

Exploitation Through the Wal-Mart Model

Read Wal-Mart Our Rights!

Wal-Mart violates human rights all over the world. Their bargains are based on sweatshop labor and a lowering of labor standards.



Wal-Mart violates human rights

- ★ Wal-Mart bargains are based on low wages and exploitation, which create poverty and leave workers across the developing world in misery. Even in low-wage countries like Bangladesh, Wal-Mart does not pay its workers minimum wage.
- ★ In the U.S., Wal-Mart has racked up huge fines for child labor law violations.
- ★ In Wal-Mart's supply factories, physical and verbal assaults are used to "motivate" workers to meet impossible quotas.
- ★ Trade union activists risk being threatened, fired and blacklisted for trying to defend their worker and human rights. When meat cutters in Texas formed a union, Wal-Mart simply closed all the butcher departments. Workers in Canada, Quebec, were also trying to unionize in 2004. The response from Wal-Mart was to close down the store. In fact, Wal-Mart has an anti-union policy, upheld by a special team of managers.
- ★ Wal-Mart forces employees to work overtime and unpaid. This is one reason why workers in over 30 states in the U.S. are suing Wal-Mart for violation of their rights. In Nicaragua, workers at one Wal-Mart supply factory work up to 69 hours per week for as little as 29 cents an hour.

Though Wal-Mart has a code of conduct, requiring adherence to the local laws in the country in which they operate, even this minimal goal is not achieved.



Wal-Mart affects everyone

- ★ Not only does Wal-Mart's poverty-level wages and insufficient benefits force thousands of employees to resort to Medicaid, but many workers also need food stamps and housing assistance. In the U.S., this costs the citizens 1.5 billion dollars a year, the so-called "Wal-Mart Tax."
- ★ Wal-Mart is a major polluter. In 2001, the company had to pay 1 million dollars for violating the Clean Water Act. Wal-Mart pledged to do better, but only three years later, the company repeated the violation, and paid 3 million dollars. Moreover, their global pursuit for low-cost goods pressures the suppliers not only to break labor laws, but also to cut costs to the detriment of the environment.

Wal-Mart affects everyone in the U.S., and throughout the world in various ways. Wal-Mart is the largest corporation in the world, and sets the standards for the entire industry.





Wal-Mart exploits women

- ★ Wal-Mart's garments are produced by women's cheap labor under atrocious working conditions in foreign countries.
- ★ In the U.S., 92% of Wal-Mart clerks, which is the lowest paid position, are women. Meanwhile, men hold two out of three management positions.
- ★ Many women fill part-time positions because these jobs provide the flexible work schedule necessary to care for their children. Wal-Mart takes advantage of this fact and uses the "flexible workplace" not to be family friendly, but to exploit women's labor. The low wages result in that the majority of the employees are unable to afford health care.
- ★ The Wal-Mart model undermines worker standards as well as consumers' buying power. Through a cyclical process of low-income people needing cheaper goods, which requires workers getting less pay to produce those goods, the Wal-Mart model is pulling the rug out from underneath the feet of millions of workers.
- ★ Due to widespread gender discrimination in the company, some 1.6 million women are eligible to join a class-action lawsuit charging Wal-Mart with discrimination. Wal-Mart pays women 5-15% less than men, and women who are pregnant risk being fired. Forced birth control and pregnancy tests are used to maintain this.

Wal-Mart exploits women both as workers and consumers. It is mainly women who bear the burden of the company's low prices.

Let's not be another brick in their Wal - Take action!

Wal-Mart and its business model are powerful, but only as long as we let them be. The movement to change Wal-Mart and what it stands for is growing! *Your creativity and energy can help make that change.* Here are some simple steps to start participating in the struggle to defend human and labor rights; and against one of the biggest threats to these rights: The Wal-Mart model.

1. Educate yourself

Use our News and Resources sections on our website to find out more about Wal-Mart's practices, which undermine labor rights worldwide

2. Educate others

Distribute the flyers and fact sheets, found in the Materials section of our website, to your friends and family

3. Educate Wal-Mart

Inform Wal-Mart that you're concerned with their international sourcing practices by sending a letter to the CEO.

4. Contact us!

If you and others in your community are interested in becoming more active in this campaign, let us know!

Send letters to:

H. Lee Scott
President and Chief Executive Officer,
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.
702 SW Eighth St
Bentonville AR 72716
United States

Campaign for Labor Rights (CLR)

mobilizes grassroots support throughout the United States to promote economic and social justice by campaigning to end labor rights violations around the world. CLR educates about, and advocates against, the underlying causes of the global sweatshop.

