



student action on world poverty and the environment

## Forum 2006: Fairtrade session summary

As a result of People & Planet groups' hard work, the number of officially accredited schools and universities has doubled in the past year. At the beginning of 2005, 10 Universities, and 3 schools had Fairtrade Status – the number has now increased to 23 universities and 5 schools – a fantastic achievement. In 2006/7 we can really build on this success, and expand our campaign to exciting new areas.

### Fairtrade Status

We started the session by considering what further resources and support would be useful to support your campaigns for Fairtrade status? And how do we make the most of the expertise we have built up over the years, so we can learn from one another's experiences?

Small groups discussed the main obstacles they encountered in campaigning for Fairtrade status, and thought about what support and resources would make it easier to overcome these obstacles.

The groups identified common obstacles including:

- bureaucracy, (in many forms!)
- apathy among students and decision-makers
- pricing/cost arguments
- arguments about Fairtrade depriving people of 'freedom of choice'
- How to deal with split-campuses, or collegiate universities

There was a lot of idea sharing within the session, with a host of great solutions from groups' experience.

In terms of additional resources and support the following were identified.

- make FT status reports from other unis available to those who aren't there yet
- example case-studies of how others have dealt with problems
- more research on cost
- campaign for greater transparency
- using NUSSL
- more materials to raise awareness
- more counter-arguments needed for winning the argument with authorities, caterers etc.

### How we will take the consultation forward:

We will incorporate many of the ideas generated, as we update and revise the action guide and website. Further research and other development will continue in the support office; for example we will expand our 'myth-busting' guides to help with some of the problems identified.

We hope to build a comprehensive online resource, with up-to-date information, about which groups are doing what, what they've already achieved, and their plans. This can link to a host of resources – such as successful Fairtrade applications, model motions, petitions, and case studies – to bring together all the expertise in the network in an easily accessible way.

So do keep in touch with us! Please let us know about the problems you encounter, and your successes, and send us any particularly effective materials or approaches you have used that you'll be willing to share with other groups. Email [tradejustice@peopleandplanet.org](mailto:tradejustice@peopleandplanet.org)

### Beyond Fairtrade Status

In the second part of the session we looked at ideas for the campaign beyond Fairtrade Status. We looked at this particularly in the context of not having resources within the office to replace the Vote for Trade Justice campaign with a new campaign in the next year. The session aimed to identify the network's priorities, to determine where any additional resources we do have should go.

The group brainstormed lots of ideas, and then a prioritisation exercise, where participants placed stickers on their favoured options, highlighted four which we looked at in more depth. This doesn't mean all the other ideas are forgotten – some of them can be integrated into the existing campaign really easily.

At the same time the group decided to discuss ways that areas could be taken forward without support office resources.

The four areas that were prioritised:

- Trade Justice (30 stickers)
- Looking at other (non-food) Fairtrade/ethical/sweatshop-free products on campus (30 stickers)
- Promoting alternatives to supermarkets (21 stickers)
- Workers rights and sweatshop campaign (20 stickers)

**How we will take the consultation forward:**

Any extra resources we have in the office will be used on the priorities you have identified. People & Planet will continue to work with both the Fairtrade Foundation and within the Trade Justice Movement.

The online discussion forum developed by the Oxford group was identified as a mechanism for the network to continue further discussion and collect and share info on the areas that groups were keen to take forward. This is also a way in which we in the office can use to continue communicating on how we take the campaign forward as the year progresses. The online discussion forum is at: <http://www.pandpnetwork.dreamhosters.com/forums/>

Any further comments on either the discussions at the forum or anything else that you or your group would like to feed in? Email [sarahw@peopleandplanet.org](mailto:sarahw@peopleandplanet.org)