



Arisa Newsletter 12, February 2021

40 years Arisa / India Committee of the Netherlands

On the 15th of August last year it was exactly 40 years ago that the India Committee of the Netherlands was founded as an association. A good reason to look back. This year, Arisa will



India Committee of the Netherlands

pay attention in the next editions of this newsletter to the history of the organisation, which has been working on improving human rights in India and South Asia for 40 years now.

In this newsletter we kick off with an article about the origins of the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN) and an impression of the first years.

Any special memories of the India Committee of the Netherlands? We would like to include responses from our network in our newsletter. Send your story (max. 250 words) to info@arisa.nl. Photos are of course also welcome. Your contribution is greatly appreciated!

After 40 years, the India Committee of the Netherlands is still active, now under the name Arisa. We are supported through project funding and a number of loyal donors who have a warm hart for our work. We thank everyone who has supported us over the years. Our work is still badly needed in the coming years! That is why we urge readers to keep supporting us. Every gift to Arisa - no matter how big or small - is very welcome and will be used to improve the lives of marginalised groups in India and South Asia.

You can transfer your donation to bank account **NL 81 TRIO 037 931 3200** of Arisa Foundation in Utrecht, with specification "Donation". BIC-code is TRIONL2U.

(More than) 40 years of India Committee of the Netherlands: the first years

In 1980 the India Committee of the Netherlands was officially founded as an association. But the history of the organisation goes back even further....

It all started with a small group of people, mostly scientists and students with a special focus on India, in an attic room somewhere in Utrecht, in 1976. Things did not go well in India: in the summer of 1975, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared the state of emergency, because she could no longer manage the protests against her economic policy. Many political organisations were banned, thousands of people were imprisoned for political reasons and the press was heavily censored. Despite all these repressive measures, the Dutch media and politicians remained uncritically towards the Indian prime minister. The group of sympathizers in the attic in Utrecht decided to provide better and critical information to the Dutch public about the socio-economic, political and cultural developments in India.

[Read more....](#)

Arisa's donation campaign for affected migrant workers closed

In March last year, Arisa called for a financial contribution to support our local partners, who assist the many migrant workers affected by the lockdown in India.

In total we raised € 15,966.50: a great amount! The money was transferred in stages over the year to our partner organisations READ, SAVE, Manjari and Garment Labour Union (GLU), which enabled them to assist the most vulnerable migrants and their families in their regions. Also on behalf of our partners, many thanks to everyone who made a contribution.



Second Indian newsletter *Work: No Child's Business*

Work: No Child's Business India has released its second newsletter. WNCB is an alliance of Stop Child Labour (including Arisa), UNICEF and Save the Children that is working with local organisations in six countries - including India - to tackle child labour. More information about the initiative can be found at <https://www.wncb.org>.

In this second Indian newsletter, attention is paid to the effects on children of migration due to COVID-19. The number of out-of-school children in the age group 6-10 has tripled, due to the lack of school meals, many children are at risk of hunger, and not being able to go to school poses the danger of more child labour, child marriages and child trafficking.

You can download the *WNCB India Newsletter* [here](#).



Session of *Together for Decent Leather* during OECD Forum

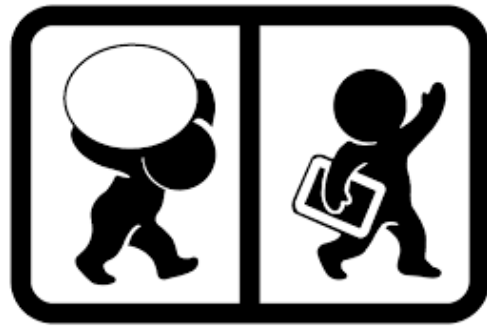
Since April 2020, Arisa participates in the *Together for Decent Leather* program. A project that focuses on improving the working conditions of leather workers in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. On February 2, 2021, a session was organised as part of this program during the annual *OECD Forum on Due Diligence in the Garment and Footwear Sector*. Project partners from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh gave a brief presentation on the leather sector in the respective countries, including common abuses towards leather workers such as contract labour, low wages, health and safety risks, and lack of social security. There were also several external speakers. The German *Textil Bündnis* explained how they apply the OECD due diligence process and what they expect from affiliated companies to make their chains more responsible. Transparency, involving rightsholders and ensuring an effective complaints mechanism are part of this. The British company *Pentland* showed how they, in collaboration with *Homeworkers Worldwide* and *Cividep*, have been active in improving the position of home workers in their chain in India. One of the tools that was shared was the use of job cards that record the work and the agreed wages between the intermediary and the home worker. More than 60 people took part in the session.



For more information about the *Together for Decent Leather* program, click [here](#).

Good news from the project of the natural stone company Arte

Natural stone company Arte and Arisa have been working with MV Foundation (MVF) for several years on the creation of a child labour free zone in the quarry area in Ballikurava, Andhra Pradesh. The lockdown left many workers, especially migrant workers, without work and income. Mobilisers [i.e. MVF community workers] maintained contact between them and the community and, in collaboration with the local government, provided them with basic food supplies, face masks, etc. The same mobilisers use a tracking system for the school attendance of the children. The schools reopened after 10 months, and the mobilisers found out that a boy did not show up for education: he turned out to be working in one of the quarries in the project area. They contacted the quarry owner who had not inquired about the boy's age. This man had previously attended a meeting between colleagues and MVF, so he was familiar with the project. The boy is now back in school and the owner now even pays his study fees! What a great change, such a well-functioning tracking system!

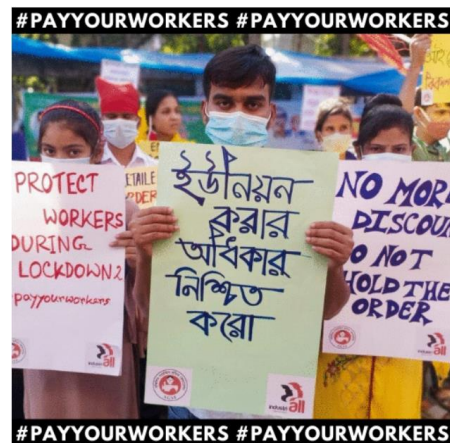


Furthermore, the organisation with which the German Xertifix cooperates for its audits has become a project partner. They were impressed after an introduction by MVF and meeting the teachers and mobilisers of the local youth who talked about working conditions and even about establishing a trade union. The organisation is now recruiting people to train workers and involve quarry owners in the project.

Clean Clothes Campaign: COVID-19 wage assurance and severance guarantee fund

Garment brands and retailers responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by cancelling orders or forcing discounts on goods already produced. The main risks and costs of the crisis were thus shifted to the people who are least able to pay this price, after having been paid poverty wages for years: the workers.

Clean Clothes Campaign, of which Arisa is a member, is seeking broad, world-wide support for a wage assurance, a severance guarantee fund and the #PayYourWorkers campaign. The website <https://payyourworkers.org> will go online in February. The campaign aims to hold brands and retailers who sell apparel responsible for the unpaid wages and severance owed to garment workers in their supply chains, urging them to maintain workers' regular income throughout the pandemic and to join a severance guarantee fund to ensure that garment workers who lose their jobs receive the severance pay and back wages to which they are legally entitled.



More information about the #PayYourWorkers campaign can be found [here](#).

Follow Arisa on social media

Arisa is active on social media. Under the name 'Arisa Foundation' we share messages about human rights violations in South Asia, especially in relation to the global supply chains of garment and textile, natural stone and seed production. Follow us on *Twitter* (<https://twitter.com/arisafoundation/>) and *LinkedIn* (<https://www.linkedin.com/company/arisafoundation/>)!

With this newsletter, Arisa wants to keep you specifically informed about her own activities.

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Arisa Foundation

Korte Elisabethstraat 11

3511 JG Utrecht, The Netherlands

T: + 31 (0)30 – 232 1340 E: info@arisa.nl W: <https://arisa.nl>