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### The Future of California's Garment Industry

A Convening of Garment Worker Advocates

November 11-12, 2004

Conference Site: UCLA Downtown Labor Center

**Planning Committee:** Sweatshop Watch, Asian Law Caucus, Garment Worker Center, UCLA Labor Center, Chinese Progressive Association, Asian Immigrant Women Advocates

#### Goals:

- Develop a common understanding about the changing nature of the garment industry, particularly in California, due to free trade policies,
- Share successes and challenges in addressing job loss in garment and other low-wage industries, and
- Strategize to develop actions and policies that will improve job training and placement, access to services, and economic development, particularly for undocumented immigrants.

*This convening is made possible by the generous support of The California Wellness Foundation.*

### AGENDA, NOTES, AND PRESENTATIONS

Thursday, November 11, 2004

#### Presentation on the State of California's Garment Industry

[Download presentation \(PowerPoint\)](#)

This session provides an overview of the changes facing the garment industry and highlight possible strategies to strengthen opportunities for immigrant workers. A report with updated garment industry numbers, including demographics of employers and workers and trends in employment are presented.

#### Speakers:

- Karin Mak, Sweatshop Watch - Los Angeles
- Joannie Chang, Asian Law Caucus - San Francisco

#### Panel 1: The Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) and free trade's impact on the garment industry

This panel will describe the MFA; how is it changing the global garment industry in terms of production patterns of retailers, employment and working conditions; and how it will affect garment workers in the U. S. and California. The panelists will also discuss other trends in free trade, which are challenging garment workers.

#### Speakers:

- Professor Richard Appelbaum, UC Santa Barbara
- Nikki Fortunato Bas, Sweatshop Watch - [Download presentation \(Word\)](#)

#### Workshops: Corporate Accountability

##### Workshop A: Holding retailers and manufacturers accountable for sweatshop conditions in the US and globally

[Download notes \(Word\)](#)

This workshop evaluates past campaigns against California-based corporations, including the Gap and Jessica McClintock.



Facilitators/Resource People:

- Nikki Fortunato Bas, Sweatshop Watch - facilitator
- Chie Abad, former Saipan Garment Worker
- Stacy Kono, Asian Immigrant Women Advocates
- Conrad McKerron, As You Sow

**Workshop B: Linking the global to the local**

[Download notes \(Word\)](#)

This session looks at local responses to globalization through policy work, coalition building, and grassroots organizing.

Facilitators/Resource People:

- Alejandra Domenzain, Sweatshop Watch - facilitator
- Mary Mendez, ENLACE - [Download presentation \(Powerpoint\)](#)
- Anna Blackshaw, Public Citizen

Strategies for Addressing Job Loss and Stimulating Job Creation

**Workshop C: Identifying possibilities for immigrant workers under workforce development programs.**

[Download notes \(Word\)](#)

This workshop provides an overview of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) and also discusses limitations of these programs through a panel on Workers' Experiences with Workforce Development Programs.

Speakers:

- Gordon Mar, Chinese Progressive Association - facilitator
- Nona Leigois, Legal Aid Society of Los Angeles/Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board
- Grace Meng, Asian Law Caucus
- Fei Yi, Chinese Progressive Association, San Francisco
- Guillermo Glen, Association of Border Workers, El Paso, Texas

**Workshop D: Organizing campaigns and strategies to leverage government benefits and services for job training and creation**

[Download notes \(Word\)](#)

This workshop focuses on how campaigns have been organized to leverage government benefits, job training & placement services, and English classes to immigrant workers. It will cover the successes as well as challenges.

Speakers:

- Victor Narro, UCLA Labor Center - facilitator
- Lydia Lowe, Boston Chinese Progressive Association
- Enrique Velasquez, Strategic Action for a Just Economy

Friday, November 12, 2004

**Workshops E & F: Examining Other Economic Development Models**

[Download notes \(Word\)](#)

Panelists discuss the nuts & bolts of building labor-industry-government partnerships to upgrade the garment industry and share information on how worker co-ops can be formed. Strengths and weaknesses of these 2 strategies are shared.

Facilitators/Resource People:

- Victor Narro, UCLA Labor Center - facilitator
- Katie Quan, UC Berkeley Labor Center
- Sara Crean, Garment Industry Development Corporation, New York
- Scott Cummings, UCLA
- Sandi Romer, Mama's Hot Tamales
- Viola Casares, Fuerza Unida

**Brainstorm Session: Based on the knowledge shared today, what are some goals we should work towards?**

[Download notes \(Word\)](#)

**Strategy Sessions:**

Strategy Session 1: How to work towards a garment industry in California that provides good jobs for garment workers? This strategy session addresses corporate accountability in the garment industry and maintaining local jobs.

[Download notes \(Word\)](#)

**Strategy Session 2:** How to best assist garment workers facing job loss by improving access to job training and opportunities for real re-employment? This session addresses ways for garment workers to access good jobs, other economic opportunities, and government jobs training programs.

[Download notes \(Word\)](#)

### **Discussion of next steps**

[Download notes \(Word\)](#)

## **SUGGESTED READINGS:**

### **Background Readings on the Changing Nature of the Garment Industry**

• [Crisis or Opportunity? The Future of Los Angeles' Garment Workers, the Apparel Industry, and the Local Economy \(PDF\)](#), a new report by Sweatshop Watch and the Garment Worker Center

• [Free Trade's Looming Threat to the World's Garment Workers](#), Sweatshop Watch Working Paper, October 30, 2003 - [En Español](#)

• [Free Trade's Threat to California's Garment Workers & Policy Actions for Economic Justice \(PDF\)](#), Sweatshop Watch Fact Sheets, May 2004

• [New York City's Garment Industry Today: A New Look? \(PDF\)](#), Fiscal Policy Institute, August 2003

### **Background Readings on Worker Displacement**

• [Looking for Work in the Bay Area: Employment Opportunities for Limited English Proficient Workers in the Healthcare, Biotechnology, and Package Delivery Sectors \(WORD\)](#), Chinese for Affirmative Action, July 2003

• [Evaluation of the Power-One Project: A Re-Employment Program for Dislocated, Limited English Proficient Electronics Workers in the City of Boston \(WORD\)](#), Boston Redevelopment Authority, March 2004

• [Workforce Development Policies: Background and Current Issues \(Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Workforce Investments Act, Higher Education Program\) \(PDF\)](#), The Workforce Alliance, March 2003

• [Getting to Work, A Report on How Workers with Limited English Skills Can Prepare for Good Jobs \(PDF\)](#), Working for American Institute, AFL-CIO, May 2004

• [Basics of Workforce Investment Act of 1998 \(PDF\)](#), Working for America Institute, AFL-CIO

• [Flow of Individuals with Limited English Language Proficiency Through WIA \(PDF\)](#), ADARE (Administrative Data Research and Evaluation) Project, October 2004

• [Understanding Economic Development \(PDF\)](#), Working for America Institute, AFL-CIO

• [Building Adult Basic Education, Getting Access to Funds & Partners \(PDF\)](#), Working for America Institute, AFL-CIO

• [Checklist of Federal Benefits Programs Available to Documented & Undocumented Workers](#), Working for America Institute, AFL-CIO



## WORKSHOP A NOTES

*Future of California's Garment Industry, Strengthening Opportunities for Immigrant Workers*  
A Convening of Garment Worker Advocates  
November 11-12, 2004, Los Angeles, CA

### WORKSHOP A: HOLDING RETAILERS ACCOUNTABLE

This workshop evaluated past campaigns against California-based corporations.

**SPEAKERS:** Chie Abad (Global Exchange), Stacy Kono (Asian Immigrant Women Advocates), Conrad MacKerron (As You Sow)

**Facilitator:** Nikki F. Bas (Sweatshop Watch)

#### I. Chie Abad, Global Exchange – Campaign against Gap and others producing on Saipan

- I am a former Saipan garment worker, now I work at Global Exchange, a non-profit international human rights organization that works on social justice. Global Exchange has 4 programs: 1) reality tours, 2) fair trade store, 3) public education, 4) human and global rights campaign.
- I used to work for a contractor of Gap, Levi's and other retailers in Saipan. Even though work was done in Saipan, we used the label "Made in the USA." Workers worked 14 hours a day, 7 days a week. The factory had a quota system to finish a certain quantity per hour. If we did not finish the quota, we would have to come back to the factory and make up the pieces left before getting paid. People were fired if pregnant. I worked there for 4 years and then tried to organize a union with HERE. Managers were against the campaign and threatened the workers. We lost the union vote by 5 votes even though the management fought it. I kept organizing and then lost my job. I then went to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) of the USA, and got an injunction against the company from firing me. In 2001 the court settled the case against me. I then exposed the industry by speaking about the campaign across the country. In 1999, there were three lawsuits against the retailers and manufacturers and by 2003, 26 retailers and manufacturers settled the lawsuits (Gap, Target, Limited, Abercrombie, JC Penney, ...). The settlement included US\$20 million for back wages and independent monitoring.
- Mine is a good story but women around the world are facing exploitation. What kind of democracy do we have when some people live in poverty even though they are working? Workers want a better life for their family and want to be treated with respect and dignity.
- I had to leave Saipan to start the campaign. I went to the US Embassy. Congressman George Miller helped me get a visa. Global Exchange enabled me to speak around the country. I went on a speaking tour to educate the public. Students and community groups helped a lot.

- **Outcomes:** Campaign against major retailers in Saipan achieved: monetary settlement, independent monitoring, repatriation for workers to go home, recruitment fee lowered to \$1500 (was \$5,000-10,000), working and living conditions improved for current workers.
- **Obstacles:** Chie was threatened personally, her partner and family also threatened. More than 12 lawyers from the retailers deposing her was difficult but she stood up.

## **II. Stacy Kono, Asian Immigrant Women Advocates (AIWA) – Campaign against Jessica McClintock**

AIWA launched the Garment Workers Justice Campaign in 1992 to demand that garment manufacturers take corporate responsibility for the working conditions and low wages of immigrant seamstresses. This national campaign brought together labor, religious, community organizations and students to support the grassroots leadership of immigrant women workers. Jessica McClintock Inc. and AIWA reached a historic agreement in 1996 calling for "cooperative efforts to insure workers rights and of fair labor practices."

The agreement included:

- \* donating money to establish a garment workers' education fund and for the former Lucky (factory) garment workers
- \* sponsoring scholarships for students and garment workers
- \* providing two toll-free numbers in English and Cantonese to make compliance with wage and hour laws easier and more accessible for garment workers.

Following this agreement in 1996, AIWA garment workers met with and reached similar agreements with three more San Francisco Bay Area manufacturers - Byer California, Fritz California and Esprit.

## **III. Conrad MacKerron, As You Sow – Gap Initiative**

- As You Sow is a non-profit based on San Francisco, which tries to mobilize financial markets for social change. We work with advocates and investors and approach corporations as concerned shareholders on labor rights issues – Nike, Gap, Nordstrom, Disney, McDonald's, and Wal-Mart.
- Shareholder advocacy has had long history. Scored big victories in the 1980's during the South Africa – apartheid movement; late 1990's Burma divestiture movement. Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) is key leader in shareholder advocacy on many issues including labor rights.
- As You Sow started talking to Gap and Disney along with religious and socially responsible investors (SRI) on labor rights in 1995. First victory when Gap agreed to do independent monitoring in El Salvador. But Gap only did such monitoring in a few factories, with little information on conditions in the rest of their supply factories. In fact, there is very little public information about code of conduct

enforcement and protection of labor rights internationally. So the group approached Gap again since they stuck their neck out before.

- Asked Gap for quantitative assessment of supplier facilities so we can compare with competitors. Early on the company was defensive in dialogue, more concerned about asking shareholders to get Global Exchange off their back. Shows effectiveness of public pressure. But new management was more open to discussing doing a public report. However, still had to initially threaten to file shareholder resolution.
- Gap report is available on company website. We view its publication as a watershed development. Departing CEO Don Fisher wanted report published and he was about to retire so they moved it quickly. Got very impressive media coverage, front page of Wall Street Journal – wire services called, lots of reporters, press played it up as a significant development. Result was company became more positive towards the community since traditional critics praised report. So Gap is talking to more NGOs now. As You Sow is using report as potential model for companies like McDonald's, Disney, Nike and Wal-Mart to emulate. Good sign that Nike seems ready to resume public reporting. Wal-Mart puts out a report but it is quite poor and needs a lot of work.
- As You Sow works as catalyst – in touch with activists and investors to see how we can work together. Need more strategic plan to challenge rest of apparel sector and other industrial sectors on vendor standards enforcement.
- Work needs to be done to get large state pension funds like Calpers to be more active. Basically about using leverage as shareholders – encourage companies to act to protect brand name. Activism has helped make an argument with companies that consumers care. Companies react to public attention.

**Obstacles** - Gap and other company work done on mostly ad-hoc basis now approaching 10 years. Would have helped to have adequate resources to be able to simultaneously engage many companies—perhaps a whole industry sector—at once.

#### **IV. Questions/Comments**

- Build a sweat free committee. New campaign from Global Exchange to get governments to pass anti-sweatshop ordinances for cities, counties and all government agencies for uniforms, flags, equipment, etc.. Create a demand and market for no sweat laws. Maine, New Jersey and Pennsylvania have passed laws. Los Angeles city just passed a no sweat ordinance.
- *Any way to get copies of Code of Conduct? How do you get the info?*
  - o Lawyers Committee for Human Rights has a new database, Yardsticks for Workers Rights: Learning from Experience at [workersrights.humanrightsfirst.org](http://workersrights.humanrightsfirst.org)
  - o Companies have codes, but need to see how enforced. Most have on their websites.
  - o Private companies say they have them but don't give out the information.

- *As You Sow – how to get the word out about company’s practices?* Hard because problems are difficult to overcome and resources limited. We are still a small fraction of the total amount of shareholders. Natural connections - religious and labor pension funds, socially responsible investors, NGO investors.
  - o Lots of retailers probably bad on vendor standards compliance but no one focuses on all of them so not sure what is going on – like JCPenney, Federated, Kmart, etc. Companies that are larger have a high profile so care about their image.
- *Leadership development – what is going on in Saipan? Leaders continue to fight or outside people watching?*
  - o Since 1999 working conditions improved. Now limit on hours worked a week to 60 before maybe 120 hours in a week. Workers can live wherever they want and have babies if they want. Chinese workers hard to organize because of language so now easier. Now health care to help pregnant workers. Chinese workers protesting over 2 years worth of salary. Lawsuit against the factory – EEOC claim now.
  - o NGO’s were a part of the lawsuits. Learned process took a lot of resources to be involved. Learn the legal process and then settlement process. Lots of compromises. Wanted single independent monitoring program but companies did not agree. So now have two monitors – Verite and Global Social Compliance (Price Waterhouse Cooper). Will have report soon on first year of monitoring. Did get worker education included in monitoring. Not many resource organizations in Saipan for workers so difficult to do leadership development.
  - o AIWA – leadership key to develop workers. Look at individuals and organizational goals. Have steps to see development. Range from awareness to taking a leadership position. Build a broad base of workers. Since have deep roots with the organization, has made the organization much stronger.
- *Garment workers - what were the long-term effects of settlement?*
  - o AIWA- Impact on industry – at the time, no other campaigns, helped to influence future campaigns, conditions improved in San Francisco factories, manufacturers had to be aware of the conditions that the workers were facing, Sweatshop Watch did policy work, El Monte (historic sweatshop case where Thai garment workers were held under slavlike conditions and sewed for major labels), combination of things made a big impact.
  - o Texas – What should be the responsibility of companies? When they leave, can we ask them for something? Levi’s gave some money but only lasted a year. Re-training program by the Dept. of Labor but not useful for most workers.
- *Consumers - is there hope to change how consumers behave?*

- Sweatfree market discussion – coalition of Musicians Against Sweatshops, Sweatfree Communities, Sweatshop Watch, USAS, been talking about how to push that issue. Consumers willing to pay more.
  - REI - coop members outraged about the conditions in a San Francisco factory. Lots of letters and support.
- *So are there other economic models? Need to have alternatives for shoppers?*
  - If governments make a change then people will follow the trend. So if tax dollars are used properly, then maybe people will be more aware and care.
- Walmart connects to families and to people who can't afford to pay more. How do we connect with those people? Workers can't pay more because they are not paid enough.





## **WORKSHOP B NOTES**

*Future of California's Garment Industry, Strengthening Opportunities for Immigrant Workers*  
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November 11-12, 2004, Los Angeles, CA

### **WORKSHOP B: LINKING THE GLOBAL TO THE LOCAL**

This session looked at local responses to globalization through policy work, coalition building, and grassroots organizing.

**SPEAKERS:** Anna Blackshaw (Public Citizen), Mary Mendez (Enlace)

**Facilitator:** Alejandra Domenzain (Sweatshop Watch)

#### **I. Anna Blackshaw, Public Citizen**

- Goals of Public Citizen include protecting democracy and protecting against negative impacts of global trading systems.
- There are many implications for local on the ground organizing in this era of globalization. The nature of global trade agreements has changed. Changes in Multi-Fiber Arrangement, tariffs, quotas for the large part have affected not only international trade rules but over the last 10 years have also dramatically impacted areas called “non-tariff trade barriers” (e.g., labor standards, green laws related to environmental protection).
- In California, which is on cutting edge in many ways of labor standards and environmental protections, progressive legislation such as local procurement laws (dealing with labor standards) are at risk due to global trade agreements.
- In 1996, State Senator Figueroa sponsored anti-sweatshop legislation that has since been expanded to include requirement to sign code of conduct (i.e., not to use sweatshop, slave, child labor). These CA state laws are largely symbolic however due to lack of enforcement mechanisms.
- Trade agreements technically apply to the states and not to local governments but rumors that there may be efforts to try to expand their reach.
- Local procurement laws have more teeth, as distinguished from state anti-sweatshop laws. Still, we need to devise a way to strengthen local anti-sweatshop ordinances. Our approach needs to be 2 –pronged:
  - 1) create a potent legislative model (e.g., local ordinances that include language on incentives to keep production local, even though this kind of language would technically violate trade agreements, and that include \$ for enforcement)
  - 2) at the same time, educate state and local legislators who need to be made aware that they are inextricably part of the global trade regime (and it’s not just the responsibility of the federal government) and they need to help press for legislation/ordinances that are truly democratic, have teeth, etc. These legislators need to be made aware of the fact that they have a responsibility to ensure they are better engaged in the discussion and issues concerning global trade system in order to protect their ability to enact democratic laws and regulations.

- Some of this has already started to happen. Anna was involved in the CA Senate Committee that began 4 years ago (and is still ongoing) to examine global trade rules and their impact on local procurement laws.

## II. Mary Mendez (Enlace)

- Enlace works with affiliates (e.g, worker centers) to advance rights of low-wage workers
  - World is advancing fast toward globalization, jeopardizing workers' rights
  - We need international orgs to fight this problem. We need pact among orgs to fight globalization. These orgs need to be proactive not reactive to corporations' behavior.
  - Fighting just one org in specific place is not realistic b/c multinational corps own the world
- 51 multinational corps-- they lead 2/3 of economic and trade movement
- Enlace goal is to build strong orgs. Every 2 yrs we have a convention where our affiliates share their ideas; allow growth and develop strategies to continue fighting. During convention, all affiliates present their fights and people vote for those fights they want to select for future years
- Campaign strategies used by Enlace:
- All companies have 3 sectors: Raw material sector, Fabrication / labor sector, Market sector
- To fight any of these sectors individually is not realistic or strategic. Need to take into great account the market sector b/c corps move raw material and labor sectors to other locations. But impossible to move market b/c markets are stable and represent greatest income for corps.
- Taking in consideration all sectors, next strategy is communication: connecting base with affiliates/allies. Connect labor with market. The problem in past is that base grows a lot but not allies sector. And when base is needing great support from allies, they can never come in and help b/c the allies sector is being outgrown. Sometimes the opposite happens and the allies sector grows too much, and they grow tired waiting for base to catch up to them. So what happens is allies disappear and when base needs them, they're not there. So growth needs to happen among base and allies simultaneously so pressure can be exerted at same level and on same page.
- Examples of Enlace successes:

EXAMPLE 1: South Baja CA. This location provides wonderful infrastructure for corps (has airports, ports, roads); labor is ready to be exploited there. What's going on with workers here? They're completely isolated from rest of Mexico. Legal system in Mexico is centralized; so to access it, have to reach capital, which is 260 miles away. Therefore, this is paradise for investment b/c of isolation of this place.

This isolation was taken advantage of by Pungkook Industrial Co, a Korean company. It paid workers less than m/w and exploited workers. Group of workers here decided to organize, called themselves SINTTIM. SINTTIM began forming independent union. But as usual, as soon as corps see this challenge, they run away-- eliminated plant, chased away union leader from plant, and finally in the last year closed last plant open in the country and left. Moved to Asia away from regs of free trade and the country.

It is very difficult to exert pressure on corps. So Enlace began doing research with allies re. products sold by company, its market distribution, allies, and clients. After research done, developed working plan with SINTTIM. Decision was to make the point of pressure Addidas because Addidas continued producing products in Asia and well-known; also headquarters in US so easier for us to exert pressure. We started shaking things around and exerted pressure. But pressure was not enough. We needed to exert even more. Looked for allies in Canada, US, Mexico to exert more pressure. Lots of e-mails to corp and to gov't but still not enough so more pressure applied. With same allies we continued pressure. We did actions at different consulates (in LA, Mexican consulate; also Korean consulates). E-mails sent to different consulates from Korea that were located in US. At same time, workers in Baja exerted pressure on local government there. This was simultaneous pressure with same message. We won and forced company to do following:

- 1) Pay workers 3 months of salaries plus 30 days per year of services
- 2) Unjustifiably fired worker was compensated \$10,000
- 3) Bus was provided for union leader to continue organizing efforts

EXAMPLE 2: Sara Lee Corporation brands (includes every day products such as Haynes, home products).

Unionization in Mexico is very corrupt. To unionize in Mex is completely different than in US. You have to:

- 1) register, which includes requirement of federally approved legis.
- 2) govt authorization to organize
- 3) recognition election. (not secret vote but in front of ER)
- 4) union contract; companies pressure govt by threatening that if contract awarded, will move out of country

With Sara Lee, an anti-union corp, Enlace was able to get the following agreement for workers re. unionization:

- 1) Guarantee of neutrality and freedom to associate and not be harassed
- 2) Entitled to secret vote, with independent observers (including human rights observers)

### **III. Discussion/Comments:**

How can we connect these examples with what's going on in LA? Very similar dynamics. Workers are underpaid, exploited. Corps are the same. They're exploiting by

maltreating workers. We need to get company that's in the vanguard to make changes. If such a company does so, other corps will do the same. We can put a lot of pressure on them this way.

*What opportunities do people see to link local work to what's happening in Asia?*

Workers here are exploited by same corps and have common interest in joining together to fight common corp. While there have been preliminary successes b/w N. America and S. America, to bring added effectiveness we need to link up with production workers in Asia as well. Important to recognize b/c many times factories in Latin America owned by Asian owners. So important to build solidarity so that there is class solidarity and workers see that Asian workers are also exploited by those same corps

We need to be conscientious when we purchase an item, who made the item and under what conditions

We need to move discussion beyond idea of solidarity of workers.

Important to have message in common with allies, have common target to move forward.

It may be very difficult to exert pressure on allies to go against one store b/c so many products are made by one store; allies may not want to target one specific store but we can target a product.

Researching the company is very important. What products do they make b/c not all products can be used to apply pressure. It's possible that company wants to increase sales in one specific country. All this needs to be taken into account so we can come up with common target.

How do we grow allies and base simultaneously?

There have been some attempts to be proactive vis a vis corps. One example is company counsels where workers from across globe who work for common company do coordinated collective bargaining, organizing. Example: UPS (teamsters established worldwide council of UPS workers, who undertook joint bargaining in 1990s). Example: Flight attendants' contract with United Airlines (one single union contract that covers all 40,000 attendants no matter what country live in, with exact same wage levels). This seems to be natural progression of labor movement, but unfortunately we're often times playing catch-up behind companies.

What about establishing global minimum wage? Or does that become one nation imposing its standards elsewhere and come across as protectionist for the US against workers elsewhere?

There is no significant movement to establish global minimum wage for workers. It works for flight attendants because wages are medium to low so it's possible with this

workforce. But with garment, competitive advantage issue is really big issue and so idea of global minimum wage would not have legs.

We recognize MFA phase-out will happen and what is proper response of garment workers to trade issues? Should we be advocating for more trade barriers or regulations (e.g., maintenance of certain tariffs, etc.)? We should be aware of the fact that there are some worker movements in other countries that believe any establishment of labor standards is a barrier and smacks of US protectionism.

What are challenges faced by local anti-sweatshop ordinances? CA antisweatshop laws have been largely ineffective b/c no enforcement mechanism. But LA ordinance actually has \$ for enforcement program- this is what distinguishes LA ordinance from CA anti sweatshop laws. Should we push for expanding laws so actually teeth behind it? Try to see if we can advocate for \$ to enforce CA anti-sweatshop laws. We could also push for local incentives to protect local industry from job movement overseas. This kind of language would be in violation of procurement policies but this strategy operates on 2-prong basis: we should try to get local language like this enacted and at same time get state and local legislators to fight against trade laws that would make language like this violate agreements.

LA anti-sweatshop ordinance allocates \$100,000 / year for enforcement. Not enough but still step in right direction.

Need to strategize on how to grow the base and promote different organizations. Enlace tries to focus on looking at issues from the outside in because sometimes people in orgs become too focused on the internal issues that affect them and then just react to those challenges. So Enlace engages in training of base to be proactive, grow the base and develop leadership.

Campaigns require a lot of internal resources. Leadership development is time-consuming process that does not happen over night. Need to help with not only campaigns but building resources and leadership development that go beyond one particular campaign.

Need to understand and think about immigration status as it relates to organizing. Because of immigration status and fear of being deported, workers feel overwhelmed and fearful to become involved and we need to understand this and work on this. We need to be able to talk about this and really connect with other struggles that happen elsewhere b/c sometimes workers here feel like they're the only ones experiencing this. There's a connection to what's happening here and elsewhere. Workers will be able to reach a point in their own consciousness where they can move beyond feeling overwhelmed and that they can't do anything. As powerful as doing research is, and understanding the need to do research, we also have to work with the base b/c they're the ones who will make change possible. There's still a long process for worker to organize. We can have a deeper impact with companies that actually stay here and work to engage workers in

those campaigns and strategies while supporting workers globally. With MFA phaseout, we can have a good opportunity to impact companies that do stay here.

With workers, there is not always understanding of how policies affect the reason they came here. Connecting them to other workers will help them move beyond their fear and see there are other workers organizing. Considering other workers' strategies and how corporations function similarly elsewhere is very significant. We need to understand that it's a process for workers to understand that they actually do have power. Then we can do synchronized actions.

Important to form coalitions with multi-ethnic groups so workers see common exploitation and not division. Solidarity is still important, especially if you look at it with a deeper and broader lens. Building solidarity among different low-wage worker communities and their leaders across borders is important strategy. Example: Mexican garment worker leaders came to SF and they were able to meet with leaders of Chinese Progressive Assoc (a lot of whom were victims of job loss in garment industry in Bay Area). For these workers, it was significant to meet with worker leaders from Mexico and hear about their effort to organize independent union in Mexico; this experience fed into leadership development of CPA workers.



## **WORKSHOP C NOTES**

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### **WORKSHOP C: IDENTIFYING POSSIBILITIES FOR IMMIGRANT WORKERS UNDER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

This workshop provided an overview of The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Trade Adjustment Act (TAA), and highlighted challenges faced by immigrant workers in accessing their rights and benefits through these workforce development programs.

**SPEAKERS:** Nona Liegeois (Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles), Grace Meng, (formerly of Asian Law Caucus), Fei Yi Chen & Alex Tom (Chinese Progressive Association), Guillermo Glen (Asociacion de Trabajadores Fronterizos)

**Facilitator:** Gordon Mar, Chinese Progressive Association (San Francisco)

#### **I. Nona Liegeois, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles - Workforce Investment Act**

- Workforce Investment Act is a federal program under local control
  - Federal job training and placement program
  - Replaces previous job training program, not just focused on job training
    - Provides a whole range of services, and differences in target audience – open to more people
  - Money distributed to states, then to local Workforce Investment areas where a local elected official (mayor, council) and workforce investment board decides how that money will be spent
- WIBs replace Private Industry Councils
  - WIB does not directly provide services, but contract out to companies who do.
  - Some are community based non-profits, others are national companies -> make up “one-stop centers”
- In LA, about 24 one-stop centers -> “Worksource centers” in LA
- WIA – three levels of services (core, intensive, training)
  - Core
    - Universal access services: no income, immigration, or eligibility for services (supposedly)
    - Mostly self-help, looks like a computer lab w/ fax machine, job listings
    - If they ask you for SSN, (but not supposed to) you can refuse
    - In LA, they use swipe cards to track usage
      - Not supposed to be to track the person, and SSN not necessary
  - Intensive services
    - Work with a case manager
      - Soft skills training

- Need to be unemployed or low income, work authorization
  - Work authorization requirement is due to the way CA interprets Federal law.
- Training
  - Vouchers: each area defines it themselves
    - Approved list where they can take those vouchers
  - On-the-job training: pays 50%
  - Customized training
    - Designed for a certain employer or group of
    - Worker not directly employed, but ideally a commitment to hire
- Two sets of customers (job seekers and businesses)
  - Some services interpreted as services to businesses
    - So job seekers may find it difficult to navigate services
  - Ex. Rapid response: open to businesses laying off employees
    - Staff will go to businesses and provide services for their workers
      - And possibly to avoid layoffs
      - Need permission from business
- Serves as entry point for other job services
  - EDD job listings, statistics
  - So not just WIA \$ providing the services
- Issues in Workforce Investment Board- LA
  - Access for limited English proficiency (LEP)
  - Proportion of money spent on skills training - little
  - Interpretation training, translation of key documents have been done
  - Title VI compliance with directors
  - Local offices have different ways of doing things, very localized
  - LA considered a model, even with the problems
- Need for skills training in LA
- 2-4% spent on actual training – but most of the money is being spent on the infrastructure of the centers
  - a feeling amongst some to not to provide training, for EDD, CC's
  - WIB in LA feels like it wants to be a partner in providing training
- Money for vouchers come out of budgets of one-stops themselves
  - Makes one-stops hesitant to spend that money

## **II. Grace Meng, Asian Law Caucus - Trade Adjustment Act (TAA)**

- TAA is a set of entitlements for displaced manufacturing workers due to globalization (workers displaced because of rise of imports)
  - but no geared towards need of low-income, Limited English Proficient (LEP) workers
- TAA provides many benefits
  - Free job training
    - In San Francisco it turns out to be up to 10k per worker
  - Extending Unemployment Insurance



- Same amount while doing training for up to 2 years
  - Can include ESL if it involves vocational training
  - SF Jewish Vocational Services
    - Has ESL training, then janitorial training
- A job search allowance
- A job relocation allowance
- 65% health care tax credit
  - can get in advance every month, but need to be enrolled in eligible health care programs – which CA may not even have
- in implementation, the program is ineffective
  - but can still provide crucial services to families after job loss
- only applies to manufacturing jobs clearly moving overseas
- JJ Mae- garment factory in San Francisco that shutdown
  - Paid minimum wage, had healthcare, relatively good
  - Workers had limited skills
  - Came to Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) to help with negotiating a severance package
    - Then workers exposed to TAA
    - Unemployment insurance didn't help that much
- Applications sent to EDD, then EDD does an investigation
  - Application can be done by employer, three workers, or a worker rep
  - Concerns with uncooperative employers
    - Ex. Of owner who contracted with McClintock
    - Owner was not forthcoming, but possible contact with manufacturer
    - Letters, and additional information useful
  - Offices unusually responsive
  - Workers contacted about their eligibility
  - Training must be appropriate for them
  - Has lots of paperwork going around, strict deadlines, forms not translated
    - Easy for workers to not be able to access services

### **III. Question & Answer on WIA and TAA**

- City of LA budget was \$150million, now reduced to \$70 million, highest funding Workforce Investment Area in country
  - most of money dispersed to one-stops
  - closer work with one-stops help improvements, b/c it may mean more money
- WIA and TAA should work together, one-stops should be able to help workers with TAA applications
  - WIA and TAA should be complimentary, but coordination not always there
- Programs have been out there for decades, but immigrant workers haven't had the chance to access them

#### **IV. Fei Yi Chen, Community Organizer at Chinese Progressive Association (CPA) – Workers Experiences with Workforce Investment (San Francisco)**

Translation by Alex Tom, CPA

- I worked in garment factories, and then in electronics plant
- In 2001, employer fired all workers and discouraged unemployment insurances, but CPA helped organize and win settlement for over \$800k
  - w/o CPA around, workers would not be able to fight for rights
- We collected unemployment and participated in TAA program
  - in 2002 participated in a child-care training program
  - only three months long, trainings all in English, was difficult
  - even after finishing, still couldn't find work
- Became a leader through another campaign (Wins Garment Factory case)
  - 2002 came onboard CPA to be a peer organizer
  - is now on staff as a community organizer
  - 2001 assisted workers in accessing unemployment benefits
  - 2004 assisted 250 workers in 10 different factories understand rights and get TAA benefits
- JJ Mae Case
  - Thirty workers, all Chinese, 40+ years old, mostly women
  - All didn't speak English, difficult to find a training program
  - Even if they did complete the program, still couldn't find a job
- CPA approach City College to develop a training program for workers
  - Class is 1.5 years, to improve English for low-income immigrant workers, interview skills
- Because of globalization, many factories going bankrupt
- W/ Asian Law Caucus, started outreach to workers before firing
  - 10 WOC leaders
  - visited over 70 factories
  - reached over 1200 workers through workshops on TAA
- TAA problems
  - DOL and EDD if they reach an uncooperative or non-English speaking employer, they will deny application
  - Ex. Wing Tai Factory
    - DOL depends on CPA to help track down employers
    - EDD supposed to know about TAA, but some workers have called and the people don't know TAA
  - In SF only three different places to apply for TAA
    - Other work-centers don't necessarily care for workers in same way that CPA does
    - Difficult, majority of workers are women
    - Mrs. Wong – not accepted into any training programs because her English too low
      - Came in w/o knowing about TAA, unemployment out, husband sick
      - CPA helped her find other workers to get TAA
      - Approved last week

- 150 factories, 3000 workers
- CPA intake process
  - CPA mapped the TAA intake process

## **V. Guillermo Glen, Asociacion de Trabajadores Fronterizos - Workers Experiences with Workforce Investment (Texas)**

- El Paso highest displacement rate in US (more than 7000 workers certified by TAA—does not include petitions that were denied or those secondarily affected)
  - Majority women over 35 years old; LEP population
- 1995 organization started along with sister org, La Mujer Obrera
  - Association has both men & women, includes electronics, Johnson & Johnson, a lot of factories that went to Mexico besides the garment industry
  - Promises by factories (ie federal govt will take care of you and provide training)
  - If you are trained, you do not have to accept a job that is lower than 80% of your original wages
  - In Texas, TAA authorizes up to \$8500 for training. But workforce agencies try to get contracts for \$2000. Esp. in LEP populations, almost impossible to train someone with \$2000.
  - El Paso-no bilingual infrastructure to train workers. Even if all workers certified, cannot access system. Esp. TAA program became a welfare program for the schools. Some run by ex-military people (!!)
  - TAA has existed since 1984, under a different name. In El Paso, most of money (under new TAA) went to adult basic education groups, that only taught English and tried to help workers get GED.
  - There is no place to get trained in the time that TAA outlines. Association fought hard to extend the benefits.
  - Supportive services (childcare, transportation etc) have been important. Only way that women and men have a chance to get re-trained. Cannot afford to go to school and have a part-time job.
  - TAA is a good program. But because it is not enforced, presents problems. Primarily because there is no educational infrastructure.
  - Have tried to get community colleges to offer classes.
  - Asked a group in San Jose to develop a job training program in El Paso. The only thing they did was train men to be truck drivers and women to be computer operators.
  - Eliminated certified nurses' assistant and childcare provider.
  - For TAA there are many requirements to enter the program. you have to bring your social security number, if you have not served in the military, you have to get a pardon. But this is Texas.
  - Orientation Program: never explain to workers what all possibilities are. Don't give workers a choice in terms of what to get trained in. There is a list of approved jobs. All the current orientation program does is assess English capability.

## **VI. Discussion on Workers' Experiences with TAA**

- *How did CPA get access into factories to do outreach on TAA?* CPA got access to factories by speaking with the employer first, usually fairly cooperative
  - Creative ways to do it, if not cooperative – deception, flyering
  - TV announcements for workshops
- Bush has cut training budget in half, now in Texas applying many restrictions
- Workers at CPA have little expectations of actual help, but two years of unemployment really attractive
  - Options: custodial or in-home service
  - EDD not required to keep placement rates
- Indirect intimidation: forcing workers to sign papers saying they have to return money if don't complete training program
- WIA success rates
  - Measured by retention, wage change
  - No similar breakdown for immigrant workers
  - “The Job Training Charade” – govt focus on job training is a political diversion, training for jobs that don't exist, way to divert workers from structural economic problems, compares to public works programs (JTPA)
    - WIA even more conservative, voucher system benefits private trade schools that are ripping people off
    - Efforts by WIA in LA to funnel trainees into city jobs
    - WIA very flexible locally
- Concrete recommendations for advocates
  - Knowing options available for training, leveraging power onto councilmembers, getting control of the money through councilors
  - Work with WIB and other agencies to understand purpose of conference – WIB has incentive to funnel folks over to TAA
    - ED of WIB in LA sympathetic to expand access to TAA
  - Defining what training programs you want to see, work to improve the training in one-stops, be selective in recommendations for workers



## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING NOTES**

*Future of California's Garment Industry, Strengthening Opportunities for Immigrant Workers*

A Convening of Garment Worker Advocates

November 11-12, 2004, Los Angeles, CA

### Community Development Strategic Planning

- goals: come out with concrete steps to approach goals
  - investment in community development
    - how to get government accountability
  - job training
    - more relevant to growth industries
    - quality
    - accessible: to undocumented as well
    - language
    - what kinds of training: skills, language
  - WIA/TAA
    - How to use it better
  - Wal-Mart
    - Land use/development
  - Corporate accountability in development projects

### Strategic use of WIA and TAA

- recognition of structural problems
  - major problem is the need for documentation
  - also difficult to ID vulnerable areas of industry
  - outreach by govt. programs
  - linking training programs to areas of job growth
  - improving quality of training programs, better educational models
  - majority of workers are undocumented: 70% of garment workers
    - exp of GWC, most Latino workers, but less so Asian
  - scale issue – but also ability to use the massive #'s of people who will be unemployed as an advantage
  - structural problems w/ WIA/TAA – no feedback mechanisms
    - organizing program participants to address problems
  - get mechanism into structure to allow for “client/customer feedback”
  - money tied to training programs
- create alternative systems and job training programs
  - WIA and TAA money going to the training we want to see
    - Job training
    - Community economic development
    - Literacy programs
    - Language programs
  - Option of the discretionary amount to fund these alternative pieces
    - Ability to lobby local boards (WIB), very political
    - Get community, worker advocates on the boards

- Boards have a great deal of autonomy, can expand definitions to get access to money
  - Still working within the structure, but looking for ways to make the money work for us
  - DOL money to faith based and community orgs to provide services to support career centers
- Increase accountability/efficacy of WIA/TAA
  - Feedback mechanisms
    - Organize program participants to point out program's problems
      - Lack of language access
      - Poor quality of training programs
      - Need for both skills and language training
      - Need to tie to growth industry, so training will lead to jobs
    - Institute mechanism for feedback w/in career/one-stop centers
    - Lobby local WIB/EDD
      - Get representation on these boards
- Need to discuss internal needs of the organization
  - How to maintain core mission of organization before thinking of external steps to get money – and avoid transitioning into service delivery
- Can efforts make these programs more accountable BUILD ON our organizing work
- Do such programs actually improve workers employment prospects?
  - Ex. Of JTPA actually lowering young worker's prospects
  - CPA trying to avoid being stuck in this stuff
- Pressure job training providers – have them show results as prerequisite for getting the money
  - Collect data on “success” of job training program and use to create accountability
    - Increase in educational attainment
    - Actual job placement
    - Living wages, increase in wages
  - Providers on boards not actually interested in supporting workers
  - Research good programs/best practices
    - CAA, CLASP, Gaston Institute
    - Possibilities for stable employment
  - What we really want to see is the expansion of good vendors, and not actually take up the responsibility ourselves
- Partner with unions to create good programs
- Partner/target employers, using OT training \$
- Target employers to provide community benefits
  - Hiring
  - Training
  - Career ladders
  - LEP access
  - Prioritize local workers, immigrant workers
- Earlier planning, so we can put training in place

## Land Use

- need effective research b/c each city has different process to grant subsidies to developers
  - vulnerable point: identify what's the process to get subsidies, so we can hit corporations' ability to get subsidies
  - develop a model of what needs to be researched locally
  - an opportunity to link housing/land use groups with worker organizers
  - must act before subsidies granted, too late to intervene
- need to craft a pro-business message to efforts
- big box ordinance passed in LA – need to commit to a community impact report
  - Boston – impact advisory group: to recruit community members to negotiate benefits – and bypass our ability to reject it
- Problems of community boards that don't represent community
  - SAJE: efforts to take over Neighborhood Councils
    - Need to take control of land, possibly through land trusts
  - South Central Farmers (Alameda and 54<sup>th</sup>)
    - 300+ farmers sustaining themselves over 30 years, owner's son wanted to sell the land to the developers
    - refused to move, got good lawyers to get injunctions
- surveying workers on what they want to see in jobs
- criteria, specific jobs
  - SAJE is surveying what people want out of their jobs
  - LEAD project in LA – neighborhood based survey of community demographics, underground economy, and
    - Multiethnic: Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, Korean
    - ERT able to get monetary commitment
    - 4 head groups, and 9 additional groups from bases help with getting surveys
    - talking to ERT to get it done in the Bay Area
  - Cal Labor Federation – talk of doing a survey, and getting money from WIBs to conduct that research

## Undocumented workers and lack of access

- WIA and TAA not as useful – but organizing to get community benefits to fund training programs, CED, co-ops
- Opportunities for local pots of money – ex of HUD money exclusion – city govt could provide money for section 8 vouchers if HUD won't
- providing economic survival tools, life skills training for immigrants
- training to help ppl grow small businesses, building on existing skills and backgrounds
- access to and partnering with community college systems, find a niche to create skills development training, work with supportive leadership

## Steps

- scott cummings (UCLA prof) offered law school students to do research, give him 2-3 research projects
- apply for DOL national emergency grant- SF is interested in applying, WIB agency applies for it, but CPA would have access to money somehow. whether you can control money, depends on organizing
- research funders/foundations that gives money towards training undocumented, private foundations or even government money
- empowerment zone money?, but money can be problematic, because of bureaucracy & restrictions with government money. With bush re-elected, money is probably less and more restriction.
- 
- Boston CPA- continue to do case by case basis working with unemployed workers, fighting for unemployed workers' rights
  - On organizing level, joining broader coalition in MA to see what can be done in terms of statewide reform on job training and unemployment system
  - Most energy go into "south bay" next to Chinatown in boston, organize to have greater community control over development in that area, getting clear community benefit agreements. Also examining community land trust.
  - What structures can we develop on our own?
- NELP
  - Research what UAW accomplished in auto industry, to help us think of what is possible
  - Gathering research on best practices
- Enrique (SAJE)
  - Learn more about best practices, what works for job training, and money to fund
  - Getting to know CDD: what sources of funding, continue w/ development of job training programs
- Sweatshop Watch
  - Put best practices on-line
  - Worker's survey
  - Focus on undocumented workers
  - Support GWC organizing efforts
  - Advocacy for customized training programs
- Fuerza Unida
  - Improve training programs
  - Look prospectively so laid off workers can get into new jobs, eg Toyota
  - ID industries w/ job growth in San Antonio
- Research avenues
  - International models
    - Job training, fund raising for own programs, cooperatives, raising capital for small businesses
    - From a solidarity standpoint: other countries are dealing with this issue even more severely than in US – linking global to local



- Possibilities for stable employment
- Building solidarity internationally – not just learning, but organizing too
  - Responsible foreign and military policy
  - Creating systems where remittances can fund local development in home towns
  - Getting a part of wiring services, perhaps starting up own agency
- Strategic alliance between housing and worker advocates
  - Any part of this must also deal with housing, access to financial institutions, sustainability in addition to workplace issues
- Language access in training programs
  - Biggest problem with jobs is doing the interviews, language – the work can get done, but it's language that's the problem – even if the skills are solid
- AIWA
  - Survey of workers
  - Power analysis of WIB in Alameda county
  - Research on possibility of garment industry retention – what niches may be open for job creation



## WORKSHOP E&F NOTES

*Future of California's Garment Industry, Strengthening Opportunities for Immigrant Workers*  
A Convening of Garment Worker Advocates  
November 11-12, 2004, Los Angeles, CA

### WORKSHOP E & F (COMBINED): INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This session discussed the nuts and bolts of building labor-industry-government partnerships to upgrade the garment industry. The second half provided an overview of community economic development through worker co-ops and microenterprise businesses.

**SPEAKERS:** Sarah Crean (Garment Industry Development Corporation), Katie Quan (UC- Berkeley Center for Labor Research & Education), Scott Cummings (UCLA Law School), Sandi Romero (Mama's Hot Tamales), Viola Casares (La Fuerza Unida)

**Facilitator:** Victor Narro (UCLA Labor Center)

#### I. Sarah Crean, Garment Industry Development Corporation (NY)

- NY may be an example for LA in next few years
- Background in maintaining manufacturing jobs in NY – real economic devastation in last several years
- Workers in apparel industry in NY
  - Fashion industry hierarchy in NY, so availability of higher paid, higher skilled manufacturing jobs
  - NY is heavily unionized, so larger concern when there was offshoring, UNITE played important role, more play in city politics
  - Much fewer workers 35K production workers, 35k in wholesale, additional thousands in fashion industry – total around 100k
- Garment Industry Development Corporation (GIDC) started in 1984
  - Primary focus was on improving job skills, and also making union shops competitive
  - Notice tension between helping low-wage workers and maintaining garment industry in LA
    - Focus of GIDC is to keep the jobs – seek out what's the best ways
    - In LA not handcuffed by need to maintain industry
  - Tripartite structure: founded by UNITE, then city, then heads of unionized factories and manufacturing companies
    - Collaboration possible because of political importance of NY unions
  - Main focus is worker training, has training center, ESL, computer classes, and on-site training for workers
    - Shifts focus away from lost jobs, but to improve skills of workers who do have jobs

- Improve manufacturing practices
- Found it wasn't enough, started work on bringing in orders from retailers
  - Success has been mixed, been working with GAP for five years, but finally some successes
  - Export assistance from factories
  - Made in NY label
- Note: conscious decision that best way for garment workers was to improve the factories
  - Wasn't going to work with sweatshops, choice was to let them fall by wayside
- Successes?
  - Worked with hundreds of factories, and thousands of workers
  - But industry jobs and factories still losing jobs
  - How to justify existence?
    - Researching apparel industry in NY
    - Conclusion that best market for NY is young designers
      - Shift to target young designs to use high-road union factories to get jobs done
      - A recent program
    - Not the only solution
      - Getting big retailers to use NY for special orders, quick turn contingency work, couture
    - Still question of what size industry will be left in NY
    - Work to get highest skilled workers into better paying jobs such as sample-making

## **II. Katie Quan, UC-Berkeley Center for Labor Research & Education**

- Worked to create "Made by the Bay" non-profit consortium, which had the same goals of GIDC (Made by the Bay used to be called "Garment 2000")
- Early 90's before NAFTA there were many plant closures
  - Worker centers in SF focused on fighting factory closing and sweatshop incidents
  - Prompted need to save garment industry in a non-sweatshop situation
- High-profiling campaigning put industry on defensive
  - DOL staff sought way to look good, union on offensive
  - Uneasy alliance brought together by DOL
    - Manufacturers, Contractors, union, Mayor's Office of community dev, DOL
- Found three strategies for three goals
  - High quality production, on-time production, high compliance
    - Seek high price niche
    - Technological innovation – ergonomics and productivity
      - Ex. Of modular production with standing up to sew
    - High compliance
      - Reached 90% compliance rate in SF (but already was high compared to LA, NY)

- Had school for workers to improve skills at SF Community College
  - Main problem wasn't workers' skills however
  - Had management training
  - Was able to get a lot of funding from city sources
    - Hooked up as NIST (national institute for science and technology) demonstration project
- 1995-2002
  - conclusion that efforts were too little too late
  - great partnership, lots of funding, and pushed innovation to limit
    - but job loss continued
  - globalization hit too fast to try to catch up
  - should we maintain the garment industry, if so how?
    - But if not, what then?

### **III. Scott Cummings, UCLA Law School**

- Work on "community economic development" (CED)
  - what's issue from the legal standpoint?
  - How to work proactively?
  - Goal is to improve economic options
- Strategic Actions for a Just Economy (SAJE) and domestic worker co-op in Hollywood
  - Shows potential and shortcomings
  - A powerful vehicle for organizing the workers
    - A business that is an economic, environmental justice angle
    - Catered to base looking for better options
    - Incorporated aspects of worker control
  - Limitations
    - Problems with business implementation
    - Hard to have consensus decision-making
    - Accounting, managerial skills, constants skills development
- What is CED?
  - Locally accountable development
    - Focus on identifiable community spaces
    - Focus on neighborhoods
    - Identifiable working groups such as industries
    - Accountable b/c of seeks participation of workers, community – those affected by businesses
    - Done by non-profit organizations
    - Create commercial development that has living wage jobs
  - Idea evolved in reaction of fed govt. efforts to destroy low-income communities – ex. Of Bunker Hill displacement of community and workers
    - Response to fund non-profits who pursue development
    - Also about creating power in communities
- Three different models of CED
  - Organizing around large-scale development projects

- Big projects often done with community money
- Pressure that such projects are accountable to community
  - Ensuring living wage jobs, housing for community
  - Ex of Staples Center development
  - Benefits: large scale job creation
- Local Entrepreneurship
  - Invest in individuals to become economically self-sufficient
  - Loan assistance, technical assistance
    - Benefits: if successful, individual is empowered, but an incremental approach, and many small businesses fail anyway
- Worker-owned cooperative
  - Rarely used – traditional model of business is opposed to workers
  - Workers get to make decisions, egalitarian sharing of benefits
    - Ex. Timber industry, Domestic worker co-op, gardener co-op
  - Group solidarity, bargaining powers
  - Tough to coordinate consensus-based decision-making
    - Swimming up the stream, need community education
  - Emphasis is on identifying niches where this can work and create living wage jobs

#### **IV. Sandi Romero, Mama's Hot Tamales**

- Mama's Hot Tamales is a restaurant and entrepreneurship program for vendors to sell tamales in MacArthur Park area in Los Angeles
- best Tamales on West Coast
- 1994 laws passed to benefit street vendors
- MacArthur Park first sidewalk vending district
  - Health department kept hassling vendors
  - Seemed to be set up to fail
- Only 17 permitted vendors by 1999
  - Not enough resources to get carts
  - Vendors not able to maintain livelihood because of illegal vendors and regulations by city to restrict mobility
  - 3 have shifted to small restaurants, 2 surviving
- partnered with PACE to educate vendors in starting a small business
  - 90 people through business training component
  - working with banks to expand small businesses
- Tamales a retail item to help expand economic development
  - Focus on niches: building carts, culinary school, restaurant, street vending, job training in food services
  - Part of rediscover MacArthur park community development program

#### **V. Viola Casares, La Fuerza Unida (Texas)**

- Fuerza Unida formed after Levi's laid off workers in Texas and they formed their own sewing cooperative.

- Coop started out of necessity, way to raise money for worker organizing
- started by making pillows, blankets but donations got cut
- also goal of getting more women from community to join
  - started free sewing classes to get people to come into offices, get folks interested in starting a co-op
  - starting making pot-holders, etc. cultural items
- then saw need to get additional business training, got funding to hire a co-op coordinator
- co-operative a shared work and profit structure
  - children get brought in to learn as well
  - place to learn about culture, and education on issues affecting community such as immigration
  - sought way to think of alternative way of production than at Levi's plant, not based on competition
  - ways to empower women in the community

## VI. Discussion & Q&A

- how much money does it take to start a co-op?
  - ex of Thai worker's co-op- workers started co-op, but no longer participate in it
  - technology, capital, niche needs – and how about the thousands of workers?
  - Where will the money come from?
  - Took over \$1M to start Mama's, needed the support of ED, Board President and Board
    - Finding niche really helped
  - Community based businesses only one small piece of the strategies to address job loss
    - Co-ops really fragile, but a part of a range
    - Question is resource allocation: there should be some to co-ops
  - Fuerza Unida looks for opportunities to expand co-ops, such as snack bar
  - No one solution: but there are different pieces that could alleviate the situation
  - At GIDC, retailers don't always have the best ideas themselves – write off domestic factories prematurely, ways to reconvince them
    - Race to bottom hurts retailers as well – finding a common agenda
- How to impact large numbers of worker?
  - What are possibilities with local lawmakers?
    - Report release saw a good response from lawmakers – presentations to mayor, WIB
    - Co-ops found it was too difficult to compete without resorting to sweatshops, so sold shares (ex. Of Thai workers)
    - Local govt. in LA seem supportive of efforts – so some opportunities
    - Need to research now what the workers want to do considering the current conditions

- Lots happening, but on verge
- Jobs, housing, food – is it possible to come together for community living efforts?
  - Viola: women understand the need to struggle together to make things work – but pressing need to make it work
  - Scott: alternative models go against individualism in society, land trusts one option to maintain permanent affordability in communities – a legally enforceable option, but need to seek ways to incorporate these and put it to scale
- Education – how to de-educate capitalism and individualism?
  - Viola: starts by sharing stories, and then move onto issues
- Sweat-X, what happened, and what of undocumented workers, high road with undocumented workers?
  - Immigration: no law that states undocumented workers can't own businesses – it's been done, some risks because of IRS reporting
  - Sweat-X: problem at end was targeting the wrong orders, needed to focus on more expensive products with a greater profit margin
- CPA-Boston co-op attempted
  - To help unemployed workers get supplemental income, worked with Becky Johnson
  - Discontinued b/c there was way too much resources invested in a small number of people
  - Must recognize that we're operating in the context of capitalism
  - Need to define division of labor – organizers need to keep organizing though – research to be done by other
- How did the cooperative come together?
  - Viola: ex-Levi's workers, and also workers attracted by sewing classes
  - Sandi: Street vendors approached individually, now word of mouth, LAPD referrals
- Differences in industries
  - Structural problems won't be solved by co-ops
  - But legal mechanisms for worker involvement is a possibility – public company, shareholders
- With Mayor involved, sit down with industry folks
  - Will help advocates decide what options are needed
  - Some industry folks don't even recognize the problem, but those that do don't know what steps to take
  - Advocates haven't found the place to concentrate resources
  - Power analysis and why
  - Impact of CIWA, MIWON: how to wield the power that we do have over city govt.
  - Still need to find out what are worker's needs and what avenues they are looking for – and whether they even want to stay in low-wage industries



## BRAINSTORMING SESSION NOTES

*Future of California's Garment Industry, Strengthening Opportunities for Immigrant Workers*  
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November 11-12, 2004, Los Angeles, CA

### BRAINSTORMING SESSION NOTES (To prepare for Strategy Sessions)

Facilitator: Kimi Lee

#### I. How to contribute to larger effort?

- Domestic garment industry
- Workforce investment and community development
- Corporate accountability – locally and in larger scale

#### II. Dream world- what do we want?

- living wage
- retaining industry
- high compliance, enforcement of labor laws
- same protections elsewhere as in here, cross border organizing
- unionized industry
- worker education to learn about rights
- job training around more stable industries, such as hotels and links to unionized jobs
- health care access
- more resources for corporate accountability and enforcement, but also reinvestment in communities
- effective monitoring, worker monitoring of code of conduct
- participation in WTO, other structures/alternative to WTO
- enforcing health and safety laws in factories
- immigration reform -> legalization
- Wal-Mart: Unionize retail workers, Public education of big box stores, Shifting consumer mentality to pay more for sweat free goods
- Government accountability – enforcement
- End corporate welfare
- Get domestic work – GAP, Limited commitment to \$ and product lines -> and other retailers
- Partnering with design students
- work with transportation workers, critical to companies distribution systems

#### III. Report back from Lunch time Caucuses

##### Ordinances

- still working on building a local coalition
- focus on the Bay Area campaign

##### Free Trade Agreements

- structure in congress next year, realistic expectations of what can be accomplished with the current administration
- let Federal work fall by wayside, and focus on what can be done locally and at the state level





## PROMOTING CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY & LOCAL PRODUCTION STRATEGY SESSION NOTES

*Future of California's Garment Industry, Strengthening Opportunities for Immigrant Workers*  
A Convening of Garment Worker Advocates  
November 11-12, 2004, Los Angeles, CA

## PROMOTING CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY & LOCAL PRODUCTION STRATEGY SESSION NOTES

**Facilitator:** Kimi Lee

### I. Timeline Items:

- Sweatshop Watch will organize information-gathering, please send updates either to SW or to the list-serve set up from this conference
- Will meet again in 1 year, probably separate Bay Area and LA meetings
- March "Sweatfree Market" Conference: Share list of good companies, work on messaging

### II. What Groups Are Doing:

#### Consumers

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| -Promote good labels   | GX/SW      |
| -Build relationships with industry                               | SW/GWC     |
| -Messaging/Statement about the industry (e.g. not China-bashing) | SW         |
| -MoveOn.org/Online networks                                      | Paul       |
| -Sweat-free coalition  | GX/SW/GWC  |
| -Sweat-free clothing in movies                                   | GWC/Cal Co |

#### Government

- |                               |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| -Free trade                   | Cal Co   |
| -Increase labor inspectors    | GWC/SW   |
| -Health care for all          | GWC/AIWA |
| -"Sweat-free" city ordinances | GX       |

#### Contractors

- |                                      |       |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| -City Council (funding for training) | APALC |
|--------------------------------------|-------|

#### Retailers

- |                 |           |
|-----------------|-----------|
| -Code of Ethics | SW/ENLACE |
|-----------------|-----------|

-Research retailers in LA

GWC

Workers

-Education

GWC

## **CONFERENCE OUTCOMES**

### **Future of California's Garment Industry, Strengthening Opportunities for Immigrant Workers**

1. Continue communication among participants through new list serve
2. Share knowledge by posting conference notes on website
3. Coordinate local convenings next year to follow-up on work (promoting corporate accountability and local production in the garment industry & community economic development issues)
4. Convene groups that work on economic development in Los Angeles and Bay Area to share information and strategies
  - a. Workers housing, development
  - b. Create objectives
5. Create messages around anti-sweatshop work, especially with MFA phase-out and racist blaming of China
6. Create research list
7. Provide clearinghouse for best practices in job training on website
8. Follow-up with legislator roundtables/briefings on City and State levels about sweatshops & garment industry