



## Arisa Newsletter 6, February 2020

### Follow Arisa on social media

Arisa is active on social media. Under the name 'Arisa Foundation' we share messages about human rights 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/arisa-foundation/>)!

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

### International meeting on child labour in global supply chains

On January 27, Arisa participated in the international meeting *Taking next steps to end child labour in global supply chains* in Leiden. The meeting provided an opportunity for constructive dialogue to share good practices, challenges and lessons learned to end child labour in global supply chains. Among the speakers were the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Sigrid Kaag, and children's rights activist and Nobel Prize winner Kailash Satyarthi.



152 million children aged 5 to 17 years old are still victims of child labour worldwide. Governments, companies and NGOs have therefore committed to the elimination of child labour by 2025, as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is increasingly recognised that child labour is everybody's responsibility in today's global supply chains.

### Contribution of Arisa partners MV Foundation and ARAVALI

Our partners, Venkat Reddy of MV Foundation and Varun Sharma of ARAVALI, were invited to speak at the conference and to share their experiences and insights regarding the child labour free zone approach and the involvement of (local) business.

We took the opportunity of our partners' visit to the Netherlands to meet with representatives from, among others, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Parliament and the procurement department of the municipality of Amsterdam as well as the education labour union, to discuss about child labour, labour rights, mandatory due diligence legislation and the role of civil society, business and governments in addressing human rights violations.



"Child labour causes poverty," says mr. Venkat Reddy of MV Foundation, who has more than twenty years of experience in working with Child Labour Free Zones. He adds that it is a myth that the income of children is essential for families living in poverty. While he does not deny that every penny helps when you are poor, the children earning a few cents only causes poverty and illiteracy. The presence of child labour keeps the salaries of adults low as the children are unequal competitors on a labour market with high demand for cheap labour. "In a production area every child must go to school, and incentives are needed to ensure this. Companies are not reaching the last mile, the homeworkers."

"Transparency is essential for us working on the ground to know with whom we can engage to ensure sustainable change." Speaking is mr. Varun Sharma of ARAVALI. In his experience it is very valuable to know which international buyers are involved in the area where ARAVALI works. International pressure from governments and companies does help also to get local business to improve the working conditions and to take collective actions.

More (background) information on the international meeting can be found here:  
<https://takingnextsteps.nl/>.

## Tools and guidance documents for addressing child and forced labour online

Together with four garment companies and local partners, Arisa has been working in the past two years on the *Remedies Towards a Better Workplace* project in Tamil Nadu, India. One of the results of the project, which was also implemented in Bangladesh, is a series of tools for tackling child labour and forced labour and mapping the garment supply chain. These tools, co-developed with the Fair Labor Association (FLA), help companies to enter into a dialogue with their suppliers, provide ideas for mapping the supply chain and provide an overview of indicators for child labour. They can now be found online on the website of the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textile: <https://www.imvoconvenanten.nl/en/garments-textile/tools>.



### GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING POLICIES AND PRACTICES ON CHILD LABOUR AND FORCED LABOUR

Content developed by the Fair Labor Association (FLA) as part of the project "Remedies towards a Better Workplace" with input from project partners: Hivos, Arisa, Unicef, AGT/SER, SAVE, READ, CCR, CSR, WE Fashion, O'Neill, Pratap, Hunkemöller, ING, Cool Investments.

For whom: for AGT signatories, FLA affiliates, brands and companies

Objective: The explanations and recommendations provided in this document support companies in understanding how to best work with and support supply chain partners when addressing child labour and forced labour risks.

Background: As part of the project "Combating Child Labour in the Garment Supply Chain", AGT signatories used a collaborative approach to collect more insight into their supply chains and how best to support their supply chain partners in preventing and remedying child labour and forced labour. In Tamil Nadu the project was implemented by four Dutch garment companies: ARISA, SAVE and the Fair Labor Association (FLA) and in Bangladesh it was implemented by two Dutch garment companies, UNICEF Netherlands and CCR CSR.

The businesses and organisations that signed the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textiles (AGT) committed themselves to fighting child labour and forced labour in their supply chain. This document provides concrete steps for setting standards and improving child labour and forced labour policies, and recommendations for providing remediation in case forced labour or child labour is detected. Suggestions for further reading and links to existing tools for companies to address child labour and forced labour are also provided.

<https://www.imvoconvenanten.nl/en/garments-textile/tools>.

## More transparency in the garment industry

Clothing and shoe brands and retailers have drastically increased their disclosure of information about their supply chains in the past three years, a coalition of unions and human rights groups (including Clean Clothes Campaign and Human Rights Watch) and labour rights advocates said in their joint report *Fashion's Next Trend: Accelerating Supply Chain Transparency in the Garment and Footwear Industry*, published in December. In 2016, the coalition created the "Transparency Pledge", a minimum standard of supply chain transparency that enables advocates, workers and consumers to find out where a brand's products are made.



The report describes how dozens of brands and retailers are publicly disclosing information about their supplier factories. This has become a widely accepted step toward better identifying and addressing labour abuses in garment supply chains.

Read more about this report on the *Clean Clothes Campaign* website:  
<https://cleanclothes.org/news/2019/surge-in-garment-industry-transparency>.

## **OECD Conference 2020 on due diligence in the garment and shoe sector**

The OECD Conference on garment and footwear took place from 11-13 February 2020, this year focusing on due diligence. Two Arisa staff members travelled to Paris to take part in this conference, accompanied by one member of our Indian NGO partner SAVE in Tirupur. During the forum there were many sessions about corporate social responsibility from different angles. Themes such as transparency, data sharing, uncovering and including the hidden parts of supply chains, shifting trade dynamics, animal welfare and the idea of harmonising the different ways of auditing/evaluating were some of the topics discussed during these three days. One of the main sessions was dedicated to the discussion on mandatory due diligence. Since voluntary initiatives have not led to the hoped-for progress, legislation seems to receive increasing support from different stakeholders. During the discussion, a "smart mix" of legislation combined with existing multi-stakeholder initiatives was brought forward. The Agreement on Sustainable Garments and Textiles could function as a guiding platform for companies and brands on how to implement the intended laws.



In addition to the scheduled sessions, the conference also offered a good opportunity to meet other participants, as many people involved in the garment and footwear industry, from companies and ministries to NGOs and trade unions, attended the forum. Therefore, several side meetings were arranged in which Arisa and partner SAVE participated, an excellent opportunity to discuss upcoming and current projects and initiatives with other parties and partners, or to get to know new organisations. It were busy but interesting days!

## **Deadly Indian factory fire again shows need for preventive safety measures**

A fire in the Nandan Denim factory in the Indian city of Ahmedabad mid-February killed at least seven workers. According to media reports, the death toll was caused by severe safety defects in the factory. This fire thereby painfully shows the need for concerted preventive safety measures throughout India's garment industry.



The factory on its website claims to be one of the world's largest integrated denim fabric makers and, on a now removed page, named major international apparel companies including Wrangler, Zara, Joe Fresh, Target, VF Corp, Ralph Lauren and Primark as its buyers. Most of these companies have denied a recent sourcing relationship with the factory and the factory itself has indicated that this unit primarily produced for the local market. Despite these denials, the US import database Import Genius shows several recent shipments coming from the factory.

The fact that even such a large, internationally producing factory can turn out to maintain units that are obvious death traps is a bad sign for the safety of the many subcontracting and local producers in the country.

For more information, read the article on the site of Clean Clothes Campaign (Feb 17, 2020): <https://cleanclothes.org/news/2020/deadly-indian-factory-fire-again-shows-need-for-preventive-safety-measures-and-justice-for-workers>.

## **Support the work of Arisa Foundation!**

Arisa Foundation is financially supported by institutional donors and a group of individuals who are well-disposed to Arisa's work.

We thank all our donors who contributed to our work in 2019! We attach great importance to the financial support of those who appreciate our work, because it indicates that there are many people who also consider the goals we are committed to as important.

Every gift to Arisa – no matter how big or small – is very welcome!

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

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