



# Amnesty International

# LABOUR AND LABELS

## HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CURRICULUM

A human rights resource for teachers of KS3-4 Geography, Citizenship and related subjects

### **BACKGROUND**

We live in a global economy and much of the clothing and footwear we buy is made in less economically developed countries. Workers in factories making products for our markets can be denied their basic human rights through low wages, removal of union rights, and poor health and safety conditions. This activity explores our global interdependence, the impact of globalisation on the rights of people in poor countries and what action we can take to address the imbalance.

[www.amnesty.org.uk/education](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/education)

**PROTECT THE HUMAN**



## ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This resource contains materials for one or two lessons and can be used as part of a scheme of work on development issues or economic activity.

The Teacher's Notes below suggest activities to do with your class and outline in detail how to use the resource.

This resource is part of Amnesty International's Human Rights in the Curriculum series, raising awareness of human rights issues through curriculum-linked lessons and resources. Full curriculum links for this resource are provided at the end of the document.

For more free resources see [www.amnesty.org.uk/education](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/education)

### Learning objectives

- To consider the geographical distribution of different economic activities.
- To understand the interdependence of places in regards to economic activity
- To understand the effects of development on the quality of life and human rights of different groups of people
- To consider values and opinions around this moral and social issue

### Resources

In addition to copies of the worksheets provided, you will also need:

- Calculators
- A world map and some pins – if possible use a Peters projection map

### ICT opportunities

The follow-up activities suggest IT research opportunities suitable for homework or to do as extension activity in class.

### Human rights

The following articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) are relevant to this activity:

#### Article 22

Everyone has the right to the basic economic, social and cultural rights needed for dignity and the free development of personality.

#### Article 23

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests

#### Article 25

Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living for ... health and well-being, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.

# LABOUR AND LABELS

## LESSON OUTLINE



### HOMEWORK TASK

#### Where are our clothes from?

Possible homework task before the lesson or a starter activity:

- Ask the students to look at the labels in their jackets, shirts and trainers/ shoes to see where they are made. Stick pins in a world map to show where the clothes and trainers come from. (It is likely that a significant number of them will be made in countries such as Thailand, China, Bangladesh, the Philippines or Morocco.) This could be done as a class survey or individually.
  - Ask the students to comment on why they think their clothes are made in these countries. (Labour costs are cheaper, less health, safety and environmental controls, less tax, closer to raw materials.)

### CLASS BRAINSTORM

#### What rights do workers here have?

- Brainstorm as a class the different rights that a worker has: the right to paid holidays, sick leave, maternity and paternity leave, fair pay, gender and race equality, fair working hours, professional development, union membership, good working conditions, freedom from abuse, health and safety. (If suitable, extend this to include the rights students have in their part-time jobs.)

### ROLE PLAY

#### How are my trainers produced?

- Explain that you are going to investigate in detail the production of a pair of trainers worth £50, to find out how much different parties earn who are involved in the design, production and sale of the product.
- Explain that companies such as Nike, Reebok and Adidas own the brands for the trainers but they contract out the making of the trainers to factories in less economically developed countries.

#### Group work

- Split the class into four groups to represent each group of people involved in the production of a pair of trainers (see role cards.) Give each group one of the role cards, ensuring that you have at least one group representing each role. (You may wish to include the farmer who produces the cotton, in order to represent primary, secondary and tertiary industries. The farmer would receive an even smaller share of the £50 than the factory worker.)
- Ask each group to think about their role in producing the trainers and work out how much they think they should get to cover their costs and profit (if the world was a fair place) out of £50. They should think about the work they do and the overheads they may have to cover.
- Ask each group to feed back and explain why they think they should get the amount they have suggested. They should refer to the work they have to do and their overheads to justify their case.
- Write up on a board how much each group thinks it should get.

**LABOUR AND LABELS** LESSON OUTLINE contd**Discussion**

- You will find that the amounts add up to more than £50. Explain that there is only £50 available so a consensus will need to be reached. Discuss who should take a cut in order to make it add up to £50.
- Once you have reached a consensus on what would be a fair division, reveal the reality for a pair of trainers, (which could come from any of the main companies Nike/Reebok/Adidas etc), which is as follows:  
Brand owner's cost and profits (eg Nike, Reebok, etc.) £16.40;  
Factory owners £9.40 (materials £6.55, overheads £2.00, profit £0.85);  
Factory workers £1.20<sup>1</sup>  
Retailers' cost and profit £23.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Reading International Solidarity Centre Xchanging the World. 1997. You may find different cost breakdowns from other sources. This is because the breakdown is a simplification of reality, and costs vary with different brands. However, whichever source you refer to, you will find that the labour costs are a very small proportion of the overall cost of the trainer: typically between 2 and 4 per cent.

- Compare the reality with the class consensus – is this fair?
- Give the groups time to discuss whether they think this is fair, and if not, why not

**CASE STUDY****Sythasinee's story**

- Read Sythasinee's story on Resource Sheet 1.
- Ask the students to annotate or highlight sections where a right is being denied to Sythasinee. You could hand out copies of the UDHR and ask students to link the rights in the article with the rights in the declaration. For a young person's version of the UDHR, follow the links from our education web page: [www.amnesty.org.uk/education](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/education)
- Ask the students to tell you their favourite brands and what they like about them (eg they look cool, they are worn by certain celebrities, etc). Have they ever chosen a brand based on how the company treats the workers who make the products?
- Discuss what action the students could take to improve the rights of workers making the products we buy. Ideas could include joining a campaign, boycotting products, buying fair-trade produce, lobbying governments and companies.

**Follow-up work**

- Check out [www.cleanclothes.org](http://www.cleanclothes.org) and [www.labourbehindthelabel](http://www.labourbehindthelabel) for up-to-date campaign information.
- Research the websites of major sportswear companies to find out what they say they are doing to improve conditions.

Activity adapted from 'Nike Strike' in 'Xchanging the World' 1997  
Chris Blythe and Dave Richards, Reading International Solidarity Centre.

# LABOUR AND LABELS RESOURCE SHEET



## Suthasinee's story

Suthasinee used to work in a factory in Thailand making clothes for Nike, Adidas and the Gap. She earned £2.80 for a basic eight-hour day, £4.30 with three hours' overtime. Eleven-hour days were normal, six days a week, and at peak times she regularly worked until midnight.

The factory is hot inside, the fire exits are often blocked, and workers have to buy food in the factory's dirty canteen. The managers shout at the workers to work harder and faster. Because workers have to work so quickly, accidents are quite common – sewing machine needles through fingers or metal splinters in the eyes. When workers get home from work in the evening they are exhausted. They eat, watch TV and sleep. Suthasinee shared a small room with two other workers and spent about a third of her wage on rent. She couldn't really afford to go out – a cinema ticket costs £1.50 (over half a day's basic wage).

Suthasinee would have had to spend more than a week's wage to buy one of the shirts she made (they sell for more than £30 here in the UK). Suthasinee took a stand against their poor working conditions ... she was fired.<sup>1</sup>

## Labour rights in the football industry

Nike pays £8 million a year to the Brazilian national football team and Adidas pays £1 million a year to French player Zinedine Zidane. Meanwhile the Asian workers who make the football boots and other sports gear worn by players are paid as little as 30 pence an hour – £2.58 for a standard working day. Shopping at their cheapest local markets, women producing brand-name sportswear in Indonesia need to work nearly four hours to earn enough to purchase 1.5kg of raw chicken (the size of a small chicken), which for some is all the meat they can afford for a month.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced with permission from Norfolk Education and Action for Development as part of their Jusbiz project [www.jusbiz.org](http://www.jusbiz.org)

<sup>2</sup> Source: Oxfam Australia 2006 *Off Side! Labour Rights and Sportswear Production in Asia*. ISBN: 1-875870-61-X. © Oxfam International

## LABOUR AND LABELS ROLE CARDS



### **Brand owner (eg Nike, Reebok, Adidas)**

You are in charge of the overall management of trainer production. You have to decide on the design of the trainer and how much it should cost. You invest a great deal in product development and advertising. (You pay Michael Jordan £12.5 million to endorse your shoes.) You work to make sure that your trainers are the best on the market and try to sell as many as possible to make a good profit for the people who invest in your company (known as shareholders.) You worked hard to get to where you are but you still have to work long hours and manage a big team.

### **Factory owners**

You run the factories where the trainers are made and you then supply them to the brand owner. The brand owner (eg Nike, Adidas) provides you with all the component parts for the trainers but you have to supply the glue and the thread so the workers in your factory can stitch and glue them together. It is your job to look after the buildings where the trainers are made, recruit workers and, most importantly, make sure that the workers produce high quality trainers and that they are delivered to the brand owner on time.

### **Factory workers**

You work in the factory making trainers. You are very lucky to have a job as many people in your community are unemployed. You make the trainers by sewing material such as leather and plastic and then sticking the pieces together with a strong glue. The glue gives off fumes that can make it difficult to breathe and make you feel sick. You have to work 11 hours a day for six days a week and you are constantly under pressure from the bosses to work harder and faster. You are forced to do overtime when deadlines are near. If you refused you would be sacked. There are often accidents in the factory because everyone is working quickly – some people get sewing machine needles through their fingers or metal splinters in their eyes.

### **Retailer**

You represent shops such as Footlocker or JD Sports. It is your job to receive the stock of trainers from Nike and to sell them in your shop. You have to pay the costs of keeping the shop open (eg rent electricity, labour costs) as well as make a profit for the people who invest in your company (known as shareholders.) You have a choice over which trainers to stock but you know that the main brands are the ones that sell best.

## CURRICULUM LINKS



### England

#### KS3 Geography

- 1** Geographical Enquiry and Skills: Pupils should be taught to:
  - c. Collect, record and present evidence
  - e. Appreciate how people's values and attitudes [for example, about overseas aid], including their own, affect contemporary social, environmental, economic and political issues, and to clarify and develop their own values and attitudes about such issues
- 3** Knowledge and understanding of places: Pupils should be taught:
  - a. The location of places and environments studied, places and environments in the news and other significant places and environments
  - e. to explain how places are interdependent [eg through trade], and to explore the idea of global citizenship.
- 6** Themes: Pupils should be taught:
  - h. changing distribution of economic activity and its impact including:
    - i. types and classifications of economic activity
    - ii. the geographical distribution of one or more economic activities [for example, farming, tourism]
    - iii. how and why the distribution has changed and is changing [for example, the impact of new technologies], and the effects of such changes
      - i. development, including:
        - i. ways of identifying differences in development within and between countries
      - iii. factors, including the interdependence of countries, that influence development
- 7** In their study of countries and themes, pupils should:
  - a. study at a range of scales – local, regional, national, international and global
  - b. study different parts of the world and different types of environments ... and parts of the world in different states of economic development.
  - e. study issues of topical significance.

#### KS3 Citizenship

- 1** Knowledge and understanding
  - a. Pupils should be taught about the human rights and responsibilities underpinning society.
    - i. Pupils should be taught about the world as a global community, and the political, economic environmental and social implications of this.....
- 2** Skills of enquiry and communication
  - a. Pupils should be taught to think about topical moral and social issues, problems and events by analysing information and its sources.
  - b. Pupils should be taught to justify orally and in writing a personal opinion about such issues, problems or events.
  - c. Pupils should be taught to contribute to group and exploratory class discussions.
- 3** Skills of participation and responsible action:
  - a. Pupils should be taught to use their imagination to consider other people's experiences and be able to think about, express and explain views that are not their own.

#### KS4 Citizenship

- 1** Knowledge and understanding
  - a. Students should be taught about the human rights and responsibilities underpinning society and how they relate to citizens.
  - h. Students should be taught about the rights and responsibilities of consumers, employers and employees.
  - j. Students should be taught about the wider issues and challenges of global interdependence and responsibility.



## CURRICULUM LINKS contd

- 2 Skills of enquiry and communication
  - b. Students should be taught to express, justify and defend orally and in writing a personal opinion about such issues, problems or events.
  - c. Students should be taught to contribute to group and exploratory class discussions.
- 3 Skills of participation and responsible action:
  - a. Students should be taught to use their imagination to consider other people's experiences and be able to think about, express and critically evaluate views that are not their own.

### Northern Ireland

Curriculum links relate to the current guidelines for the Revised Curriculum for NI

#### KS3 Environment and Society Learning Area: Geography Strand

Develop Knowledge, Understanding and Skills:

- Enquiry skills, eg drawing conclusions relating to secondary resources
- Critical thinking skills to make informed decisions
- Develop a sense of place through the study of issues of topical significance, in order to develop an understanding of: the ways in which places are interdependent; the need for social and economic change to be sustainable

#### Objective 1: Developing pupils as individuals:

- Personal Understanding: Demonstrate an awareness of their own relationships to other places, peoples and environments, from local to global

#### Objective 2: Developing pupils as contributors to society:

- Citizenship: Explore how we can play a role in helping to promote a fairer world for all
- Ethical Awareness: Research and debate ethical issues in geography

#### Objective 3: Developing pupils as contributors to the Economy and Environment

- Economic Awareness: Investigate the impact of globalisation and how it has produced winners and lose

#### KS3 Learning for Life and Work: Local and Global Citizenship Strand

##### Human Rights and Social Responsibility

Young people should have opportunities to:

- Investigate why it is important to uphold human rights standards in modern democratic societies, including meeting basic needs, protecting individuals and groups of people.
- Investigate the principles of social responsibility and the role of individuals, society and government in promoting these.

##### Equality and Social Justice

Young people should have opportunities to:

- Investigate how and why some people may experience inequality as a basis of their material circumstances in local and global contexts.

### Scotland

Curriculum links relate to the current guidelines for the new Curriculum for Excellence.

#### Environmental Studies at S1/S2:

##### People and place

The human environment, Level F: Explain some of the reasons for differences in economic growth at a global level

##### People in society

People and needs in society strand, Level F: Identify the ways in which employment and trade decisions made by multinational companies can affect different groups and countries

Rules, rights and responsibilities in society strand, Level E: Describe some main factors in selected human rights issues.



## CURRICULUM LINKS contd

The activity supports the development of students as:

### Successful learners able to:

- learn independently and as part of a group
- make reasoned evaluations

### Responsible citizens able to:

- make informed choices and decisions
- develop informed, ethical views of complex issues.

### Effective contributors

- communicate in different ways and in different settings
- solve problems.

## Wales

### KS3 Geography

- 1 Geographical Enquiry and Skills, 3: analyse and evaluate the evidence, draw conclusions and communicate findings, ideas and information in an appropriate way.
- 3 Themes, 7: Economic Activity
  - about different types and classifications of economic activity
  - about the geographical distribution of one economic activity
  - how and why the distribution has changed and is changing, and the effects of such changes

## England/Northern Ireland/Scotland/Wales

### KS4 Geography

These activities can be used in any GCSE Geography syllabus which includes the teaching of development issues or economic activity.