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# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## *How Quay Asia Tackles Societal and Workforce Inequality through Social Enterprise*

Different organisations have different approaches to corporate social responsibility. Quay Asia believes addressing inequalities in society is an important aspect of corporate social responsibility.

From 2016 Quay Asia has supported a social enterprise known as “Aroyee.” Aroyee trains and then employs young women and men from disadvantaged families in the Chittagong Hill Tracts to be chefs and servers. Quay Asia invests in and manages Aroyee. Quay Asia regularly reviews its oversight of Aroyee to ensure labour compliance and maintain a robust ethical framework around equality, employment, and remuneration.

Quay Asia provides accommodation in Dhaka to all apprentices and employees. Apprentices receive a stipend equivalent to almost twice the minimum wage set for workers in the apparel industry – the largest manufacturing sector in Bangladesh. In addition, every apprentice can graduate to permanent employment after a few months’ training. Women and men receive equal remuneration for equivalent work. The business is structured so that women can pursue equally or more highly remunerated positions.

These financial and employment arrangements address structural inequalities in the labour market by allowing women, people from families with limited capital, and people from minority communities to enter the labour market and build a resilient career where they can both save and remit money back to their families.

For all employees of Aroyee, Quay Asia facilitates the opening of a bank account to receive salaries, promotes financial literacy and inclusion, and acts as a guarantor for employee bank loans. Quay Asia protects employees by providing life, medical and accident insurance.

To date Quay Asia has provided training and decent employment to six women and six men from the Chakma and Tripura communities. Quay Asia recruits and supports the relocation of these young people by providing safe accommodation in Dhaka.

Existing women employees accompany women recruits from their homes in Rangamati and Khagrachari Districts. Quay Asia provides information about safeguarding to the parents or guardians of young women recruits.

Following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic the Aroyee service was suspended in March 2020. Quay Asia assessed health risks and allowed the Aroyee staff members to return to their communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. However, the company continued to remunerate Aroyee employees at 50 per cent of gross salary in the absence of a universal national insurance system or national unemployment benefit scheme in Bangladesh.

Overall, Quay Asia addresses a complex intersectionality of workforce inequality through the careful structure of career opportunities and decent work for women and men of poorer families from the small ethnic communities in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.