I Don't Want to DIE for FASHION.
In this Action Update you will find information on how your donations, campaigning and support have really made a difference.

Finally, two years on from the Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh we are happy to announce that the $30 million compensation fund is complete so all victims of Rana Plaza will receive compensation. This momentous win would not have been possible without public pressure demanding brands pay up.

Our Living Wage campaign continues to gain pace as we call for brands including Marks & Spencers and H&M to go beyond corporate social responsibility PR and to deliver on their promises to pay garment workers a living wage.

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
Labour Behind the Label campaign for garment workers’ rights worldwide, supporting garment workers in their struggle to demand the right 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.

We have four strategic aims:

- **We raise public awareness** and mobilise consumers, empowering them to make decisions about their purchases.
- **We pressure companies** to take responsibility for workers’ rights in the entirety of their supply chains.
- **We support workers** in their struggles for decent working conditions, including speaker tours and urgent appeals.
- **We campaign** for governments to take responsibility by legislating on corporate responsibility.

We work together with similar organisations across Europe and with partners in producer countries. We represent the Clean Clothes Campaign in the UK.

*Image © Rachel Manns*

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**We believe that everyone with a stake in the garment industry has a responsibility to improve working conditions.**
Finally, after two long years of campaigning, we can announce that the Rana Plaza Donors Fund has reached the $30 million needed to ensure all survivors and families of the victims who died in the disaster will receive full compensation for medical care and loss of income. Two years ago when an eight-storey building housing five garment factories in Bangladesh collapsed, killing 1,134 people and injuring 2,515 more, campaigners around the world joined together in action to demand justice. It has only been through collective campaigning and with your help that this has finally been achieved.

Our partner Kalpona Akter, Executive Director of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity, asked us to share this message with you:

“The families and victims have waited a long time to have this news, and this was long overdue. In practical terms this compensation will help each person to sustain their lives – enabling some to continue to send their kids to school, and at the very least now no-one will starve. We would like to thank every single person for supporting our campaign, and helping us to achieve this goal”.

The compensation fund, managed by the ILO, relied on brands contributing based on their stake in Rana Plaza, in Bangladesh as a whole, and their

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profits and ability to pay. Whilst some brands such as Primark led the way in contributing, others dragged their feet or paid in well under what was asked, leading to a funding crisis. On 24th April 2015, the second anniversary of the disaster, the fund was short of $6 million.

Benetton, for example, openly admit to sourcing from Rana Plaza. The Benetton family, who own the brand, turned a profit of €139 million in 2013. Benetton labels were found in the rubble, amongst the bodies of 1,134 people, next to women such as Rojina Begum, who survived 3 days trapped in the ruins only to be forced to amputate her own arm in order to escape alive.

We calculated Benetton owed $5 million in compensation. However, in a move that excluded trade unions and labour rights organisations directly involved in the compensation efforts, Benetton engaged global accounting firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers to assess how much they owed. As a result they announced they would only contribute $1.1 million. This denial of responsibility illustrates there is still a long way to go to ensure transparency and accountability in the industry.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel called the compensation crisis ‘embarrassing’ and put garment industry working conditions on the G7 agenda. On June 8th 2015, the same week as the G7 summit meeting headed by Merkel, a large anonymous donation was made into the fund, successfully bridging the gap. This is a momentous campaign victory: the first time a compensation scheme like this has been implemented for a large supply chain disaster, setting a significant precedent. We would like to thank you for adding your voice to demand that brands are held responsible when lives are lost making their clothes. For standing in solidarity with Bangladeshi garment workers. For demanding justice for fashion’s victims.

“The families and victims have waited a long time to have this news, and this was long overdue... We would like to thank every single person for supporting our campaign, and helping us to achieve this goal”
Two years on has the garment industry changed?

Two years on from Rana Plaza one question is repeatedly asked: What has really changed in the garment industry? The answer, sadly, is not much. Workers still earn poverty wages, conditions across the industry are still unacceptable, and union organisers are still threatened and attacked.

_As ground-breaking as the Accord is, is it enough to be regarded as the beginning of truly systematic change?_

To suggest nothing changed would not be true. The Accord transformed the process of building inspections in Bangladesh, ensuring almost two thousand factories are checked by properly qualified inspectors. This is not an insignificant achievement in an industry that turned a blind eye to the existence of death trap factories for over a decade. Ground-breaking as this is, can it be regarded as the beginning of truly systemic change?

At the Accord’s core are a set of principles that challenge the root causes of safety issues: transparency, the right for workers to refuse dangerous work and challenge health and safety breaches without fear of reprisal, and a change in the buying practices of the big brands whose business models drive a rapid race to the bottom. Some advances have been made on transparency, but progress on worker empowerment, the development of joint buyer and factory owner financing agreements, support for workers who lose their jobs when unsafe factories close, and the stabilising of orders within company supply chains has hardly begun.

There is a valid argument that the inspections were the most urgent part. The large-scale programme of inspection, undertaken without any existing infrastructure, has been an uphill challenge. The progress made is commendable. However, in our desire for good news we must not oversell this as transformative change.

To date, the Accord has delivered the information required by brands who want to ensure they aren’t buying from the next Rana Plaza. This done, it is now possible for some to try and delay meaningful attempts to deliver on the bigger changes required – changes which go to the heart of...
It is too soon to evaluate if Rana Plaza has led to real and fundamental change in the industry, but the signs are not overly encouraging.

their own business practices. The Accord includes clauses obliging signatory brands to address crucial issues such as: complaint processes to enable workers to report and refuse dangerous work, the financing of safety improvements, the establishment of incentives to promote safe workplaces, and changes to buying practices that undermine investment in safe factories. These are complex areas and will require shifts in the current and very profitable business model adopted by multinational brands.

It is too soon to evaluate if Rana Plaza has led to real and fundamental change in the industry, but signs are not overly encouraging. The two years for the industry to collectively find a mere $30 million to provide basic compensation to its victims is one clear example of how, despite public expressions of grief and regret, there is still an unwillingness to take responsibility. There is also no sign the quality of inspections in other countries with similar building safety problems has improved.

There is a lot of work left to do. We must not get disheartened, nor accept a limited version of change. This would be a disservice to the memory of those and all the other thousands of workers that died to make our clothes. We must continue to push the industry to go further, to do better. We must keep asking difficult questions, and refuse to buy into glossy yet meaningless sustainability reports. We must demand our government legislate to ensure brands are held accountable when rights are abused in supply chains.

We owe it to those who continue the fight in workplaces around the world to keep pushing and shouting until all the promises made – by governments, factory owners and brands alike – are delivered. Only then can we begin to talk about real change.
Conscious collection. Ethical model factory. Fair living wage initiative. The buzz words of ‘ethical’ brand marketing seem to be on the rise, but how do we know if what brands say is really backed up by what they do? According to a recent study, 94% of European-based CEOs believe that communication about corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives significantly impacts a firm’s positive reputation. Many have come to see this as a strategic necessity or form of “global brand insurance” so that when stories of sweatshops or likewise hit the headlines, companies can fall back on their reservoir of social goodwill and brand loyalty.

British brand Marks & Spencers (M&S) and Swedish multinational H&M have staked out an ethical name for themselves on the UK high street, both receiving credit for their work in Labour Behind the Label’s ‘Tailored Wages’ report last year. Both have invested millions in major advertising campaigns, trading on their new ethical images to compete for consumer trust and market share. M&S is now the UK’s third largest clothing retailer by volume and has picked up over 190 awards since the launch of its ethical programme ‘Plan A’, including Ethical Consumer’s ‘Most Ethical High Street Clothing Retailer’ in 2014. H&M likewise has taken a similar path, now sponsoring the ethical fashion pages of The Guardian and has picked up a number of ethical awards in 2014 for its conscious collection and fair living wage initiative.

**So, can we believe it?**

We asked our partners in Cambodia and Sri Lanka about M&S and H&M to see if their ethical stances are evident on the factory floor. Do the local unions who have daily interaction with conditions in factories supplying M&S and H&M notice the difference?

Athit Kong, Vice President of Cambodian garment workers union C.Cawdu, said: “H&M’s PR rings hollow to workers who are struggling everyday to feed their families. A ‘sustainability’ model that is wholly controlled by H&M and not founded in genuine respect for organized workers and trade unions on the ground, is never going to result in real change for H&M production workers. This only serves as a public relations façade to cover up systemic abuse.”

**“This only serves as a public relations façade to cover up systemic abuse”**

More investigation is required to unearth the true extend of the divide between what M&S and H&M say and what they do, however what remains clear is that ethical spin isn’t always backed up by fact. As consumers, we need to look beyond the CSR to see the realities on the factory floor.
Despite mass communication by H&M about the ‘Fair Living Wage Initiative’...

1,795 suppliers pay H&M workers way below a living wage.

3 suppliers work towards higher wages.

What remains clear is that ethical spin isn’t always backed up by fact.

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<th>Their Commitment</th>
<th>Facts On the Ground</th>
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<td>Plan A (objective 17) commits M&amp;S to supporting the payment of fair living wages in the developing countries that they source from, starting with Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka by 2015.</td>
<td>In June 2014 M&amp;S published an appraisal of their achievements. Objective 17, we’re told, has been achieved. Yet workers in factories in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka continue to live in poverty and no marked difference has been reported from unions about wages for M&amp;S workers.</td>
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<td>H&amp;M launched its roadmap to a living wage in 2013, which commits the brand to paying to 850,000 textile workers a “fair living wage” by 2018.</td>
<td>Work is underway in just three factories out of 1,795 so far. No benchmark has been given for what the eventual definition of a ‘fair living wage’ is so far.</td>
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Change your shoes

This summer we will be launching a new campaign to change the way our shoes are made. In 2013 over 22 billion pairs of shoes were produced worldwide. This equates to three pairs of shoes produced for every person in the world. 87% of global footwear production occurs in Asia, with China producing the most. Unfortunately, and perhaps unsurprisingly, many of the same issues that plague the garment industry are prevalent in other global commodity sectors. As with clothes, the worker receives a tiny percentage of the price, with approximately 2% of the price of a pair of shoes being paid to the workers who made them.

Transparency is the bedrock of any just and sustainable supply chain, and its complete absence in the shoe industry is one of the driving forces behind many of the on-going human rights abuses. This summer we will expand our fight for transparency to the shoe industry, calling for comprehensive policy changes on every level. Partnering with 18 organisations across Europe and working closely with partners in producer countries, we will campaign for justice and the human rights of those who make our shoes.

Please check the website for campaign information, updates, and to take action.

Image © GMB Akash
Summer fundraising drive

So far this year we have seen some incredible fundraising efforts, including over £1,300 raised by our amazing runners in the Bath Half Marathon and funds raised by our wonderful Six Items Challenge participants. Thank you all for your support!

Our campaigning work is needed now more than ever. Fast fashion dominates our high streets. Clothes are seen as cheap and disposable as consumers respond to fast-paced trends, buying the latest fashion for a few pounds. The industry is built on exploitation and it is garment workers who pay the true price of these cheap clothes. In order to sustain our campaigning, education and lobbying work, and ensure a UK platform for garment workers voices to be heard, we need to raise further vital funds. We receive no statutory funding, and every penny of a donation is valued and goes towards ensuring our campaigns are successful and make an impact.

Can you help support our work with a generous monthly gift or a one-off donation? Or perhaps you want to organise a community fundraising and awareness raising event such as a clothes swap, pub quiz, film night or sponsored run?

We will continue to fight alongside garment workers, trade unions and labour rights organisations worldwide to demand safe workplaces, a living wage for garment workers, and to ensure human rights are upheld throughout supply chains. Please join us and donate what you can as together we can ensure that no-one need live in poverty for the price of a cheap t-shirt.

To find out about ways you can get involved and support our work through fundraising please do get in touch with Caroline at caroline@labourbehindthelabel.org.

To support our campaign work with a regular donation please visit www.labourbehindthelabel.org/donate. 赞
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.