

Roundtable Discussion of Fairtrade at Educational Institutions.

A great thank-you to everybody who participated in this discussion. I have tried to sum up below the most important points that came out of the 7 discussions.

However I would first of all like to draw attention to three main themes that kept coming up in every discussion:

- **The dilemma of student ownership over the campaign vs the sustainability of the campaign.** There was agreement that a two-tier approach is necessary, so we work with both educational authorities and teaching staff as well as students and parents. Student representation is however not sufficient for student ownership: there has to be a strong demand for Fairtrade products amongst the students for a campaign to truly be successful.
- **Resources and staff.** Working with schools clearly requires a lot of time and resources – we need to find these resources and find ways of doing our work efficiently.
- **Sharing ideas and good practice** can be a great way of saving time and energy. We should work across towns, region and nations to share our experiences in working with schools and universities and share materials, activities, lesson plans and so on. Organising conferences with this purpose, whether in a town, a region, a country or for all of Europe can be one way of achieving this.

Lastly, two things:

- 1) People & Planet's on-line resources might be of use to your work – we do a lot of work in schools (6th forms) and universities. Check out <http://peopleandplanet.org/tradejustice>
- 2) For those of you in the UK having a University in your town: make sure they come to the Fairtrade Universities Conference 9 February in Leeds. Read more at: <http://peopleandplanet.org/unicon>

Why are educational institutions important in our work on Fairtrade?

- Young people are incredibly receptive, have an intuitive grasp of fairness and are great advocates for Fairtrade.
- Young people are the future Fairtrade consumers. It is important to target them because they are still in the process of forming their habits.
- They are the multipliers and current “shadow-buyers” - their “pestering power” is significant in terms of influencing the decisions of their parents.
- Young people and students are the future campaigners – building their capacity now will feed into our work later.
- Students (especially at university) are a great resource in terms of campaign skills and research skills.

What are the challenges and opportunities we face in our work with educational institutions? How can we translate these into priorities?

Opportunities	Challenges	Priorities
Schools and universities are huge markets – them committing to using FT products significantly boosts demand.	Catering managers might be hostile, it might be more expensive.	Provide support to student campaigners and information to catering managers and staff about availability and prices.
Young people are easy to		We can use famous people in

Opportunities	Challenges	Priorities
convince as they intuitively grasp the concept of fairness.		the media to get kids aware of Fairtrade issues
Working in schools provide us with a great opportunity for getting into the media		Use this actively, let media know about what we do, tell local media when we do workshops in schools etc.
Working in schools enables us to go into proper depth on issues.		
Teaching staff are often quite positive to bringing in FT issues in education. Germany: it is in school books. UK/Sweden: citizenship and life skills lessons are open to lessons on Fairtrade.	In some countries (Norway) the syllabus is not really open to bringing in Fairtrade issues. Bad teaching on Fairtrade can really undermine our work. (How many of us had heard teachers mixing Free and Fair trade after our talks?) Teachers are under a lot of pressure to do a lot of things. We are also under a lot of pressure as a movement, maybe we don't have the resources to provide all the support needed.	Find ways of getting it into the syllabus by cooperating with teachers or introducing it as project work or a "theme day". Get involved in teacher training, get articles in teachers magazines. Develop good packages for teachers with lesson-plans, activities and information. Share material, lesson plans and activities. Try to get funding to employ people to work directly with school and universities.
Children's intuitive grasp of Fairtrade and their power as shadow-consumers (influencing their parents choices)	Parents who lack knowledge about Fairtrade might think their children have been brainwashed into wanting one particular brand or product.	We need to bring parents on board early, by having representatives on the steering group,
There are often established fund-raising schemes, young enterprises schemes or tuck-shops at schools. Fairtrade has often been successfully introduced this way.		Provide information, give free samples and flyers.
Some schools have international profiles or twin-schools in other countries		Find case studies from places they are connected with, encourage schools to make connections to schools in the south.
A lot of schools and universities have done great work on Fairtrade already.	Often their experience is not shared with others so other groups spend a lot of time struggling with the same problems.	We should find some way of "sharing best practice" - town groups have on-line case studies of schools in their areas, organisations having on-line resources, organising conferences (local, regional,

Opportunities	Challenges	Priorities
		national or international?)
<p>Students are often organised in different groups, have a lot of campaigning experience and are part of greater networks. Their involvement in these groups enables them to make the link to Trade Justice. They can also take their FT campaigning skills with them to their next university, workplace, town etc.</p>	<p>Students are busy, group composition changes year by year. Having support from the top of the educational establishment is crucial for sustainability of the work on Fairtrade but can lead to students not feeling ownership of the campaigning.</p>	<p>Two-tier approach - focus on cooperation with different student societies as well as the heads of the educational establishment. Try and balance sustainability with student ownership, by having both students and staff well-represented in the steering group.</p>
<p>We can recruit students as volunteers, get them to do research that can be useful for us such as case studies etc.</p>	<p>Students are busy with academic and other commitments.</p>	<p>Really show how much we need them and what a difference their efforts can make. Support them properly in their work if they take it on.</p>