



OXFAM
Australia

LABOUR RIGHTS: BEHIND THE SEAMS

TEACHER'S NOTE



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Overview

A resource for Year 9 and 10 Geography, Economics and Business, and Civics and Citizenship exploring the topics of: labour rights and responsibilities of participants in the global workplace; the impact of business decisions, trade and consumption on the wellbeing of people and places where goods are produced; and the concept of fair and ethical consumption and trade. It includes five case studies from Asia and Australia, and student activities after each sub-section. The resource can be taught either as a whole, or as a single or combination of themes and case studies.

This teacher's note includes: curriculum links; resource requirements; further information suggestions; and suggested answers to the student activities in the resource.

In this section, you will find:

- Curriculum links
- Resource Requirements
- Further readings
- Suggested student activity answers



Curriculum links

This resource contributes towards achievement of the following Australian Curriculum requirements:

Year 9

Geography

- The ways that places and people are interconnected with other places through trade in goods and services, at all scales (ACHGK067)
- The effects of the production and consumption of goods on places (ACHGK068)

Economics and Business

- How do participants in the global economy interact? (Key inquiry question); Why and how participants in the global economy are dependent on each other (ACHEK039)
- What are the responsibilities of participants in the workplace and why are these important? (Key inquiry question); The changing roles and responsibilities of participants in the global workplace (ACHEK042)
- Reflect on the intended and unintended consequences of economic and business decisions (ACHES049)

Civics and Citizenship

- How do citizens participate in an interconnected world? (Key inquiry question)
- Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australian, regional and global contexts (ACHCS089)

Year 10

Geography

- Issues affecting development of places and their impact on human wellbeing (ACHGK078)
- The role of international and national government and non-government organisations' initiatives in improving human wellbeing (ACHGK081)

Economics and Business

- Factors that influence major consumer and financial decisions and the short- and long-term consequences of these decisions (ACHEK053)
- Reflect on the intended and unintended consequences of economic and business decisions (ACHES061)

Civics and Citizenship

- Reflect on their role as a citizen in Australian, regional and global contexts (ACHCS102)



Resource requirements

Labour Rights: Behind the Seams – Student Workbook, 1 x per student.

In addition, for the following sections within the resource you will need:

Why should I care about labour rights?

- Student Activity – Labour Rights and Fair Trade – Thinking About Work, 1 x per student

Examples of the global standard for the rights of workers

- Students will need access to the internet to complete activity 2, which asks them to review the Articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Alternatively, these articles can be downloaded from the United Nations' website here:
www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf, 1 x per student pair

Labour rights: from policy to practice

- Student Activity – Labour Rights – Labour Rights Power Mapping, 1 x per pair or per small group. Note: Students will need a pencil and an eraser to complete the handout

Fair trade and ethical consumption

- Student Activity – Fair Trade and Ethical Consumption – Consumer Decision-Making, 1 x per pair. Note: Students will need access to the internet to complete activity 2, which asks them to read the detailed description of each of the 10 Principles of Fair Trade, available here: wfto.com/fair-trade/10-principles-fair-trade

Etiko Pty Ltd case study

- Student Activity – Etiko Supply Chain – Map of Asia, 1 x per student. Note: Students will each need a colour pencil to complete the activity

Oxfam Shop case study

Note: You will need to advise students if their awareness-raising promotional material should be in the form of a poster, a brochure or a presentation.

You will also need to either give each small group a different Oxfam Producer Partner case study information and photos OR give each small group a complete copy of the Oxfam Producer Partner case study materials and ask them to choose which Producer Partner they want to use as an example.



- Student Activity – Oxfam Shop – Scenario Activity, either 1 x per student or 1 x per small group
- Student Activity – Oxfam Shop – Producer Partner Information, either 1 x per small group or 1 x copy cut into 4 x pieces with 1 x piece per small group
- Student Activity – Oxfam Shop – Producer Partner Photos, colour print, either 1 x per small group or 1 x copy divided into 4 x sets by Producer Partner with 1 x set per small group
- Students will either need poster paper or access to presentation software, e.g. PowerPoint or Keynote

NOTE: All student worksheets are provided at the back of the student workbook.



Further information suggestions

There are extensive resources and information about labour rights and fair trade available on the internet, some of which could form the basis of additional student activities.

For example:

Labour rights

Summaries of Australia's history of labour rights and industrial relations can be found at:

- Fair Work Ombudsman: www.fairwork.gov.au/about-us/legislation/the-fair-work-system/australias-industrial-relations-timeline
- ABC Rear Vision: www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/bosses-and-workers-in-australia/6407092

Indonesia Freedom of Association Protocol

- *Negotiating Freedom* is a 35-minute documentary that follows the journey of five Indonesian union leaders working together on the Freedom of Association Protocol, the negotiation process and the challenge faced by factory workers organising to claim their rights. It can be watched online or is free to download in various resolutions here: www.engagemedia.org/Members/labourrights/videos/negotiating-freedom
- Students may be interested to review Ethical Clothing Australia, which is an accreditation organisation that works with textile, clothing and footwear producers in Australia to ensure their Australian-based production supply chains are transparent and uphold Australian workers' labour rights. This could fit with either the labour rights case study on the Indonesia Freedom of Association Protocol, or the fair trade case study on Etiko Pty Ltd. <http://ethicalclothingaustralia.org.au/>

Bangladesh Fire and Safety Accord

- The Accord website: <http://bangladeshaccord.org/>
- Clean Clothes Campaign's history of the: www.cleanclothes.org/resources/background/history-bangladesh-safety-accord

Students may find it interesting to read the Open Letter from Kmart Australia's Managing Director about how Kmart works with suppliers in Bangladesh, and information about its approach to ethical sourcing, either before or after they respond to Activity 2. b) in this sub-section.

- Kmart: http://mediacentre.kmart.com.au/LatestNews.aspx?udt_385_param_detail=120
- Kmart: www.kmart.com.au/ethical-source-casestudy



Fair trade

Note: the resource uses the follow definitions regarding 'fair trade':

- **Fair trade:** This refers to the broader ethical production and consumption movement. It includes the producers and workers, the active retailers of Fair Trade products, consumers, and volunteers and advocates concerned with global trade issues.
- **Fair Trade:** This refers to the actual production and trade in goods made according to set Fair Trade principles and standards, for example the World Fair Trade Organisation's 10 Principles of Fair Trade.
- **Fairtrade:** This refers specifically to the Fairtrade International organisation and network, and the label they use to indicate that specific goods have been certified as meeting their Fairtrade Standards.

World Fair Trade Organisation: www.wfto.com/fair-trade/10-principles-fair-trade

Shop Ethical: www.ethical.org.au/get-informed/issues1/

Students could review different ethical production certification systems. What ethical issue(s) are these systems concerned with? What types of products do they certify? How does this contribute to producer communities? Note: there is a case study on Fairtrade International in the resource.

For example:

- Fairtrade: www.fairtrade.net/about-fairtrade/faqs.html
- Forest Stewardship Council: <https://au.fsc.org/en-au/about-fsc/faqs>
- Rainforest Alliance: www.rainforest-alliance.org/about/marks/rainforest-alliance-certified-seal
- UTZ: www.utz.org/what-we-offer/certification



Suggested student activity answers

These are suggested answers and key points for student activities where a clear, standard response can be expected.

Most answers are taken from the education resource content.

Why should I care about labour rights?

Student worksheet 'Labour Rights and Fair Trade – Thinking About Work':

Q1(c). The aim of this activity is to have students review their understanding of these key terms as they study the topic. Answers might include:

Labour: The word 'labour' is another way of talking about workers, and the work done by people in the production of goods and services. Typically, it refers to people who are employed by an organisation and receive a wage in exchange for their work.

Labour rights: Those rights that relate to workers and the conditions people experience at work, eg: Declaration of Human Rights Article 23 — right to free choice employment; just, favourable conditions (including safety); protection against unemployment; no discrimination; equal pay for equal work, just and favourable remuneration; right to form and join trade unions/freedom of association and right to collective bargaining. Also, no child, forced or compulsory labour.

Exploitation: Being taken advantage of, for example treating a person unfairly while benefiting from their work.

Decent work: Work that is productive and delivers a fair income; has security in the workplace; provides opportunities for personal development; workers are free to discuss any concerns they have and can participate in decisions that affect them; workers can organise; and equal treatment and opportunities.

Freedom of association: Right to join a group, eg a union.

Collective bargaining: While an individual worker does not have much power to negotiate with their employer, as a group workers have more power and also the whole group can then benefit from the outcome of negotiations rather than just an individual.

Fair trade: Goods that have been ethically produced, eg certified as meeting set standards that cover social, economic and environmental concerns. Note: 'Fair trade refers to the ethical production and consumption movement; 'Fair Trade' refers to ethical production and trade; 'Fairtrade' refers to the specific standards and certification from the Fairtrade International organisation.

Ethical consumption: Ethical consumers are typically motivated by concerns about the impact producing goods has on the people and places where the goods have come from. These include: social concerns about working conditions and labour rights; economic concerns about whether



farmers/workers received a fair income for their labour; and environmental concerns about the sustainability and potential pollution and destruction caused by production.

Global citizenship: Note — this term is not specifically defined in the resource, however it does provide examples of citizens concerned by labour-rights violations in other countries campaigning to brands and in their own country on behalf of those workers. It also refers to people making consumption choices based on the belief that the people and places who produced those goods should not be harmed as a result of the production process. Generally, global citizenship refers to: someone who is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen; who is outraged by social injustice; who is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place; and who takes responsibility for their actions.



What are labour rights?

Q1. Some ways a worker's wellbeing can be affected by their working conditions:

- Income-levels can impact how much workers have for needs and wants, like food, housing, healthcare and entertainment, for example, and how much money they have to support other family members.
- How safe a workplace is can affect a worker's physical health.
- A worker's mental health and wellbeing can be impacted by: the number of hours they have to work; if they have job security; whether or not they experience bullying and discrimination; and if they have access to benefits like holiday and sick leave.



Examples of the global standard for the rights of workers

Q1. Articles in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights that could directly or indirectly be connected to working conditions, employment or ensuring a worker's labour rights include:

Rights relating to labour, employment, working conditions

Article 4 – No-one shall be held in slavery or servitude.

Article 20 – Right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association; no-one can be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 22 – Everyone has the right to social security, and the economic rights indispensable for dignity.

Article 23 – Note: this Article is examined in the resource as the core Article outlining workers' rights.

Article 24 – Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25 – Everyone has the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability or any other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond person's control; Motherhood is entitled to special care and assistance.

Article 26 – Technical and professional education shall be made generally available.

Article 27 – Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which they are the author.

Ensuring a worker's labour rights

Article 1 – All human beings have equal rights.

Article 2 – Everyone is entitled to all the rights in the Declaration without distinction.

Article 6 – Everyone has recognition as a person before the law.

Article 7 – All are equal before the law and entitled without discrimination to equal protection of the law, and to protection against any violation of this Declaration.

Article 8 – Everyone has right to effective remedy for acts violating the fundamental rights granted by law.

Article 29 – In the exercise of their rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing the rights and freedoms of others and meeting the just requirements of public order.

Article 30 – Nothing may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of the any of the rights and freedoms in the Declaration.



Labour rights: From policy to practice

First question: Answers might mention: Due to poverty, an individual working for an organisation can be vulnerable to exploitation because they do not have as much power as their employer. If a worker lives in poverty, they may need whatever income they can get just to be able to survive regardless of the conditions they have to work under, which can put them and their wellbeing at risk. This vulnerability is made worse if there are no or insufficient social protections, like unemployment benefits or pensions. A person living in poverty may not have access to other employment options and so must put up with exploitation. Alternatively, they may be subject to forced labour or have to work for an employer as a debt-repayment arrangement. They may not have an education or literacy, and therefore be unaware of their rights.

Second question: Answers might mention: Profit margin — reducing expenses on wages and working conditions can improve an employer's profits.

Third question: Answers might mention: The UN and NGOs, like Oxfam, argue that with the rise of global trade, multinational corporations and businesses that produce goods in other countries have a responsibility to address rights issues linked to their business decisions and activities.

Q1(b). Students may put the stakeholders at different points on the power map, however it is likely they will be somewhere in the following quadrants:

| | |
|--|---|
| Company mainly concerned with maximising profits | Company interest in ethical production Workers' union NGO concerned with labour rights Large group of consumers who petition companies International Labour Organisation Government ratifying labour rights declarations |
| Individual consumer prioritising cheap purchases | Individual worker |

Note: Students may add their own stakeholders to the power map, and change stakeholder positions as part of Q2.

Note: Students need to read the *Indonesia Freedom of Association Protocol* and *Bangladesh Fire and Safety Accord* case studies before completing Activities 2 and 3.

Q3. Answers may include some of the following general points:

Labour rights: The rights of workers, eg Declaration of Human Rights Article 23 — right to free choice employment; just, favourable conditions (including safety); protection against unemployment; no discrimination; equal pay for equal work, just and favourable remuneration; right to form and join trade unions/freedom of association and right to collective bargaining. Also no child, forced or compulsory labour.



Why Oxfam believes labour rights are important: Oxfam advocates for labour rights to help workers receive enough income for a sustainable livelihood, and to improve their wellbeing. Labour rights help address social justice issues such as child labour, discrimination and exploitation, and vulnerability experienced by people living in poverty.

How labour rights can impact a person's wellbeing: Some ways a worker's wellbeing can be affected by their working conditions: Income-levels can impact how much workers have for needs and wants, like food, housing, healthcare and entertainment, for example, and how much money they have to support other family members; How safe a workplace is can affect a worker's physical health; and a worker's mental health and wellbeing can be impacted by the number of hours they have to work, if they have job security, whether or not they experience bullying and discrimination, and if they have access to benefits like holiday and sick leave.

Example of how Oxfam works with other stakeholders to help support labour rights: Indonesian Freedom of Association Protocol — Oxfam participated in meetings about how to get labour rights policies and laws implemented in the workplace, including a workshop that started the Protocol. Oxfam facilitated discussions between participants, provided training on corporate accountability policies and practice for brands, as well as skills on networking and communicating with international stakeholders for worker organisations. Oxfam also encouraged international support by asking consumers of these products, in countries like Australia, to take an active global citizenship role by contacting the brands to encourage them to keep working towards agreement on the Protocol.

Bangladesh Fire and Safety Accord — Oxfam launched a public campaign calling on concerned Australians to use their power as consumers and global citizens to encourage the brands to sign the Accord, and be open and transparent about the factories in their supply chains. Oxfam also approached the brands directly to share personal stories about workers' experiences, talk about what changes have been occurring in the region and what is possible, and offer information and tools to help brands improve their supply chains. Oxfam gave advice and support to the Wesfarmers group about labour rights in the region and working with the local unions.

How Australian businesses and citizens can influence labour rights globally: Businesses have the power to bring about change in a workplace, both directly as employers and indirectly through their power to influence factories and other businesses in their supply chains. Consumers have power because brands need them to buy their products and because businesses want to generate good will. As part of campaigns calling on businesses to sign labour rights agreements, citizens might sign petitions; send letters or emails, or phone brands about the Accord; use social media; and even be a physical presence outside stores talking to other consumers about working conditions.



Case study: Indonesia Freedom of Association Protocol

Q1(a). Could include: Job security is at risk if Sewani speaks out; she lost her job without notification even though on a contract; she experienced a stressful trial period and was unable to take leave even if really ill; she continually moved between sections so had no stability; she was no longer selected to work overtime and given the chance to earn a higher income; if a boss doesn't like you they can do whatever they want, even if against policy.

Q1(b). Made Sewani feel tired and depressed. Might also note that it affected her income, and could have been a risk to her health by having to keep working.

Q1(c). Oxfam participated in meetings about how to get labour rights policies and laws implemented in the workplace, including a workshop that started the Protocol. Oxfam facilitated discussions between participants, provided training on corporate accountability policies and practice for brands, as well as skills on networking and communicating with international stakeholders for worker organisations. Oxfam also encouraged international support by asking consumers of these products, in countries like Australia, to take an active global citizenship role by contacting the brands to encourage them to keep working towards agreement on the Protocol.

Q1(d). Oxfam advocates for labour rights to help factory workers receive enough income for a sustainable livelihood and to improve their wellbeing.

Q2(a). Personal opinion question but likely to note that the involvement of the sportswear brands was important to the creation of the Freedom of Association Protocol. It gave impetus to the factory managers to participate and, by making brands responsible for ensuring worker rights were upheld, gave the Protocol a greater chance of success than previous agreements. This resulted in policy change but minimal change in practice.

Q2(b). Personal opinion question but by making the sportswear brands responsible for ensuring the rights of workers in their supply chains are implemented in the workplace, the Protocol would appear to give them the power and direct responsibility of a workplace participant.



Case study: Bangladesh Fire and Safety Accord

Q1. Personal opinion question but likely to note that, as nearly half of the Bangladeshi population lives in extreme poverty, if the brands leave Bangladesh to operate elsewhere, millions of people would be left without work and likely experience greater poverty.

Q2(a). Personal opinion question but may note that many Australians were shocked at the media coverage of working conditions in Bangladesh for products they owned. They asked the brands to sign the Accord as a corporate responsibility action. Australians may have been motivated by sense of global citizenship; an empathy for others; a desire to end poverty; guilt at their connection to exploitation through their purchases; and also Australia's own history of industrial relations and the personal importance of labour rights for many Australians.

Q2(b). Personal opinion question but may note that brands could have been motivated by a sense of corporate responsibility; wanting to maintain consumer good will and not alienate consumers from their brand; a means to contribute to addressing poverty; and a desire to prevent further tragedies.



Fair trade and ethical consumption

Q1(a). Answers might include factors such as: price; status symbol; popular/trendy; better quality; extra benefits/inclusions; matches other previous purchases; positive reaction to previous purchases from that brand; availability (either easier to get or rarer so more status); better functioning (eg tastes, sounds, looks better, easier to operate); ethical/moral considerations — matches personal values (eg environment; supports a community/particular business; fair; from a particular place, including Australian-made).

Q1(b). Answers might include:

Reasons consumers may buy ethical products: Concerns about labour rights and working conditions; concerns about fair incomes for work and reducing poverty; concerns about environmental sustainability; considered trendy; better functioning products.

Reasons consumers might not buy ethical products: Lack of knowledge about ethical production; too expensive; not available; may not think matches quality/functioning of other similar products; personal values (eg rejection of items seen as politically correct, association with environmentalists, etc); not sure if a good has been ethically made.

Main barriers to buying ethically made products: Lack of access/not available; expense; challenge knowing if a good has been ethically produced or not.

Q2. Students need to provide a single example for each answer. Answers might include:

a) Principles ensure labour rights by: complying with, at a minimum, national and local laws and ILO health and safety conventions; respecting the rights of workers to form and join trade unions and bargain collectively; ensuring fair pay; ensuring compensation for work already completed/advance payment; enabling participation by employees in decision-making processes.

b) Principles address environmental sustainability concerns by: the use of raw materials from sustainably managed sources; the use of production techniques that seek to reduce energy consumption and where possible use renewable energy technologies; minimising waste; using organic or low pesticide in agriculture; and using recycled or easily biodegradable packing materials.

c) Principles help reduce poverty by: payment of a fair price/pay; support for marginalised small producers; aiming to move producers/workers to economic self-sufficiency.

d) Principles help reduce discrimination by: not allowing discrimination in hiring, remuneration, access to training, promotion, termination or retirement; promoting gender equality; recognising special health and safety needs of pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers.



Case study: Fairtrade International

Q1. Mind-map answers for social, economic and environmental benefits might include:

Social — labour rights are recognised, including no forced or child labour; organisations have democratic decision-making and transparent processes; organisations do not discriminate; projects are funded by Fairtrade Premium, such as healthcare and education.

Economic — stable income protected from market fluctuations; income-generating opportunity; additional funding to invest in businesses and community projects.

Environmental — agricultural practices must be environmentally sound, for example minimal and safe use of chemicals, and maintenance of soil fertility and water resources; organic products are encouraged.

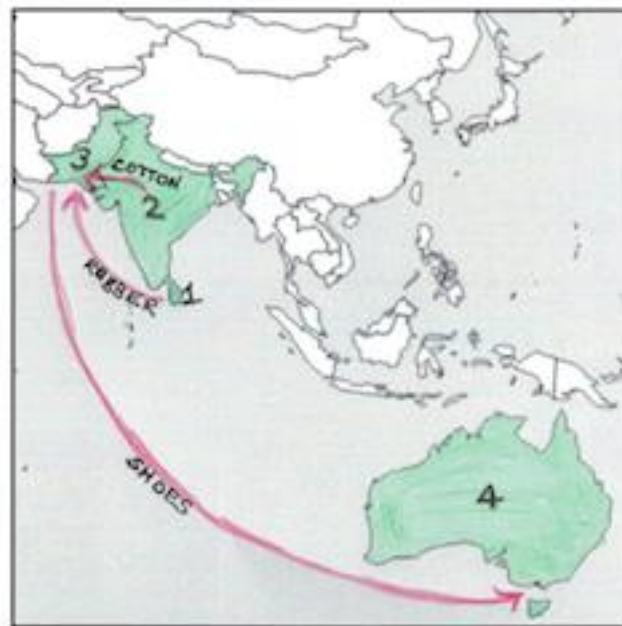
Overall long-term impact likely to be sustainable development; improved wellbeing for communities; income-generating opportunities for individuals; and reduced environmental damage/pollution.

Q2. A challenge for ethical trade and production is ensuring consumer confidence; consumers want to know that the goods they buy actually are helping communities and being produced according to the set standards. Fairtrade International addresses this by having products independently certified along the supply chain, conducting on-site audits and demanding regular reporting. Only products that meet the standards and certification process can use the Fairtrade Mark, a logo consumers can recognise regardless of a product's brand.



Case study: Etiko Pty Ltd

Q1. Title: 2015 supply chain for Etiko sneakers



Adapted from: <http://www.freeworldmaps.net/outline/maps/world-map-outline.gif>

Note: Students might include further arrows within Australia to represent the delivery of shoes to Australian consumers.

Q2. Etiko's tag would suggest that 'evil' is the exploitation of other people and places in the production of goods. Their own business practice is 'not evil' because they use products and producers that have been independently certified as meeting social and environmental standards, with workers' rights recognised. Their additional payment of the Fairtrade Premium supports other businesses to invest in improving their businesses and communities, thus contributing to ending global poverty and its effects.



Case study: Oxfam Shop

Q1. Oxfam is concerned with addressing global poverty and injustice. Supporting fair and ethical trading is one way Oxfam works with communities to achieve this. By building demand for products, creating a sustainable distribution channel and providing business practice training, local businesses can grow. This provides employment and an income that people can use to support themselves, and contributes towards addressing social, economic and environmental issues in their communities.

Q2. Answers may include some of the following general points:

Fair trade: Goods that have been ethically produced. Often independently certified as meeting set standards that cover social, economic and environmental concerns.

Ethical consumption: Ethical consumers are typically motivated by concerns about the impact producing goods has on the people and places where the goods have come from. These include: social concerns about working conditions and labour rights; economic concerns about whether farmers/workers received a fair income for their labour; and environmental concerns about the sustainability and potential pollution and destruction caused by production.

Addresses global poverty and supports sustainable development: Workers receive a fair income and, often, additional funds, which can be invested in their community. Production is financially sustainable (eg minimum prices) and environmentally sustainable through business practice (eg organic goods).