

Day 18

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This article resonated with me the most:

<https://fairworldproject.org/her-labor-his-land-how-insecure-land-rights-undermine-women-and-contribute-to-food-insecurity-in-kenya/>

This article is about Katherine, who plants mangos with her husband in Kenya. She works in difficult conditions under the hot weather of Kenya, yet she can not enjoy the profits earned from her own work. Because men are viewed as the household leaders and farm owners, they get the majority of the money even when they did not do the majority of the work. Although she has worked hard to plant mangos, many rights for women are not recognized in Kenya, and her experience is not unique. There are many other women out there, working tough hours for unequal pay on the basis of gender, and each of them has a story. This is unacceptable in society, and we need to work to empower women for better lives.

**I did my own research
and found a video on
youtube, called “How
Patagonia is Making
Fair Trade Profitable.”**

Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwuQbmLC>

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Many workers grind in an exploitative system which values profit over workers. This is how our clothing is so cheap; our sales and discounts are built on paying struggling workers as little as possible. Many people don't want to talk about this subject because all of us feel guilty and none of us know what to do.

This video shows us that there is a solution, through the lens of a single worker. A lady named Upeksha Madushani works in a garment factory in Sri Lanka as a sewing machine operator. Thanks to fair trade practices in her factory (a Fair Trade Certified Garment Factory), she is able to send her 5 year old son to an onsite daycare center. The factory also provides transportation services to their workers. There are about 70% women in this factory.

These factories are a refreshing alternative to the horrible labor conditions of normal environment, where a cesspool of bad treatment of workers, low wages, unsafe factories, and pollution of the environment usually develop. Fair trade certification requires a few things, among those include no child labor, fair wages, reasonable working hours and benefits, health and safety, and eco-friendliness.

In the factory Upeksha works for, managers work with employee council to discuss the benefits together, and the daycare center just one of many win-win situations that develop from this employee-employer partnership. The mothers especially are extremely happy because they know their children are in safe hands and it allows them to be able to work during the day without worry.

The message that resonates with me the most is that responsible business is required in the world. Businesses can't just value profit; they need to value the environment, the people working under them, and much more. It is easy for many to forget about the people who produce everything we buy. It's even easier to purposely ignore the fact that some, if not many, of them are exploited and taken advantage of. We can all start from buying and supporting Fair Trade certified products, as we as consumers have the power of our purchases. Our purchasing decisions affect workers around the world. We can sway companies to give these employees fairer wages if we really wanted to. Those supporting Fair Trade certified products are saying, "let's do that now." Not later, not tomorrow, not in 10 years, let's start giving those making our clothes more rights today. We need to help workers not only to improve their lives but also find their voice, hope, pride and confidence in their everyday lives, and Fair Trade helps make that happen.

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