

Global power and resources: the empire of the fashion industry

The fashion industry is everywhere. Big brands and retailers open shops on all continents and web shops send clothes to all corners of the planet. You will mainly find garment factories in countries in Asia, South America, eastern and southern Europe and Africa.

How come? These countries are known as 'low-income countries'. Brands have their clothes made there with only one goal in mind: to minimise the price of production.

Cutting risks: too much work & little security

The average day of garment workers is fraught with stress and risk. Their workplace is noisy and hot. Makers' hands come into contact with biting chemicals.

What about protective gear? They don't get any. The factory building itself is hardly ever checked for construction safety. There could be a fire, or the roof could collapse. Should that come to pass, people working inside will often be left to their own devices and not find any fire extinguishers. And should they want to escape in time, the exits, including the emergency doors, will most likely be blocked.

Wholesaling gender inequality: women at a disadvantage in the factory

Women are the backbone of the clothing industry – they work in shops, create designs and head fashion magazines. And... they do most of the work in the garment factories.

Woman and girls stitch your clothes and make embroideries. Often, they are seen as 'good at handiwork'. Women are also said to be more 'obedient' than men. Unlike their male colleagues, they are paid less and hardly ever receive promotions. Women have 'no need' for them, apparently.

You've probably already noticed, there's a lot that needs mending here.

Rolling up the sleeves: unionised and united in battle

Garment workers can fight for their rights by protesting with colleagues and uniting in trade unions. A trade union is an association that stands up for workers' rights and interests.

The more united workers are, the more likely they are to achieve higher wages and better working conditions. Yet in many garment production countries, joining a union can be risky: factory management may oppose makers' activism and will try to get rid of these 'troublemakers'. Workers may be fired, harassed or sometimes even murdered for standing up for their rights.

Rewarding quality: makers deserve living wages

During quality control, your clothes are checked for flaws. Any loose stitches are mended. Then the items are shipped off. Yet the 172 hands that made your clothes remain behind empty.

After all, brands get their clothes made cheaply so that they haul in the profits. Meanwhile, makers earn wages they cannot even live on.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many garment makers have not been paid, or have lost their jobs. They now have even more difficulty affording food, health care and shelter.

Put your hands up for living wages! Join the fight against poverty wages

Garment workers' wages need to be raised. Fashion brands will not do so by themselves. That is why the Clean Clothes Campaign has teamed up with other organisations and launched a major campaign to ensure that the European Union makes stricter rules for wages in the garment industry.

With your signature, we can force the European Commission to discuss better laws that ensure living wages in the garment industry. We need 1 million signatures.

Do you want the makers of your clothes to be paid fairly? [Sign the petition!](#)



Are you under 18 or not an EU citizen?
Forward the petition to your family, sports
team, teacher, neighbour, best friend or
anyone else you like.