

“Active Brands’ Response”, 19 January 2024

Regarding your email below, we have initiated discussions with Handa to thoroughly investigate the concerns you've brought to our attention. Based on this, it has become apparent that there are several inconsistencies in the allegations, and I would like to highlight some key points:

1. Active Brands' production at Handa takes place in Handa factory number 1, not factory number 2 as referenced in the linked post below.
2. Handa has no record of the individual behind the Facebook post. Can you provide evidence that this person has ever been an employee at Handa? It's essential to consider the possibility that this individual may not be a factory employee but could be supporting organizations advocating for the exit of Western brands from Myanmar. Active Brands is actively engaging in consultations and closely monitoring the positions of NGOs, both within and outside Myanmar, as well as human rights organizations such as Amfori and Ethical Trade Norway, along with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Norway. The decision to stay or exit carries significant consequences, and we are navigating through complex considerations.
3. Handa maintains high standards in their social and labor efforts, with robust management systems in place, including trade unions and worker representatives, mostly local Burmese.
4. Handa's factories undergo regular third-party audits, including assessments by BSCI and FSLM (SLCP).
5. Attached are photos and files providing additional information:
  - Ventilation at the factory, with large fans running during working hours (video attached).
  - Gate pass samples, demonstrating ease for workers to request leave if unwell.
  - Monthly payroll samples with employee signatures.
  - Overtime wages based on hours, with additional bonuses for meeting or exceeding targets.
  - Documentation supporting access to medicine from the clinic and the presence of first aid boxes for workers.

Considering the above, coupled with our longstanding partnership with Handa and the rigorous due diligence we have maintained over several years, we express skepticism about the credibility of the allegations. However, we remain committed to thoroughly investigating the matter. If you can assist us in contacting the individual making the allegations or provide a representative with further details, we are fully prepared to continue our research and address the situation further.