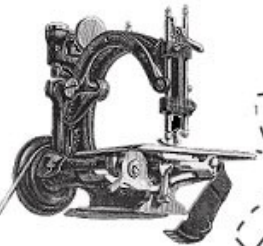




BUYING POWER

How decision making in the fashion industry impacts on working conditions



Labour Behind the Label
AN ETHICAL INDUSTRY
a labour behind the label project

The labour behind the label

- ✂ Look at the labels in your clothes.
- ✂ Call out the countries where your clothes are made.
- ✂ Where are most of the brands/retailers based who design and sell these clothes?
- ✂ This role play considers the links between the workers who make clothes in those countries and the brands/retailers that sell them.



Quick Quiz

✂ This is not a test. It is just to get you thinking. Don't worry if you don't know the answers.



1. How much is spent on clothes each year across the world?

- a. US\$ 1 trillion
- b. US\$ 50 billion
- c. US\$ 10 million



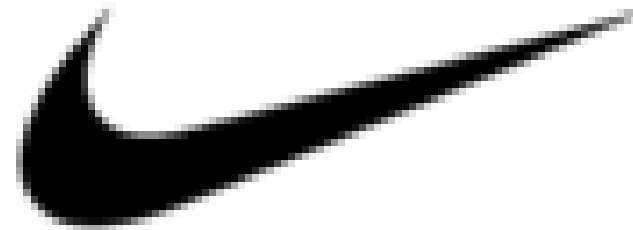
- ✂ US\$ 1 trillion in 2000 – a third in Western Europe, a third in North America and a quarter in Asia

Trading Away our Rights: Oxfam 2004



2. How much is the Nike brand estimated to be worth?

- a. US\$ 2.7 million
- b. US\$ 8.2 billion
- c. US\$ 50 billion



- ✂ In 2003 the value of Nike's brand alone was estimated at US\$ 8.2bn, Gap's brand at US\$ 7.7bn, and Levi's brand at US\$ 3.3bn.

Trading Away Our Rights: Oxfam 2004



3. If a trainer is sold at \$100, roughly how much does the factory worker earn?

- a. \$ 25
- b. \$ 5
- c. \$ 0.50



- ✂ The worker earns roughly \$ 0.50, the brand name's profit is roughly \$ 13.00 and the materials cost roughly \$ 8.50

<http://www.cleanclothes.org/campaign/shoe.htm>



4. What is the monthly minimum wage for a garment worker in Bangladesh?

- a. £113.53
- b. £32.82
- c. £12.41



- ✂ The legal minimum wage for a Bangladeshi garment worker has just risen to £12.41 a month. A single garment worker needs to spend between £16 and £25 just to fulfil basic needs.

<http://www.cleanclothes.org/urgent/06-09-22.htm#wages>



5. What percentage of garment workers are women?

- a. 10%
- b. 55%
- c. 75%



✂ More than 75% of jobs in the industry are held by women.

<http://www.id21.org/insights/insights36/insights-iss36-art08.html>



6. How long might it take for a catwalk design to be seen on the high street?

- a. 6 months
- b. 6 weeks
- c. 6 days



- ✂ The latest styles can be on the high street just six weeks after they first appeared on the catwalk.

Fashioning an Ethical Industry:2006



7. What percentage of clothes are bought at value (low-cost) retailers in the UK?

- 10%
- 40%
- 70%



✂ We now buy 40% of all our clothes at value retailers - with just 17% of our clothing budget.

Who Pays For Cheap Clothes?, Labour Behind the Label 2006



Role play objectives:

- ✂ to consider the priorities and challenges facing company chief executives, designers, buyers, factory owners and garment workers and how these impact on working conditions in the garment industry and
- ✂ to consider the actions that chief executives, designers, buyers, factory owners and workers could/are taking to improve conditions for garment workers.



Big Logo and Nice Garments

- ✂ Nice garments is a factory in Pakistan that supplies dresses to Big Logo, a high street retailer based in the UK.
- ✂ You are going to be divided into five roles and given a background brief and some questions:
 - Big Logo Chief Executive
 - Big Logo Designer
 - Big Logo Buyer
 - Nice Garments Factory Owner
 - Nice Garments Worker



Role play instructions

- ✂ You have 10 minutes to read through your background brief and in small groups discuss the questions on your sheet.
- ✂ Use your imagination to answer the questions. Not all the answers are on the sheet.
- ✂ Use the flip chart paper to record your answers.
- ✂ Appoint a spokesperson to feedback from your group to the whole group.



Role play feedback

- ✂ Describe your role to the other groups
- ✂ Feedback your priorities and the challenges you face in achieving these priorities.
- ✂ As you listen to the presentations from other groups be thinking about how the priorities and challenges you hear may impact on your role.



How do the different groups' concerns, priorities and challenges impact on other groups?



An example of how one role's priorities could impact on other groups:

The **CEO** wants to ensure their company remains competitive and has the latest designs in store to increase profits



The **designer** responds to the latest trends and submits final designs close to order deadline.



The **buyer** demands flexibility from their suppliers as they don't know in advance what they will need to produce or where.



The **factory owner** is unable to plan ahead and so can't keep staff on regular hours or permanent contracts.



To meet these orders, **workers** have less secure contracts and are forced to work more overtime in peak periods but have no work at quiet times.



Instructions - role play part 2

- ✂ You have 15 minutes to read your Taking Action card and answer the questions on your sheet.
- ✂ Use the piece of flipchart paper to record your answers.
- ✂ Appoint a different spokesperson from your group to feedback to the whole group.



Taking action to improve working conditions

- ✂ Feedback what action have you been asked to take?
- ✂ Explain the pros and cons of the action you have been asked to take? Do you think it will lead to changes in conditions for garment workers?
- ✂ What else do you think you or another group could do to improve conditions for factory workers?



Conclusions

- ✂ The pressure to meet their priorities and overcome their challenges means that actors in the supply chain make decisions that can have a negative impact on conditions for garment workers.
- ✂ Each actor within the supply chain can take action to improve working conditions in the fashion industry. Each action will only have the desired effect if the causes and the symptoms of poor working conditions are addressed.



Further reading:

- ✂ Purchasing Practices: Factsheet 17 – Fashioning an Ethical Industry (2006)
- ✂ Who pays for cheap clothes? 5 questions the low cost retailers must answer - Labour Behind the Label (2006)
- ✂ Buying your way into trouble? The challenge of responsible supply chain management – Insight Investment Management Ltd/Acona Ltd (2004)
- ✂ Trading Away Our Rights - Women working in global supply chains, Oxfam International (2004)
- ✂ Buying matters – Traidcraft et al (2006)

All available from www.fashioninganethicalindustry.org

