

USAS | united students against sweatshops

End Deathtraps Worker Tour: About The Speakers



Kalpona Akter is the executive director of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity (BCWS), one of Bangladesh's most prominent labor rights advocacy organizations, and is herself a former child garment worker. BCWS is regarded by the international labor rights movement and by multinational apparel companies as among the most effective grassroots labor organizations in the country. Kalpona is an internationally-recognized labor rights advocate and has traveled widely to speak about the deplorable conditions that Bangladeshi garment workers face every day. She has been interviewed extensively by local and international media, particularly following the Tazreen fire and the Rana Plaza building collapse.

Reba Sikder, is a 19 year old Bangladeshi garment worker. She worked for over a year as a sewing operator at Ether Tex Ltd, a factory located in the Rana Plaza building. On the day of the Rana Plaza collapse, Reba was working on the 6th floor of the building. She was trapped in the rubble for two days before she was finally rescued. Since the collapse, Reba has been actively involved in organizing efforts to pressure apparel brands to pay compensation to Rana Plaza survivors and sign the Bangladesh Safety Accord.



Garrett Shishido Strain is a USAS national organizer, coordinating international campaigns in solidarity with garment workers who produce apparel for US universities. While attending the University of Washington-Seattle, Garrett helped organize several campaigns for student and worker power, including UW USAS's successful campaign to end the University's business relationship with outsourcing giant Sodexo. Beginning in 2010, Garrett also became an elected officer and organizer with UAW Local 4121 where he helped organize a contract campaign that resulted in significant wage increases and improvements for over 4,200 academic student employees across the UW campus.

