



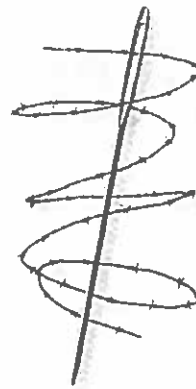
Stop

Sweatshops

an education/action kit

Stop Sweatshops

# Educator's



# Handbook

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This handbook is designed for groups and individuals interested in raising awareness of and fighting against sweatshop abuses, and working in solidarity with the young women and men who make our clothes, shoes and toys.

We hope the handbook will be useful to those of you who don't have a lot of experience facilitating educational programs on sweatshop issues, and provide new ideas and resources to more experienced activists/educators.



*The handbook is designed to help you develop skills for education and action on sweatshop issues. It should help you:*

- design and facilitate a workshop to motivate people to become involved in Stop Sweatshops campaigns and actions;*
- give an interesting presentation that involves the participants; and*
- prepare yourself to respond to challenging questions.*

# Popular education:

## linking education and action

Our approach to education and organizing is called popular education. Popular education differs from traditional schooling in that its fundamental aim is to empower people to improve their conditions and defend their rights.

Popular education values the knowledge and experience of the participants, not just that of the teacher and the "experts." It is a creative, democratic and collective process whereby teachers and students learn together.

*Educating for a Change*, by Rick Arnold, et al (Between the Lines, 1991), is an excellent resource on popular education, which we've borrowed from for this handbook. It includes lots of workshop exercises, and information on popular education. It's a useful companion guide to this handbook.

### Popular Education

- *Begins with people's everyday experience.*
- *Doesn't pretend to be neutral.*
- *Challenges unequal power relations.*
- *Encourages equitable participation.*
- *Encourages collective action for change.*
- *Models and develops democratic practices.*
- *Draws on the whole person.*
- *Has a vision/long term goals.*
- *Leads to action.*

## ➔ The Spiral Model

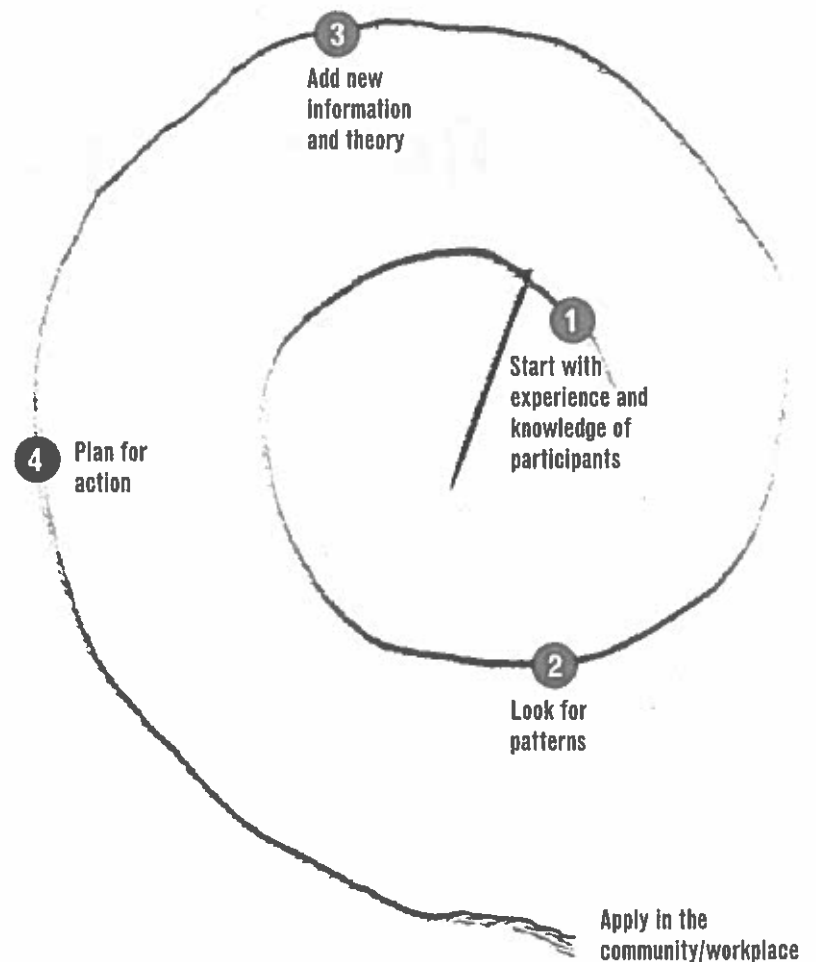
*We use a popular education planning tool called "the spiral model" to help us design a workshop or presentation.*

*In any workshop or presentation, we need to signal to participants that their knowledge will be valued and respected. (#1)*

*From that starting point, participants are encouraged to reflect on and analyze their experience by looking for patterns in what they know. (#2)*

*As popular education facilitators, we try to provide new information and insights that can assist participants in deepening their understanding and analysis of sweatshop issues. (#3)*

*And finally, workshop participants work together to identify actions that will contribute to improving working conditions and eliminating sweatshop abuses. In the process, we begin to create a vision of the alternatives we are struggling for. (#4)*



## WHO are the participants?

Find out as much as you can about the participants:

- how many people are coming;
- their social identity (gender, race, first language, social class, age, etc.);
- sectors they represent (union, church, students, etc.);
- areas of work and knowledge of and experience with sweatshop issues;
- whether they know each other and if they will be working together in the future;
- attitudes, understanding and skills they are likely to bring to the workshop;
- why they are coming (their expectations).

## WHAT do you want to accomplish? (Objectives)

This is the hardest part, and the most important. To begin setting objectives ask yourselves what outcomes you'd like from the workshop: what do you want people to feel, know, understand, and be able to do at the end of the session? From there, try to define two or three "smart" objectives for your three-hour session.

### "Smart" objectives are:

- **Specific** (*Will they address what you want people to feel, know and be able to do?*)
- **Measurable** (*How will you know if you have achieved your objectives?*)
- **Active** (*Do you have an action to suggest?*)
- **Realistic** (*Can it be achieved by this group with the resources available?*)
- **Time Available**

## HOW will you accomplish your objectives? (Activities)

Once you have defined clear objectives, the next step is to choose the activities that will assist participants in meeting them.

Don't feel stuck with activities others have used. Create a new one, or adapt old ones to fit your participants' needs.

## Activities Checklist

Before you decide on any activity, consider:

- ❑ **Participants:** Numbers? Backgrounds? What they know about the topic already? Whether they have physical limitations that should guide what activities you choose?
- ❑ **Comfort level:** Will people feel comfortable doing this at this point in your event?
- ❑ **Time of day:** Don't plan a presentation immediately after lunch, when people are sleepy.
- ❑ **Time available:** Don't spend one hour on introductions in a three-hour workshop.
- ❑ **Literacy level:** Think about what reading or writing skills are required for any activity.
- ❑ **Logistics:** What space, materials and technology are available?
- ❑ **Potential resistance to the activity:** Are you confident you can lead it and/or adapt it if necessary?

# 1. Introductions

*We only have a short time for this workshop, and people already know each other anyway. Perhaps we should start right in . . .*

Introductions are an important lead into any event or presentation. People want to know what's going to happen in the session. Even when participants know each other, introductions help to "break the ice" and allow participants to make the transition from whatever they were doing beforehand.

Of course, you don't want to spend too much time on introductions or you won't get to the work people have come together to do, and your task-oriented participants may feel frustrated.

## What We Do

We've found the "Sweatshop Bingo" game (page 20) to be an effective introductory activity.

### ! Tips for effective introductions

- *Warm people up and create a good atmosphere.*
- *Find out people's expectations|hopes.*
- *Get people focused; introduce the theme(s).*
- *Review|negotiate workshop objectives and agenda.*
- *Negotiate logistics (starting and ending times, for example).*
- *Establish your credibility as facilitator. (Who are you anyway?)*

# 2. Find out and collectivize what people already know

*But this group doesn't know anything about sweatshops! Before they can participate, we need to give them background information.*

Participants will likely know a lot more than you think they do. As shoppers, they will know many of the major brand names. They may have a friend or relative who works as a garment or homeworker, and already be familiar with conditions in the garment industry. Or, they may have seen a television documentary about sweatshop conditions in Mexican maquila factories.

Starting with the participants' experience reassures them that they have something to offer the learning process, and that they can learn from each other, not just from you. It provides you with valuable information so that you won't waste time or bore participants with what they already know.

## ➔ what people already know

- *Major brands names*
- *Nike means sweatshops*
- *Jobs are leaving Canada*
- *Sweatshops are in the Third World*
- *Celebrity brand endorsers make a lot of money*
- *Workers get low wages but don't need as much as we do*
- *Workers in retail stores have their labour rights violated too*



You may find that some of the participants' information is incorrect. Getting this out early in the session will help you identify misinformation and assumptions that need to be addressed later.

## What We Do

To draw out what people already know we often use the "Sweatshop Brainstorm" activity (page 19).

# 5. Plan for Action

*We are only preparing an information session. There won't be time to have people get involved in action.*

Our experience is that participants always want to know what they can do. No workshop would be complete without a discussion of actions people can take to fight sweatshop abuses. By taking action, however small, participants increase their learning and commitment and have an opportunity to learn new skills.

Note: Before discussing collective action, find out whether the workshop participants will be working together as a group in the future. If not, focus on what they might do as members of other constituency groups, or as individuals.

## ! Tips for action planning

- Consider whether suggested actions are realistic and do-able.
- Make it clear how everyone can participate.
- If the group wants to plan a special action or campaign, don't try to do detailed planning in the workshop setting. Set up a time when the group can do that work.
- Think about how people can have fun as part of the planning and carrying out of any action.

## What We Do

We've found it useful to brainstorm a list of many different actions groups can take. Here's a start:



Leaflet a local store or mall



Organize a panel discussion

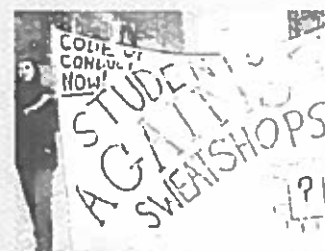
Organize a sweatshop fashion show or mall tour  
(See Action Tools)



Organize a delegation to meet with local store managers



Organize a letter-writing bee



Lobby your school or other public institution to adopt a code of conduct for licensed or bulk-purchased apparel  
(See Codes Primer)

Individuals can also get involved by asking questions wherever they shop or writing individual letters in support of Stop Sweatshops campaigns.

# Adapting your workshop design

*If someone has already done a workshop design for a university group, can I also use it for my union local meeting?*

The short answer is yes, and no. Most workshop designs that were prepared for a specific group need to be adapted for another group, even one in the same sector. You may have fewer or more participants with different expectations, or the action campaign may have changed.

If you're working from a design by another educator, it might give you new ideas and new ways of coming at the theme. But you'll need to con-

sider how to adapt the design so that it works for you, and for your group.

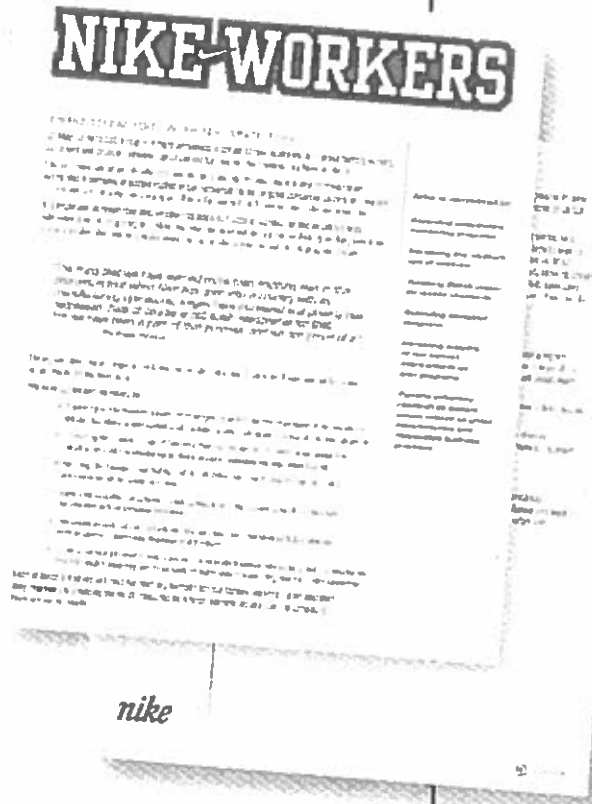
How do you do that? We suggest beginning with the WHO, that is, answer the questions about who your participants are and why they'll be in your workshop, and then move through the borrowed design, considering all of the other building blocks (objectives, activities, and resources) and the spiral flow as outlined earlier.

The MSN used the following exercise as part of a workshop involving local union leaders from across Canada:

Workshop participants were divided into small groups and asked to read and evaluate a Nike media release in which the company makes a series of promises about how it will address labour rights violations in its overseas supply factories. Small groups were then asked to rate the promises based on the language used in the commitments the company was making – firm commitment, vague promise, or PR fluff.

The exercise worked well because the participants all had experience dealing with contract language, and were therefore highly skilled at determining the level of commitment Nike was making based on the language used in the media release.

If we wanted to adapt this exercise for a workshop with high school students, we'd more likely make it a media literacy exercise in which students evaluated what messages Nike is trying to convey and what images of itself the company is attempting to promote. Students could then be asked to develop criteria for assessing whether Nike makes good on its promises.



# Co-facilitation

Having a co-facilitator allows you to relax a little. If you forget something, your co-facilitator can help you out. Here are some tips for co-facilitators.

## Before the workshop

- Decide how you will divide the work.
- Know your own and your partner's material.
- Agree on cues for when you get into trouble.
- Agree how you will signal each other to keep on time.
- Agree how you will support each other (if you miss something for example).
- Decide how you will deal with disagreements between you.

## During the workshop

- Alternate between facilitators, with one writing while the other is facilitating.
- Arrange yourselves so that both facilitators are visible but the focus is on one person.
- Avoid intervening when your co-facilitator is on.
- Ask your partner for help when you need it.

## After the workshop

- Do a check on how you both felt about the co-facilitation.
- Evaluate the workshop and your roles.
- Be frank with each other about strengths, vulnerabilities and trouble spots.

# Ensuring equitable participation

*A major task of the facilitator is to ensure that everyone gets a chance to participate equitably. This is not easy. Many things influence participation. For example shyness can inhibit participation, or, if you have the class clown in your workshop, you may have the opposite problem and need to find ways of limiting his/her participation.*

*In addition to these personal factors, you need to be alert to how systemic discrimination – on the basis of gender, age, race, or social class, for example – can impact how and whether people participate in your workshop.*

*To deal effectively with these challenges, when and if they arise, we also need to be aware of our own assumptions and biases that we as facilitators bring to the workshop, which in turn affect comfort and participation levels.*

*For example, in a workshop involving (mostly male) unionists, the general view expressed was that if they were in the situation of those poor Central American women garment workers, things would be different. Our unionists knew how to organize, and assumed that the problem was the Central American women didn't. Some suggested that if they had to endure the working conditions described, they'd leave and find other jobs. Two participants, Chinese Canadian women from a different union, were rather quiet during the discussion. Our facilitator had to figure out how to challenge the stereotyped view of Third World workers, and ensure that the two women of colour in the group had more space to share what they knew and thought. How would you handle this situation?*

## ! Tips to encourage equitable participation

- Have people work in pairs and small groups.
- Don't assume that everyone can move around the room at the same rate, can stay sitting, has equal reading skills, can hear well, feels comfortable being touched, etc.
- Anticipate that participants, like you, will bring their biases with them and that the expression of those biases may disrupt the workshop process and make others feel it's unsafe to share what they think and feel.
- Don't put people down for biases you don't agree with.
- Don't avoid dealing with issues and problems as they arise.
- If problems do arise, try to ensure that no one gets isolated and/or ganged up on in the process.



## Feedback, an educational must

The best way to find out whether people have understood is to ask them. It helps to do this as you go along, and not just at the end of your presentation. Their questions and comments will help you clarify any points and supply necessary additional information. But watch the time.

## Sample Presentation Outline

### ➔ Exposing the Labour Behind the Label

1. *Label Check: Where are our clothes made?*
2. *Under what conditions – Canada?*
3. *Under what conditions – Internationally?*
4. *How has the global restructuring of the industry changed the labour force and working conditions?*
5. *What are we pressuring companies to do?*
6. *What are governments doing? What should they be doing?*
7. *What are workers and their supporters – labour, NGO and women's groups – doing?*
8. *What can we do?*

*Reference: Issue Sheets and Action Tools in this kit, as well as the MSN website: [www.web.net/~msn](http://www.web.net/~msn)*

For a more interactive presentation, try:

- Asking questions at various points in your presentation.
- Having main points on large cards. Example, "Ten Actions You Can Take To Stop Sweatshop Abuses."
- Asking participants to stand up or raise hands if they have ever owned a pair of Nike shoes, or clothes from Gap ... and so on.
- Adapting the "Label Check" or "Sweatshop Brainstorm" activities to fit the time available.



*If you have the people and time, why not stage a Sweatshop Fashion Show instead of giving a presentation. Then you can facilitate the question/answer period.*

Remember: too many "tricks" can distract from your main points. Find the balance to engage the audience, without diverting their attention from your message.

"Props" can be useful educational tools. For example, you can use:

- popular brand-name clothing to contrast the price we pay versus what workers are paid;
- maps to locate where clothes are made (could be more than one country for one shirt) and the distance clothes travel;
- actual company codes of conduct to highlight the discrepancy between what companies say and what they do;
- videos or clips from videos to hear directly from the workers.

## Public Speaking

*You have all the elements in place. Now you just have to stand up there and make the presentation. Here are points we keep in mind:*

- *Have your main points written out and available for sharing.*
- *Take deep breaths. (Just before starting take two deep breaths to deal with the nervousness.)*
- *Wiggle your toes to move your excess nervous energy out of your upper body.*
- *Know your exit line. (Your audience won't know if you forget some examples, or even main points. Try to get back on track with your summary of main points and suggestions for action.)*
- *Speak slowly, and use your own words. (Try not to read or copy someone else's style.)*
- *Decide in advance what to do with your hands, whatever is comfortable.*
- *Remember that fear is good. (It means that you care about what you're doing.)*

# Answering Difficult Questions, a Few Examples

## **Q What companies should I avoid? Which companies can I buy from?**

There is no definitive list of good companies or bad companies. Few retailers can guarantee that all their clothes are made under fair working conditions.

"Buy Canadian" is no longer a reliable guide. A growing percentage of "Made in Canada" apparel is assembled in small sewing factories and by homeworkers. Many are paid less than the minimum wage, denied statutory benefits, and forced to work long hours with no overtime pay.

However, there are things we can do to challenge sweatshop abuses, such as ....

## **Q Are you asking us to boycott all products made in sweatshops?**

No. We only call for boycotts when the workers involved request us to do so, or in special cases where the democratic movement in a country, such as Burma, calls for a boycott.

Campaigns targeting brand-name companies can be effective even without a boycott because ....

## **Q Why don't they find other work or organize a union?**

Homeworkers and contract shop sewers in Canada often don't have other work options. It's extremely difficult for isolated homeworkers and contract shop employees to organize.

Workers in overseas export processing zones (EPZs) face even greater obstacles to organizing. In countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, unions are not tolerated in EPZs. In countries like El Salvador and Guatemala, workers who attempt to organize unions are threatened, intimidated and fired.

Despite these obstacles, workers are trying to organize. Here's how we can help ....

## **Q Don't workers in other countries make less because their standard of living is lower?**

The standards of living may be lower, but multi-billion dollar companies aren't paying a living wage even by local standards. Too many workers are receiving starvation wages.

Countries frequently set a low minimum wage to attract foreign investment and jobs. Companies can afford to pay a living wage, not just an artificially low minimum wage.

## **Q Won't paying a living wage increase the price of goods, or force companies out of business?**

Paying workers a living wage will not bankrupt the giant apparel and sports shoe companies. Nor does it have to mean higher costs for consumers.

In 1997, Nike's production wage costs accounted for about .4% of the price of a pair of Nike shoes.

If Nike had cut its worldwide marketing outlay of US\$975 million by only 4%, they could have paid a living wage to all Indonesian Nike workers.

## **Q Well, isn't it important that at least they have jobs?**

Yes, people everywhere want and need jobs, but they also want respect and a decent living.

We're demanding improved conditions, not that overseas factories be closed.

## **Q Is child labour a big problem in the garment industry?**

Child labour is a major problem in some countries, however in many countries, exploitation of young workers is a bigger problem. Fifteen and 16 year-olds need protection too, regulated hours, time for school, no hazardous work.

# Sweatshop Brainstorm

## Description:

The Sweatshop Brainstorm is a useful introductory exercise that allows the facilitator and the group to find out what participants already know about sweatshops. Using this information as the starting point for the rest of the workshop, the facilitator provides additional information and analysis to build on what participants know and challenge misconceptions and biases.

## Notes:

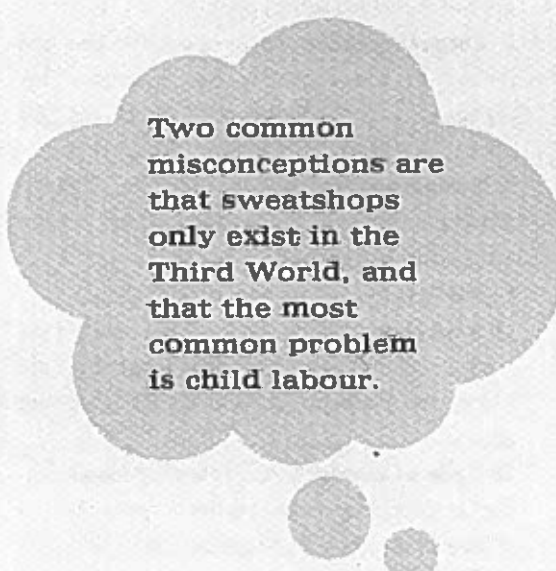
- Establishes what participants know and don't know about the issue.
- Gets participants involved from the beginning
- Doesn't take much time.
- Can be used as introduction or the basis for a workshop design.
- Adaptable to almost any size group.

## How to do the exercise:

- 1 Write "SWEATSHOPS" on a black board or flip chart.
- 2 Ask participants to "brainstorm" key words they associate with the term "SWEATSHOPS."
- 3 Record the information on a flip chart.
- 4 If you have the time, move into a more "guided discussion" using some or all of the following questions:
  - Where do sweatshops exist?
  - Who works in sweatshops, and why?
  - What companies or brands use sweatshops?
  - What are common sweatshop conditions and abuses?
  - What are people doing to change things? Who is involved in these efforts?
  - Where did you get your information about sweatshops?

Record all participants' answers on flipchart paper, including incorrect answers.

You can refer back to this information throughout the workshop. For example, after you've provided "new information" through a video or presentation, you might want to ask participants how they would add to or change their sweatshop list.



**Two common misconceptions are that sweatshops only exist in the Third World, and that the most common problem is child labour.**

# Sweatshop Bingo Card

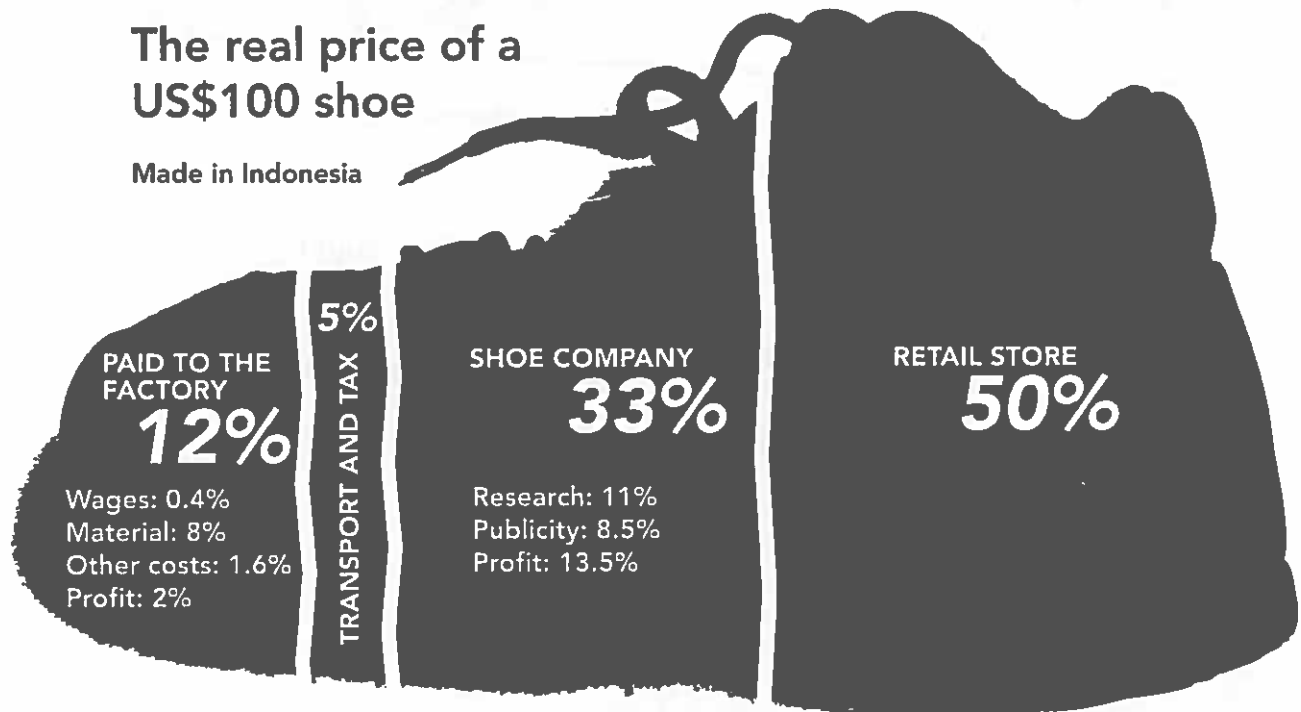
Speaks more than one language	Knows what 'ILO' means	Can name 5 popular brand names	Is tired of paying high prices for brand names	Would like to get active in stop sweatshops campaigning
Is involved in other social justice activism	Works in a retail store	Knows what "maquila" means	Can name a popular brand known for using sweatshop labour	Can name a country where Nike shoes are made
Knows what a "sweatshop" is	Can name a celebrity sponsor for a brand name company	Has written a letter supporting a campaign against sweatshops	Has lived in more than one country	Knows what a corporate code of conduct is
Has brought brand-name running shoes	Knows who Phil Knight is	Knows what MSN stands for	Has attended a workshop on sweatshops	Has worked in a sweatshop
Can name a union that organizes homeworkers in Canada	Is or has been a trade union member	Can name the largest retailer in Canada	Knows what 'NGO' stands for	Knows someone who has worked in a sweatshop

# MSN's Favourite Workshop Graphics

(which we recreate on flip charts)

## The real price of a US\$100 shoe

Made in Indonesia



produced by the Maquila Solidarity Network  
[www.web.net/~msn](http://www.web.net/~msn) • e-mail: [perg@web.net](mailto:perg@web.net)

based on information from the Clean Clothes Newsletter August 1999

## Accreditation

*Social auditing firms and individual auditors are accredited as being properly trained to carry out social audits of workplace and company compliance with a code of conduct. In theory, NGOs and not-for-profit organizations could also be accredited as social auditors.*

## Certification

*Production facilities, brands and/or companies are certified by external monitors or accredited social auditors as being in compliance with a code of conduct.*

## Code of Conduct

*A voluntary code of conduct outlines the rights and standards a corporation pledges to adhere to in its relations with workers, communities and the environment. Company codes apply to one company, multi-company codes to more than one company in the same sector, multi-sectoral codes to companies in more than one sector and industry-wide codes to companies across a sector. Multi-stakeholder codes involve unions and NGOs in code development and implementation.*

## Disclosure

*The demand for companies to publicly disclose the names and locations of all the production facilities making their products has become a central component of Stop Sweatshops campaigns.*

## Free Trade Zones/Export Processing Zones

*Free trade zones in Latin America and the Caribbean and export processing zones in Asia are geographic areas in which foreign companies are allowed to import duty-free component parts for assembly, and then re-export finished products. Governments usually provide special incentives for companies in these zones, including low wages, no unions, minimal taxes and lax environmental regulations. In China, these zones are called "special economic zones."*

## Homework

*Homework usually refers to subcontract sewing of garments or pieces of garments in workers' homes. In many countries, homeworkers also assemble other products, including electronic goods. Homework is usually associated with low wages, excessive hours of work, no statutory benefits, and job insecurity.*

## Internal monitoring

*Company personnel monitor workplace compliance with a code of conduct, local legislation, and/or other standards.*

## Jobbers

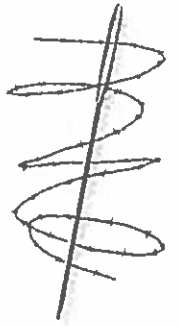
*Retailers contract production to an intermediary, called a "jobber," who handles subcontracting arrangements with smaller factories and sewing workshops.*

## Just-in-time Production

*Just-in-time production is a system in which small orders of goods are made in a quick turnaround time. In the garment industry, just-in-time production allows retailers and super-labels to adjust quickly to rapidly changing fashions, while shifting the risk to the manufacturers. While manufacturers compete for small orders with tight deadlines, retailers and super-labels can cut back on inventory and storage facilities.*

## Licensing

*Retailers are often licensed to be the distributor of brand-name products in a particular market. Manufacturers are sometimes licensed to manufacture products bearing brands from another country, for distribution in their own market. Some universities enter into licensing agreements with manufacturers allowing them to make goods bearing the university name, crest and/or logo. Students are using these agreements to pressure for codes of conduct governing the labour practices of university licensees.*



# A Tour of the MSN Website

**www.web.net/~msn**  
**homepage** Latest updates on MSN campaigns, action alerts and resources.

## **campaigns**



- Current Campaigns
- Up-to-date news, background, analysis and suggestions for action.

### Examples:

- Demanding that Nike pay a living wage.
- Urging universities and other public institutions to adopt codes of conduct for licensed products.

## **campaign action tools**

Ideas for organizing Stop Sweatshops campaigns and actions.

- Researching the Labour Behind the Label
- Organizing Sweatshop Fashion Shows
- Letter Writing
- Plays and Street Theatre
- Lobbying Public Institutions
- Holiday Season Stop Sweatshop Carolling

## **action alerts**

Up-to date information and sample letters for emergency letter-writing campaigns in defense of workers fired or mistreated for exercising their rights.



## **resource centre**



Resources to help you prepare an educational presentation or learn more about the issues, including:

- Working Conditions in Maquila and Export Processing Zone Factories
- Globalized Garment Industry
- Child Labour and the Rights of Young Workers
- Codes of Conduct, Monitoring and Verification.

## **links**



You can connect to websites and resources around the world.

Y hay información en español.

# Join the Stop Sweatshops Movement

Workers around the world want jobs, but they want jobs with dignity.

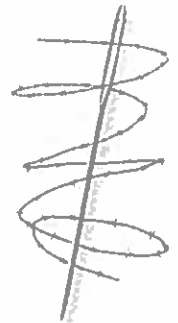
That's why the **Maquila Solidarity Network** fights to strengthen the right of workers to organize and improve conditions.

You can join the Stop Sweatshops movement and this exciting growing network.

Join the Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN).

As a member of the MSN, you and your organization will:

- receive quarterly action mailings, including our newsletter, a press clippings package, and action flyers on workplace organizing and Stop Sweatshops campaigns;
- receive regular e-mail campaign updates;
- participate in solidarity actions and corporate and government lobbying campaigns;
- facilitate worker exchanges and sharing of experiences and strategies.



**YES!** We/I want to join the Maquila Solidarity Network

Suggested contributions:  \$35  \$50  \$100  \$250  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**YES!** We/I want to order additional copies of the *Stop Sweatshops* kit.

[\$12.50 per kit, includes postage and handling. 40% discount for orders of 50 copies or more.]

We/I would like # \_\_\_\_\_ kits at \$ \_\_\_\_\_ each for a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (enclosed).

(Make cheque payable to the Maquila Solidarity Network)

NAME	ORGANIZATION		
ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL	
CITY	PROVINCE/STATE	COUNTRY	POSTAL/ZIP CODE

Fax or mail your order to us at the address/number below:

Maquila Solidarity Network  
606 Shaw St.  
Toronto, ON M6G 3L6  
Fax: (416) 532-7688  
E-mail: [perg@web.net](mailto:perg@web.net)





# How to use the kit

If you're an educator planning a workshop, you might begin by reading the *Educators' Handbook*. It will help you design your workshop and give you ideas for participatory exercises to make the workshop more effective and interesting.

For background information on how the garment industry works and the sweatshop practices common in the industry, skim *The Labour Behind the Label: How Our Clothes Are Made* Issue Sheet.

For specific information on companies linked to sweatshop abuses, try some of the websites listed in the Action Tool *Researching the Labour Behind the Label*.

If you want workshop participants to discuss issues concerning child labour, consider using

the Issue Sheet *Child Labour and the Rights of Young Workers* as a resource.

Looking for an interesting follow-up activity? Suggest to workshop participants that they organize a *Sweatshop Shopping Tour*, using the Action Tool of the same name as their guide.

The *Codes Primer* Issue Sheet will give you useful background information on the evolution of codes of conduct, and a better sense about what should be included in a code for public institutions.

To publicize your campaign, consider staging a Sweatshop Fashion Show. The Action Tool *Organizing a Sweatshop Fashion Show* will tell you all you need to know.

## What is the MSN?

*Since 1995, the Maquila Solidarity Network (MSN) has promoted solidarity with the efforts of maquiladora and export processing zone workers in Latin America and Asia to defend their rights and improve their working and living conditions.*

*We've played a key role in the growing Canadian Stop Sweatshops network of labour, faith, student, women's, international development, and community groups and concerned individuals.*

*Through educational workshops and distribution of information, analysis and campaign materials, we raise awareness of sweatshop abuses in Canada and internationally.*

*Through corporate campaigns, we mobilize public pressure on retailers and brand-name apparel companies to clean up sweatshop practices.*

## Evaluation and Follow-up

After you've read and used the kit, please let us know what you would change, add or cut to make it a more effective education/action tool. We've consciously designed the kit to allow for inclusion of new resource materials. Please fill in the Kit Evaluation Sheet, and return it to the MSN.

To assist you in your education work and action campaigns, visit our MSN website for new information and resources and for links to other relevant sites. You can find us at: [www.web.net/~msn](http://www.web.net/~msn)

## Acknowledgements

*Many individuals and organizations contributed to the research, writing, and networking which made it possible for us to produce this kit. We would in particular like to thank: Bev Burke, Moira Hutchinson, Anibal Viton and Sheila Wilmot. We would also like to thank the BC Teachers Federation, the International Development Research Centre, and the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour for their financial support.*

## Credits

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*Printing: Thistle Printing*

*Design: Kevin Thomas*

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## How are codes enforced?

Company codes seldom provide independent means for verification that the company or its suppliers are complying with the code.

Companies usually rely on internal monitoring by their own personnel. Some go further and hire financial auditing firms to verify that they and/or their suppliers are following the code.

➔ *Reports from internal monitors or external auditors are rarely made public. And companies generally do not disclose the locations of the factories where their clothes are manufactured, making it virtually impossible for labour or human rights organizations to confirm whether the company is living up to its standards.*

*However, some companies are responding to demands for greater transparency in monitoring. In 1999, Liz Claiborne allowed the Guatemalan independent monitoring group COVERCO to release a candid report on worker rights violations in one of its supply factories. The report also outlined the steps the supplier would need to take to comply with the Liz Claiborne code and Guatemalan law.*

## What do workers think of codes?

Workers around the world producing clothes for North American retailers are seldom aware that company codes of conduct exist.

Although many retailers require suppliers to sign on to their codes of conduct, few require their suppliers to inform workers, supervisors and managers of the rights and standards contained in the code.

For example, few companies bother to translate their codes of conduct into the languages of the workers who make their products.

When workers are given information on codes of conduct, however, they often see them as a useful tool to defend their rights and improve their working conditions.

Women's groups working with export processing zone workers in Asia and Central America are beginning to use codes of conduct as an educational tool in labour and gender rights training, and in campaigns for improved standards.



**Workers around the world producing clothes for North American retailers are seldom aware that company codes of conduct exist.**

# New Initiative for Corporate Around the World

*In countries around the world, labour and non-governmental organizations are negotiating multi-stakeholder codes of conduct on labour and environmental practices with major consumer products companies.*

*In some of these initiatives, monitoring and certification of supplier factories is being carried out by Northern "social auditing" firms. In others, Southern non-governmental organizations are involved in code verification.*

*As codes of conduct, monitoring and certification systems are being put into practice, labour, NGO, student and religious organizations in the North and South are demanding a greater role in monitoring, increased corporate disclosure of information, and transparent mechanisms for workers and labour rights advocates to lodge complaints and challenge auditors' reports.*

## ■ United States

### *Fair Labor Association*

Major US apparel companies, including Liz Claiborne, Nike and Reebok are participating in the Fair Labor Association (FLA) which hopes to begin certifying factories and brands in 2000.

The FLA's multi-company code of conduct has been criticized by labour and human rights groups for failing to include provisions for a living wage, adequate protections on hours of work, or sufficient protections for freedom of association and collective bargaining in countries where those rights are legally denied.

The FLA's external monitoring and brand certification model has also been criticized for allowing companies to hire their own monitors, and for not requiring companies to disclose sufficient information on supplier factories or the monitoring process.

➔ *For more information on the FLA, visit: [www.fairlabor.org](http://www.fairlabor.org)*

### *Worker Rights Consortium*

The Worker Rights Consortium (WRC) was created by United Students Against Sweatshops as an alternative to the FLA's monitoring and brand certification program. The WRC is a consortium of US universities that have adopted codes of conduct for university-licensed products.

Codes of WRC member universities must meet the standards of the WRC code, which includes provisions for a living wage, the right to organize and bargain collectively, and protection of women's rights.

Licensees are required to publicly disclose the locations of production facilities, as well as wages, benefits, average hours of work, and workplace policies.

Verification of code compliance relies on a worker and third-party complaints system. How and by whom on-going code verification will be carried out is not yet clear.

➔ *For more information on the WRC, visit: [www.workersrights.org](http://www.workersrights.org)*

### *WRAP Certification Program*

The Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production (WRAP) certification program was launched by American Apparel Manufacturing Association (AAMA) in October 1999. It is endorsed by apparel manufacturers' associations in Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. Wal-Mart has also expressed its support for WRAP.

The WRAP Principles are generally weaker than those in other codes, with few provisions requiring more than compliance with local laws. The provision on freedom of association appears to endorse US "right to work" legislation.

WRAP places sole responsibility for seeking and achieving factory certification with the local factory owner. The AAMA is seeking NGO and academic representation on the WRAP board.

➔ *For more information on the WRAP program, visit: [www.wrapapparel.org](http://www.wrapapparel.org)*

# What's different about the new codes?

Many of the new codes include provisions for independent verification that code standards are being met. Increasingly, university codes require companies to disclose the locations of

manufacturing facilities as a condition for producing university-licensed goods.

Most new codes are based on ILO core labour rights, but some go beyond core rights in establishing minimum standards on wages, hours of work, overtime pay, and health and safety.

While most voluntary codes have been developed by Northern companies and/or labour and non-govern-

mental organizations, they usually focus on the conditions of Southern workers. Northern civil society groups involved in drafting codes therefore need to be careful not to impose standards that are impossible for Southern countries to meet or define standards at a level of detail more appropriate to collective bargaining.

**!** *Northern NGOs and labour groups involved in designing codes need to find ways to ensure Southern participation in the development and implementation of codes. Otherwise well-intentioned efforts might be viewed as Northern protectionism.*

## ? What are the standards?

Provisions based on core labour rights as defined in International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions:

- *freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively (Conventions 87, 98, 135 and Recommendation 143);*
- *forced and bonded labour (Conventions 29, 105);*
- *child labour (Conventions 138, 182 and Recommendations 146 and 190);*
- *non-discrimination (Conventions 100, 111).*

Provisions that go beyond what are currently defined as core labour rights:

- *health and safety (Convention 155 and Recommendation 164);*
- *hours of work and overtime compensation;*
- *wages (ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy);*
- *security of employment (no abuse of labour-only subcontracting to avoid social security obligations).*

*Very few codes contain provisions addressing the rights of home-based workers (Convention 177 and Recommendation 184). One important exception is the Australian Code of Practice for Homeworkers.*

# Are codes an alternative to government regulation?

Close attention should be paid to the impact of codes and monitoring systems on labour legislation and its enforcement.

This is not only an issue for Southern groups. Community groups in Canada have been reluctant to consider voluntary

**→** *Under the Australian code, companies must also provide the union with detailed information on their supply chain, the use of homeworkers and their wages and benefits.*

codes as a tool to address labour rights violations in Canada's garment industry, fearing that voluntary codes might play into government and corporate privatization and deregulation agendas.

However, some voluntary codes are being used to reinforce domestic labour legislation.

The Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia's Homeworkers' Code of Practice requires companies to ensure that their contractors and subcontractors are providing homeworkers the legal minimum wage and other statutory benefits.

A voluntary code could also contain provisions outlining steps companies are required to take to ensure supplier compliance with the law, such as requiring suppliers to participate in periodic inspections or audits by ministries of labour.

Codes can also require companies to disclose information on suppliers, as well as on the use of subcontractors and homeworkers. Such information assists unions and advocacy groups in investigating violations of labour legislation.

# Independent Monitoring

Some consumer products companies now admit that internal monitoring (by company staff) of supplier compliance with codes of conduct is not adequate, and that some form of third-party external verification is needed for codes to have any legitimacy.

Debates continue over who should do the audits and what their relationship should be with the companies whose suppliers' practices are being audited.

In a few instances, companies, such as Nike and Liz Claiborne, have mandated or contracted local NGOs or respected Northern health and safety activists to carry out audits of particular factories.

**! We don't for a minute think monitoring is the answer to all the problems of maquila workers. But it is a tool that can be used in the struggle to empower workers. In these very precarious situations where workers are trying to organize, you have to be creative and use absolutely every tool that exists. Where tools don't exist, you have to invent them.**

Carolina Quinteros, El Salvador Independent Monitoring Group (GMIES)

More often, Northern apparel and toy companies contract Northern "social auditing" firms to carry out audits of factories. Many Southern

groups are very critical of the private sector social auditing model. They question whether Northern social auditing firms, with little or no human rights experience, will be able to determine whether workers' rights are being violated. Northern auditors will not be trusted by workers, they say, because workers will view them as company representatives.

Three alternative models of code verification are being explored in the Netherlands, the UK and the US.

In the Netherlands, a foundation with equal representation from unions, NGOs, retailers and manufacturers will train and hire auditors who will be responsible to the foundation rather than to companies.

In the UK, the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) is experimenting with pilot projects to evaluate different models for verifying code compliance.

In the US, the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC), launched by United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS), emphasizes public disclosure of factory locations and complaint-based independent monitoring, as an alternative to factory or brand certification.

Most civil society groups in both the North and South believe global monitoring and verification systems will only be successful if workers are knowledgeable about and actively involved in these processes. As well, local NGOs who know the country, the labour conditions and have the confidence of the workers must be given a more active role than merely being consulted by "professional" auditors.

## → Disclosure

*Students Against Sweatshops groups in the US and Canada are pushing their universities to adopt codes requiring companies producing apparel licensed to bear the school's name or logo to publicly disclose the names and locations of all the production facilities where those products are made.*

*If full public disclosure becomes a reality, they argue, companies will no longer be able to hide sweatshop abuses.*

*Companies counter that disclosing detailed information on their supply chains would put them at a competitive disadvantage.*

*It's unlikely, however, that disclosing the names and addresses of suppliers would give away many trade or production secrets. In the sports shoe industry, for example, Nike runners are often made in the very same factories as Adidas and Reebok running shoes.*

*Companies are probably more concerned about the possibility that unions and labour rights advocates will gain access to this information, than they are about sharing it with their competitors.*

*In response to student pressure, in 1999 Nike agreed to release a partial list of factories producing clothes for five universities involved in the Fair Labor Association. Champion and Russell have gone Nike one better, agreeing to disclose the names and locations of all factories producing their university-licensed apparel.*

Maquila Solidarity Network

606 Shaw St., Toronto, ON M6G 3L6 • tel: 416-532-8584 • fax: 416-532-7688 • e-mail: [pergo@web.net](mailto:pergo@web.net) • [www.web.net/~msn](http://www.web.net/~msn)

# Research for Action

If you're like most people who phone the MSN, people preparing a classroom exercise, writing a term paper on sweatshops, or organizing a Sweatshop Fashion Show for your local church group, you want a quick run-down on sweatshop abuses linked to well-known retailers or super-labels.

Luckily, some of that research has already been done and is available from the groups that have been tracking these issues. Much of this information is accessible on the internet.

Here are some key websites with information on apparel companies:

**Maquila Solidarity Network:** [www.web.net/~msn](http://www.web.net/~msn)

**Global Exchange:** [www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org)

**Clean Clothes Campaign:** [www.cleanclothes.org](http://www.cleanclothes.org)

**Campaign for Labor Rights:** [www.summersault.com/~agj/cfr](http://www.summersault.com/~agj/cfr)

**National Labor Committee:** [www.nlcnet.org](http://www.nlcnet.org)


**Corporate Watch:** [www.corpwatch.org](http://www.corpwatch.org)

For a more direct line to information on particular corporations, the MSN has a page full of the most up-to-date links to campaigning organizations with useful information on companies like Nike, Adidas, Gap, Wal-Mart, Disney, Liz Claiborne, Benetton, and more.

## Country Profiles

You may also want to know more about the prevailing conditions and common abuses in particular countries or regions.

For example, students staging a Sweatshop Fashion Show at the University of Toronto spoke about conditions in Chinese factories while wearing school clothes made in China. Although they couldn't document the exact conditions under which those particular clothes were made, they were able to point to the prevailing conditions and common abuses in the region of China where most clothes are made. This allowed them to make the point that full public disclosure is necessary to ensure that these abuses are not committed at factories producing U ofT clothing.

 Profiles of prevailing conditions in particular countries like China, Honduras, Mexico and Bangladesh are available on the Maquila Solidarity Network website at: [www.web.net/~msn](http://www.web.net/~msn)

## Exercises

Doing research can be an educational experience in itself. Involving people in basic research is a great introduction to Stop Sweatshops campaigns.

Before initiating the Woolworth campaign in 1996, the Labour Behind the Label Coalition invited members to visit stores and do label research.

Although it can be very labour-intensive, label research often yields important information about the companies you are investigating. In our store visits, we ask volunteers to list the countries where particular brand-name apparel is made, and then do a rough estimate of which countries and regions of the world are most and least represented. This exercise will not give you a scientific breakdown of where the company sources from, but it will give you a rough idea.

Students beginning campaigns for university codes of conduct have sent volunteers to do meticulous bookstore research, noting every garment bearing their school's name, where it comes from, who makes it, and the CA number on the label. This information is a good starting point for the kind of company research discussed below. It has also helped students confront their administration with basic information on where university-licensed clothing is being made and by whom.

We often start educational workshops by asking participants to look at the label on the shirt of the person next to them. When we share the information, people are often surprised how few clothes are made in Canada, or that clothes carrying the same label are made in many different parts of the world. Again, this exercise won't give workshop participants an accurate picture of where clothes sold in Canada are made, but the results usually mirror global trends.

### Internet research

*Many of our suggestions for research involve using the internet. If you do not have internet access, most public libraries in Canada do have free computers available for use. Tell the librarian what you want to do, and they can help set you up.*

Garments sold in the US have an RN number, which can be traced in much the same way at this website:

 [www.ftc.gov/bcp/rn/rn.htm](http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/rn/rn.htm)

Once again, the information you receive may or may not prove useful. You may get the name of an obscure contractor you've never heard of, or you may learn that the garment is registered to a recognized Canadian manufacturer, in which case it is easier to find more information about the manufacturer.

In the case of garments made outside Canada, you may receive the name of an importer, whom you can then contact and ask questions.

If the CA number is registered to a Canadian retailer, you may be surprised to find that the name is different than the one you expected. For instance, we discovered that despite their Canadian image, Northern Traditions, Northern Getaway and Northern Reflections labels (and stores) are all owned by the Venator Group (formerly Woolworth), a large US conglomerate.

The confusing thing about the CA registration number is that it tells you what companies particular garments are registered to, and not necessarily who owns or makes the brand-name label. We need and deserve better access to information legislation that would require retailers and super-labels to make public the names and addresses of all their contractors and subcontractors.

## Company trademarks


Trademarks are the brand names, slogans, and other copyrighted names that a company owns. If you want to locate all the brand names associated with a company, Industry Canada maintains a database of registered company trademarks that is accessible on the internet. Sometimes this is even accompanied by a picture of the brand's logo.

You can search this database at this website:

 [strategis.ic.gc.ca/engdoc/main.html](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/engdoc/main.html)

Just type in the company name, press "search," and the database will tell you what documents are available on the company. It will likely include a financial profile of the company and a list of all the trademarks it owns.

Alternately, you can look up a trademark (say, the label name on one of your shirts) and find out who owns it. (See example below.) You can do that directly by going to this website:

 [strategis.ic.gc.ca/cgi-bin/trade-marks/search\\_e.pl](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/cgi-bin/trade-marks/search_e.pl)

Then you can search for that company's name to see what other trademarks they own.

You can find US-owned trademarks at the following site:

 [www.uspto.gov/tmdb/index.html](http://www.uspto.gov/tmdb/index.html)



**PRINCIPLES**

L/G  
70% ACRYLIC/ACRYLAMIDE  
20% NYLON/NYLON  
2% SPANDEX/SPINNET  
MADE IN HONG KONG  
FRANCHISE A HONG KONG  
CM 00284

Industry Canada  
Canadian Intellectual Property Office  
Strategis

Help What's New Site Map Feedback About Us Français  
GO TO  Search Strategis

Home Links  
Licenses, Leases and Franchises  
Canadian Intellectual Property Office

**CANADIAN TRADE-MARK DATA**

Note: Data on trade-marks is shown in the official language in which it is an abstracted.  
The database was last updated on: 2014-03-07

APPLICATION NUMBER:	0579275	REGISTRATION NUMBER:	TM431000
STATUS:	REGISTERED		
FILED:	1986-11-25		
ADVERTISED:	1987-04-22		
REGISTERED:	1987-10-30		

REGISTRANT:  
GOLDFARB BROS. INC.  
447 DECARIE BOULEVARD,  
MONTREAL,  
H4P 2M6  
QUEBEC

CURRENT OWNER:  
HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY  
411 BAY STREET,  
TORONTO,  
M5H 2Y4  
ONTARIO


 **THE BAY'S PRINCIPLES? A trademark search of the label "Principles" finds it's owned by the Hudson's Bay Company.**

## Newspapers and Industry Publications

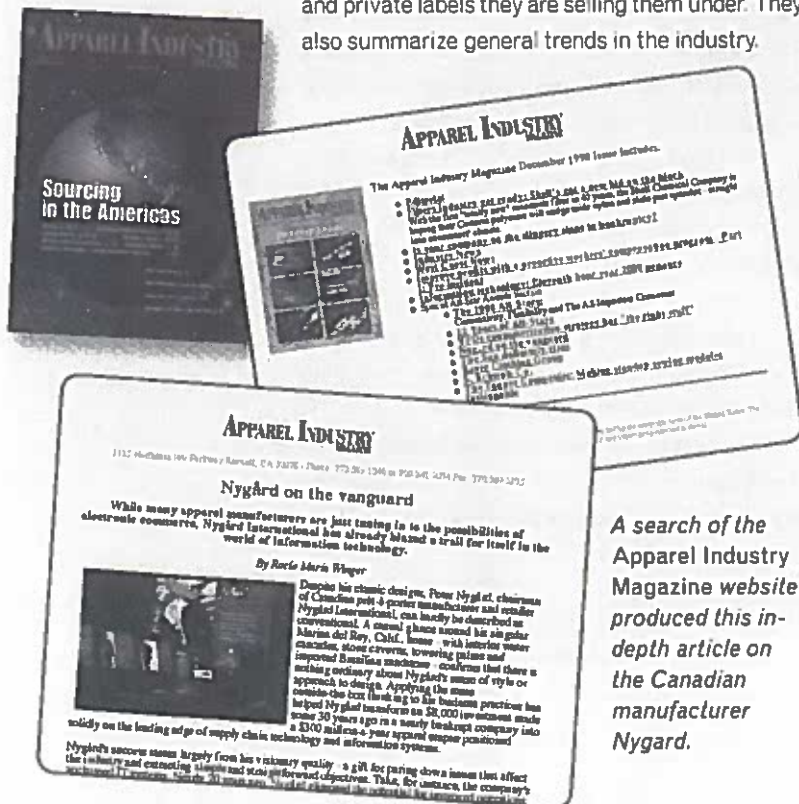
News reports in the business section of major Canadian newspapers are also a good source of information. Articles in the business press are often quite candid about a company's operations, plans for the future, where they're buying and where they're selling. You can access most Canadian newspapers and other publications through this website:

 [www.bourque.org](http://www.bourque.org)

For US-based companies, a good web resource is the Transium Business Journal Search. By typing in the company name or stock symbol, you can access summaries of business articles about the company organized under topics like "labor," "outsourcing," "downsizing," "imports" etc.

 [wsrn.transium.com/background](http://wsrn.transium.com/background)

You can also go directly to apparel industry magazines. Designed for people in the clothing business, these publications are a good source of useful tidbits about where companies are sourcing and manufacturing their clothes and what brands and private labels they are selling them under. They also summarize general trends in the industry.



*A search of the Apparel Industry Magazine website produced this in-depth article on the Canadian manufacturer Nygård.*

*Canadian Apparel Magazine* is the major magazine of this type in Canada. For an American perspective, try *Apparel Industry Magazine* and *Bobbin*. Both are available on the internet at:

 [www.aimagazine.com](http://www.aimagazine.com)  
 [www.bobbin.com/BOBBINGROUP/BOBBINMAG/index.html](http://www.bobbin.com/BOBBINGROUP/BOBBINMAG/index.html)

Your public or university library should have indexes available on compact disc or on-line, listing articles by name or topic. Try the Canadian Periodical Index, the Canadian Business and Current Affairs Index, and the Wilson Business Abstracts, all of which list articles in various magazines and newspapers. To find the articles themselves, record the publication name, date, and page number and look up the magazine in the library directory.

## Step 3: The latest trends

For a broader perspective on the apparel industry, you can often find information on industry trends – who's moving factories where, who's buying which companies, etc. – by checking the websites of apparel manufacturer associations. They also provide useful links to other websites. Here is a partial list:

**Canadian Apparel Federation**

[www.apparel.ca](http://www.apparel.ca)

**Manitoba Fashion Institute**

[www.apparel-manitoba.org](http://www.apparel-manitoba.org)

**American Apparel Manufacturers Association**

[www.americanapparel.org](http://www.americanapparel.org)



It's amazing what you can find by just doing basic searches on the internet on topics such as: offshore sourcing, Canadian apparel, apparel manufacturer associations, and even individual company names.



# Company Profile

NAME	Sears Canada
CONTACT INFO	Public Affairs, 222 Jarvis Street, Toronto, ON M5B 2B8 tel: (416) 941-4425. Email inquiries: home@sears.ca
WEBSITE	http://www.sears.ca
ANNUAL SALES	\$6.1 billion (1999)
ANNUAL PROFITS	\$199.6 million (1999)
MARKET SHARE POSITION	19.2% in 1998 in department store sales, ranked 3rd.
CORPORATE OWNERSHIP	55% owned by American Sears Roebuck and Co. Maintains full control of its sourcing activities in Canada and abroad
NUMBER OF STORES AND EMPLOYEES	110 full-line department stores. 41,000 employees (1999)
CEO	Paul Walters
CEO COMPENSATION	\$1.74 million (1998)
ANNUAL ADVERTISING BUDGET	\$75 million (1999), 6th largest in Canada
MARKETING STRATEGY	Catalogues distributed to over 4.5 million households
VOLUNTARY CODE OF CONDUCT?	Buying Policy stipulating basic requirements and standards for domestic and foreign vendors and subcontractors
ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS	Retail Council of Canada
SOURCING INFORMATION	buying offices in Egypt, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, China, Singapore, Italy, Hong Kong, Philippines, Korea, Thailand, Bangladesh, Guatemala, India and Tel Aviv listed in Buying Policy
SUPPLIER INFORMATION	In August, 1998, Sears asked for an extra 3% discount on menswear on a retroactive basis to July 1, 1998, a move seen as an ultimatum for doing business with the company by suppliers
PRIVATE LABELS	Jessica, Nevada, 2R Two Roads Design, Wardrobe Essentials, R&R, Court Club
NATIONAL BRANDS	Alia, Tan Soy, Alfred Dunner, Santana, Hollywood, Levi's, Ikeda, Managar, Boca, Dockers, Pierre Cardin, Cacharel

Where'd they find it?

Globe and Mail, Jan. 20, 2000

Canadian Apparel Magazine, March/April '99

Annual Report

Report on Business Magazine

"Marketing" Vol. 104, no. 41

Annual Report

Sears Canada Buying Policy

Canadian Apparel Magazine, March/April '99

store visits

Preparing a Sweatshop Fashion Show can be an educational experience in itself. Participants collect brand-name clothes made in countries around the world. They visit stores and websites to compile information on prices, wages and working conditions. They learn about workers' issues and demands, and the actions we can take to support them. They design a script, choose music, and rehearse. They publicize the event, prepare campaign materials, and contact the media.

Church groups, union locals, and high school and university students across the country have staged highly successful Sweatshop Fashion Shows, raising awareness and sparking discussion, debate, community interest and action.

Many fashion shows have attracted media attention, thereby reaching a much larger audience. Targeted corporations are taking notice.

## 1. Identifying your Objectives and Audience

This guides everything else you do to prepare for the show, including the companies you target, the key messages you want to convey, how you word the script, and the music you choose.

### ➔ Example

*University of Toronto students involved in Students Against Sweatshops - Canada (SAS-C) designed their fashion show to raise awareness among fellow students, and to encourage them to join a campaign for a code of conduct for university-licensed apparel. They chose brands that students identified with, and targeted companies producing apparel bearing the name and logo of their school.*

## 2. Researching Companies and Brands

Involve volunteers in researching the companies and brands you want to target. Search for up-to-date information and attention-grabbing facts about companies and their practices. This information will be useful in developing your script, as well as your group's knowledge of the issues.

- Visit company websites and check out annual reports for information on world-wide sales, profits, CEO salaries, and expenditures on advertising and promotion.
- Visit websites of campaigning organizations for information on wages, working conditions, and to identify specific cases of labour rights violations.
- Visit stores and check magazine and newspaper ads for information on prices and the images and messages associated with the brands.

But be careful not to get bogged down under piles of information.

### KEY STEPS TO PREPARE YOUR FASHION SHOW:

1. Identify your objectives and audience
2. Research companies and brands
3. Design the production
4. Prepare the script
5. Choose a venue
6. Promote the show
7. Invite the media
8. Collect the costumes
9. Choose the music
10. Test the sound system
11. Rehearse the show
12. Promote action.

# Sample fashion show

This is a sample fashion show script that we have used in MSN-sponsored events. Please modify the script to fit your own objectives and audience. Through quick research, you can update the information on companies and abuses.



## Welcome

**1.0** **Announcer 1**  
Welcome to our Sweatshop Fashion Show. Today, you'll see our models displaying some of the latest fashions made in Asia, Latin America, the United States and Canada.

**0.2** **Announcer 2**  
We're also looking at something you don't see often in a fashion show, something the big clothing companies don't want us to know about, the conditions under which our clothes are made and the stories of the women who labour behind the labels. So, sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.



## Venator – Northern Reflections

**1.0** Our first model is Phyllis. She has chosen a very "Northern" look for today's fashion show. She is modeling a Northern Reflections sweatshirt that was made in Canada. Beautiful top with the loons and peaceful lake. That's Canadian all right.

**0.2** Don't let the wholesome, northern pioneer and woodland images fool you. Northern Reflections is owned by the US multinational retail giant, the Venator Group (formerly known as Woolworth's). And, don't be fooled into thinking that because it was made in Canada it wasn't made under sweatshop conditions. In 1996, in Metro Toronto, Northern Reflections clothes were being sewn by workers who were being paid \$4.50 an hour, 65% of the minimum wage. The company agreed to carry out an internal investigation, but they refuse to disclose the results. Thank you, Phyllis.

## GAP

**1.0** Our next model is Lynda. She's wearing a Gap shirt made in El Salvador.

**0.2** In 1995, an international campaign was mounted in solidarity with workers in one plant in El Salvador. The result? Fired union supporters were reinstated, and Gap agreed to accept independent monitoring of the Gap code of conduct. While Gap gets points for accepting

independent monitoring at one factory in El Salvador, it has since refused to permit independent monitoring at any of its other supply factories around the world. Thank you, Lynda.

## Wal-Mart

**1.0** Our next model, Anibal, is wearing a long sleeve shirt made in "Myanmar" that Wal-Mart sells for less at \$9.99.

**0.2** Did you say Myanmar? That's the new name for Burma. Burma is noted for its ruthless military rulers and for their use of sweatshops to finance repression. The regime is so corrupt and repressive that the Canadian government is urging Canadian companies not to conduct business with Burma. Meanwhile, Wal-Mart Canada has been selling clothing made in Burma in defiance of government policy.

## Nike

**1.0** Kevin can really pull off this sporty look from Nike. He's fully branded in his Nike shirt and pants. His shirt with the tasteful swoosh was purchased at a local store for only \$49.98.

**0.2** The Nike swoosh was once the international symbol for "cool," but tireless campaigning has made it synonymous with sweatshops. While Nike now spends tons of PR dollars promoting its new "No Sweat" image, reports of sweatshop abuses keep surfac-

## 5. Choosing a Venue

Don't worry about finding a venue with a formal stage or runway. A "catwalk" can be improvised at almost any site.

If possible, organize the seating to allow sufficient room for the models to perform and interact with the audience. If you're using a stage, consider having the catwalk run up a centre aisle to the stage, so the models can perform as they enter, model and exit.

### ➔ Examples

*Students at York University staged their fashion show outdoors at a busy location at the centre of campus. They placed a red felt carpet on the cement to define their runway.*

*A Ten Days for Global Justice group in Sioux Lookout, Ontario did a Sweatshop Fashion Show as part of their church service. They used the centre aisle of the church as the runway, and the pulpit for the announcers.*

## 6. Promoting the Show

If you're inviting the public to your fashion show, try to make the flyers and posters as entertaining as you hope the show will be. A mock fashion show deserves a mock poster. Use and manipulate the images and logo's associated with the major brands.

"Star" models can also be a draw. Consider recruiting your school principal, a popular teacher, the minister of your church, or your union local president to perform as announcers or models. If a higher profile provincial or national personality is available, even better.

"Stars" also attract the media, so be sure to highlight them in your media release.



### ➔ Example

*In Kingston, Ontario, a university student group invited former NDP leader Ed Broadbent to be the announcer for their fashion show. Maude Barlow of The Council of Canadians modelled Wal-Mart labels. One hundred people attended, and the media was out in force.*

## 10. Testing the Sound System

If you are holding the show in a noisy area or a big hall, be sure to have a good sound system and an experienced person to run it. You want everyone to hear your message.

Be careful that the music doesn't drown out the announcers' presentations.

Plan ahead where you want the music to fade in and fade out.

### ➔ Example

*At an MSN-sponsored fashion show in Toronto, we didn't have a chance to test the city-owned sound equipment before the show. While everyone enjoyed the show, the audience missed a lot of what the announcers were saying.*



## 11. Rehearsing for the Show

It is essential to have at least one rehearsal before the show and to appoint one or two "stage managers" to make sure everything goes smoothly, and to "trouble-shoot" when small problems arise.

### ! Cut, Cut, Cut

*We've found that the announcers' messages are often too long, and the models are left hanging on the runway. Rehearsing allows you to make last minute cuts or other adjustments to the script, and to discover ways to dramatize the message, rather than just reading it.*

If at all possible, rehearse with the sound system and music. This will allow you to anticipate possible technical problems.

Make sure all models know the order of the presentation and have had a chance to read over the script, and particularly their scenes. Most importantly, each model needs to know their cues for entering and exiting the runway.

Take a few moments during the rehearsal for models to experiment with different modelling styles, poses and actions.

## 12. Promoting Action

A Sweatshop Fashion Show can be a great launching pad for Stop Sweatshops campaigns or for solidarity actions.

Consider closing the fashion show with a brief review of the concrete actions audience members can take to challenge the practices described in the show. Be prepared with campaign sign-up sheets; petitions, sample letters or postcards; and background materials.

### A word of warning

Resist the temptation of ending the program with long speeches that repeat what people have already learned in a more entertaining way.

### ➔ Examples

*Research carried out by York University students for their fashion show targeting university-licensed products was converted into "facts sheets" and distributed on campus.*

*Local Ten Days for Global Justice groups across Canada have used fashion shows to kick off church-sponsored educational evenings, and to motivate their members to become active in their annual campaign.*

Maquila Solidarity Network

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### **Step 3: Tour Preparation**

**3** Prepare scripts for speakers at each store you will visit. They should be brief, simple and humorous. Scripts should contrast the images of the products being sold with the conditions of workers who make them, compare the store price with what the workers are paid, and explain what consumers can do to help improve conditions. You may want to also mention the positive steps that some companies have taken.

- Prepare a creative flyer to hand out to shoppers at the end of the tour. Highlight the sweatshop facts and figures you've uncovered in your research. Provide suggestions for one or two simple actions shoppers can take — such as writing to the CEO of a company that's currently the focus of a Stop Sweatshops campaign or asking store managers questions about what their companies are doing to ensure their products are not made under sweatshop conditions.
- Decide on the time and starting place for your tour. Busy shopping days are most effective for getting your message to the public. If appropriate, invite the media.

### **Step 4: Tour Orientation**

**4** Gather at the designated mall entrance. Tour "guides" distribute copies of the mall map and explain the tour route and agenda and what participants should do if requested to leave the mall.

Since malls are private property, security guards could ask you to leave. Be polite. Explain that this is an educational activity, not a protest. If security insists that you leave, continue the presentations outside the mall at the nearest public space.



### **Step 5: Shopping Tour**

**5** Tour guides lead tour participants from store to store, gathering them in a semi-circle outside each store and introducing speakers. One person may act as a speaker for each store or teams of two can share presentations.

During the final store presentation, have selected tour participants begin to leaflet shoppers.

Wrap up the final presentation with an explanation of who the group is and what you are asking shoppers to do. Invite tour participants and shoppers to join the group outside the mall to find out more about what they can do to challenge sweatshop abuses, and — if appropriate — to get involved in your group.

### **Step 6: Tour Wind-up and Debriefing**

**6** As the tour guides lead everyone out of the mall, tour participants continue leafleting shoppers. (If you try to leaflet earlier in the tour, you'll probably be asked to leave almost immediately.) Once outside, gather the group together again briefly. Reiterate the suggested actions on your flyer and have a brief assessment of the tour. Incorporate the suggestions into your next tour. The group may wish to stay a bit longer to leaflet shoppers as they enter and exit the mall.

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# An Industry Turned on Its Head

Fifteen years ago, manufacturers — such as those in the old garment districts of Toronto or Montreal — did the designing, marketed their samples to hundreds of retailers, and then produced the orders. Globalization and free trade have turned that process on its head.

Today, retailers and super-label apparel marketing firms such as Nike and Liz Claiborne design the clothes and then contract out their production to manufacturers around the world. Retailers and super-labels dictate the price of production and the turn-around time. Manufacturers compete for orders.

# Return of the Sweatshop

Until recently the term "sweatshop" conjured up images of turn-of-the-century garment districts in New York, Montreal and Toronto.

In the early years of the industrial revolution, working conditions in many North American and European factories resembled those in today's Asian and Latin American export processing zones. But the growth of unionization and government regulation mitigated the worst abuses.

Today, as many unionized factories have been closed in the North and government regulation is being dismantled, sweatshop abuses are making a comeback. The abusive treatment women workers face in Asia and Latin America is also reappearing in some non-union factories here in Canada.

## Did you know...

- ❶ *A visit to the clothing section of any Canadian department store can take you around the world and home again. For example, The Bay sources its private label apparel from China and Hong Kong, Vietnam, Bangladesh, India, Italy, Spain, Brazil and Canada. Its popular Gretzky line, for example, is made almost exclusively in China.*
- ❷ *In 1999, Wal-Mart Canada sold clothing imported from Burma, a country under one of the most repressive military dictatorships in the world. The democratic movement in Burma has called on all foreign companies not to invest in Burma. As of May 2000, clothing made in Burma was still appearing on Wal-Mart shelves.*
- ❸ *In March 2000, Gildan Activewear, Canada's leading T-shirt manufacturer, threatened to close its Clark Street sewing factory in Montreal and move production "to a Third World country where salaries are lower." The announcement came in the midst of negotiations for a first collective agreement with Gildan employees. Gildan already sources from or owns plants in Mexico, Haiti, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua.*
- ❹ *Canada's leading manufacturer of women's wear, Nygard International, has been expanding its operations in Mexico. Winnipeg Nygard workers are represented by the garment workers' union UNITE. In 1998, the company sub-contracted some of its sewing to factories in Mexico where the right to organize independent unions is seriously restricted. In 2000, Nygard plans to open its own sewing facilities in Guadalajara, Mexico.*

### Violations continue: !

- ✓ Mandatory pregnancy testing
- ✓ Below subsistence wages
- ✓ Long hours of compulsory overtime
- ✓ Indentured labour
- ✓ Child labour
- ✓ Body searches
- ✓ Monitored bathroom visits
- ✓ Verbal abuse
- ✓ Denial of access to health care
- ✓ Unpaid overtime to complete quota
- ✓ No job security
- ✓ Denial of right to organize
- ✓ Code of conduct not posted

The label on Musonda's Wal-Mart shirt says "Made in China." It was substantially cheaper than Christina's Gap vest. Like Gap, Wal-Mart will not disclose information about where product lines are made, so we can only guess at the working conditions of the women who worked on Musonda's shirt.

## Meet Yin

Yin works in a garment factory in Shenzhen a "special economic zone" in Guangdong Province in Southern China, adjacent to Hong Kong. The owners of the factory are from Hong Kong. They moved their production to mainland China a few years ago. Yin sews clothes for well-known North American labels.

Workers such as Yin are known as "mingong" or "peasant labourers." Yin left her rural village in search of work at the age of 17. She had to get a temporary resident's permit to be able to work in Guangdong.

The company helped her to get the permit and then took deductions from her pay cheques over the next six months. They keep her resident's permit, making it impossible for her to leave the factory grounds without permission.

To get a job, she had to show a certificate proving that she wasn't married. She is now nearly 25 and will probably not be able to get another job in a factory. Once she has no work, she will not get another residency permit, so she will have to return to her village.

Yin and other workers in the factory live in a dormitory behind the plant. She sleeps in a room with 11 other women, sharing double beds. Each woman has about one square metre of living space. For as long as she works

here, this will be her home.

There are nearly 262 garment factories in the zone, employing about 63,000 workers, all living in crowded conditions similar to Yin's. The cost for her meals in the dorm is deducted from her wages. Some factories are referred to as "three-in-one," meaning that the factory, warehouse, and dorm are all in the same building.

Yin doesn't spend much time in the dorm. She has only two days off a month and regularly works 14 hours a day. Her workday starts at 7:30

in the morning and usually ends at 9:30 at night. During peak production periods, she sometimes works through the whole night.

According to Chinese labour law, Yin is entitled to time and a half for overtime after eight hours, and double time on Saturdays and Sundays. But Yin and her co-workers aren't aware of what the law says. She never gets time and a half for overtime, and regularly works more than the legal limit of overtime hours. The money she earns helps support her family back home.

Discipline in the factory is strict and workers are fined for any violations of factory rules. There are fines for talking or getting a drink of water during work time, for arriving late, for refusing to work overtime, and for cooking in the dorms. If Yin misses three days of work in a row, the company will consider her to have resigned and she will have no job to return to.

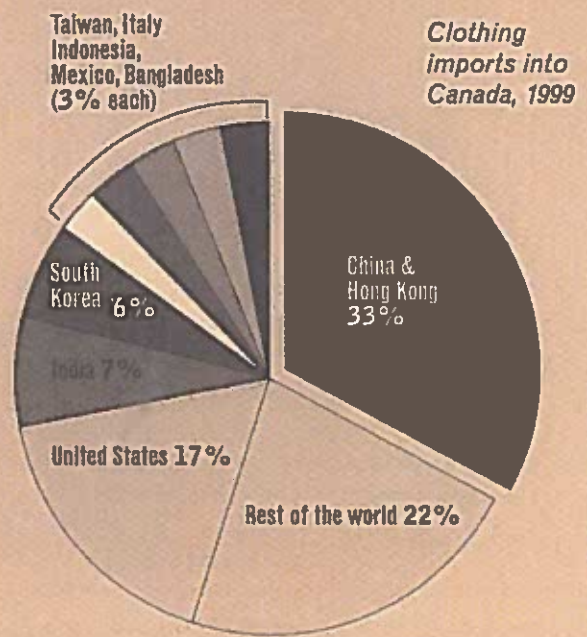
Despite the sweatshop conditions at work, Yin's biggest worry is that the factory will close and she'll be left without a job. Many companies are leaving Shenzhen to move farther north, where local governments are offering investment incentives and cheaper labour.

## China

*In the last few years, China has become the world's largest garment producer and exporter, as well as the top garment exporter to Canada.*

*In 1996, there were approximately 44,000 garment factories operating in China, with an annual output of 8.5 billion pieces, and employing 4 million workers, the majority of them women. Mass migration from the countryside and the closure of many state-owned factories have created a huge reserve labour pool for foreign investors.*

## Where do our clothes come from?





# The Canadian Piece in the Puzzle

*The label on Sonia's T-shirt, bought at the Bay, says "Made in Canada." It doesn't tell her whether it was made in a unionized factory, in a sweatshop or by a homemaker.*

## Meet Susan

Susan is a Toronto homemaker. She sews pre-cut pieces of cloth into finished garments in her home on an industrial sewing machine she had to purchase herself. Like most homeworkers, Susan sews clothes for more than one Canadian retailer, but she has never met anyone from the companies whose brand-name garments she sews.

Susan is paid on a piece rate basis by a subcontractor, but she isn't paid for the two hours it takes to pick up the pre-cut pieces and return the finished product. Susan never knows how much she is being paid until she receives her pay cheque. Often her cheque is late; sometimes it bounces.

Susan is a skilled sewer, but when she compares the piece rate she is paid and the hours she works, she receives only \$4.50 an hour, 65 percent of the legal minimum wage. In Ontario, homeworkers like Susan are legally entitled to 10 percent above the minimum wage, to compensate for their overhead costs.

Susan's hours of work are also very insecure. When she does get work, it must be done right away, so she has to work quickly and without a break for long hours. During busy periods, she works as many as 75 hours a week.

No matter how many hours she works, Susan does not receive overtime pay. Nor does she get statutory holiday or vacation pay. When she is out of work, Susan doesn't receive Employment Insurance (EI). Her employer considers her an independent contractor, and does not make contributions to EI or the Canadian Pension Plan.

When Susan first began working at home, she didn't know she was entitled to the minimum wage because she was paid by the piece. She knew the piece rates were unfair, but she didn't think there was anything she could do about it. She needed the work, so she took the rate.

Susan is reluctant to make a formal complaint to the Employment Standards Branch. She worries that if she does, her present contractor will stop giving her work, and she won't get new contracts once other contractors hear she has complained.

Like most homeworkers, Susan would prefer to work outside the home in a full-time job. But there aren't many of those jobs left. Besides, she has young children and she can't find affordable childcare.

Susan also takes on short-term jobs in small contracting shops. The conditions aren't much better than working at home. The sewing factories are in small, windowless rooms in industrial malls, or in basements or garages.

In her last job outside the home, Susan worked in a small sewing factory with six other women. They worked for a few days or a few weeks at a time, depending on how much work was available. She was paid by the piece and often didn't make minimum wage. When there was work, she often worked up to 12 hours a day, six and sometimes seven days a week.

### Canadian Garment Industry Jobs

1988	1993
115,500	83,000

### Union Membership, Garment/Textile Industry

1980	1992
81,000	38,800

### Garment factories with fewer than 20 workers

1970s	1990s
22%	75%

# Homeworkers in Canada

In 1995, the Canadian garment industry was made up of over 2,000 firms employing about 84,000 people.

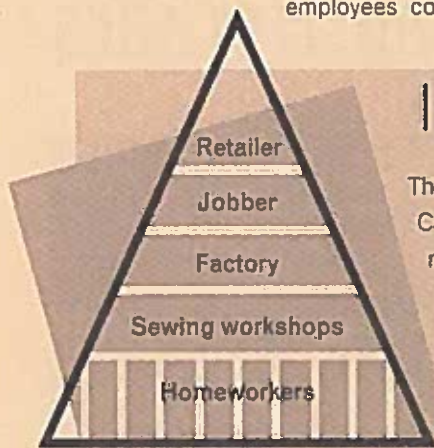
The actual number of workers in the industry is probably a lot higher. An enormous number of small, unregistered contractors and homeworkers do not appear in official statistics.

There are at least 40,000 homeworkers in Canada's garment industry, the vast majority are immigrant women of colour.

Most homeworkers and contract shop employees come from Asia where Canadian

garments are also made in export processing zones under sweatshop conditions.

Many garment workers came to Canada seeking opportunities or fleeing repression. They find themselves competing against workers in their countries of origin and watching standards fall toward those they thought they had left behind. The subcontracting system marginalizes immigrant women in part-time, insecure, poverty-level jobs outside the official economy.



## Industry pyramid

The end product of restructuring in the Canadian garment industry is a pyramid-shaped system of production with the retailer at the top.

The retailer contracts work to a jobber, who subcontracts to a small factory where the cutting and possibly some sewing is done. Most of the sewing is subcontracted to small workshops. In order

to meet the production deadline, they subcontract some sewing to homeworkers.

At every level in the pyramid, additional contractors receive a cut of the price paid by the retailer. Workers are left with a smaller and smaller share.

The result is an industry where violations are the norm, where piece rates fall below the minimum wage, where employment is precarious, and where sweatshop conditions are spreading.

## Working for change

The problems facing workers in the garment industry seem insurmountable. But garment workers around the world are organizing to challenge sweatshop abuses. Small but important victories are being won, and precedents set.

Labour, women's and human rights organizations are building alliances locally, nationally and across national borders.

International solidarity has succeeded in winning the reinstatement of some garment workers who were fired for union organizing.

Consumers in the North are increasingly asking questions about where and how their clothes are

made and demanding guarantees that clothes are made under humane conditions.

Students in the US and Canada are campaigning for codes of conduct for university-licensed apparel.

Groups in the North and South are challenging ineffective company codes of conduct, and demanding tougher standards and independent verification.

As business goes global, so is the movement against sweatshops.

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## Why do companies employ children and young people?

Garment manufacturers in Central America's free trade zones, Mexico's maquiladora factories and Asia's export processing zones, claim they prefer to hire young girls and women because they have nimble fingers. Workers suspect that children and young people are hired because they are less likely to complain about illegal and unjust conditions. And more importantly, they are less likely to organize unions.

In fact, child labour is often directly linked to the low wages paid to adult workers, restrictions on the right to organize, and the lack of affordable child care. In Bangladesh, many child labourers in the garment industry are the children of women working in the same factories. If

women workers received a living wage and/or their employer provided daycare, their children would not have to work.

In the jeans manufacturing centre of Tehuacan, Mexico, child labour co-exists with full employment. The reason: wages are kept artificially low to attract foreign investment, and independent unions are not tolerated.

In order to meet their family's basic needs, working parents are forced to send their underage children to work in the maquilas. They cannot afford to send them to school. And by illegally employing workers, employers in Tehuacan are able to avoid paying into the government's social security (health care) program.

**Young people work in export processing zone factories because their families are poor and need an extra income to survive. They want decent wages and working conditions and reasonable hours of work so they have the opportunity to go to school.**

### Sarah's Story

Sarah [not her real name], is a community leader in one of the shanty communities on the outskirts of Tehuacan, Mexico. Although Sarah would have preferred that her children went to school, the low wages paid to adult members of her family forced her to encourage her underage children to seek work in the maquilas.

*You see lots of young people working in the maquilas around here. Stand outside one of the factories in the centre, even at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, and you can see real young ones heading home.*

*Last year the government passed a law, which all the maquila owners supported, to push kids off the street. The result was that they weren't able to make money washing car windows or selling things anymore. Of course that pushed more of them to the maquilas looking for work.*

*The kids that have it the worst are those without identity papers. They end up in the clandestine factories, where they get paid even less and treated worse.*

*Children around here have to work. They don't have any option, and neither do their families. Look at us. Three of my children are working in the maquilas. They all started when they were 13 and 14. We couldn't have made it without them. It costs so much for food that we needed all four incomes just to survive, just to have the basics, beans and rice and maybe chicken or meat once every two weeks. Doctors, medicine, education – everything costs more than we can afford.*

*Now that there's only two kids at home, I hope things can be different. I hope these two can stay in school, and finish grade six. The older ones are helping out.*

# Lessons from the children\*

On June 16th, 1999 I participated in the daily schedule of inspections of Rugmark licensed carpet factories in Nepal with three monitoring staff. At two of the three factories a few young workers looked like they were 14 or under. Many of them would rhyme off the ages that they had been told to say by their father or the factory owner. Some reported being 18 or 19, but looked much younger.

In one instance, a girl ran out of the factory, looking for a place to hide. She finally admitted to being 13 years old. Eventually, she gave her name as Muna. She vehemently opposed the idea of going to school

"I have no future," Muna explained. "I will work here until I am married off and then I will work in the home for my husband."

Muna had five younger siblings. Her mother worked in the home, while her father worked on the small plot of infertile land that they owned. She was the only family member bringing in an income and consequently she had two concerns about attending school.

Firstly, she was deeply concerned that if she didn't work, her family would become more impoverished.

Secondly, she was worried that she would have to carry books and wear a uniform that would indicate she was in first or second grade, which would embarrass her.

When she was told that in the Rugmark centre there were many children with similar experiences ... and that the classroom, dining room and dorms were all in the same compound, she was delighted.

She was even more relieved when she heard that her job would be offered to one of her adult family members.

Removing exploitative child labour from factories in particular industries may be a slow process, but by listening to the children's voices, we can learn how to change the future so that it is indeed better.

\* From a report by Tanya Roberts-Davis on her trip to Nepal to research the Rugmark process of rehabilitation. Tanya, who was 16 when she visited Nepal, will be publishing a book of the children's accounts (March 2001). Contact her at: [tecnican@web.net](mailto:tecnican@web.net).



## International Conventions on Child Labour

### **International Convention on Child Labour, 1989**

*United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 32*  
"State Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development."

### **ILO Convention 138, 1973**

*The International Labour Organization's (ILO) Minimum Age Convention (Convention 138) sets a basic minimum age for employment of 15 years, and 14 for countries meeting the ILO's developing country exemptions. It prohibits hazardous work for young workers under 18. To date, 77 countries have ratified the Convention.*

### **ILO Convention 182, 1999**

*This newly ratified Convention calls for the Prohibition and Immediate Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, including forced or bonded labour, and hazardous, unhealthy and unsafe work. To date, six states have ratified the Convention.*

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