

Arcadia Group – People & Planet meeting, 2nd June 2008.

Note: Labour behind the Label attended as an observer.

Introduction

P&P asked to discuss Arcadia's work on Living Wages, Multi Stakeholder engagement, Freedom of Association, and recent media articles concerning Arcadia, including Uzbekistan.

Arcadia wanted to understand how P&P research their campaigns prior to publishing, and to address P&P's concerns by sharing the work that Arcadia have been involved in over the last 18 months.

Areas of discussion

- Overview of Arcadia's approach:** Arcadia introduced the Fashion Footprint Initiative. <http://www.arcadiagroup.co.uk/responsibilities/social/footprint.html>. Arcadia have also recently launched a new initiative through Fashioning an Ethical Industry to take on students for a four-week placement
- Migrant workers:** Arcadia outlined recent initiatives to improve conditions for migrant workers
- Workers' rights:** Arcadia outlined recent initiatives on discrimination, grievance and harassment processes.
- Living wages:** Arcadia discussed the living wage through Arcadia project work in Bangladesh, Mauritius and Africa.
- Fortune Garments:** Arcadia detailed the work it had undertaken in conjunction with the supplier.
- Forced labour in Uzbekistan:** Arcadia detailed the work they have undertaken to allow visibility of the supply chain in Uzbekistan. Arcadia met with Environmental Justice Foundation in January. Arcadia will not source garments from Uzbekistan and have instructed suppliers only to source cotton from countries which meet the Arcadia Code of Conduct, which prohibits the use of child labour.
- Fairtrade:** Arcadia summarised the current Topshop empowerment programme in Africa.
- Multi-stakeholder engagement:** Arcadia addressed this through illustrating its current contacts with external stakeholders including, unions, NGOs and other retailers. In Arcadia's view, membership of the ETI is not a pre-requisite to being an 'ethical' retailer. People & Planet emphasised that they did indeed consider membership of a credible MSI to be a prerequisite for any company wishing to be considered as ethical, and raised the Fair Wear Foundation as an alternative
- Freedom of Association.** Arcadia described its code, its recent work on labour issues in one of its factories and its ongoing dialogue with the ITGLWF.

Conclusions and next steps

Arcadia asked what P&P would do about their campaign as a result of the information presented in the meeting. P&P agreed to write to Arcadia to inform them of any changes to the campaign after consulting with its members.