



Arisa Newsletter 18, December 2021

This is the last newsletter of 2021, the year in which we celebrated our 40th anniversary. In each newsletter we reflected on a period from our history. We would like to thank you all for the support and cooperation over the past years. In 2022 we will continue our work to protect human rights in production chains in South Asia and we would like to do that together with you.

Happy Holidays!

Responsible procurement by Dutch government: good example to follow?

Ten years after the Dutch government has committed itself to sustainable and socially responsible procurement in global production chains, it is still not possible to achieve this ambition. This is evident from a new study by the MVO Platform, into twenty procurements of the government of the Netherlands in the period 2018-2021. Arisa actively participated in this research.

Each year, the Dutch government spends 17 billion euros on the purchase of products and services in sectors with a high risk of human rights violations and environmental damage, such as electronics, food, natural stone, garments and textiles. The report [Goed voorbeeld doet volgen?](#) ("Good example to follow?") shows that in only ten percent of the procurements examined, government agencies took responsible supply chains seriously by implementing the [International Social Conditions](#) (ISV). A large part of the tenders fell outside of this so-called ISV policy, while they took place in high-risk sectors. The study also found that the Dutch government lacks sufficient knowledge and ambition to put the policy into practice as well as structural insight into its application.



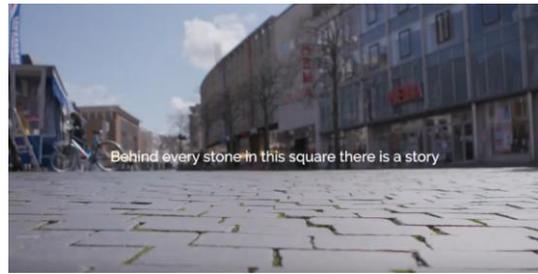
Goed voorbeeld doet volgen?
Onderzoek naar aandacht voor verantwoorde
waardeketens in overheidsaanbestedingen
november 2021

Fortunately, good examples have also been found. For example, purchasers from Rijkswaterstaat (Directorate General for Public Works and Water Management) set conditions for the minimum price received by coffee farmers in a tender for catering for 10,000 civil servants, and preference was given to companies that could present a good plan for sustainability in the chain. Purchasers of the Belastingdienst (Tax and Customs Administration) are cooperating with Electronics Watch - an organisation that focuses specifically on improving conditions in the electronics sector through public procurement - to purchase new storage equipment for a data center. These are examples that will hopefully be followed more widely in the coming years. Arisa will continue to fight for a sustainable procurement policy by the government and contracting authorities in the near future.

Sustainable procurement of natural stone

Over the past three years, a group of government agencies, companies and NGOs have been working on applying the International Social Conditions (ISV) in the procurement of natural stone for government projects. This project was commissioned by the TruStone Initiative. Arisa has been closely involved in a number of activities of the project, such as the risk assessments in two regions in India where TruStone companies source granite and sandstone. Just before the outbreak of the pandemic,

the results of the studies were discussed with the local suppliers during a working visit. As the visit to Rajasthan had to be cancelled halfway, the dialogue continued online with a number of stakeholder discussions in which our partners from Rajasthan were also involved. A number of videos were made to conclude the project:



A video for companies: <https://youtu.be/rTu0lcKGzsY>, a video for municipalities and other procuring authorities: <https://youtu.be/pkui9OGdYYQ> and a video on cooperation and dialogue: <https://youtu.be/99I5I9revrA>.

A [German publication](#) dedicated to the role municipalities can play when it comes to sustainable procurement and corporate social responsibility, features an interview with Arisa colleague Lizette Vosman (page 10).

Results of the first year of the *Factory Support Programme* in Tamil Nadu

In September 2020, the Factory support programme started in Tamil Nadu. This project, co-financed by RVO (Netherlands Enterprise Agency), focuses on working conditions at suppliers of eight Dutch garment companies: Erve Europe, Euretco, Fabienne Chapot, HEMA, O'Neill, Prénatal, The Sting and WE Fashion. Other participants in the project are, in addition to Arisa, Mondiaal FNV and local NGO SAVE. The aim is twofold: on the one hand to raise awareness of workers' rights and responsibilities, and on the other hand to set up functioning workers' committees aligned with Indian labour regulations.



Participating companies are expected to nominate their own suppliers for a SAVE training programme. This organisation trains the management and workers of factories to form and run the worker committees. Corona threw a bit of a spanner in the works, but eventually the training programme started at six suppliers. One supplier has already completed the programme.

In addition to the training programme, SAVE runs a local complaints line. To increase the awareness of this line, she advertises in neighbourhoods of Tirupur where workers live. In the past year, 416 complaints were received on the line, almost half of which have now been successfully resolved. Where necessary, Arisa supports the complaints line and coordinates the communication between SAVE and the Dutch companies.

In the coming year we want as many factories as possible to participate in the training programme. The ultimate goal is to train 75 suppliers, not only direct suppliers of the participating companies, but also links deeper in the production chain, such as spinning mills.

More information on the initial results of the programme can be read [here](#).

***Sustainable Natural Stone Project* kicks off in Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu**

Last month the kick-off sessions of the *Sustainable Natural Stone Project* in India – delayed by corona – finally took place. This collaboration between Arisa and natural stone companies Michel Oprey & Beisterveld (MOB), Stone and Jetstone is co-financed by the RVO (Netherlands Enterprise Agency). ASK and XertifiX, two organisations that will carry out risk analyses in factories and quarries in the above-mentioned states, shared their plans for the project during the sessions. From January 2022, they will map out which risks are present in and around a number of suppliers of the participating natural stone companies. They will do this through inspections and interviews with workers, trade unions, local authorities and communities.

After completing the risk analysis, the natural stone companies affiliated with the TruStone Initiative will draw up an action plan, together with Arisa, suppliers and local partners. This next phase of the project is scheduled to begin in June 2022.

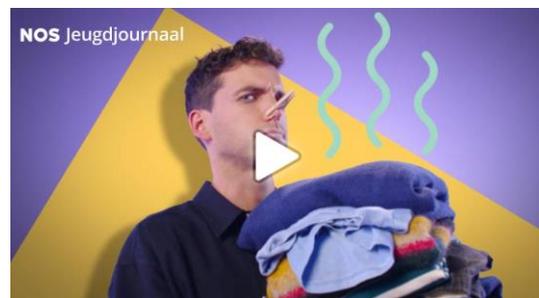
Understanding the garment industry chain in Delhi

Arisa has commissioned new research that aims to better mapping the structures of the garment industry in two districts in Delhi. Delhi and its surroundings - the National Capital Region (NCR) - is one of the larger production areas for garment and textiles in India. The study specifically looks at all the steps that exist between the export factories where clothing is made and subcontractors who carry out parts of the production process. It is known that part of the production is outsourced to small workshops and homeworkers. This is where the risk of poor working conditions and child labour is greatest. Previous research showed that many children in Delhi are still working in the garment industry, particularly in their own homes, along with their homeworking parent(s). These parents, mainly women, are often paid very little for their work, and because they have no formal employment relationship with their contractor, they are not in a position to negotiate their wages, the amount of work, or when the job needs to be finished. Children work with their parents to earn some extra money, for example, or to complete the amount of work on time. By gaining more insight into the garment industry chain, intervention strategies can be developed to improve the situation of homeworkers, thereby reducing the need for children to work along with their homeworking parents. The research is part of the [Work: No Child's Business \(WNCB\) programme](#). The results will be published in the spring of 2022.



Jeugdjournaal: garments with a bad smell....

As a result of the report [Seeds of Oppression](#) that Arisa released in July this year, the *Jeugdjournaal* (Dutch television news programme produced for children by NOS) contacted us. They wanted to pay attention to the problems in the garment industry. We brought NOS correspondent Aletta André in contact with our local partner in Gujarat, and that contribution was included in the video *Er zit een luchtje aan je kleren* ('There's a smell to your clothes').



Watch the video and more background information [on the Jeugdjournaal website](#) [only in Dutch].

Fourth newsletter Work: No Child's Business India

The [fourth edition of the WNCB India newsletter](#) was published recently. This time, much attention was paid to the consequences of the long school closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The *Work: No Child's Business* programme in India, in which Arisa also participates, will make extra efforts in the coming months to bringing children back to school. The pandemic has forced many children into labour and the various partners are working hard to reach these children and convince communities to allow children to return to school. In the newsletter special attention was paid to the position of girls and to the fact that millions of children were left without a midday meal due to the school closure. The newsletter also describes workshops that are held, in the context of WNCB, with children about storytelling.



MKB Nederland and VNO-NCW launch a webpage with information about child labour

MKB-Nederland (the largest entrepreneurs' organisation in the Netherlands) and VNO-NCW (the largest employers' organisation in the Netherlands) have taken the initiative to make entrepreneurs from small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) aware of the risk of child labour in their chain and what steps they can take. The [Work: No Child's Business](#) alliance,



of which Arisa is a part, has contributed to this initiative.

Entrepreneurs can [perform a scan on a website](#) [in Dutch] to gain insight into the possible risk of child labour and call in the help of an advisor free of charge. The Action Plan provides entrepreneurs with recommendations and tips to take action themselves in combating child labour in their supply chain. If there is a risk that a company is (indirectly) involved in child labour, the company is obliged to take steps to prevent and combat this child labour in the chain. For the action plan, Stop Child Labour's [Action Plan for Companies](#) has been translated and tailor-made for SME entrepreneurs.

Announcement of legislation for responsible business

Arisa is pleased with the announcement by Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, De Bruijn, that the government will work towards a Dutch law for responsible and sustainable business. With this legislation, the Netherlands is taking a major step to protect human rights and the environment in global production chains. Together with the MVO Platform, Arisa has long argued for an obligation for companies to tackle abuses in their chains. Arisa actively participates in a number of initiatives in this field, such as the covenants, but also sees that voluntary initiatives only bring about limited changes. Research and policy evaluations have also shown that voluntary policy measures alone are not sufficient to encourage companies to act responsibly and that a legal obligation is necessary. Legislation for corporate social responsibility already exists in countries such as Germany, France and the United Kingdom.



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[More information](#) [in Dutch] can be found on the website of the MVO Platform.

40 years ICN/Arisa

This year we celebrate the 40th anniversary of our organisation. We look



India Committee of the Netherlands

back in the newsletter, but also on a special page on our website. For an overview of the history of ICN/Arisa, visit <https://arisa.nl/40jaarliw-arisa/>.

India Committee of the Netherlands: the years 2010-2020

In this newsletter, we focus on the last decade of ICN/Arisa's 40-year struggle against child labour, human rights violations, discrimination and other injustices in India and South Asia. From this last period a selection of the numerous studies and reports that were often cited in the media, both nationally and internationally, and which repeatedly led to parliamentary questions that forced the Dutch government to take a position.

It was also a decade of major changes for the organisation. The number of staff members grew, Gerard Oonk retired as director after almost 40 years and Sandra Claassen took over, and the foundation moved to new premises on the Korte Elisabethstraat in the center of Utrecht. The latter in combination with the change of name into Arisa – 'Advocating Rights in South Asia' –, and with that the expansion of the focus from India to South Asia.....

[Read more...](#)

Memories Wilma Roos, Mondiaal FNV, of her collaboration with ICN

Following our call for stories about 40 years of Arisa/ICN, we received several reactions. In this newsletter the contribution by Wilma Roos, senior policy advisor Mondiaal FNV and former member of Advisory Board ICN.

It has been almost 40 years ago, in 1982, that I cycled through the beautiful center of Utrecht to see a photo exhibition about India. A fellow student in Social Geography had persuaded me: as one of the first



volunteers of the India Committee of the Netherlands, he established this exhibition. And because I was curious about his activities at the ICN, I gladly went along. Impressive black and white photos showed a shocking world of poverty, inequality and caste discrimination that I was not aware of.

[Read more...](#)

Support Arisa's work!

Arisa is financially supported by institutional donors and a large group of individuals who are committed to our work. We value the financial support of those who appreciate our work and any donation to Arisa – no matter how big or small – is very welcome!

Deposit your contribution into bank account NL 81 TRIO 037 931 3200 attn. Arisa Foundation in Utrecht, stating "donation". BIC-code is TRIONL2U.

Follow Arisa on social media

Arisa has an Instagram account! On Instagram, Arisa mainly wants to showcase images about our work. We really appreciate it if you follow us. Under the name Arisa Foundation we share reports about human rights violations in South Asia, especially in relation to the production chains of garments and textiles, natural stone, leather and seeds. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).

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