STEP INTO HER TRAINERS...

Respect, equality and fairplay: exploring questions about the sportswear you buy and the workers across the world who make it.
Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles."

(Article one of the Olympic Charter)
The London 2012 Olympics promises to deliver breathtaking displays of sporting and cultural achievement, and gather together sports heroes from around the world under a banner of fairness, equality and respect. But these principles of fair play and respect are called into question when we take a closer look at the working conditions of people employed around the world to produce the Olympic goods and branded sportswear available in our shops. For many, life on these production lines means working excessively long hours in bad conditions, to make sportswear that they could never afford to buy.

Step Into Her Trainers is a teaching pack aimed at Fashion & Textiles related courses, Citizenship, and Geography, at KS4, A-level and BTEC.

This pack was produced for the Playfair 2012 campaign, calling for better conditions for workers in sportswear and merchandise factories worldwide.

Tables outlining curriculum links can be found at the back of this pack.

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Front cover pictures (clockwise from main) © Bee Hayes; Playfair 2008; CCC; Michaela Konigshofer.
The global sportswear industry is worth over £30 billion worldwide. Millions of workers are employed in the manufacture of branded sportswear and the Olympic branded goods made for the games. It would be wonderful to think that the worthy ideal of fair play which is promoted by the event could be borne out for the people making the sporting goods which are sold in its name.

In order to minimise costs and maximise profits, production of sportswear takes place in countries where labour is cheap and regulations are loose. This includes many of the world’s poorer countries such as Turkey, Bulgaria, Thailand, Indonesia, Pakistan, Cambodia, India, Bangladesh and China. Manufacture is contracted out through a ‘supply chain’ of buyers, factory managers and subcontractors who manage manufacture, finishing and packaging.

In many countries those who can get jobs in sportswear factories are considered lucky, and young girls leave their families in rural areas to travel hundreds of miles in search of such work. Yet the reality when they arrive is tough. Workers across the world face a daily grind of excessive hours, forced overtime, lack of job security, poverty wages, denial of trade union rights, poor health, exhaustion, sexual harassment and mental stress. Even in factories which on the surface look clean and modern, workers are often deprived of their internationally-recognised basic rights.

**Poverty Wages**

In Bangladesh the minimum wage is 3000 taka – just a quarter of what a worker needs to be able to feed herself and provide for her family. Minimum wages are set by governments in the midst of fierce competition for multinational investment. As a result these are often well below a government’s own measures of poverty, and way below what is needed for a worker to live a decent quality of life. Workers often have to choose between buying food, educating their children or paying for medicine.

As the big sportswear brands seek to increase sales in the economic crisis, they put suppliers under greater pressure to cut production costs. This might mean outsourcing production to smaller factories or homeworkers where cheap labour and child labour may be evident.

**A Living Wage is defined by Labour Behind the Label as enough to cover basic costs for a worker who is a member of a family of four. Basic costs include food, clothing, housing, utilities, necessary travel, healthcare, education, and a small amount of discretionary income. This wage should be achieved in a standard working week of no more than 48 hours, before overtime and deductions.**
Sportswear companies as global players have the power to demand that supplier factories cut their prices, speed up manufacturing, and meet demands for 'flexible' production and delivery. So, when large factory orders come in with short turnaround times, workers are often made to work 12–16 hour shifts. If they refuse, they risk losing their jobs. A seven-day working week is becoming the norm in the peak season, particularly in China, despite legal limits on paper. The majority of garment workers (over 75%) are women. Due to the long hours they are made to work, family life and children are often neglected.

Workers are furthermore often forced into work by manufacturers holding back pay during busy periods to ensure that workers can’t resign, or by employers keeping hold of worker identification papers and refusing to return them.

**Excessive hours and forced labour**

The freedom to join a trade union and bargain collectively is a human right, as defined by the UN Universal Declaration, but it is widely opposed throughout the garment industry. Although this right is enshrined in many codes of conduct, employers often harass and discriminate against workers who choose to form or join a trade union, and workers refrain from participating because that are afraid that having trade union membership will threaten their jobs.

**Denial of trade union rights**

The global sportswear industry employs workers in countries where jobs are needed most. Millions of people work at the bottom of these global supply chains, linking together some of the richest and the poorest people in the world. If there were fair conditions for trade, where workers were given permanent contracts, paid a living wage, and had their rights respected in fair and safe workplaces, millions of people around the globe could be lifted out of poverty. Since labour only accounts for 1% of the total cost of a garment, even doubling wages would make only a small dent in the profits of multi-national companies. Foreign investment does not have to mean exploitation.

**Trade is positive**

"NONE OF US HAVE TIME TO GO TO THE TOILET OR DRINK WATER. EVEN SO, WE ARE WORKING WITHOUT REST AND ARE ALWAYS AFRAID OF NOT WORKING FAST ENOUGH TO SUPPLY SOLES TO THE NEXT PRODUCTION LINE."

-Worker making New Balance shoes, China
Learning Objectives

- To introduce participants to the sportswear industry and some basic facts and figures about labour rights in an interactive way.
- To consider the negative and positive impacts the Olympics and the garment industry could be seen to have on garment workers.

What you do

1. Ask students to complete the quiz in pairs or small groups. Reassure students that this is not a test and that it does not matter if they know the answers or not — the aim is to get them thinking about the issues raised.

2. Once students have had enough time to work through the questions, go through the answers one at a time. Give students the opportunity to discuss the answers and ask questions. If you would like to use a PowerPoint presentation to do this, one is available to download at: www.playfair2012.org.uk/resources/stepintohertrainers

3. You can follow the quiz with a discussion about what students know about working conditions in the industry. Then ask them to consider what positive impact the garment industry can have on workers, their communities and country. Suggested answers include: Wages, employment, infrastructure (roads, ports, etc.), related industries (packaging, transportation, etc.), women's empowerment and foreign investment.

Teacher talking points/Answers

Question 1  
Answer: 1c (Source: Labour Behind the Label, 2010)
As little as 30 years ago, most sportswear was made in the country in which it was sold. Globalisation has seen sportswear brands move production to countries where labour is cheaper, and regulations are looser — mainly Asia.

Question 2  
Answer: 2b (Source: www.bbc.co.uk, 20/9/2007)
Adidas are the official sportswear sponsors of every major football and sporting event. This brings in millions of dollars in profit every year despite large sponsorship fees.

Question 3  
Answer: 3c (Source: ITGLWF 2008)
When looking at the total cost of a garment, the majority will go to the retailer, around a quarter to the brand and marketing, and the remainder is divided between transport, import and export fees, material costs, supplier overheads and profit, leaving only a very small amount for the wages of the person who made it.

Question 4  
Answer: false (Source: Playfair 2012 leaflet, ‘Campaigning for a Sweat-free Olympics,’ 2010)

Question 5  
Answer: 5b. (Source: No Medal for the Olympics report, Playfair 2008)
The legal maximum is C. Before the Beijing Olympic games workers making Olympic branded caps at Mainland Headwear Holdings Ltd in China were forced to work around 160 hours overtime per month. This works out at around 6 hours overtime on top of a full 8 hour shift.

Question 6  
Gender is an important consideration for workers rights. Many supervisors in factories are male and harassment of the mainly female workforce is a common problem. Many of these workers are also mothers with children to feed on their meagre salaries.

Question 7  
Answer: 7a (Source: www.asiafloorwage.org, 1/9/2009)
The minimum wage for a garment worker in Indonesia is only half the amount needed to have a basic quality of life. A basic quality of life is defined here as enough to buy food, shelter, clothing and healthcare for a garment worker and her family.

Question 8  
Answer: 8c (Source: http://people.forbes.com/profile/mark-g-parker/57735)
Mr Parker, CEO of Nike, earned a total compensation of $11,030,681, which included a base salary of $1,533,557, stocks worth $3,500,065, option awards of $2,916,095, an incentive scheme payment of $2,735,569, and other compensation of $343,395. It would take a Sri Lankan worker 14,000 years to earn the same amount.
1) In which countries are most trainers produced?
   a) Europe  
   b) USA  
   c) Asian countries such as China, Vietnam and Indonesia

2) How much did Adidas pay to the London 2012 Olympic Games in order to become its official sportswear partner?
   a) £20 million  
   b) £100 million  
   c) £1 billion

3) What percentage of the final price of a running vest might a factory worker typically earn?
   a) 10-15%  
   b) 5-7%  
   c) 1-3%

4) The International Olympic Committee requires that suppliers of Olympic branded goods do not use child labour or forced labour. True/False

5) In the run up to the Beijing Olympics, what was the average amount of overtime worked by workers making Olympic branded hats?
   a) 100 hours  
   b) 160 hours  
   c) 36 hours

6) What percentage of workers in the sports industry are women?
   a) 75%  
   b) 96%  
   c) 68%

7) What is the minimum wage for a garment worker in Indonesia?
   a) £70.09 per month  
   b) £105.60 per month  
   c) £140.18 per month

8) How much did Mark Parker, CEO of Nike earn in total in 2010?
   a) £4,900,000  
   b) £3,750,000  
   c) £7,000,000
**ACTIVITY 2: LABELS (10 MINS)**

**Learning Objective:**
- To increase awareness of the global nature of garment production.

**What you do:**

Ask your group to look at the labels in their clothes.

- Where does it say their clothes were made?
- Gather the answers to get an idea of the range of different countries where garments are made.
- Ask students to talk in pairs about what they think life might be like for the person who made their garment. What do are the difficulties that this person might face at home and at work? After 3 minutes, gather the answers in a plenary.
Activity: A Day in the Life of a T-Shirt (30 mins)

Learning Objectives:
- To introduce students to sportswear supply chains and give participants an understanding of the distribution of resources in the global sportswear industry.
- To help students understand the global connections made by the garment industry.

What you do:

1. Explain to the group that you are going to do an activity which traces the life of a t-shirt from its construction in a garment factory in Indonesia to its place in someone’s wardrobe. Ask the group who they think the first people are in this chain. When someone says ‘factory worker’ they form the first group.

2. Ask who is next in the chain, and so on. The chain should be formed of Factory Workers, Factory Manager, Buying House, Brand, Retailer and Consumer. (See role play cards on following page for descriptions). The consumer role, although a vital part of the chain, doesn’t have many questions to consider in this exercise. You make like to take this role yourself.

3. Space the groups out as far as possible. Ask the first group to imagine that they are in Indonesia and the last group to imagine they are in the UK to imagine the other groups or participants as all the steps in between.

4. Ask each group to take a few minutes to discuss what their role involves. Feed this back within the larger group.

5. Distribute the role cards on the following page to the appropriate groups. Do they match more or less with what the group had imagined themselves?

6. Tell each group that a t-shirt costs £30. Ask them to decide how much of this £30 they should get and why. Each group should take a few minutes to discuss this together. Get feedback from the groups, asking them to present their arguments for the amount they think they deserve.

7. Now reveal the true situation and discuss it as a group.

Discussion points

Who benefits most?
Is this a fair situation?
What would be the effects of redistributing the resources?
How do you think this could be achieved?
What is stopping this from happening?

Note: This breakdown and the role description have been simplified for the purposes of the activity. Each garment will have a different breakdown, and costs will vary between countries. Figures are based on research by ITGLWF (2008). Roles also vary depending on sourcing methods.
**Factory Workers**

**Job:** You work 12-14 hours a day in difficult factory conditions. You cut the pattern pieces and sew the garment together. You press the garments, treat the garments with chemicals where necessary, and pack the garments ready for shipping.

**Costs:** You have to earn enough to feed your family, pay for shelter, transport, clothing, medical bills and send your children to school.

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**Factory Manager**

**Job:** You work in an office, manage the workers and make sure the orders are completed to tight deadlines. You negotiate with the buying house and the brand to produce the orders they require.

**Costs:** You have to pay workers’ wages, supervisors’ wages, and pay for the cost of running a factory as well as keeping a small profit for yourself.

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**Buying House**

**Job:** You manage the production process, outsource the garments to local factories, specialist units and homeworking groups, and make sure the orders are correct and delivered to a tight time frame. You sometimes work with the brand on designing garments also.

**Costs:** You source and pay for fabrics, trimmings, and threads. You also take a cut of the profit.
**Brand**

**Job:** You write the specifications for the garments you want to source and you get them designed, either in house or in collaboration with the buying house. You also manage the brand’s public relations.

**Costs:** You have to pay for staff to work on your design, marketing and management teams. You also have to pay to ship the product from its production country to its retail country, and market it once it gets here. A chunk of the profit also stays in your pocket.

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**Retailer**

**Job:** You sell the garment and create a retail environment which builds your brand image.

**Costs:** Your overheads include staff wages, staff uniforms, shop rent and taxes, lighting, carrier bags, and in-store marketing. Making a profit is also your main aim.

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**Consumer**

**Job:** You buy the product.

**Costs:** It costs you £30.
**Activity 4: Unfair Factory**
**GAME 15 MINS; ADDITIONAL RESEARCH UP TO 1.5 HOURS**

**Learning Objective:**
- To help participants gain an understanding of common rights issues facing garment workers, and understand the pressures of the production process.

**PLAY THE GAME AT:** [WWW.PLAYFAIR2012.ORG.UK/GAME](http://WWW.PLAYFAIR2012.ORG.UK/GAME)

This activity could be done as a group, or as an additional activity set for participants to do at home.

**What you do:**

1. Allow students time to play the game.
2. Ask for some feedback: What problems did you encounter? What happened when you joined the union? What was the most frustrating thing about the game?
3. Ask participants to research and write a short report on workers’ rights and the issues faced by workers employed in garment factories using the ‘What’s the Story?’ function on the game and the websites listed below.

[WWW.LABOURBEHINDTHELABEL.ORG](http://WWW.LABOURBEHINDTHELABEL.ORG)
[WWW.FASHIONINGANETHICALINDUSTRY.ORG/Resources/Factsheets](http://WWW.FASHIONINGANETHICALINDUSTRY.ORG/Resources/Factsheets)
[WWW.PLAYFAIR2012.ORG.UK](http://WWW.PLAYFAIR2012.ORG.UK)
Activity 5: Breaking News: Panel Debate (1 Hour)

**Learning Objectives:**

- To help students gain an understanding of the power relations between players involved in global trade relationships, and the difficulties of assigning responsibility.
- To encourage students to consider the issues from a number of different viewpoints.

**What you do:**

1. Read the news article as a group.

2. Explain that everyone is going to take part in a press conference which followed the breaking of the news story. There has been no time for back room negotiations so no one knows what will happen.

3. Divide the group into four to represent Kick Sportwear; the owner of the Megatex factory; the workers; a group of journalists.

4. Hand out the role cards (printed overleaf) and allow groups 10 minutes to prepare their views.

5. Host the press conference and allow journalists to ask their questions to a representative from Kick Sportswear, Megatex, and the Workers.

6. Get feedback from the group, using the discussion questions below as a starting point.

- Who had the power in this dialogue? Who was powerless?
- Who won and who lost? Why?
- Was this fair?
- How should cases like this be resolved?
- What should the outcome have been?

As an additional activity, participants can write a newspaper article using material from the press conference. This should include the viewpoints of each group, state each party's concerns, and report on the outcome of the situation.

NB: This story is fictional. Names have been fabricated, but it is based on a real life case.
Workers fear for jobs after blaze guts garment factory

Monday, 12 April 2011

A FIRE destroyed a garment factory in Meanchey district’s Chakangre Krom commune in Phnom Penh on Saturday night in an incident that factory officials say may have been caused by old and faulty equipment.

The garment factory – owned by the company Megatex Ltd – was destroyed, along with over 1,000 tonnes of clothing, more than 500 sewing machines, three overlocking machines and other factory equipment.

A factory administration official who wished to withhold his full name, said the blaze started around 8:45pm. “No workers were injured in the fire,” he said. “The security guards told me last night that the fire was caused by a mechanical fault.”

Workers at the Megatex factory, which employed 2,750 people, are concerned that they will lose their jobs because the fire destroyed all the raw materials in the factory. Workers had furthermore not been paid their wages for the previous month and were worried that these would not be paid.

The factory was producing export goods for a number of global sportswear brands including Kick Sportswear Inc.
Kick Sportswear Inc.

You are sourcing 70% of the goods produced by this factory. Your factory inspections should have picked up problems with faulty equipment. The last report from the factory shows that equipment was old and the building structurally flawed, however this is normal across the region so the factory was passed.

Your PR department has advised you to show sympathy for the workers and offer the factory a small payment in solidarity. You do not want to pay for the large order which was burnt.

You are not global police. You feel it’s not your job to chase up conditions in every factory.

As a company, spend some time discussing your position. Come up with an argument to defend yourself, and a strategy to get what you want out of the negotiations.

Elect a spokesperson to attend the press conference.

Mr Sulityo, Megatex factory owner

You are in a difficult situation. The order for Kick Sportswear was almost completed. It was for 20,000 pieces and you had been working on it for two months. None of your workers have been paid as you can only afford to pay them when Kick pay you, and Kick Sportswear only pay on completion.

Kick gave you 2 weeks notice for your last factory inspection and during that time you employed a local handy man to do a number of temporary repair jobs to the property and the machinery. With some skilful management of factory visitors you managed to pass all the categories in the inspection. Since Kick Sportswear did pass you, you feel this disaster is at least partly their responsibility.

If Kick Sportswear refuse to pay, you are considering claiming an insurance payment, leaving the factory, and moving house.

As a group, spend some time discussing your situation. Come up with a strategy for the press conference, and nominate a person to attend on behalf of the factory.
The Workers

You are angry and worried. You suspect that Mr Sulityo, the factory owner, will be unable to pay you for all the long hours that you have been working over the last month. Many of you have children to feed and bills to pay which are overdue. Now that the factory has burnt down you will all have to find other jobs, which will not be easy, especially when finances are so tight and there is no social security, but having a debt on top will make things doubly difficult.

Someone has informed you that there is a union in a nearby town. A union can offer legal advice and offers a way for workers to have more power collectively, when bargaining with big businesses like Kick. They may be able to offer assistance.

As a group spend some time discussing your situation. Come up with a strategy for the press conference, and nominate someone to represent your views at the press conference.

Journalists

Your newspapers want you to cover the story and find out what the resolution to the disaster will be. You want to make this a good story so you are looking to see if anyone is to blame for the disaster.

Come up with a list of questions to ask the different parties. You can find out how people feel about the situation, as well as what actions will be taken by each group.
Learning Objective:

- To help students consider employment rights and health and safety issues in garment production factories.
- To give students the opportunity to explore the difficulties around upholding rights and responsibilities.

Background information for teachers: A code of conduct is a set of rules laid down by a company outlining its expectations for working conditions in supplier factories. For a sportswear brand, this would include a list of labour standards required in factories such as, ‘Working conditions are safe and hygienic,’ and ‘Child labour shall not be used.’ However, many of the codes used by companies have little impact in challenging violations of workers’ rights. In itself and without the proper monitoring and independent verification, a code is nothing but a piece of paper. Codes are used alongside factory inspections and other measures.

What you do:

1. Ask participants to idea storm some issues for garment workers in sportswear factories. What are the difficulties for a worker? Would you say that some of the situations that they face are unfair?

2. Explain that since the mid 1990s global sportswear companies have mostly all adopted codes of conduct which state the standards which they expect to be upheld in their factories.

3. Ask participants to work in groups to come up with the five most important rules for maintaining good conditions in a factory. Give groups 10 mins to discuss this.

Some things to consider:

- How to ensure a safe and healthy working environment.
- How to ensure that workers are not victims of harassment by their supervisors.
- How to ensure hours/days of work and overtime conditions are not excessive.
- How to make sure workers get breaks during the day.
- How to monitor the age of the workforce.
- How to ensure workers have a way to express complaints about their work.
- How to set wage rates in proportion to the cost of the final product.
- How to ensure worker dismissals are always merited.

4. Feedback as a whole group what was discussed. Write the rules up on the board. Were there similarities and differences between the rules? You can show an example of a code of conduct for comparison. These can usually be found in the corporate section of any large brand’s website e.g. http://www.adidas-group.com/en/sustainability/

5. As a whole group decide on one rule which is the most important – the golden rule. Take a vote on this.

6. Get groups to consider what steps need to be taken by brands, factory managers, consumers and others to enforce this rule. Is it easy? What will be the difficulties? What steps do they think are already being taken to make the rule a reality?

7. Feedback ideas.

Additional activity:

Ask participants to choose a well-known sportswear brand producing for the Olympics (such as Adidas, Speedo, or Nike) and research how it upholds its code of conduct. Participants will need to look in the corporate section of the website, or make an enquiry via the brand’s corporate social responsibility (CSR) team.
Weisan Wong is a garment worker in the Dongguan area of China. She works in a factory sourcing to sportswear brands including Reebok and New Balance. She is paid entirely by piece rate, which means that her wage changes depending on how many shoes she makes. She earns an average of RMB600 per month (£57), which is better than average in her factory but still less than the minimum wage. From that, RMB155/month (£14.80) is deducted for lodging in the factory’s dormitories, where 12 workers occupy each room. She finds it very hard to live on the amount of money which is left. Weisan works under intense pressure from her supervisor gluing the soles of shoes, often clocking up 3 hours overtime per day on top of her 10 hour shift. This means her free time is mostly used for sleeping, and she has no time to have friends, see family or socialise.

(Adapted from ‘Clearing the Hurdles’ report, Maquila Solidarity Network, Play Fair 2008 campaign)
**ACTIVITY 7: WAGE INEQUALITY (30 MINUTES)**

**Learning objectives:**
- To help participants understand the poverty gap created by a low minimum wage.
- To encourage discussion about whose responsibility it is to fill this gap.

**What you do:**

1. Ask participants what a minimum wage is and how they think it was worked out.

   *Teacher reference: A minimum wage in the UK is £6.08/hr for workers aged 21 and over, £4.98/hr for workers aged 18-20 inclusive, and £3.68/hr for all workers aged 16-17 (below this age, workers are not entitled to the minimum wage).*

2. Explain that minimum wages are very low in garment producing countries. Explain that there is a difference between a minimum wage and a 'living wage'.

   *Teacher talking points: One reason minimum wages are very low is because garment exporting countries and factories are in competition with one another in order to attract foreign investment. The lower the cost of labour, the more likely that country or factory is to attract global business. If the minimum wage in India, for example, were to increase global brands may move production to Indonesia where labour is cheaper. Because minimum wages are low compared to living costs, many anti-poverty groups talk about 'living wages'. A 'living wage' is enough to cover basic costs for a worker and her family, including food costs and non food costs such as clothing, housing and utilities, healthcare, social security, education, and a small amount of savings.*

3. Read the extract on *Sheet A* and get participants to answer questions.

4. Make a list of who the group think is responsible for taking action to fill the wage gap. This list should be as exhaustive as possible. E.g. factory owner; buyers for the company; designers; company directors; consumers; governments in sourcing countries; other international regulatory bodies. As you do this, encourage participants to think about why each of these are responsible and what they could do to change things.

5. In groups, ask participants to rank who is the most responsible down to the least. Groups should also consider the following questions:
   - Do you think the player with the most responsibility in the supply chain accepts responsibility for the wages problem?
   - What is stopping this player from acting to sort the problem out?
   - What should they be doing?

6. Ask each group to give a short oral report stating where they think the responsibility lies, and what activity should be taken to improve conditions.

**Teacher notes:**

Below is a list of pointers on roles and responsibilities. This is not an exhaustive list, so please do add your own thoughts.

- Factory owners pay worker wages. They receive a price for each item produced, and they choose what percentage of this to spend on labour.
- Buyers for companies set up the price for each design specification. It is out of this price that workers' wages are taken. They are seeking to negotiate the cheapest price.
- Governments in sourcing countries set minimum wage rates. Were these to be higher, the wage gap could be closed.
- Consumers choose to buy cheap clothing. The rise of fast fashion and budget clothing has been one of the causes of the race to the bottom in the amounts paid to factories per item.
- Company directors sit at the top of the supply chain. They start the whole process by employing staff to design and source clothing. It is their responsibility to ensure that profits stay high and costs remain low.
Although wages in any garment workforce vary based on skill and responsibility, most workers’ monthly earnings in the garment industry average a little higher than the national minimum wage. When governments set minimum wages, they balance the interests of workers with what they see as the need to remain competitive in the global market and respond to pressure from companies to keep wage rates low. As a result, minimum wage rates often bear no relation to the cost of living, and fall far short of what a worker would need to lead a basic quality of life. In many garment-producing countries, the minimum wage actually leaves a family well below the national poverty line, even though this is also set by the government.

A ‘living wage’ is enough to cover basic costs for a worker who is a member of a family of four. Basic costs include food, clothing, housing and utilities, necessary travel, healthcare, education and a small amount of discretionary income.

In 2009 the Asia Floor Wage alliance, a coalition of unions and labour organisations spread across Asia, first put a figure on the value of a living wage across 6 garment producing countries (the figure has since been revised). They did this by taking average food baskets based on a standard calorie intake, and getting figures for other non food costs. They further agreed that the wage should be earned in no more than a 48 hour week, and should provide for a family of 2 adults and 2 children.

1. Why is a living wage different from the minimum wage?

2. In which country is the wage gap between the minimum wage and the living wage largest? What is this gap as a multiple of the minimum wage?

3. In which country is the wage gap between the minimum wage and the living wage the smallest?

4. If a living wage covers the cost of the items listed above, and a minimum wage is less than half this amount, what do you think are some of the consequences for families?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Monthly Min Wage</th>
<th>Monthly Min Wage (£)</th>
<th>Living Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>3000 taka</td>
<td>£24.17</td>
<td>12,248 taka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>843.91 yuan</td>
<td>£82.80</td>
<td>1842 yuan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>5130 rupees</td>
<td>£64.55</td>
<td>7967 rupees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>988829 rupiah</td>
<td>£69.08</td>
<td>2132202 rupiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>8413 rupees</td>
<td>£47.67</td>
<td>19077 rupees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>256200 riel</td>
<td>£38.40</td>
<td>692903 riel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows the difference between the minimum wage and living wage in each country.

Note: Living wage figures were taken from www.asiafloorwage.com and sterling exchange rates were accurate 2/11/2011.
Learning Objectives:

- To introduce students to four initiatives to improve working conditions in the garment industry (Fairtrade, Social Audits, Trade Unions and Reducing Overtime Project).
- For students to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the initiatives in terms of improving working conditions in garment manufacture.

What you do:

1. Choose which case studies to cover in your session and divide students into groups so that each group examines one case study. Case studies are printed on the following page.

2. In small groups, ask participants to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the initiative they have been given in terms of improving working conditions.

The following questions are aimed at focusing discussions but do not all need to be discussed or reported back on:

- Does the initiative involve workers?
- Is it a long-term approach?
- Does it address the root causes of poor working conditions in factories?
- Does it address the overall behaviour of companies?
- Does it change behaviours and attitudes?
- Do you have different criteria to assess the impact of the initiative on working conditions?

3. After around 15 minutes, introduce the case studies one at a time by reading through the information on the sheet and then allow the relevant group to feedback from their discussions (approx 10 minutes per case study for feedback). Allow other students to ask questions and share their views.

4. Once all case studies have been considered, a plenary discussion could be held around the following questions:

- Can company practices alone improve working conditions?
- Do we also need to address the way we consume?
- Do governments have a role?
- What else needs to happen to improve working conditions?

Reference: Exercise and case study information was adapted from: Sustainable Fashion: A Handbook for Educators, by Fashioning an Ethical Industry, 2009.
**What Can Be Done:**

**Case Studies**

**Fairtrade**

The Fairtrade Mark for cotton was launched in 2005 in the UK and is the only independent certification for cotton farmers in the developing world. The need for a Fairtrade label for cotton production is clear: Cotton prices have been in long-term decline, falling to $0.92/kg in season 2001/02, the lowest level in 30 years. Subsidies to U.S. cotton farmers have led to unfair competition for African and Asian producers. Many cotton farmers are struggling to survive. The Fairtrade Mark for cotton is lifting the lid on these injustices at the start of the supply chain. It provides disadvantaged farmers with a better deal and opportunity to trade their way out of poverty and provide for their families and communities.

The Fairtrade Mark does come with a requirement to provide documentary evidence of efforts to ensure worker rights within the rest of the supply chain which is submitted for approval. This however is not a guarantee of working conditions within the supply chain.

As well as numerous smaller fair trade companies, a number of high street companies stock lines made with Fairtrade cotton, although this hasn’t yet become a trend among sportswear companies. The Mark’s use by big highstreet retailers has caused some controversy. It has been suggested by some, as the Fairtrade cotton mark doesn’t certify manufacture, that it can be used as a fig leaf to cover over exploitation in other parts of a brand’s supply chain. This presents a confusing message to consumers.

In summary:

- The Mark is an independent product certification label applicable only to cotton production, and not to the other stages of textile and garment manufacture. There is a requirement for documentary evidence of efforts to ensure workers’ rights within the rest of the supply chain.
- The Fairtrade label is applied to a product (as opposed to necessarily reflecting a company’s policies and practices in general).

**Social Audits**

In order for sportswear brands to verify that their codes of conduct are being observed in their supply chains, social audits are conducted. This is the term for an inspection of working conditions in factories. Tens of thousands of audits are now performed every year.

A typical audit will involve three things:

- Document review: looking at wage sheets, timekeeping, personnel records, etc.
- Site inspection: walking through a factory to check for health and safety problems and to observe the workers at work.
- Interviews: usually this includes interviews with managers, supervisors and workers.

There are important distinctions between audits where warning is given and those that are unannounced. In fear of losing their contracts, some suppliers hide anything that might mean they fail the audit. They may keep two sets of records of wages and hours worked – one which shows the real information and one to show the auditors. The factory is tidied up and prepared in advance so that it meets health and safety criteria. Underage workers are given the day off and home-based workers often go unchecked. Workers may be coached and intimidated to ensure that they say the right thing. Better audits place a strong emphasis on worker interviews conducted off-site and by someone who has the workers’ trust e.g. a local person of the same gender with experience of interviewing.

However they are conducted, the evidence shows that audits are not the solution that many companies treat them as. Whilst improvements to visible, easy wins such as health and safety may be made, the difficult issues such as harassment, discrimination and trade union freedom are left unaddressed. Social audits can be valuable if they are conducted in a credible way. But audits remain only one tool for ensuring workers’ rights are respected.

In summary:

- Social auditors (inspectors) go into factories to assess conditions against a code of conduct, which is often like a check list.
- The auditors may be company staff or hired consultants.
- Audits show a snapshot of conditions in the factory on one day.
- Good practice for audits, such as talking to workers outside of the factory, is not always followed.
Trade Unions

“Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.”
United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 23.4

Trade unions allow workers to stand together to defend their rights and allow them to say things collectively that they are too scared to say on their own. Through collective bargaining, workers can negotiate with their employers on wages and working hours they believe are decent. This is potentially a more sustainable approach. In contrast, efforts by sports and fashion companies to ensure that workers’ rights are respected are based on a top-down model referred to as ‘compliance’, which relies on a code of conduct and factory inspections imposed on suppliers.

Only a tiny percentage – probably somewhere between 5 and 10% – of garment workers are unionised, and many of these are in ‘yellow’ unions established by factory managements. Managers often respond to unions by adopting ‘union-busting’ tactics to prevent workers from forming unions. In 2005, 115 trade unionists were murdered for defending workers rights, 9,000 arrested, and nearly 10,000 workers sacked across all sectors (not just garments).

More and more production is taking place in parts of the world where the rights to freedom of association are prohibited, as is the case in China. Not all garment workers who are aware of their rights choose to take them up by joining a union, but the fact remains that millions have never been given that choice.

In summary:
- Trade unions allow workers to stand together to defend their rights and allow them to say things collectively that they are too scared to say on their own.
- Between 5 and 10% of garment workers are unionised.
- Not all garment workers who are aware of their rights choose to take them up by joining a union, but millions have never been given that choice.

Reducing Overtime Project

This project took place over a 3 year period in China, a country where many Olympic goods are produced. In China, as in many other garment producing countries, garment workers often work 12-13 hours per day, seven days a week in an effort to increase their pay packet. Eleven brands and retailers worked with local Chinese partners to see if it was possible to reduce overtime without cutting workers’ monthly take home pay by improving factory efficiency.

Case study of a project factory: Basic people management training was given to factory management and supervisors, and workers were given skills training. Communication skills and planning workshops were provided for workers, managers and supervisors. By the end of the project, productivity in the factory had improved. A year later workers no longer worked on Sundays or past 8 pm during the week. A system of incentives and production bonuses were introduced, which made it possible for 95% of workers to earn the minimum wage by working just their basic hours, compared to 40-50% before the project.

The experience of the project in a number of factories in China showed that workers need to have a strong voice and be allowed some negotiating power for the project to succeed. There was concern among NGOs that workers would be put under considerably more stress than before and production targets be expected in shorter time frames. Half the factories involved in the project at some stage presented false or inaccurate records. This fact was assigned to the pressure factory management are under from all buyers to demonstrate compliance with codes of conduct, not just those involved in the project.

In summary:
- This project worked with Chinese factories to see if it was possible to reduce excessive overtime without reducing workers’ monthly take home pay, through improving efficiency in factories.
- By the end of the project almost all the workers were earning a minimum wage.
- Human resources and communications training were key to the project.
ACTIVITY 9: ACTION FOR SPORTSWEAR (30 MINUTES)

Learning Objectives:

• To help participants consider how their actions are connected to the lives of garment workers who make their clothes.
• To encourage participants to take action to improve conditions

What you do:

1. Ask students to idea storm in small group things they can do as consumers and citizens in the UK to bring about change for garment workers. Each idea should be written on a post-it note. Students can be encouraged to think about what change they want to achieve and how they could influence:
   • Their friends
   • Their school / college
   • Their local community
   • Companies which retail in their town/city
   • Global brands
   • Governments

   For examples of activities see the facing page.

2. Draw a graph on a white board where the axes are labelled Impact (y) and Effort (x). Get participants to stick ideas on a graph in the appropriate place. This will help to assess which actions have the greatest impact and how much energy will need to be put in to achieve it.

3. As a group use the combined ideas to write an action plan for what you, as a group, can do. This could just be one action, or many. The plan can be broken down under headings of aim, activity description, who, and when.
Talking points:

What will be the effect of each action on consumers? On retailers? On factory workers? You can encourage students to evaluate the actions by considering these points.

Is buying less a positive action? Workers in production countries rely on the jobs provided by the fashion industry. If there was a boycott on certain brands on a large scale many workers would lose their jobs and end up in a worse situation. How can buying have a positive impact?

Here are some example of actions:

- **Letter Writing**: the class could decide to express their opinions by writing letters to a brand’s head quarters. Each member could write a personal letter to a company’s corporate social responsibility department asking for more information and raising concerns about workers’ rights and the conditions in which their clothes are made.
- **Consumer Voices**: students can make a point, when on the High Street, of asking in shops about a brand’s workers’ rights policy or make a commitment to buy only second hand clothing; locally made items or from ethical brands.
- **Events**: the class could hold an information stall to raise awareness of the issues; put on their own ethical fashion show or find other ways to raise awareness of clothing production in their school or college.
- **Clothes Swapping**: a class could decide to hold a clothes swap and use the event to raise awareness of rights issues for garment workers. Labour Behind the Label can provide an additional resource pack for this. Please contact info@labourbehindthelabel.org
- **Badge Branding**: a class could decide to make badges to raise awareness of the issue. These could read ‘The person who made my t-shirt received less than 2% of its cost = Unfair.’ These could be given out to other students in the school to raise awareness of the problem.
- **Corporate Lobbying**: the class could research where the school’s uniforms and sportswear are made and set up a personal meeting with the company to discuss their concerns.

For further information:

www.labourbehindthelabel.org

A case study of a school who pioneered an ethical labelling project is available here: http://fashioninganethicalindustry.org/resources/teachingmaterials/pre16/institutional/
Further Issues to explore for textiles teachers

We believe that the way the fashion industry is managed at the design and planning end can be changed to have a more positive impact on the lives of workers in supplier countries. It is therefore vital that students of fashion and textiles are taught about the ethical issues related to garment manufacture. All of the exercises in this pack are beneficial to this extent. But for fashion and design students particularly there are social responsibility considerations which, if embedded in their work, could help to change the industry to benefit its victims.

Exploration of the following design brief is a way to develop some of these ideas.

Design brief

Quote: “Olympism is a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy of effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.” (Article one of the Olympic Charter)

Develop a merchandise product for the Olympics that mirrors as closely as possible the Olympic ideal of ‘respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.’ This should take a particular focus on ways in which the production of the product can respect the rights of the workers in clothing factories who make Olympic merchandise.

Suggestions for merchandise: bag, t-shirt, cap, ball...

Sneaker case study

Launched in 2007, Blackspot Sneakers were born out of a desire to break the power of brand advertising, and offer a credible alternative to sweatshop produced shoes. Their brand is an open-source brand, which means that it can be used by anyone for any purpose at no cost.

According to their website, Blackspot Sneakers are ‘earth-friendly, anti-sweatshop and cruelty-free.’ The shoes use 100% organic hemp, which is processed with natural methods such as water retting, eliminating the need to use chemicals. The rubber used for soles and toe caps is either 70% biodegradable rubber certified by the FSC or rubber sourced from recovered car tires. They’ve chosen to use non-water-based glues, as water-based glues lack permanence so shoe longevity suffers. The white anti-logo and the red splodges are hand-painted, and the soles are stitched, glued and embedded for extra durability.

The sneakers are sourced from a fair trade factory in Pakistan and also from a unionised factory in Portugal.

If you want to know more about Blackspot or check out the in depth details about their factories, production techniques and labour rights policies visit https://www.adbusters.org/campaigns/blackspot
**Further Information**

Few of us living in the UK are aware of the journey of an item of clothes before it reaches the shops.

Most of the fibre and fabric manufacturing, and processing (fabric finishing, dyeing) takes place in complex assembly lines across the globe. Low wages, excessive working hours and work in poor conditions are just some of the issues for garment workers producing goods in these factories.

Yet the right to a fair wage is built into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 23.3 and 25.1), and the right to reasonable working hours (article 24) is also there.

Many of the causes of these human rights violations start at the point of design and planning. An ethical design will take into consideration the social impacts of each decision made in the planning process of a product. Considerations of materials, buying process, production monitoring, and product price breakdown can have big effects on the lives of workers in factories.

**Design Considerations**

- Consider material choices in the design of your products. How can you know that this material was produced fairly? Will using this material have a cost effect on your unit price? See [www.sda-uk.org/materials/](http://www.sda-uk.org/materials/) for information. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of different materials.
- Critically consider the timing of the different stages between design, placing the order and when you expect the order to be delivered so that workers aren’t under pressure to work unpaid overtime. Buying practices have a direct relationship to conditions in factories. See [www.fashioninganethicalindustry.org/resources/factsheets/issues/factsheet17/](http://www.fashioninganethicalindustry.org/resources/factsheets/issues/factsheet17/) for more details.
- Does your product have any beading or sequin work which may require hand stitching? How will you ensure that the workers (who mostly work from home) are treated fairly? See [http://fashioninganethicalindustry.org/resources/factsheets/progress/factsheet12b/](http://fashioninganethicalindustry.org/resources/factsheets/progress/factsheet12b/) for a case study.
- What will be the price breakdown of your product? How can you ensure that workers making the item get a fair share?
- How will you label your product to ensure that shoppers get your message?

**Useful sites include:**

To find out more about social issues in garment production visit [www.labourbehindthelabel.org](http://www.labourbehindthelabel.org) for research into issues and campaigns in the textiles industry.

[http://www.sda-uk.org/home.htm](http://www.sda-uk.org/home.htm) is a useful site for working though a design process.

[www.fashioninganethicalindustry.org](http://www.fashioninganethicalindustry.org) has a number of useful factsheets and resources which you can use to find out more about ethical design.

[www.ethletic.com](http://www.ethletic.com) produce trainers and footballs from fair trade materials.

[www.nosweatapparel.com](http://www.nosweatapparel.com) produce wholesale t-shirts and sweatshirts, using 100% organic cottons. They produce in unionised factories.

**Other information for textiles teachers:**

An activity to help students consider how ways of buying from factories effects workers' rights. [http://fashioninganethicalindustry.org/resources/teachingmaterials/eticasestudies/](http://fashioninganethicalindustry.org/resources/teachingmaterials/eticasestudies/)


A fact sheet about slow fashion is available here [http://fashioninganethicalindustry.org/resources/factsheets/issues/slowfashion/](http://fashioninganethicalindustry.org/resources/factsheets/issues/slowfashion/)

A number of useful background videos are signposted from Fashioning an Ethical Industry's YouTube channel. See: [www.youtube/user/FElnumber1](http://www.youtube/user/FElnumber1)
**Curriculum links**

This pack has been primarily designed for teachers with students in KS4 and A-level and BTEC but some exercises can easily be adapted for use with other groups who want to learn more about global trade. The activities link strongly into the curriculum for Fashion & Textiles, Citizenship, and Geography, but there are also cross-curricular uses in English, PSHE, and Business Studies.

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Design and market influences: The role of professionals within the textiles industry.

Design in the human context: economic, social, and environmental considerations.

Processes and manufacture: Global production, health and safety considerations.

Social, cultural, moral, health & safety and environmental issues: the influence of ethical trading and the consumers role in sustainable design.

Social, cultural, moral, health & safety and environmental issues: understand moral and environmental issues associated with textiles.

Health and safety issues: awareness of health and safety issues in manufacture.

Contested Planet: The development gap, the role of trade in creating the gap and reducing the gap.

Global Challenges: Global networks, the flow of money, labour and trade, winners and losers.

Global Challenges: Challenges for the future, the viability of green strategies and ethical purchases.
# Curriculum links

Citizenship KS4 and A-level

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Democracy & Justice: Understanding of fair and unfair, exploring the role of the law.

Rights & Responsibilities: Exploring different kinds of rights, obligations, and responsibilities.

Identities and diversity: Interconnections between UK, Europe and the rest of the world.

Critical thinking and enquiry: Question, analyse, evaluate and interpret different ideas.

Advocacy and representation: Explain viewpoints, present arguments.

Taking informed and responsible action: Explore actions, research and take action to influence others.

Political, legal and human rights, and freedoms in a range of contexts from local to global.

Debate, in groups and whole-class discussions: topical and controversial issues.

Participate in different forms of individual and collective actions, including decision-making and campaigning.
Below are a number of useful definitions for some of the technical terms used in this resource:

**Buyer.** The staff within a retailer or clothing brand who find and manage relationships with suppliers. Sometimes also used to refer to the retailer or brand itself.

**Code of conduct.** A statement, usually by a retailer or brand, of the way it expects suppliers to act, in particular regarding workers’ rights.

**Living wage.** Where the earnings from a standard working week are sufficient to meet the basic needs of workers and their dependents, and to provide some discretionary income. Distinguished from both the minimum wage and prevailing industry wage.

**Minimum wage.** The legal lower limit on what a worker can earn. In some countries, the minimum wage varies by region and by profession. It is often the product of a negotiation between business, trade unions and government, but the pressures of competition in the globalised industry mean it is rarely sufficient.

**Purchasing practices.** The manner in which a buying company does business with its suppliers, encompassing prices, lead times, size and frequency of orders, stability and security of the buying relationship, etc

**Social audit.** Inspection of working conditions in a factory, usually against the criteria set out in a code of conduct.

A **supply chain** is a system of linked businesses, people, technology, processes, information and resources involved in moving a product from supplier to consumer. In the case of garments, this involves farmers, weavers, dying units, factories, buyers, transporters, brands and retailers, to name just a few.

**Trade union.** An organisation of workers offering mutual support and representation. In particular, trade unions negotiate with management on employment matters. Globally, fewer than 5% of garment workers are unionised

For further videos and information about sportswear and workers’ rights go to [www.playfair2012.org](http://www.playfair2012.org)

You can find a range of films about garment workers at: [www.fashioninganethicalindustry.org/resources/ChinaBlue/](http://www.fashioninganethicalindustry.org/resources/ChinaBlue/)

For further interviews and clips visit FEI’s youtube channel at: [www.youtube.com/user/FEInumber1#p/u](http://www.youtube.com/user/FEInumber1#p/u)

Find additional teaching materials for education at all levels: [www.labourbehindthelabel.org/resources](http://www.labourbehindthelabel.org/resources)
[www.fashioninganethicalindustry.org/teachingmaterials/](http://www.fashioninganethicalindustry.org/teachingmaterials/)

Online updates to this pack will be available from [www.playfair2012.org.uk/resources/stepintohetrainers](http://www.playfair2012.org.uk/resources/stepintohetrainers)
This pack was published by Labour Behind the Label and produced by the Playfair 2012 Campaign.

The UK Playfair 2012 campaign is calling on the organisers of the London Olympic Games, the sportswear industry, and the International Olympic Committee to raise the bar on workers’ rights. We want them to ensure that workers making sportswear and Olympic-branded goods have their rights respected.

www.playfair2012.org.uk

The campaign is co-ordinated by the Trades Union Congress and Labour Behind the Label.
The London 2012 Olympics provides a fantastic opportunity for pupils in the 9-14 age group to learn more about who makes the sportswear and sporting merchandise they buy. Fair's Fair brings alive the concepts of human rights, equality and fairness by telling stories of people who make these goods in poorer countries, often working with few rights, and for poverty wages.

The pack was developed through involvement with teacher members from Anti-Slavery International, ATL, NASUWT and NUT working in collaboration with the TUC. Lesson ideas and activities make links between different subjects including art and design, citizenship, English, geography and maths.

By using this pack, pupils can develop their understanding of why decent working conditions are part of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals to end poverty, and take practical actions to help make the world a fairer place.

The pack includes:
- 10 lesson plans
- 14 activity sheets
- 4 photo cards
- A DVD made with pupils from the Cherwell School and Oaks Park High School

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