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Walmart launches initiative to empower women working in factories in India, Bangladesh, China and Central America.

Bentonville (US). Walmart today launched its Women in Factories programme, a five-year initiative that will empower 60,000 women working in factories that supply products to Walmart and other retailers in India, Bangladesh, China and Central America. The program, which is being implemented in collaboration with local NGOs, will teach critical life skills related to communication, hygiene, reproductive health, occupational health and safety, identifying personal strengths and gender sensitivity. Up to 8,000 women will also receive leadership training to develop the work and life skills necessary for personal and career development.

The program will be rolled out to 150 factories in India, Bangladesh, China and Central America over the next five years, initially launching in Bangladesh and India in 2012. The program was designed and will be implemented in collaboration with CARE in Bangladesh and SWASTI in India. The program will be evaluated by Northwestern University in partnership with DAI and Mission Measurement.

The Women in Factories program is part of Walmart's Global Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative that Walmart president and CEO, Mike Duke, announced in September 2011.

Walmart's Global Women's Economic Empowerment Initiative aims to use the company's global size and scale to empower women across its supply chain by focusing on five main goals:

- •Increase sourcing from women owned businesses,
- •Empower women on farms and factories,
- •Empower women through job training and education,
- •Increase gender diversity among major suppliers; and
- •Make significant philanthropic giving toward women's economic empowerment.