



Dozens of Female Child Workers Found in a Shenzhen Factory

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The following is a summary of the linked article:

http://nb.ifeng.com/gngj/detail_2013_12/30/1662336_0.shtml

On December 27, the Labor Inspection Team of Bao'an District cooperated with Fuyong Street Labor Office, carrying out investigation in Click Technology Limited (hereafter "Click"), a Shenzhen-based factory.

When the local officials arrived at the factory, a manager whose last name is Zeng said these 73 employees were recruited on December 21 and began working on the next day. After four of them resigned from the factory, the 69 workers left are currently working there. Click showed the officials the resumes these girls provided during the recruitment process and the copies of their household registration documents which indicated they were born in 1995 or 1996. In response to the officials' inquiry, the company insisted that these young workers were not child workers but formal employees at least 16 years of age.

Oddly, these 69 girls came from Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture. At the time that the journalist visited Click, the company only provided personal files of about 40 people. Based on what Zeng said, these profiles were provided by an intermediary because the company was only responsible for hiring. Zeng denied the accusation that they withheld employees' overtime-work compensation. He said that Click made a one-time payment as an agency fee to the intermediary for introducing these girls to the company. Zeng further explained that Click paid overtime-work wages to the girls regularly and the intermediary and the company never unreasonably stole or deducted their wages.



The journalist found many backpacks as the picture showed in workers' dormitories

Staff from the Fuyong Street Labor Office told the journalist that what Click provided were merely the resumes of the 69 girls which were used when they entered the company. Click didn't have any these girls' information about their identities, nor did it sign formal labor contracts with them. Although these girls' resumes indicated that they were all above the minimum legal working age, labor officials found great differences between this information and what the girls said during interviews with seven of them on December 27. "We have concluded that the company didn't rigorously conduct ID checks during recruitment process" and it is seriously suspected of illegally hiring child workers.

The labor officials also told the journalist that these female workers physically were small and their faces looked very young. During the interviews, they couldn't clearly express basic information, such as their ages, addresses, and their home addresses. For example, when asked about their birth dates, they could only tell the years in which they were born, but they were unable to say the specific dates. The labor officials believed there were problems at the factory, but they were facing difficulties in obtaining evidence. Labor officials intended to carry out individual interviews with every girl, but the girls insisted they wanted to be together during interviews. However, whenever asked about key information during the interview, these girls would communicate independently with each other in their Yi language, making it difficult for the officials to confirm facts. However, in response to the journalist's inquiry, these girls unintentionally told him that they left school after the fifth or sixth grade to go to the factory, and most of them were about 12 years old. According to what the girls said, they worked 12 hours a day only to earn 2,000 RMB (\$330) per month, and they never received overtime pay.

Labor officials suspected that the intermediary might be quite experienced in recruiting young workers and has specifically trained these girls in skills they can use to avoid exposing their ages and the identity of the intermediary.

Currently, the Tangwei Police Office is in the process of verifying their real ages. The police have also begun an investigation into whether the company took advantage of its employees for its own interests. Liu, the vice executive director at the Fuyong Street Labor Office, said that they have informed Click about this issue and demanded the company to send the girls back to their hometown.

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