

WHAT SHE MAKES

IS KEEPING HER IN POVERTY



GEOGRAPHY, YEAR 10



OXFAM
Australia

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What She Makes: Education Resource has been created in collaboration with Social Education Victoria (SEV), the Geography Teachers Association of Victoria (GTAV) and Oxfam Australia. It has been developed to support the delivery of a flexible and engaging curriculum to support the What She Makes labour rights campaign, to increase intercultural understanding and awareness of the lives of garment workers in Bangladesh and an intensive and thorough examination of the determinants of living wage equity. This resource aims to inspire young Australians to take action against popular brands to pay a living wage to the women who make our clothes.

What She Makes: Education Resource has been mapped to support the implementation of the Australian Curriculum. Available online for free download, the resource includes:

- Specific mapping to the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship Levels 7–10, Geography Year 10: Geographical Knowledge and Understanding required by Unit 2: Geographies of human wellbeing, and Year 7 Place and Liveability and Year 8 Changing Nations;
- Background notes for teachers to ensure teacher knowledge of context while supporting teacher professional judgment within the local context;
- Tablet- and print-friendly Student Activity worksheets;
- Detailed Lesson Plans with support for assessment tasks decisions by the teacher. What She Makes helps students explore the barriers facing garment workers seeking a living wage, how wellbeing is affected by poverty, and how students can get involved to pressure brands to address these issues.

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Disclaimer: Reference has been made to the Australian Curriculum: Civics and Citizenship and Geography. Teachers should also refer to state jurisdiction for local curriculum context. This resource was originally published in October 2018. All information and links correct at the time of publishing.



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What She Makes

How do the clothes that you purchase have an impact on global human wellbeing?
To complete these tasks, you need to have access to the online resource
'What She Makes: Power and Poverty in the fashion Industry'.



ACTIVITY

1

Mapping data and human wellbeing

Your task:

In a small group, study the available data and identify which of the listed countries fall into one of the three below categories, which measure human wellbeing.

Categories of human wellbeing (for the sake of this assignment)

Group A — High level of human wellbeing

Group B — Middle level of human wellbeing

Group C — Low level of human wellbeing

Each group member is tasked with collecting four different examples of indicators of human wellbeing to compare with three of the following countries. Categorise the three countries you choose into Group A, B or C, making sure each group member selects different countries and indicators. Begin by each choosing either wealth, income, GDP or wage (one each) using the following links and then use the supplied table to graph your data using your countries and indicators.

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Comparison	Indicator 1	Indicator 2	Indicator 3	Indicator 4	Group A, B or C?
Country 1					
Country 2					
Country 3					

You can list as a percentage (per 100) or per 1000, but keep your numbers consistent so it's easier to compare.

Sources for country comparisons:

World Data

Global Wealth Databook P21

CIA World Fact Book

Country List:

			Canada 	Bangladesh 	Italy 
Ethiopia 	Vietnam 	China 	South Africa 	France 	Egypt 
Argentina 	Australia 	Brazil 	Russia 	Norway 	South Korea 
Kenya 	Morocco 	India 	Saudi Arabia 	Denmark 	United States of America 
Colombia 	Thailand 	Papua New Guinea 	Mexico 	Indonesia 	Cambodia 

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The indicators of wellbeing may be selected from the table below or you could decide some of your own. Be sure that at least one person in your group uses an indicator of income or wealth and that all group members use different indicators.

Possible comparisons:

mortality rate	TV ownership
car ownership or traffic mortality	food consumed daily
housing or shelter	life expectancy
birth rate	literacy rates
access to electricity	school attendance
telephone ownership or internet access	number of doctors or 1,000 of population
access to water	employment

Data sources can be found in the gazetteer of any Atlas or in many online resources, including:

[Gapminder](#)

[Nation Master](#)

[World Statistics](#)

[Sustainable Society Index](#)

Once you have collected your four pieces of comparative indicators of human wellbeing for each country, decide which country fits into each of the three categories: Group A, B or C.

As a group, compare your results for each country and decide on a final list of which countries fit into each of the three categories. As a group discuss the following and make note of your answers.

Were there any countries that you had trouble fitting into a category? Explain why.

From the indicators you used, which category had the greatest range or variation between levels of human wellbeing? Explain your answer using three or four examples from your data collection.

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What do people with a high level of human wellbeing have access to that people with low levels of human wellbeing don't have access to now? Make a list.

Make a choropleth map by shading in an outline world map to show the three groups of countries that you have identified. Use one colour or different shades for each of the three categories. Save some trees and get creative with your map [here](#).

1. Describe any patterns that you have identified for each of the three categories or regions. Your answer should use terms such as continent names, numbers, hemisphere, equator, concentrated and scattered.

2. If you were planning to build a factory that produces goods that have high wage or labour costs (what you pay the factory workers), which of the three categories or regions of human wellbeing would you locate it in? Why?

ACTIVITY

2

A living wage

Your task:

Is it too much to ask that a person who goes to work for more than 40 hours a week should be able to live on the wage that he or she earns? Access to money is a major cause of inequalities between regions of wellbeing. Access to housing, food, water, employment, education, energy, clothes and healthcare are all indicators of wellbeing. If you are being paid or earn a living wage, it is likely that you will have a decent standard of living for yourself and your family. Most countries set a minimum wage rather than a living wage for their workforce. How is this problematic, or is it?

TASK ONE

Working in the global garment industry

1. To get an understanding of what it means to be a worker in the garment industry of Asia or Africa, view the following short film clips and discuss and or make notes using the following questions as a guide.

Bangladesh

- A. What is the evidence that these three workers, Anju, Forida and Fatima, do or do not earn a living wage?
- B. Describe their working conditions.
- C. Describe their living conditions.
- D. Describe the quality of their family life.

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Bangladesh

- What is the evidence that the woman earns something closer to a living wage?
- Is her life any better than that of Anju, Farida and Fatima?

Ethiopia

- How is Lemlem Mussie's life similar or different to that of the women working in Bangladesh?
- Does she seem to be earning a living wage? Explain.
- Why does the factory manager say that large factories like the one that Lemlem works in were built in Ethiopia?
- Describe the contrast between the factory and Lemlem's accommodation.
- From these examples of the working life of garment factory employees in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, do they appear to be earning a living wage? Explain your response.

TASK TWO

Minimum wage

Your task:

Read pages 9 and 10, [Whatshemakes](#)

- Use the data from the minimum wages comparative table for workers in the garment factories of Asia on page 10, to construct a column graph to illustrate the monthly wage for a worker from each country. Assume they work a 48-hour week for 4.3 weeks in a month. Factories in these six Asian nations make 91% of all clothes sold in Australia.
- Add a seventh and eighth column for Ethiopia to illustrate the monthly income for a bank employee of AUD \$24 per month and for a government or public service employee of AUD \$28 per month.

Answer the following:

- Would you expect that a worker in a bank or in the public service would earn more or less per month than a garment factory worker? Explain your answer. What does your graph illustrate about wages in Ethiopia?
- How many times more do garment factory employees earn in China than in Bangladesh?
- As wages have grown in China what would you expect must have happened to the wellbeing of the workers?
- As wages have grown in China what would you expect must have happened to the location of garment factories within Asia?
- How might the monthly wages displayed in your graph explain the recent heavy investment by Chinese companies in garment factories in Ethiopia?

TASK THREE

Living on the minimum wage

Dollar Street is a pictorial record of how people live. It compares 264 families in 50 countries visually recording many everyday aspects of their lives. The aim of this project is to show that there are people and families behind the statistics relating to human wellbeing within each country, and that within each country there are those who are better off than others.

Resource: [Gap Minder](#)

There are eight families in Bangladesh who have their lives available for comparison. Of them, only one family has a wife who works in the garment industry. They are the Hossain family with the highest monthly income of USD \$175 (AUD \$235 as of Aug 2018).

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Your task:

Compare the lives of three Bangladeshi families, including the Hossain family.

1. Create a table that compares at least 10 indicators of wellbeing between these families. Fill in the table using images or text

Indicators of wellbeing	Hossain family	Family 2	Family 3
Monthly income	\$	\$	\$
Cost of food	\$	\$	\$
Size of house			

2. Identify two or three differences and similarities between their lives.
3. Explain how life is different for the Hossain family compared to the other two Bangladeshi families that you investigated.
4. Use Dollar Street to compare the lives of a family in each of the other Asian countries with high numbers of garment workers: China, Vietnam, Cambodia, India and Indonesia. Compare families with about the same income as the minimum monthly wage for a garment worker that you graphed in TASK TWO.
5. Discuss what life would be like for a garment worker in a low wage paying Asian country relying on the minimum wage. Would you call this a living wage?
6. Look at Dollar Street for several African countries near Ethiopia. Does the level of human wellbeing seem to be different in Africa compared to Asia?

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TASK THREE

Minimum wage vs living wage

Read page 11, ([Whatshemakes](#))

Look at the t-shirt image of the cost structure of Australian clothing prices. Identify the labour production cost.

Read page 12, ([Whatshemakes](#)) Read Forida's Story.

Discuss with your class the ways that an increase in Forida's wage and improved working conditions will be beneficial to her wellbeing.

Pages 16-21. ([Whatshemakes](#))

Your task:

You have 15 minutes in a small group to try to formulate an explanation of the difference between a living wage and a minimum wage. Jot down notes below.

Read the information and then in clear and simple terms, using at least one example from the text, be ready to orally report your group understanding to the class. The explanation should only be two minutes maximum.

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TASK FIVE

Consequences of a low-cost fashion industry

Your task:

Write a newspaper or magazine article with a catchy headline, such as “Who pays too much for our clothes?”

Use case studies from the following resources to explain how the human wellbeing of garment workers in Asia and Africa has been compromised so that we can have access to cheaper clothes.

The cost of Dhaka’s booming textile industry

H&M in Bangladesh

The human cost of fast fashion is still too high

‘Shameful’ clothing brands failing Bangladeshi workers, say activists

Five years after deadly factory fire, Bangladesh’s garment workers are still vulnerable

East Africa pushes second-hand clothing ban



Perhaps the #1 rule of writing a newspaper article is that you are factual. You do not want to make assumptions or fabricate information. Before you can write your article, you must have as many of the facts as you can gather. Here are some facts that you will need to find out:

- **What? The specific event that took place.**
- **Who? The people involved.**
- **Where? Places.**
- **When? Date and time.**
- **Why? Reasons for the event taking place.**
- **How? Connecting the facts.**

Once you have all your facts, you can write your article.

THE HEADLINE OR TITLE

For a news article, the headline is where you can be the most creative. The headline should grab the reader’s attention. It needs to be catchy, it might evoke emotion, or it can inspire curiosity.

THE ARTICLE BODY

The news article should be written with an “inverted pyramid” approach. This means that the most important information comes first, in most detail, and each following paragraph gives less and less detail. Whereas a novel, for example, starts with little information and you must read to the end to get all of it.

Don’t make your paragraphs long — two to three sentences each. Your word count should generally stay around 500 words or less.

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ACTIVITY

3

How can we challenge What She Makes?

Background

In Australia, minimum wages and safe working conditions are law. Unions protect the interests of their members, but also campaign to assist workers globally. The minimum award rate of pay for garment factory workers in Australia is \$19.53 per hour even as a trainee or piece worker. This is equal to about half of a month of work in Ethiopia or a week's work in many Asian garment factories. It would take 4,000 years for a garment worker paid a minimum wage of 40 cents per hour to earn the same amount of money that a highly paid CEO in an Australian retail business would earn in one year.

Read pages 30–33, [Whatshemakes](#)

The Oxfam What She Makes campaign is asking for Australians to speak up, as together we can hold brands accountable for what she makes. We must stand with the women who make our clothes and let brands know loud and clear that the women working in their factories must be paid a living wage.

Also, remember that Oxfam does not support a boycott of big brands. The goal is not to take away jobs from the women who make our clothes, but to instead make sure that they are paid fairly for the work they do.

Your task:

It's now your chance to make a difference.

In a group of 3–4 students, create an outline for a public awareness campaign to promote the What She Makes campaign. Your aim is to improve or highlight the inequalities in human wellbeing that you have discovered by studying the cheaper end of the global garment manufacturing industry.

Some things to consider:

- Who should your campaign target?
- What means of public awareness will you use?
- How long should your campaign run and how long do you predict it will take to succeed?
- How will you rate your success or failure?
- What is your central aim? You can be broad or specific.

Some inspirational examples:

- Write a research piece, record a podcast or produce a TV news item on the current safety of garment factories in Bangladesh.
- Run a social media campaign to encourage people to put pressure on brands when they buy new clothes.
- Investigate clothing waste: water, wages or energy.
- Raise some money for the improvement of an aspect of human wellbeing.
- Write to politicians or clothing brands about living wages in Australia or globally.
- Use one of the case studies of Anju, Florida or Fatima to create a short podcast, radio or video which compares their living standards with your own.
- Come up with something different with your team.

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Possible extra resources:

[What She Makes](#)

[Oxfam publishes 'Naughty and nice'
list of ethical fashion brands](#)

[2018 Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh](#)

[About the Accord](#)

[Witness Signatories](#)