

# Sweatshop Fact Sheet

## 1. INDONESIA

Workers in Indonesia have been organizing for their rights. The minimum wage was raised, but according to human rights observers the average Nike shoe worker in Indonesia still makes only \$1.25 per day, working sometimes as long as 10 or 12 hours per shift. According to the Clean Clothes Campaign, this wage is still only about two-thirds of what is necessary to cover basic needs for a single person. In 1997 Nike spent \$978 million on advertising, including big contracts with the national Brazilian soccer team and U.S. basketball stars like Michael Jordan. Nike currently pays Tiger Woods \$55,555 per day to be their spokesman.

Sources: Clean Clothes Campaign [www.cleanclothes.org](http://www.cleanclothes.org); and <http://nikewages.org/index2.html>.

## 2. HAITI

A garment worker in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, paid the legal minimum wage and working 50 hours a week, would need to work 8.8 hours in order to purchase 5 pounds of beans; 4 hours to purchase 5 pounds of rice; 6.7 hours for 1 pound of yams and 5.6 hours to purchase 1 pound of charcoal for cooking. In Haiti, half a week's pay is required to purchase just these four essential items! Most factories pay their workers on a piece basis, though they are required by law to pay at least the minimum wage of 36 gourdes per day — about \$2.17. In violation of the law, workers in some factories do not earn the minimum wage if they do not reach their production quota.

Factory workers told Christian Peacemaker Team delegation members from Italy that \$2.17 is not enough money to live on. When asked what would be a fair wage, workers generally replied that \$4.50 would be acceptable. Source: Go to [http://www.citino.it/associazioni/CNMS/ve/welcome\\_sp.html](http://www.citino.it/associazioni/CNMS/ve/welcome_sp.html).

## 3. UNITED STATES

Instead of going to school, hundreds of thousands of children work in the fields of California and other agricultural states picking fruits and vegetables. They get paid more than kids around the world, but things cost a lot more in the

United States. Sometimes they work in the fields 12 hours a day, six days a week. They get paid by the amount of baskets they fill with strawberries or other fruits and vegetables. For example, in 1998, Sani H., then sixteen, picked chile peppers at the rate of 50¢ per bag (about the size of a bushel). He worked from 7:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. and earned about \$20 a day, for an average hourly wage of \$2.50.

Source: <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/frmwkr>

## 4. VIETNAM

Seventeen-year-old women work 9 to 10 hours a day, seven days a week, earning as little as 6¢ an hour in the Keyhinge factory in Vietnam making giveaway promotional toys — especially Disney characters for McDonald's. At the end of February 1997, 200 workers fell ill, 25 collapsed, and three were hospitalized as a result of acute exposure to acetone. The wages earned by the women don't even cover 20% of a worker's daily food and transportation costs.

Source: National Labor Committee, [www.nlcnet.org/DISNEY/mcdisalt.htm](http://www.nlcnet.org/DISNEY/mcdisalt.htm).

## 5. EL SALVADOR

At the Hermosa factory in El Salvador, workers are paid about 60¢ per hour working up to 70 hours per week. At peak times they have worked a 19.5 hour shift (6:30 a.m. to 2:00 a.m.) with workers forced to sleep on the factory floor. They get paid 29¢ for each \$140 Nike NBA shirt they sew; 30¢ for each \$100 pair of NBA Nike shorts they sew. The drinking water at the factory is contaminated — bacteria levels are 429 times greater than internationally permitted norms. Women raise their babies on coffee and lemonade because they can't afford milk.

Source: National Labor Committee [www.nlcnet.org/elsalvador/0401/hermosa.htm](http://www.nlcnet.org/elsalvador/0401/hermosa.htm).

## 6. EGYPT

Ten- and eleven-year-old girls work at looms making carpets. They work from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in violation of Egypt's labor laws. They work six days a week and make \$5 per week. (Hint: figure out their hourly wage by doing something other than multiplication.)

Source: U.S. Department of Labor.

## 7. BANGLADESH

At the Beximco factory in the Export Processing Zone of Dhaka, Bangladesh, young women sew shirts and pants for Wal-Mart and other retailers. The workshift is from 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week. The one-hour lunch break is not paid. Sewing operators make 20¢ an hour and helpers make 9¢ an hour. Even though the law requires it, Wal-Mart and its contractor do not pay overtime premiums (extra money after 48 hours). There is no maternity leave and no health care provided workers. In Bangladesh's Export Processing Zone unions are outlawed.

Source: Wal-Mart's Shirts of Misery, July 1999, by the National Labor Committee.

## 8. GUANGDONG, CHINA

At the Ming Cycle factory in Guangdong, China, workers aged 17 to 25 work in four factories making Wal-Mart Mongoose bicycles. The base wage is 20¢ an hour, but with overtime pay it increases. One pay record shows a skilled assembly line worker in April 2000 working 84 hours a week, and earning 30¢ each hour. At the factory, if a worker is caught dozing off, exhausted by the long hours, he or she is fined a half day's wages and can be fired.

Source: National Labor Committee, [www.nlcnet.org/golden\\_grinch/walmart\\_mongoose\\_bikes.htm](http://www.nlcnet.org/golden_grinch/walmart_mongoose_bikes.htm).

## 9. QINGDAO, CHINA

At the Daesun Electronic Corp. in Qingdao, China, workers make top-of-the-line Alpine car stereos, some costing up to \$1,300 each. They are made by young women who are paid an average (according to the company) of 27¢ to 31¢ an hour. (Starting pay is 20¢ to 22¢ an hour.) They sit hunched over, staring into microscopes nine-plus hours a day, six days a week, soldering parts of the stereos. Above the women is an electronic scoreboard that monitors their progress toward the daily production quota of 720 units.

Source: Made in China, a report by the National Labor Committee, [www.nlc.net](http://www.nlc.net), May 2000.

## 10. HONDURAS

At the Evergreen Factory in the Rio Blanco Industrial Park, 630 workers sew McKids Wal-Mart's children's clothing and Arizona clothing for J. C. Penney. The majority of workers are

young women of 14, 15, and 16. They are forced to work overtime: Fourteen-hour shifts Monday through Friday, as well as nine-hour shifts on Saturdays and Sundays. In one four-month period in 1998, there were constant, mandatory seven-day work weeks. The workers earn approximately 43¢ per hour.

In some Honduran factories, workers do up to 14-hour daily shifts and occasional mandatory 24-hour shifts, working right through the night. If a worker cannot stay for the overtime, she is suspended without pay or fired.

The 43¢-an-hour base wage meets only 54% of the cost of survival. Workers sewing Wal-Mart clothing cannot afford to purchase milk, juice, meat, fish, fruit, cereals, or vitamins for their children. Nor can they afford to buy new clothes.

Source: <http://www.nlcnet.org/walmart/honwal.htm>

## 11. AMERICAN SAMOA

Clothing is produced for J.C. Penney and other retailers at factories where workers are beaten. Food was so inadequate that workers were "walking skeletons," according to a U.S. Department of Labor report. The factory belonged to Daewoosa, a small Korean-owned clothing manufacturer.

Three hundred workers, brought from Vietnam, were fed watery broth of rice and cabbage, and kept 36 to a room, with two workers to a 36-inch-wide bed. Workers earned about \$400 a month, but were forced to pay \$150 to \$200 a month for food and rent. Workers were sometimes beaten with pipes. Workers' net pay was approximately \$1.22 an hour. Samoa has a minimum wage of \$2.60 an hour.

Source: "Beatings and Other Abuses Cited at Samoan Apparel Plant That Supplied U.S. Retailers," by Steven Greenhouse, The New York Times, Feb. 6, 2001; and [http://www.sweatshopwatch.org/swatch/newsletters/7\\_1.html#samoa](http://www.sweatshopwatch.org/swatch/newsletters/7_1.html#samoa).

## 12. MEXICO

In January 2001, workers in the Kukdong factory in Atlixco, Mexico were making \$30 for a 45-hour week. They make Nike sportswear (sweat-shirts, T-shirts, etc.) for University of Oregon, University of North Carolina, University of Michigan, Michigan State, Georgetown, Penn State, and others.

Source: Campaign for Labor Rights

— compiled by Bob Peterson