

Reward work, not wealth ^[1]

To end the inequality crisis, we must build an economy for ordinary working people, not the rich and powerful.

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Source: Oxfam International

Format: Report

Publication Date: 31 Dec 2017

AVAILABILITY

Full report PDF ^[2]

Attachment	Size
 2018_oxfam_reward_work_not_wealth_en.pdf ^[3]	1.16 MB

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2016, annual share dividends from the parent company of fashion chain Zara to the world's fourth-richest man, Amancio Ortega, were worth approximately €1.3bn (1). Stefan Persson, whose father founded H&M (2), is ranked 43 in the Forbes list of the richest people in the world, and received €658m in share dividends last year (3).

Anju works sewing clothes in Bangladesh for export. She often works 12 hours a day, until late at night. She often has to skip meals because she has not earned enough money. She earns just over \$900 dollars a year (4). Last year saw the biggest increase in the number of billionaires in history, with one more billionaire every two days. There are now 2,043 dollar billionaires worldwide. Nine out of 10 are men (5). Billionaires also saw a huge increase in their wealth. This increase was enough to end extreme poverty seven times over. 82% of all of the growth in global wealth in the last year went to the top 1%, whereas the bottom 50% saw no increase at all (6).

Living wages and decent work for the world's workers are fundamental to ending today's inequality crisis. All over the world, our economy of the 1% is built on the backs of low paid workers, often women, who are paid poverty wages and denied basic rights. It is being built on the backs of workers like Fatima in Bangladesh, who works sewing clothes for export. She is regularly abused if she fails to meet targets and gets sick because she is unable to go to the toilet (7).

It is being built on the backs of workers like Dolores in chicken factories in the US, suffering permanent disability and unable to hold their children's hands (8).

It is being built on the backs of immigrant hotel cleaners like Myint in Thailand (9), sexually harassed by male guests and yet often being told to put up with it or lose their jobs.

This paper looks at growing extreme wealth, and those who work but live in poverty. It explores why this is happening, and gives recommendations on how it can be fixed.

Related link: [Extreme inequality is bad for us all, but women are hurting most](#) ^[4]

Region: International ^[5]

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