

Characteristics of the companies and their brands

The following chart includes a list of global companies that source garments from countries around the world and the labels that they own. It is not a complete list, but does profile some of the more prominent international companies.

Column 1 identifies the name of the company that owns the “brand”.

Column 2 identifies the “brands” or “labels” that the company owns. Many companies own more than one brand, and the brands they own can change over time(the name and/or logo of the brand are generally found on the garment’s tag). However, the name of the company and the name of one of its prominent brands is often the same. For example, Gap Inc. makes Old Navy, Banana Republic and Gap clothes.

The **other columns** in the chart provide information about each company that may be relevant to the decision about whether and how to engage with the company. Each column is described below.

■ **Manufacturer**

The companies that have a checkmark in this column own some or all of the factories they use. As a result, they have the power to directly make changes in the factory to improve wages and working conditions.

■ **Publicly-traded**

When a company is publicly-traded – that is, its shares are bought and sold by outside investors – US and Canadian law requires that they must report more information about their company and its activities to the public. This allows you to learn more about the company. In addition, in some cases activist shareholders have supported worker campaigns by pressuring companies by way of their shareholders to change policies and practices, including those related to labour rights.

Company name	Brand/Labels it owns	Manufacturer?	Publicly-traded?	University licensee?	Significant supplier?	Suspended in past?	Member of WRC?	Suspended factories?
H&M	Abercrombie & Fitch, Abercrombie Kids, H&M, H&M Kids, H&M Home, H&M Cosmetics, H&M Beauty							
Gap Inc.	Gap, Old Navy, Banana Republic, Gap Kids, Gap Home, Gap Beauty, Gap Fragrances, Gap Eyewear, Gap Optical, Gap Footwear, Gap Eyewear							
Gap	Gap, Gap Kids, Gap Home, Gap Beauty, Gap Fragrances, Gap Eyewear, Gap Optical, Gap Footwear, Gap Eyewear							
Gap Kids	Gap Kids							
Gap Home	Gap Home							
Gap Beauty	Gap Beauty							
Gap Fragrances	Gap Fragrances							
Gap Eyewear	Gap Eyewear							
Gap Optical	Gap Optical							
Gap Footwear	Gap Footwear							
Gap Eyewear	Gap Eyewear							

■ **University licensee**

The companies that have a checkmark in this column may be vulnerable to student pressure if you can prove that the brand is not meeting minimum labour standards. Also, many universities are members of the Worker Rights Consortium and the Fair Labor Association, both of which receive and investigate complaints of labour rights violations that occur at factories that supply university-licensed apparel. The WRC investigations tend to give greater importance to worker testimony than those carried out by the FLA. They also tend to be more detailed and transparent and with stronger corrective action plans. The WRC tends to prioritize the complaints about violations of freedom of association (see glossary).

BRANDS AND LABOUR RIGHTS

How and when to engage with brands?

■ Municipal supplier

Some companies sell large amounts of clothing (primarily uniforms) to municipal or state governments (or provinces in Canada) for example to supply their firefighters, police, transit or hospital employees. Some of these governments have also instituted “ethical purchasing policies” which require their suppliers to meet minimum labour standards. Like the university licensees, the brands that supply these municipal or state governments may be forced to respond to complaints, or risk losing these large customers. A database of cities with these ethical purchasing policies, their suppliers, and the factories they use is available from the Sweatfree Purchasing Consortium:

http://buysweatfree.org/linkup_search

■ Responded in past

Some companies have had more experience than others with labour rights organizations in dealing with specific cases of violations and, therefore, it is more likely that they will have developed a policy as to how to deal with these issues. These companies are more likely to respond when called to action. If you know of prior cases in which the company has taken positive steps to address violations, these can be mentioned and used as precedents and reference points in order to convince the company to do the right thing.

■ Member of Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSI)

The Fair Trade Association (FLA) and Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) are multi-stakeholder initiatives whose members include major brands and some manufacturers from the garment sector. These initiatives have mechanisms by which to receive and investigate third-party complaints, although their effectiveness is the subject of much debate. However, in some cases, they can be used as a potential tool to pressure companies to take action.

■ Global Framework Agreement

Global framework agreements are signed agreements between a Global Union and a multinational company. Such agreements commit the signatory company to ensure compliance with a set of labour standards in their own and/or their supplier factories. When the Global Union receives a report of worker rights violations from one of its affiliated unions, it can intervene with the company to pressure for the violations to be rectified. In the garment sector, the global union IndustriALL has signed two global framework agreements to date, the first with Inditex (Zara) and the second with H&M.

■ Discloses factories

A few brands disclose the names and addresses of the factories that make their goods. In those cases, it is much easier to link the brand to a particular factory. Links to the current lists of factories provided by these brands are included at the end of the chart, as well as links to other databases that link university licensees and municipal suppliers to factories.