

The Truth about Nike and sweatshops

Aren't these allegations outdated? Hasn't Nike cleaned up it's act?

No. Independent research continues to indicate that workers in Nike contract factories are still commonly required to work more than 60 hours per week and are harrassed or threatened with dismissal if they refuse overtime. They are still paid wages which are below what they need to feed their children and are still intimidated and threatened with violence when they try to form unions.

Where are Nike's trainers made?

Nike has consistently moved production of its sneakers to wherever wages are lowest and workers' human rights are most brutally repressed. In 1990 more than half of Nike's sneakers were made in South Korea. As South Korea became a democracy and South Korean workers fought for wage increases, Nike shifted production to Indonesia and China. As Indonesia moved towards democracy in 1997-98, Nike started to reduce

production there, moving that production to Vietnam and China. According to Nike's 2001 Annual report, in the 2001 fiscal year 40% of Nike's shoes were made in China, 31% in Indonesia and 13% each in Thailand and Vietnam. Only 1% each were made in Italy, South Korea and Taiwan.

Source: Landrum, N. (2000), A Quantitative and Qualitative Examination of the Dynamics of Nike and Reebok Storytelling as Strategy, Dissertation Thesis, New Mexico State University, New Mexico.

How much are workers paid in Nike contract factories?

In the great majority of Nike contract factories full-time wages are equal to or slightly above the local legal minimum wage. In the industrial zones of China, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia the legal minimum is well below what is needed to meet the basic needs of a small family.

In Indonesia, as of July 2001 entry-level full-time wages in Nike contract factories in West Java were equal to or slightly above the legal minimum of Rp. 17,000 (\$US2) per day. Research paid for by Nike itself and released by the Global Alliance for Workers and Communities in February 2001 indicated that many Indonesian Nike workers are distressed because they cannot afford to have their children with them and must leave them with relatives in their home villages.

Isn't it a lot cheaper to live in countries where Nikes are made?

It is of course cheaper to live in Vietnam, Indonesia or China than in the US, Europe or Australia, but not cheap enough to support children on the standard wages paid in Nike contract factories. Jim Keady, a former professional soccer player from the US, spent August 2000 in Indonesia trying to live on the full-time wages of Indonesian Nike workers. He went hungry. You can check out his progress on the website - www.nikewages.org

If conditions are so bad, why do people work in Nike factories?

People choose to work in Nike factories because the alternatives are even worse. Most of Nike's contract factories are located in countries marked by extreme poverty, high unemployment and extensive malnutrition. When the choice is between going hungry or working long hours for poverty wages in a Nike factory, of course people to choose to work in these factories.

What do you want Nike to do?

Ensure that workers making Nike products are freely allowed to form unions and are paid a full-time wage which allows them to provide themselves and their families with an adequate diet and housing and to pay for basic necessities such as health care.

What can I do? Should I boycott Nike products?

No Sweat is not calling for a boycott because some Nike workers do not support one. In the past when jobs have been cut in Nike contract factories, factory managers have told workers that they are losing their jobs because consumers are boycotting Nike. This had the potential to undermine cooperation between campaigners and Nike workers. We are instead encouraging people to join us to expose the profit made out of sweated labour, join our campaign and protests, work with the Unions to win workers rights, and lobby Nike, Governments and other organisation to demand an end to sweated labour.

Don't a lot of big corporations use sweatshops? Why target Nike?

Labour abuses in Nike factories had already been extensively and reliably documented over a number of years. Nike was the market leader in the sportswear industry, one of the industries with the worst records in this area, and had lead the push into low wage countries with poor human rights records. But we dont just target Nike. No Sweat will target any company with a record of sweated labour and human rights abuse!

Where does this info come from?

This information was based on research carried out by Oxfam Australia for more info visit there website: www.caa.org.au/campaigns/nike

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Join No Sweat. Visit: www.NoSweat.org.uk

email: admin@nosweat.org.uk

phone: 07904 431 959

or send in the slip on the back of this leaflet

