

# THE HUMAN THREAD

1. Roughly 98% of clothes sold in America are actually made overseas.

<http://money.cnn.com/2013/05/01/news/companies/bangladesh-garment-factory/>

2. In efforts to maximize profit, factories often force overtime, duck extra pay, or even lower wages to subcontracted workers off-site. This attack on factory wages is due in part to an increasing demand for the cheapest goods possible by consumers in the United States. Changing consumer-spending habits away from the cheapest goods possible is one way to help protect wages for factory workers overseas.

3. On average, only between .5 and 3% of the cost of production for the average item of clothing go to the worker that made it. That means by best estimates only 30 cents would go to a worker who made a shirt costing 10 dollars to make. <http://www.cleanclothes.org/livingwage/what-is-the-asia-floor-wage>

4. The average garment factory worker on average by country makes very little in USD. Here are the numbers for some of those countries on an hourly basis.

Bangladesh-\$0.24

Cambodia-\$0.45

Pakistan-\$0.52

Vietnam-\$0.53

China-\$1.26

<http://www.businessinsider.com/average-hourly-wage-for-garment-workers-2013-5>

5. Typical violations of workplace conditions include wage theft (not paying overtime, violating minimum wage laws), building safety, and underage employment, some as young as 11 years old.

[http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/lwp/NLC\\_childlabor.html](http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/lwp/NLC_childlabor.html)

6. Some US brands are better than others. Some of the more honest and just brands include Patagonia and Eileen Fisher. Some ways to ensure better options for clothing is to check that they are through Fair Trade companies, locally made, Union made, and made sustainable.

<http://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/fair-trade-clothing>

<http://www.patagonia.com/us/footprint>

7. Transparency is key: Some stores actually publish the Factory names and their locations, making them more reputable brands when it comes to safety of workers.

8. There is legislation in California working towards corporate transparency called the California Transparency Act requiring companies to disclose information to the public their efforts to ensure their goods are not made by enslaved or forced laborers.

<https://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/sb657/resource-guide.pdf>

9. One way of addressing wages is ensuring workers what is called a "living wage." A Living Wage is a wage that allows the earner and their family to afford basic costs of living without requiring government assistance. Living wages vary based on the location of the worker, but the concept is the same everywhere, ensuring workers can afford a basic standard of living.

[http://www.livingwageaction.org/resources\\_lw.htm](http://www.livingwageaction.org/resources_lw.htm)

10. One of the ways buildings are being made safer is through the ACCORD on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh. This ensures independent building inspections, public disclosures of factories, and elected Health and Safety Committees.

<http://bangladeshaccord.org/about/>