

# Assembly line assignment



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

1 November 2009 Paper #2 Assignment What is life like on the global assembly line? In the article "Life on the Global Assembly Line" Barbara Ehrenreich and Annette Fuentes did a very good job of portraying what was really going on in the lives of women working in an assembly line in Third World countries. I felt like the authors were not happy about what the corporations were doing. I think that the corporations are like a hungry dog that never could be satisfied with anything.

I only disagree with one little thing in their article, the term "first world" or "third world" do not exist anymore, because the cold war ended three decades ago; however, I agree with Ehrenreich and Fuentes' argument about women being exploited in the third world countries by evil corporations by wage difference, gender inequality, and ruthless working and living conditions. If I am given a chance to own or run a multinational corporation; I would do anything to make sure no one is taken advantage of, and everyone would be treated equally, and be a role model corporation that other corporations would also do the right thing.

First of all, in my imaginary corporation, I would pay all my employees equally. In fact, as the CEO of the corporation, I would set my salary as \$1. There are numerous CEO's such as Steve Jobs (Apple) around the world that has set their salaries at \$1 annually (Julian). I think this is a brave move and a smart one. The big CEO's don't need all the money. Even without the millions of dollars every year as a salary, these CEO's live abundantly. "In the U. S. , an assembly-line worker is likely to earn, depending on her length of employment, between \$3. 0 and \$5 an hour. In many Third World countries, a woman doing the same work will earn \$3 to \$5 a day"

(Ehrenreich and Fuentes 176). All I can say is that it is not fair. Why is it that a woman in an underdeveloped country works hard for a whole day and still makes the same amount of money that a woman in a developed country makes in an hour? I understand that there is a difference in costs of living, which is why there is a difference in wage. However, the wage that the corporations are paying the women that works in the assembly line is not reasonable.

The corporations, in their defense, they would say that they are simply abiding by rules of the country and they are paying those women the minimum wage set by the third world government. Is it their fault that they were born in an underdeveloped country? Or should they blame their government for doing a terrible job of running the country? According to world fact book, on an average 30-40% of the total population of an underdeveloped country is living below the poverty line (CIA). What this means is that all of these people wake up in the morning with nothing to eat. So, any person who is eligible would love to have a job that will bring food to their table. A low wage goes hand in hand with the economic situation of the country itself. When was the last time you heard about a country that is struggling economically, but still thinks that their people should be paid a certain wage that is higher than the average. Even if the government has to lower the minimum wage, they will do it in order to attract multinational corporations. Most developing countries need foreign corporations to invest in their country to help boost the economy.

An investment brochure issued by the Malaysian government informs the multinational executives that “ the manual dexterity of the oriental female is famous the world over. Her hands are small, and she works fast with extreme care...Who, therefore, could be better qualified by nature and inheritance, to contribute to the efficiency of a bench-assembly production line than the Oriental girl? “(Ehrenreich and Fuentes 180). Basically, the government in an underdeveloped country is short selling their own women to help boost the economy.

Secondly, being the CEO of the corporation has its advantages. I can do whatever I want. It's my company. I want to have a living and working environment in my corporation that is suitable for everyone. I want to have a workplace where anyone would want to work. But that is not the real world. Both working and living conditions for the woman working in an assembly-line job is cruel and unethical. They are treated as if they were a bunch of lab rats just taken out from their cages to work their butts off; once the shift is over, they are thrown back into their cages and left there to sleep.

The American Friends Service Committee reports that dormitory space is “ likely to be crowded—while one shift works, another sleeps, as many as twenty to a room” (178). I think prisoners are treated better than they are. At least, prisoners are not packed into twenty people in a room and expect them to rest after a whole day of intense labor. In addition, they are not even close to getting compensated on how much work they are doing.

Furthermore, there were reports of cases where women passing out because of toxic chemical fumes building up inside the working area.

Ask yourself this one question, would you let all of these things happen to your own mother, sister, or other female relative just to make money? I would say no. If I have my own company, I would do the right thing. I would rather be making less money but run an ethical company rather than making millions and be the devil. I would like my corporation be a role model to other corporations by setting an example and making a difference in the lives of other people. One little thing I disagree when I was reading the article was with the terminology the authors used.

I didn't like them referring to countries that are less fortunate than theirs as "third world." Even though the term "first world" and "third world" vanished with the cold war ended, but the countries still exist. Now, it is just developed or underdeveloped. The term "first world" or "third world" are so old-fashioned that it sounds like the third world countries are inferior to the first world countries. Everyone is equal. Not one person or one country can be inferior to another.

Ehrenreich and Fuentes pointed out great arguments on how horrible women are treated in underdeveloped countries through wage difference, gender inequality, and ruthless working and living conditions. Whenever I imagine the lives of the women that work in the assembly lines, I cannot stop asking myself, how can human beings treat other human beings like that? Maybe they are not human; they are hungry bloodsucking vampires. Instead of blood, they suck on money from weak, helpless women. These vampires are called the corporations.

They are heartless, and never satisfy its hunger for more money. I realized how lucky I am and I'm glad that no one in my family has to go through the hardships and suffering in order to provide the family with food and other necessities. I probably cannot change how multinational corporations run their factories, but I know that in my heart that if I am given a chance to run a corporation that I would do anything to make sure nobody is taken advantage of; never forget that all people are equal, and be an positive influence to other corporations.

I hope that I can create a place that is a better place to live and work for all the people that would be working for me. Works Cited CIA, comp. “

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