



Social Concerns

A concern that has been brought to our attention is the potential for "labour abuse", such as poor wages, child labour, toxic workplaces, etc. Many of these stereotypes are just plain false. The People's Republic of China is growing and modernizing in leaps and bounds, and we were somewhat shocked when we first visited China for a number of reasons, one being that our preconceived notions about their technological and social ways of life were being challenged. Following are some facts about the social aspect of our partner factory:

- Our partner's factory is brand new and state of the art



UV cured coatings are made of 100% solids and therefore do not off-gas toxic chemicals (left) and the milling shops are very clean, with modern dust removal technology (right)

- all areas where there are people working with glue are open and ventilated (Canadian factories have enclosed areas where people work with glue)
- Very low turnover rates indicate that workers are being treated fairly. The Coating Line Manager, QC Manager and Production Manager have all been with the company for 10+ years
- Owner demands that employees have years of experience, therefore ensuring no children are working in his factory and ensuring that our products are of the highest quality

Here are some other more general facts:

- According to the OECD, Chinese workers have a much higher savings rate (roughly 25%) than North American workers (under 2%), suggesting that they may not be as underpaid as we assume. They have dramatically lower tax rates and general costs of living, helping them earn "less" but keep far more
- Bamboo farms are mostly family farms earning up to 2.5 times the annual income of their peers, trading bamboo under the "household responsibility system", aka the free market.⁽¹⁾
- "Bamboo contributions have benefited poor as well as rich groups, and these contributions have moved many households from the poorer to the richer classes"⁽²⁾

1. http://wfi.worldforestry.org/media/publications/specialreports/Bamboo_Tenure_Wang.pdf
2. www.ScienceDirect.com