

Spring 2016

# Responsible Consumerism at Merrimack College: A Manual for How to Get Sweatshop-Free Options in the Bookstore

Marisa Auger

*Merrimack College*, [augerm@merrimack.edu](mailto:augerm@merrimack.edu)

Annie McDonnell

*Merrimack College*, [mcdonnellan@merrimack.edu](mailto:mcdonnellan@merrimack.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/honors\\_capstones](http://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/honors_capstones)



Part of the [Social Influence and Political Communication Commons](#)

---

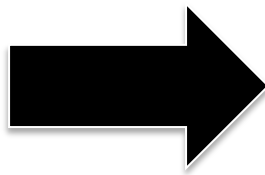
## Recommended Citation

Auger, Marisa and McDonnell, Annie, "Responsible Consumerism at Merrimack College: A Manual for How to Get Sweatshop-Free Options in the Bookstore" (2016). *Honors Program Capstone Projects*. Paper 8.

This Capstone - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors Program at Merrimack ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Program Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of Merrimack ScholarWorks.

# Responsible Consumerism at Merrimack College

A Manual for  
How to Get Sweatshop-Free Options in the Bookstore



**FAIRTRADE**

Honors Capstone Project:  
Marisa Auger  
Annie McDonnell

# Table of Contents:

- Section 1: Steps to Success
- Section 2: Presentation and Notes
- Section 3: Annotated Bibliography

## **Step 1: Educate Others**

The first step that is necessary for starting this project is to educate others, in addition to yourself, about the issue of responsible consumerism and the sources of the products you buy. Specifically speaking, it is important to be aware of the origin of products that we in particular sell at Merrimack in our bookstore. In order to educate and be well-informed on the information about sweatshops and how they are connected to Merrimack, refer to the research log and annotated bibliography (included at the end of this binder).

An effective way to educate other is through an informational presentation. A presentation that educates others on the issue at hand would be beneficial in many ways for this movement. By creating a PowerPoint that has the necessary information, you can use it to disseminate this information to others, including other students, faculty, and administrators that could help with this project.

Included are the slides for a presentation that could be used to present to classes to teach them about sweatshops, to gain support from students for this project; it also can be used to present to SGA to show the need for support for from a student council. For each slide, there are notes with information that can be used as a script for presenting this information to others; and can be tailored accordingly to the different audiences as needed. This presentation should be informative and should be backed in heavy amounts of research. While the research doesn't have to be written out in detail in the slides, it should be included through explanations in presenting the material.

## **Step 2: Organize**

The next step after educating others is to organize a network of students and faculty who support the idea of offering sweatshop free alternatives to the bookstore. The reason why this is crucial to organize a base group of people who are passionate about this idea is that there is more power in numbers when instilling change.

You could first reach out to faculty members on campus, from a variety of departments. From within the Campus Ministry Office, Jeff Wallace would be a beneficial resource. The work that he does in Campus Ministry aligns well with the goals for this project. He also works with many different students, that Jeff could reach out to those that he believes would be particularly interested. Another office to work with could be the Social Justice Department. Professors from this department, like Luis and Rabbi Mandell, could give their advice and experience in the cause. Lastly, faculty members from the Religious Studies Department may also be interested in this cause as the principles of Catholic Social Teaching play a large role in the sweatshop free movement. Professors like Dr. Allman or Padriac O'Hare, would be helpful resources for moving this project forward.

After getting the support from various faculty members, you could organize a group of fellow students who would be interested and start a Merrimack United Students Against Sweatshops club on campus. This is important because getting students to care about the cause and come together will help enact real and effective change. By getting enough people interested in this and starting a club to talk about various ways that you can instill trade-free merchandise in the bookstore, will help achieve the next steps.

### **Step 3: Raise Awareness**

After getting a group of faculty members as well as students to support the instillation of offering sweatshop free alternatives at the bookstore, you need to begin to raise awareness for the cause.

There are multiple ways to do this, but the first would be to start a photo campaign on campus where all of the photos could be posted together on a wall in the Sakowich Center or around campus. It seems that the photo campaigns gain a lot of attention from other on campus such as the Relay for Life posters, so this could be a great way to raise awareness. You could ask students and faculty members to hold a sign that says "I want to make Merrimack sweatshop free because..." or "I believe in conscious consumption because..." and each person taking the photo can fill in the blank. In this way, each person can personalize the photo.

Another idea for a photo campaign that you could ask people to partake in is to have people take a picture of the tag on their clothing and post this on social media, using a hashtag of something like #whomakesmyclothes or #wheredomyclothescomefrom. This could also be a good idea to have people start thinking about where their clothes come from when they purchase them and consciously think about who makes their clothes and what conditions does that person undergo when doing so.

Furthermore, you could have a table on Main Street in the Sakowich Center, handing out different information about events that are happening or have happened around the world relating to sweatshops such as the Rana Plaza Collapse in 2013. This is another way to raise awareness as people do not even know about such events involving sweatshops, and you also could have small cards with educational information to hand out. Simply being a presence on campus is important to answer questions that people may have.

Another form of awareness would be to present at Social Justice week. An idea could be to involve students, asking if they have or wear items, which are known for their poor working conditions such as Apple or Nike. You can ask students if they own an iPhone or Nike apparel and then show students where their iPhone or their Nike apparel comes from by displaying pictures of the company's sweatshops and talking about the working conditions of the workers. This is a powerful tool to show people about how their purchases affect actual people and teaches students about responsible consumerism. During this presentation, you could also show an informational video to engage viewers on the topic.

Lastly, starting a United Students Against Sweatshop club would be another way to bring awareness to the sweatshop dilemma. A club could organize various events all throughout the year and even take on a major role during Social Justice week.

**Step 4:**

The final step in the process is to create a proposal to enact the change. One way to do so is to write the proposal where you offer the idea of creating a section in the bookstore that sells trade-free Merrimack clothing, chocolates, or candies. In this proposal, the importance of educating the board on the issue of sweatshops and why the bookstore should offer trade-free merchandise would be listed. You can talk about the principles of Catholic Social Teaching as Merrimack is a Catholic college, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the social justice aspect of the rights of the worker.

# PowerPoint Slides and Notes



# Sweatshop vs. Fair Trade

Bringing Sweatshop-Free Options to  
the Merrimack Bookstore

## What is the issue?

- US Department of Labor defines sweatshops as  
“a factory that **violates 2 or more labor laws**”
- Terrible working conditions: poor physical and emotional conditions
  - Close quarters
  - **Infested** workplace
  - Demanding work
  - **Underaged** workers
  - Restrictions on breaks
  - **Unfair wages** for work/overtime
- “A quick tour of the building reveal **no fire extinguishers**, only **one exit** - the front door - and little more than a hole in the ground, down a **rat-infested** hall, for the toilet.”



## Why is this important?

- Universal Declaration for Human Rights states that “all men and women are created equal and born with inherent human dignity”
- Catholic Social Teaching & “Imago Dei”  
Tom Beaudoin explains that “all humans regardless of any variable are created in the image of God, and thereby deserving of basic decency.”

### How that relates to sweatshops?

- restricting workers of a respectable, quality standard of living and working
- denying their human dignity

## How are we involved?

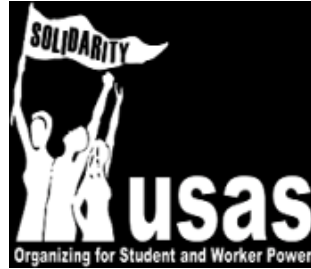
- Role as Consumers
- Voting with our wallets
- What are we really buying?



- John Oliver “Fashion” - [https://w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

## What can we do?

- Educate ourselves and others
- Come together to enact change
- Start on campus



## THE RANKINGS

<b>A</b>	These companies are social and environmental leaders in their category.
<b>B</b>	These tend to be mainstream companies taking social/environmental responsibility seriously.
<b>C</b>	These companies have either mixed social and environmental records or insufficient data available to rank them.
<b>D</b>	These engage in practices that have significant negative impacts on people and the planet.
<b>F</b>	These companies have the worst social and environmental records in the industry.

## References

Aulakh, Raveena. "My Life as a Sweatshop Worker." Daily Mail Reporter. October 12, 2013.

<https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-sweatshops>

Better World Shopper "The Rankings" <http://www.betterworldshopper.org/rankings.html>

Tom Beaudoin, Consuming Faith (Maryland, Sheed and Ward, 2006), 57.

John Oliver. *Fashion*. Last Week Tonight with John Oliver. Clip. April 26, 2015. HBO.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VdL-f4jihP78>

United Nations, "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights," December 10, 1948,

<http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights>.

## Presentation Notes

### **Slide 1:**

The goal for this project is to offer sweatshop free options at the bookstore. This presentation is structured to educate the public, including students, student organizations, faculty, staff, and administrators, about sweatshops, how prevalent they are in the consumer society, and the role we as individuals have on this issue. In sharing information about the realities behind the products we purchase, we hope to enlighten others on the conditions that workers face in order to supply the goods we buy, so that others can realize that sweatshops are problems that need to be addressed.

**Slide 2:**

The issue that we are talking about are sweatshops. This is a word that most people have heard of and is thrown around a good bit, but most people don't know the actual meaning, or what qualifies something to be a sweatshop.

According to the US Department of Labor, a sweatshop is "a factory that violates 2 or more labor laws." Labor laws are seen on a state and federal level, as well as internationally. Labor laws cover information such as how many hours individuals can work for in a week, how much they are paid by the hour (for minimum wage, as well as in an overtime situation). The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) covers most of these issues. Another popular way that protects these issues is the Occupational Safety and Administration (OSHA), which enforces rules to ensure that people are protected while on the job.

Sweatshops violate many of the practices and laws created to make sure that workers are protected and able to have a decent standard of living from their job. For example, most sweatshops have terrible physical working conditions. This includes close quarters for workers to work in: there is not a lot of space for the workers to do the extremely detail-oriented work. The physical work they do, is usually very demanding and harmful to their joints, etc. The workplaces most times are not clean or kept up to code: there are infestations of insects, cockroaches, or rats, which demonstrates the filth that they must endure to work and be paid. Other conditions that workers endure in sweatshops are things like unfair wages for the amount of work that they do; this is especially true for international places, where the corporations can get away with not paying their workers sufficient wages. The way that they are treated are not positive too: workers are allowed minimal breaks, are overworked, underpaid, and most of them are underaged workers. These sweatshops also don't abide by basic fire and safety codes for the actual buildings where their workers work.

While the working conditions in themselves are negative, they also extend to conditions that workers face outside of the workplace. With minimal pay, workers are left to live off of the limited wages that they are given. The realities that these workers must endure affect every aspect of their life outside of their job. Due to their limited wages, there is less money to go around for food, for paying for their home and the utilities, for clothes, etc. and all of these aspects for not only themselves, but also for their family. Out of this lack of pay, an entire family is negatively affected.

At the surface, these sweatshops are an issue because human beings are forced to live in a way that is less than human. That is the most basic reason why we should be concerned. We have to realize that we as consumers play a role in this cycle, because we are part of the factor that make sweatshops a reality, which will be explained in the next few slides.

**Slide 3:**

Why is this something even worth talking about?

There are two basic answers to this question. One comes from the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, stating that “all men and women are created equal and born with inherent human dignity.” This illustrates the humanistic approach to this situation. As human beings we have this awareness to knowing that we were created equal and having human dignity. As a school community, we represent and support all aspects of respect and community on our campus. Therefore we should be supporting the community at large, and all those who somehow play a role at Merrimack. By being a human being, we should work for the respect and fair treatment of all other human beings, because they were created equal.

Specifically why is it worth our time investigating at Merrimack in particular?

One of the specific things about Merrimack that relates to this issue is the fact that it is a Catholic school. A part of the Catholic Social Teaching, the basis for Catholic thought, is the concept of human dignity. This idea that all people are created with human dignity stems from the ideas within the Bible, comes from Genesis 1:26, which explains that all are created in the Imago Dei, “wherein God created men in his own image.” As a Catholic institution, it only makes sense that Merrimack should be acting on its founding values. This is a good rationale for the administration to support this project and be involved in bringing a sweatshop free option to the bookstore.

**Slide 4:**

It is easy to read about or hear about these stories and these conditions regarding sweatshops, and only identify it as a disconnected event that does not affect everyday consumers, including college students at Merrimack. In reality, however, we college students are some of the greatest population of consumers in society. As consumers, or people who buy things, we are one of the sources of this issue. Consumers provide the demand for specific products from companies. This puts pressure on companies to manufacture their products fast. Consumers also provide a demand for products at a more affordable cost to them. This puts pressure on companies to manufacture their products as inexpensively as possible. These pressures on companies are some of the motivating factor for companies to turn to such negative practices. Wanting to get the most profit as possible for their business, companies choose ulterior practices to complete the work that is needed to be completed while also saving them costs, so their profit are as lucrative as possible. It is then that businesses begin to outsource their labor to third world countries or to workers they know will work for little pay. Places like sweatshops are born from this need for cheap labor and exploitation of work in order to get that labor.

In that rationale, where we choose to spend our money directly plays a role on sweatshops and the companies that exploit others through them. Whenever a consumer chooses to spend their money, they are actively voicing a vote for what type of practices they think are acceptable. When you purchase a sneaker made from a company that uses sweatshops, you are firstly enabling that practice by giving them more money to continue their practice; secondly, you are sending a message to the company that you approve of the use of sweatshops.

So often when we shop, the only thing that a consumer sees is a brand name or a price tag. What is unseen are the implications that each item has. Behind the swoosh or the tag are realities that we don't want to accept or believe. There are individuals who work tirelessly, with little pay, few breaks, and little to no humanity, to provide us with luxuries. We don't see what we are really buying when we pay for things.

John Oliver Clip - start at 4:15pm

**Slide 5:**

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead

As the ones who purchase things and make the decisions of what to buy, consumers have the power in this scenario. You vote with your wallet; meaning that consumers have the power through their money and where they choose to give and spend their money. When the question of “what can we do” is asked, it is then important to know that there are many answers for it.

The first way we can respond is to educate ourselves and others. The “Better World Shopper” book ranks various companies and organizations that produce different things based on their company’s connection to human rights, the environment, animal protection, community involvement, and social justice. By identifying what the company does and how it operates, consumers can be more aware of what and who they are supporting. In doing so, you also should tell others of what you learn, so that the consumers can be informed of what they are buying and where their money is going.

Another thing consumers can do is come together to enact change. This can look like a variety of things: from committing to not actively support companies that use sweatshops, to starting a club, to educating people, to taking steps to addressing this issue on your own campus! The organization United Students Against Sweatshops is a way for students to come together and organize to bring about a change on campus. By using this as a guideline and model for what they can do on their own campus.



# Research & Annotated Bibliography

## Annotated Bibliography

**Associated Press (Producer). (1997). USA: President Clinton Announces Plan to Combat Sweatshops [Streaming video]. Retrieved from Associated Press Video Collection database.**

This is an announcement from President Bill Clinton on his plan to respond to the use of sweatshops and slave labor by companies and retail organization. His audience is the American people and the companies that already exploit their workers with such practices.

This video put together by the Associated Press shows President Clinton presenting his dedication of part of his administration to the examination and response to the use of sweatshops in retail stores that sell their products in the United States. This plan includes a “code of conduct” for the industry that focusing on an improvement of wages and working conditions. Developed with and involving multiple organizations, this also encourages the US to have a role watching the actions of these companies. President Clinton states with conviction this of workers in factories: “Their health and their safety - their ability to make a decent wage - their ability to bring children into this world and raise them with dignity and have their children see their parents working with dignity - that's an important part of the quality of our lives.” This announcement is aimed toward the American people, to raise their awareness about this issue. To further this, the AP video includes images and clips of the type of work and the conditions that workers are exposed to when working in sweatshops.

This source will be helpful to the topic because it shows how higher administration and the government can be effective in organizing effective change for certain issues. This video can support that awareness needs to be raised by the public.

**Aulakh, Raveena. “My Life as a Sweatshop Worker.” Daily Mail Reporter. October 12, 2013. <<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2456412/My-life-sweatshop-worker-Undercover-reporter-tells-crushing-work-terrible-pay-girl-boss-aged-just-NINE.html>>**

Raveena Aulakh is a Canadian reporter who went undercover in a Bangladeshi sweatshop to report on the quality of work and life for those who work in these factories. Aulakh writes for the DailyMail.com, an online publication which reaches not only the British population but also others who have access to the internet.

The main point of this article exposes the harsh realities of working in a factory with sweatshop conditions. This article makes an emotional appeal to readers touching on the low wages, the long hours, and the young age of the average workers in the factory. The feeling of the author is one of outrage. Aulakh begins by addressing the physical qualities of the factories: “A quick tour of the building revealed no fire extinguishers, only one exit - the front door - and little more than a hole in the ground, down a rat-infested hall, for the toilet.” While Aulakh was frustrated and outraged at these conditions, in speaking to workers and their families, and noted on the reality of some people needing that job: “In a country with widespread poverty however, such jobs are valued and Meem had ambitions to move up the factory chain to become a better-paid sewing operator.” Another difficult reality that Aulakh acknowledged is that these jobs are important aspects of these individuals lives. “By all accounts, working women are changing their lives, their families’ lives,’ Ms Aulakh said. ‘There is more food in homes, and cleaner clothes. There is electricity, even if it’s one bulb, and there are toilets...But it has come at a price.’”

This article is significant to my topic because it gives background information to the conditions of sweatshops and the complexity to the issue – namely that it is not simply enough to end factory work, because there are many workers who need the paycheck, although they do not deserve the working conditions.

**Beaudoin, Tom. *Consuming Faith*. Thomas More Publication, Maryland. 2006.**

Tom Beaudoin is a professor of theology at Santa Clara University, who explores the topic of consumerism from an ethical perspective. The audience that Beaudoin’s work is geared toward is primarily educating readers about the correlation between economics and religious beliefs, specifically those aligned in the Catholic faith.

Beaudoin first introduces the topic up for debate, trying to paint a full picture of responsible consumerism, highlighting who is involved or connected to this issue. After identifying the facts that are at play in this ethic situation, Beaudoin later expresses the active role that ordinary people have in this as consumers. Based on the cheap labor that is exploited in sweatshops, stores and organizations are able to benefit from lower prices to the public while still making a profit off the items. Beaudoin makes strong claims about the implications of consumer's actions on sweatshops, explicitly so when he writes "this has come to be one of the saddest commentaries on our society today – that the middle classes in order to get the cheapest goods possible, allow themselves to be beneficiaries of an economy in which the poor exploit the poor." Beaudoin also raises awareness to the differences between a living wage and a minimum wage, and relates this difference to the treatment of the workers exploited in sweatshops. As a researcher steeped in a study of ethics, Beaudoin makes an appeal to the reader that there is a Christian responsibility on the part of the consumer to be aware of this lack of human rights and human dignity in these types of working conditions, and to change their ways to respond in a way that their Christian identity would encourage.

This source is significant to my project because it uses Catholic Social Teaching concepts as a way to respond to the injustice present in the issue of sweatshops. While it definitely is biased from a religious viewpoint, it still produces the ideology that "all humans are created in the image of God, and are thereby deserving of basic human decency." This will be a useful source to be used to support fair trade from the Catholic perspective.

**Bose, Purnima. "From Agitation to Institutionalization: The Student Anti-Sweatshop Movement in the New Millennium." *Indiana Journal Of Global Legal Studies* 15, no. 1 (Winter2008 2008): 213-240. *Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost* (accessed March 10, 2016).**

The author, Purnima Bose, shows the development of student involvement in the anti-sweatshop movement on a college campus. This article was published in a Global Legal Studies journal, and it's audience is primarily a more scholarly, specific audience.

This article examines the way that students were engaged in having an active role in an anti-sweatshop movement on a college campus. Bose highlights Megan Hise who became interested because of the exposure and knowledge of sweatshops, and how that expanded to her interest in labor issues. In speaking about how Hise was engaged, she shares that "In some ways it is easier to agitate a person new to these issues by initiating the dialogue with the visceral reality of the iconic sweatshop: the heat, the fatigue, the toxic odors, the hunger, the humiliation. Starting from the vantage point where the conditions are so ugly that organizing a union can mean a life or death struggle, labor solidarity suddenly seems more urgent." This anecdotal explanation for involving students connects to the presence of different organizations that established them on their college campus. Bose explains that the role of the student in the anti-sweatshop movement is very important and develops significantly, saying "against such figurations, student activists and their allies are part of a transnational private sector that is attempting to empower garment workers by formulating policies that address the nexus of international commerce and human rights." This introduction as students tends to lead into the further involvement of protecting and advocating for human rights.

This source will be helpful to this topic because it shows how students play a role in this social justice issue of sweatshops, and focusing on its role on a college campus, which is applicable to my project.

**"Evaluations of H & M Compliance with Safety Action Plans for Strategic Suppliers in Bangladesh." *Clean Clothes Campaign. United Students Against Sweatshops. 2015. Web. 24 February 2016.***

Researchers in the article who are a part of the Clean Clothes Campaign introduce the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, a country known for having factories extremely unsafe for workers who have died due to the building fires. The article discloses reports from the inspectors of the Bangladesh Factories. H and M, a company with many companies in Bangladesh promised to correct the dangers in its factories. The article seeks to accurately determine if H and M lived up to that promise. The article zones in on the Rana Plaza building which collapsed in 2013, killing over one thousand garment workers and injuring two thousand more. Since this collapse, Western Companies formed the Accord agreement to have

factories undergo safety renovations and stop conducting business with factories that fail to make these renovations. The article answers the question as to how sweatshops arise by stating that pressure to have the lowest prices and to compete in the global market causes these horrific conditions and the ability for factories to not change the problem. The Accord, conducted fire, structural, and electrical safety inspections at H and M's Bangladesh factories. If a violation was found, the factory has a deadline to correct the violations. The transparency of the inspection also allows for the public to see the reality of the working conditions. The article lists its findings that H and M violates sixty-two safety violations in each of its factories which sums up to over one thousand. Safety fixes include fire-rated doors and enclosed staircases which are the number one tool to preventing workers deaths in factory fire or collapses. The article concludes that despite claiming that it would offer safer working conditions for its workers in Bangladesh, H and M failed to take the right steps to renovate its unsafe factory conditions.

The article is helpful because it makes the reader aware that although companies may publically assure the consumer that it is enacting change, in reality, this is not the case. The purpose of the article is to show that their sweatshop problem is still in effect today, despite the press releases and many organizations that have arised.

This will be helpful in my research because this is an article conducted in 2015. If people argue that the issue is in the past and not as bad as it has been, this is not the case. The issue still remains despite companies publically announcing that they care and will renovate their factories for worker safety. H and M is a popular company known for its cheap prices, but people need to realize, is it worth it?

**Garman, Jason. "Ethical consumerism and the power of having a choice/voice." TEDxTeAro. Aug 1, 2013. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAG-t-kXcqE>>**

Jason Garman is a humanitarian from New Zealand who works with OxFam international. He has experience working with survivors of humanitarian emergencies, helping those get out of the cycle of poverty, and address the issue of fair trade.

The main point of this TedTalk by Garman is to highlight the role that we as individual people have on the outcome of certain ethical practices taken by companies. Garman begins his speech by expressing the idea that "you have a choice, and you have a voice." Garman drives home the idea of the power of our independent role in talking about the interdependency of people throughout the world. Using an example of the full production of a garden, Garman argues that while individuals can be dependent by growing their own crops to eat, there are many players who are necessary to make this happen. This includes the workers who melt the metal to make a spade, the harvester of the wooden handle, and the driver who delivers the tool to the store. Garman focuses on how if humans come together, they are a powerful force, even though our power might not measure up to a large company's monetarily.

This is significant to my topic because it speaks to the role of the individual on accomplishing a task. This can be applied to student pressure to encourage buying from an ethical company on campus.

**Gravitz, Alisa. "Sweatshops and Child Labor: Use Your Vice and Economic Choices for Change." *Green America*. Green America. 2004. Web. 4 April 2016.**

This article is from Co-Op America Business Network which is an organization that seeks to improve the working conditions, wages, and opportunities for workers in sweatshop factories and enact real reform from large corporations. The article outlines the issue of sweatshops and how people can end the issue. It recounts real-life stories from sweatshops workers such as Quang Thi Vo who worked as a seamstress in a factory located in the U.S. territory of Samoa. This form of modern slavery causes workers into submission by making threats and locking them inside until the work is completed. In addition, the article also lists victories that have occurred to ending sweatshops such as a New York law passed in 2003 that allowed public schools and colleges to ban the purchase of clothes from companies that owned sweatshops. The article also lists countries around the world, including the U.S., that contain sweatshops in order for consumers to avoid labels that are made in these countries. The article concludes with frequently asked questions as well as steps for individuals to end sweatshops; or example, people can pressure companies by contacting them through letter writing, finding alternatives such as fair trade products, and organizing collectively.

The article acts more as a guidebook from the organization. The goal of the article is to persuade readers to adopt a sweatshop free mentality and become responsible consumers by providing the tools and information to do so. It gives first-hand accounts from sweatshop workers as well as success stories of organizations that have gone sweatshops free.

The source is useful in my research as it provides in detail foundational information on sweatshops and how they arise. It addresses the problems and demonstrates solutions for the reader. I can use this article as it goes into the solution: fair trade clothing companies as an alternative to sweatshops companies/manufacturers.

**Keady Jim. *Behind the Swoosh*. Documentary. Educating for Justice. Rainlake Film, 2011. DVD/Youtube. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5uYCWVfuPQ>>**

Jim Keady was a collegiate athlete at St. John's, when he found out about the working conditions of those who make the clothes the athletics department used, Keady acted out in protest against the unethical business decision. Using his well-known status as an athlete and prominent figure on campus, Keady is speaking to the public, not only other students but also consumers in general, to raise awareness on the issue.

As a way to learn more and educate others about this, Keady travels to Indonesia to understand what it is like to live on the budget of a Nike worker. Keady and his colleague Leslie Kretzu, who is also the codirector and founder of Educating for Justice, alongside Keady, fully committed themselves to being learn the labor practices put in place in these types of factories. Keady and Kretzu lived for a month the life that a factory employee would lead: on a wage of \$1.25 a day, in a slum house, getting to know the workers. After experiencing the serious realities of life on a budget of 7,000 rupees (after payments are deducted), Keady and Kretzu began to feel physically and mentally the toll that this lifestyle has on the human body. Keady expressed "there is no way to live on \$1.25 a day and keep your human dignity." This documentary also showed the politic corruption present in this issue, through meeting with individuals who had been targeted and imprisoned for trying to fight for worker's rights and unionization.

This source will support this topic by demonstrating the realities of this issue and showing the accessibility and possibility of providing this information to students. Keady ends this documentary by saying "we should care for these people because they are human beings," simply alluding to the ideas expressed in Catholic Social Teaching and the premise of human dignity.

**Kristof, Nicholas. "Where Sweatshops Are a Dream." *New York Times*. January 15, 2009. <[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/15/opinion/15kristof.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/15/opinion/15kristof.html?_r=0)>**

Nicholas Kristoff is an op-ed columnist for the New York Times, focusing primarily on human rights, women's issues, and global affairs. His articles are organized to shed light on the side of topics that are often overlooked or not considered as seriously.

This article published in the New York Times sends a provocative message about the side of sweatshops that the consumer never sees. Kristoff shares in-person interviews with those directly affected by sweatshop employment, and presents the straightforward reaction that workers have toward sweatshop labor. While Americans think of it as exploitation, Kristoff shares some "don't think they exploit enough." Kristoff references individuals who "would love to get a job in a factory...at least that work is in the shade." The blunt reality, and lesser of two evils, has a different role than it is perceived. Kristoff implies that sweatshops are not entirely terrible: in that it has increased the standard of living, and it speaks to a social justice response to this problem, by suggesting that "the best way to help people in the poorest countries isn't to campaign against sweatshops but to promote manufacturing there."

This source, although it shows the further complicated nature of this topic, will help to provide a much fuller vision of the problem regarding sweatshops and the need for responsible consumerism. Kristoff shares a more controversial part of this issue, but one that can help narrow how to respond to it more effectively.

**Meyers, C. D. "Moral Duty, Individual Responsibility, and Sweatshop Exploitation." *Journal Of Social Philosophy* 38, no. 4 (Winter2007 2007): 620-626. *Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost* (accessed March 10, 2016).**

C.D. Meyers writes about the exploitation of sweatshops, as well as the responsibility that consumers have with relation to this issue. This was published in a *Social Philosophy Journal*, and the author is affiliated with the University of Southern Mississippi. The audience is generally a highly educated group with an interest in this topic.

This article tackles the tension between those involved in the anti-sweatshop movement and those who actually defend sweatshops. By focusing on a movement that is connected to this social justice issue, social movements are one of the main pieces of this article. Meyers examines why the anti-sweatshop movement has gain such support over the year, citing primarily that the precipitant is how this issue contests with individual's moral leanings. Meyers expresses "though many opponents of sweatshops do not explicitly appeal to contemporary philosophical ethics, these theories are popular in part because, and insofar as, they justify our commonsense moral intuitions." These "moral intuitions" are a driving force behind people's decisions to get involved in this movement. But even with this large group that disagrees with sweatshops, there are still some who have drawn conclusions that the use of sweatshops is not infringing on moral rights. Meyers explains this side of the argument through this example: "Similarly, though the sweatshop pay is unfair, the workers rationally consent to such unfairness without any coercion (direct or indirect) and are not made any worse off from being offered the job. On the minimalist view, if no one's rights are violated then no wrong is committed." This article includes the full picture of the struggle and contention of sweatshops, an issue that has evoked both positive and negative response from the public, both with different reasons of support.

This article is significant to my topic because it shows that there are two sides to this issue. So often people just look at the conditions and say that sweatshops are intrinsically evil, but Meyers shows there is another perspective to see it from which makes this issue all the more complicated.

**"Mission, Vision, and Organizing Philosophy." *USAS. United Students Against Sweatshops*. N.d. Web. 25 March 2016.**

This article, taken from the United Students Against Sweatshops website, outlines the organization's mission and vision as well as details their organizing philosophy. USAS is a grassroots organization mostly run by students. The article uses "sweatshop," as an umbrella term that takes into account all of the struggles individuals face due to the global economic system caused by sweatshops. Ideally, USAS envisions a world free from oppression where humans are respected for their inherent dignity. Furthermore, the organization has five pillars under their organizing philosophy: solidarity, collective liberation, grassroots democracy, diversity of tactics, and pluralism. Under the solidarity pillar, USAS explains that they believe all human beings are connected and need to form a collective power to work together to create a just world. The organization explains that having students as the real proponents of change will shift the labor movement. USAS states that students are marginalized in their schools because they do not make decisions that affect the larger campus community. To achieve change through better working conditions as part of the global justice movement, USAS practices nonviolence and civil disobedience.

Although the article is biased, in that it comes from a specific side of the sweatshop argument, this is a credible organization that has helped colleges and youth groups across the United States in the fight against sweatshops. Its goal as an organization is to empower students and provide the necessary tools and philosophy to create change.

This article is helpful in my quest to offer sweatshop free clothing to Merrimack College because it outlines clearly the mentality that has helped other schools to enact change, and I can adopt these philosophies. These tools are useful when approaching students to care for the movement as well as faculty and decision-makers at the college. The research also provides a foundational belief that connects directly to the Catholic Social Teaching philosophy such as the idea of solidarity among individuals

**Moran, Lee. "British shoppers find 'call for help' messages from sweatshop workers in clothing" New York Daily News. June 26, 2014 <<http://www.nydailynews.com/life-style/shoppers-find-notes-sweatshop-workers-clothes-article-1.1844730>>**

Lee Moran writes for the New York Daily News, which has an online website as a way to disseminate articles to a greater audience. This article is an op-ed piece sharing information about a particular topic.

This article centers on a theme of findings by shoppers at retailers in the UK. Several customers found shocking notes and other identifying information stuffed in different pieces of clothing at a large retail store. These letters expose the conditions that workers must endure, as well as evoke outside help and assistance from consumers for the quality of life workers are facing. This article also collects reactions from customers who found these notes and who were directly exposed to them. Responses include sentiments such as this: "To be honest I've never really thought much about how the clothes are made. But this really made me think about how we get our cheap fashion." By interviewing consumers, this shows the reaction that consumers have to learning about these issues. It shows that there is a decision that has to be made in considering which is more important to a consumer: a person's standard of living and work, or a price tag.

This article will be helpful for this topic because it shows the humanity that is evoked when consumers learn about the realities of where their clothes are made.

**Oliver, John. *Fashion. Last Week Tonight with John Oliver. Clip. April 26, 2015. HBO.* <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VdLf4fihP78>>**

John Oliver was the host of the late night talk show and news satire called "Last Week Tonight with John Oliver" on HBO. This show reaches millions of viewers on television, as well as online through popular brief YouTube clips.

In this clip, labeled "Fashion," John Oliver addresses the growing fashion industry and the role that consumers have in this situation. Oliver speaks to the new low prices correlated to the production of those same items from major brands and companies. In doing so, Oliver highlights the controversy within the GAP and its ongoing struggle with workers' rights over the past 20 years. First beginning with the constant improvement plans developed by these corporations like the implementation of an "independent monitoring program" or "age verification requirements." Oliver supports this point by repeatedly expressing the problems that arise out of these companies, to not avail or improvement. Frustrated by this, he refers to it as "a pattern of reckless behavior that has to be addressed." In speaking out about this in a public and highly viewed way, Oliver implores his viewers to be educated on this issue and to act upon what they're learning because "this is going to keep happening for as long as we let it." This clip also shows the politics behind this issue and how it is centered around cost and profit more than anything else, because the money situation is dictating how companies treat individuals for their own interest.

This clip will be helpful to this topic by presenting this material in a lighthearted way, which also speaks directly to the public by educating them on what the true cost of the price of clothing is.

**"Sweatshops: Economic Action to End Sweatshop and Forced Child Labor." *Green America. Green America. 2014. Web. 5 February 2016.***

Green America is a foundation that looks to create a "green economy for people and the planet." In its push to do so, it highlights the dilemmas of sweatshops. This question and answer article about global sweatshops helps the reader to understand the basics of sweatshops and addresses common questions regarding them. According to the article, sweatshops are defined as violating "two or more labor laws"; additionally, a factory is considered a sweatshop due to poor wages, unsafe working conditions, and the inability for workers to unionize. The article asserts that the reason why sweatshops arise are that manufacturers shift locations that allow for cheaper labor and fewer regulations in factories. The article answers the question of the inevitability of sweatshops saying that they are not inevitable as consumers may be attracted to the low costs of products, but if he/she knows it was made in a sweatshops, he/she is less likely to purchase it. The article argues that US consumers would be willing to pay more money if they knew the product was not produced in a sweatshop. Some may question that sweatshop labor is better than no job for these workers; however, the article says that workers are trapped in a cycle of exploitation where

wages are so low that individuals can never escape poverty. It is also not expensive for corporations to check the conditions of their factories. To combat misconceptions, the article writes that there is no “sweatshop free” label that exists but union labels insinuate that workers can organize freely. Additionally the “made in the USA” label does not ensure that the product was made in a sweatshop free factory, but it might mean that it violates fewer labor laws.

Highlighting common questions and providing accurate answers, the article is helpful in my research because I can use this when presenting my research. Although it has an agenda to combating sweatshops, the article does present both sides of the issue as the questions act as a counter-argument for fixing the sweatshop problem. The purpose of this article is to bring awareness and education to the issue and combat any assumptions or misinformation about the sweatshop topic. The question that I still have after reading is that the article asserts that people are willing to buy clothes for more if they know it was not made in a sweatshop; nonetheless, with all of the information and press released about companies such as Nike which produce their products in sweatshops, are people truly willing to sacrifice the label?

This article is helpful in my research because it offers the foundational information for my topic. It presents questions that may arise when giving information to fellow students, and I can have accurate answers from a company that focuses on making a green economy for all.