



## CSOs and NGOs working for Migrant Workers Rights<sup>1</sup>

**Name of Organisation:** AWAJ Foundation, Bangladesh, 2003

**Website of Organisation:** <http://awaj.info/>

**Facebook of Organisation:** <https://www.facebook.com/awajfoundation.org/>

**Organisation of DTP Alumni Y/N:** Yes

AWAJ, which means “voice” in Bangla, is a foundation that has over 37,000 members and 37 full-time staff. It has helped settle thousands of disputes regarding wages, overtime, holidays and maternity leave from over hundreds of cases from factories. Awaj Foundation provides a platform that offers all sorts of support and opportunity for socializing and mobilizing the workers’ issues. It also raises awareness on the rights of migrant workers. It campaigns for safe migration and anti-trafficking, and ensures migrants representation to the ‘Wage Earner Welfare Board & Probashi Kakkyan Bank’. It provides reintegration and rehabilitation program, as well as coordinates action and research on labour rights for migrant workers and other advocates/CSOs.

AWAJ is registered under the Department of Women Affairs and NGO Affairs Bureau Bangladesh. It was founded in 2003 by Nazma Akter, who is one of the country’s most respected and influential labor leaders. Nazma values garment factories as she believes the industry provides women with working opportunities as it empowers them to earn a living and have greater choices in life. However, the garment industry has been exploitative and lacks safe working conditions and regulations. Nazma is against this and views that the women should get fair and safe treatment. Nazma argues, “When a woman garment worker knows her rights, she can demand better working conditions from the factory.” Furthermore, Awaj Foundation’s vision is to provide services to migrants at all stages of migration, through coordination and cooperation with other stakeholders at home and abroad. Awaj Foundation will collaborate with national, regional and international organizations in addressing the rights of migrant workers both in the human rights and legal aspects.

**Organisational Strength:**

- 70 well trained full time staff members & 25 field officers
- 4 dedicated lawyers providing legal support to victim workers
- 2 doctors providing medical consultancy to the grassroots
- 19 officer in 12 major industrial clusters in Dhaka and Chittagong division
- 15 well equipped/furnished training venues
- 23 well trained trainers (TOT) on labour and labour migration

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**Website:** <http://awaj.info/>

**Facebook :** <https://www.facebook.com/awajfoundation.org/>

*Profile written March 2017*

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<sup>1</sup> The Diplomacy Training Program (DTP) is an NGO affiliated with the Faculty of Law at UNSW in Sydney. Since 1990, it has provided training to over 2800 human rights defenders and community advocates. These individuals work for a wide range of organisations working to promote shared values of human rights – in different ways. This profile is part of a series developed by DTP ([www.dtp.unsw.edu.au](http://www.dtp.unsw.edu.au)) to illustrate the richness and diversity of the organisations working to promote human rights more broadly.