

Subject: Pinehurst

Date: 9/15/11

Interviewer: Milli Lake and Anne Greenleaf

Coded by: Chelsey Sobel and Kasmira Hall

NOTE: This is not a transcript. This document comprises interview notes from the interview conducted with workers from Pinehurst in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, on November 15th, 2012. We hope to provide a direct transcript in Spanish and English as soon as resources become available.

What kind of issue have you been having at Pinehurst, especially with unionization?

The brands are taking away jobs. It doesn't matter if workers unionize because they are losing their jobs anyway.

Is the owner of the factory American?

Yes.

Which brands are the factories producing for?

Nike, Adidas, Kenneth Cole, Armani, Polo.

Are any of the products made in the factories for colleges?

Nike and Adidas.

Do you see university logos on the clothes you are producing?

We see logos on some while they are in production, but some don't get logos until they are printed.

Once they are printed, do you know which of the universities the factory work is for?

No. We see the logos on the long sleeves but we don't know which schools they are for.

When was the union formed?

August 14th, 2010.

What has happened since that time? What is happening now?

We are constantly fighting and organizing for better benefits. The first step is to form a union. Some were fired.

How many people were fired?

Ten. Very important for us to get back those jobs. We got back seven of those jobs.

Who formed the union, the first one?

It's our group of people who are involved. We tell other workers to be a part of the union. Nine people formed the union.

Are they part of CGT?

Yes.

How did they form the union? Did they call about the union?

We went to the office of Evangelina Argueta.

How did they know about CGT?

We heard about her through other workers and we called her on the telephone.

So had you heard about the Nike and Russell cases?

Yes. We don't have much Nike production in our factory. The managers still fired people and we don't understand why they are firing people. We think that brands need to be more involved with the factories. We work for the brands not the factory. We have the right to start a union. Brands need to be more involved in protecting benefits and rights for workers, and eliminate discrimination against those that form the unions. Nike asked about their regulations in the factories. The Code of Conduct was not just on paper.

Where did you read the code of conduct?

I asked human resources. They don't have it exposed to workers but there are other ways to find it.

Is the right to form a union the primary issue at Pinehurst or are there other problems going on?

We need to find someone to represent the workers and communicate with the factory owners.

What did WRC do? Did they conduct interviews with the union?

They made interviews with people working here. They support us and we like that. Our arms are open to people who want to help us.

Have you been in contact with other organizations like Maquila Solidarity?

Yes. We want to connect with anyone who wants to help.

How did you first hear about the Nike case and Hugger?

We knew Hugger closed. It was public news. Workers told each other. That was in 2005.

Did you hear that the Hugger workers were compensated by Nike? What do you know? What kind of benefits? How much money?

The only information we received was that Nike paid. I don't know the rest.

Did you say that Nike visited your factory recently?

Yes, a Nike representative, Denise, visited a month ago

Did she often visit the factory or was it a special occasion?

When they fired 10 coworkers, we started to campaign. They fired 120 members of the union. We understood there was less production in our factory, but they fired 135 workers and 120 were members of the union. That's why we started to fight to get those jobs back. We denounced the violation of the right to form a union.

Did you take the case to the labor ministry?

Yes. But we also targeted the brand directly. We sent emails to Nike and Adidas.

Is that why Denise visited?

Yes.

Did any other representatives from other brands visit?

Only Adidas and Nike.

How was that visit? What kind of things did they talk about?

They asked us what happened, why the 135 people were fired. We communicated with them what the factory said to us. Denise said the decision by Nike was motivated by production/efficiency. We told her there was a violation of the right to form a union and the facts weren't very clear. 93 percent fired were members of the union.

When Nike conduct interviews with workers, do they do this at the factory site?

Yes, one by one.

How do you hope that the case will eventually be resolved?

I wish they brands could be more involved.

Can you talk a little bit about the people who have been fired, and the challenges they have faced?

Things in this country are difficult. There are no jobs. Those who were fired are still looking for jobs, and when they fired those individuals they took out the more active members of the union. We're angry because they took out most active members of the union.

Did you hear about the Russell case?

Yes.

Did you hear about Russell from CGT?

We heard about it through a magazine and through board members of the union.

How did you end up doing the training at CDM?

We are a new union and need to train members of the board.

When did they do the training at CDM, was it 2005?

No. 2010. We have done different trainings as well. We have worked in factories since around 14 years old. But this was my first experience in a union. I like to help other people, to be the voice of people who don't have a voice.

You seem involved with CDM also. Could you talk about what it's like to work with them?

We enjoy it. It is something we want to do and share in. There is something new everyday. We have a lot of pride in this work.

What kind of things are most interesting to you?

As a woman, it is great to defend myself. Equality of gender is important to us. Men have the same rights as women. We are all equal. We defend ourselves, with words based in law. People must respect what the law says.

Was the factory owner present during any meetings and did you get a sense of an intimidation?

There was no intimidation in the interviews.

You could speak clearly and openly to them?

Yes.

Is there any intimidation from the factory owners or employers about forming a union or standing up for your rights?

We feel harassed from factory owners. They don't respect open access. We don't have union representation, only factory owner representation. Human Resources has to represent the factory and one person represents the union. Sometimes they make mistakes and don't bring any union members, just factory members.

What is the general attitude of factory owners towards unionization? Do you feel any threat or fear for losing your job or anything like that? Does the factory owner ever say anything verbally or written?

No. The problem is with the administration, not the factory owner. They always bring in new rules that weren't there before.

How do you feel about the attitude of the Human Resources manager towards you? Is she supportive or antagonistic?

They are workers. They have a lot of obstacles even as human resource workers. But Human Resource workers are still antagonistic towards the union. They don't have enough power so all the processes are very slow.

At the beginning you talked about the other union the factory owners founded, a rival union that was founded in the factory. Could you talk a little more about what that union is and what the problems are with them?

We are working like ants. If we make any noise, we are taken out. The factory wants to make a collective contract with the other union, not ours. The brand helped us with their investigation of the original union. They found mistakes with the other union, but not with ours.

Do you want to tell us anything else we didn't talk about?

Yes, we want more training and more help.