

Learning Activity 1.1

Following the dress: mapping global supply chains in the garment sector



©ILO/M.Crozet

Overview

Mapping exercise, in small groups and then in plenary, that allows participants to visualize the different stages and players involved in the garment supply chain. It should help clarify the different stakeholders and players.

Participants are presented with a case study. Within their small group they will sketch the global supply chain for a particular piece of clothing, highlight the risks incurred by workers at various stages and identify the most affected players. They will also be able to start determining why and how workers will be affected by the identified risks.

Suggested time

One hour

Target group

Representatives of:

- Lead companies aiming to improve supply chain organization.
- Global, national and local employer organizations and trade unions.
- National and local government responsible for legislative implementation and factory inspection.
- Multi stakeholder initiatives and social auditors.
- Global, national and local NGOs and women's organizations.

Aims

- Visualize the different stages and players involved in one supply chain.
- Understand the complexities of global supply chains.
- Appreciate that it is relevant to focus on poor working conditions and workers' abuse in global production.

Preparation

- Make copies for the participants of the relevant case study (1.1.) available in the Resource Kit.
- Provide the necessary materials for drawing and note writing.
- Reproduce (or visually display) the Global Supply Chain chart available in the Resource Kit.
- If projection facilities are available show the FWF video indicated under "Resources".

Setting

- A room large enough to accommodate several groups.

Materials

- Hand-out with case study
- Flip charts and post-it
- Markers
- Tape (if needed)

Time/Steps

- *(Optional, if time and projection facilities are available)*
Show the FWF video indicated under “Resources”. (7 minutes)

In small groups, ask participants to:

Step 1: (suggested time: 15 minutes)

- Read the description of global supply chains (if not already presented in plenary) and the garment case study provided as a hand-out. Note down the different stages and players involved in the garment supply chain. Study the supply chain graphic provided, noting the many different stakeholders and players.

Step 2: (suggested time: 15 minutes)

- With a piece of flip chart paper draw out the global supply chain for a cotton women’s dress that has embroidery on the collar and pearl buttons. Start with the embroiderers (probably home workers), supplying factories and end with the consumer and global brand/company. Participants will decide in which countries the garment is made, where it is sold, and by which brand.
- *With a marker or stickers, highlight up to **five** points in the global supply chain at which they think poor working conditions may prevail.*
- *Then, highlight **five** players involved in the global supply chain that they think will be most affected by poor working conditions.*

Step 3: (suggested time: 30 minutes)

- Later, in plenary, a representative of each small group will present their drawing with notes and will comment them briefly. Following the small group presentations, participants will discuss the conclusions and prioritize the most important differences identified between the ideal situation and the current reality.

How to adapt it

- With a small number of participants, perform the activity in plenary. The facilitator can present or read the case from the hand-out (rather than giving each participant a copy) to stimulate discussion and brainstorming. S/he then guides the discussion.
- The same activity, in particular with a target group including either a majority of gender experts, or of gender-sensitized trade unionists, may be proposed later in the learning process, once the concepts of gender-based violence have been introduced.

A more focused request may be added and participants asked to:

- *With a marker or stickers, highlight up to **five** points in the global supply chain at which they think verbal, physical and sexual harassment and abuse might be an issue.*
- *Then, highlight **five** players involved in the global supply chain that they think might be most affected by sexual harassment.*
- *Using a post-it note make a brief note (or drawing) of why and how they think each of the five players will be affected by sexual harassment – consider everyone involved, as well as the organizational impact.*

If more time is available, a plenary discussion should then focus on specific proposals for improvement.

Tips

- The exercise must clarify the invisible complexities of global supply chains and help appreciate the risk of weaknesses in workers' protection in any global supply chain.
- Ensure that there is enough time to complete the sharing session and to debrief afterwards.
- Plan in advance how the results will be captured and used, and be sure to translate the outputs into a format that participants can use easily, as the results of this exercise might be useful for further learning activities.
- Drawings may be used instead of writing post-it notes if participants prefer.

Resources

- Fair Wear Foundation video available on YouTube that explains global supply chains in the garment sector. This provides a useful introduction to the complexities of global supply chains.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfQgfKz8t9w>
- Global Supply Chain Chart available in the Resource Kit.

Hand-out

Please refer to **Case Study 1.1.** ➔ **Global Garment Industry**
