

Accessing the Harsh Reality of Sweatshops

Harsh Reality

Every human being has the right to get paid fairly for the work they do and not be subjected to a dangerous and/or toxic working environment. Yet, the harsh reality is that many of the consumer electronics products we enjoy, whether it's a DVD player, HD television, or an MP3 are made by people who don't earn a living wage. Often they work six and seven days a week, and live in small crowded dormitories.

The Downward Slide

Brand manufacturers of consumer electronics are in a fiercely competitive market for our dollars. They are driven by: price pressures, narrowing profit margins, investor pressures, and brand perception.

These forces motivate brand manufacturers to pressure factories into faster production cycles, higher quality, and lower production costs. Factories, who are already operating on small profit margins find ways to cut costs. Usually, this means that workers in countries like China, Malaysia, and Mexico don't make a living wage and are often subjected to harsh and unsafe working conditions. For example, in China the standard wage in many factories is less than 45 cents per hour (US dollars). A living wage, according to several sources, including the World Bank, is three times that.

Many Products, Few Choices

The sad reality is even if we want to support companies that pay their workers a living wage, and foster safe workplaces, by purchasing their products, we have little or no information on which to base our decision. The electronics industry, under pressure from human rights organizations such as CAFOD in Europe, have come up with an Electronics Industry Code of Conduct. Enforcement of the code is completely voluntary and results of factory inspections are generally private and confidential. Unfortunately, there is overwhelming evidence that terrible working conditions and below poverty wages persist.

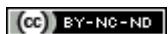
Organizations like SOMO in Europe, CEREAL in Mexico, and SACOM in Hong Kong are continually reporting and exposing sweatshop abuses in the electronics industry.

Conclusion

There is "downward spiral" that drives companies to seek solutions that pay people a non-living wage, subjects them to unsafe and dangerous working conditions, and destroys the local natural resources. Everyday, millions suffer because of this. Fair Workplace Council believes there is a way to help reverse this trend and create a mechanism where people and the environment do not have to

Fair Workplace Council is a California based nonprofit organization dedicated to living wages and safe working conditions in the manufacture of consumer electronics.

For more information contact us: www.fairworkplace.org. or e-mail us: info@fairworkplace.org



©2007 by Fair Workplace Council. Original content created by Fair Workplace Council is available under a creative commons license. Some information and images are provided by third parties and are subject to copyright license of the original owner.

suffer in order for us to enjoy modern technology.



©2007 by Fair Workplace Council. Original content created by Fair Workplace Council is available under a creative commons license. Some information and images are provided by third parties and are subject to copyright license of the original owner.