

SNEAKERS: LEADERS AND LAGGARDS



Equita

The Autonomie Project — Produces sneakers made with Forest Stewardship Council certified all-natural and sustainable latex sole. The company pays Fair Trade premiums to both the rubber producers in Sri Lanka and to the shoe stitchers in Pakistan. **Grade: A+**

Equita — Sells sneakers from the Paris-based Veja company. Veja works directly with Brazilian cooperatives to source eco-friendly organic cotton and natural latex for its sneakers, which are made under fair labor conditions, including living wages and long-term relationships with producers. **Grade: A+**

Global Exchange — Offers No Sweat sneakers (see below) in its online Fair Trade store. **Grade: A+**

No Sweat Apparel — Produces sneakers at a unionized factory in Indonesia. Wage and benefit information for the workers appears on No Sweat's Web site, including maternity benefits, Ramadan bonuses, health insurance coverage, and more. **Grade: A+**

Traditions Fair Trade — Sells sneakers made by Argentinian cooperatives. Traditions' Web site links to The Working World, a nonprofit entity that supports the cooperatives, where shoppers can view a break-down of where each penny of the purchase price of the shoes is going. **Grade: A+**

New Balance — As a conventional shoe company, New Balance is unique in making more than one quarter of its products in the US. Its shift toward Chinese manufacturing in recent years has opened the company to criticisms, such as the low wages and long hours documented in a 2006 report by National Labor Committee (NLC) and China Labor Watch. **Grade: C**

Timberland — Timberland utilizes a third party assessment system for independent monitoring of its manufacturing facilities, but the factories from which Timberland sources have still been cited for unfair overtime, unsanitary conditions, and late pay. **Grade: C**

Nike — Recent factory-level abuses have included the firings of worker-organizers at one of Nike's Turkish factories to prevent union activity. **Grade: F**

Reebok/Adidas — Recent labor abuses at Reebok's Jordanian factories include human trafficking of guest workers, confiscation of passports, 16-hour shifts, wages below the legal minimum, beatings, and sexual assault. **Grade: F**

Puma — Repeatedly implicated in egregious violations of workers' rights in Turkey, China, El Salvador, Indonesia, and Mexico. Reports from Bangladesh included child workers being beaten, suffering from exhaustion, working mandatory 14-hour days, and paid as little as 6½ cents an hour. **Grade: F**

Learn more at ResponsibleShopper.org and find green choices at GreenPages.org. Find contact information for A+ companies on page 26.