

# WHAT SHE MAKES

IS KEEPING HER IN POVERTY



## WHAT SHE MAKES SCHOOLS HOW-TO GUIDE

Take action to support the women  
who make our clothes



**OXFAM**  
Australia

# WHAT SHE MAKES

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## Oxfam Australia Schools Program How-to guides

Oxfam Australia Schools Program How-to guides are written to provide teachers, students and the broader school community with information, tools, tips and tricks to host awesome events that drive change in the local and global community.

Disclaimer: The views of this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of Oxfam or any funding agency. For more information on the What She Makes campaign, including the full Media Report and Sewing Kit technical report, see [whatshemakes.oxfam.org.au](http://whatshemakes.oxfam.org.au)

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The information in this How-to guide is correct at the time of publication.

## About Oxfam

At Oxfam, we believe all lives are equal and no-one should live in poverty. We join forces with people who share this belief, to empower communities to build better lives for themselves. That's why we are there on the ground, not only to save lives in times of crisis, but also to develop lasting solutions. Our work spans wide because there are many causes of poverty. That's why we're also in front of decision-makers, governments and corporations, and speak out on the big issues.

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Cover image: Melbourne, Australia: Oxfam Australia staff participate in an action targeting Myer in Bourke St Mall, as part of the What She Makes campaign.  
Photo: Geoff Bartlett/Oxfam Australia.

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# WHAT SHE MAKES

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## ONLY 4%

OF THE PRICE OF A  
GARMENT GOES TO THE  
WOMEN WHO MAKE IT.

Source: Deloitte Access Economics for Oxfam Australia, 2017

Holding a What She Makes event at your school will help bring attention to this issue and put pressure on the big brands to improve their human rights record and make a huge difference in the lives of the people who make our clothes.

Whether it's a clothing swap to inspire your fellow students to share and reuse clothes to show you care about #whatshemakes, or a call to action to get as many people as possible to contact the brands who make your uniforms, or discussing labour rights in the classroom — there are so many ways you can take action!

This What She Makes How-to guide is designed for you, Australian school students and teachers, who are looking to make some noise, make a difference, and show support for the women who make our clothes. It's full of tips on how you can make your event a success and should be used with the other goodies available on the What She Makes website, like videos, posters and more [whatshemakes.oxfam.org.au](https://whatshemakes.oxfam.org.au)



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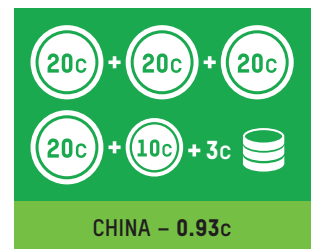
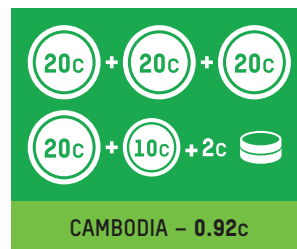
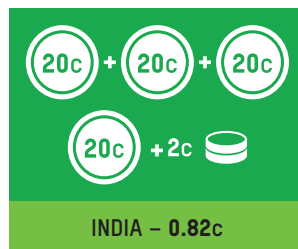
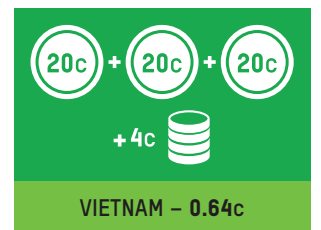
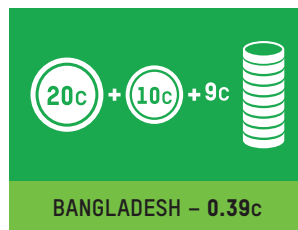
Photo: GMB Akash/Panos/OxfamAUS

## What women make: wages in the garment industry

No-one who works full time should have to live in poverty.

Some might argue that despite the fact that the cost of living in certain countries may be lower, the salaries paid in the garment industry still don't allow a worker to exist with basic dignity, hygiene or health. The women and men making our clothes are living in poverty, with some being the same age as you are now.

While brands like Kmart, Cotton On, Just Group and H&M are growing, the workers who make the clothes are barely making ends meet.



Note: Exchange rate used is 1 USD = 1.25 AUD.23, 24

### Women garment workers are:

- earning less than men.
- frequently subjected to verbal and physical abuse.
- subjected to sexual harassment at work.
- often living in slum-like housing.

Asia provides around 91% of the garments sold in Australia, with China being the top sourcing destination, followed by Bangladesh, which provides

more than 9% of all garments sold here. Other key source countries for the Australian market include Vietnam, Indonesia, Cambodia and India.

The minimum wage is the lowest salary that workers can legally be paid. Having legal minimum wages is supposed to ensure that workers earn enough to afford housing and enough to eat.

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## A LIVING WAGE

for a worker and their family should provide:



Food



Utilities



Education



Clothing



Housing



Healthcare



Transportation



Savings

Earned in no more than 48hrs/week.

### What is a living wage?

- A living wage should be earned in a standard work week of no more than 48 hours.
- It should provide, for a worker and their family, a decent standard of living including:
  - food
  - housing
  - healthcare
  - clothing
  - transportation
  - utilities (energy, water)
  - child care
  - education
  - money left over for emergencies and savings

Companies need to work towards paying the women and men who make our clothes a living wage.

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## Forida's story

"If we were paid a little more money, then I could one day send my son to school; we could live happily, we could lead a better life."

Forida makes clothes for Target Australia, H&M and other global brands.

Forida makes 35 cents an hour<sup>27</sup> making our clothes.

Forida is 22 years old. She lives with her husband, a rice miller, and her toddler son in Kallyanpur, a slum area in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She also supports her mother-in-law, who looks after her son while she is at work. Forida and her family have lived in a dark, hot and cramped compound with six other families, including her landlord's, for three years. There is just one toilet and place to bathe for the whole compound, and two shared cooking areas. Constructed mostly of tin and wood, her living conditions are crowded and run down. Forida says, "When it rains, there's a smell in our home."

Behind the rental property is a big, black polluted pond, which attracts a consistent influx of mosquitos, especially in Forida's room — half of which is built over the water. This increases her family's risk of exposure to viral, mosquito-borne diseases like malaria, dengue fever and Chikungunya.

Towards the end of each month, Forida's salary runs out and she just eats "old watery rice, with salt and green chili".

If she was paid a living wage, Forida could "provide food for the last week of the month [and] eat better food like vegetables and meat".

Each day, like all garment workers, Forida is given a target that she must complete before she can go home. Forida makes shirt collars and has a target of 80 collars per hour for a striped or patterned shirt, and 100 collars per hour for a solid colour shirt. These targets are impossible to meet in regular working hours, so she is forced to work overtime to complete the immense workload. During busier times, when international clothing brands place demanding orders, she might work as late as midnight. Often, she is given no notice of overtime, so cannot make care arrangements for her son. If production targets are not met, 500 taka (AUD \$7.70) is deducted from her wages as punishment.

The pressure at work is immense. If she makes any mistakes, she is verbally abused by her supervisor. "I feel embarrassed when I am scolded in front of so many people and then I feel bad about myself because I'm not able to do the work properly. If I could do the work properly, then I wouldn't be scolded so hard and this makes me cry."

Forida hopes for more realistic targets and a better wage.

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## AVERAGE COST STRUCTURE OF AUSTRALIAN CLOTHING PRICES



**Note:** \*GST is 9% because the 10% GST is added to the pre-GST cost of an item. This means, as part of the total retail price of an item, GST usually makes up 9%.

**Source:** Deloitte Access Economics for Oxfam Australia, "A Living Wage in Australia's Clothing Supply Chain"

## Brands can afford to pay workers more

- At the same time as workers are earning as low as 39 cents an hour (or less), companies and CEOs in the garment industry are making large amounts of money.
- While governments across Asia set wages low to encourage foreign investment, brands also play an important part in keeping wages low by negotiating hard with individual factories to produce garments as cheaply as possible.
- To meet the demands of big brands, garment manufacturers are making workers work long hours on poverty wages.



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## Taking action

### This is where you come in!

After the Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh collapsed in 2013, Australian consumers — including teachers and students — demanded that companies act. In response, almost all the largest garment retailers in Australia joined the groundbreaking Bangladesh Fire and Building Safety Accord. Students just like you helped to bring about real change — impressive, hey?

Similarly, as Oxfam and others have focused on calling for transparency, bringing garment companies' factory lists out of hiding, Australians have again taken to email and social media to express their opinions. Since March 2016 alone, 10 of the biggest brands operating in Australia have published most of their factory locations online — keeping them accountable when problems occur.

Young people can push the boundaries again. 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.

### Why not just boycott?

You may be thinking “I’ll just stop shopping there” but boycotting a company is not the only answer. We want the women who make our clothes to have safe, fair working conditions and decent pay. That means keeping their jobs, so Oxfam does not encourage consumers boycotting their favourite brands. Instead, consumers should tell brands how they feel about living wages.

### Reasons to participate in change:

- The garment industry is an important part of the economy in many developing countries.
- What we’re asking for is that the jobs in those industries are fair and safe — and that people are paid a living wage for the work they do.
- We all buy clothes, so we should use our power as customers to tell companies we care about what she makes.

“Consumers in [the West] have a big responsibility ... they have to think about how these companies are doing business. The multinationals take our blood and our sweat. Consumers need to know where their clothes are coming from and what the working hours and conditions are. We need to [also] look at the living conditions.”

— Former child factory worker Nazma Akter, founder of the Awaj Foundation, which fights for labour rights in Bangladesh

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## Planning your What She Makes event or action

### Organising for impact

Holding events in your school community is a fantastic way to raise awareness about the What She Makes campaign and to create change for the women who make our clothes!



Dhaka, Bangladesh: Women march for their rights. Photo: Peter Caton/OxfamAus.

### Here are two things you can do:

1. Run an awareness campaign at your school asking people to sign the What She Makes pledge
2. Write letters, emails, posts on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook walls of big clothing brands — we even have a script right [here](#).

You could choose to host one event to do both these actions, or host two events: first focusing on getting pledge signatures, and then hosting a “contacting the brands” working bee!

### Taking action!

#### To start, you'll need:

- Get a teacher or faculty member on board — let them know what you want to do.
- Organise other students. Will you do this as a class, a group of friends, a year level, social justice group, or other?
- Make a poster, put out a call for members, and set a meeting day and time.
- Plan your first meeting.

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## Holding your first meeting

**This is the fun bit! Discuss these questions in your planning group:**

- What ideas do you have for an awareness campaign within your school?
- What do we have to do to make sure this happens? Will we need anything, such as food, tables or materials?
- How can we get everyone involved at some stage?
- How can we entertain people and make sure they have fun?
- How can we make sure people learn more about the campaign and how they can get involved?
- What campaign resources or information do we need, including posters or the What She Makes pledge?
- Brainstorm fun event ideas.
- Decide a venue, date and time.
- Set clear goals and targets.
- Build a promotion plan.
- Discuss funding or sponsorship (if required).
- After the event, review how everything went.

Your event needs to be meaningful to you and your school. Make sure it's relevant to the stuff people in your community might understand or experience themselves. Ask yourself:

- Will it be enjoyable and interesting for participants?
- Will we get people thinking, asking questions and wanting to make a difference?

Be passionate **and** realistic — what can you do with what you've got? You'll be surprised at how even just one classroom, with just a few resources, can end up creating an awesome event!

## Making it happen

This event planning table is a quick guide to setting clear targets for your event. This will help keep your group on track and help you review your event easily and effectively.

Reviewing your event might sound tedious but it's important to check how well your tactics are working. This will enable you to run increasingly successful events in the future, and to build a strong movement for social change in your school community.

On the day, make sure someone is on hand to document the fun. Perhaps allocate one classroom to take photos, make videos or write reflection pieces?

Don't forget to promote your school's work towards social justice. Email us at [schools@oxfam.org.au](mailto:schools@oxfam.org.au), along with your signed [release form](#).



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## First meeting agenda

Event name:	
Campaign name:	What She Makes
Date and time:	
Venue:	

Costs:	Costs	Funding breakdown
<p>Does the event require funding?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, we don't need any funding</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, we need funding. Fill out what costs you expect to have in the table.</p>	Snacks and drinks	\$
	Printing	\$
	Equipment	\$
	Other	\$
		\$
	<b>Total:</b>	\$

Event Goals:	Example goals	Expected outcome
<p>What do you want to achieve by holding this event? These goals should be brainstormed and decided on before your event. Delete or add goals to the list that are relevant to your event.</p> <p>And make sure your goals are SMART:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific</li> <li>• Measureable</li> <li>• Achievable</li> <li>• Realistic</li> <li>• Time-bound</li> </ul>	How many people do we want to attend the event?	
	How many signed pledges do we aim to collect?	
	How many emails or letters do we want to send to the brands who make our clothes?	
	Work out who you could collaborate with for this event within your school. For example, could you collaborate with the Home Economics or Textiles class, or other classes exploring the topics of work and labour rights?	
	Contact and inform local media about the event you are holding. Who will you contact?	
	How much money do we aim to fundraise?	
	How will you use social media or online networks to spread the word?	



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Resources:	Some questions to ask	What do we have?	What do we need?
What resources do we have and what do we need to achieve our event goals?	How can we gather support? For example, your neighbour could lend a table or grandma will bake a slice.		
	Do we have enough volunteers to organise the event?		
	How will we promote the event (online and offline) to achieve our goals?		
	Do we have enough information about the campaign?		
	Do we have enough money to cover costs for the event?		

Other:	What's on?	How will this positively or negatively impact the outcomes of our event?	What can we do to make sure our event is still successful?
<p>Are there any other things we need to consider?</p> <p>Be aware of things like other major community events or national and international days, such as NAIDOC Week or World Refugee Day.</p>			

<b>Post-event debrief: Celebrate your work and reflect on your achievements</b>  Have a post-event celebration and thank everyone who helped out. Talk about what worked and what you'd change if you do it again or host another event to build on this one. Look back and enjoy your success — you've earned it!	How many students and teachers did you reach?	
	How many people signed the pledge?	
	How many people helped and joined in?	
	How many students and teachers wrote letters or emails to brands?	

Email [schools@oxfam.org.au](mailto:schools@oxfam.org.au) and tell us about your success!

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## Awareness campaign: What She Makes

### To-do prior to pledge blitz:

1. Print out pledge forms to collect names and emails for people to fill out and use the phone number and post code of your school.
2. Get a table or spot in a high traffic area within your school.
3. After all your pledges are signed, get online and fill in the info you collected. Or save yourself the data entry and have a tablet on you for students to fill out at your event! Remember to use the phone number and post code of your school.



Northcote, Australia: Market visitor signing the #WhatSheMakes campaign pledge. Photo: OxfamAUS.

### How to talk to people to encourage them to sign the pledge!

As part of the blitzing team, you will be trying to engage someone's interest in your message, have them embrace it and inspire them to act.

One of the ways to do this is to use the model AHA – as in, "Aha, a light bulb moment!"

AHA is an acronym for Anger, Hope, Action. Check out the example below:

- We instill a sense of **anger** by exposing inequality — the people who make our clothes are paid poverty wages!
- We create a sense of **hope** by identifying a way to create positive change — brands can afford to pay a living wage!
- We suggest an **action** people can do to create change — that's signing our pledge!

### Things to think about when you're trying to stop people walking by to sign the pledge:

How do I ask people to stop?

How do I stand?

What way should I look?

Would I want to stop for me?

Getting the message across is more than just knowing your stuff. To communicate well, you need to match your words with persuasive tone and body language. Remember to make eye contact and smile!

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## Top Tips:

- Show confidence!
- Be assertive and straight to the point: "Hey! Please sign this pledge."
- The more people you ask, the more pledges you will get.
- Make students and teachers aware you only want a signature and not their wallet.
- Don't waffle, keep it short and simple.
- Try not to be distressed if you get a lot of refusals. These things tend to run in streaks. You will probably get a whole lot of sign-ups in a row, before you know it. Keep going!
- Get right in with the busy foot traffic.
- Don't get caught up in really long conversations, keep it simple!
- Be happy, and just enjoy it!

## What She Makes pledge – for distribution

Hard or soft copies of the pledge are available for your event.

### You have two options:

- Print the pledges on the next page (as many copies as you'll need for your event) and mail them to Schools Program, 130–138 Leicester St Carlton VIC 3053 or scan and email to [schools@oxfam.org.au](mailto:schools@oxfam.org.au)
- Direct people to sign the pledge online at [whatshemakes.oxfam.org.au](http://whatshemakes.oxfam.org.au) if you are able to have tablet computers at your event.



Northcote, Australia: Jess, a volunteer at the Suitcase Rummage supports What She Makes. Photo: Supplied by OxfamAUS.

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We're tackling poverty in the fashion industry.  
We demand big clothing brands pay a living wage.

By not paying a living wage, big brands are keeping the women who make our clothes in poverty. But this can change. Together, we can hold big brands to account for what she makes.

## Sign the Pledge

We're all cut from the same cloth. I will:

- Stand in solidarity with the women who make our clothes
- Let big brands know loud and clear that the women working in their factories making my clothes must be paid a living wage.

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Post code: \_\_\_\_\_

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Post code: \_\_\_\_\_

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Post code: \_\_\_\_\_

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First name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Post code: \_\_\_\_\_



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## Contacting the brands — What She Makes

Once you've got people to sign the What She Makes pledge, there's still plenty more they can do. Visit the [What She Makes website](#) to check out the [Company Tracker](#). You can direct people here to take further action, or if you're super keen you can set up a time where people can write to brands to ask them #whatshemakes.

## School uniforms and What She Makes

Where do most of your students buy their school uniforms? Do any of the clothes or accessories come from any of the brands on our company tracker? If so, you could encourage students to write to brands asking them to commit to paying a living wage. You could even write from the Principal and the whole school, to make an even bigger impact. Or what about joining up with schools in your local area to go even bigger? This could be the focus of a letter-writing campaign.

## Online and offline activism

If your group has decided to target brands online, check out the [brand tracker](#) to take the temperature on the progress of the What She Makes campaign to see which of the country's biggest and most well-known brands are lagging behind and need your voice. Take action and let brands know you expect more from them. Use the '[stuff companies say](#)' as a guide for your engagement.

You can also host a letter-writing event with your friends, especially your friends with fun markers. Find out everything you need to know to host a successful letter-writing event [here](#).

## More actions for your school

- Host a clothing swap or shwooping experience to contribute less to fast fashion.
  - Invite everyone to bring in clothing they don't wear anymore but are in still in good shape.
  - Everyone can throw their clothes in a pile or display them for trade and you can even resell the clothes for a few dollars and fundraise.
  - Take a look online for some basic rules to hosting a positive shwooping experience
- Get your school to host an Oxfam market stall for Mother or Father's Day to support fair trade shopping and help your fellow students better understand their purchasing power.
- Petition your schools to source Fair Trade uniforms.
- Print off the What She Makes images on sticker paper or just tape them up where people shop to raise awareness.

I care about

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Demand big clothing brands pay a living wage  
[whatshemakes.org](http://whatshemakes.org)

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Brands should

**PAY  
A LIVING  
WAGE.**

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