ACTION UPDATE

WINTER 2015

Supporting garment workers worldwide

LABOUR BEHIND THE LABEL

Welcome

In this Action Update you will find information on how your donations, campaigning and support have really made a difference.

Take action – demand Kik pays long term compensation for the victims' families from one of the worst factory fires in history which claimed the lives of 254 people. Our Change Your Shoes campaign has now launched and we are excited for it to build momentum. Download the app and keep checking our website to watch the campaign grow. Also in this update are details about a new report which has been released about H&M and its failing to meet safety standards for Bangladeshi garment workers.

We have had campaign success as a result of a global day of action on behalf of Mulberry workers where Labour Behind the Label worked alongside other campaign groups to support the SF Leather workers' cause. An agreement has been reached and this was a direct result of pressure and combined efforts from all involved.

Thank you for your continued support – without you our work wouldn't be possible. Whether you stand with us outside shops, attend demonstrations, donate, send action cards or fundraise for us, it all helps to make change happen. Together we can ensure a world where no one has to live in poverty for the price of a cheap t-shirt.

In solidarity,

Ilana, Ilona, Sam, Anna, Ursula, Caroline, Rose
The Labour Behind the Label Team

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Labour Behind the Label Limited supports garment workers' efforts worldwide to improve their working conditions. It is a not-for-profit cooperative company, registered in England No. 4173634. The Labour Behind the Label Trust is a separate organisation that raises funds for the organisation's charitable activities, registered charity number 1159356.

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Labour behind the Label at a glance

Labour Behind the Label campaign for garment workers' rights worldwide, supporting garment workers in their struggle to live in dignity and work in safety. We believe that everyone with a stake in the garment industry has a responsibility to improve conditions – workers need to join together and demand better rights, consumers need to take ethics into account in the way that they shop and enter into dialogue with companies, governments need to step in and defend workers' rights through legislation, and companies, especially the big brands at the top of the supply chain, need to be accountable to their workers.

Goodbye Sam

It is with sadness that Labour Behind the Label bids farewell to Sam Maher, a champion of garment workers rights who has been with us for over 13 years. Since Sam started, Labour Behind the Label has grown and evolved, setting up home in Bristol and becoming a workers cooperative. However one thing has remained constant throughout – our determination towards fighting for garment workers rights worldwide. Sam has brought extensive knowledge, understanding and commitment to our work, and has overseen many successful campaigns. Sam is going to continue working in the sector as a freelancer, and will hopefully come back and

visit us at Labour Behind the Label HQ often. We wish her, and Callie the dog, the very best of luck.

Action

Change Your Shoes

We have recently launched our new campaign calling for a change in the ways that the shoe industry operates. Currently, this immense global industry runs under a veil of secrecy, with a near total lack of transparency allowing systemic human rights abuses to continue with the growing pace of the industry.

Workers in the shoe industry face many of the same issues as those in the garment industry, and are fighting against poverty pay, long working hours, denial of trade union rights, physical and verbal abuse, unsafe working conditions and exposure to dangerous chemicals.

Even labelling cannot guarantee where your shoes were made or the conditions. Shoes with labels stating 'made in Italy' may have leather uppers made in countries such as India and Bangladesh, often by homeworkers earning just 10 pence per shoe.

So, what can you, as consumers, do? Join us in taking the first step to changing the industry by downloading the Change Your Shoes app - it's free and takes just seconds to download, available from Google Play or the Apple Store. The app will count your steps and add them to those collected from thousands of people using it across Europe, creating a 'virtual march' to Brussels to demand the EU take action on transparency in the shoe supply chain.

Working with 18 organisations across Europe and in India, China and Indonesia, the Change Your Shoes campaign will deliver a petition to EU policy makers, calling for regulations in the shoe industry and greater transparency. Together, we can change the shoe industry and ensure an end to worker exploitation.

For more information on the campaign and the app, please visit: **labourbehindthelabel.org/shoes** ●

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2015 European Year for Development

our world our dignity our future

Mulberry workers reach factory agreement

Following actions in September in support of Turkish workers producing for the luxury handbag brand Mulberry, we are pleased to announce that the SF Leather Workers have won their campaign!

A meeting in October between factory management and workers ended a nine month union busting dispute, where it was agreed that court cases against the union would be dropped and full compensation paid to all workers involved.

Workers at SF Leather, a Turkish supplier of handbags and purses for Mulberry, had been calling for their human rights to be respected after management fired all the workers who had joined the new factory union Deriteks Sendika, attempted to sue them on trumped up charges, and only offered to rehire them if they gave up union membership.

In protest at this clear (and illegal) union busting strategy, Labour Behind the Label worked alongside other campaign groups to join in a global day of action to support the SF Leather workers' cause. The giant pink handbag we placed outside a Mulberry franchise in Bristol and the delivery of the petition to the Mulberry HQ in Somerset attracted media attention and added pressure on the brand to act.

Just two days after the demos took place in Bristol, Istanbul, Hong Kong, Copenhagen, New York, Bangalore and others, the local union was invited to meet with factory management to negotiate a settlement.

"The 14 workers who held a round-the-clock protest outside the factory to call for their jobs back and their right to organise a union are the real victors. This shows that where international struggles link, we can work to protect our human rights and improve situations in factories around the world," said Abdulhalim Demir from Clean Clothes Campaign Turkey.

A meeting of the union has been held inside the factory since, where union officials were allowed to meet with all the workforce to educate workers on their rights. Workers who were compensated were not offered their jobs back, so although the union considers the settlement a victory, they are continuing to push for greater access and recognition of their right to organise in the factory. ●

It's time to #MakeKikPay

On 11 September 2012, at around 6pm the Ali Enterprises factory in Pakistan exploded into flames, claiming the lives of 254 people, and seriously injuring 55. In the wake of the disaster, among the carnage and destruction also lay bundles of denim with German-language labels carrying German retailer KiK's brand "Okay Men". After the fire it was revealed that the factory's production was dedicated to making jeans for the German retailer KiK. It was also reported that plant managers forced workers to stay, ordering the gates to be closed in order to try and save the company's stock: piles of jeans destined for KiK stores.

One survivor stated, "They prevented people from leaving, so they could save the clothes" – KiK's jeans.

KiK's complete disregard for workers' safety has cost thousands of lives in Pakistan and Bangladesh. It has a startling track record of sourcing from some of the most dangerous factories in the world. KiK is the only company in the world that has been linked to the worst three garment factory disasters in recent history – the Ali Enterprises factory fire in Pakistan; the Tazreen factory fire in Bangladesh (2012); and the Rana Plaza factory building collapse, also in Bangladesh (2013). A total of 1,500 garment workers are dead as a result of these tragedies. Thousands more were injured and continue to battle with life altering injuries.

Three years on, victims of the Ali Enterprises fire continue to wait for long-term compensation. Despite their promises, and even signing a legally binding agreement, the German retailer KiK is refusing to pay long term compensation for the victims' families. Join us and take action!

Visit **labourbehindthelabel.org/campaigns/worker-safety** ●

Growing momentum for the Living Wage campaign

149,000 signatures signed for a living wage for the people who make our clothes

Our loud roar for a living wage came together this October when more than 200 workers, brands and policy makers came to a campaign summit in Brussels to discuss how we make sure a living wage is achieved across garment supply chains.

200 workers, brands and policy makers came to the campaign summit

We presented 149,251 signatures to brands and policy makers (many of which came from Labour Behind the Label supporters) calling for a living wage now and an end to worker poverty, bringing together three years of lobbying and campaigning work.

Brand representatives, High level EU officials, MEPs, representatives from OECD, ILO, and global union federations including IndustriALL and others, discussed proposals on due diligence, legislation on supply chain transparency, and an ombudsperson to provide access to justice for workers in supply chains.

The need for binding agreements between brands and unions to pay living wages in garment supply chains was also clearly stated by workers from Cambodia, Indonesia and others.

H&M failing to make fire and building safety repairs in Bangladesh

H&M is dramatically behind schedule in correcting the dangers faced by the Bangladeshi workers who produce its clothing, according to a new report by Clean Clothes Campaign and others.

"If only H&M was willing put the same energy into meeting their sustainability commitments as they do into promoting them"

According to data from factory inspections publicly disclosed by the Accord, (an agreement signed by H&M in the wake of the Rana Plaza disaster which killed 1138 workers in 2013), it has been found that H&M factories are not safe and H&M has failed to honour promises to repair and improve their conditions.

Focusing on the subset of contract factories that H&M has deemed the best performers in its supply chain on labour and environmental issues, the report shows that all of these factories have failed to meet mandated time frames for repairs and the majority of all renovations have still not been completed despite lapsed deadlines. The outstanding renovations include the installation of fireproof doors, the removal of locking or sliding doors from fire exits, and the enclosure of stairwells - meaning that in many factories workers may be unable to safely exit a factory in an emergency.

"If only H&M was willing put the same energy into actually meeting their much lauded sustainability commitments as they do into promoting them, we may well be closer to seeing a safer garment industry in Bangladesh."

You can take action to call on H&M to act: **laborrights.org/hmpetition**

The Labour Behind the Label Trust

The Labour Behind the Label Trust ("The Trust") is a separate organisation to Labour Behind the Label that raises funds for Labour Behind the Label's charitable activities. The Trust is independent of Labour Behind the Label, but the two organisations work together closely. The Labour behind the Label Trust is a registered charity, Charity No 1159356.

We are now looking for some new Trustees to join the board.

As a trustee you will also be taking on legal responsibility for the governance of the trust. Meetings are four times a year, either via Skype or in Bristol. Please see details for specific roles, below.

Fundraising Someone with a fundraising background and knowledge of the various grant-making organisations available to Labour Behind the Label. A wide network is a bonus but not a requirement.

Human Rights/Advocacy Someone with specific experience in human rights and/or advocacy that is prepared to get active on our behalf. We'd like at least one trustee who is happy to do 'public-facing' work and talk about the issues in the garment industry.

Charity Law/General Legal Expertise Someone with knowledge of charity law and structures, but more generally contacts in the legal world. We'd ideally like someone who is able to offer us advice occasionally on the wider issues we work on.

We are also looking for:

A Treasurer With experience of dealing with charitable finance, who is willing to take responsibility for producing the annual accounts and dealing with the Trust's banking and finances.

Company Secretary To take responsibility for ensuring the legal requirements of the trust, including those to Companies House and the Charities Commission, are met.

The roles of Treasurer and Company Secretary could combine with any of the above positions.

Deadline for applications is 31st January 2016.

Vitality BATHALF 2016

Sunday 13th March

The Vitality Bath Half Marathon is one of the most established and popular city centre road events in the UK. It sells out quickly with 15,000 entries. After the success of last year's event we now have places in 2016's run. Beat those winter blues and run for garment workers worldwide.

We will provide you with all the support you need throughout your training, from tips on training plans to ingenious ways to extract donations from your friends and family. And we will be on call whenever you need support.

By running this race for Labour Behind the Label you are raising our profile in the UK as well as helping to raise the money we need to continue our charitable work.

To sign up go to **labourbehindthelabel.org/bath-half-2016**

February 10th – March 24th

The Six Items Challenge is back! We call it the *fashion fast to oppose fast fashion*. This challenge is not easy, but it will be rewarding and after the six weeks you will have a renewed understanding of your relationship with your clothes whilst raising awareness and much needed funds for our campaigning efforts. We promise.

The idea is simple – select six items of clothing from your wardrobe and pledge to wear only these every day for six weeks. Don't panic – you can have unlimited access to underwear, accessories and footwear. You're even allowed to use your sportswear or performance gear if you need to maintain a fitness regime. But your main items of clothing – dresses, trousers, tops, skirts, jumpers, shirts or cardigans – must remain the same throughout.

To sign up go to **labourbehindthelabel.org/support-us/organise-a-clothes-swap**

Got a question? Contact Caroline at **caroline@labourbehindthelabel.org** or on **0117 941 5844**

Affiliate to Labour Behind the Label

Many organisations, including unions, schools, colleges and businesses, choose to affiliate to Labour Behind the Label to show their support for the workers who make our clothes.

By affiliating with us your organisation will directly support our work alongside over 250 unions and garment worker organisations across the garment industry.

"Wolverhampton UNISON takes international issues seriously but also recognises the need for our members to see the relevance of those issues.

By supporting Labour Behind the Label's campaign to defend and promote the rights of garment workers who produce much of our high street clothing, we believe we can engage our membership in making the link as to "what has it got to do with us?" as well as support Labour Behind the Label in its direct contribution to international solidarity."

Dave Auger, UNISON Deputy Branch Secretary

For an affiliation pack please email
donate@labourbehindthelabel.org
or call us on 0117 941 5844