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Latest data on working conditions in global supply chains, March 2018 edition

By Garrett Brown | March 13th, 2018 | 0 Comments

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The river of articles and reports on unsafe, unhealthy and illegal working conditions in the global supply chains of all major consumer products (apparel, electronics, toys, sports shoes, food, etc.) continues unabated. I have assembled a [selection of the key reports and articles](#) for the period of December 2017 to March 2018. Among my favorites this quarter are:

- Continuing [coverage](#) of Ivanka Trump’s sweatshop factories in China;
- [Victories for garment workers](#) in Pakistan and Bangladesh where Ali Enterprise factory survivors have finally received compensation after the fire that killed 112 people in 2012, and the Bangladesh Accord won a \$2.3 million settlement against two brands that delayed fixing unsafe factories in their supply chain in Dhaka;
- How the [World Bank has enabled](#) the “systematic



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looting” of Africa; and

- Ireland “[forced to collect 13 billion in Euros](#)” in unpaid taxes from Apple that Ireland’s government “doesn’t want.”

Likewise, there has been no change in the [inability of standard “corporate social responsibility” programs](#) to make any meaningful impact on hazardous and illegal working conditions in the supply chains of world-renowned consumer product “brands.”

There is an alternative to CSR that is gaining publicity and support – it is called “worker-driven social responsibility (WSR).” The operating principles of WSR include:

- “Labor rights initiatives must be worker-driven” – this means factory floor workers and their representatives must play an integral part in the development, implementation and verification of workplace standards; and
- “Buyers must afford suppliers the financial incentive and capacity to comply” – this means that once hazards are found, the brand cannot just walk away from the factory, but rather must provide the local factories with the resources and support required to actually fix the problems.

The entire statement of principles, as well as the organizational and individual endorsers of WSR are [at the website](#) of the Worker-Drive Social Responsibility Network.

I’ve [written previously](#) about how conscientious consumers and public health professional can keep track of working conditions and workers’ rights in global supply chains. The UK’s “Business & Human Rights Resource Centre” provides a one-stop way, thanks to the staff of this non-profit organization. They scour the internet for the latest reports from companies, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on all aspects of global business. You

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can [sign up](#) for a weekly notification. The Maquiladora Health & Safety Support Network also continues to provide up-to-date information on CSR [on its website](#).

About the Author: Garrett Brown --- ---



Garrett Brown is a certified industrial hygienist who worked for Cal/OSHA for 20 years as a field Compliance Safety and Health Officer, and then served as Special Assistant to the Chief of the Division before retiring in 2014. Since retiring, Brown continues to follow Cal/OSHA issues and established the “Inside Cal/OSHA” website at <http://insidecalosha.org> . Brown also has been the volunteer Coordinator of the Maquiladora Health & Safety Support Network since 1993 and has coordinated projects in Bangladesh, Central America, China, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Mexico and Vietnam.

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