

Fit for Fair

An overview

The growing consumption of fast food, clothes and shoes leaves very little space for contemplating the source and means these products were made of and with. Fit for Fair is a project, a part of the global effort to raise awareness in consumers about their role and power in shaping the face of industry, the decent lives of manufacturing labour and in the long run the attitudes towards resources which could be human, environmental, monetary etc.

Fairness in consumption and trade means all people engaged in the production of goods which we consume have been treated fairly, their human rights, dignity and personal integrity were preserved and kept intact, they were not coerced into labour which was harmful to them or the environment.

Decent work in the sportswear industry

In 2013, six NGOs from six different countries in Europe launched a joint project to increase awareness among the general public of exploitation and human rights abuse in the sportswear industry. Funded by the European Union, the project is run by partners in Germany, the UK, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Moldova. 'Fit for Fair' aims to support consumers to better understand and challenge the issues facing garment workers in the sportswear supply chain.

The project team aims to connect consumers across Europe with the women and men who make their clothes and thus catalyse action for change in the producers' fates and lives.

The most of the sportswear under famed names of international brands is actually manufactured in countries or regions of the third world and by women labour mostly. These brands are presented and advertised on world-wide sports events and on mass media but the actual products (clothes, shoes, balls etc.) are the fruits of underpaid and rights-deprived women labour, facts the final consumer is usually unaware of and is misled by the brands' popular image.

The project comes as a tool for bridging the cultural gap in the ideas for decent labour in the north and south poles of the European Union and in third countries. More often than not buyers and consumers of high quality sportswear in the developed North are unaware of the working conditions and the low-rate pay the hand manufacturing these goods is forced to comply with. It is also true that more affluent consumers are very rarely aware that some of these goods are produced in the southern regions of Europe at the same strenuous and humiliating working conditions as their colleagues from the 'third-world' countries work in.

FIT FOR FAIR is targeted at provoking a change in the mindset and behaviour patterns of youth and teenagers as well as their surrounding adults with regard mostly to raised awareness to the human cost in the production of high quality sportswear. The project is designed to be of benefit to both developed and developing countries by offering insights

into the differences between the ideas of labour rights and responsibilities of these two groups (the consumer public and the manufacturing labour) and thus helping in shortening the distances that separates them.

Over the course of the project's implementation many of the targeted issues have changed, the Rana Plaza collapsed taking the lives of over a thousand of Bangladeshi working poor and revealing in the ruins the litter of labels of the most famous world brands. The world saw the reluctance brands and retailers linked to Rana Plaza showed to providing sufficient and timely donations into the fund, which was set up to pay compensations to the victims and their families. And also we all witnessed how through joined effort the rights of the workers could be defended. That now action has been started in Bangladesh to bring about policy changes to ensure that those affected by future disasters would receive more timely support, that there is enough confidence to urge European politicians to develop better regulation of supply chains to ensure that brands and retailers are held properly accountable in the future.

Books were published and seminars were held to illustrate that not all the brands treat their producers like disposables. The good practices of those who work for more than quick profit will surely be adopted and some of them have entered the textbooks for young designers and clothing industry managers.

Global learning for decent work in the sportswear industry

It is our belief that the more people learn about the conditions the famous brands' produce is made in, the greater the power grows for changing the status quo of exploiting human health, dignity as well as natural resources. We believe that if more attention is paid to these issues and more people are engaged in finding an effective solution to these problems, they will not exist tomorrow.

Global learning and education promotes the shared point of view, recognizing the rights of those who are different, developing of a cross cultural communication skills of people of all ages.

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