

WHAT SHE MAKES

IS KEEPING HER IN POVERTY



Photo: GMB Akash/Panos/OxfamAUS

GEOGRAPHY
STUDENT NOTES
YEAR 7–8



OXFAM
Australia

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What She Makes: Education Resource has been created in collaboration with Social Education Victoria (SEV) and 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 whilst 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 – the campaign

One of the reasons for urbanisation in Bangladesh is the availability of jobs in factories, including clothing manufacture. Both men and women are drawn to higher-paying jobs, better health and educational facilities, and a lifestyle that they perceive will be better than the mostly agricultural jobs available to them in the rural areas where they were raised. These economic and social opportunities are the pull factors that draw people to the possibility of a better life in urban areas or cities.

Work in factories, such as the global textile industry, has not just resulted in social and economic opportunities for the workforce, but has also created environmental problems. In the countries where these new factories are located, scarce water and electricity resources are guaranteed to the factories and the local residential communities are left with only short hours of supply of both electricity and water to their homes. The waste generated by the manufacturing processes is often disposed of poorly. Housing for the workers is often poorly planned and can result in unsanitary slums and shanty settlements on the edges of urban regions.

ACTIVITY

1

Think about the above statement. Watch the following clip and take notes on the environmental and other costs of the textile industry in Bangladesh.

The cost of Dhaka's booming textile industry
<http://education.abc.net.au/home#!/media/1534718/the-cost-of-dhaka-s-boom>

The cheap clothing provided to the world's wealthiest countries has become disposable. Fashion and style change quickly and outfits "need" to be replaced by this season's latest colours and designs. Disposal of clothing waste is now a problem. Not only is the water and energy used to create the clothing lost, but where does this clothing end up? Maybe landfill? In fact a lot of this clothing is packed into shipping containers and sold back into the clothing markets of Asia and Africa for local consumption often destroying local or traditional clothing industries.

How could the manufacture of cheap clothing in Bangladesh be used to explain the causes and consequences of urbanisation?

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The causes of urbanisation

As a class, discuss the push and pull factors that have resulted in the rapid growth of urban regions within Asia.



Photo: GMB Akash/Panos/OxfamAUS

ACTIVITY 2

Push and pull factors

List some push and pull factors for young Australians moving from regional or rural areas to cities, or from smaller to larger cities in the table below.

Push factors	Pull factors

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The consequences of urbanisation

A day in the life of a minimum wage earner in Bangladesh

www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QSC_9c6qCQ

Students to watch the above film clip, which explains what life is like for a garment worker who lives in Dhaka, and then fill in the questions below.



1. Has she always lived in Dhaka?

2. What does she say are the good things about living and working in Dhaka?

3. What does she say are the not-so-good things about living and working in Dhaka?

4. Does she plan to stay in Dhaka forever?

5. Briefly describe her daily life.

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ACTIVITY 4

Watch the following clip and then work in pairs to answer the following questions.

What She Makes: www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfVWt3Z1d3g

This clip describes the life of three garment workers in Bangladesh: Anju, Forida and Fatima. Please remember that the women who are hiding their faces are doing so to protect their identities. They could be in danger for sharing all of this information with us and Oxfam. We are grateful for their bravery.

1. What is the evidence that their work does not provide them with a living wage?

2. Have each of these women come to Dhaka to work by choice? What are their push or pull factors?

3. Describe their daily lives.

4. Describe their homes.

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ACTIVITY 5

Comparing quality of life

Use the Gapminder website to compare the lives of a couple living in an urban environment with a family who live in a rural environment.

- Rickshaw driver with a wife who works in the garment industry. Living in Dhaka. Income \$175.
www.gapminder.org/dollar-street/family?place=56057b4f6872a18820d19575&zoom=3
- Extended family of farmers living in the rural district near Dhaka. Income \$58.
www.gapminder.org/dollar-street/family?place=56056a7fcd8f1e9a207bb4f7&zoom=3

a. Compare these two families. Does there seem to be much difference between their quality of life? Use examples like clothing, food, shampoo and what their house is made of. Add more factors to compare in the table below.

Examples	Urban family	Farming family
Food		
Transport		
Building materials		

b. The difference in their incomes is huge, but what do you think must cost more each week if you live in the city?

c. From your investigation, do you think the consequences of urbanisation in Asia are positive or negative?

d. Why might the growth of cities continue? The aspirational home of the rickshaw driver and his wife may give you your answer.

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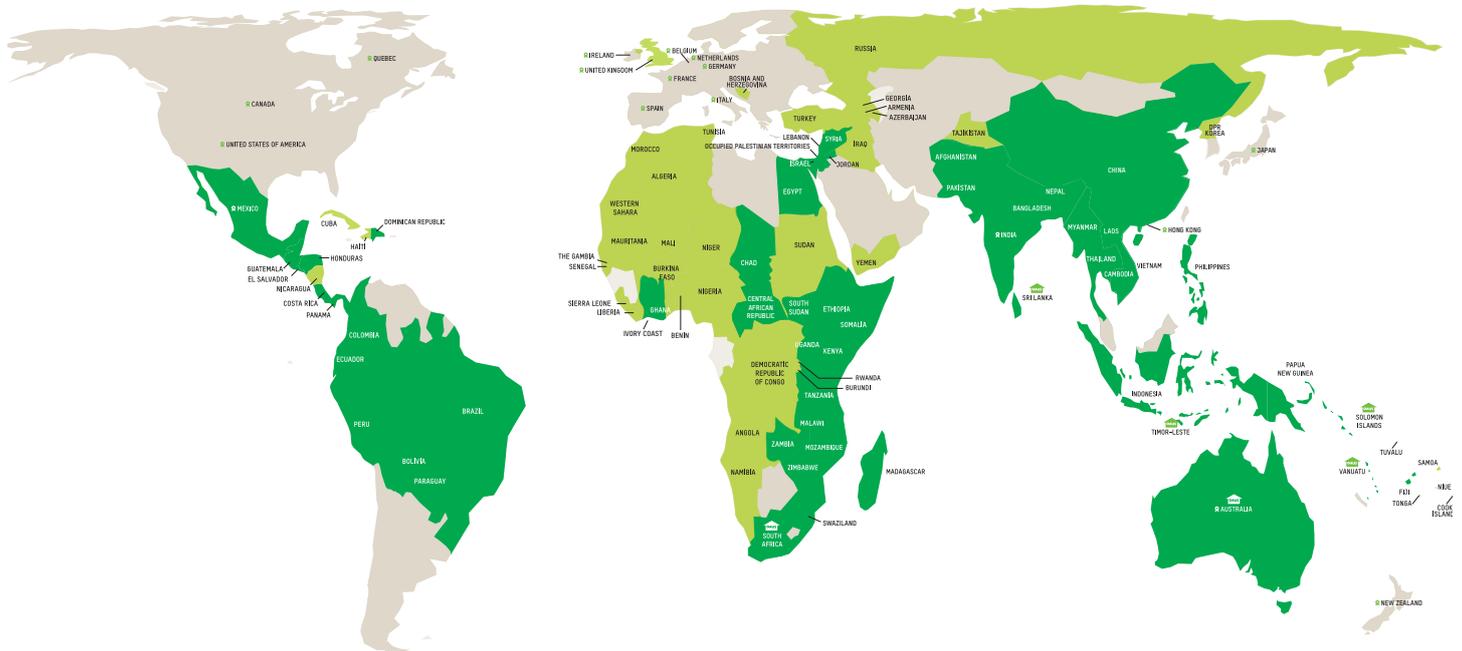
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ACTIVITY

6

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Go home and collect 20 items of clothing from your wardrobe at home. List the manufacturing country of origin and bring the list to class. Record the places of manufacturing origin represented as a map or graph. Collate the data firstly for yourself and then add to a map or graph for the entire class.



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As a class, discuss the distribution of manufacturing.

Australia imports more than 96% of all garments sold in our retail shops. Globally, 80% of garment workers are young women aged between 18 and 25 years. Most textile and clothing industries have closed down in Australia and other high-wage countries. Consequently, production has moved to developing countries in Asia, such as Bangladesh.

Disposable, low priced fashion, has become the norm in our shops as cheap-priced imports flood local retail outlets. The low prices are due to the low wages and lower costs of offshore production. Local manufacturers have been unable to compete with the cheap imports. As consumers, we've become used to paying \$10 for a t-shirt or a few dollars each for bras and briefs.

As you can see in the graph below, on average, only a very small percentage of the price we pay for each garment actually goes to the person who made it.

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*.

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ACTIVITY

7

Using the articles of clothing provided by your teacher, calculate the wages paid to the workers who manufactured this clothing.

Discuss the possible difficulty of the construction or time taken to create these items of clothing. Discuss how long they might last in your wardrobe and what you might do with them next year.

Together with the international union movement and many other international government and non-government organisations (NGOs), Oxfam Australia has become heavily involved in campaigns to increase the wages of the poorly paid working women of the global textile industries. When workers do not earn a living wage, they become trapped in a cycle of poverty from which it is hard to escape.

Much emphasis has been placed on the specific human wellbeing issues encountered by the textile workers of Bangladesh. Interestingly though, the large international textile factories have now begun to move to the even cheaper waged locations in Africa, such as Ethiopia.

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ACTIVITY 8

Create a campaign, advertisement or educational flyer to publicise the issues identified in the What She Makes campaign.

- issues such as cheap or disposable clothing
- the poor wages paid to create our cheap clothing
- the living conditions created by the underpayment of garment workers

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Liveability and reflection

ACTIVITY 9

The stories of Anju, Florida and Fatima are good case studies of liveability in poorer Asian countries that can easily be compared with liveability in the United States of America, Sweden or the United Kingdom, using the Gapminder website.

www.gapminder.org/dollar-street/matrix

Compare housing, transport, food and furniture between different countries and people who have different incomes.

Country	Housing	Transport	Food	Furniture	(Optional other factor)	(Optional other factor)

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ACTIVITY 10

Students create posters of aspirational or actual liveability in one of the countries they have investigated.

