

MAKE

#Bangladesh
#WorkerRights
#FastFashion
#DesignIntervention

“Workers should have their voice.”

- Kalpona Akter, Workers' Rights Advocate

FAST FACTS // Bangladesh:

- majority of Bangladeshi garment workers live in extreme poverty, despite a 65 % increase in the legal minimum wage from 11.5¢/hour to 18¢/hour in 2010.
- according to the United Nations, < \$1.00/day = extreme poverty
- in 2010, close to 50 garment workers lost their lives in factory fires in Bangladesh
- there are an estimated 3 million garment workers in Bangladesh
- the majority of Bangladeshi garment workers are women

TAKE ACTION // Campaigns:

| [#SABangladeshProject](#)
| [Killer Jeans](#)
| [Asia Floor Wage](#)
| [Living Wage Campaign](#)
| [Play Fair](#)
| [Triangle Returns:](#)
| [Institute for Global Labour and Human Rights](#)
| [Let's Clean Up Fashion](#)

*This is an edited 'sampling' of informational resources.
[Click here](#) for #MAKE learning activities, lesson plans and resources.*

FEATURED READING // #Bangladesh & #WorkerRights

[Bangladeshi garment workers denied rights, War on Want reports](#)

August 3, 2011

War on Want has published a new report outlining current conditions for garment workers in Bangladesh—Stitched Up: Women workers in the Bangladeshi garment sector. Of the many issues addressed in this report, the research outlines the true impact of short lead times, explaining how wages earned can depend on whether or not a worker meets production deadlines. It also showcases certain worker rights that have been denied as a result of an absent rule of law.

[Fashioning an Ethical Industry and London College of Fashion report // Steps Towards Sustainability: Snapshot Bangladesh](#)

July 30, 2011

Earlier this year, Fashioning an Ethical Industry (FEI) and London College of Fashion joined forces to produce Steps Towards Sustainability: Snapshot Bangladesh — A resource for fashion students and educators. “the seeds for creating a vibrant, more sustainable fashion industry in Bangladesh have started to be sown” (Steps Towards Sustainability: Snapshot Bangladesh: pg. 4) This must read report presents case studies as a snapshot that “educators and students can explore them from design, business and apparel management perspectives.” (Steps Towards Sustainability: Snapshot Bangladesh: pg. 6)

[Week of Action on Killer Jeans, Labour Behind the Label](#)

May 30, 2011

Like that faded denim look? Think again...

[Triangle // A Call for Remembrance, A Call for Action](#)

March 25, 2011

Let this 100th anniversary of Triangle be both a call for remembrance and a call to action. “This is the most necessary social movement of our generation” (Charles Kernaghan, NLC) This important documentary from the National Labor Committee connects the fire of 1911 to the Hameem group factory fire in Bangladesh that took place just a few short months ago.

Time to Connect the Dots!

August 18, 2010

Bangladesh has been rocked by protests that resulted in injured and killed workers and security personnel, labour leaders have gone into hiding fearing the worst, some arrests have taken place — all of this over unsatisfactory wage hikes to 3,000 Taka/month (~US\$43) but, don't worry Canadian consumers, your clothing costs will not increase! I have to say, I was a bit surprised by this headline, although, to be fair, it is in the "Money" section.

Bangladesh// The Details

July 29, 2010

Two weeks ago, SA founder, Mary Hanlon alerted us to a little reported story on massive worker strikes in Bangladesh. Following that, we decided to create Social Alterations // Visual Lab and introduced The Bangladesh Project. We noticed a lack of context in the reports circulating, so we decided to just go ahead and give our readers the details behind the story. Although the protests were most dramatic during the past month, this story has been unfolding for a long time. Let's go back one year to July 2009.

Bangladeshi garment workers fight for their rights, will you?

July 14, 2010

"The garment industry accounts for more than 80% of impoverished Bangladesh's £10bn annual export earnings" (Jason Burke, The Guardian) Millions of Bangladeshi workers took to the streets of Dhaka recently to protect their rights as workers only to find their basic human rights violated. Chilling images illustrate systemic violence and corruption, as workers went on strike to demand a better wage. Many of the images that emerged showcased children at the centre of the violent riots. Currently, the legal minimum wage for a garment worker in Bangladesh is 11½ ¢/ hour (an estimated \$25/ month).

#DesignIntervention // Alternatives to #FastFashion: Exploring different models of fashion

Hacking Design RSA

Otto Von Busch

Despite the ready to wear 'fast fashion' model being labeled as democratic, the reality is, in fact one in which workers have no voice. Consumers are encouraged to be passive and excessive waste is produced. The existing relationships between design, manufacture and consumption perpetuate a lack of horizontal agency; which is challenged by Otto, through the concept of 'Hackism'. A must see for designers who do not support the dominant industry model of fashion and are left feeling excluded from fashion altogether.

Sustainable Fashion and Textiles: Design Journeys

Fletcher, Kate. London: Earthscan, 2008.

"Sustainable Fashion and Textiles: Design Journeys brings together for the first time information about lifecycle sustainability impacts of fashion and textiles, practical alternatives, design concepts and social innovation. It challenges existing ideas about the scope and potential of sustainability issues in fashion and textiles, and sets out a more pluralistic, engaging and forward-looking picture, drawing on ideas of systems thinking, human needs, local products, slow fashion and participatory design, as well as knowledge of materials." (KateFletcher.com)

What Happens? An appendix on Fashion stewardship and Social entrepreneurship

Otto von Busch & Karl Palmås (2010)

A theoretical discussion on fashion stewardship in relation to the politics of invention. This paper unpicks the concepts of 'social' and 'entrepreneurship' in order to gain an understanding of what is meant by social entrepreneurship and how this can be related to social change.

What happens next? A journey towards fashion stewardship

Annika Axelsson, Otto von Busch, Karl Palmås & Karin Stenmar (2010)

An alternative approach to the business of fashion, told through this simple picture book. *'This is a story of a sustainable process in fashion called fashion stewardship. It is an adventure about a caring company that creates a symbiosis with a caring consumer.'*

Slow Fashion Fact Sheet

Kate Fletcher, for Fashioning an Ethical Industry

'Slow fashion is about designing, producing, consuming and living better.' (Kate Fletcher)

An alternative to the fast fashion model, slow fashion builds respect into the production of fashion and quality into the produce.

“the rituals of fashion”, “the mechanisms of fashion”, “the virus of fashion”

Otto von Busch

“Fashion is the celebration of the immediate future. By being constantly new, fashion indicates that the future can be something else, and it pulls us there, by force almost, promising the endless possibilities of the new, the unwritten, our possible better self.” (The Virus of Fashion, Axel Trumpheller and Otto von Busch: Pg. 27)

Fast Life, Slow Fashion: A New Theory of Fashion [VIDEO]

A panel of experts explores the complexities and sustainability of fast life and fast fashion in the 21st century - The New School

The experts in this program of discussion include practicing designers, and academics on the subject of slow fashion. The total program running for 1:34 minutes is broken down into short chapters (2-4 minutes) that can be watched individually. Chapters include 'building a slow fashion community', 'changing fashion as well as clothing'.

An end to fast fashion? Consumer-focused, sustainable alternatives

Directorate General for the Environment European commission 19th Jan 2012

Rapidly changing fashions are responsible for the increasing volume of production and consumption of clothing; this excess is associated with greater social and environmental impacts. If consumer values could be used to rethink design and business strategies, more sustainable production and consumption could be achieved.

A solution to fashion textile unsustainability

By Joan Farrer and Angie Finn

The mechanical operations of fast fashion production demonstrate a super efficient, mass manufacturing process. This process has social and environmental costs attached and the flow of information to the consumer is poor; as a result of this the buyer (brand or consumer) cannot exert choice over products based on knowledge of their production. This paper explores how persuasive adaptive computing could be used to increase awareness across the supply chain and combat the 'built in obsolesce' in today's fashion industry.

FURTHER READING // #Bangladesh & #WorkerRights

Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) // [Bangladesh](#)

BBC News: [Bangladesh Country Profile](#).

Dickson, Marsha, Suzanna Loker and Molly Eckman. [Social Responsibility in the Global Apparel Industry](#). Fairchild Books (2009)

Faruque, Abdullah Al. “[Current Status and Evolution of Industrial Relations System in Bangladesh](#)” Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Organization, 2009.

Haider, Mohammed Ziaul. “[Competitiveness of the Bangladesh Ready-made Garment Industry in Major International Markets](#).” Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Review. Vol. 3, No. 1, June 2007.

International Labour Organization: [Decent Work Country Programme: Bangladesh](#) (March 2008)

Kabeer, Naila. “Compliance Versus Accountability: Struggles for Dignity and Daily Bread in the Bangladesh Garment Industry.” In: Newell, Peter and Wheeler, Joanna, (eds.), *Rights, Resources and the Politics of Accountability*. London: Zed Press, 2006.

Overseas Development Institute. “[Bangladesh: Case Study for the MDG Gap Task Force Report](#).” The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. May 2010.

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Wage Ladder, new online tool benchmarks living wages for garment workers

November 23, 2011

The Fairwear Foundation (FWF) has just launched Wage Ladder, an online tool and resource to assist brands, factories, trade unions and NGOs in their efforts as they work towards establishing and mainstreaming living wages for garment workers. What exactly is a ‘living wage’?

[Fair Wear Foundation awarded UN grant to support garment workers in India and Bangladesh](#)

November 17, 2011

The Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) has been awarded a grant by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women (UN Trust Fund). Working in India and Bangladesh, the three year grant will be used by FWF and four partner organizations (SAVE and Cividep, in India, and the AMRF Society and Awaj Foundation in Bangladesh) “to implement innovative new strategies to reduce workplace violence against women in the garment industry.” (FWF)

[Kalpona Akter calls on Wal-Mart shareholders to stand-up for garment workers internationally](#)

June 5, 2011

Kalpona Akter, of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity (BCWS), addressed Wal-Mart shareholders at their annual meeting to present the NYC Pension Funds’ shareholder proposal for Wal-Mart Supplier Human and Workers’ Rights Reporting, with the support of New York City Comptroller John C. Liu.

[Bangladeshi labour activists face trial and wrongful detention on fabricated charges](#)

May 30, 2011

The Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC) has reported today that Kalpona Akter and Babul Akhter of the Bangladesh Workers Solidarity Center (BCWS), alongside other Bangladeshi labour leaders, will be forced back into court next month...

[New York Fashion Week vs. the Ready Made Garment Sector in Bangladesh: whose interests are protected when ‘special’ police hit the streets for fashion?](#)

February 1, 2011

The fashion industry is often seen as a complicated paradox. So much so that many professionals working in the field of worker rights and environmental security frequently shy away from using the word ‘fashion’ itself. In its place, they vote for ‘garment,’ ‘apparel,’ ‘textile,’ etc. While it’s natural for industry jargon to vary—different circles will have their own set of terminology—it is important to recognize that in the end we are all talking about the same thing: fashion.

Fashion, after all, designs the stage and sets the pace for the performance. For our part, if we cannot connect human and environmental security issues taking place within the industry’s supply chain to the fashion runway, we haven’t dug deep enough.

[Bangladeshi garment labour activist remains jailed on fabricated charges](#)

January 25, 2011

Last month, we received word on the arrest of Moshrefa Mishu, president of the Garment Workers Unity Forum, in Bangladesh. Since our initial report, further details on her arrest have surfaced, and we are happy to inform you that the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has formally issued an appeal. The issues surrounding the case include: illegal arrest; arbitrary detention; fabricated charges; ill-treatment; impunity; rule of law. (AHRC)

[Take Action // President of Garments Workers Unity Forum \(GWUF\) arrested, Bangladesh](#)

December 17, 2010

Social Alterations has learned that Moshrefa Mishu, the president of the Garments Workers Unity Forum (GWUF) in Bangladesh has been arrested.

[At least 28 Garment Workers Die in Bangladeshi Factory Fire, Clean Clothes Campaign Reports](#)

December 14, 2010

We are stricken by the news out of the Bangladesh today, where at least 28 garment workers have died in a factory fire. As you know, we have been campaigning for these workers, with your support. Our campaign is ongoing, and we will keep you posted on how to get involved as the story develops. In the meantime, please read the below message from the Clean Clothes Campaign.

For further reading, please visit SocialAlterations.com/reading

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