

Complaint – Continental Clothing Company and Kwintet – Bangladesh

Status: In Remediation

FWF is responsible for setting up a complaints procedure in production countries where FWF is active. The complaints procedure allows third parties to make complaints about the working conditions or the way the Code of Labour Practices is implemented in factories which supply FWF members.

The responsibility of FWF includes investigating the complaint, verifying whether the agreed corrective action plan is implemented and public reporting. This complaint report gives an overview of a complaint filed to FWF, the investigation and agreed corrective action plan as well as how the outcome is verified. For more information on the complaints procedure see the FWF website. FWF also publishes an overview of complaints received in its annual reports.

1. Affiliate involved

Continental Clothing Company

Kwintet

2. Accused party

A factory located in Bangladesh possibly supplying Continental Clothing Company and Kwintet.

3. Date of receiving complaint

9 January 2015

4. Filing party

The issue was raised in the documentary *Slag om de Klerewereld*, first broadcasted on 9 January 2015 on the Dutch network VPRO. FWF's complaint procedure allows issues raised in media reports to be treated as formal complaints.

5. The complaint

In the documentary, labels for FWF member Continental Clothing Company were found in a Dhaka label factory where employees appear to be younger than the legal working age.

There also appear to be issues related to proper handling of chemicals in the factory.

6. Admissibility

FWF decided that the case is admissible on 9 January 2015.

The case is relevant to the following labour standards of FWF's Code of Labour Practices:

- No exploitation of child labour
- Safe and healthy working environment

7. Investigation

According to FWF's data, Continental Clothing Company has one garment supplier in Bangladesh, which is located outside of Dhaka. The factory had been audited by FWF in 2013. The audit reported two subcontractors doing printing, embroidery and knitting. But the audit did not cover production sites that make labels.

FWF has informed Continental Clothing Company about the case. Continental Clothing Company is expected to contact the supplier to find out the location of the label producer. Since it is possible that child labour is used in the workshop, FWF requested Continental Clothing Company to work with FWF local staff to make sure the brand and the suppliers take shared responsibility for the children in line with FWF's Policy on Child Labour.

With the assistance of the factory, FWF local staff identified the location of the workshop, which is located in a street containing several small workshops performing similar services. During a visit to the workshop labels of another FW affiliate were also found, namely Kwintet.

Investigation by Continental Clothing could not establish a clear link between the approved label producer, as formally commissioned by the affiliate's factory, and the workshop in which the labels were found. Similarly, Kwintet's factories source labels from another approved label producer. However, informal subcontracting from the official label producers to the workshop in which the labels were found cannot be ruled out.

8. Findings and conclusions

FWF local staff was able to identify the child who was now working for another label printing shop in the same street. A meeting was subsequently held with the child, the child's father and another relative. The father indicated that the boy is between 13.5 years old at present.

FWF local staff subsequently met with the family of the boy, explained FWF's policy on child labour and explored alternatives for the child, other than working in the printer shop. Going back to school was not of real interest to the family, but enrollment in a technical training could be an option. The family asked for further information and (possible) alternative options for support.

9. Remediation

Following further investigation by FWF local staff, the following technical education courses were proposed to the family: 1. Freeze /AC certificate course, 2. General electronics certificate course, 3. Computer, 4. General electrical, 5. Dress making & tailoring, 6. Mobile phone servicing, 7. Automobile maintenance. All of these are certificate courses under Bangladesh technical education board. The duration for each course is 12 months. The family was satisfied with the proposed solution and confirmed to select one the proposed courses.

In line with FWF’s policy for child labour, it is proposed to compensate the family for the loss of income of the child during the time he is enrolled in the course. Presently he is earning BDT 6,000 per month. In addition, relevant course fees are to be covered.

The total cost for the remediation would then consist of BDT 93,000 (see breakdown below), which translates to € 1,051. In addition, the implementation of the above mentioned arrangement needs to be monitored carefully. FWF local staff will take care of monthly payments to the family of the child and verifies monthly that the child is attending the selected vocational training course. These cost amount to € 512.

Cost item	BDT	EUR
Ensuring monthly income of child to support his family (6,000 x 12)	72,000	814
Course fee	16,500	186
Certification	1,000	11
Others (travel, stationary, etc.)	3,500	40
Monitoring by FWF (1 day FWF local staff for investigation (€ 0.5*130.96 + 0.5*107.12) + 2 hours p/m for monitoring during one year (2*12*€16.37)		512
Total	93,000	1,563

10. Verification

FWF local staff will verify monthly that the child is attending the selected vocational training course.

11. Evaluation by the complainant

The family was satisfied with the proposed solution. FWF will monitor monthly that the child is attending the course and complies with the proposed solution.