

# Border/Line Health & Safety

NEWSLETTER OF THE MAQUILADORA HEALTH & SAFETY SUPPORT NETWORK

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## DR "No Sweat" Factory Up and Running

Network members made a second site visit to the Alta Gracia Project garment factory in the Dominican Republic in June as the "no sweat" plant producing university-logo clothing kicked into full production. The plant visits are part of a year-long MHSSN effort to ensure safe and healthy conditions at the paradigm-changing factory.

More than 125 workers in Villa Altigracia are now producing T-shirts and hooded sweat-shirts for South Carolina-based Knights Apparel, a major supplier to US universities including Duke, Harvard and the University of California system. The New York Times ran a lengthy article on the project in July and the Workers Rights Consortium website describes the facility's compliance with the organization's "no sweatshop" criteria for a "living wage," union representation

and safe working conditions (see box for links for both).

The MHSSN team, who all volunteered their time while Knights Apparel picked up the travel expenses, consisted of Network Coordinator Garrett Brown, Mariano Kramer, a recently retired Cal/OSHA Senior Safety Engineer who coordinated the agency's garment sweatshop sweeps in Los Angeles, and Valeria Velazquez, a health educator from UC Berkeley's Labor Occupational Health Program.

During the site visits, the OHS team found many of the usual hazards associated with garment factories – electrical system issues, machine guarding concerns, ergonomic risks from highly repetitive work, chemical exposures

(See "No-Sweat", page 3)

## Suicides, Cancers in Asian Electronics Plants

Brand-name and contract electronics manufacturers have been rocked this year by a series of ongoing scandals about working conditions in the Asian plants that work day and night to produce the vast majority of the world's consumer electronics.

The worker suicides and cancer cases have called into question the effectiveness of electronics brands' elaborate "corporate social responsibility" (CSR) programs, their contradictory business model, and the near-zero participation by workers in factory health and safety programs.

In the first five months of 2010 at Foxconn Technology Group's giant 300,000-worker electronics assembly plant in Longhua, China, 16 workers attempted suicide by jumping off the top of tall dormitory buildings, resulting in 12 deaths and four crippling injuries, and at least 20 other workers were restrained before committing

suicide. All workers were between 18 and 24, and were migrants from rural areas of western China.

By the end of May 2010, at least 49 young semiconductor workers had contracted cancer – including 32 brain, leukemia and lymphoma cancers – while working at Samsung's huge electronics plants throughout Korea. Nineteen deaths have occurred, mostly to workers in their 20s. Samsung denied the cancers were work-related, but a Korean magazine reprinted an internal Samsung handbook outlining the use of at least six carcinogens at its plants, including arsine, benzene, and trichloroethylene.

On July 22nd, a broad coalition of over 40 European, Australian and U.S. investors joined their voices to issue a public statement condemning abusive workplace conditions in the global

(See **Asian Plants**, page 5)

# Letter from the Coordinator

Amazingly, it turns out that the most vibrant, effective and democratic labor unions in the world today are the factory-based organizations of migrant workers in China!

This spring and summer, young, previously rural migrant workers from western China have undertaken repeated, successful strikes against global transnational corporations that have won the workers significant wage increases, improved working conditions, and promises of no retaliation against individual workers or the plant workforce as a whole.

The striking workers, operating completely apart from the party-run official trade unions, elected their own leaders, conducted their own negotiations, and submitted any proposals and tentative agreements to approval by all affected workers in plant assemblies, where everyone had equal voice and vote. This is an instructive example for unions in the United States, as well as in “Communist” China.

The supposedly unsophisticated, ex-peasant workers successfully managed to “thread the needle” between Chinese

union leaders, Chinese government and security apparatus, and powerful foreign corporations, to achieve real improvements in their lives and working conditions.

After 15+ years of global corporate social responsibility (CSR) departments and programs – now a \$40 billion a year “cottage industry” – the people who brought these workers a “living wage” and genuine “worker empowerment” were the factory workers themselves.

If the transnational corporations – which spend millions a year on CSR activities – are really serious about worker empowerment and living wages for workers in their far-flung supply chains, then they could seize this moment to allow workers to form genuine, member-controlled unions, and then negotiate with these unions for higher wages, better treatment, and safer working conditions.

Alas, the first response of many transnational corporations in China – led by the athletic footwear and equipment industry – was to announce that they will be shifting production out of China altogether. The now-preferred, more “business friendly” countries include Vietnam, Indonesia and Bangladesh, where workers are paid even less than in China, have even fewer rights than in China, and have not yet rebelled on the scale of China’s migrant workers.

On July 5th, the *New York Times* published an editorial titled “China, the Sweatshop.” The national paper of record noted “the labor strife spreading through China’s factory cities has clearly frazzled the government. Last month, it

deployed Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, aka ‘Grandpa Wen,’ who told laborers at a Beijing subway station that the government and society ‘should treat migrant workers as they would their own children.’ China’s exploited workers don’t need an extra parent. They need higher wages, better working conditions and a chance to form independent unions. They need China to stop being a sweatshop to the world.”

Of course, the Chinese government needs to protect workers in China, especially a government that claims to be “Communist.” But the *Times’* admonitions to the Chinese government also apply to the transnational corporations which roam the world looking for the most vulnerable, exploitable workers and the most pliant, subservient governments, and which play country against country, region against region, city against city, in their relentless search for the lowest pay, least enforcement and greatest subsidies.

The *Times* editorial has it right for all workers in global supply chains: “They need higher wages, better working conditions and a chance to form independent unions.” The transnational corporations that claim to be sincerely interested in being “socially responsible” have yet another chance to prove it – they can end the policies and practices that have created sweatshops in China, and elsewhere, and make good on their many promises to support worker empowerment, living wages, sustainable production, and community development.

We’ll see... ■

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The Support Network has an extensive Reading and Resource List posted on the web site: [www.igc.org/mhssn](http://www.igc.org/mhssn)

## APHA OHS International Award for Korea’s Dr. Kong

The Occupational Safety and Health (OHS) Section of the American Public Health Association (APHA) has awarded its 2010 International Award to Korean occupational physician and outstanding activist Dr. Jeong-ok Kong. Dr. Kong is a leader of the SHARPS – Supporters of Health and Rights of People in the Semiconductor Industry, which is leading a campaign against the giant Samsung Corporation to take responsibility for cancer deaths among its young workers and eliminate carcinogenic exposures in its factories. The prestigious award will be presented at the APHA conference in Denver, CO, in November.

("No-Sweat", from page 1)

from the "spot remover" solvents and airborne cotton dust, and heat illness concerns in a non-air conditioned factory in the tropics.

In a refreshing change from many garment operations, however, these issues have been rapidly addressed by plant management, assisted by both their international customer, Knights Apparel, and by the union which was formed between the two site visits.

Safety-related changes in the factory, both before and after the MHSSN visits, have included:

- installation of brand new electrical circuits in the building and equipment;
- upgraded guards on sewing machines and other equipment's belts and nip points;
- improved lockout/tagout procedures for maintenance and operations;
- use of state of the art, ergonomically-correct chairs by sewing machine operators;
- installation of an effective local exhaust system to remove solvent vapors from the spot removing room;
- substitution of less toxic cleaners for solvents typically used in the industry (methylene chloride and toluene);
- housekeeping procedures that mandate vacuuming production areas several times a day to reduce settled and airborne dusts;
- installation of additional roof fans to reduce the building's heat load, and procedures for mandatory water breaks during high temperature periods; and
- provision of appropriate personal protective equipment for cloth cutting, chemical use, and material handling operations.

As part of the June site visit, LOHP's Velazquez conducted a three-hour training on ergonomics, and the elements of effective health and safety committees, with 30 plant employees – both managers and union members.

Under Dominican law, the plant is required to establish a joint health and

safety committee on site. The committee has taken on the responsibility for maintaining safe conditions through periodic facility inspections, accident and illness investigations, verification of hazard corrections, and training the plant workforce on topics such as ergonomics, chemical hazards, heat illness, and emergency action plans.

In the US, a plant H&S committee and these kinds of activities might seem unremarkable and routine. But in the DR, as in other developing countries where the world's garments are produced, this is very unusual and essential for establishing and maintaining a safe workplace.

The Dominican Republic, with a population of 9.8 million and a workforce of 4.4 million, has only nine government health and safety inspectors for the entire country. Occupational health and safety in the DR is almost totally dependent on active, effective committees and programs on a workplace level. Most plants in the DR have inactive, or only nominal, plant safety committees and OHS programs.

The day after the Alta Gracia site visit in June, the MHSSN team put on a full-day training in Santo Domingo with representatives of seven of the union federation's nine plant locals, including Alta Gracia, as well as representatives of Fundación Laboral, a leading labor rights organization in the DR, and Batay Ouvriye, a labor rights group from neighboring Haiti.

The goal of the Santo Domingo training was to begin the process of building OHS capacity and a safety culture in the plants represented by the union federation, which itself is considering establish-

ing a federation-level health and safety department.

The concept behind the Alta Gracia plant is the brainchild of the Washington-based Workers Rights Consortium (WRC), a labor rights non-governmental organization contracted by over 185 universities, and cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco, to ensure that their "sweat free" logo clothing is actually produced under decent conditions.

For years the WRC proposed a model where workers were paid a living wage, had decent conditions, and could exercise their right to form a union – while the apparel retailer could advertise an attractive "no sweat" brand to socially-conscious students and alumni – and university code compliance officers could leave behind the constant worry, and frequent occurrence, of scandals about terrible working conditions in their supposedly "sweat free" supply chains.

The Alta Gracia factory is off to a promising start, and working conditions are head and shoulders above those in other garment plants in global supply chains. Hopefully this fall, US universities will place big enough orders with the plant so that it goes beyond "novelty status" to being a going concern and an alternative model to the "race to the bottom" in a world of sweatshops.

For our Network, we have continuing interest in efforts to maintain safe conditions in the Alta Gracia plant and in expanding work with the free trade zone unions and workers rights organizations on the island. Anyone interested in possible follow-up projects should contact Coordinator Garrett Brown at [garrettdbrown@comcast.net](mailto:garrettdbrown@comcast.net). ■

## For more information on the Alta Gracia project

- Webpage of the Workers Rights Consortium at <http://www.workersrights.org/verification.asp>
- Photographic depiction of the production process at the plant at <http://mhssn.igc.org/AltaGarcia.htm>
- New York Times July 16th article on the project at [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/18/business/global/18shirt.html?\\_r=1&emc=eta1](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/18/business/global/18shirt.html?_r=1&emc=eta1)



Mariano Kramer inspecting the Alta Gracia plant with maintenance manager Fanny Gil.



Mariano Kramer and Garrett Brown meeting with plant manager Fernando Flaquer.

## MHSSN Volunteers At Work

Mariano Kramer, Valeria Velazquez and Garrett Brown with participants in the Santo Domingo training with Dominican organizations, the Free Trade Zone union federation and Fundación Laboral, and the Haitian organization Batay Ouvriye

Valeria Velazquez conducts a training with Alta Gracia workers and managers.



(Asian Plants, from page 1)

electronics supply chain.

“Worker abuses such as excessive overtime and supervisor harassment which are endemic in the electronics manufacturing sector have been cited by non governmental organizations as contributing to excessive stress and grave mental health issues among factory workers,” according to the investor coalition.

The investor groups, led by Boston Common Asset Management, LLC, Trillium Asset Management Corporation, As You Sow and Domini Social Investments LLC – all members of the New York City-based Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility – seek to “send a strong message to the electronics manufacturers in their portfolios urging stricter supply chain compliance.”

The investors’ statement can be found at: [http://www.iccr.org/news/press\\_releases/pdf%20files/072210Foxconn.pdf](http://www.iccr.org/news/press_releases/pdf%20files/072210Foxconn.pdf)

### Foxconn • Apple • Dell • HP

At Foxconn, electronics workers have 12-hour shifts (with two one-hour breaks), frequently six days a week. Talking at work is forbidden (with fines meted out to violators), and recent counseling sessions on site have revealed that some workers are so exhausted and isolated by work that they do not even know the names of their roommates in their 10-person dorm rooms.

“We are extremely tired, with tremendous pressure,” one assembly worker told investigators from China Labor Watch, “We finish one step every 7 seconds, which requires us to concentrate and keep working and working. We work even faster than the machines. Every shift we finish 4,000 Dell computers, all the while standing up. We can accomplish these assignments through collective effort, but many of us feel worn out.”

Foxconn logistics worker Lu Pengguo told the London Financial Times “At work there is pressure all the time... On our production line we do the same thing every day, over and over again, day after day, month after month, year after year. It makes me feel drained.”

“I know why all those people jumped,” 23-year-old Lin Fengxiang told a national Chinese newspaper, “In here nobody gives a damn about you.” Trainee Li Cheng (paid a reduced wage during the months-long “trainee” period) told the same reporter, “This is their territory. We can only try to survive.”

A Beijing sociology professor wrote in the Southern Metropolitan Daily in Guangzhou on May 17th, “People cannot help but ask, what kind of world has Foxconn created?...In the eyes of Foxconn’s managers, the only real thing there is in young people’s lives is the sweat and blood needed for the production line. Their feelings, their personal life, and their social networks are systematically neglected, compressed and stripped away...Of course, this kind of factory is a sweatshop.”

Both Foxconn and Apple have strenuously denied the worker suicides are a reflection of sweatshop working conditions. But Apple’s own CSR program has documented ongoing problems. The last international scandal at Foxconn erupted in 2006 after a local newspaper exposé of harsh working conditions.

Apple conducted an audit then and found that Apple’s “code of conduct” – setting a limit of 60 hours of work per week and no more than six consecutive days of work – was violated 34% of

time for working hours and 25% of the time for 6-day work weeks at Foxconn. Numerous reports by non-governmental organizations since 2006 have documented worsening conditions as Apple’s demand for iPhone and iPad production has skyrocketed in the last four years. Foxconn facilities reportedly produce 70% of Apple products.

It should be noted that Apple’s code allowing 20 hours a week of overtime – the same as the industry’s Electronics Industry Citizen Coalition code – explicitly violates China’s national law prohibiting overtime greater than 9 hours a week or 36 hours a month. Work weeks of 70 to 80 hours also renders completely meaningless reported “CSR compliance” with chemical and noise exposure limits, as these limits assume exposures lasting only 40 hours a week.

Apple issued in July its “Supplier Responsibility: 2010 Progress Report” which indicated that of the 102 plants it audited in eight countries, 69% of plants had inadequate worker training on OHS; 48% of plants used personal protective equipment incorrectly or were without it altogether; and 24% of plants had never conducted an ergonomics evaluation of the highly repetitive assembly work.

The 2010 CSR report also indicated that in Apple’s supply chain factories,

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58% of plants worked more than 60 hours a week at least half the time, and 64% of plants worked 7 days a week at least than half the time. Little progress has been made since 2006.

## Samsung

Samsung is the world's number one producer of flat screen televisions, the number two producer of mobile phones, and had 2009 sales revenues of \$120.4 billion. The company is, by itself, responsible for 20% of all Korean exports, and has as much political power as economic impact in the country.

The growing controversy about cancer clusters among young workers at Samsung's fabs, assembly and research facilities has forced it to address the concerns with an unprecedented public relations effort. On March 31st, 23-year-old Park Ji-yeon died of leukemia, which had first been diagnosed when she was 21 and working at Samsung.

The company has categorically denied that its workers were exposed to harmful chemicals. However, the transnational has admitted that 25 workers had contracted cancer, with 10 deaths, since 1998.

Hankyoreh 21, the Korean magazine reporting on Samsung's internal handbook on carcinogens and solvents, also quoted two engineers at the Giheung semiconductor plant. "Because employ-

ees are forced to compete for productivity, there was no choice but to disable the interlock safety device, which is unnecessary and slows down the work rate. They disabled dozens of interlocks on average each day, exempting only those absolutely fatal to safety," said engineer Kim.

The second engineer, a ten-year Samsung veteran, told the Korean news-weekly: "When I was working there, there were quite a number of organic solvent and gas leak incidents."

In July, Samsung announced it has commissioned an "independent commission of occupational health experts" to conduct a year-long study of worker exposures and adverse health effects from radiation, benzene and other carcinogens at its plants.

An environmental consulting firm, Environ International, will be paid by Samsung to conduct "an objective and transparent review of the safety of our

semiconductor manufacturing facilities." Reportedly, faculty or researchers from the Harvard University School of Public Health will be involved in Samsung-funded effort.

Meanwhile, surviving family members, occupational health professionals and activists in Korea have been keeping the spotlight on Samsung with public events on the anniversaries of the deaths of semiconductor workers, such as 30-year-old Hwang Min-woong and 27-year-old Yeon Jae-wook, whose deaths occurred in July.

As part of a global "2010 Joint Action Campaign for Semiconductor Workers' Health and Human Rights," the Korean SHARPS (Supporters of Health and Rights of People in the Semiconductor Industry) organization has called for public events internationally in the period of October 12-15th when three major electronics conferences will be held in Korea. ■

## Electronics Campaign Information

- Foxconn/Apple/Dell/HP: For the latest news articles, copies of protest letters by Chinese and international academics, and global petition campaigns, please see the website of SACOM – Students & Scholars Against Corporate Misbehavior at: <http://sacom.hk>
- Samsung: For the latest news articles and information on the international days of solidarity in mid-October, please see the "Stop Samsung – no more deaths!" website at: <http://stopsamsung.wordpress.com/>

## US Delegation Prepares for ANROAV Conference

Close to a dozen US activists are preparing to attend the annual meeting of ANROAV – Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational Accident Victims, which will be held October 18-20th in Bangdung, Indonesia.

Among the organizations participating will be our Network, the Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP) at UC Berkeley, the Hesperian Foundation in Berkeley, the Developing World Outreach Initiative (DWOI) of the Northern California Local Section of the

American Industrial Hygiene Association, and the International Campaign for Responsible Technology (ICRT).

LOHP and ICRT have been asked to put on a two-day skills-share workshop on health hazards in the electronics industry, and effective techniques for evaluating these hazards and pushing employers to eliminate or reduce them.

The ANROAV conference, which brings together representatives of more than 20 organizations from 14 Asian countries, offers a great opportunity for

US health and safety professionals and activists to meet and interact with their counterparts in Asia. There are many US-based transnational corporations with operations in both the US and Asia, so ANROAV provides a means to establish communications and ongoing relations of mutual aid and support between Asian and US organizations.

Anyone interested in more details about the US delegation, please contact Coordinator Garrett Brown at [garrettdbrown@comcast.net](mailto:garrettdbrown@comcast.net). ■

# Johnson Controls Workers Win One Round, Continue Fight

Johnson Controls ranks 58th on the Fortune 500 list of global corporations and reported \$979 million in profits in 2009, and a \$297 million profit in the first quarter of 2010, despite the global economic crisis. The corporation has announced plans to open another 10 manufacturing plants in China, adding to their 40 factories already there.

Johnson Controls also operates 30 plants in Mexico, including three in the city of Puebla. After a years-long battle (see below), workers at the “Resurrection” plant won the right to be represented by a union chosen and controlled by the workers in the plant. The union, “Los Mineros,” is the same independent union that represents workers at the Cananea copper mine in Sonora where our Network conducted a health and safety survey in October 2007.

Workers at a sister Johnson Controls plant in Puebla, the “FINSA” plant making car seats for VW and BMW, however, are still fighting for a member-controlled union and improved working conditions in the plant, where the wages run between \$7 and \$16 a day (88 cents to \$2 an hour) for six eight-hour days.

The Canadian Maquila Solidarity Network published this report in June on the victory at the Resurrection plant and ongoing efforts at FINSA:

“A three-day strike by workers at a Johnson Controls auto parts plant in Puebla, Mexico, backed by an international solidarity campaign, has won the workers the right to be represented by a union of their free choice.

The Johnson Controls Interiors plant employs about 450 workers and produces seats and seat parts for major auto companies, including Ford and Mercedes-Benz.

On May 29, representatives of the striking workers and the company signed an agreement that recognizes the workers' decision to be represented by the National Union of Mine and Metal Workers (SNTMMSSRM or Los Mineros).

A company-controlled ‘protection union’ linked to the Puebla State PRI government has held title to the collective agreement at the factory, but the workers have never received a copy of that agreement nor been consulted about whether they wanted to be represented by that union.

The agreement sets an important precedent in Mexico where employers often sign ‘protection contracts’ with corrupt unions without the workers' knowledge and/or consent in order to prevent those workers from organizing or affiliating with a democratic union.

In addition to recognizing Los Mineros as the workers' union, the agreement also includes the following provisions:

- No reprisals against the workers for participating in the movement;
- No legal action against those who participated in the strike;
- Payment of full wages for time lost due to the strike;
- An annual profit-sharing payment of US\$100 per worker (20 times the \$5 originally offered by the company); and
- Direct employment and union membership for all workers currently employed through a third-party employment agency.

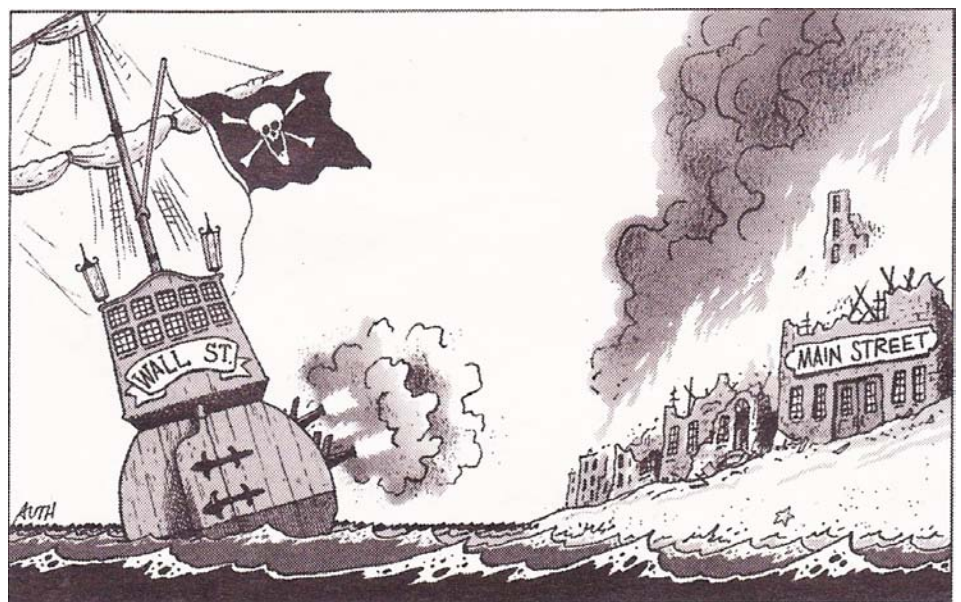
In Mexico, the workers have received support from the Puebla-based Worker Support Centre (CAT), the Mexico office of the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center, and the Project for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ProDESC). Organizations mobilizing international solidarity included United Steel Workers (USW), Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), United Auto Workers (UAW), USLEAP, and the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF), and MSN.

Meanwhile, the lengthy dispute continues at the company's FINSA plant, also in Puebla, where workers are attempting to rid themselves of another ‘protection union.’

The workers at that factory have formed a Temporary Coalition of Workers in order to negotiate with the company. To date, Johnson Controls has refused to recognize or negotiate with the Coalition, and has fired many of its leaders.

On April 28, two members of the CAT team supporting the workers, Enrique Morales Montañón and Coral Juárez Melo, were visiting Johnson Controls employees in the community of Santo Toribio, Tlaxcala, when Enrique was physically assaulted by the 17-year-old son of Magdaleno Taxis, a local

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leader of the CROM, the corrupt union that signed a 'protection contract' with management at the FINSA factory.

FINSA workers are currently touring the United States, seeking solidarity with

their struggle to be represented by an independent union. MSN is joining with counterpart organizations in Mexico and internationally in calling on the company to meet with the Coalition of Johnson Controls Workers, reinstate workers who

have been unjustly fired for supporting an independent union, and respect the workers' right to be represented by a union of their free choice."

For additional information see <http://en.maquilasolidarity.org/node/942>. ■

## New Resources

- Updated resource lists to July 2010 compiled by our Network have been posted on the website (<http://mhssn.igc.org/resources.htm>). The lists include key articles and reports on China, Mexico, corporate social responsibility and codes of conduct, global factory reports, global electronics industry, and global poverty and development.
- The International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) issued a major report – “Missed the Goal for Workers; The Reality of Soccer Ball Stitchers” – at the opening of the recent World Cup contest held in South Africa. Unsurprisingly, conditions in factories making the soccer balls, shoes and equipment in China, India, Pakistan and Thailand have not significantly improved. The report can be found at: <http://www.laborrights.org/stop-child-forced-labor/foulball-campaign/resources/12331>
- Oxfam Australia is running an interesting blog on its website written by a 24-year-old woman footwear factory worker in Indonesia named Sewani. The blog, called “In My Shoes,” can be found at: [www.oxfam.org.au/blogs/index.php/category/in-my-shoes/](http://www.oxfam.org.au/blogs/index.php/category/in-my-shoes/)
- “Red Dust,” is a 20-minute documentary by Karin Mak on the efforts of Chinese nickel-cadmium battery workers to document and end debilitating illnesses from cadmium poisoning in the production of rechargeable batteries. Information can be found at: [www.reddustdocumentary.org](http://www.reddustdocumentary.org)
- “Complicity, campaigns, collaboration and corruption. Strategies and responses to European corporations and lobbyists,” is a new report from the Hong-

Kong based Globalization Monitor organization on how labor rights groups, do, can and “should” interact with transnational corporations and government agencies. The report can be found at: [www.globalmon.org.hk](http://www.globalmon.org.hk)

- “Tolerating Violations in the ICTI CARE Process: Tianyu Toys Keeps Failing to Meet Standards,” is the third report from SACOM – Students & Scholars Against Corporate Misbehavior on repeated violations of both Chinese law and corporate “codes of conduct,” by this Dongguan, China, company and its international customers. The report can be found at:

[www.sacom.hk](http://www.sacom.hk)

- “US-owned Jabil factory in China is run like a minimum security prison producing for Whirlpool, GE and HP,” is a new report from the National Labor Committee in New York on miserable working conditions in a supplier for well-known US corporations. The report can be found at: [www.nlcnet.org/reports?id=o6o2](http://www.nlcnet.org/reports?id=o6o2)
- “Chinese university students investigate life on the factory floor,” is a report from the China Labour Bulletin in Hong Kong about three students who went “undercover” during their

(See **New Resources**, page 9)

### NETWORKING NOTES

- In an historic victory for garment workers in Honduras, Nike Inc. has agreed to pay \$1.5 million to 2,000 workers laid off last year from Nike apparel suppliers. Workers at the Hugger and Vision Tex factories are owed over \$2 million in unpaid wages and legally required severance pay. Nike agreed to the “relief fund” under intense pressure from a student-led campaign that resulted in cancellation of Nike licensing agreements with several US universities. More information is available at: <http://en.maquilasolidarity.org/node/950> and <http://workersrights.org/university/memo/072610.html>
- Verité, a Massachusetts-based research and code compliance monitoring organization, released in June a major report on human trafficking, forced labor and slavery in global economy. The organization also launched two related initiatives – “HELP WANTED: Hiring, Human Trafficking and Slavery in the Global Economy” and the “Well Made” campaign to improve conditions in global supply chains – featuring their report and a dedicated website at: <http://www.verite.org/WellMade/>
- The 12th annual European Work Hazards Network Conference will be held at the University of Leeds in the UK on September 10-12th. Participants are coming from throughout Europe, with a significant group coming from the United States and Canada as well. The conference always generates numerous useful materials on a wide range of subjects related to workplace safety. Further information is available at: [www.ewhn.eu](http://www.ewhn.eu).



## Quotes of the Month

*“Last year China overtook Germany to become the world’s largest exporter, and this year it could surpass Japan as the world’s No. 2 economy...China is stuck doing the global grunt work in factory cities while designers and engineers overseas reap the profits. Much of Apple’s iPhone, for example, is made in China. But if a high-end version costs \$750, China is lucky to hold on to \$25. For a pair of Nikes, it’s four pennies on the dollar.”*

— John Pomfret, “Beijing tries to push beyond ‘Made in China’ status to find brand-name innovation,” Washington Post, May 25, 2010.

*“Never expect something like a labour strike to happen in China? Please bear in mind that workers on this globe belong to the same group. When the exploited labourers are forced to toil extra time, work under huge pressure and earn disproportional tiny wages – often less than 1500 yuan (US\$220) a month in China – the disappointment and frustration gather and grow to anger, and eventually revolts break out.”*

— Li Hong, “Time to defend Chinese workers rights,” columnist for the official People’s Daily newspaper in China, June 7, 2010.

*“There are many guilty parties,” Juanita Luna [whose four-year-old son Jonatan died in the daycare fire] said, “It’s a disgrace. A disgrace for Mexico.” Mexican Supreme Court justices conducted an investigation and, in March, named 19 government officials at all levels who they said bore responsibility [none have been arrested]...”I don’t want to lose the last thing I have left, which is faith that my son will have justice,” said Mayra Valle [whose three-year-old son Isaac died], “Even with all that the government does to us Mexicans, we still believe. I don’t want to be wrong.”*

— Ken Ellingwood, “Year after Mexico school fire justice is elusive,” Los Angeles Times, June 3, 2010.

[For background on this June 5, 2009, fire in Mexico see: <http://thepumphandle.wordpress.com/2009/07/23/mexicos-daycare-fire-not-even-babies-are-protected>

### (New Resources, from page 8)

summer break to experience the life of 190 million migrant workers in China. The report can be found at: [www.clb.org.hk/en/node/100834](http://www.clb.org.hk/en/node/100834)

- “The Impact of China’s Labor Contract Law on Workers,” is a new report from the International Labor Rights Forum looking at the actual impact on the

factory floor of China’s 2008 implementation of several new labor laws. The report can be found at: [www.irflf.org](http://www.irflf.org)

- The European Union’s “Fair Trade Center” in Sweden issued a report called “Strategies for strengthening human rights in the Chinese workplace” in December 2009 that has just been translated and released in

English. The report, aimed at “companies, trade unions and NGOs,” can be found at: <http://www.fairtradecenter.se/english>

- The European Union’s workplace safety agency – EU-OSHA – has issued its 2009 Annual Report highlighting the theme “spending on health and safety is an investment, not a cost.” The report emphasizes the long-term value for enterprises of workplace safety, even in difficult economic times. It can be found at: [http://osha.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2009\\_annual\\_report\\_01.15062010](http://osha.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2009_annual_report_01.15062010) ■

## MHSSN Wins Award from AIHA Committee

Our Maquiladora Health and Safety Support Network, and Coordinator Garrett Brown, are the 2010 winners of the American Industrial Hygiene Association’s (AIHA) “Rachel Carson Environmental Service Award.” AIHA’s Environmental Issues Committee presented the award to Brown in May 2010 at its annual conference in Denver, Colorado.

The Carson Award is given to individuals and/or organization that have “advanced public awareness of environmental, safety and health issues; problems and solutions; or recognition, evaluation and control of a hazard that adversely affects the community and environment,” according to the AIHA.

“This award is the highest honor bestowed upon an EHS professional or group” by the committee, AIHA said in announcing the award. “It is presented to EHS professionals who have attained outstanding success in their EHS business, profession or life’s work.”

**Check out our website  
for archived newsletters,  
updated resource lists,  
and more.**

**[www.igc.org/mhssn](http://www.igc.org/mhssn)**