

»You don't really think that much about how the people who made your sweater live. But you would like them to be doing okay.«

Berkant

# How much was your Hoodie?

A magazine about the real price of what you eat, your clothes, your mobile and your holidays - and about corporate responsibility for human rights.

SWED  
WATCH



The things we buy leave a trace. They affect people's everyday lives, for good and for bad. What can we do to ensure that it is for good rather than for bad? And what responsibility do companies have? Let's start by looking at our **clothes**.



### What did your hoodie cost?

What did that 25 dollars you paid for your sweater include, and how was it produced?

Perhaps it is made of Indian cotton that was woven into fabric and sewn together in Bangladesh, with thread from China. It has created work and an income, but a lot of water and chemicals were probably used during the manufacturing process. There is also a risk that dirty water from the production process has contaminated watercourses, and that the people who sewed the T-shirt are not paid wages that they can live on.

Clothing companies play a dual role in our world. They create jobs and make development possible for countries and people. At the same time, the companies are sometimes criticised for pushing down the prices at which they purchase garments, which can result in the textile workers' wages and working conditions being adversely impacted.

### Made in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the world's largest clothing manufacturers. The textile workers are usually women and young girls. Many have left their life in the countryside, and sometimes their

children too, to work in factories in the major cities.

The jobs provide women with their own income and over the past 20 years, the situation for textile workers has improved in a number of ways. But the vast majority still do not have wages that cover their basic needs, and psychological and physical abuse are commonplace in the



workplace. Low wages also force women to work long hours. Safety is a major challenge in the textile sector in Bangladesh. In 2013, a large factory called Rana Plaza collapsed. Clothes were being made there for the European

market were manufactured. More than 1,000 people were killed and almost twice as many were injured. Although workers had reported cracks in the building, nothing had been done to repair them. After the disaster, clothing companies, factories, trade unions and governments joined forces to improve the safety of factories in Bangladesh, but a lot of work still remains to be done to ensure that Bangladeshi textile workers have safe workplaces.

### Difficult to influence

A basic problem in Bangladesh is that it is difficult for the textile workers to influence their work situation, whether it involves safety, wages or working conditions. Many employers do not want workers to organize in trade unions, even though it is a human right. Those who do so risk being beaten, sacked and even murdered. Today, only a small percentage of the workers in the textile sector in Bangladesh are members of a trade union.



»If our managers knew we met with a trade union, they would set impossible production targets, physically and psychologically abuse us if we did not meet the targets and sack us within a month.«

Farida, a tailor's assistant



Long working hours are commonplace for textile workers in Bangladesh. In this factory, punitive signs are used to increase the pace of production.



# The T-shirt journey

All goods have a *supply chain*. The chain describes how the goods are made, from raw material to finished product. In all stages of the supply chain, there are a number of risks for people and the environment. What risks may have played a role in the manufacture of your T-shirt?

**1 The cotton field.** A T-shirt is often made of cotton. In several countries where cotton is grown, including India, Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, forced labour and child labour is used. Cultivation of cotton requires large amounts of water and the pesticides used can often contaminate the land and watercourses. This is a danger to both the farmers and the people who live in the area.

**4 Tailoring.** The fabric is cut and sewn together into a finished garment. The clothes we buy in Europe mainly come from China, Bangladesh, Vietnam and India. As you can see on the previous pages, there are risks such as low wages, long working hours, physical and psychological abuse and violations of the right to organize and negotiate collectively.

**3 Dyeing and treating.** The fabric is dyed and may be treated so that it is resistant to dirt and moisture, and does not shrink in the wash. Text or patterns may also be printed or embroidered on the fabric. A lot of chemicals are used at this stage. A lack of proper protective equipment and ventilation as well as fire hazards are all risks that have been identified. If the water that is used is not purified, it can cause additional risks. In many of the producing countries, watercourses are so polluted that people risk becoming sick and losing important sources of income.

**2 Spinning and weaving** The cotton is made into thread and yarn, then woven or knitted into fabric. This takes place in China, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Turkey as well as some other countries. Studies from southern India have shown that girls under 18 years of age can work 60 hours a week or more in dangerous working environments and be forced to work overtime and night shifts. Many are subjected to degrading treatment by their superiors and cannot move around freely when they are not at work.

**5 Transport & storage.** Between all the steps in the supply chain, the goods must be transported and stored, and then sent to shops and customers. In the transport sector, in addition to the climate impact, there are other risks such as trafficking, forced labour, low wages and poor working conditions, lack of collective bargaining agreements, lack of security and corruption.





Lily, 10 years old, lives in a slum area in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She suffers from rheumatic fever. Lily's mother works at a textile factory and her wages are not sufficient to pay for the health-care that Lily needs.

»I have pain in my legs and arms. My mum cannot afford to buy food for us or pay for my treatment. I want to run and play but I can't.



During the 1990's, it was revealed that factories that manufactured shoes and clothing for major international companies were using child labour. Since then, many different stakeholders have worked to bring about change, but child

labour is still a major problem in the textile industry. It is believed to be more common amongst subcontractors who are hired when the factories themselves cannot manage to complete all their orders, and where the fabric is dyed, the thread is spun and the cotton is grown.

The primary reason for child labour is that parents' wages are so low. The low wages not only force children to work, but also affect children's rights in other ways, such as their right to go to school, their right to be with their families and their right to the standard of living needed for their development.

ILLUSTRATION JOSEFIN HEROLF

Articles from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

ARTICLE 23

- 1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- 2) Everyone, without discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- 3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for themselves and their family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- 4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of their interests.



What are human rights?

Human rights mean that all people, regardless of country, culture and context, are born free and have equal dignity and rights. They are written down in various international agreements and declarations. The governments of the world have a duty to protect the rights of their citizens. The most famous document is the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted after the Second World War, with the intention of ensuring that something similar would never happen again. The document establishes 30 rights, such as the right to freedom of expression, education and work and the right to be free from slavery and torture.

ARTICLE 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

ARTICLE 25

1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for their own and their family's health and well-being, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond their control.

Business enterprises should respect human rights.

Companies have a responsibility that their production and their services do not adversely affect people's rights. Find out more on page 12. ►



»The working conditions of the people who are extracting the minerals for our mobile phones are terrible. It should not be like this.«

Minna

»I think that too much responsibility is placed on consumers, and too little on the companies and those who govern society.«

Salma

# Swipe right?

There are at least, 40 minerals in your mobile phone. Several of them run the risk of having a dark history.

**A**ccess to doctors, banks and a constantly updated encyclopaedia in your pocket – mobile phones create fantastic opportunities worldwide. At the same time, the electronics industry suffers from major problems with regard to human rights. A large part of the production takes place in Asia, often under poor working conditions. There is also a considerable risk that the minerals contained in the phones have been extracted under difficult working conditions.

## Difficult working conditions

The IT companies that manufacture our phones and computers have production plants and suppliers in China, Malaysia, Mexico, Brazil, India, Europe and the USA. Substandard working conditions have been found at suppliers of all major electronic brands. Issues include:

- Wages that are impossible to live on
- Illegally long working hours
- Forced overtime
- Violation of union rights
- Inadequate protective equipment
- Forced labour
- Adverse effects on health such as cancer and skin diseases



Poor working conditions in manufacturing plants have had serious consequences. In 2010, 17 young migrant workers at a large Chinese electronics company, with global customers, tried to commit suicide.

After this became public, the industry's efforts to improve conditions have increased. Today, many leading companies demand that the manufacture of their products take human rights into consideration. Despite this, many of the risks remain.





IMAGE JEPPÉ SCHLIDER, DIAGONIA/PMU

»Maybe I will die from all the toxic substances, but if I have no job, I will die anyway«

## Origin: The Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is one of the countries that supply the global electronics market with minerals. The country's huge mineral wealth should have made the country rich, but instead there have been conflicts over its natural resources, which have escalated into a brutal war. Many different stakeholders try to make money from the minerals and an illegal mineral trade, characterized by corruption and violence, has emerged. During

the course of the fighting over natural resources between soldiers and rebels, villages have been burned down, people have been killed and sexual violence has been used as a weapon.

The conflict has cost more than five million lives over the past 20 years. There are also similar problems with the illegal trade of minerals that finance armed forces in Myanmar, Colombia and the Central African Republic.

Tens of thousands

of children work in the mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Children have testified to Amnesty International about 12-hour work days for one to two dollars a day in wages. Working conditions are dangerous, resulting in injuries and deaths. Even adult miners risk their lives on a daily basis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## Illegal trade:

Several states have introduced initiatives to combat the illegal trade in minerals from conflict zones. For example, the USA and the EU have established laws placing requirements on companies that buy certain kinds of minerals. Several companies have also been involved in initiatives aimed at tracing the origin of minerals. But a lot of work still needs to be done. In 2017, Amnesty released a report on the mineral cobalt, which can be found in phones and car batteries. About half of all the cobalt on the global market comes from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Despite this, none of the 26 companies that were investigated in the report, including large electronics and car manufacturers, were aware of where the cobalt in their products came from.

Jean Pierre has worked in the mine most of his life. Most mornings he stands like this, with clay up to his knees. He rubs mercury into a cloth together with sand and gold. The water from the cloth drips off his hands into the water where he is standing. He knows it is toxic, that it can cause kidney and respiratory problems and even be fatal.

**The mine:** Barak Sastifa works deep under ground in narrow mine tunnels – without any protective equipment. A task that often falls on the younger miners. Putting his life on the line, he digs out mineral-rich ore. The many tonnes of stone above his head are held up by mere sticks, wedged against the rock wall. Tunnel collapses and accidents occur frequently.



IMAGE JOAKIM WOHLFEIL, DIAGONIA





# Can companies do exactly what they want?

**C**ompanies must follow the laws and regulations that prevail in the countries where they conduct business. If a company manufactures products in China, it must be aware of the laws and regulations that apply there. They should also respect international agreements and

laws, such as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In some countries, the laws do not meet international standards. In other in others, the laws are not applied in practice, perhaps because of corruption or a lack of resources.

Take the example of the right

to form unions. Although it is well-established in international law, it is violated in many countries. Under Bangladeshi law, for example, workers have the right to organize. Yet people who want to form or join trade unions are often sacked or abused.

## Oversight and compensation

According to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, companies must ensure that their operations do not cause, contribute to or are linked to human rights violations.

They should be aware of where the materials in their products come from, and how

people's rights are affected during the manufacturing process.

If the company discovers that there is a risk of human rights violations or that human rights violations are occurring in its business or in its supply chain, it should do everything possible to reduce the risk or ensure that the violations cease.

If a company has contributed to human rights being adversely affected, it should ensure that the people affected are compensated. This may, for example, entail financial compensation or that land is returned to people who have had it confiscated. In addition, companies should openly report risks and shortcomings.

## Daily violations

Today, many companies work actively to improve their operations, their supply chains and the sectors in which they operate. Despite this, and despite laws and principles, people's rights are violated on a daily basis within global supply chains. Many companies have thousands of suppliers, that in turn have subcontractors all over the world.

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights are not laws, merely principles. If it appears that a company is not behaving in accordance with the principles, there is no court to investigate the case or hand out punishment.

## The 2030 Agenda and The Global Goals

In 2015, the world's leaders agreed to achieve four things by the year 2030: eradicate extreme poverty, reduce inequality in the world, solve the climate crisis and promote peace and justice.

To achieve this, 17 Global Goals were established, which require the active participation of companies. For example, businesses should promote decent

working conditions, growth that everyone will benefit from, gender equality and sustainable innovations, as well as combating climate change.

Goal number 12 focuses particularly on promoting sustainable consumption and production, including sustainable use of natural resources, getting

companies to adopt sustainable methods and encouraging the public sector to engage in sustainable procurement.

Find out more about the 2030 Agenda at [globalgoals.org](http://globalgoals.org)



## The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

The United Nations Guiding Principles were adopted in 2011 with the support of all the UN member states. In the Principles, the United Nations clarifies that states are responsible

for protecting the human rights of their citizens, but that companies also have a responsibility to respect them.

According to the Principles, companies should not cause or contribute to human rights violations and they should act to prevent violations. They should also provide compensation for any adverse impact on human rights with which they were in-

involved. The adverse impact may be connected to their own business or that of their suppliers, their customers or their business partners.

Companies should have a process for identifying, rectifying, monitoring and reporting threats to human rights.

Governments are encouraged to adopt a plan for how the principles should be implemented.





# Bon appétit

Chicken nuggets with forced labour and deforestation ice cream? There are many hidden risks associated with what we eat and drink for both people and the environment.

**T**he whole business of what we eat can be complicated. What is really good for us, for others and for the environment? At the supermarket and the restaurant, it can sometimes feel rather hopeless: how big is the carbon footprint from the tomatoes and what were the working conditions like for the farmers who grew the mangetout?

The Earth's population is growing and with it the need for food. The situation has led to certain states and companies exploiting large areas of land in other, often poorer, countries to produce food for export.

At the same time, the populations of poorer countries are growing the most and they often have the greatest difficulty getting enough food.

## Water – a scarce resource

Growing and processing food also involves a number of other risks to people and the environment. Food production accounts for 70 percent of all the world's water

consumption, and water is a scarce commodity in many places. This shortage of water can cause both health problems and conflicts. Furthermore, a lot of fertilizers and chemicals are used in agriculture, which risk destroying wildlife and wiping out fishing stocks if they flow into watercourses.

## Deforestation

The expansion of agriculture and large plantations is also a major factor behind the deforestation of the world's tropical forests. Deforestation is a significant cause of climate change, which leads to extreme weather events, such as torrential rain, droughts and storms, becoming more common.

There are also a number of risks for people who work in the food industry, such as health risks due to the use of chemicals in the cultivation of crops, poor working conditions, forced labour and child labour.

»It is difficult to make the right choice. I think about the environment and animals when I shop, but what is good for the environment really?«

Semira





**Tasty treats!**  
**That can have**  
**a problematic**  
**history.**



**Coffee**

**RISKS:** Many studies have shown that there are threats to human rights in the coffee industry. On plantations in Brazil, Swedwatch has identified risks such as forced labour, child labour, illegally low wages and long working hours, dangerous pesticides and a lack of protective equipment.



**Avocados**

**RISKS:** Growing avocados requires a lot of water. Despit this, they are often grown in areas where there is a shortage of water which can result in water shortages. In several regions in Peru and Chile, production has contributed to the local population not having enough drinking water or water for their own crops.



**Vanilla**

**RISKS:** Vanilla is one of the world's most expensive flavourings, but in Madagascar, which accounts for 80 percent of the vanilla sold on the global market, the farmers only get a fraction of the profits. This means that they end up in a vicious cycle of poverty and child labour. In 2015, it was estimated that 20,000 children were working in the vanilla industry in Madagascar.



**Tea**

**RISKS:** Tea is grown in many places around the world. In India, which is the world's largest producer of tea after China, low wages, a lack of safety equipment for handling chemical and substandard housing and sanitation have been identified as risks to employees.

**INVESTMENTS >**  
**Banks, fund managers and other types of investors are important stakeholders in terms of human rights, the environment and the climate because they are owners of many other companies. They should ensure that companies in which they own shares cease to violate human rights and compensate those affected.**



**Palm oil**

**RISKS:** There is palm oil in many of the products we eat, including biscuits, chocolate, breakfast cereals and ice cream. In Indonesia and Malaysia, the rainforests have been destroyed to make room for oil palm plantations. Logging has had a considerable impact on the world's climate and limited the ability of indigenous people to support themselves on what the forest can provide. At the same time, they have not always been given a share of the income from the palm plantations.

An investigation that Swedwatch conducted in 2017 showed that rainforests were being cut down in Borneo without the consent of the indigenous peoples - despite the fact that it is required under international law. Interviewees described how bulldozers came in and started clearing their land without any warning, and that anyone who tried to protest or prevent the companies' activities were putting their lives at risk.

The investigation concluded that Swedish banks that invested in companies that have palm oil plantations in Borneo, or import palm oil into Sweden, did not have sufficient knowledge of how the indigenous peoples' lives and forests had been affected. The banks had also not put enough pressure on the companies to return land and compensate the indigenous peoples for the damage that had been caused.



**Chicken**

**RISKS:** Chicken from Thailand can be found in ready meals, in restaurants and in school dining rooms. In 2015, Swedwatch interviewed migrant workers from Cambodia and Myanmar who worked in Thai chicken factories. The workers said that they had to pay large sums of money to recruitment firms and employers to get a job in Thailand, and by doing so ended up in debt to them. Many had had their passports and important documents confiscated and their movement restricted. Illegal wage deductions, unpaid overtime and abuse was in evidence, and child labour was also being used.

Swedish companies and authorities that bought chicken from Thailand did not have as much knowledge as they should have had. Today, a number of food companies work together to ensure that rights are respected, such as through dialogue with local organizations that work for the rights of migrant workers. Many authorities have also started to look more closely at the risks associated with food production.

The situation that the workers found themselves in is called debt slavery. About 12.5 million people worldwide are estimated to be stuck in forced labour and 8 million in debt slavery. Similar conditions to those experienced by the workers in the chicken factories have been discovered in other industries, such as the Thai fruit industry and the fishing industry.



»It feels important to travel, because you realize how similar people are. You also become aware of how privileged you are.«  
Kajsa

# The Travel bug

Holidays in the sun for some – lives in the shadows for others.

**D**o you like to travel? You are not alone. International travel is reaching all time highs.

Tourism is an important source of income for many countries and provides great development opportunities. At the same time, travel has a downside. Emissions from air travel contribute to climate change, which hits people living in poverty particularly hard.

Climate change is leading to rising sea levels, which for example means that the popular holiday destination, the Maldives, is in danger of ending up completely under water in 80 years' time.

## Forced labour

But travel also has another downside – one that concerns people who live and work in tourist destinations. At hotels in Thailand, for example, there are employees who are stuck in forced labour or exploited in jobs where they are unable to support themselves. In Dubai, located in the United Arab Emirates, as many as 80 percent of the country's population are migrant workers.

Just as in the case of the chicken industry in Thailand, which you can read about on the previous pages, it is common in the UAE for migrant workers



IMAGE: ISTOCK

to be forced into debt slavery when they are tricked into paying high recruitment costs.

## Censured states

Both Thailand and Dubai have also been criticized for a variety of human rights violations. The United Arab Emirates has been accused of not complying with international human rights regulations. Just as in Thailand, freedom of expression and the freedom to organize are very restricted there.

In Thailand, the tourism industry has a downside that many do not see, characterized by human trafficking, sex tourism, environmental degradation in coastal areas and high water consumption.





## Long weekend in Dubai

The United Arab Emirates has developed a special employment system for migrant workers,



»I cannot stand working like this, but my family relies on the money I send home.«

for workers to make demands and change jobs. The migrant workers often become completely dependent on their employers, are forced to work long hours and do not always receive the wages to which they are entitled.

In 2015, Swedwatch interviewed 23-year-old Andrew, who

worked at a large hotel in Dubai. In his home country of Kenya, Andrew had come into contact with a recruitment company that promised him a well-paid job in Dubai. To be able to pay for the trip there, Andrew sold his land – he had calculated that his wages in Dubai would be enough to buy back his land, build a house and pay for education when he came home. But it did not turn out the way Andrew had imagined.

“When I arrived in Dubai I was picked up by a man who took my passport and all my papers. He took me to the recruitment agency who said my contract was not valid. If I did not sign a new contract, they would send me home.”, he said.

Andrew was put to work at a large hotel where he had to stand up for 12 hours straight. He could not take a break or have a day off.

“I cannot work like this, but my family relies on the money I send home. If I had known that this would happen, I would never have sold my land. I can't go home empty-handed.”, he said.



PHOTOGRAPHY

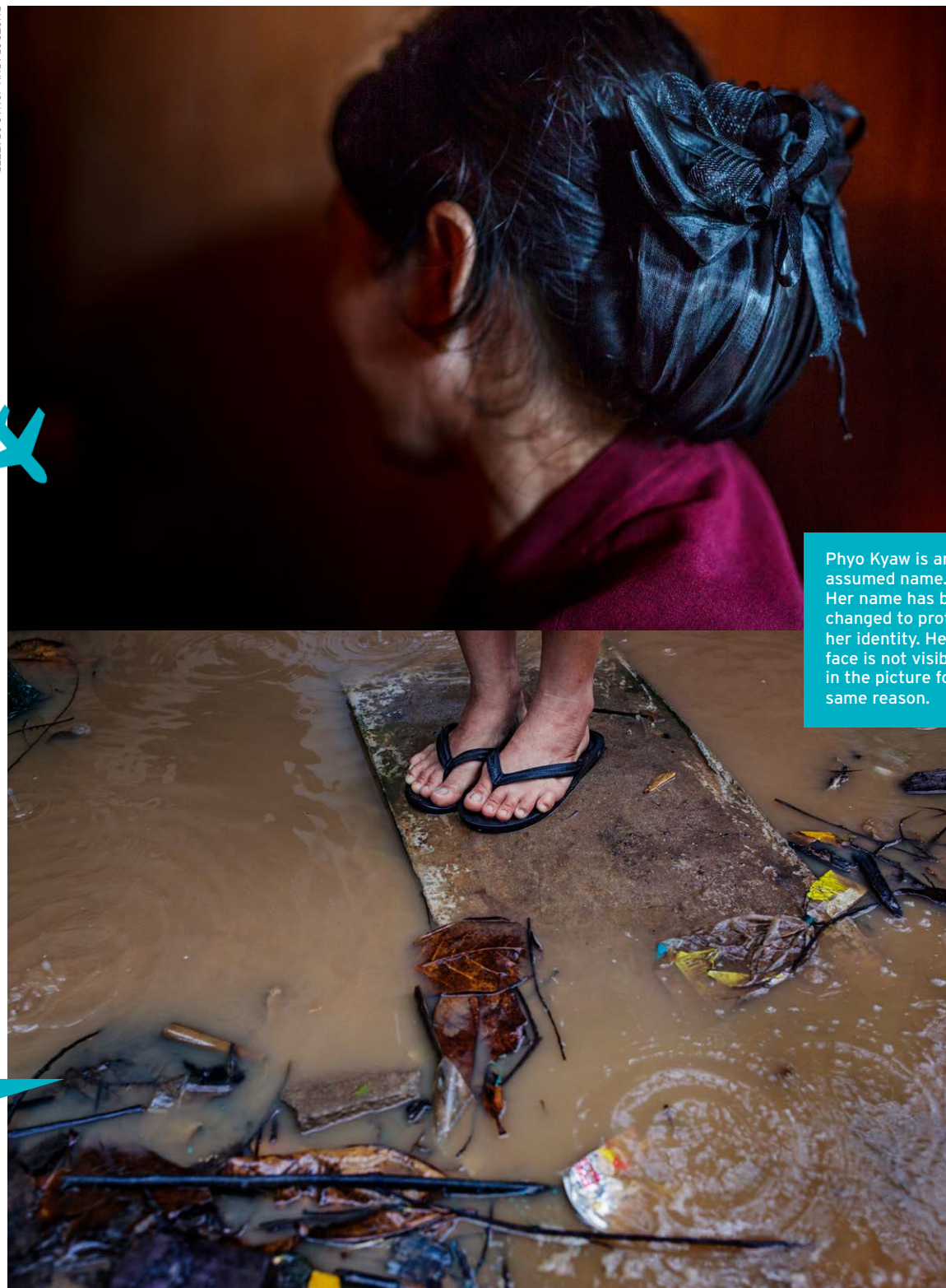
## Holiday in Thailand

Many migrant workers also work in Thai hotels and restaurants. They mainly come from the poorer neighbouring countries of Burma, Cambodia and the Philippines. In 2017, the organizations Fair Action and Schyst Resande interviewed nine Burmese migrants who worked at six different hotels in the tourist resorts of Phuket and Khao Lak. The hotels are under contract to Swedish travel companies. According to Fair Action, eight of the workers interviewed would have to earn at least 50 percent more to support a family, buy proper food, and have a decent home. Four of the workers had wages that were below the minimum wage, although the minimum wage is the lowest wage an employer can give an employee according to Thai law.

**Phyo Kyaw** worked as a maid at a hotel in Khao Lak, and was hired by a Swedish tour operator. According to Thai employment law, employees must have at least one day's paid leave a week, but Phyo, like several of the other interviewees, worked seven days a week. The hotel staff lived in corrugated metal shacks built on marshland. About fifty people shared three outdoor toilets. Phyo told me that she earned 80 SEK a day.

– If I were paid 25 SEK more per day and perhaps a day's paid leave a month then everything would be fine.

PHOTOGRAPHY JONAS GRATZER



Phyo Kyaw is an assumed name. Her name has been changed to protect her identity. Her face is not visible in the picture for the same reason.



## To buy - or not to buy?

As a consumer you can try to influence the companies where you buy products by reading up and asking questions. This can be better than stopping buying the company's products altogether, because boycotts can lead to a financial backlash for the company or the company's suppliers, which in turn may result in the people working in the factories losing their jobs.

Visit the the company's website and check if they openly and credibly describe how they produce their products, and/or contact the company and ask the following types of questions:

- Do you know where the product is made and where the components come from?
- Do you strive to ensure that it is manufactured under fair conditions?

## Do right at work

Workplaces can both manufacture and purchase products and services. What is it like at your workplace or at those of people you know? Are there processes in place to handle environmental and human rights risks and impacts?

# What can you do?

## Put pressure on politicians!

Politicians can introduce rules and laws with the aim of respecting human rights in global supply chains. Find out what the politicians in your municipality, county council or country think about the situation! E-mail politicians or ask questions during election campaigns to demonstrate that the issue is important, and use your voting rights when you are old enough to vote. You can also support or get involved in various associations or organizations.



ILLUSTRATION  
JOSEF HEROLF

## Invest your money ethically

You can make a difference through your savings. Do some research and ask your bank what they do to ensure that their investments and capital contribute to sustainable development. Banks often have special sustainable investment funds in which you can invest your money.

## Check labels

Sustainability labelling is an effective and easy way for consumers to obtain guidance about how a product is produced. However, certification systems are sometimes criticized because they do not always deliver on their promises, or because they are not sufficiently ambitious. Read up on this and find out about different labels to see what they entail.

## Put pressure on your school!

What procedures does your school or municipality follow when purchasing food and furniture? European legislation makes it possible for public bodies to impose certain requirements in terms of working conditions and environmental considerations when purchasing goods and services. Find out from your headteacher or the municipality what procedures they have put in place to ensure that people's rights are respected in the manufacture of school desks or school food, for example.

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**The things we buy have a history which we do not always think about. Someone has extracted the minerals in your phone, dyed your top, picked your avocado. Consumption creates income and development opportunities, but the environment and other people sometimes pay a higher price than us. Let's take a closer look at the types of things that young people spend their money on. What are the hidden risks associated with the things we buy? What responsibility do companies have for ensuring no harm is done – and what can we do to influence them?**



[www.swedwatch.org](http://www.swedwatch.org)