



**Literature Review:  
Worker-driven Social Responsibility**

By

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The Worker-driven Social Responsibility (WSR) model addresses labour issues in supply chains of multinational corporations by centering worker's voice and rights (Pike 2020). The model relies on worker power and collaboration to enforce legally binding agreements with corporate buyers and creates market consequences for violations (Angelini and Curphey 2022:495). In this model, the workers identify rights violations and manage the solutions (Angelini and Curphey 2022). This model has been highlighted for its success in the agriculture (Mieres and McGrath 2021; FLEX, 2020) and garment sectors (Worker Rights Consortium, 2019).

### **The Adoption of CSR Policies by MNCs**

The WSR model became relevant due to the failure of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and other private governance mechanisms in combatting forced labour and issues of gender-based violence and harassment in supply chains. CSR is understood as “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (Commission of the European Communities, 2001, p. 6). Starting in the 1970s Multinational Corporations (MNCs) began adopting codes of conduct that declared their voluntary commitment to workers' rights. During this period neoliberal policies promoting international trade and capital mobility spurred a transformation in global production practices (LeBaron et al., 2018). MNCs in the global north began subcontracting, outsourcing, and offshoring their manufacturing process primarily to the global south where labour costs are low (FLEX, 2020). In a race to the bottom, developing countries began competing to establish themselves as the most attractive to MNCs. They did and continue to do so by eliminating or reducing taxes on foreign investment, lowering labour standards, and decreasing wages all of which contributed to the increased precariousness of workers (ILRF, 2019).

Traditional protection for workers is derived from labour laws and organising via trade unions to negotiate better standards (Gordon, 2017). However, both the state and unions have failed to keep pace with the speed at which workplaces have fissured and supply chains have grown (Weil, 2017). Employment laws only apply to a corporation's direct employees, exempting corporations from liability for any labour abuses that occur among its subcontracted workforce (Gordon, 2017). MNCs therefore use the tactic of subcontracting to shift risk onto suppliers. Furthermore, labour laws provide protection for full time employees and not the casual, irregular, short term and migrant workers commonly associated with fissured workplaces. These workers are discouraged from collectively bargaining to assert their rights due to fear of retaliation in the form of loss of shifts or dismissal (FLEX, 2020). This is compounded in the case of migrants whose status is tied to their jobs and fear deportation (Brudney, 2016). Labour laws lack authority beyond national borders and there are no internationally enforceable labour standards. MNCs are therefore wholly unrestrained in their search for lightly regulated regions.

In the 1980s, activists, trade unions, NGOs, and student groups began mobilizing consumers in the global north to pressure brands to take accountability for the labour violations in their supply chains (Bair & Palpacuer, 2015). There were media exposés of exploitative conditions in Chinese and Central American factories (ILRF, 2019). Activists

argued that while the law may not deem lead firms liable, they still had a moral responsibility due to the profit they derived from these workers' labour (Gordon, 2017). There were demands for MNCs to implement changes such as higher wages and safer working conditions in contract factories (Bair & Palpacuer, 2015). There was a proliferation of corporate-led initiatives in response to this negative publicity. Major brands such as Nike and Walmart began formulating codes of conduct based on international labour standards for their overseas suppliers (ILRF, 2019). The brands also began developing auditing regimes to monitor supplier compliance. Stakeholders in the field believed that CSR filled the governance gap created by the limited enforcement of labour laws in producer countries (Bair & Palpacuer, 2015). The proponents of CSR argue that corporate codes are efficient, flexible and offer a direct approach to addressing the violation of workers' rights in company supply chains (ILRF, 2019). However, CSR policies are problematic for several reasons.

### **The Pitfalls of CSR**

CSR been criticised for being a purely promotional efforts designed to protect the brand's reputation, pacify stakeholders and distract from the corporation's unethical activities (Jackson, Doellgast & Baccaro, 2018). This is because CSR is based on voluntary commitments in which corporations design their own corporate codes including how it is to be enforced and face no penalties when they fail to follow the standards they outline for themselves (Gordon, 2017). These codes also lack transparency as companies rarely measure their effectiveness on the ground or report instances of non-compliance by suppliers (FLEX, 2020). Labour history has proven that improved working conditions are achieved only when there is an ongoing threat to a corporation's profits (Gordon, 2017).

Furthermore, voluntary compliance programs typically operate in the global south which is distinctly different from the reputable labour standards, independent trade unions and relatively unconstrained media of the global north (Brudney, 2016). China and Bangladesh who are at the forefront of low-cost manufacturing are among the worst in protecting freedom of association rights in the world (Anner, 2018). Workers are unwilling and, in many cases, unable to assert their rights due to inadequate regulatory systems and a lack of education and training regarding levels of pay, hours of work and other conditions of employment (Brudney, 2016). This combined with uninterested or fearful media contributes to low levels of transparency that makes effective monitoring difficult to achieve.

Supply chain monitoring through social auditing models is also ineffective. Internal auditors are problematic in terms of addressing non-compliance because both the corporation and the suppliers have a business interest in concealing labour violation (Locke, Kochan & Romis, 2007). Third party auditing is widely perceived as a conflict of interest in that the auditors are reporting to corporations from whom they hope to obtain future work. This has raised questions about the reliability of the outputs from these social audits (Outhwaite & Ortega, 2019; Kuruvilla 2021). This dependence on future work also acts as incentive for auditors to select the cheapest inspection methods least likely to reveal violations. This includes desk audits patterned after financial audits which involves top-down examination of documents rather than more effective worker interviews (Brudney, 2016; Gordon; 2017). In the case of site visits, if suppliers are given advance

notice, they can falsify documents and coach workers to lie about their work conditions (Zenker, 2018; Kuruvilla 2021)). Interviews conducted exclusively at the work site also intimidates workers who fear retaliation (Brudney, 2016). Poor monitoring and enforcement has also been regarded as the downfall of Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs) which sought to address the limitations of CSR by including civil society and various other stakeholders to develop and monitor standards (FLEX, 2020). However, it has not been any more successful than CSR in achieving sustainable change for workers.

Since CSR initiatives are designed by corporations, they fail to address the issue of the firm's purchasing practices which perpetuates forced labour. Suppliers suffer a price and sourcing squeeze at the hands of brands (Anner, 2018; Anner, 2020). Brands are constantly demanding lower prices from their suppliers. Suppliers agree to these prices due to fear of losing the order to a competitor even though it does not cover their production cost (Anner, 2020). Suppliers in turn choose to operate in sub-optimal buildings and reduce wages to maintain a profit. Additionally, brands are requesting smaller orders which last on shelf for only a couple of weeks. For instance, the fast fashion craze in the garment sector has led to higher pressure on workers, which has even forced workers to compromise on basic needs such as using the restroom (Bhattacharjee 2019) . Suppliers, who struggle to find enough orders to run the factory at full capacity, accept more orders than they can handle fearing loss of business. This production spike further leads to increased pressure on worker rights and unauthorised outsourcing. Corporations therefore demand that suppliers comply with labour standards while simultaneously pressuring them to ignore them (Gordon, 2017). The only way to change this dynamic would be by requiring the lead firms to fund better working conditions by putting more money into their supply chains.

Finally, CSR initiatives tend to offer generic solutions instead of tailoring them to the specific sector they are meant to regulate (FLEX, 2020). This is because the voice of workers and their representative organizations has been absent from CSR. Workers are the addressees of CSR activities, yet they have no say in the initiatives meant to benefit them (Jackson, Doellgast & Baccaro, 2018). If workers are not actively engaged in the design and enforcement of standards then crucial issues that affect them tend to go unidentified and unaddressed (Gordon, 2017). It is in this context that the worker- driven social responsibility model has emerged.

### **The Emergence of the WSR Model**

The WSR Network was launched in 2017 specifically to address the deficiencies and failures of traditional CSR models and MSIs by highlighting worker-driven alternatives (ILRF, 2019). The network was founded by organisations such as the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), Migrant Justice and the Fair Food Standards Council (FFSC) with the aim of “expanding, promoting and replicating” the WSR model in supply chains around the world (WSR Network, 2017). The network's first principle explains that worker- driven means “workers and their representative organisations- global, national or local labour unions, worker-based human rights organizations, or other organizations that genuinely represent workers' interests- must be at the head of the table in creating and implementing the program, including its priorities, design, monitoring and enforcement” (WSR Network, 2017). Therefore, unlike

CSR which is motivated by a firm's desire to protect its reputation, WSR is underpinned by principles of industrial democracy, that is, the notion that worker participation in the governance of labour standards is necessary to ensure that those within the organisation can hold those in authority accountable (Donaghey & Reinecke, 2018). WSR has been conceptualized and positioned in the academic literature in various ways, including as a part of "worker-driven supply chain governance models" or "multi-party bargaining models for global supply chains", and as an example of "supply chain collective bargaining" (Barkay and Shamir, 2021).

The WSR Network's six principles and the key elements of the four WSR initiatives it showcases, which are discussed below, are set out in the appendix. WSR-initiatives use the economic leverage key buyers wield over their suppliers to ensure that suppliers adhere to labour standards and respect workers' rights. Workers' representatives, both civil society groups and trade unions, enter into legally enforceable agreements with the buyers that oblige buyers to impose economic consequences on suppliers who fail to meet the stipulated standards. The most successful enforceable-brand agreements prohibit buyers from sourcing from suppliers who are not part of an independently monitored program that is worker-driven.

There are a number of key features that define the WSR model and are critical to its emergence and success. The standards for suppliers are formulated by the workers and their representative organisations (FLEX, 2020). There is a legally binding contract between the lead firm and workers' representatives mandating the lead company to ensure that their suppliers are compliant with the standards. Buyers are required to support suppliers to assist them with complying with the standards, which includes making payments towards wages or building upgrades (Gordon, 2017). Non-compliant suppliers must face tangible economic consequences. Thus, there is a combination of carrots and sticks to incentive supplier compliance (Blair and Basi, 2019). Workers are educated about their rights so that they can act as monitors to enforce the standards. They also play an important role in evaluating the program and negotiating modifications to the agreement to address new and unforeseen issues (Gladstone, 2020). Complaints mechanisms enabling workers to report violations without fearing retaliation are essential, particularly in light of the deficiencies of social auditing (Outhwaite & Ortega, 2019). There must also be an independent monitoring body conducting frequent inspections, responding to complaints, determining whether the standards have been breached and if the firm should continue to source from the supplier in question. Finally, consumer pressure is the essential component necessary to force buyers to negotiate with workers' representatives. Accordingly, transparency is an important feature of WSR, and the specific companies, brands, and suppliers bound by the agreement are publicly disclosed (Gladstone, 2020).

The monitoring and complaint resolution system in WSR models have resulted in better employee-employer relations. Workers feel safe to raise issues that impact their safety and productivity without the fear of retaliation and MNCs benefit as well from the time-bound resolution of labour issues through transparent and measurable outcomes (Angelini and Curphey, 2022). WSR agreements also empower outsourced, subcontracted, migrant, and other precarious supply chain workers who typically lack protection. Suppliers, although not a part of negotiating the standards, also benefit because buyers

source from suppliers that are independently monitored to ensure that labour standards are met and workers' rights are protected. Buyers can deploy a variety of market incentives, involving both carrots and sticks, to induce suppliers to adhere to labour standards (Blasi and Bair 2019: 11).

The WSR Network promotes the development and adoption of WSR largely based on the success of the Fair Food Program (FFP). The FFP was launched in 2011 by the CIW, a human rights organisation composed of farm workers in Florida's tomato industry (Asbed & Hitov, 2017). America's agricultural sector has a long history of being low-wage and exploitative and growers tend to recruit workers from vulnerable migrant populations (Brudney, 2016). Court cases have revealed workers being held captive by threats and violence, sexual harassment, beatings and shootings (Asbed & Hitov, 2017). The CIW identified the buyers as the cause of the downward price pressure on suppliers who in turn imposed downward pressure on working conditions and wages. After four years of campaigning and boycotting Taco Bell, the original Fair Food Agreement was signed in 2005 by its parent company Yum! Brands who agreed to improve working conditions in tomato fields.

Today the FFP operates in multiple states across America and its signatories include the CIW and 13 buyers (FLEX, 2020). The Fair Food Code of Conduct negotiated between workers, growers and buyers sets out practices participating growers must follow including no subcontracting of employment and the prohibition of child labour, forced labour and sexual harassment (Brudney, 2016). The Fair Food Agreements between the CIW and participating buyers are legally binding and include two crucial provisions. Buyers must pay the Fair Food Premium on every pound of produce purchased which is passed on to workers and reflected in their payslips (Asbed & Hitov, 2017). Growers are suspended for non-compliance with the code. This latter provision ensures that there is enforcement of the code through market consequences for growers who fail to comply. Significantly, the FFP changed both buyers' purchasing practices and suppliers' labour practices.

Peer to peer education occurs by means of CIW staff informing workers of their rights. The FFSC, as an independent body, oversees the FFPs implementation. It operates a multi-lingual complaints mechanism whereby workers can call 24/7 with complaints which are investigated by the FFSC. The FFSC also audits growers by reviewing records, interviewing all levels of management and over half the number of workers at a farm. Extensive worker interviews are conducted in various places such as in worker buses and worker accommodation (Brudney, 2016). The FFSC has stated that it was able to overcome the inherent limitations of auditing by deputising 30,000 workers as monitors (Brudney, 2016). Further, the code of conduct is continually revised to address new problems as they arise, including implementing mandatory safety protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic (Reyes Chavez, 2023). The FFP has not only transformed Florida's tomato industry from a hotbed for modern slavery to one of the best working environments in American agriculture, but it has also eliminated sexual violence and harassment (Asbed & Hitov, 2017). The FFP has also been successful in sustaining changes; it has been resilient even in situations where workers have little structural power (Mieres and McGrath 2021).

The Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety is another example of a successful WSR agreement. The Accord was signed in 2013 after the collapse of Rana Plaza which killed over 1,100 garment factory workers (Donaghey & Reinecke, 2018). The signatories included two Global Union Federations (IndustriALL and UNI Global Unions), eight Bangladeshi unions and 222 brands. Four NGOs including the WRC served as witnesses to the agreement. The Accord was governed by a Steering Committee which included equal representation of brands and unions and a neutral chairperson from the International Labour Organisation (ILO). This legally binding agreement committed signatories to a five-year program of factory safety audits and remediation. Brands were obligated to cease sourcing from non-compliant factories, provide remediation support to suppliers such as increased prices or direct payments for renovations, and to maintain sourcing relationships with the factories being remediated (FLEX, 2020). The companies funded an independent inspection program in which Corrective Action Plans (CAPS) were developed after factories were inspected by building, electrical and fire safety engineers. All inspection reports and CAPS were made public. Factory Safety Committees made up of elected workers along with managerial representation held all-employee meetings to educate workers about their rights and workplace safety. A complaints mechanism was also set up for workers to report any safety concerns.

The Bangladesh Accord has faced some challenges in implementation, such as the slow pace of factory remediations and operationalization of worker safety committees, and the limited capacity of local union signatories (Huber and Schormair, 2021; Champagne, 2021). Nevertheless, the Accord was successful as evidenced by the completion of 89% of all required factory renovations by 2019 (Worker Rights Consortium, 2019). The binding arbitration process was a key enforcement mechanism which put pressure on brands to comply. The unions brought arbitration proceedings against two brands who failed to ensure their suppliers renovated facilities within the required deadlines. The cases were settled in 2018, one of them for \$2.3 million (Croucher et al., 2019). In 2023, building on the success of the Bangladesh Accord, the Pakistan Accord on Health & Safety in the Textile & Garment Industry' (Pakistan Accord) was signed to establish a workplace safety program in Pakistan (WSRN 2022; International Accord 2023). The Bangladesh Accord was extended at the end of its initial five-year term in 2018 and renewed in 2021 as the International Accord for Health and Safety with 187 brands as signatories. Under this new iteration of the Accord, and as a result of the government's opposition to the program, the inspection work is managed by a new domestic body: the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) Sustainability Council (Champagne, 2021). The results of this new renegotiated agreement still remain to be seen.

Other examples include Milk with Dignity (MWD), a 2017 legally binding agreement in the dairy farming industry between Migrant Justice and Ben & Jerry's (FLEX, 2020). A code of conduct for dairy farmers regulating wages, working time, housing and health and safety must be adhered to by suppliers. MWD is similar to the FFP in that Ben & Jerry's pays a premium to all participating farms which enables all workers to have a bonus reflected in each payslip. The Milk with Dignity Standards Council (MDSC) serves as the independent body which investigates worker complaints, audits farmers and may suspend farmers for non-compliance. Like other WSR agreements, MWD faces the challenge of market pressure from firms outside the framework of the agreement (Gladstone, 2020), and this has recently resulted in lower farm enrolment and a drop in the number of workers

covered by the agreement (Migrant Justice and Milk With Dignity Standards Council, 2022).

Another recent WSR agreement, announced in 2019, is the Agreement to Combat Gender based Violence in Lesotho's garment sector. It is the second example of a WSR Agreement regulating a cross- jurisdictional supply chain in the garment industry following the Accord (FLEX, 2020). The agreement includes a complaint mechanism modelled after the FFP's mechanism, which has been "uniquely successful in addressing a culture of sexual harassment and gender-based violence" (WSR Network, 2017). Like the FFP, it dealt with suppliers' labour practices that made workers vulnerable to abuse. It prohibited the use of daily labour contracts, a widespread practice, except under a very narrow range of circumstances.

The Lesotho Agreement is unique because unlike other programs it not only features legally binding agreements between worker organisations and the brands (Levi Strauss & Co., The Children's Place and Kontoor) but it also includes a legally binding agreement between the worker organisations and the supplier, Nien Hsing Textile Co (FLEX, 2020). The brand agreement is the lever used to enforce the supplier agreement. If the supplier does not comply each brand will then reduce its orders in a bid to force compliance (FLEX, 2020).

These examples demonstrate that WSR agreements can be tailored to fit the conditions of the particular industry. Furthermore, the model has proven to be successful in addressing forced labour in both domestic (FFP and Milk With Dignity) and transnational supply chains (the Bangladesh Accord and Lesotho).

Despite the promise of WSR initiatives as a form of binding transnational labour regulation for buyer-driven supply chains, it is important to acknowledge some of the difficulties in establishing, sustaining, and scaling WSR initiatives. WSR initiatives typically build upon a history of labour organising and need either a tragic catalytic event or sustained public campaigns against consumer-facing buyers to take root (Blair and Basi, 2019; Sellers, 2021). Establishing a sustainable source of funding for the various educational, enforcement, and monitoring regimes created by WSR agreements is difficult as they typically have high start-up costs as well as ongoing implementation and monitoring expenses and "cannot be done on the cheap" (Gladstone, 2020; Sellers 2021). The FFP and the Bangladesh Accord are funded through "substantial contributions" from buyers and manufacturers in the form of scaling fees and wage premiums (Gladstone, 2020; Brudney 2021). However, relying too heavily on money from such sources is risky as it "can lead to undue bias or hesitation when determining violations" and compromise the independence of the monitoring and enforcement system (Sellers 2021; Brudney 2021; Gladstone, 2020; WSR Network 2018). Workers may also bear the brunt of funding constraints, as was the case in Bangladesh where some employers increased production targets to cover the costs of compliance with the Accord, with negative impacts on the predominantly female workforce (Pike and English, 2020).

Commentators have also observed that the wider success and impact of the WSR model may be constrained by government hostility and resistance to increased worker power (Gladstone, 2020; Brudney 2021; Bair et al. 2020; Champagne, 2021; Sellers 2021) and



“underlying unchanged power relations in the supply chain” (Frenkel and Schuessler, 2021). Consequently, despite improvements in building safety and workers’ health and safety in Bangladesh since the introduction of the Accord, low wages, long working hours, and abuse remain major problems in the country’s garment industry (Frenkel and Schuessler, 2021). Bangladeshi garment manufacturers, who wield enormous political power, and the Bangladesh state were not fully incorporated into the Accord (Bair et al. 2020; Champagne, 2021).

A key component of WSR initiatives is the enforceable brand agreement, which essentially is a market-based mechanism that is legally enforceable. Blair and Basi (2019: 7) report that ‘most successful efforts cover a large swath of the supplier market, minimizing the threat of unfair competition by non-participants’. A high degree of market penetration is critical to sustaining a WSR initiative. It is also imperative that buyers do not simply shift orders to new suppliers. The FFP, for example, is threatened by buyers outsourcing to Mexico, for example (Gladstone 2020: 593). So far, WSR initiatives have been unable to address broader competitive pressures and to deal with the power of buyers to shift jurisdictions in order to source more competitively.

The WSR model has already proven to be more effective than CSR and should be the new model for addressing forced labour in supply chains. However, existing WSR agreements function on a relatively small scale in relation to global supply chain production and there is a need for further analysis on how this model can be scaled up, replicated, and sustained in other environments (Barkay and Shamir, 2021; Brudney, 2021)

## Appendix 1: WSR Principles and Elements of Key Initiatives

### WSR Network – Statement of Principles

<https://wsr-network.org/what-is-wsr/statement-of-principles/>

1. **Labour Rights Initiatives Must Be Worker Driven:** Workers are the only actors in the supply chain with a vital and abiding interest in ensuring their rights are protected. If, therefore, a program intended to improve their situation is to work, workers and their representative organizations – global, national or local labour unions, worker-based human rights organizations, or other organizations that genuinely represent workers’ interests – must be at the head of the table in creating and implementing the program, including its priorities, design, monitoring, and enforcement. An initiative’s labour standards must be based on universal labour and human rights principles, which are embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and defined by the Conventions of the International Labour Organization.
2. **Obligations for Global Corporations Must Be Binding and Enforceable:** Respect for human rights in corporate supply chains cannot be optional or voluntary. Effective enforcement is key to the success of any social responsibility program. Worker organizations must be able to enforce the commitments of brands and retailers as a matter of contractual obligation.
3. **Buyers Must Afford Suppliers the Financial Incentive and Capacity to Comply:** Corporations at the top of supply chains place constant price pressure on their suppliers, which inexorably translates into downward pressure on wages and labour conditions: the market incentivizes abuse. Corporations must instead be required to incentivize respect for human rights through a price premium, negotiated higher prices, and/or other financial inducements that enable suppliers to afford the additional cost of compliance with the agreed labour standards.
4. **Consequences for Non-Compliant Suppliers Must Be Mandatory:** The obligations of global brands and retailers must include the imposition of meaningful, swift, and certain economic consequences for suppliers that violate their workers’ human rights, whether or not ending the supplier relationship suits the economic and logistical convenience of the brand or retailer. Only programs that include such economic consequences can ensure protection for workers.
5. **Gains for Workers Must be Measurable and Timely:** The ability of brands and retailers to obscure the failure of voluntary labour rights initiatives is greatly aided by the absence from these initiatives of the obligation to achieve concrete, measurable outcomes at the workplace level within specific time-frames. To ensure accountability, any program designed to correct specific labour rights problems must include objectively measurable outcomes and clear deadlines.
6. **Verification of Workplace Compliance Must Be Rigorous and Independent:** Workplace audits – often infrequent and perfunctory and never free of buyer influence – are the exclusive monitoring mechanism in traditional CSR programs and have proven inadequate time and again. Effective verification of supplier compliance is essential and must include the following components: inspectors who have deep knowledge of the relevant industry and labour issues and who operate independently of financial control and influence by buyers; in-depth worker interviews, carried out under conditions where workers can speak freely, as a

central component of the process; effective worker education that enables workers to function as partners with outside inspectors; and a complaint resolution mechanism that operates independently of buyers and suppliers and in which workers organizations play a central role.

**Fair Food Program** (<https://wsr-network.org/success-stories/fair-food-program/>)

The first comprehensive, fully functional model of the Worker-driven Social Responsibility paradigm, was launched across the 30,000-acre, \$650 million Florida tomato industry in 2011.

- Pass on the premium retailers pay for their produce to their workers in the form of a bonus (the premium is often referred to as a “penny per pound,” though the amounts vary according to crop variety);
- Compliance with the worker-drafted, human rights-based Fair Food Code of Conduct, including zero tolerance for forced labour, child labour, violence and sexual assault;
- Worker-to-worker education sessions conducted by CIW on the farms and on company time to ensure that workers understand their new rights and responsibilities under the Program;
- A worker-triggered complaint resolution mechanism leading to investigation, corrective action plans, and, if necessary, suspension of a farm’s Participating Grower status, and thereby its ability to sell to Participating Buyers;
- Health and safety committees on every farm to give workers a structured voice in shaping a safer, more humane work environment;
- Concrete changes in harvesting operations that go beyond existing legal protections to improve workers’ wages and working conditions, including an end to the age-old practice of forced overfilling of harvesting buckets (a practice which effectively denied workers’ pay for up to 10% of the tomatoes harvested), the provision of shade in the fields, and the use of time clocks to record and count all compensable hours accurately;
- Prohibition of labour sub-contracting;
- Ongoing comprehensive audits of Participating Growers’ operations by the [Fair Food Standards Council](#) to ensure compliance with each element of the Program.

**Bangladesh Accord** (<https://wsr-network.org/success-stories/accord-on-fire-and-building-safety-in-bangladesh/>)

In May 2013, the Accord launched with 43 corporate signatories from 13 different countries and 10 labour signatories, including 2 global union federations and 8 Bangladesh federations.

- Independent inspections by qualified inspectors;
- Require suppliers to implement all necessary corrective action with necessary follow up;
- Provide financial support to allow factories to be able to afford the repairs;
- Maintain a long-term sourcing arrangement with Bangladesh;
- Terminate with factories who are noncompliant;
- Require suppliers to provide independent health and safety trainers for workers;

- The Accord is a legally binding and enforceable agreement, in which brands are obligated to implement their commitments under the program.

**Milk with Dignity** (<https://wsr-network.org/success-stories/milk-with-dignity/>)

On October 3, 2017, farmworkers from the Vermont-based [Migrant Justice](#) and the CEO of Ben & Jerry's jointly signed the first-of-its-kind Milk with Dignity (MD) agreement.

- Farmer worker authored code of conduct;
- Farm workers education for enforcement;
- Third party monitoring by a Milk with Dignity Standards Council to ensure farmers compliance with code ;
- Work with farms to problem solve and farms that do not resolve problems expelled from agreement;
- Premium paid to suppliers
- Legally binding agreement enforceable against Ben and Jerry's.

**Lesotho** (<https://wsr-network.org/success-stories/gender-justice-in-lesotho-apparel>)

Launched in 2019, the "Agreements to Prevent and Combat Gender-Based Violence and Harassment in Lesotho" binds three buyers and covers five factories owned by Nien Hsing and benefits more than 10,000 apparel workers, the vast majority of whom are women.

- Workers who experiences harassment can file a complaint with an independent monitoring body that will investigate and can impose remedies.
- Antiretaliation provisions
- Worker-driven worker training program
- Protection against workers exercising associational right
- A binding obligation on the part of the signatory brands to use their economic leverage to reverse any non-compliance.
- A definition of GBVH, within the agreements, that instrumentalizes ILO Convention 190 6 on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (making these the first binding agreements to incorporate this broad, intersectional definition).
- Strong protections for freedom of association, recognizing that it is a fundamental enabling right for workers to be able to collectively address GBVH.
- A brand obligation to provide funding for the first two years of the program.

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