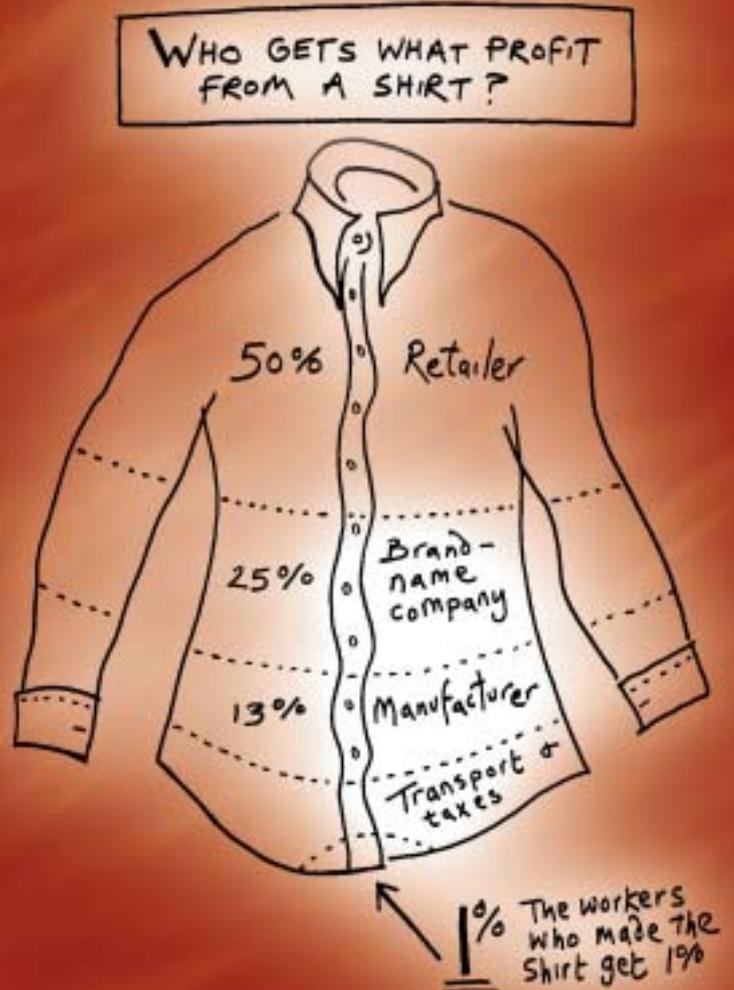


Garment Industry Supply Chains

a resource for worker education and solidarity
Women Working Worldwide



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Feedback

Women Working Worldwide is always interested to hear feedback on how and where our materials have been used, including suggestions for improvements.



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This Unit helps workers to plan and implement a campaign to improve their situation.

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Why this pack was produced

In today's era of 'globalisation', many goods are produced in complicated patterns of subcontracting that stretch across the world. It is happening on a huge scale, and in many industries - both in manufacturing and in services.

The increasing informalisation of the workforce is a key feature of subcontracting. 'Informalisation' means the practice by employers of hiring workers in such a way that they are not recognised as employees under labour law, that is to say as 'formal' workers.

'Informal' workers may be on repeated short-term contracts, or working as 'casuals' or as homeworkers, for example. Such workers have little chance of claiming their legal rights. Many do not know who they are really working for. Meanwhile their employers avoid their legal responsibilities, reduce their costs, and increase their profits. Employers are not necessarily breaking the law; they are simply side-stepping it. But the hard-won employment rights of workers are being deeply eroded.

Subcontracting supply chains can be quite difficult to understand. So too can their impact on workers' organisation. The situation is presenting many challenges for the trade union movement around the world.

The garment industry is one that is particularly mobile, and its supply chains have become truly global and complicated. The industry is constantly seeking out vulnerable sectors of society from which to draw its workers, and often shifts location to avoid trade unions. Garment workers are finding it extremely difficult to organise to defend their rights.

So, this pack focuses on the garment industry. The main aim is to assist garment workers, the majority of whom are women, to understand the supply chains in which they are working. We believe this will help them to maximise their opportunities to organise and build solidarity to claim their rights.

Strong, local organisation of workers is the essential first step, along with solid support from the local community. But when working in a supply chain, it becomes important to build links between workers at different points along the supply chains, even between many countries.

International solidarity can be a very daunting prospect, particularly for isolated workers. However, trade unions and campaigning organisations in many parts of the world exist to support and assist in this process.

With strong local, national and international organisation, workers at all stages of the garment production process stand a better chance of achieving success in their struggle for respect, a living wage, decent working conditions, and their rights to organise.

Complicated subcontracting supply chains are now developing in many industries. Therefore the issues contained in this pack may provide a useful way for others, not just garment workers, to explore the industry in which they work and how to strengthen their organisations.

How this pack was developed

This pack is one outcome of a year-long action-research project on garment supply chains carried out by Women Working Worldwide and some of its partner organisations during 2002-2003. These partners are:

- Hong Kong Christian Industrial Council, Hong Kong/China
- Friends of Women, Thailand
- Karmojibi Nari, Bangladesh
- Philippines Resource Centre
- Baguio Women Workers' Programme, Philippines
- Transnationals Information Exchange Asia (TIE-Asia), Sri Lanka
- Working Women's Organisation, Pakistan
- Union Research Group, India
- Bulgaria Gender Research Foundation

The action-research project involved WWW and the partner organisations in finding out in great detail about how supply chains operate. They uncovered in particular the extent of subcontracting by large manufacturers to smaller factories, and how managers often engage their own employees to act as agents to place work out with homeworkers in the surrounding community.

Much of the information and most of the case studies in this pack are taken from the results of this action-research project.

Individual modules for the education pack were then developed by the partner organisations, exchanged, translated, and piloted with groups of workers in the various countries. Feedback from the piloting was shared at a seminar in Manila in October 2003, from which Celia Mather compiled this resource pack.

Part of a wider WWW project

The action-research project was part of a wider WWW project called **'The rights of workers in garment industry subcontracting chains'** running January 2002 to April 2004. This involved research also on garment supply chains involving the UK, and an in-depth analysis of the supply chains of the US-based garment company Gap. The findings have been published in various publications which are listed at the end of this pack.

Overall, WWW's work on the rights of workers in the international garment industry goes back over twenty years. More details are available on the Women Working Worldwide website at: www.women-ww.org

Facilitator's Notes

Who this pack is for

This pack is for use in workers' education and organisation by tutors, facilitators and organisers.

It is designed for use with garment workers, primarily but not only women. They may be:

- factory-based workers
- workers in small production units such as 'sweatshops'
- homeworkers.

It can also be used in a wider range of educational settings, for example with:

- retail/shop workers who sell garments
- consumers who buy garments
- transport workers who deal with garments as cargo
- students who are studying the world economy
- globalisation campaigners, as an example of a key global industry.

What this pack contains

The first Units concentrate on developing the skills to map the supply chain that particular groups of workers are in, "piecing together the puzzle":

Unit 1 encourages garment workers to begin analysing the supply chain that they are in, from their own situation

Unit 2 assists workers to analyse their supply chain in more depth, particularly its international nature, and who/where the other workers are in their chain.

Unit 3 looks at the Gap global supply chain, for direct use with workers in the Gap supply chain, or for others to use as an example.

Unit 4 explores the wider context of developments in the global garment industry.

Then the pack focuses on how workers can use mapping techniques and information about their supply chain to develop a strategy for organising and claiming their rights:

Unit 5 explores local solidarity, particularly between those who are formally employed in factories and those who are 'informal' workers, as well as in the local community.

Unit 6 looks at the potential for international solidarity between workers in the same supply chain, including the role of codes of conduct.

Unit 7 is a guide to developing a plan of action.

What this pack does not cover

The pack is mostly about the relationships between employers and workers. There is some discussion of international trade, investment and labour policy. However, the pack barely goes into the role of national governments in passing and enacting employment legislation, creating jobs, and supporting investors. Facilitators may find it useful to add in discussion of these issues relevant to your own country.

The structure of the units

Each of the seven Units contains two sections:

■ Information Sheets:

These sheets contain analysis, case studies, graphics, and sources of further information.

The sheets aim to provide useful background reading for those facilitators for whom the issues may be relatively new.

We anticipate that facilitators will select individual sheets to use educationally, taking into account the nature of the educational programme and the interests, background and capacity of the participants.

Sometimes selected Information Sheets can be used within the educational session, as a basis for discussion. The case studies are particularly intended for this purpose.

Selected Information Sheets can be given to the participants to take home to read, discuss with others, and use in organising fellow workers.

■ Facilitators' Guide:

The facilitators' guide in each Unit gives ideas for how the materials might be used educationally. They give:

- The aims of the Unit/session
- Suggested educational methodologies
- Some key questions
- Graphics to use
- Suggestions for building an action plan out of the session.

How this pack can be used

WWW does not anticipate that facilitators will use all the materials in this resource pack, nor necessarily in the order that they are given. Rather, we expect you will select materials flexibly, according to your educational needs.

Overall, however, the pack is designed to start with and build on the experiences of garment workers, including those for whom workers' organisation and education is relatively new. This can be the case, for example, for homeworkers who usually work in isolation, or for workers where repression makes it very difficult to establish trade unions.

Therefore the pack uses the inductive method of drawing on the knowledge and experience of the participants, and then adding further information in order to encourage them to deepen their analysis and consider action they may take. It starts at the 'local' level and builds outwards to the 'national' and 'international' levels.

The pack encourages 'action-research' where workers actively seek out information about their own situation and how it fits into the wider supply chain. They are asked to look for the labels and brand-names on the clothing they make, or the names of the enterprise they work for, and how this enterprise is linked to other workplaces and companies, even across the world.

'Action-research' can be very challenging. There is usually a limit to what workers can find out. However, this should not be allowed to discourage either them or you. The process of trying to find out is a learning experience in itself, and not a waste of time.

Facilitators can and should play a key role in supporting this 'action-research' by workers. A number of WWW partners found that providing extra information at the right moment gave great encouragement to the workers to continue.

The Information Sheets in this pack provide some of this background and also give sources of more information, particularly through the Internet. More can be gained from researchers in the trade unions, NGOs, and academic institutions in your country, government publications, and so on.

The role of the facilitator

WWW anticipates or expects that facilitators will:

- (a) **Find and use background research** that already exists on the garment industry in your own country, and on your national employment laws, so that you can add in information that the participants may not already have.
- (b) **Use the pack flexibly**, responding to the needs and experience of each particular set of participants. Where they are experienced union activists, for example, it may be more appropriate to start with Unit 4 on the global garment industry. Different Information Sheets may be appropriate for different workers.
- (c) **Adapt the educational methods** according to the culture of learning where you are. In some places participants become more involved in learning through energetic role-plays, elsewhere through discussion in small groups, and yet elsewhere through drawing pictures. Where literacy levels are low, asking participants one-by-one to read aloud a few paragraphs allows all participants to grasp the contents of a written text at a similar speed. What is well known is that people rarely learn much from a long presentation of new information by someone standing out front.

Some Units contain drawings and diagrams with blank spaces. These are templates to be used educationally. You can fill in the blanks before the session. Or you can ask the participants to help fill in the blanks. The second method helps to draw out the information that participants already have, even if they are unaware of this.

Obviously, this means that the maps and diagrams produced will differ depending on the employer, country and type of workers participating in the training. Different groups of participants will have different types of information. Therefore examples given in this pack may not always be applicable. We expect facilitators to use your own experience to adapt them.

Evaluation

It is always useful to find out what participants felt they learnt from a session. Here is one method which could be used at the end of each session.

Ask the participants to think about or write down one thing that:

- they **learnt** from the session (**Head**)
- they **felt** from the session (**Heart**)
- they **will do** as a result of the session (**Hand**)

Encourage them to share their responses with the other participants and yourself, and to take any written notes home as a reminder to themselves.

What's my role as a garment worker?

Millions of workers around the world make clothes. There are those who cut the cloth. There are those who sew seams, make buttonholes, insert zips, and finish off by cutting threads and sewing on labels. The cloth cutters are often men. The rest are mostly women.

Key Questions:

- What type of garment work do you do?
- Do you work in a big factory, a small factory, a small workshop, or at home?
- Does your pay cover what you need for living adequately?
- Do you have to work overtime when you don't want to?
- Do you face health or other problems at your workplace?
- Why do you think the garment industry employs so many women workers?
- Have you ever got together with other garment workers to try to improve your situation?

Garment workers work in many different places. Some work alongside hundreds of others in big factories. Others are in smaller factories of, say, 50. There are many in small units of just a few workers each. And there are homeworkers, working unseen and isolated in their own homes.

Most of these workers are linked together, supplying garments for the world market. Most suffer very low wages, long and irregular hours, and job insecurity.

A woman in her tiny home in the slums of Mumbai/Bombay sits finishing the finger ends of gloves. The work came to the Indian homemaker through an agent working out of a local factory. Who runs the factory, she doesn't know, though she does know women who work there, cutting and sewing. None of them know who asked the factory to produce these gloves, but the factory workers have heard that the gloves are going to the UK and Germany. Later, in Manchester, a British shop worker is selling the gloves. She shows her customer the 'Made in India' label. They are good quality gloves and will keep hands warm in the harsh European winter. The woman who buys the gloves may give a passing thought to the Indian workers who made them.

In this way, garment workers in poor countries across the world are linked into global chains that supply shirts, jeans, sweaters, scarves - all kinds of clothing - to markets that are mostly in the wealthy North.

- Some 8 million people in the world are thought to have jobs in the clothing industry (2000). But no one really knows how many there are, because a lot of garment workers, such as women homeworkers and others on casual contracts, are not counted in government statistics.
- Over half the world's clothing is made in Asia (China, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, the Philippines and so on).
- About three-quarters of garment workers are women.

Difficulties faced by garment workers

Low wages

Garment workers are usually very poorly paid. In many cases, these wages are below the legal minimum wage in the country concerned. Even the legal minimum is itself often well below a 'living' wage, that is to say enough money to buy adequate food, housing, clothing, education for children, etc.

The majority of garment workers are women. They have skills which the garment employers need. But mostly women are employed rather than men because they can be paid less than men, because of gender discrimination.

Many garment workers also report they are paid late. Sometimes wage calculations are very complex, based on a combination of time and piece-rate payment. This makes it very difficult to work out what workers should be paid. Many report signing a blank sheet of paper when they are given their wages, which means that their employers are not declaring the real wage bill to the government.

“ We were told if we demanded too much money, the company would relocate to other countries. One factory moved to Laos recently. Are we paid too much? After ten years' service, we take home about US\$20 for a 48 hour week. ”

Union activists, Thailand.

Typical monthly wages of garment factory workers, 2000-01 (converted into US\$)

Country	Monthly wages including overtime in US\$	Overtime
Bangladesh	26-55	51-125 hours a month, compulsory
Bulgaria	113	
China	Peak times: 84 Slack times: 20	100 hours a month, compulsory
India	23-35	
Indonesia	53	100 hours a month
Lesotho	83-133	108 hours a month, mostly compulsory
Philippines	146	
Sri Lanka	56-62	25-40 hours a month
Vietnam	21-50	

(From 'Wearing Thin: the State of Pay in the Fashion Industry', Labour Behind the Label, UK, 2000-01)

Note: These figures are only to give a general idea. Actual wages vary widely, according to the status of the worker (permanent or casual), whether the worker gets a weekly wage or is paid by the piece, whether the employer is a big manufacturer or a small one, and so on.

Job insecurity

Millions of garment workers are vulnerable to losing their jobs at a moment's notice. Even workers who are paid very badly for long hours and high output can be laid off, as orders are moved to places where other workers can be employed more cheaply.

Garment workers also face daily insecurity. Employers want to hire workers when they have many orders and fire them again when work is scarce. So they employ people on short fixed-term contracts, as 'seasonal' workers, or as 'probationers'. Or they send work out to home-based workers, to whom they can give orders as and when there is work to be done. Many garment employers fail to give a contract of employment, meaning that the workers have no legal rights.

Irregular work/long hours

There is either too much work or too little. During peak orders, the working day can be 10 -16 hours a day or even more, and no days off. To make up low wages, workers must accept overtime. Sometimes overtime is unpaid but workers have to do it for fear of losing their jobs. In all countries, garment workers work on average 60 hours over 6 days each week.

Lack of social welfare

Many workers report that employers are failing to make social welfare contributions and keep the money themselves. This leaves the workers without medical or social welfare cover.

Health and safety issues

Garment workers often face: very high temperatures and/or noise; dust; inadequate ventilation; inadequate lighting; lack of fire-fighting equipment; blocked exits; bad sanitation; unhygienic canteens; and lack of drinking water. Illnesses such as asthma can be brought on by these conditions. Many workers also complain of constant fatigue, headaches and fevers. Yet most find it very difficult to take time off due to illness.

Harassment

Women workers are more likely to be harassed than men workers. It can involve verbal, sexual, and physical abuse. Workers may be threatened with dismissal if they do not submit. Long overtime means that women finish work late, when there is no secure transport. As a result they are vulnerable to sexual harassment and physical attacks late at night.

Repression of trade unions

There are very low levels of union organisation throughout the global garment industry. There are many reasons for this. In some countries, union activists face repression from the police or even the army. 'Yellow unions' which are controlled by management are tolerated in some factories. Or workers are simply dismissed if they try to form or join a trade union. It is very difficult for workers who are in and out of a job, or who are in very small workplaces, to organise themselves. It is also difficult for migrant workers whose legal status is unclear.

AH WEN'S STORY

Ah Wen was born in a small city in Guangdong province, China. Her family was poor and in 1983, aged just 15, Ah Wen left home to work in garment factories in bigger cities. Her first workplace was a state-owned factory in Guangzhou producing dolls' clothing. She was considered lucky to work there but she felt discriminated against as a "country woman" and the wages were very low.

Ah Wen moved to another factory. This one was Hong Kong-owned and was constantly taking in new workers, many of them young women from the rural areas like Ah Wen. The factory provided a dormitory bed and food, and the pay was reasonable. So they put up with the poor working and living conditions, and the abusive behaviour of managers. But something was wrong with her breathing. Ah Wen thought it was due to fatigue but it was difficult to ask for sick leave. So she bought medicine from the pharmacy and did not see the doctor. Her health got worse. Eventually she suspected it could be due to dust in the factory. She had spent most of her savings on medicine, and so she moved on.

“ Ah Wen sees how some supervisors give paid jobs to their friends and relatives, while the difficult, dirty and low-paid jobs go to those coming from other provinces. ”

By 1989, Ah Wen followed her friends to work in an electronics factory in Shenzhen. There they earned about the same wages but the working conditions were much better. After two years she went home to get married. Ah Wen now worked as a homemaker to supplement her family's income. She received semi-finished garments from the factories nearby. But the factory was always finding some excuse to deduct money from her pay. In 1996 Ah Wen stopped working at home and went back into a garment factory. Her experience meant she could work as a supervisor.

Some supervisors, like Ah Wen, are paid monthly, getting RMB 800 (about US\$98) a month plus overtime at the same rate. But others are paid according to the output of the piece-raters, getting 5% of the workers' income. Ah Wen sees how some supervisors give paid jobs to their friends and relatives, while the difficult, dirty and low-paid jobs go to those coming from other provinces. It reminds her of the discrimination she faced as a young girl in her first factory.

Information from Hong Kong Christian Industrial Council.

JEAN'S STORY

Jean is a white woman in the UK, in her fifties. She has worked for the same garment company for 16 years and was promoted to floor supervisor. Jean places a great deal of importance on her work as supervisor and does not have any complaints about her working conditions.

But the company has just moved most of its production abroad and made massive redundancies in its UK workforce, reducing from 60 employees to around 12. All the employees were women besides the owner and two men who worked in the cutting room. The owner liked to claim he employed people on a full-time, permanent basis. But Jean says the vast majority worked part-time, and many were let go when orders were quiet and restarted later when business picked up.

The redundancies caused a lot of tension as some workers who had been there for many years were retrenched before others who had been there less than a year. Who was kept on was decided on their ability to multi-task. Jean described the time as "a nightmare". Many of the workers blamed the work from abroad for the job losses in the factory. As work was sent out and came back, the women had to pack and check it. "They don't like passing any work from offshore... They class it as 'different work'. But it is for the same company. And it's work and you are going to get paid for it. You've not got a lot of choice", says Jean.

“ *I don't feel secure because I don't know if I am going to be sat here this time next year.* **”**

The biggest problem for Jean is that the future for the company and the workforce is so insecure. "I think we have just got to wait and see whether things will pick up. Because there is not a lot of work coming in that is going to be done (here). It's all small orders and things like that. So at the moment I don't feel secure because I don't know if I am going to be sat here this time next year."

Information from Women Working Worldwide.

VEENA'S STORY

Veena is a homemaker in India, mostly working on thread-trimming. She has many grievances, but has never got to the point of organising.

Piece-rates are set at a level which make it impossible for one worker alone to earn anything like the minimum wage. So other members of the family, especially the girls, get drawn in. Veena thinks there are also hidden deductions. She has to buy the thread-cutter for trimming, and thread if she is button-holing, and this eats into her pay. She has to carry the heavy bundle of clothing from the factory to her home in a sack on her head, and then back to the factory and up several flights of stairs when the work is finished, and this time is not compensated. Even the meagre wages are not always there. If she arrives late at the factory or there are few orders, she might have to go home empty-handed.

“
We are workers and there should be equal respect for our labour
”

But when there is an urgent order to be completed, the employer expects them to put aside everything else to complete it. “He doesn't consider our problems. If we can't complete an urgent order, he yells at us or threatens not to give us orders in the future. We have to tolerate his behaviour”, Veena complains.

Homework is said to be suitable for women because they can combine it with domestic duties. But Veena's experience of no work followed by too much work shows what a myth this is. They do not get any paid leave or holidays, and are often forced to work extra on festival days when they would prefer to relax with their families. On top of everything, the supervisors and men workers at the factory often make 'dirty' remarks, making the women feel treated with no respect. Veena feels that there should not be discrimination between factory workers and homeworkers: “We are workers and there should be equal respect for our labour”, Veena says.

Information from Union Research Group, Bombay, India.

What's my role as a garment worker?

Aims:

Taking workers' reality and experiences as the starting point, this Unit aims to:

- encourage garment workers to think about their own work situation, and the reasons for their problems;
- provide information about garment workers elsewhere who may be experiencing similar situations;
- start mapping the supply chain and the other workers who are in this chain.

Methods:

1 *Identifying problems at work*

Key Questions:

- What problems are we facing at work?
- Which of the problems we face are currently getting worse?

Brainstorm; write up the participants' responses on whiteboard/flipchart, grouping into themes.

2 Identifying the reasons for problems at work

Select a case study in this Unit and ask a participant to read it out aloud to the others, to be followed by discussion. Or small groups can take a case study each, read aloud, discuss and report back to the whole group.

Ah Wen's Story shows:

- Discrimination against migrant workers
- Inadequate factory wages
- Bad work conditions and ill health
- Payment difficulties for homeworkers
- Management favouritism

Jean's Story shows:

- Lay-offs and reduced work due to international subcontracting
- Job insecurity leading to resentment among workers

Veena's Story shows:

- Low piece rates and high quotas
- Additional costs incurred by homeworkers
- Family involvement in finishing quotas
- Insecure work - either too much or too little
- Harassment from employers

List responses on whiteboard/flip-chart, group similar responses, and clarify.

Key Questions:

- What are the similarities in the situation that this garment worker is facing with our own situation? What are the differences?
- Why are we and other workers, even in far off countries, experiencing these problems at work?
- Why are so many garment workers women?
- Who causes/is responsible for these problems?

3 *Starting to map the supply chain*

This is a group participatory exercise to encourage the participants to begin building a diagram of the supply chain in which they work.

You can start by asking “trigger questions” about what they know about their own workplace, such as:

- What is the name of the company you work for?
- Who owns the company you work for?
- Where do the cloth, thread, zips or buttons come from?
- Is work going out from the local factory to sweatshops and/or people in their homes?
- Where do the goods go when they leave the local factory? Are they going to any particular countries or companies?
- Whose labels are on the goods?
- Who are the workers who make the clothes we buy, and where are they?

As the participants answer, write up their contributions on a flip-chart or big piece of paper on the wall, and develop a diagram of their chain.

On page 17 there is an example of what the chain *could* look like. Each chain developed by workers will be different.

Page 18 has small pictures of factories and other production units, of cloth, buttons and zips, and of trucks and ships, etc. These can be used visually to trigger ideas from the participants.

Continue to build the chain until the group finishes contributing. The facilitator can also fill in key missing elements.

The diagram need not be too complex. Indeed, the participants may not have much information at the start. This should not be a cause for worry or criticism. You can point out that this is just the beginning.

Time should be given for questions and discussion.

Make sure you keep a copy of this map for use in later sessions.

4 *How can we find out more?*

There will be gaps in the participants' diagram of their supply chain. This is an opportunity to talk about how workers can find out more.

- What else do we want to find out about our supply chain?
- Where can we look for information?
- Who can we ask?

List the responses. The facilitator can add in with extra examples.

- The addresses of other companies are often written on the packages and boxes that are sent from the factory. There are addresses also on the boxes of materials and parts that we receive at the factory. Sometimes there is writing in other languages, but we can try to copy things down.
- There are many documents, letters, receipts and orders in the factory which have names and addresses, figures, quantities, etc. Office workers may be willing to help supply this information.
- We can also find out more about foreign and local managers, and find out who visitors are and which countries/companies they are from.
- We often see the names of the products we make on the labels.

So, there may be a lot of information in front of our eyes. But perhaps we just don't think that it is important, and so we have not noticed it before.

What did we learn?

Take the opportunity to find out what the participants felt they learnt from this Unit. In piloting in Asian countries, it was repeatedly found that this session provided the first opportunity for workers to consider the global supply chain, and to think about similar workers to themselves in other countries.

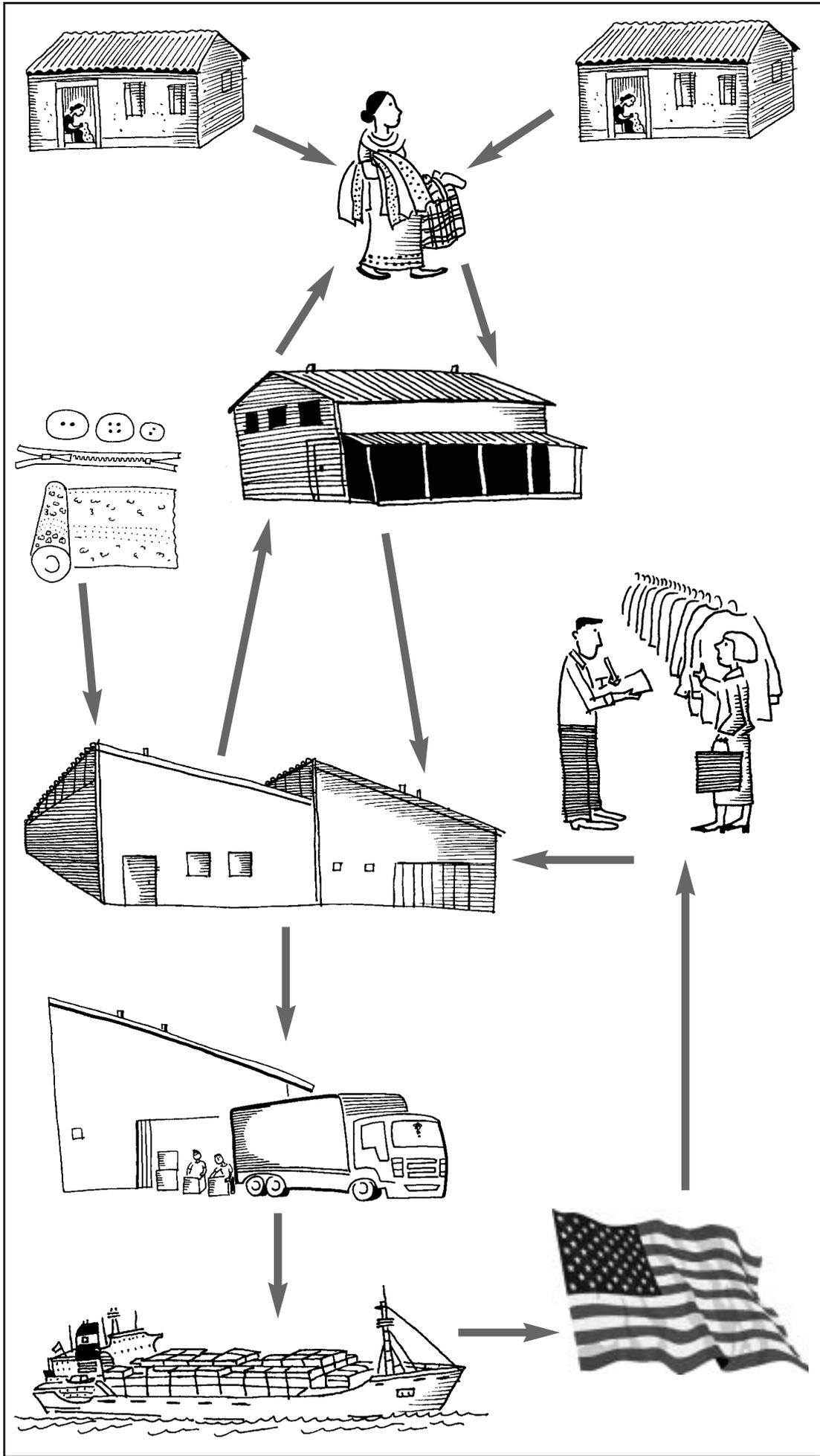
Follow-up action:

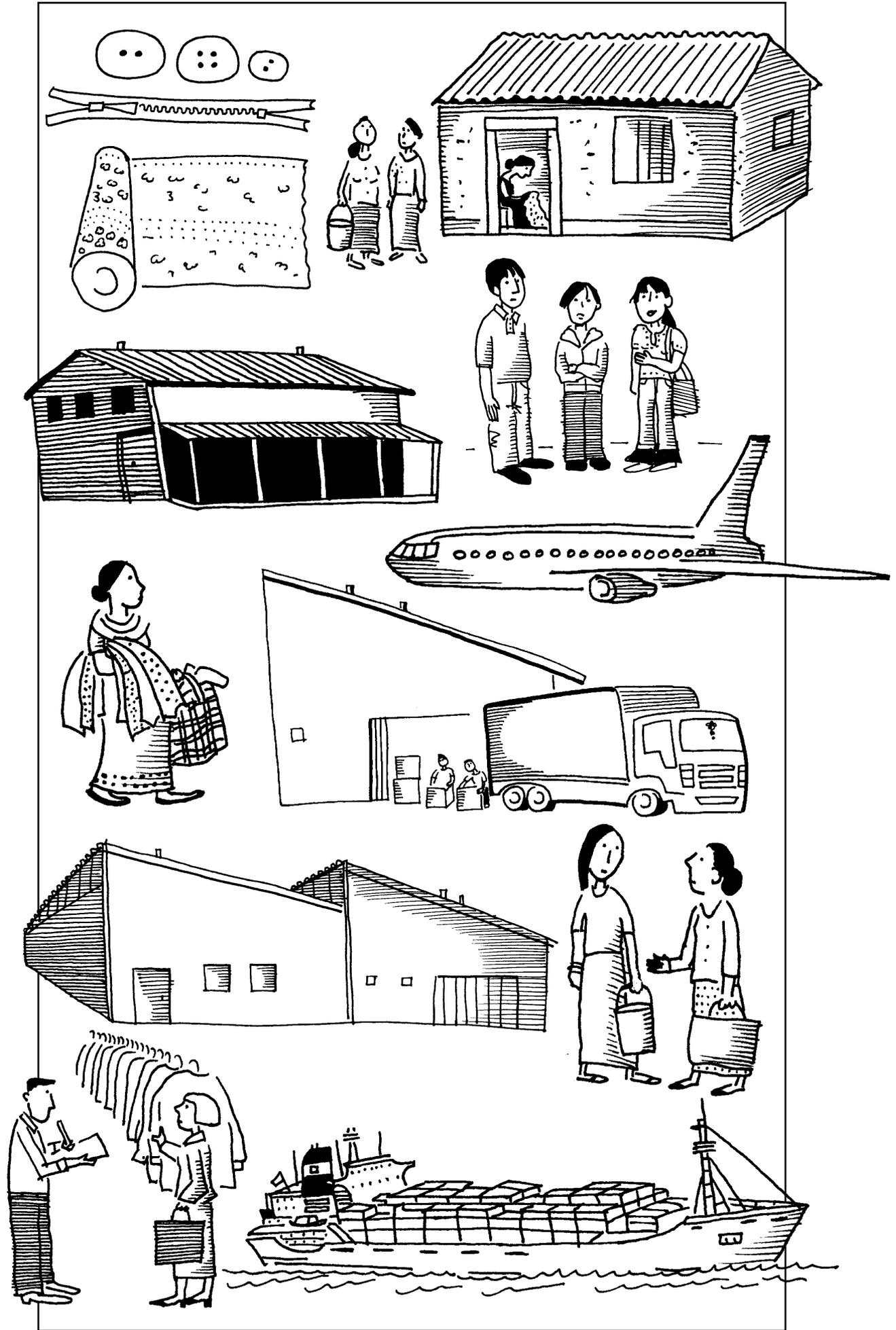
Read the hand-outs and share the information with others.

Seek out more information about who you are producing garments for:

- by looking at labels and writing down what is on them
- by asking friendly office workers at the factory what they know about the orders
- by noting down what is on the board outside the factory.

Take up any opportunities to discuss with fellow workers how you might reach out to other garment workers locally - in your own workplace, in other factories or sweatshops, or to homeworkers - to discuss common problems.





The world of garment production - where do I fit in?

All over the world, clothes were traditionally manufactured for the local market. But over the past thirty years, the garment industry has become global, involving workers - mostly in the poorer countries - in making clothing for people near and far. Most of their work is for big companies, also called 'multinational corporations', that are based in the rich countries.

What is 'Subcontracting'?

Subcontracting is the term used when a company agrees a contract with another company to manufacture a product or part of it, or to carry out a service. The second company is known as the subcontractor or the supplier.

A contract to manufacture garments usually states the quantity, type, quality, deadline, and price for which the subcontractor must deliver the garments. The first company will then sell the final product as its own.

- About 20 big companies dominate world production of clothing: 13 from the USA, 5 from Europe, and 2 from Japan.
- The clothing and textile industry is worth about US\$147 billion (thousand million) a year (2001).

How garments are produced around the world has become very complicated. The big companies that sell garments place orders with other companies to make them. This is called 'subcontracting'. The subcontractors often subcontract to smaller companies, and they in turn subcontract again. Many companies are involved, across many countries. It is known as the garment 'supply chain'. At the very bottom of the chain are workers in sweatshops and women working in their own homes.

It means that garment workers in many different factories and units, in many different countries, can be making clothing for the same buyer. They are linked together in the same supply chain, though they probably don't know it.

Most garment workers have no idea who they are really working for, let alone where the goods they make are sold. They usually don't know who the other workers are in their supply chain. Garment workers often feel alone in their struggle for decent pay and job security.

How can we build solidarity and common demands to improve the situation of garment workers in such a situation? It is a huge challenge to workers and trade unions, and to all who support workers' rights.

Key Questions:

- Where do the garments you help to make go to be sold?
- Who are the other workers in your supply chain, and where are they?
- Why might it be useful to know more about these issues?

How does the 'supply chain' work?

Clothing retailers place orders with big manufacturers who then subcontract to smaller factories, who in turn often outsource to homeworkers. This is the basic supply chain in the garment industry.

There are many other players who are part of the supply chain. In order for workers to organise effectively, it may be important to know who all the players are.

Retailers are the companies which sell to the public or 'consumers'. Retailers may own their own chain of stores, sometimes in many countries. Or they may sell their goods in other shops, by mail order, or these days through the Internet. Retailers do not make the goods; they just sell them. Some have brand-names or 'labels' which are famous worldwide, which help to sell their clothes. Others are much less known. Retailers are mostly based in **Western Europe** or **North America** where their main markets are.

The head office of a **retailer** comes up with new designs for fashionable clothes. It also receives information on sales from its shops. It then sends out orders for the new designs, or re-orders for garments that are selling well, to the company's **regional offices** in **Asia, South America, and Eastern Europe**. These are also known as the '**buyers**'.

Some retailers also have **national offices** in the countries where their garments are made. Their job is to carry out factory checks to monitor quality, and help with scheduling and shipping of the finished garments.

Manufacturers organise the making of the clothes. But first they must win the order from the retailer. The regional office of the retailer asks a number of manufacturers to compete to win the orders. They negotiate on price, materials and delivery. The retailer selects the manufacturer that offers the best deal.

Big retailers like to work with big manufacturers who can produce large volumes of garments at high quality, and that have textile wings to supply the cloth. Cloth and supplies such as thread, zips and buttons come in from other suppliers too.

Smaller factories: Often a big manufacturer subcontracts production to smaller factories. It may do this when it cannot handle the volume, meet the deadline, or do the work for the agreed price. Quality standards and working conditions are worse in smaller factories. They keep their costs down by hiring and firing workers according to demand, forcing them to do overtime, and so on.

Some big retailers, especially those that are conscious of their image among consumers, do not like their manufacturers to subcontract like this. But it is common. Very often, the big retailers don't even know where their goods are produced lower down the chain.

Homeworkers: Smaller factories sometimes also subcontract part of the work such as stitching or finishing to individual **agents**. They may be former employees, or still working in the factory, for example as line-leaders. The agent takes the work out to the local community. This may be to a sweatshop, perhaps that they run, or to homeworkers, mostly women working in their own homes.

This is how garment work is sent down the supply chain.

Back up the supply chain

Then the finished garments go back up the chain. They cross the world to find their markets.

Transport and distribution is subcontracted out to companies that specialise in the movement of goods across the world. The garments are handled by truck and van drivers, port workers, seafarers on ships and warehouse workers.

Retailers receive the goods they ordered into their depots and storerooms, and then send them out into the shops and stores, where shop workers sell them to the public.

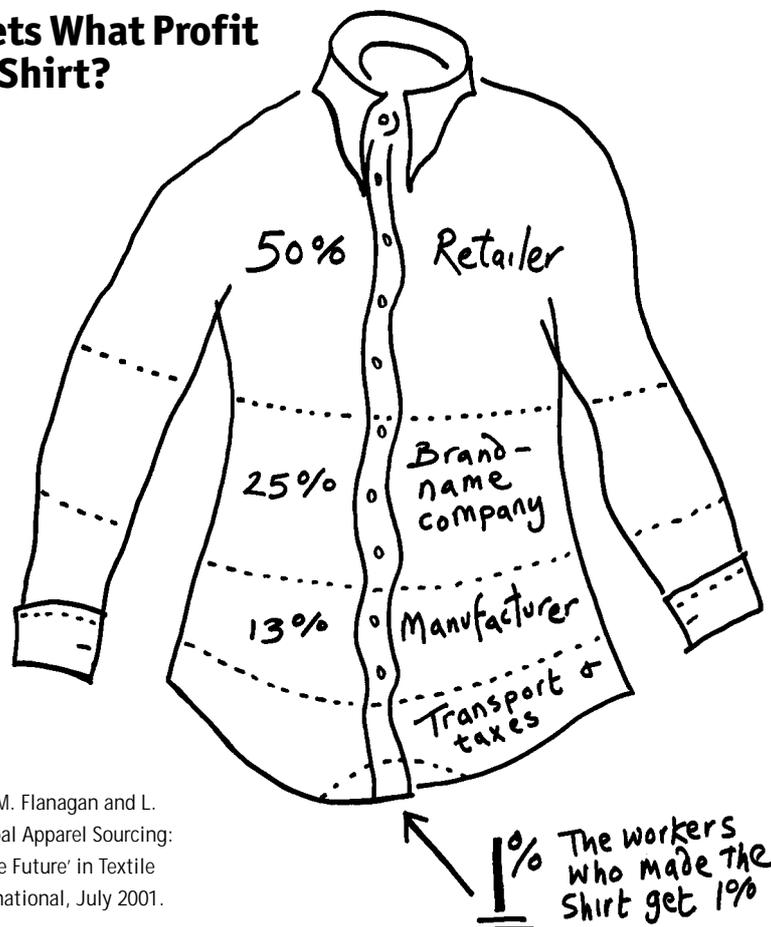
Quite often some of the garments go to shops and markets in the country where they are made. This happens when too many garments are produced, or an order is cancelled, or the garments did not pass the quality control. Often they are sold very cheaply, and this creates unfair competition for **local manufacturers** by forcing down the price of clothing.

Agents operate all along the subcontracting supply chain. Some are big companies acting on behalf of other big companies, dealing with very big volumes of production. Others are small, handling low volumes, for example taking work out of factories to homeworkers. For all of them, their money comes from the difference between what they earn from the contract and what they pay others to do the work. They increase their power by providing as little information as possible to those above as well as those below them in the chain.

This is how well-known brand-name garments are made and sold around the world.

'The Story of a Glove' gives an example of a supply chain of the big US retailer Gap.

Who Gets What Profit from a Shirt?



Figures from: M. Flanagan and L. Leffman, 'Global Apparel Sourcing: Options for the Future' in Textile Outlook International, July 2001.

The Story of a Glove

In the headquarters of **Gap USA**, designers are designing gloves to sell in stores across the US during the winter months. At the same time, buyers are looking at the sales figures for gloves from the year before to decide how many pairs of gloves to order.

When the design and number of gloves are agreed, the order is sent to **Gap International Sourcing**. The Asian headquarters are based in Singapore.

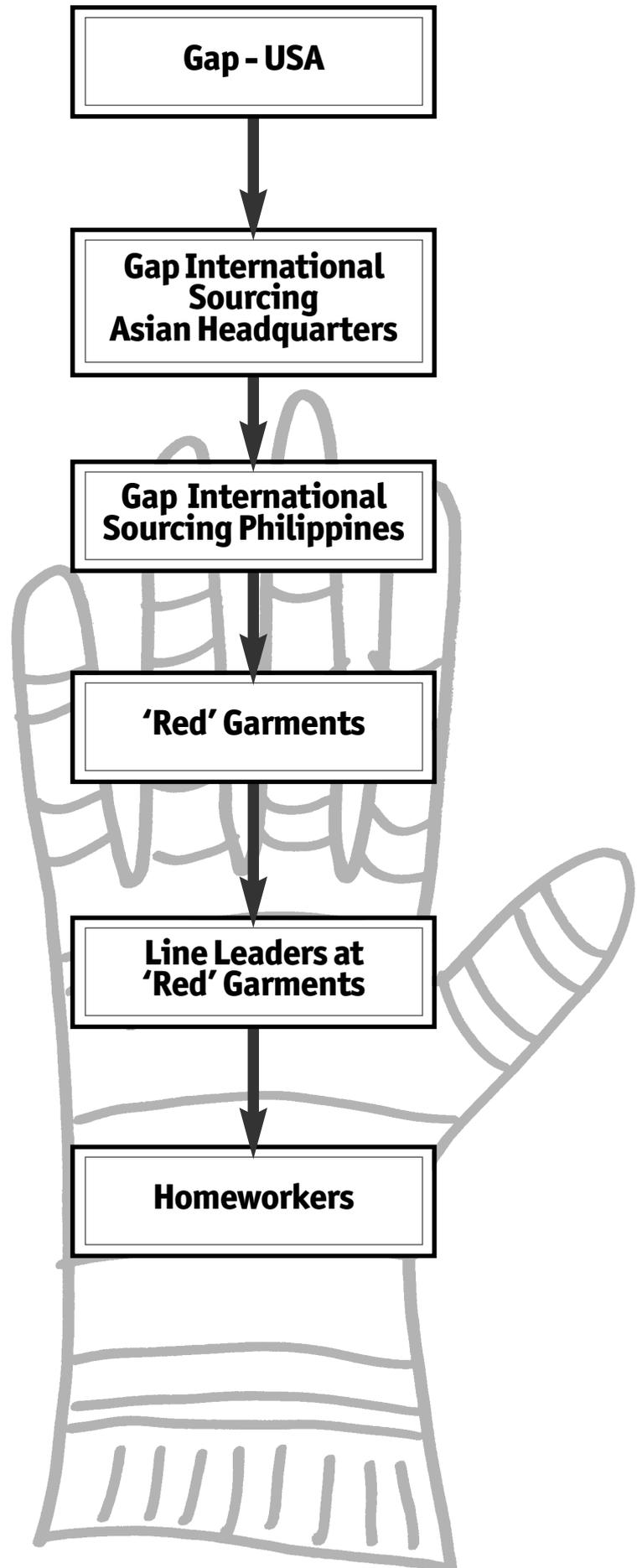
From this office they send the order to national offices based in different Asian countries. In our example they send the design and order to the office in the Philippines office - **Gap International Sourcing (Philippines)**.

The order is then sent to **Red Garments**. The gloves are made up in the factory. From July to October, Red Garments have so many orders that they hire piece-rate workers to supplement their permanent workers.

Finishing off the gloves - closing the tips, linking, and hemming - needs to be done by hand. This procedure takes a long time, so it is not done inside the factory. **Line Leaders** take extra work from the factory and give it to friends and relations in their community.

These women are **homeworkers**. They do the hand sewing to finish the gloves. When the homeworkers finish the gloves, they are brought back to Red Garments who ship them to a distribution centre in the US.

From there, the gloves are sent to the stores throughout America and are put on sale.



MELODY'S STORY

Melody used to work for a garment firm in the Baguio City Economic Zone in the northern Philippines. The factory was owned by a Korean national and produced bags for export. Melody was one of the women who led in the formation of a trade union in the factory, winning the support of most of the workers. Issues then were low wages and benefits, and a high quota system leading to forced overtime.

“Melody gets the equivalent of US\$0.06 for each pair of gloves she finishes. It takes her about 8 hours to do 20 pairs, and so she gets US\$1.20 a day (less 20% tax).”

Then the company filed a notice of closure, claiming financial losses. This left no option for the workers but to go on strike. But in fact it had a sister company in another export-processing zone in the country, to which it shifted production. It ran away from its obligations to the Baguio workers.

While the labour case was pending, many workers were left unemployed and deprived of the money and benefits due them. Melody spent almost two months searching for new job. She and other union members were discriminated against. They were not hired by other garment factories because they were branded as “unionists”.

Being a single parent, with a 4 year old son, Melody has to earn a living. Now she takes in work at home, closing tips and finishing knitted gloves. A line-leader from the local factory subcontracts the work to her during the peak season, when they are producing for the winter market in Europe and North America.

Melody gets the equivalent of US\$0.06 for each pair of gloves she finishes. It takes her about 8 hours to do 20 pairs, and so she gets US\$1.20 a day (less 20% tax). This barely sustains her family's daily needs. But the line-leader gets US\$0.14 per pair just for subcontracting the work, or US\$2.80 a day for the 20 pairs that Melody does. Line-leaders often have several - sometimes dozens of - homeworkers working for them, and so they make a much better living.

Information from Women Workers' Programme, Baguio City, Philippines.

PARVEEN'S STORY

Parveen is a separated mother of three, living in the UK. She has never worked in the garment industry outside her home although she would like to. She recently left the supplier for whom she had been making clothes for four years. She now makes punch bags for another supplier. She knows the name of her supplier, who is another Asian woman. But she knows very little about her supplier's company. She knows that the punch bags are sold by a major retailer because she saw them for sale in a catalogue.

Parveen was very happy to move to this new supplier as she now gets paid regularly. But she still only earns around £3 (US\$4.8) per hour, which is below the national legal minimum wage. Payment from her old supplier was very irregular but it wasn't necessarily her fault. The company used to pay her money to her husband and at first she did not know how much she was earning. When she found out she was getting less than others, she rowed with her employer but they told her "if you don't like it, don't work" (i.e. you can quit). Parveen says: "It is like that if you fall out with them. My supplier worked for pennies and still never got the money. Her supplier was her husband's relative. She was really running around."

Despite all these problems with homeworking, Parveen says the biggest issue is that the homeworking is disappearing. All the local factories are importing goods direct from Pakistan and China, and they say they cannot pay the homeworkers more than they do or they would close. If her employer were to be prosecuted for the minimum wage, he would not be able to pay the bills, would close down, and she would not get any work, she believes. Ideally Parveen would like to work in a factory because the pay is better, but she cannot as she cannot speak good enough English.

“ ...she still only earns around £3 (US\$4.8) per hour, which is below the national legal minimum wage. ”

Information from Women Working Worldwide.

The world of garment production - where do I fit in?

Aims:

Building on the ideas and activities developed in Unit 1, this Unit aims to:

- map the global garment supply chain of which the participants are part;
- help them understand their position and role in this chain;
- identify who are the key players/major stakeholders in the chain, and where the power lies in the chain;
- start to explore where and how is it possible for workers to bring pressure on employers along the chain so as to overcome their problems.

Preparation:

Background reading/research on the garment industry in your country, and on the supply chains that the participants may be involved in. It will be helpful if the facilitator has some concrete information about the countries supplying components and where the finished garments are being sold.

Methods:

1 *Building a picture of our global garment supply chain*

Begin with the local map that was drawn up in Unit 1, recapping the major points.

Ask the participants to add to their map any information they have gathered since Unit 1:

- from labels on their goods, from factory signboards, from company documentation
- about other factories elsewhere in our area or country producing the same labels
- about where their goods go when they leave the local factory.

'The Story of a Glove' on page 22 can also be used as an example to help trigger more ideas for their map. You can, for example, add to the participants' map empty boxes where the information is not yet known. The facilitator can add in from your own knowledge.

Make sure you keep a copy of this map. Hopefully, the participants will be able to add in more information as they go through later Units.

2 *Our place in the world of garment production*

This is another way of visualising the global supply chain, taking a map of the world as the basis. It can help the participants become more aware of the other countries where there are workers in their supply chain.

Familiarise the participants with the map 'Journey of an Embroidered Shirt' on page 29. Note the key features:

- The orders come from the industrialised countries, in this case the USA;
- Components such as cloth, buttons and zips often come in from other countries such as India, the Philippines and Malaysia, in this case China;
- In Pakistan, where these shirts are assembled, the work is done by different units: in large factories, which also subcontract to smaller factories, who in turn use homeworkers;
- The shirts are exported to the USA and Europe to be sold.

You can then use the blank world map on page 30. Ask the participants to work in small groups and fill it in as much as they can with information about their own supply chain. Ask them to:

- draw arrows and boxes showing components/raw materials coming in - where are the cloth, buttons, etc. coming from?
- draw arrows and boxes showing local production - by workers in factories, sweatshops, in their homes;
- draw arrows and boxes showing where the finished goods go to.

The facilitator can add in information to help complete the map.

Key Questions:

- **In which other countries are there workers in our supply chain?**
- **What kinds of work are they doing?**
- **Are there workers elsewhere who are doing the same work as us?**
- **How could we find out?**

3 *How does the supply chain work?*

The aim is to help participants consider who benefits most from the global supply chain, and the different power of: retailers, manufacturers, small subcontracting factories, agents, factory workers, homeworkers.

The facilitator can use the diagram 'The Story of a Glove' on page 22 and the explanation 'How does the supply chain work?' on page 20 - 21 to present information on the key actors in the global garment supply chain.

You can also use the graphic 'Who Gets What Profit from a Shirt?' on page 21 as an aid to discuss how the profits of the garment industry are distributed. A similar graphic for a sportshoe can be found at: <http://www.cleanclothes.org/campaign/shoe.htm>

The diagram shows that there are big profits going to the retailers and brand-name owners at the top of the supply chain. These profits could be redistributed to the workforce at the bottom. The retailers and brand-name owners take a much larger share, and have more power, than the manufacturers. These points have an impact on the campaign strategies of workers, as is discussed in later Units.

Key Questions:

- **Who benefits and has most power in the supply chain?**
- **Why do workers get only a tiny proportion of the profits?
Is this fair?**
- **What arguments could workers use to win a greater share of the profits?**

4 **Why might we build solidarity in our supply chain?**

The case studies in this Unit can be used to illustrate the impact of the supply chain on workers. They show how production is moved so as to weaken workers' demands for decent wages, or better conditions, or for their union to be respected.

Melody's Story shows:

- Union-busting - by shifting production to another location
- Seasonal homeworking
- Inadequate wages
- Subcontracting from the factory to homeworkers
- The profit made by subcontracting

Parveen's Story shows:

- Importance of personal contacts in getting home work
- Husband controlling wages
- Non-payment of outstanding wages
- Fear of losing your job if you ask for an adequate wage

This is an opportunity to begin discussing why knowing about the international garment supply chain might be useful to help overcome such problems.

The issues are explored in greater depth in later Units and so for now the aim can just be to stimulate awareness.

If the participants have developed a map of their supply chain, this can be used as an aid to discussion about who else is in our supply chain with whom we could build alliances.

Key Questions:

- **Why might knowing about the supply chain help us overcome our own difficulties at work?**
- **Who in the supply chain could we build alliances with?**
- **What are the issues on which we could build solidarity?**
- **How might we get together?**

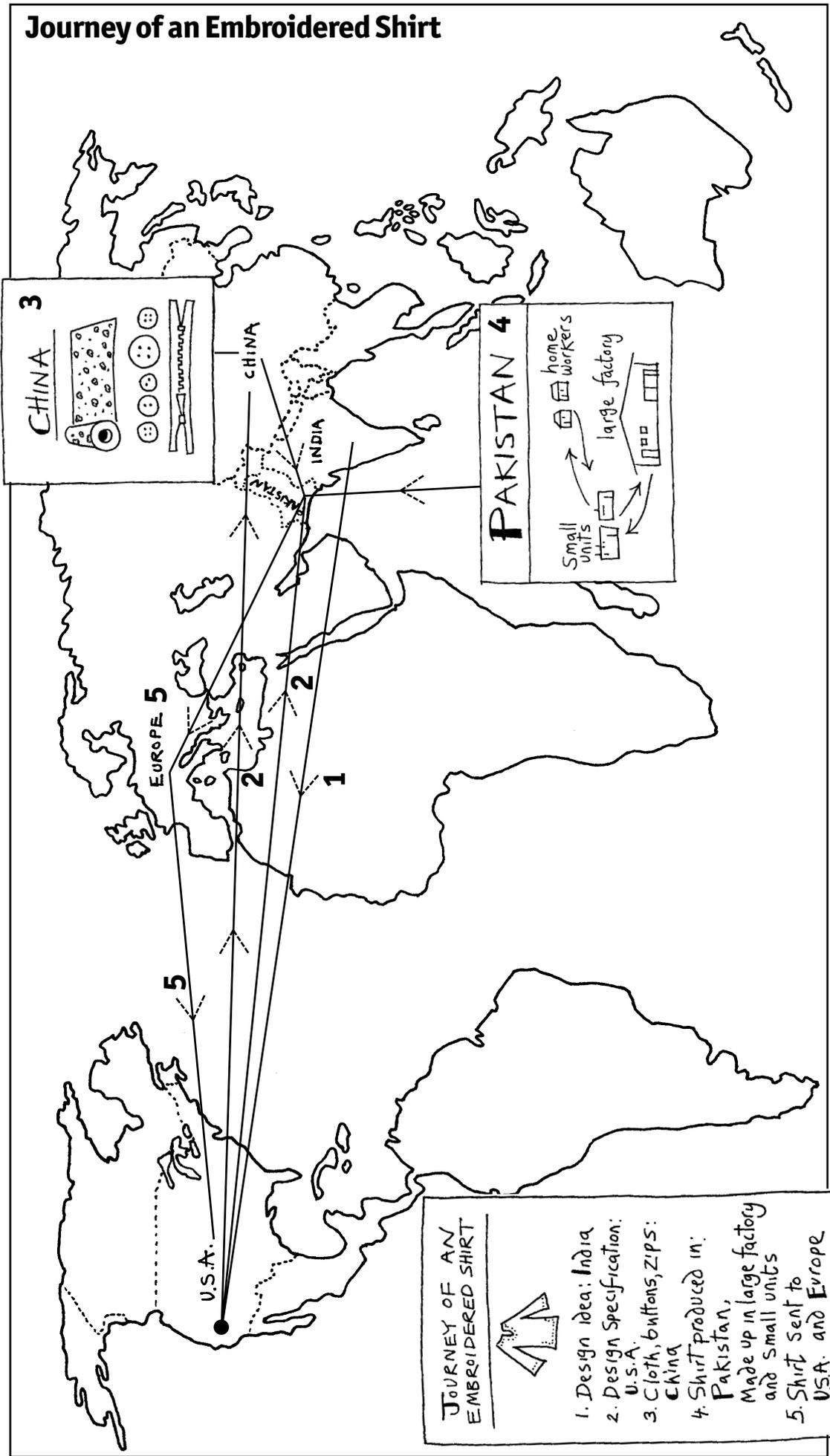
What did we learn? Evaluation of the session.

Follow-up action:

Read the hand-outs and share the information with others.

If you do not know already, try to find out what trade unions of garment workers already exist in your area or your country. If there are no trade unions, are there workers' support groups? There may, for example, be human rights lawyers or women's associations that give help to workers.

Journey of an Embroidered Shirt



3

CHINA

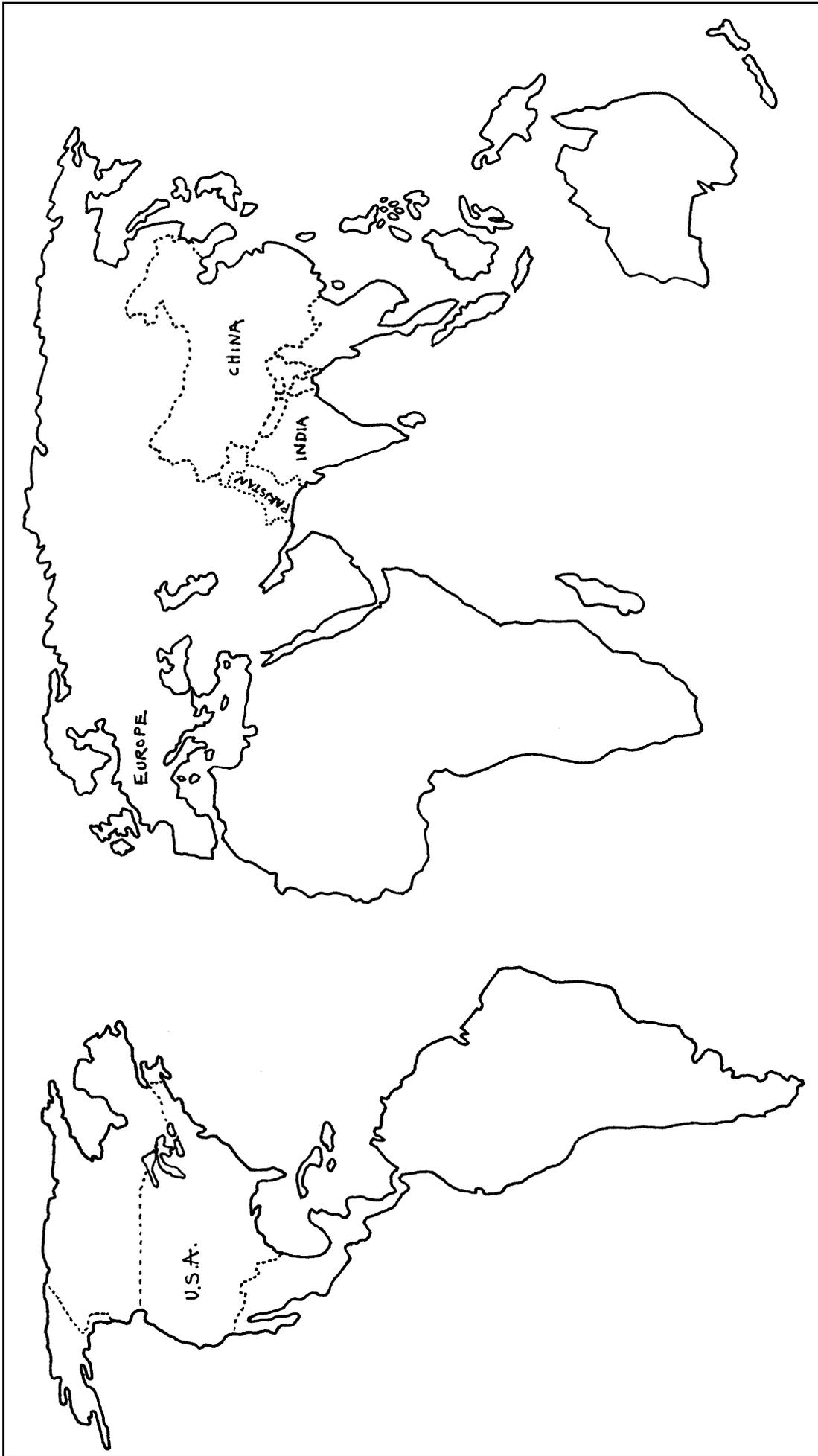
4

PAKISTAN

home workers
large factory
Small units

JOURNEY OF AN EMBROIDERED SHIRT

1. Design idea: India
2. Design Specification: U.S.A.
3. Cloth, buttons, zips: China
4. Shirt produced in: Pakistan, Made up in large factory and small units
5. Shirt sent to U.S.A. and Europe



Gap: example of a global chain

Gap is a chain of well-known stores spanning the globe. Gap sells casual clothes - like jeans, T-shirts and shirts - for men, women and children. Gap does not make any clothes itself. It is a retailer - it only sells clothes. Instead of making the clothes it sells, Gap subcontracts production to thousands of manufacturers around the world.

- Gap is based in San Francisco, USA.
- It has 4,200 stores throughout the world.
- It employs 165,000 people altogether.
- In 2002, Gap's sales were US\$13,848 million.
- In 2001, Gap bought clothes from 3,600 companies in more than 50 countries.

Gap has several brand names that are sewn on the labels of the clothes made for them. They are: Gap, GapKids, babyGap, Banana Republic and Old Navy.

Pressure on Gap from international campaigns

Key Questions:

- Do you work in the Gap supply chain? If so, do you know where the orders come from and where the goods you make go to?
- If you don't work for Gap, can you build a picture of your global supply chain like the one for Gap?

People around the world have become aware of the injustices facing garment workers. They include those who buy clothes, even in countries very far away from the garment workers who made them. Famous brand-names such as Gap have come under pressure to accept that they have a responsibility to ensure that workers are employed in a humane way, with respect for their rights.

Gap has responded by issuing a Code of Conduct that its suppliers must respect. This includes no forced labour, at least minimum legal wages, a safe and healthy working environment, and more. Gap has set up a special department, with staff in 25 countries, to monitor how the Code is implemented by its suppliers. Gap says it wants to build long-term partnerships with campaigners and local organisations, including labour unions, at the community/factory level.

So Gap has made attempts to shoulder its responsibility to workers who produce clothing for its stores. It is open to dialogue and action, including with workers' organisations. This is a vital step. But there is a long way to go before long-term improvements are felt by workers throughout Gap's global supply chains.

More information:

Gap: www.gap-inc.com

'Gap Code of Vendor Conduct': www.itglwf.org/docs/Gapcode.doc

'Bridging the Gap: A look at Gap's supply chain from the workplace to the store', by Jennifer Hurley, Women Working Worldwide, 2003

Who's Who in the Gap supply chain

Maps 1 and 2 show the many different people, companies, agents, offices, factories and other workplaces involved in the Gap supply chain. Who are they, and what do they do?

Gap Store: This is where garments are sold. Information on sales from every store are continuously sent to Gap headquarters.

Gap-USA: This is Gap headquarters for the USA. There, GAP organises design, ordering, and re-ordering of garments that are selling quickly.

Gap International Sourcing regional office: The regional sourcing office gets the orders from Gap-USA and is responsible for sending out contracts to manufacturers. They choose the manufacturers.

Gap International Sourcing national office: The national sourcing offices are generally responsible for quality control and monitoring conditions for workers in factories. Sometimes they are also responsible for shipping finished garments to the regional office or to Gap-USA (or Gap-Europe, Gap-Canada, Gap-Japan).

'Blue' Textile and Garment Manufacturing: This is the headquarters of a large textile and garment manufacturing company. Large companies like 'Blue' often have factories in several different countries. They get orders from big companies like Gap, do all the administration and planning in their headquarters, and then send the orders and deadlines to their subsidiaries.

'Blue' Textiles: This is a subsidiary of 'Blue' Textile and Garment Manufacturing. It makes some of the textiles that will be used by 'Blue' Garments.

'Blue' Garments: This is also a subsidiary of 'Blue' Textile and Garment Manufacturing. It makes up the garments.

'Blue' small factory: Big companies like 'Blue' Textile and Garment Manufacturing often have smaller factories that employ women on short contracts and pay piece-rate wages.

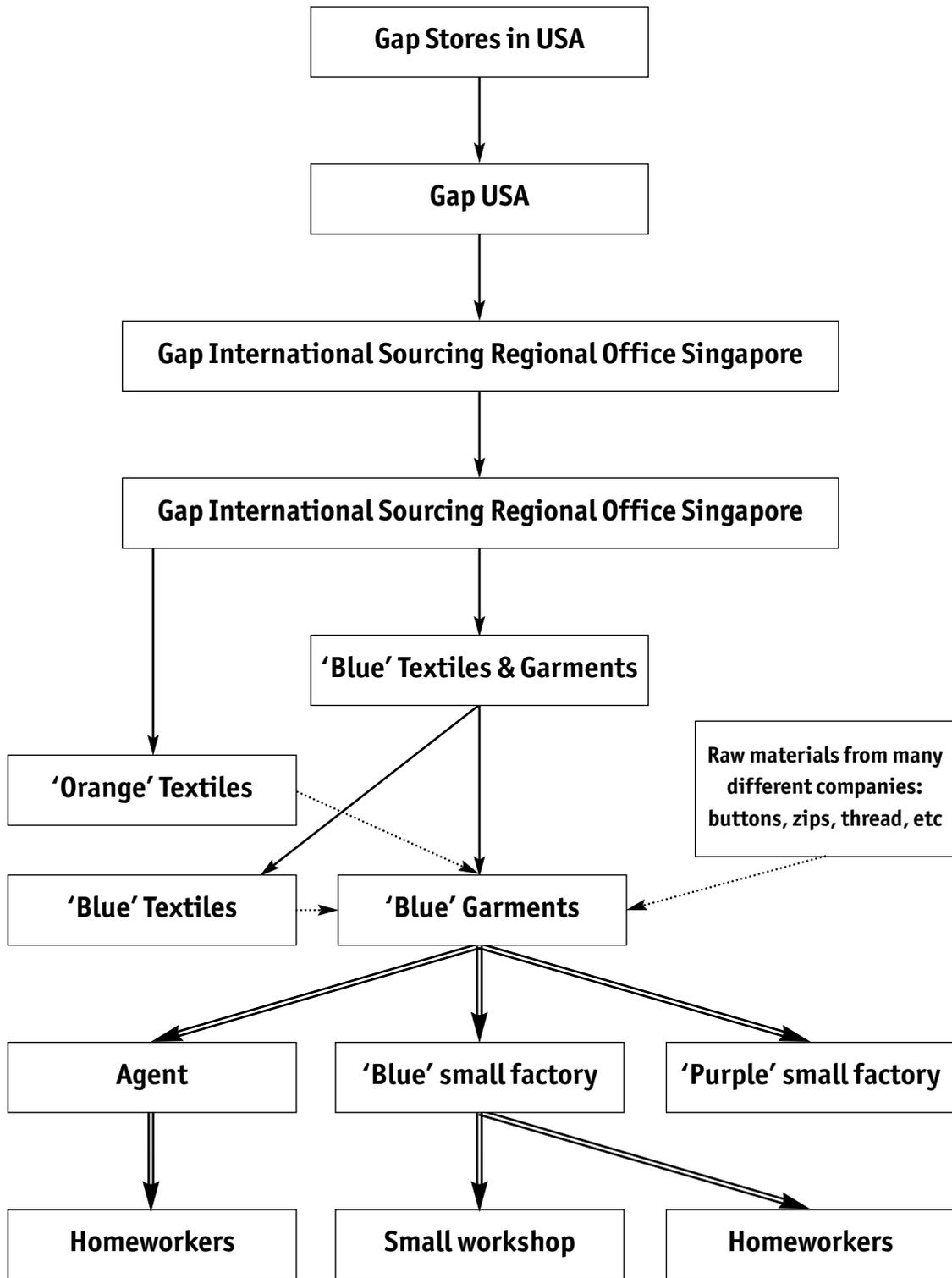
'Purple' small factory: This is a small factory that is not owned by 'Blue' T&G but takes orders from 'Blue' Garments on a contract-by-contract basis.

Agent: Agents operate at all levels of the chain. Some agents are used by big manufacturers to place large volumes of production with subcontractors. Other agents operate out of small factories, handling low volumes and organising workers to do tasks such as stitching or finishing in sweatshops or in their own homes. Agents are often paid in advance and many earn over 20% commission.

Homeworkers: Working at home, they usually get jobs because they know the agent personally. They normally pay their own overheads, from machines and thread to electricity. Work is infrequent: sometimes they go for months with no work. At peak seasons they may have to work 12-14 hours a day, seven days a week.

Map 1

Supply Chain Showing The Downward Flow of Production



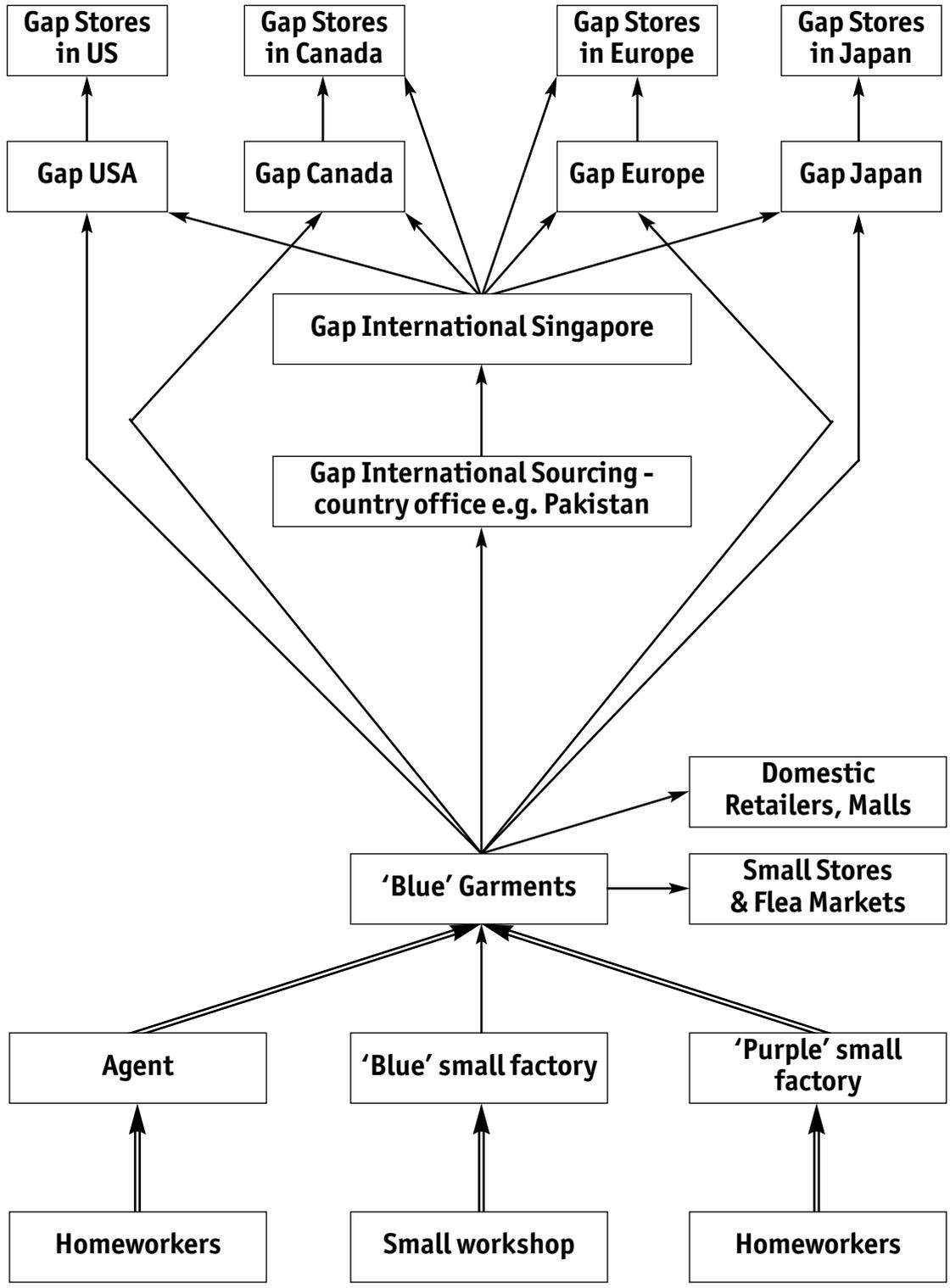
Key:

- Flow of orders →
- Flow of raw materials →
- Flow of unfinished garments →

Note: All company names - except for Gap - are not the real names

Map 2

Supply Chain Showing The Upward Flow of Production



Key:

Flow of finished garments →

Flow of unfinished garments ⇨

Note: All company names - except for Gap - are not the real names

RANI'S STORY

Rani works in the finishing department of a garment factory in Lahore, Pakistan, which exports T-shirts and jeans to the USA and UK. 500 women work there, aged between 14 and 30 years. In her department, there are 15 women and five men, and the supervisor is a man.

Although she has been working there for three years, Rani is still a 'temporary' worker. She has no fixed working hours, starting at 7 am and finishing at 10-11 pm. "We go home when boss allows us to", Rani says. "We work long hours but we don't get any overtime pay. My male supervisor harasses me by making unwelcome remarks. He tries to have affairs with the young girls and threatens them he will stop their wages if they refuse. If I refuse to do overtime, they will ask me to leave the factory. And we are not allowed to talk with each other".

“ Although she has been working there for three years, Rani is still a 'temporary' worker. ”

In her factory, very few women are married and they do not get any maternity leave. She works in dim light and gets severe headaches and eye problems. There is no proper air ventilation system and many of the workers suffer asthma and lung problems. There is no separate toilet for women and no place to eat. Rani sits on the floor at lunchtime to eat the food she brings from home.

Rani does not get an equal wage for equal work. She works on piece rate which each month totals about RS. 1200 (US\$ 24). When she gets her wages, she has to sign a blank piece of paper. Rani says that there is no union in the factory. If any worker tries to form union, he or she is dismissed without any reason given.

Rani has five sisters and two brothers. Her father is sick and unable to work. One brother is drug addict because he could not get a job and became frustrated. Her mother and two sisters also support the family by working as domestic workers.

Information from Working Women's Organisation, Pakistan.

UNION VICTORY IN A GAP SUPPLIER IN EL SALVADOR

In April 2002, managers at the Tainan garment factory in El Salvador announced that workers who had been suspended at the beginning of the month would not be rehired and the factory was closing. Tainan, which is Taiwanese-owned, claimed the layoffs and plant closure were due to a lack of orders from North America. They blamed the union for the drop in demand.

Gap was one of the companies placing orders, but denied it had a problem with the union. In fact, Gap had successfully persuaded Tainan to reinstate fired workers a year earlier.

The Tainan workers' union had obtained legal recognition in July 2001. The union had just submitted a request to the Labour Ministry for collective bargaining rights when the management made the announcement that it would close the factory.

An international campaign was initiated. Campaigners called on the parent company Tainan Enterprises to re-open its El Salvador factory, rehire the workers, and negotiate in good faith with the union. In the US, they lobbied Taiwanese government officials and Tainan's customer headquarters. Hundreds of letters were sent to Gap and other buyers including those who source garments in Tainan's factories in Asia such as Philips-Van Heusen, Footlocker, Ann Taylor, Dress Barn, and Columbia Sportwear.

This pressure succeeded in getting Tainan Enterprises to begin discussions on reopening the El Salvador plant. Meetings were held between senior management and the union. The international campaign was then suspended because Tainan Enterprises was engaging in negotiations.

As a result of the talks, the company agreed to finance a new factory that would have a unionised workforce with a collective bargaining agreement. A new factory, Just Garments, is replacing the Tainan factory. Just Garments will be the first garment factory in El Salvador to have a trade union and a collective bargaining agreement. At the time of writing, Gap was expected to place the first direct order with Just Garments.

Information from 'Bridging the Gap: a look at Gap's supply chain from the workplace to the store', Women Working Worldwide, 2003, and Maquila Solidarity Network, Canada. www.maquilasolidarity.org

Gap: example of a global chain

Aims:

- to look in detail at Gap's global supply chain;
- to use the Gap example to build a picture of the workers' own supply chain;
- to look at some cases of solidarity in the Gap supply chain;
- to discuss the possibilities of solidarity in the participants' own supply chain.

Preparation:

Try to find out whether there is production for Gap in your country/region, and if so, where it is.

Methods:

1 *Understanding Gap's global supply chain*

The two maps of Gap's supply chain in this Unit can be used with workers who are involved in the Gap supply chain. Or they can be used with other participants as an example of a supply chain.

Familiarise the participants with the two Gap maps. Go through the key features, also building on what was learnt about the supply chain in Unit 2.

Map 1 shows the downward flow of orders from Gap headquarters to the Gap sourcing office (for example in Singapore), and the flow of raw materials, to big manufacturers. They may then pass the work on to smaller factories that they own, or often also subcontract to factories they do not own which are even more flexible and cheaper, who may then further subcontract to homeworkers.

Map 2 shows the upward flow of finished garments from the homeworkers and small factories, and back to the big manufacturers. Sometimes the goods go via Gap sourcing or regional offices, but increasingly the big manufacturers organise transport to Gap in the USA, Canada or Europe, who then distribute to stores around the world. Some Gap garments, such as those that did not pass quality control, will go to local stores and markets to be sold cheaply.

2 *Developing the picture of our own supply chain*

Ask the participants to construct an even fuller diagram of their own supply chain, using any information they have gathered and new ideas from the Gap supply chain maps. They can use the blank maps provided with this Unit.

Map 3

- Where on the diagram is our workplace? Can we fill in the name of our employer?
- Whose goods are we making? Can we fill in a retailer's name at the top?
- Who places the orders with our workplace on behalf of that retailer?
- Is there a retailer's office in our country? How can we find out?
- Do unfinished garments go from our workplace to other workplaces? If so, where to?

Map 4

- Where on the diagram is our workplace?
- Where do the goods go when they leave our workplace?
- Where are the retailer's stores where our goods end up on sale?

2 *Solidarity along the Gap supply chain*

Gap has a high profile for selling fashionable clothes. It has come under a lot of pressure from campaigners in the countries where it sells its clothes. Young people who buy Gap products have actively raised their concerns about the working conditions in Gap's supplier factories.

Ask a participant to read aloud 'Union victory in a Gap supplier in El Salvador' on page 36.

Union victory in a Gap supplier in El Salvador

shows:

- Manufacturer blames plant closure on anti-union pressure from retailers
- Gap denies it is anti-union
- International campaign pressure on the manufacturer and retailers for workers' rights.
- Union-management negotiations
- Agreement for a unionised workforce with collective bargaining agreement

What did we learn? Evaluation of the session.

Follow-up action:

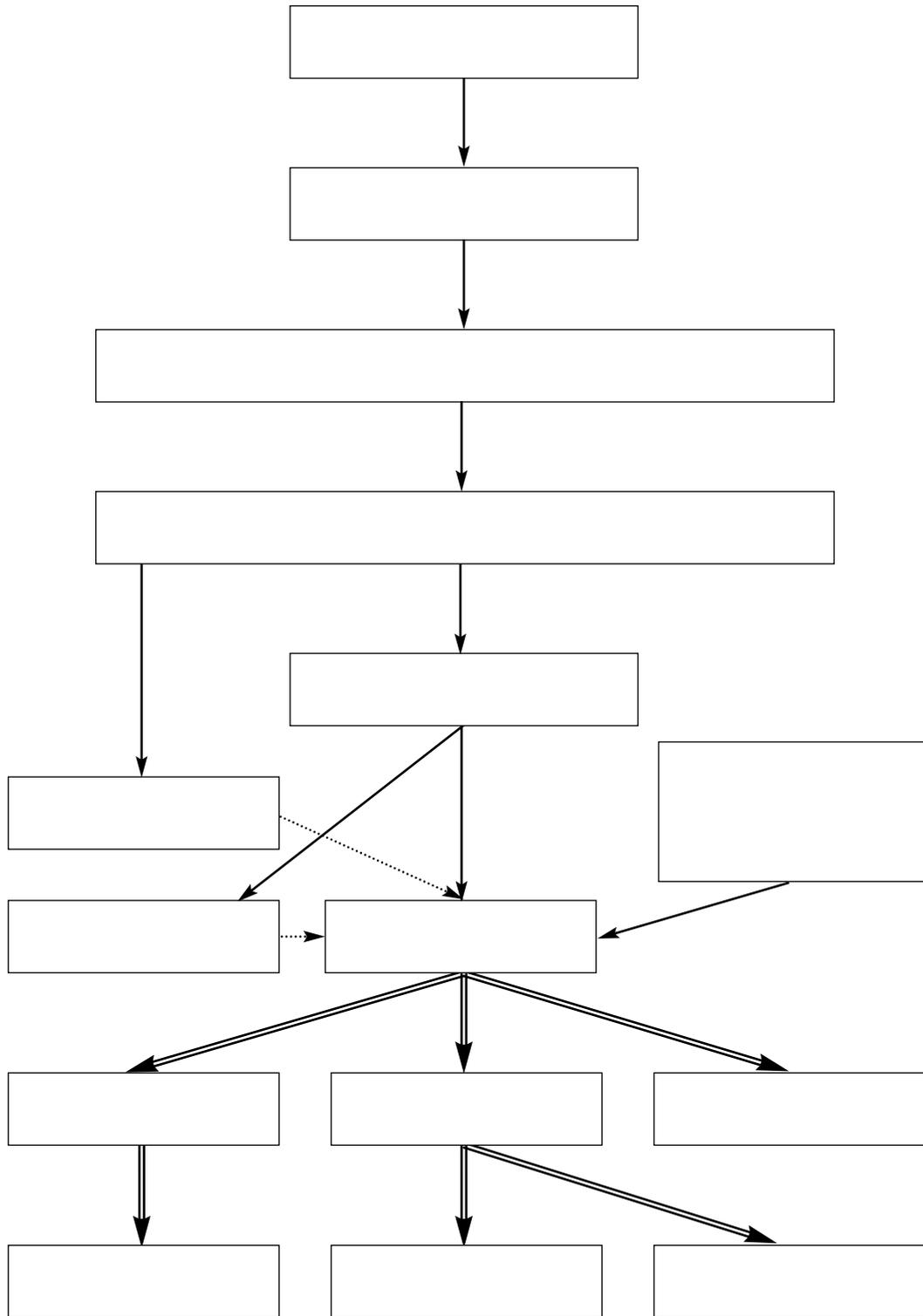
Try to find out if your employer, or any of the buyers whose goods you make, have a Code of Conduct. If there is one, see if you can get a copy.

Key Questions:

- Why was the campaign to help the retrenched workers at Tainan successful?
- How did international campaigners help? How do you think they found out about the situation in El Salvador?
- Do we know of any national or international organisations that might help us be in contact with other workers in our supply chain?

Map 3

Supply Chain Showing The Downward Flow of Production

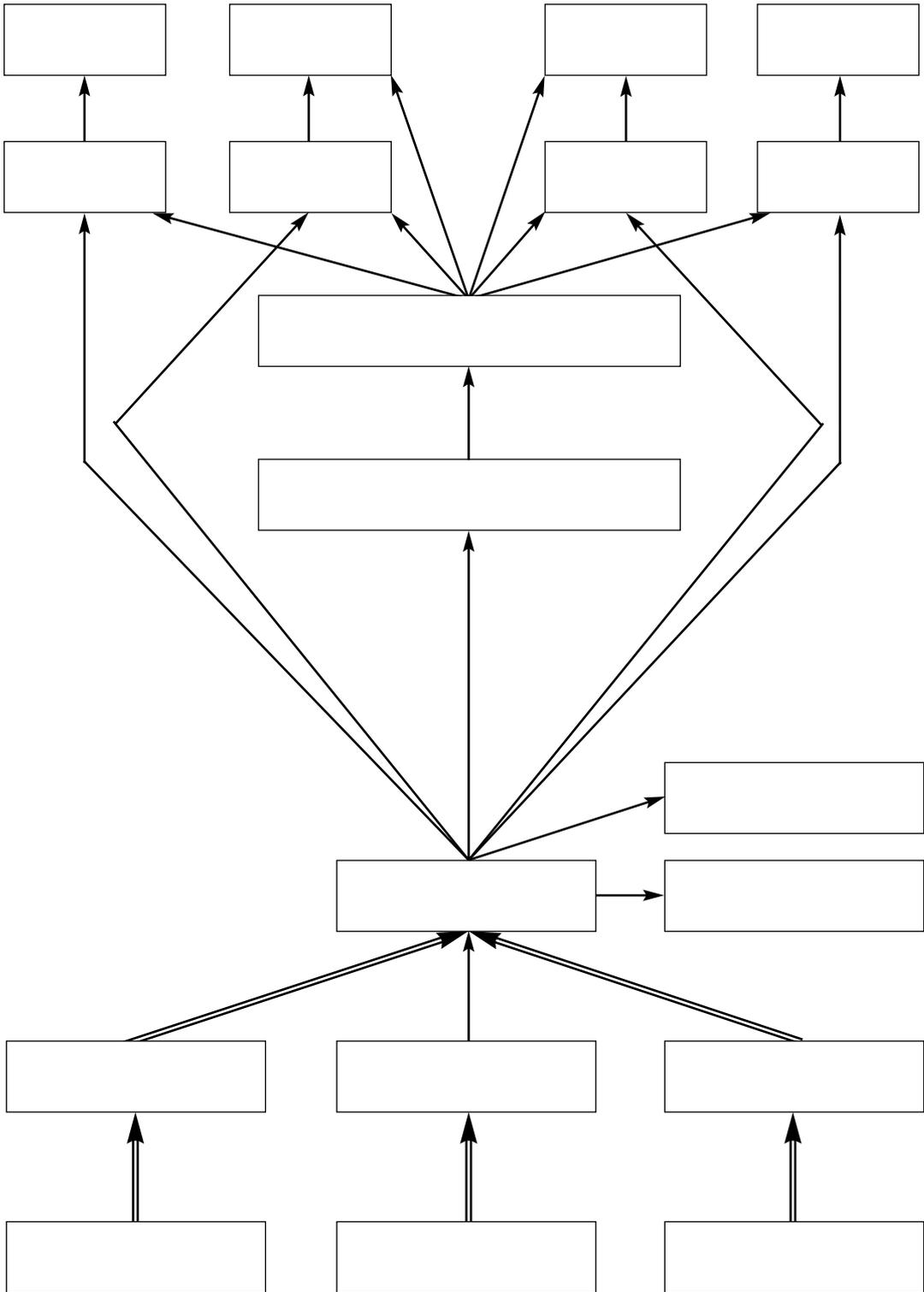


Key:

- Flow of orders
- Flow of raw materials
- Flow of unfinished garments

Map 4

Supply Chain Showing The Upward Flow of Production



Key:

Flow of finished garments 

Flow of unfinished garments 

The global garment industry

The garment industry is a key example of a globalised industry.

“ *The shirt I am wearing... The cotton could have been grown in Senegal. It might have been ginned in Egypt, spun in Pakistan, woven in China, the fabric then cut in India, and sent to Nepal for stitching. The buttons might have been made in Malaysia. The thread could have come from the Philippines. The shirt was then finished in Hong Kong, put in packaging that originated in Thailand, marketed in Singapore, and sold here in the United Kingdom.* ”

Neil Kearney, General Secretary of the international union federation for garment workers (ITGLWF), talking to British trade unionists.

From: www.tgwu.org.uk/TGWUInternatEd/Textiles/kearney.htm

Many countries are involved in producing garments for the big retailers. The US sportswear company Nike sources from about 75 countries around the world.

The number of companies involved is also huge. Take, for example, the US-based chain of stores called Walmart. It sources its clothing, textiles and footwear items from 60,000 suppliers around the world. Those are the principal suppliers and they, on average, have 5 or 6 subcontractors each. So this one multinational retail chain is sourcing from about 400,000, or maybe even half a million, suppliers. What is more, Walmart changes its suppliers from season to season.

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Who benefits from the supply chain?

Retailers and big manufacturers who subcontract work out get many advantages from having a large number of suppliers:

- They can use the specialised skills of workers from different regions and countries.
- If a subcontractor asks for a higher price because its workers are demanding higher wages or better conditions, orders can be shifted to another supplier where standards are lower. Or it may be enough just to threaten to shift the work, which may intimidate the subcontractor and its workforce into abandoning their demands.
- If a government wants to bring in stronger labour laws or raise minimum wages, retailers and big manufacturers can threaten to shift production to other countries. This may frighten the government into giving up its plans.

In every case, the retailers and big manufacturers are encouraging competition between small companies, between workers, and between governments. By this means they have a lot of power in the supply chain.

Retailers often do not know about the extent of subcontracting. They know about the big manufacturers to whom they give their contracts. But the big manufacturers often do not tell the retailers that they are subcontracting the work out further. So most retailers cannot say exactly where or by whom their goods are being produced. The sweatshops, small agents and homeworkers are especially invisible, and they are the ones with least power in the supply chain.

More information:

'International subcontracting: the new face of the garment industry', Angela Hale, Women Working Worldwide briefing paper, 2000.

'Notes on the Subcontracting Chain', Kelly Dent, TIE-Asia, 2002.

Why and how the garment industry went global

Most companies at the top of the supply chains have their head offices in the US and Europe. It is from here that they manage their global operations. They use computer technology to send and receive designs, orders and sales figures around the world, 24 hours a day. They can shift production from one location to another while keeping overall control.

■ Easy to move factories

To maximise their profits, companies want to keep down costs. Garment production is 'labour intensive' - it uses many workers. So, companies want to control their labour costs (including wages and social security costs). Other costs they want to control include transport costs for cloth and components coming in, and for the finished goods to go to their markets.

The garment industry can be easily moved about. It relies on skills that are available around the world, especially women's sewing skills. Also the machinery is relatively light and easy to move.

At first, Northern manufacturers moved and set up their own factories in the South, particularly in Asia and Central America where wages are lower. They rented land and buildings, installed equipment, and employed workers directly. But this meant they had to take responsibility for employing those workers, and they risked opposition from trade unions. So, from the 1980s they found another strategy. Increasingly they contracted other companies to take on those burdens and make their goods. They 'outsourced' or 'subcontracted'.

Today, famous sportswear and clothing companies such as Nike, Adidas, and Gap just promote and sell a 'name', a brand label. They get their profit from design and marketing, and they reduce their costs and risk by getting subcontractors to do the manufacturing. The big retailers such as Marks & Spencer and Walmart, who used to buy goods from importers, now send their own buyers overseas to place orders directly with subcontractors.

During the first phase of relocation in the 1960s and 1970s, European and US companies went to countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Mexico where labour costs were lower than in the North. Later, they went to even lower wage economies such as the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, and then Bangladesh and Central America. More recently they have moved to Vietnam, Laos and, above all, China which today produces almost 13% of the world supply of clothing.

Within countries too, labour costs are kept down by moving from one area to another. In many countries, governments have assisted foreign investors by setting up special export-processing zones, also known as Free Trade Zones (FTZs). These zones are governed by special laws which prevent workers from organising.

Or manufacturers deliberately employ people whose rights under labour law are very weak. These include homeworkers and undocumented migrant workers, both of whom may have no rights under labour law. And sometimes workers from low wage economies are taken to other countries, for example Chinese workers to Mauritius.

■ Easy to shift work between factories

The global garments industry runs on fierce competition. Profits at the top of the chain can be huge, but have to be maintained year on year to keep shareholders happy. Consumers shop around for the best buys, and so retailers are in constant competition with each other to maintain their profit margins.

So the retailers put pressure on their subcontractors, agents and trading companies for lower cost goods. This creates intense competition between companies and countries, fighting to get the orders. The brand-name retailers from the North have a lot of power to play one subcontractor off the other. They often claim they can get a better deal elsewhere, so as to drive down the price.

Rather than turn down an order, manufacturers accept unprofitable deals and make them work by increasing pressure on the workforce for lower cost and greater flexibility. Orders can fluctuate a lot. Retailers get data in from their stores about what is selling well and want to re-stock their shelves quickly. Or they demand a rapid response to changing fashion, such as last minute changes in fabric or colour. Or there are production delays caused by late arrival of cloth.

So manufacturers reduce their costs and increase their flexibility by reducing the regular workforce. Instead they employ contract labour on very low wages with no benefits such as paid holidays or sick leave, and they demand forced or unpaid overtime. They also place part or all of the orders to smaller factories, i.e. they subcontract again. These smaller production units also increase their 'flexibility' by hiring and firing temporary workers and putting work out to homeworkers, the lowest paid workers at the end of the chain.

This does not mean the end of large factories and Free Trade Zones. The number of FTZs is still increasing, for example in China. But companies in zones are also putting out work to local subcontractors, agents and homeworkers, even if the big retailers don't know it.

Not all work goes to cheap labour countries. The tight demands of the fashion industry mean that it can be more efficient to produce some items in the country where they will be sold rather than in a far-off place. Where this happens, there is still subcontracting and homeworking. Homeworkers play a key role also in the industrialised countries of Europe and North America.

Through subcontracting, manufacturers can reduce the costs of labour and overheads by more than a half. And it can be used to weaken or avoid workers who demand better wages and conditions or who try to form a trade union.

This is the 'chain' of subcontracting that allows the manufacturers to pass the risks and insecurities onto workers down the line.

Everywhere as work moves down the subcontracting chain there is an increase in the proportion of women workers.

■ Policies that encourage globalisation

Developments in the garment industry are also related to economic policies forced on governments of poor countries by international financial institutions. In return for loans, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank insisted that countries should produce for export rather than home consumption. Meanwhile, international trade agreements established a system whereby poor countries could produce garments for markets in North America and Europe.

International trade agreements say how many goods can be imported from one country into another (quotas), and the level of import duty that the government will put on the imports (tariffs). The garment industry expanded into Mexico partly as a result of the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Also, Eastern Europe has a special agreement with the European Union. But the most important international trade agreement affecting the garment industry has been the Multi Fibre Arrangement (MFA), which was established in 1974.

Under the MFA, quotas have been negotiated between importing and exporting countries each year, stating the exact quantity of each item that can be traded. Quota agreements have affected where garment factories are located. For example, Hong Kong and Korea have had severe quota restrictions. So companies from those countries relocated to countries like Indonesia, to reduce costs and also to take advantage of unused quotas there.

In 1995, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) was set up, and the MFA was replaced by the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC). This says that the quota system will be phased out in ten years. So, by 2005, companies will be even freer to source wherever they can maximise profits. This will increase competition in an already highly competitive industry. So some governments, for example Vietnam, are reaching one-to-one agreements with Northern governments, hoping to save the industry in their own country.

Many countries were told in the 1980s that their economies would 'develop' if they focussed on producing garments for export. Now some are likely to suffer badly, losing out to countries which offer even more profits to the investors. Those hit the hardest will of course be the garment workers laid off and their communities. Millions of people will be affected.

“ *It has been said that if exports could catapult our country to industrialisation, then we should have advanced by now through the garment industry alone. From 1989 to the present, the value of garment exports comprised 17-23% of our total economic output... (But) 276,500 workers in the industry receive an average daily wage of US\$2.30, ... far below the daily minimum wage.* ”

For those workers still getting garment work, there is no sign yet that they can look forward to secure jobs with decent wages and hours. The international trade union movement has been trying to have labour standards included in international trade agreements. The unions argue that decent wages and working conditions will help to upgrade the industry and the wider economy. But so far there has been no success in building labour standards into trade agreements. From 2005, garment workers the world over are set even more to face a 'race to the bottom'.

Diane Reyes, Philippine Resource Centre, Manila.

'Organising along International Subcontracting Chains in the Garment Industry, Women Working Worldwide workshop, September 2000.

PRANOM'S STORY

Pranom works for MAP, a human rights organisation in northern Thailand. She supports refugees who have fled the brutal military regime in neighbouring Burma which systematically uses forced labour. Over one million Burmese people have sought safety in Thailand, but they have few legal rights there. Pranom's cases include gross exploitation of Burmese women in Thai garment factories. Pranom says:

"Burmese workers are harassed by employers and government officials and can be deported at any time. About 120,000 have temporary work permits, but if they leave an abusive employer, they can lose their legal status. If they try to take any action, the employers blacklist them and they don't get work again.

At the Siriwat Garments factory in the Mae Sot area, women have to work up to 18 hour days. They live over the factory in very cramped conditions. After the employer takes deductions for accommodation and the work permit fee, they receive 1400-1500 baht (US\$35-37) a month including overtime pay.

The factory is Thai-owned. We were told it sews clothing for export to Japan, but the signboard outside says 'Next Retail Ltd., LE95AT England', and maybe they produce for that company. Recently we found out they are subcontracted by a company in Bangkok to produce for Levi's.

On 19 September 2003, the workers were ordered to work from 8am until 12 noon the next day, 28 hours altogether. If anyone disobeyed, they would be fined and dismissed. That next day, the employer made them continue until 1pm the following day. Then on the third day, he tried to make them go on until 11pm. Finally the exhausted workers refused. That evening, all of them - 64 women and 11 men - were ordered out of the factory and told to sleep elsewhere. The employer said that if they did not agree to work overtime, they would be laid off. Police came and threatened them with deportation back to Burma.

Levi's told us they have a Code of Conduct. I told them we 're not calling for a boycott but would like to improve the negotiating power of the workers. The employer at Siriwat now says he will pay legal minimum wages and abide by the law. He still asks them to work overtime to 11.00 pm, saying there are a lot of orders.

The migrant workers' groups and Thai organisations that are trying to assist are accused of trafficking or harbouring 'illegals'. Some of us have to live in hiding.

I think it is terrible that the global garment trade seeks out the most vulnerable people as its workers, such as these Burmese women who have tried to flee terror. And now, despite international sanctions against Burma, there is a joint project between the Thai and Burmese Governments to set up a zone for factories inside Burma to prevent Burmese workers migrating to Thailand."

Information from MAP, Thailand, 2003.

The global garment industry

Aims:

- to understand how the garment industry developed in our own country
- to explore how the garments supply chain fits into the bigger picture of globalisation
- to discuss the way the garment industry seeks out vulnerable people for its workforce.

Preparation:

Before running the workshop, it would be useful to prepare information on:

- how the garment industry has developed in your country, especially in the past 20-30 years;
- the role of international trade and financial organisations in the economic policy of your country;
- how your government has promoted investment in export-oriented industry;
- the garment industry in your country after the phase-out of the MFA by 2005.

Methods:

1 *Analysing the garment industry in our country*

Start with discussion by the participants. Depending on the participants, the Facilitator may need to be prepared to add in a lot of information.

Key Questions

- How has the garment industry developed in our country?
- Why has it developed in that way?
- Who has benefited from the garment industry in our country, and how? Consider in turn: (a) foreign retailers, (b) local retailers, (c) foreign manufacturers, (d) local manufacturers, (e) the government, (f) garment factory workers, (g) non-factory garment workers, (h) consumers.

2 *The garment industry as part of globalisation*

Key Questions

- Why does the garment industry move its production from some countries and locations to others?
- What are the international trade policies that have governed the garment industry?
- What is likely to happen to our country's garment industry with the phase-out of the MFA by 2005, and what should be the responses by (a) the government and (b) workers?

3 *Combating exploitation of vulnerable people*

Use 'Pranom's Story' as an example of how the garment industry seeks out marginal people for its workforce, why this happens and what we can do about it. Ask a participant to read it aloud.

Pranom's Story shows:

- Women migrant workers in garment factories
- Forced and excessive overtime
- Subcontracted production for big retailers
- Harassment of support workers

Key Questions:

- **Why do garment factories in Thailand employ Burmese migrant workers rather than Thai workers?**
- **Does a similar situation exist in our country, where migrant workers are exploited in the garment industry?**
- **What do we know about their situation?**
- **Why is it important for all workers to help migrant workers?**
- **How can we build solidarity with migrant workers that is effective?**

Role play: solidarity with migrant workers

The participants divide into three groups:

- undocumented migrant workers from another country who are working in a nearby garment factory
- unemployed workers in the local community
- organisers from a local trade union for garment workers.

Scenario: The migrant workers live in the factory and were forced to work 18 hours a day for 5 days to finish an order. Now they are exhausted, on strike and locked out. They have asked the local union for support but there is some resentment because many of its members lost their jobs when the migrant workers came. The migrant workers and union organisers want to work together to achieve a positive outcome for all. They hold a meeting in the community, attended by unemployed workers. What arguments can they use to persuade the local community to support the migrant workers win back their jobs with decent working hours and wages?

What did we learn? Evaluation of the session.

Follow-up action:

Read the hand-outs and share the information with others.

Find out more about trends in the garments industry, and how globalisation is affecting our country.

Find out who in our country is campaigning against neo-liberal globalisation. The sources of information might be trade unions, labour support NGOs, academic researchers, the Internet, newspapers and TV, etc.

Solidarity between workers locally

Only by working together can we improve our situation. In fact, never in history have workers won justice or respect for our rights without getting together in solidarity.

The most important form of solidarity is between workers in one location, especially if we win support from the local community. Local solidarity is essential if we are to succeed in claiming our rights.

But solidarity is very difficult when workers are in and out of employment. Sometimes we are making clothing; sometimes we have to find a living some other way. It is hard to fight together for better conditions when we are having to change jobs.

'Formal' and 'informal' workers

Many garment workers do not have a permanent job in a factory. They do not have a work contract that says how many hours they will work and how much they will be paid. More and more employers, in garments as in other industries, are employing people on short-term contracts, as 'probationers', as 'seasonal' labour, hiring when there are orders and firing when there are none. They are cutting their costs and increasing their flexibility by shirking their responsibilities to workers. Workers are being made to bear the risks and insecurity.

One term for this situation is 'informal' employment. This is because the workers are not being hired through 'formal' employment arrangements which are subject to the country's employment laws. The term 'informal' covers all the many kinds of workers who do not work in a defined workplace, for a known employer, and with an employment contract.

If you are an informal worker, perhaps you work:

- in a small sweatshop;
- in your own home;
- in a factory, but as a contract worker hired through a labour contractor and therefore never put on the payroll of the company;
- for a single employer but on one short-term contract after another;
- as a 'self-employed' person but always hired by the same company;
- as a migrant worker;
- as a seasonal worker.

In some countries, informal workers make up 90 per cent of the total labour force. In others, the proportion is smaller. But in virtually all countries, the number and proportion are growing.

Am I a 'formal' or an 'informal' worker?

- Have you got a letter of appointment or a work contract from your employer?
- Are you on the payroll of the company you work for?
- Do you get a payslip?

If you can answer **'yes'** to these questions, then you are a **'formal'** worker. Your employment may not be secure but at least you have legal proof that you are an employee of a particular company. This means that you have legal rights under your country's employment laws. For example, you cannot be dismissed without a reason.

If you answer **'no'** to all three questions, then you are an **'informal'** worker. You are not seen as an 'employee' under employment law. Your legal status is unclear, and so your legal rights are very weak. You can be dismissed for any reason. You cannot even prove that you were employed in the first place.

Why do employers prefer 'informal' workers?

Employers say that they cannot employ workers on a formal basis because orders are irregular and so they need 'flexibility'. It is true that there are peak periods when demand is high, and slack periods when demand is low. But in most cases where workers are dismissed, production has not stopped. It is carrying on with new workers in the same place or somewhere else. In other words, employers could carry on employing the existing workers but choose to employ others.

One reason for shifting from one set of workers to another is because the new ones can be paid lower wages or made to work in worse conditions. Another is that the first set of workers have formed a union.

Also, when employers formally employ workers, they have legal obligations. They may have to pay social insurance contributions, which increases their labour costs. They may have to pay compensation to retrenched workers. If you are a formal worker, you have rights, for example to take an employer to court or to form a union. It may be very hard to exercise these rights, but many employers will do whatever is possible to avoid their legal obligations and our legal rights.

So, employers who do not want to deal with unions, or want to be able to shift production to cheaper locations, or want to avoid their legal responsibilities to their workforce, prefer to hire informal workers.

Building solidarity between 'formal' and 'informal' workers

By making some workers informal, employers undermine the conditions and rights of all workers, including formal ones. So these questions are important to all workers, and fighting to strengthen the rights of informal workers benefits all workers. This means reaching out in solidarity and organising together.

Trade unions are usually organisations of formal workers. All workers have rights to establish and belong to trade unions, and to negotiate collectively with employers, according to international Conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). But in most countries these rights are only specified in law for formal workers, even if these rights are not well respected in practice.

Informal workers find it even more difficult to organise than formal workers do. If you are an informal worker, you may be hidden or out of sight in small workplaces, or alone in your own home. You may move from one employer to another at frequent intervals. You are vulnerable to losing your job at a moment's notice. This makes it hard to get together to build organisations.

Nevertheless, informal workers' organisations have been built in many countries. They include associations of homeworkers or street vendors. Some women's NGOs support women informal workers to get together to find solutions to their problems. Some trade unions have set up special sections and go out to recruit informal workers. Other unions are trying to include informal workers in all their sections and activities. In some places, alliances are being established between informal workers' groups and the trade unions of formal workers.

It is not important which model you follow, whether or not informal workers have their own organisations or are taken in as members of the trade union. What is important is that there is joint action.

More Information:

WIEGO (Women in Information Employment Globalising and Organising): an international network of women's organisations, women's sections in trade unions, workers' educational bodies, academics, and others, aiming to find better ways of organising 'informal' women workers.
www.wiego.org

HomeWorkers Worldwide: www.homeworkersww.org.uk

Streetnet for street vendors: www.streetnet.org

Legal pressure on employers

Here is a list of demands that could be made to try to halt the increasing employment of workers in informal situations. Are any of them appropriate in your situation?

- Labour laws protecting basic rights must apply to all workers;
- Employers must not employ informal workers in a job that is permanent or perennial; the employment of all workers in such posts should be formalised;
- Workers hired through an agency or labour contractor should be regarded as employees of the company for the period they work for it, however short that is;
- Employers must be legally obliged to give an appointment letter to any workers who are in the same job for more than, say, 3-6 months, and make them permanent;
- Employers must not be allowed to create artificial breaks in employment so as to avoid making workers permanent;
- Temporary, casual or contract workers must be paid at least the same as permanent workers, with pro rata benefits and leave;
- Informal workers must have access to social security and employers must pay social security contributions for them;
- All irregular workers, including homeworkers, should be issued with an attendance card and social security card which the employer must stamp; this means that, even if they don't get employment on a regular basis, their status as workers is recognised;
- Employers should be obliged by law to recognise and negotiate with organisations of informal workers.

Such demands are aimed at changing laws to oblige employers to carry out certain duties. Only then can there be legal sanctions against employers who fail to carry out their obligations.

With whom can you campaign for such changes to employment laws?

Solidarity within our community

Workers - whether 'formal' or 'informal' - are all part of the community where we live/work. So are other local workers involved in the garment supply chain such as office workers, transport workers, and shop/retail workers. Beyond that are also other workers and members of the community, including newcomers and migrant workers.

It is always important to make alliances with members of the wider community. Many will be experiencing very similar situations, such as the loss of permanent jobs, low wages, etc. Such issues can be the basis for broad-based community campaigning, as 'Cristi's Story' shows.

CRISTI'S STORY

Cristi is an organiser with the Women Workers' Programme in Baguio City, in the northern Philippines. In the city's export processing zone, the Baguio City Economic Zone (BCEZ), there are two large electronics factories and 14 small garment factories. At peak times about 5,000 workers are employed. But in November each year there are huge layoffs, until March when the factories start up again. Cristi explains how they have been campaigning in Baguio against this use of contract labour that leaves the workers so insecure.

“ At the time, workers of the Shoemart chain of stores were on strike: out of 20,000 employees (50% of whom are women), only 2,000 were regular and 18,000 'contractuals'.”

“In BCEZ, during the high season producing for the Christmas period in the North, many workers are employed and there is a lot of overtime. But in November, the garment factories lay off the piece-raters so that they can avoid paying the '13th month' Christmas bonus. In two companies, one Korean and one Italian, they actually shut down the whole factory, laying off all the workers in November and rehiring them in March. The workers cannot afford to pay rent and have to go home to their villages or look for other work in shops or as small traders.

In 2000, the national women's organisation Gabriela called a conference to look at this question of contract labour. Representing the North was Inabuyog, the Women's Federation of the Cordillera region, which has members organising in plantations, electronics, garments, and department stores.

At the time, workers of the Shoemart chain of stores were on strike: out of 20,000 employees (50% of whom are women), only 2,000 were regular and 18,000 'contractuals'. We have been experiencing many different types of irregular employment - agency hiring, piece-raters, repeat contracts, seasonal hiring, 'probationers' and the government's Work Apprentice Programme (WAP) under which many workers are employed in the Zones, plus homeworkers and so on.

The Labour Code of the Philippines says that the state shall ensure the security of workers. But since the early 1990s they have introduced provisions which allow contractualisation to flourish. They hope to encourage foreign investors to come to the Philippines by offering cheap labour and weakening unions.

It was from the 2000 conference that the national Campaign Against Contractualisation was born. In the campaign, we make contact with garment workers and carry out education programmes in the communities where they live near the Zone. We introduce issues through testimonials from the workers, and then carry out education on the subcontracting chain. We have some small groups, but it is very difficult to encourage the participation of new contacts. They will distribute leaflets but few attend the education sessions because they fear contact with unions will lead to them being kicked out of work.

Contractualisation affects so many sectors, especially the service industries and government employees. In fact, the Government is the No.1 implementer of contractualisation. So in the campaign we reach out also to teachers and university lecturers and other public employees. We have built alliances with the Church, and take every opportunity to be on the radio to make a 'noise'. We have high profile activities on festive days such as Baguio Day, International Women's Day and May Day, with big posters saying 'We Need Jobs', 'Wage Increases' and 'No to Contractualisation'.

Our aim is to form an association of contractual workers. Before, we organised unions in the factories. But they were shortlived; activists were fired and left the area. Regular workers were dismissed and replaced by contractuales. Now when workers in the Zone hear the word 'union' it is difficult. We do hope to transform the association into a union in the long-term. Under Philippines law, an association has no bargaining power; only a union does. It really affects the orientation of the workers' movement, as we have to shift to what is appropriate to the situation today."

From an interview with Celia Mather, October 2003

Solidarity between workers locally

Aims:

- to understand the significance of 'informal' employment in undermining the rights of all workers, and why it is important to develop solidarity between 'formal' and 'informal' workers
- to enable participants to use mapping to draw up a strategy for organising themselves and claiming their rights

Preparation:

Before running the workshop, you may like to find out what are the rights under employment law in your country that are denied to informal workers because they have no legal status as employees.

Methods:

1 *Using mapping for organising locally*

Take up again the local map produced in Units 1, 2 and 3. Ask the participants to identify, who and where are the formal workers, and who and where are the informal workers in their supply chain. If needed, the facilitator can add in information about what laws in your country employers avoid if they employ workers on a non-permanent basis.

Ask a participant to read aloud 'Cristi's Story'.

Cristi's Story shows:

- Contract labour in garment factories
- A broad campaign against 'contractualisation'
- Forming an association of contract workers

Key Questions:

- In what ways is employment in garment factories in the Philippines similar or different from our local situation?
- What are the benefits that employers get by hiring workers on an irregular or informal basis?
- What are the strategies used by the Campaign Against Contractualisation in the Philippines to organise informal workers?
- What are the lessons that could be drawn for our own situation?

2 Organising 'formal' and 'informal' workers together

Key Questions:

- Are the formal garment workers in our area already members of a trade union?
- Do the irregular garment workers in our area have any organisation or association that supports them?
- How can formal and informal workers organise together in our area?
- What are the barriers to organising and how can we overcome them?

Ask participants to 'brainstorm' the barriers to organising and how to overcome them. On whiteboard or paper on the wall, make two columns:

Barrier to organising	How to overcome the barrier

Write up on the whiteboard/wall. It might be useful to prioritise them, to note which should be dealt with first.

Campaign Demands: Ask the participants to make a list of demands that could underpin a campaign for the rights of informal workers. Compare the list drawn up by the participants with the list on this Unit's information sheet. Consider adding to or changing the participants' list. Then prioritise the demands, according to which are appropriate in your local situation. Ask the participants to list ways in which they could promote these demands.

3 Solidarity within our community

Look again at 'Cristi's Story'.

What did we learn?

Evaluation of the session.

Key Questions:

- What are the lessons we can learn from this case study about organising within our community?
- Who are the other sectors of our community who may be sympathetic to the garment workers' situation?
- Do we share common issues, such as their jobs also becoming more casualised

Follow up action:

Start organising to take up the demands for the rights of 'informal' or irregular workers.

Identify other workers and organisations in your area/region with whom garment workers could make alliances.

Solidarity along the supply chain

It is essential to build solidarity locally between workers and within the community. Solidarity can also be built between workers in different regions and different countries. In fact, in a global industry like garments, international solidarity is becoming more and more important if workers are to resist being forced to compete with each other in a 'race to the bottom'.

Garment workers who are producing goods for the same buyers, that is to say in the same supply chain, can be in contact, share vital information, and develop common strategies.

International solidarity can seem a very difficult thing to imagine, let alone achieve, especially to workers who feel isolated. International solidarity can only offer something where workers in a locality have managed to establish some kind of solidarity between themselves. Then international solidarity can add extra strength. There are many examples where international solidarity has helped to bring success to a particular group of workers campaigning for better wages or decent working hours, or attempting to form a trade union.

These days, computer communications using the Internet have opened up many new possibilities for international contact. In many places, workers' support groups exist who are willing to assist workers use the Internet, if needed.

Information exchange: By exchanging information, we can build up a more complete picture of what is going on, so that we cannot be fooled by false information. For example, it may not be true that a wage increase will make our factory less competitive than suppliers elsewhere. But we will not know this unless we contact workers in those other locations. Or perhaps the buyer we are working for has a 'Code of Conduct' which says that its suppliers should provide at least the minimum wage, but no-one has ever told us. In this pack there are many concrete examples of how information exchange has been vital to workers' success.

Solidarity is a two-way street: Solidarity is also about offering support to other workers who need it. Say workers in another factory along our supply chain are going on strike against forced overtime. We can refuse to increase our production that would make up for the shortfall from their factory on strike.

Coordinating demands and struggles: More than this, we can develop common strategies and co-ordinate our demands. Say the workers, even in different countries, who are supplying the same retail company co-ordinate a campaign, say for a living wage or proper employment contracts. Then that retail company will find it much harder to shift orders from one place to another to find a cheaper and more vulnerable workforce.

Overcoming barriers to solidarity

There are many barriers to working together. In order to overcome the barriers, we first need to know what the barriers are, and then find strategies to overcome them.

Competition: One barrier is competition. With unemployment rising everywhere, it looks as if millions of workers in dozens of countries are all competing for the same few jobs. We can easily feel that our own interests are opposed to the interests of workers in other countries or even in our own country, or that we have to accept worse employment conditions in order to stop our jobs being 'taken' by other workers.

If we have these kinds of feelings, the only people who will benefit are the employers. We ourselves will suffer, along with all the other workers. It is better to think of ourselves as one single workforce, divided and spread out all over the world, but still with the same interests. Whatever problems we face are also faced by the others, and so we have to discuss common solutions to our problems - solutions that will benefit everyone.

Prejudice: Another barrier is prejudice. Prejudice can be against workers who speak a different language, follow a different religion, look different, come from a different culture or different country. We all know examples of this, within our own countries as well as between different countries. Sometimes, prejudices are so strong that anyone from the other country or region is seen as an 'enemy'.

This is really a very silly way of looking at things. Just because people are different from us in some way, that doesn't mean they are our enemies! The world would be a very boring place if people were all exactly the same. We should be glad of diversity, because it makes life so much more interesting.

And yet, there are some ways in which we are all the same. We are all human beings, and are entitled to the same respect, the same rights and the same concern from other human beings. When we are excluded or discriminated against or persecuted - because we are women, for example - we feel hurt and angry. So we should never treat others in this way.

Most of the hostility of this type is stirred up by politicians for their own purposes. But ordinary people, even workers, get taken in by this kind of propaganda, partly because we are unaware of the similarity between our lives and the lives of other people. This poses a serious obstacle to building solidarity between workers, and that in turn makes it impossible to work out common strategies to obtain workers' rights.

Therefore, to build a strong workers' movement, we should always resist prejudice.

Garment workers' solidarity

There are many international organisations and networks which campaign for the rights of garment workers. Here are some:

International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF): a global union federation of 216 trade unions in 106 countries, representing 10 million garment workers. www.itglwf.org

Clean Clothes Campaign: a network of organisations and trade unions in Europe and Scandinavia. www.cleanclothes.org

Labour Behind the Label: pressure groups and trade unions in the UK, including Women Working Worldwide; part of the Clean Clothes Campaign network. www.labourbehindthelabel.org

No Sweat: a campaign that unites students and trade union activists in the UK. www.nosweat.org.uk

United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS): a campaign that unites students and others in over 200 college campuses in the USA. www.usasnet.org

Maquila Solidarity Network: a network of organisations and trade unions in Canada and Mexico/Central America. www.maquilasolidarity.org

These organisations carry out fact-finding missions and in-depth research, publicise how garment companies treat their workers, issue urgent action appeals to support particular groups of workers, and help workers devise strategies to combat abuse. The case studies in this Unit give some examples.

Solidarity from consumers

As a result of high-profile campaigning, many people in Europe and North America are now aware that much of the clothing they buy is made by workers who are exploited. Some are campaigning against this exploitation. They do not want the garment retailers to make their large profits off the backs of the workers but to forego some profits in aid of improving workers' conditions.

Consumer campaigns need information from the workers about what the actual conditions are, and advice on what kind of action to take. Quite often, consumers think that the best thing to do is to boycott the goods. But this can lead to the retailer stopping the orders and the workers losing their jobs.

Also, if workers in one factory ask for a consumer boycott of the products they make, then workers in other factories making the same goods may be hard hit, and even lose their jobs. So, calling for a boycott is a weapon that can be used, but only when all the workers concerned have been consulted first.

A better form of action is to bring pressure on retailers and manufacturers which result in workers keeping their jobs, and also being paid a living wage, safe from forced overtime, working in healthy and safe conditions, and having their rights to organise respected. This means pressure to see that improvements are made all the way down the chain to the sweatshops and homeworkers.

Company Codes of Conduct

Well-known retailers, especially those with famous brands such as Gap and Nike, have come under a lot of pressure from campaigners around the world to make sure that the workers who make their goods are not exploited or abused. Campaigners want these big and powerful companies only to give their contracts to manufacturers that respect workers' rights and dignity, and pay decent wages.

In response, many retailers have adopted Codes of Conduct. The example of Gap is given in Unit 3 of this pack. Codes set out various principles. They say, for example, that the retailer will only do business with manufacturers who pay the legal minimum wage, and do not use child labour.

There are cases where factory workforces, working with solidarity organisations overseas, have been able to use a Code to win respect for their rights. Some Codes, however, are weakly worded and omit to mention the workers' right to organise a union. Where a Code exists, the workers concerned - especially homeworkers - often do not know anything about it.

Monitoring to see how well Codes are implemented sometimes takes place in the big manufacturers. But monitoring rarely happens in subcontractors lower down the chain, particularly among the homeworkers, who the retailer may not even know about. So, campaigners are trying to insist that retailers send their representatives to visit workers at the bottom of the chain too.

There are many different types of Codes and monitoring systems, and there are many problems with them. The most important issue is that the workers concerned - including those at the bottom of the chain - must be involved in monitoring and free to speak their mind to monitors without victimisation.

Codes can never replace trade unions, though they sometimes can create space to build union organisation.

The key problem is that the retailers, whether they have a Code or not, are at the same time putting extreme pressure on the manufacturers to meet tight deadlines at low cost.

“ *Some of these multinationals... are saying “Oh yes, we believe in paying a decent wage, in having limitations on working hours” and such like. But then they demand of their suppliers production at prices that those suppliers cannot pay a living wage to the workforce, and ... delivery within such a short period that the only way the companies can meet that delivery date is to work their people 17 or 18 hours a day, seven days a week.* ”

Neil Kearney, General Secretary of the international union federation for garment workers (ITGLWF), talking to British trade unionists.

From: www.tgwu.org.uk/TGWUInternatEd/Textiles/kearney.htm

More Information:

Women Working Worldwide, 'Codes of Conduct: What Are They? Can We Use Them?', an education pack for worker activists, July 1998.

AMRC'S STORY

The Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC) is a labour resource and support organisation based in Hong Kong. AMRC decided to organise an international solidarity campaign for the garment workers in a factory in Sri Lanka that was owned by a Hong Kong company. AMRC researched information on the companies and the supply chain, informed unions and other organisations, and built solidarity. This is what they did:

- *Found out more about the parent company in Hong Kong and its links to other big corporations*
- *Used brand names to find out more about the sales office in the US and gave this information to labour groups in the US to support the campaign*
- *Asked the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions and the Clothing Industry, Clerical and Retail Workers' General Union to send a well-informed letter to the management in Hong Kong demanding that the workers in Sri Lanka be paid*
- *Informed garment workers in Hong Kong about the situation of the workers in Sri Lanka and organised demonstrations and solidarity messages*
- *Organised for a representative of the workers in Sri Lanka to come to Hong Kong. Armed with the information, she was in a good position to negotiate with the management*

In fact, the management in Sri Lanka and Hong Kong were afraid of how much information the campaign had about their company and their sales office in the US!

Information from Gerard Greenfield, 'The Impact of TNC Subcontracting on Workers in Asia', Asia Monitor Resource Centre, Hong Kong, 1998.

www.amrc.org.hk

LESOTHO UNION STORY

In 2001 research was carried out on subcontracting chains in the garment industry of Lesotho, a small country in Southern Africa. It was done for the Clean Clothes Campaign in Europe and the African regional office of the ITGLWF (the global union federation for garment workers) in association with LECAWU, the Lesotho Clothing and Allied Workers' Union. This is how the research was used:

- *After a press conference to release the first research findings, the Lesotho Government launched its own investigation into 28 garment-manufacturing factories. Its findings supported the union research.*
- *Labour Behind the Label (the Clean Clothes Campaign in the UK) used the research to pressure Gap to take responsibility for working conditions. As a result, Gap investigated one of its contract factories in Lesotho. This led the factory management to recognise LECAWU and allow union rights.*
- *LECAWU used the CCC's Urgent Appeal system to call for international support for 600 workers locked out and fired from the Super Knitting factory in 2001. The information was also distributed to other organizations, such as the Ethical Trading Action Group (ETAG) in Canada.*
- *ETAG noted that the Canadian garment retailer Hudson Bay Company also sourced from Lesotho. In February 2002 a research report into two large garment factories in Lesotho that produce for Hudson Bay revealed many illegal and unfair labour practices. A campaign was started to pressure Hudson Bay to improve conditions at its supplier factories in Lesotho.*
- *Nien Hsing was one of the companies researched. This is a Taiwanese company that has two garment factories in Lesotho and is building a textile mill there. Nien Hsing had long refused to negotiate with LECAWU. The research provided ammunition for a global campaign taken up by unions and NGOs in North America and Europe to put pressure on Nien Hsing. As a result, LECAWU was able to negotiate an historic agreement with Nien Hsing. This commits management to recognising the union once they organize a majority of the workers.*
- *LECAWU has been strengthened through these actions. The union is now able to enter factories where they had not been welcome before and some union recognition agreements have been signed. Their membership increased from 3,000 workers in early 2001 to 16,000 workers in September 2002.*

Information from Clean Clothes Campaign. www.cleanclothes.org

Solidarity along the supply chain

Aims:

- To encourage a deeper understanding of the global map of relationships between workers along the supply chain, and the possibilities of solidarity, as well as barriers that need to be overcome;
- To deepen understanding of the international garment workers' organisations and campaigns that can assist;
- To help draw up a strategy for building solidarity along the supply chain and with campaigning organisations.

Preparation:

It would be useful to research the international solidarity organisations that could link with the particular group of participants, and whether there is already some solidarity operating in their supply chain. Page 59 gives some organisations to contact.

If the question of company Codes of Conduct is going to be discussed, we recommend preparation with the WWW education pack: 'Company Codes of Conduct: What Are They? Can We Use Them?'

Methods:

1 *International solidarity along our supply chain*

This brings together Units 1 (the problems we face), 2 and 3 (the maps and diagrams of our own supply chain). Remind the participants of these earlier discussions about power in the supply chain, how solidarity might help overcome workers' problems, and - especially - with whom we might build solidarity.

The two case studies in this unit provide examples of international solidarity at work. Take one, and ask a participant to read it aloud to the others.

AMRC's Story shows:

- The role of a labour support organisation
- Researching companies in the supply chain
- Providing information to relevant organisations
- Solidarity from Hong Kong and the US for Sri Lankan workers
- Using information about the supply chain in negotiating with management.

Lesotho Union Story shows:

- Solidarity from the garment workers' international union
- Solidarity from campaigners in Europe and Canada
- Research causes the government to make its own investigation
- Pressure on Gap results in union recognition
- Pressure on a Taiwanese manufacturer wins union rights
- The trade union is strengthened.

Key Questions:

- What can we learn from this case study that might help our own situation?
- How could international solidarity links along our supply chain help us overcome the problems we face?
- What information/support could we offer other workers in our supply chain? Why might this help us?
- How can we find out if the workers who sell the goods we make, or the consumers who buy them, are interested in our situation?
- What support organisations are there that could help us?

2 **Can we use company Codes of Conduct?**

Ask a participant to read aloud 'Pressure on Gap from international campaigns' from Unit 3, page 31

Pressure on Gap from international campaigns shows:

- Pressure on Gap from consumers about workers' rights/conditions
- Gap's responses: Code of Conduct and other activities
- Improvements are not yet felt by workers all through the Gap chain.

To find out if there is a Code of Conduct, factory workers can look to see if one is posted up on a wall in the factory, or ask a friendly supervisor or office workers. Or contact international solidarity organisations with information about the labels on the goods you are producing, and ask if they know whether the company has a Code.

The Facilitator should be prepared with background information on both the pros and cons of Codes of Conduct, to help the participants to consider the issues fully.

Key Questions:

- **What is a company Code of Conduct, and what is its purpose?**
- **Why did Gap adopt a Code of Conduct?**
- **What could be the benefit to workers in Gap's supply chain from a Code of Conduct? Which workers might benefit more, and which less?**
- **Does the retailer whose goods we make have a Code of Conduct, like Gap does? If we don't know, how could we find out?**
- **Might a Code of Conduct help in our situation? What might be the use, and what might be the drawbacks?**

3 *Overcoming barriers to solidarity*

- What are the barriers to solidarity?
- How can we overcome them?

You can use the technique described in Unit 5 of brainstorming the barriers and how to overcome them.

It is an important part of workers' education to combat competition, prejudices and hostility. Sometimes simple photographs or stories of workers are the best way to do this. They tell us more about workers from other cultures and other countries than propaganda which sets out to stir up hostility and hatred. These stories can illustrate what we have in common: our common humanity as well as our common interest as workers.

The role play in Unit 4 'Solidarity with Migrant Workers' can also be used, here to think about positive ways in which migrant workers and local communities can work together to achieve a better outcome for all.

What did we learn? Evaluation of the session.

Follow up action:

Read the hand-outs and share the information with others.

Start building solidarity with other workers in your supply chain. If you need to, identify the organisations that might help you to find those workers abroad. Contact them with concrete information about your own situation and about the supply chains in which you work.

Drawing up a plan of action

Drawing up a plan of action

- Campaigning is one of the tools of organising workers.
- A campaign is a specific plan of action that is developed and implemented around an identified issue.
- A campaign is designed to achieve particular outcomes, has a defined timeframe and it details the activities to be undertaken.
- A campaign should always include education and publicity.
- The plan of action for a campaign must be concrete and achievable.

Determine the theme and target

- What is the theme of your campaign - the main issue?
- Who is/are the target(s) of your campaign?
- What do you hope to achieve through your campaign?
- What is the opposition that you are likely to face?
- Who might be your allies and supporters?

Example:

The objective of your campaign is to get workers who have been assaulted and dismissed back into the factory. So, your main target is the company.

The biggest obstacle you face is that the company refuses to meet with workers' representatives. Also the local officials of the Department of Employment take the side of the employers.

The company produces garments for several retailers in Europe and the US.

Your allies might come from:

- other garment workers locally, whether in factories or homeworkers;
- clerical and transport workers who service your factory;
- other workers locally;
- the trade union for garment workers;
- a local workers' support or human rights organisation;
- members of the community who support workers' rights;
- elected representatives to government;
- national officials of the Department of Labour/Employment;
- foreign buyers who placed the orders with your company;
- consumers who buy the goods in the stores;
- international campaigners for the rights of garment workers;
- shareholders of the foreign buyers;
- other organisations and individuals who can put pressure on the company.

Each of these potential allies needs assessing for the support they can give.

7

Research the situation

Gather as much information, including statistics and facts, as you can about:

- The situation you face, including your legal rights.
- The target of your campaign.
- The obstacles that you could face.
- Who your best allies might be.

This information is important for proper planning, when writing press releases, leaflets, lobbying and to justify to others the need for a campaign.

Consider carefully all the various sources of information that you might use. Think widely about where you might get information.

Set objectives

Draw up statements about what you hope to achieve by the end of the campaign. These are your objectives and can be used later to measure the success of the campaign.

The objectives should be specific, short, simple, measurable, agreed to by everyone, able to be reached, and have a specific time-frame attached to them.

Example:

By the end of one month:

- A campaign organising committee will be established.
- Workers Representatives will have all conducted meetings with workers in the workplace regarding the campaign and its objectives.
- Workers Representatives will have gathered the names of workers interested in being involved in the campaign and the areas they are interested in.

By the end of three months:

- Background information has been gathered and prepared.
- The Organising Committee is meeting fortnightly.
- Other organisations who can assist have been identified.
- A campaign kit with a sample press release has been prepared.
- Specific activities and tasks have been carried out.

At the end of five months:

There is an assessment of:

- Strengths and weaknesses of the campaign.
- The obstacles to achieving the objectives.
- How you can overcome these obstacles, or reduce them.

Write a plan of action

The plan of action should include tasks and activities that relate to how to achieve the objectives. Determine the task(s) or activity needed to reach each objective.

For each task and activity decide:

- **What** needs to be done.
- **When** it will be done.
- **Who** will do it.
- **Where** it will be done.
- **How** it will be done.
- **How much** it will cost, and where the money will come from.

Example:

One of the **objectives** of the campaign is to raise the profile among the general public about conditions for women workers in subcontractor factories in the Free Trade Zone.

One of the **tasks** could be the production of stickers for car bumper bars, three wheelers and motorbikes.

For this particular task you would need to:

- Determine a design for the bumper sticker, organise printing and artwork quotes, print, pay for them, and distribute. (**What** needs to be done);
- Decide by **when** the sticker needs to be completed;
- **Who** will be responsible, and who else is involved and needs to be consulted;
- **Where** the sticker will be printed and distributed;
- **How** the sticker will be distributed;
- **How** you will pay for the stickers.

7

Implement the campaign

Using the objectives and your plan of action, implement the campaign.

During the campaign enlist the support of others. Remember that you may need to convince them as to why they should support your campaign. Also, if others support you, you must be prepared to support them when they ask you to.

Evaluate the campaign

Monitor your progress regularly to ensure that the campaign is going to schedule. Evaluate the campaign against the initially stated target, objectives and plan of action. Ask yourselves whether the objectives and plan of action need to be changed. It is normal for changes to be made during the course of a campaign.

At the end of the campaign, discuss which objectives were met and which weren't. Ask yourselves why some objectives were not met. It is important for future campaigns to look at what worked during this campaign and what did not. Also identify things that happened that you did not plan for - positive or negative.

Remember to ***celebrate your victories!***

Partly taken from 'Organising in Everything We Do: Organising Campaign Techniques, Booklet 6', TUTA, Australia, 1996

MRS. SOMBOON'S STORY

The Gina Form Factory in Thailand produces bras, and has had a trade union since 1994. In 2001 the company came under new management. Harassment of the union and its members greatly increased. In 2002 the union leader, Mrs Somboon, and other unionists were dismissed.

The union informed the Asian workers' network called TIE Asia. Together they researched who the buyers of the company were and where the products were being exported to. They also made a long list of all the instances of harassment including the dates and descriptions. The union had already taken the company to court a few times but, even when the court judged the union was right, the company had refused to comply with the ruling.

The research was used to put together an appeal for action. Included in the appeal were demands to the major buyers - Victoria's Secret, K-Mart, La Senza and Gap. This appeal was sent to the Clean Clothes Campaign in Europe, who distributed it to all their member organisations and to other campaigning groups. Many people sent letters and contacted the buying companies.

Several buyers refused to take action. Gap did respond, however, and sent their monitoring team twice to the factory for an investigation and to talk to management. The Gap team also met separately with the union and several other Thai organizations. As a result of the union's struggle combined with international support, Mrs. Somboon was reinstated on 18 March 2003, and three months later the union achieved recognition at Gina Form.

Information from Clean Clothes Campaign. www.cleanclothes.org

BRYLANE WORKERS' STORY

Brylane is the fourth largest company in the US that sells clothing through mail-order catalogues. It is owned by the French multinational retailer Pinault-Printemps-Redoute (PPR).

At Brylane's distribution centres in the state of Indiana, workers had been suffering a lot of injuries as a result of handling heavy goods and they could not get management to recognise their union, which is called Unite.

So the union did some very imaginative things. They produced a catalogue, just like the catalogue sent out to Brylane's mail-order customers. In it are photographs of Brylane workers, wearing the clothes they handle. The text tells the readers about the workers' grievances.

One photo is of a Brylane worker called Minnie Farris who works in the Returns Department. She is wearing a coat of the type she handles. In the text Minnie says, "I've had surgery 5 times because management won't make my job safe. I want a union because Brylane cares so little about workers' safety." The text continues, "Minnie's Brylane coat was made in India, where sweatshops are rampant. Brylane's parent company uses contractors in India who pay less than 1 cent per garment."

This was another part of the imaginative union campaign. They contacted unions and labour rights organisations all over the world to find out about the conditions for workers making garments for Brylane. Research by the Union Research Group in Bombay/Mumbai helped Unite know about the situation of Indian workers who produced Minnie's dress.

As a result of the high-profile campaign and negative publicity, Brylane gave in. The company adopted a Code of Conduct that incorporates basic labour rights. But more important than this, it sat down and negotiated with a committee of elected worker representatives at the Indiana distribution centre. Unite now has official union recognition there. The union is continuing to demand that no worker anywhere who contributes to Brylane's success is deprived of their human rights, including fundamental labour rights.

Information from Unite, USA. www.uniteunion.org and Union Research Group.

Drawing up a plan of action

Aims:

- to develop a concrete plan of action for organizing or for a specific campaign.

Methods:

Divide the participants into small groups according to their interests. For example, groups could consist of:

- Workers from the same factory;
- Workers producing the same labels;
- All homeworkers;
- Homeworkers and workers from the factory that supplies the homeworkers;
- Workers from different factories where their unions are not recognised.

Ask them to draw up a plan of action that addresses one of their most pressing problems.

The plan could be quite simple such as:

- workers providing information on labour laws to other workers in the factory/homes
- organising in the factory to get overtime paid.

Or it could be quite complex, such as:

- lobbying along the supply chain and the key stakeholders, locally, nationally and internationally - with the aim of having the union recognised in the workplace or to support a collective bargaining process.

If appropriate, use the guide given in the Information Sheets as a prompt to the steps to take.

Ask each group to report back to the larger group who can then ask critical questions about the plan of action and strategies suggested.

What did we learn? Evaluation of the session.

Follow up action:

Read the hand-outs and share the information with others.

Take the first steps to implement the plan of action.

Organise a follow-up meeting to assess how the plan of action is going. Discuss its strengths and weaknesses. Assess any obstacles and how to overcome them. Assess whether the campaign objectives and/or the action plan needs changing.

Later, organise a meeting to evaluate how the campaign went, to assess what the achievements were and why. Also assess what any obstacles were and how they could be overcome in the future.

Good luck with your campaign!

Useful material published by Women Working Worldwide

These publications are free for trade unions and workers' rights organisations outside Europe and North America.

From the WWW project

“The rights of workers in garment industry subcontracting chains”

- ‘Garment Industry Subcontracting and Workers’ Rights’, a full report of Women Working Worldwide action research in Asia and Europe, 2003. £5.00
- ‘Bridging the Gap: A look at Gap’s supply chain from the workplace to the store’, by Jennifer Hurley, 2003. £2.00
- ‘Action Research on Garment Industry Supply Chains: Some guidelines for activists’, 2004. £2.00
- ‘Subcontracting in the Garment Industry’, Women Working Worldwide Project Workshop, Bangkok, February 2003. £2.00
- ‘Organising along International Subcontracting Chains in the Garment Industry’, Women Working Worldwide Workshop, Manchester, September 2000. £2.00

Related materials

- ‘Refashioning Resistance: Women workers organising in the global garment industry’, 2002. £4.50
- ‘Company Codes of Conduct and Workers’ Rights: Report of an education and consultation programme with garment workers in Asia’, 2002. £2.00
- ‘Company Codes of Conduct: What are they ? Can we use them? An education pack for worker activists’, 2001. £4.50
- ‘Workers’ Rights in the World Economy’, 2002. £4.50. Includes:
 - Handbook for Activists
 - Workers’ Pocket Guide

