment to address GBVH expressed by industry collaborative action³, and employer (supplier) willingness. Further, replication can be cost-efficient when adapting existing training and institutional structures.

² S Kuruvilla, The Dindigul Agreement to End Gender-based Violence and Harassment: Has it worked? (ILR Global Labor Institute, 2025). Available form: <https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/sites/default/files-d8/2025-11/gli-dindigul-nov2025-final3.pdf> [accessed 16 Feb 2026].

³ A tragedy or traumatic event has often been the catalyst for (re)action by stakeholders.