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Submission for the

**POSITIVE AWARD
2006**

Filed by: **Community Awareness Research
Education (CARE Trust), Coimbatore, India**

Community Awareness Research Education (CARE Trust)

Headquarters:	Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India
Established:	2001
Web site:	not available (see www.adoptanactivist.org)
Number of employees:	21
Number of members:	779
Area of activity:	Better labor and environment standards; research on social change; research, campaigning and training in protection of children's rights; capacity building for workers and unions regarding labor rights, etc.
Main objectives:	Implementation of Agenda 21 (Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, 1992); promotion of child and labor rights according to ILO conventions; fairer North-South relationships.

Summary

The goal of CARE Trust's campaign is to prevent the U.S. multinational Wal-Mart from gaining entry into the Indian retail market. CARE Trust charges the concern with encouraging cheap labor and environmental pollution by holding down prices at its suppliers in the region of Tirupur. CARE Trust was able to assemble a large coalition against Wal-Mart, and a strike in September 2005 triggered a national debate on the issue.

Reasons for the submission

Tirupur and the surrounding villages are a center for knitwear and is often referred to as "T-Shirt city." A principal importer from the region is the U.S. retail concern Wal-Mart. CARE Trust charges the concern with pressuring suppliers to keep prices low, so that production costs remain low and Wal-Mart can therefore realize a higher rate of return. This in effect encourages cheap labor and environmental pollution. For CARE Trust, Wal-Mart is a symbol of repressive corporate policies, lacking social and environmental responsibility.

Wal-Mart is now itching to enter the Indian retail market, seeing great potential for growth. CARE Trust is fighting against the opening of the Indian retail sector to foreign direct investment (FDI). According to the NGO, Wal-Mart's market entry would place the existence of 50 million small retailers and their employees in danger.

Within the scope of the campaign, CARE Trust sought contact and collaboration with unions, anti-globalization activists, academics, small retail and consumer organizations and peasants, in order

The deadline for the submission of the candidature was August 26th 2005. Later developments were considered in the summaries as far as known. 1

to bring to their attention the consequences of FDI. In July 2005, CARE Trust organized a workshop on Wal-Mart, during which the coalition “Stop FDI In Retail Sector And Stop Wal-Mart In India” was founded. The coalition includes several national and regional unions such as the Indian National Trade Union Center (INTUC) and the All Indian Trade Union Center (AITUC), as well as the association of small retailers in Tamil Nadu.

At the end of September 2005, six unions along with the association of small retailers held a one-day strike against foreign direct investment in the Indian retail sector.

CARE Trust also carried out the “Dirty Shirts” study, which examined the textile industry in the Tirupur region in relation to the health and safety risks of workers as well as the consequences for the environment. The study concluded that the textile industry in Tirupur is responsible for the contamination of the air, soil and ground water, and that employees who work with bleach and dyes receive insufficient protection against the chemicals they must use. Many of them suffered from health problems, skin diseases and hair loss.

Results of the campaign

CARE Trust views as a success the fact that it formed a coalition with the large national unions, which for their part have links to the government and opposition parties. The coalition also has the cooperation of more than 200,000 small retailers via the retail organization in Tamil Nadu. The strike at the end of September 2005 was a success and triggered a national debate on Wal-Mart. The “Dirty Shirts” study prompted the High Court to launch legal proceedings to protect peasants by providing them with information about the waste water from bleaching and dyeing firms. As a consequence, the judge ordered the closure of operations whose waste water was not adequately treated.

What happens next?

CARE Trust wants to intensify its lobbying of parliament members as well as the collection of signatures for the petition. In addition, it hopes to organize more demonstrations to prevent Wal-Mart’s entry in the market. A poster campaign and a petition to be given to the Indian president and prime minister are also planned.

Detailed submission: www.publiceye.ch/nominierungen

Further information and links:

- www.sardi.org