

UNITED STUDENTS FOR FAIR TRADE

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United Students for Fair Trade

USFT is a collaboration of students and youth working in solidarity with cooperative communities to promote fair trade principles, products and policies. Consciousness raising, leadership development and capacity building stand at the core of our grassroots organizing. We have three main functions. First, we organize--we work to consolidate and coordinate the power of the over 150 active student Fair Trade organizations in the U.S. Second, through intensive international exchanges and skill-building conferences, we engage in leadership development and capacity building. Third, we serve as a resource to student affiliates looking for anything from strategic campaigning advice to internship opportunities.

USFT has two core objectives. The first is to work towards a global economy that is based on human relationships, transparency, democracy, equitable access, and shared power through cooperative organizations. To do this, we raise awareness of and expand the demand for Fair Trade, both on campuses and in communities. Through this process, we redefine relationships between producers and consumers and engage in the ongoing struggle to build people's power in the face of corporate-driven globalization.

The second core objective of USFT is to expand student empowerment by working together as students and youth to cultivate the consciousness, capacity, and creativity that will proactively shape a global economy based on equity, justice, and integrity. To achieve this, we offer international exchanges and delegations, internship opportunities, host and participate in convergences and conferences, produce informational materials, and develop the organizing skills of student leaders.

We emphasize Fair Trade alternatives in the context of our critique of global trade practices and partner with trade justice organizations that lobby for progressive trade policy. Our domestic trade work includes building partnerships with anti-sweatshop and farmworker rights groups in order to promote fair domestic trade practices.

Additionally, we recognize the same economic structures that affect producers within the international trade system exist in the United States. Our Domestic Fair Trade Program builds partnerships with groups promoting the rights of farmworkers and small farmers in the United States. USFT participates in ongoing national campaigns and explores other alternative economic models such as Community Supported Agriculture to improve the livelihoods of farmworkers, small farmers and their families.

In fighting for economic justice, USFT is not only working to develop a new generation of Fair Trade leadership, but is also contributing substantially to the movement.



Purpose, Vision, and Values

Purpose:

USFT is a collaboration of students and youth working in solidarity with cooperative communities to promote fair trade principles, products and policies. Consciousness raising, leadership development and capacity building stand at the core of our grassroots organizing.

Vision:

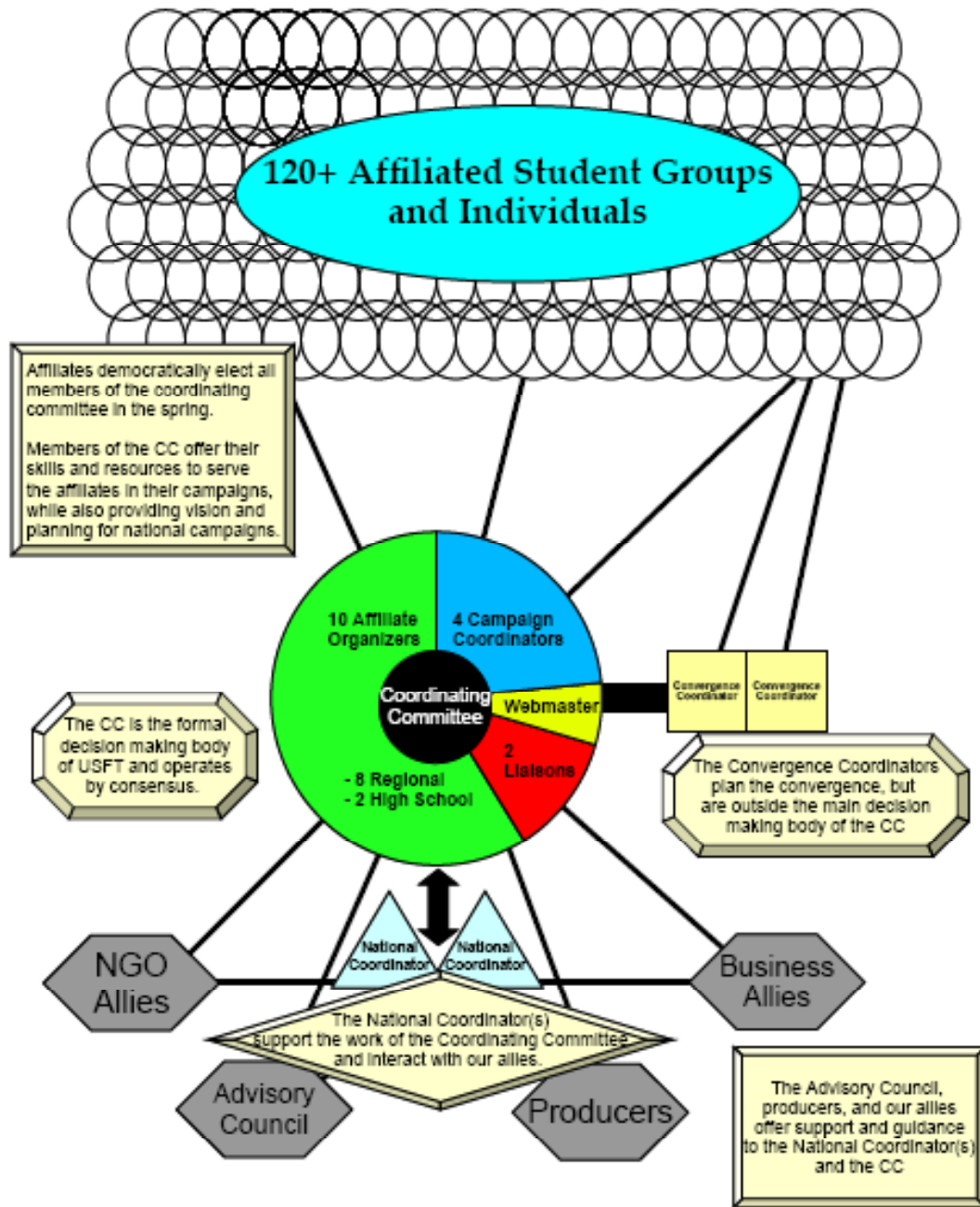
We envision a world in which the global economy is based on human relationships, transparency, democracy, equitable access, and shared power through cooperative organizations.

Values:

The following are a set of values that guide our actions. We strive to embody these principles in our work, our coalition, and ourselves.

1. Fair Trade: We work towards the key elements of Fair Trade, locally and globally. Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, accountability, and respect, which seeks greater equity in trade. It contributes to sustainable development by securing rights and offering better trading conditions to marginalized producers and workers.
2. Anti-Oppression: We struggle to understand and to actively combat racism, classism, gender discrimination, heterosexism, ageism and other forms of oppression. We must be mindful of and challenge the elements of privilege and power not only on a global level, but also within our own organizational structures and ourselves.
3. Listening to Understand: We work to build positive relationships between people and across boundaries. We strive to listen and promote understanding and dialogue across difference.
4. Guidance by Local Knowledge: We strive to remain rooted in the local experience and action of students, producers, NGOs, and businesses working to expand awareness of and demand for Fair Trade.
5. Awareness of Context: We recognize the context, history, and landscape of the Fair Trade movement in which we work, and we recognize other initiatives working towards social justice.
6. Diversity: We respect and value diversity in our work, our organization, and the Fair Trade movement as a whole. Diversity of representation, such as of ethnicity, gender, and class, as well as of individual experience and perspective, is an essential component of validating the Student Fair Trade Movement.
7. Mutual Exchange: We value a mutual exchange of information and experience. We strive to nurture constructive dialogues between everyone involved in expanding Fair Trade.
8. Making Connections: We strive to make connections between Fair Trade Certified products and other initiatives that support local economies and cooperative forms of production and trade, and initiatives that shape a fair global economy that promote sustainable livelihoods.
9. Sustainability: We organize for a more sustainable form of global trade that benefits producers as well as the natural environment. We believe that protecting the human environment is a critical empowerment and human rights issue on the ground and in our communities.
10. Celebration: We celebrate each success, large and small, to build hope in the struggle for a global economy that nurtures human beings and communities.

USFT Organization Structure



Decision-Making Structure and Process

Formal decisions within USFT are made by the democratically-elected Coordinating Committee. To ensure that individuals arguing in the minority are given careful consideration, USFT decisions are made through a consensus process. We use several models to arrive at consensus, including Fist to Five and Thumbs Up/Down/Stand Aside.

Decisions are normally made during bi-monthly Coordinating Committee calls. At least two-thirds of the Coordinating Committee must be on a call to formalize a decision. If this quorum is not present, absent decision-makers will be given three days to vote on the issue electronically.

To foster transparency, any USFT affiliate can be on a Coordinating Committee call and present during any votes. The Coordinating Committee can invite affiliates and allies to actively participate in the discussions leading up to and following the vote itself.

In certain cases, decisions will not be made on bi-monthly calls. Operational decisions are made by the Coordinating Committee as needed and the Coordinating Committee often gives USFT staff the mandate to make nonmaterial decisions. The Coordinating Committee can establish ad hoc committees to work on specific projects, and these committees are given the mandate to make decisions, with final approval from the CC. Finally, if urgent decisions need to be made on a specific item that cannot wait for the bi-monthly call, then an electronic vote can be carried out amongst the Coordinating Committee or an emergency call may be held.

No individual or group can commit USFT to anything (to actively engage a campaign in USFT's name, endorse anything in USFT's name, partner with anyone in USFT's name, fundraise for specific USFT projects, hire anyone, or fund anything substantial) without receiving an official mandate from the Coordinating Committee. Anyone, however, can engage in discussions regarding the items above to clarify a proposal to submit to the Coordinating Committee for a vote. All USFT affiliates may present proposals to the Coordinating Committee at any time.

Any formal proposal being considered during coordinating committee calls must be submitted in written form (as concise as possible) to coordinatingcommittee@usft.org, and copy your regional coordinator or affiliate organizer, who will be your point of contact.

In certain cases, the coordinating committee may vote to put a decision out to the USFT affiliate body for a popular vote. Affiliates may also force a popular vote if they have the endorsement on a proposal of at least 10 USFT affiliates (registered in the on-line database), representing at least three separate regions. Popular votes are decided by majority.

Budget and Fundraising

Each fall, USFT's Coordinating Committee undergoes the process of closing out the previous year's books and setting budget priorities for the upcoming year. A Financial Oversight committee bottomlines this process and the whole CC must approve final budgets, with input from staff and our fiscal sponsor. USFT develops our budget according to the National Network of Grantmakers and are accountable for reporting on all activities to donors and the IRS through our fiscal sponsor, the Tides Center.

USFT's revenue streams include:

- Private donors and supporters like you!
- Foundation Grants
- Ally Grants
- Fair Trade industry and movement sponsorship
- Affiliate support

In the spirit of the Fair Trade movement, USFT strives to be as transparent as possible in our budgeting and fundraising. Any affiliate can request a copy of our budget and financials, and we publish an annual report at the end of our fiscal year.

USFT Elections Structure

Introduction

Each spring United Students for Fair Trade will hold elections to confirm new leaders to make decisions about the organization's direction and be responsible for operations with the input of all affiliates. The graduating Coordinating Committee shall confirm an ad-hoc Elections Committee to administer and promote the election and verify its results. Responsibilities include coordinating logistics, publishing impartial information to educate affiliates on issues or candidates, ensuring all candidates in the election are presented and compliant with guidelines, and should not be outspoken proponents for an issue at stake.

Registering

United Students for Fair Trade will hold elections in March of each year. Members of affiliates must register to vote online beginning in March, and only registered voters will be allowed to vote in the election.

Nominating

USFT relies on motivated individuals to nominate themselves for the Coordinating Committee. Applicants self-nominate online and provide information to the broad affiliate base. We ask that no more than 2 students from each school run for the Coordinating Committee.

Term

Terms are 16 months. The members elected will serve formally until June of the following year, and will be responsible for recruiting candidates and transitioning in new leadership through the spring and summer.

Introduction to the Ballot Process

In the case of votes on plenary decisions, affiliates will cast "Yes/No" votes and a majority of voters (more than 50% of votes) shall win. Affiliates will be given at least 7 days to vote.

In the case of leadership elections, affiliates will cast instant-runoff ballots online, with an option to vote "no confidence." Affiliates will be given at least 7 days to vote.

Verification

At the close of the voting period, all votes will be tallied electronically and be verified by the Elections Committee and the USFT paid staff. Coordinators-elect will be asked to confirm, and results will be released within 1 week of the close of the voting period.

Instant-Runoff Ballot Procedure Description

Each voter ranks at least one candidate in order of preference on one ballot. For example if there are 5 candidates, the affiliate group must rank at least one and at the most 5 candidates on the same ballot. First choices are tallied. If no candidate has the support of the majority of voters (more than 50%), the candidate with the least support is eliminated from list of candidates. A second round of counting takes place. All ballots where the eliminated candidate is the first choice, the second preferred candidate on that ballot will be counted. After a candidate is eliminated, he or she may not receive any more votes. This process of counting and eliminating is repeated until one candidate has over half the votes.

Rational for the Instant-Runoff System

Instant-runoff voting is more democratic than a simple majority system.. The system is favored by many third parties as a solution to the "spoiler" effect third-party sympathizers suffer from under plurality voting (i.e., voters are forced to vote tactically to defeat the candidate they most dislike, rather than for their own preferred candidate). Note that any candidate with a majority of voters in the first round will win, just as with a simple majority system.

Coordinating Committee Job Descriptions

All Coordinating Committee Members

All members of USFT's Coordinating Committee will be expected to:

- Embody the Mission, Vision, and Values of USFT
- Represent USFT on a National and Regional level
- Work actively to meet goals outlined in USFT's Strategic Action Plan
- Participate in bimonthly Conference Calls
- Attend the 2008 International Convergence
- Build relationships and maintain constant communication with other CC members, the National Coordinator and the Advisory Committee
- Participate in organizational fundraising. You will be expected to raise approximately \$1000 through grassroots and foundations fundraising
- Manage listservs and respond to emails and phone calls promptly and professionally
- Attend conferences to represent USFT where appropriate
- Attend the Transitions Summit. USFT will be responsible for covering the costs of the adventure
- Time commitment is a minimum of 10 hours per week
- Rock the Fair Trade Movement!
- Affiliate Organizers (10)

Regional Organizers (8 elected)

Regions:

Northeast (MA, ME, NH, VT, CT, NY, RI)

MidAtlantic (NJ, PA, DC, MD, DE, WV, VA)

Southeast (AR, LA, MS, GA, FL, AL, NC, SC, PR)

Southwest (CO, AZ, NV, NM, UT, TX, OK)

Heartland (IL, WI, SD, ND, IA, MN, NE)

Midwest (OH, KY, IN, TN, MO, KS, MI)

Northwest (WA, OR, ID, MT, WY, AK)

West Coast (HI, CA, Guam)

- Build relationships with affiliates, contact each affiliate group individually monthly (minimum)
- Support affiliate campaigns, connect affiliates to each other, to resources, etc.
- Collect semester feedback forms from every affiliate
- Research new developing campaigns on campuses and draw new schools into USFT's affiliate network
- Offer leadership development opportunities to affiliates and support their organizations
- Organize monthly regional conference calls
- Facilitate on-going regional projects, campaigns and development of new ideas/projects/campaigns
- Support affiliates in finding resources for campaigns
- Expand affiliate base
- Interact with allies and producers
- Facilitate dialogue between different affiliate groups, affiliates and producers, affiliates and allies, etc
- Actively organize and campaign in your region and support student activism!
- Provide support to everyone on the CC and participate in USFT's national committees

High School Coordinators (2 Elected)

- Actively support Fair Trade campaigns in High Schools
- Reach out to new high school groups
- Seek opportunities to develop high school specific programs
- Develop and update a high school organizing guide
- Facilitate a committee of high school organizers
- Build relationships with affiliates, contact each affiliate group monthly (minimum)
- Support affiliate campaigns, connect affiliates to each other, to resources, etc.
- Collect semester feedback forms from every affiliate
- Offer leadership development opportunities to affiliates and support their organizations
- Support affiliates in finding resources for campaigns
- Expand High School affiliate base
- Interact with allies and producers
- Facilitate dialogue between different affiliate groups, affiliates and producers, affiliates and allies, etc
- Actively organize and campaign in your region and support student activism!
- Current High School student preferred

Campaign Coordinators (3)

Full Monty Coordinator (1 elected)

- Spearhead the USFT National Campaign Committee
- Work closely with the regional reps. and affiliates to coordinate national actions and develop national plans for USFT
- Build on incoming national campaign committee plans, and think innovatively towards the future
- Manage media work for national campaigns
- Conduct research and compile resources for campaigns on campuses
- Work with regional reps in making these resources available to affiliates
- Actively support campus groups in converting to Fair Trade coffee, tea, bananas, sugar, chocolate, soccer balls, etc
- Work with the National Coordinator to leverage resources for campaigns
- Communicate consistently with campus affiliates, Food Service Providers, allies, and producers

BANANA Campaigner (1 Elected)

- Empower students to engage in BANANA campaign
- Organize the national BANANA campaign
- Manage media work for BANANA campaigns
- Do research for BANANA campaigns
- Work with National Coordinator to leverage resources for campaigns
- Interact with allies and producers, connect students to allies and producers
- Facilitate the BANANA Strategy Team
- Support banana conversions on affiliate campuses
- Develop BANANA specific campaign materials
- Develop BANANA specific workshops and education tools
- Work with students to navigate dining hall conflicts and Food Service Provider conversations
- Develop structures for information sharing and best practices for conversion campaigns
- Direct action education
- Research and create resources on the banana market, demand, and strategies for expanding the Empowerment Banana Campaign

Domestic Fair Trade Coordinator (1 Elected)

- Work with students and allies to develop Domestic Fair Trade programming
- Facilitate the USFT Domestic Fair Trade Strategy Team through conference calls and a session at the Convergence
- Support and connect students engaging in Domestic Fair Trade on campuses
- Uphold USFT's role as an endorsing member of the Alliance for Fair Food and organize in support of the work of the Student/Farmworker Alliance and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers
- Maintain connections between USFT and the Domestic Fair Trade Working Group and attend meetings
- Research potential ally organizations and build relationships
- Keep abreast of workers' rights campaigns in the United States and identify potential for coalition building
- Research ways to expand Domestic Fair Trade programming
- Develop education materials and provide access to existing resources
- Develop a long-term vision and strategy for Domestic Fair Trade campaigning

BRIDGE Coordinator (1 Elected)

- Facilitate the planning of the South-North internships and the North-South internships
- Facilitate Transition Summit planning with the National Coordinator
- Plan popular education presentations for conferences
- Support the development of BRIDGE initiatives
- Facilitate affiliate access to speaker tours, events, etc
- Play a major role in connecting cooperative communities to affiliate groups
- Work with international affiliate student groups

Liaisons (2)

Industry Liaison (1 Elected)

- Communicate USFT campaign and program information to industry allies
- Serve as initial point of contact for businesses
- Manage press and media relations
- Serve as initial point of contact for producers
- Facilitate the Producer Board
- Spanish language skills preferred
- Manage relationship with TransFair USA
- Develop relationship with new industry allies
- Hold allies accountable to Fair Trade movement mission, vision, and values
- Attend industry events
- Report on USFT's activities and solicit feedback
- Facilitate dialogue between affiliates and producers
- Facilitate dialogue between affiliates and businesses
- Work with Movement Liaison to publish a quarterly USFT newsletter

Movement Liaison (1 Elected)

- Communicate USFT campaign and program information to movement-focused allies
- Serve as initial point of contact for NGOs
- Manage press and media relations
- Facilitate the Advisory Board
- Develop relationship with new NGO allies
- Hold allies accountable to Fair Trade movement mission, vision, and values
- Report on USFT's activities and solicit feedback
- Facilitate Interfaith Working Group
- Maintain constant communication with student activist groups
- Creating a database of Fair Trade opportunities
- Work closely with Student Trade Justice Campaign
- Facilitate dialogue between affiliates and NGOs
- Facilitate dialogue between affiliates and other student activist groups
- Work with Industry Liaison to publish a quarterly USFT newsletter

Webmaster Flash (1 Elected)

- Update usft.org
- Bottom line the website redesign process (Summer '07)
- Content management
- General listserv maintenance
- Organizational tech support to Coordinating Committee and affiliates
- Publication of E-newsletter
- Develop online action alerts
- Support affiliates in tech-based activism
- Provide vision and help USFT to realize our tech potential!

USFT Programs, Projects, and Campaigns

Domestic Farmworker Rights

Founded upon the same principles as Fair Trade, USFT's Domestic Fair Trade Program connects students with groups supporting farmworkers, small farmers and community organizations working toward a more just agricultural system in the US.

Farmworker Rights

A member of the Alliance for Fair Food, USFT supports the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in organizing for fair wages, better working conditions and an end to modern-day-slavery in the agricultural industry. Farmworkers in the US endure low wages and grueling working conditions: tomato pickers earn 40-45 cents for every 32-lb bucket of tomatoes, and must pick 2.5 tons of tomatoes a day just to earn minimum wage. Most make about \$7,000-10,000 a year, far below the poverty line, and are legally denied the right to form a union to address these conditions. The CIW has joined forces with consumers of fast food, students, faith-based groups and other organizations around the country to target the top of the food chain: large corporations whose bulk purchasing rates drive down farmworker wages. Through a broad-based national coalition, the CIW has won tremendous victories against Taco Bell and McDonald's, gaining wage increases, an enforceable code of conduct, transparency within the supply chain for tomato purchases and farmworker participation in decisions. The Student/Farmworker Alliance is a network of students organizing in solidarity with the CIW. Visit SFA at www.sfalliance.org and the CIW at www.ciw-online.org for more information.

Sustainable Alternatives

A number of sustainable alternatives exist to counter the model of production set by large agribusinesses. For example, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a growing movement that connects consumers with local producers to create a more sustainable food supply chain and support the regional economy. Students have gotten involved and asked their campus food service providers to source locally-grown produce. Additionally, farmer cooperatives and a number of groups throughout the country are working to support the interests of small-scale farmers and create a more just agricultural system.

Visit the following links for more information:

[Community Supported Agriculture](#)

[Equal Exchange Domestic Fair Trade](#)

[Farm to College Programs](#)

[Federation of Southern Cooperatives](#)

[Family Farm Defenders](#)

[Agricultural Justice Project](#)

[Organic Valley](#)

[Local Harvest](#)

What can you do to get involved?

Join the Domestic Fair Trade listserv and the Domestic Fair Trade Working Group!

Send an email to domesticft_request@usft.org to join the Domestic Fair Trade listserv. Contact the Domestic Fair Trade Coordinator at domestic@usft.org to join the Domestic Fair Trade Working Group or for more information!

Empowerment Bananas

This S*** is Bananas!!

Historically, the banana trade has been marked by colonialism, deforestation, contamination, labor abuses and corporate control of economies and foreign governments. In more recent history, the international market experienced an oversupply of bananas. One of the main causes was due to the liberalization (releasing of tariffs) in the market. These events coupled with the sluggish growth in demand resulted in lower banana prices. The lower the international price of bananas, the less the producer gets paid for his or her crop regardless of the money (s)he invested in producing that crop.

Moreover, supermarkets too have reduced their margins in recent years, causing producers to receive economic pressures in the form of lower prices from the different steps in the supply chain. Because banana production is capital and labor intensive, the majority of independent growers are large landowners. It is increasingly difficult for small landholders to compete and survive in the international banana market.

What are empowerment bananas?

Empowerment bananas are Fair Trade bananas! Empowerment bananas create a relationship between the producer and the consumer through which the consumer opts to connect with the producer by purchasing a product that better the producer's livelihood and ensures a fair wage for his/her product.

Empowerment bananas stem from Fair Trade values and a vision of deconstructing historical abusive practices that are associated with the banana trade. In short, empowerment bananas make a difference because they provide an alternative that enables the producer to recognize and consider the alternatives available.

Think About Your Banana...

Bananas are among the most widely consumed foods in the world and rank among the top ten most consumed food crops. Just think about how many bananas get eaten in your dining hall each day--- it's staggering!

USFT is committed to creating international linkages between producers and consumers in ways that empower communities. We believe that empowerment bananas are the feasible and more ethical alternative over conventionally traded bananas, so we're supporting grassroots efforts in the Northeast, Midatlantic, and Great Lakes areas to get 100% Fair Trade bananas on campus. Right now, the supply chain makes it tricky to get Fair Trade bananas as an individual campus outside these areas—so think of it as a great opportunity to build and deepen your connections to other Fair Trade organizing in your community. Work with local business and other campuses to create a critical mass of demand to get Empowerment Bananas in your neck of the woods and then talk to your food service provider about making the switch!

High Schools Program

United Students for Fair Trade is shaping a new program in the 2007-2008 academic year that focuses on high schools. This is a first step in a process of transitioning from a student organization composed entirely of college and university students, into a broad-based youth organization. The high schools program will emphasize these primary areas:

Education

The high schools program emphasizes peer education through a variety of means, from flyering and bake sales, to meetings and teach-ins. This educational initiative results in consciousness-raising and increased knowledge about Fair Trade versus conventional supply chains.

Community Involvement

High school students have a unique position in their communities that many college and university students lack: they are able to work within their families and communities to promote ethical consumption.

Perspectives of the cooperatives

USFT is coordinating several opportunities for high school students to meet people working in all different parts of the Fair Trade movement and to begin to understand Fair Trade from multiple perspectives. These opportunities include the annual USFT Convergence and delegations to cooperatives in the Global South.

Fundraising

The High School program works to develop new ways of fundraising that rely on ethically-produced items, and surrounds these fundraising opportunities with education about Fair Trade.

High School-Friendly Campaigns

Because few high schools represent a market for coffee or other Fair Trade products comparable in size or structure to colleges, the high school campaign will formulate new campaigns and objectives that emphasize consciousness-raising and ethical consumption. The high school program will focus on developing high school students as leaders of their own Fair Trade campaigns, and ultimately as leaders of the Fair Trade student movement.

Beyond the limits of a listserv, the high school program will function as a forum to translate ideas and strategies into significant victories and progress. Above all, the high school activism scene is like no other, and the possible power and endless creative ideas that this group can add to the Fair Trade movement is invaluable.

The Fair Trade Full Monty

The Campaign

The Fair Trade Full Monty Campaign is about guaranteeing students access to 100% Fair Trade product lines for their campuses.

Over 300 schools currently serve Fair Trade coffee, and many more are working on campaigns to make Fair Trade coffee, tea, chocolate, sugar, rice, bananas, and crafts exclusively available. At many schools, the Food Service Providers (FSPs) don't work with vendors that provide complete lines of Fair Trade products, and so the Full Monty Campaign works to make those complete lines of diverse Fair Trade products more widely available on campuses.

The Fair Trade Full Monty Campaign is also about 100% Fair Trade conversions. We as student activists need to work towards full conversions – not just a single blend of Fair Trade coffee but also drip, espresso, regular, and decaf. We need to work to get chocolate, cocoa powder and chocolate syrup, sugar packets and bulk sugar, rice, bananas, full lines of tea, tropical fruits, and crafts in bookstores and craft fairs on our campuses—all 100% Fair Trade.

Though there is currently more availability of coffee than other Fair Trade products through FSPs (thanks to the work of organized student campaigns over the past five years), the Fair Trade Full Monty is also about getting tea, cocoa, bananas, rice, and crafts available on campus whenever possible. Some campuses have gotten Fair Trade rice or bananas on their campuses. Others have focused on making Fair Trade crafts available in their bookstores, while others have emphasized the use of domestic and local foods. All of these campaigns are part of the Full Monty, and it is up to your individual group to decide how you will attempt to increase availability of Fair Trade products and to eventually reach the Full Monty on your campus and in your community.

The Mission

As students and members of the campus communities, it is our job to articulate demand for Fair Trade and organize students to put pressure on the Food Service Providers and administration. Combining grassroots organizing on campus, popular education, constructive communication with administration, and a continuous dialogue with FSPs, student organizers can score a pivotal victory for the Fair Trade movement.

The Story with FSPs

Sodexo, Aramark, and Compass Group control approximately 70% of the Food Service Provider industry worldwide. This includes hotels, corporate offices, and, of course, high schools, colleges, and universities. In the US alone, these three companies distribute tens of millions of dollars worth of coffee each year. Yet Fair Trade coffee is still only marginally available through the official channels of these three food service providers. The student Fair Trade movement is contending with the one-blend bottle neck—when an FSP approved vendor offers only one Fair Trade blend. In order for Fair Trade to be successful on campuses, we need to have a complete line of options of each product available.

Approved vendors are companies with which FSPs have official business relationships. Often, dining service managers will simply say, "If it's not an approved vendor, I can't do it." That isn't quite the case, because if it comes down to losing a contract, there's always a loophole to get the consumer what they want. But, because dining service operators are under tremendous pressure from corporate management to buy only from approved vendor partners, FSPs act as gatekeepers. Insisting that FSPs work with vendors that offer a full line of Fair Trade would break down a major barrier for student activists across the nation. It is time for FSPs and students to take a bold step towards making Fair Trade the standard in campus communities.

BRIDGE

Overview

The USFT BRIDGE program serves to build sustainable and empowering relationships between producers and affiliates. Through a wide variety of programs such as internships, trips to origin, farmer tours, and campus-coop partnerships, the BRIDGE program will offer affiliates multiple opportunities for connecting with producers. Only together can we struggle towards systematic change in global trade and have a hope for success. Add something about bringing back experience(?) to guide US movement. Also add blurb about coop youth in movements and how South/North internships support youth.

Internships

North-South and South-North internships build positive relationships between people and across boundaries. This program promotes true exchange across boundaries, experiences, and ideals. By valuing a mutual exchange of information and experiences, we strive to nurture constructive dialogue between everyone involved in the Fair Trade movement. Interns will be immersed in the culture of their host countries, learn valuable skills while working to further the Fair Trade movement, and will build the relationships which lie at the heart of everything we do at USFT.

Trips to Origin

In the pursuit of global understanding and social justice, USFT affiliates will travel to the Global South to grow their relationships with Fair Trade cooperatives. These journeys will be challenging, intellectually and emotionally, and will absolutely influence each of the student activists' lives for years to come.

Delegations

These tours will focus on building relationships with Fair Trade producers from the Global South and will give producers an opportunity to share their stories and interact with students in ways that are beneficial to both parties. Affiliates can expect to come away with a broader perspective on social justice and renewed energy for action in the Fair Trade movement. Trips include homestays in cooperative communities, greater understanding of the coffee production process, meeting cooperative and other movement allies, and are an opportunity to gain greater perspective of the cultural and political context of our cooperative allies.

Campus-Coop Partnerships

The BRIDGE program will facilitate relationships between affiliate groups and producers across long distances. These partnerships will give affiliates and farmers (producers?) new opportunities to share stories, ask questions, gain new insights, and energize each other in the continuing struggle for justice in global trade.

Trade Policy

Solidarity is at the core of USFT's purpose, vision, and values, and while we think that deep relationships, empowering alternatives, ethical consumption, and corporate social responsibility and accountability are critical components of a more just global economy, we recognize the need to address injustice on a legislative level as well.

We emphasize Fair Trade alternatives in the context of our critique of neoliberal economic practices and partner with trade justice organizations that lobby for progressive trade policy. International trade policy affects the lives of all of our international cooperative allies, and we work closely with our sibling campaign, Student Trade Justice Campaign to promote trade policies that work for farming (producing/producer?) communities.

The Student Trade Justice Campaign (STJC) is a national network of students engaging campuses and communities through education and informed advocacy, committed to achieving responsible, sustainable and equitable trade. They continually engage in actions geared towards supporting positive, genuinely development-oriented and human rights-conscious international trade initiatives. They also seek to educate students and the public about the effects of the current international trading system on the world's most marginalized and poorest peoples. STJC fights Free Trade Agreements, unfair subsidies, and US policies that disadvantage producer communities. For more information about STJC, check out www.tradejusticecampaign.org.

