

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Supply Chain Workers

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupts global supply chains. Workers in vulnerable conditions, including migrant, women, and temporary workers in global supply chains are particularly negatively impacted. The Resources below highlights impacts on supply chain workers in sectors benchmarked by KnowTheChain.

[Information and Communications Technology Sector](#)

Negative impacts have been documented in the mining sector in Latin America as well as in electronics manufacturing in Asia (incl. China (incl Hong Kong), India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam), Europe (e.g., Czech Republic and Italy), and Latin America (e.g., Brazil and Mexico) and include:

- loss of working hours and wages, job loss and lack of severance pay, and subsequent inability to cover basic needs,
- restriction of movement (inability to return to hometowns or to leave internships),
- suspension of collective bargaining agreements and cancellation of wage increases,
- health and safety risks (e.g., lack of protective equipment, lack of social distancing measures, request to return to or stay at work despite health and safety risks and under threat of non-payment of wages, continuation of production despite government request to stop production to slow spread of virus).

See [here](#) for more information and [here](#) for updates from local partners in Asia and Europe of Electronics Watch.

[Food and Beverage Sector](#)

Negative impacts of the pandemic on labor rights can be observed around the world in both food processing and production (impacting for example workers producing soft drinks or processing meat) and in particular at commodity level, i.e., impacting workers picking fruits, salad, and vegetables, or producing goods such as palm oil or seafood.

Impacts on workers cover a range of [ILO indicators of forced labor](#), in particular

- Abuse of vulnerability: [Workers picking fruit and vegetables in Peru](#), working in unsafe conditions without appropriate social distancing, report being threatened with dismissal if they do not show up to work when ill
- Restriction of movement: Workers in a [rice mill in Nigeria](#) were locked into the mill for nearly three months and forced to work throughout lockdown
- Intimidation and threats: Migrant workers in the [US meat processing plants](#) are threatened with termination if they call in sick
- Withholding of wages: 25,000 [tea workers in India](#) face hardship and hunger due to unpaid wages
- Abusive working and living conditions: [Migrant workers on Spanish farms](#) live in cardboard and plastic shelters without food or running water
- Excessive overtime: [Women workers picking bananas in Ecuador](#) face excessive working hours and concerns over leaving vulnerable family members alone at home

See [here](#) for more details on impacts and company response, and [here](#) for guidance and commodity specific impact from Verité.

Apparel and Footwear Sector

[Clean Clothes Campaign](#): Daily live-blog on how the Coronavirus affects garment workers in supply chains

[Worker Rights Consortium](#): Reports and tracker on which brands have committed to pay for orders placed with suppliers

[Business & Human Rights Resource Centre](#): Assessment of companies' responses to the pandemic, in particular purchasing practices