



## UNITED STUDENTS FOR FAIR TRADE

*EMPOWERING ALTERNATIVES*

3rd Annual United Students for Fair Trade International Convergence  
February 17-19, 2006 Denver, Colorado

The 3rd Annual United Students for Fair Trade International Convergence was a fantastic success! From February 17th – 19th, over 300 youth organizers, students, allies and producers converged on Denver, CO for a profound weekend of collaboration, critical thinking, and relationship building. Braving the cold, participants attended workshops, keynote speeches, and breakouts. Hundreds left Denver empowered and inspired to move the Fair Trade movement into the future and to carry on their fair trade activism in a powerful way. Key outcomes include:

### **Motivated Student Activists**

Participating youth were inspired by their peers, producers, international and domestic allies, and the vast potential that exists for the student Fair Trade movement. The opportunity for students to exchange raised consciousness among youth activists, and also provided a forum for underrepresented fair trade leaders to share their experiences. This is contributing to the development of a multilateral and multilevel alliance of cooperatives, universities, communities, and youth leaders who are motivated to act on their convictions.

### **Anti-Oppression**

USFT focused on Anti-oppression work as a core function of any social justice work. We began to integrate this dialogue into all aspects of our organizing. Joyce Johnson Shabazz challenged participants to examine their lives in her keynote address, and participants explored the interface between their work on campus and anti-racist, anti-classist movements in the Anti-Oppression Workshop block. This is the first piece of a much larger movement within USFT to integrate anti-oppression as a core Fair Trade value.

1225 CONNECTICUT AVE NW SUITE 401,  
WASHINGTON DC 20036  
[WWW.USFT.ORG](http://WWW.USFT.ORG)

## **Strategic Action Breakouts**

Youth participants discovered ways to act on the knowledge they had surfaced throughout the Convergence and explored organizational avenues for involvement in the Strategic Action Plan Breakout sessions. Each breakout centered around USFT's three year SAP action steps. Through this process, grassroots affiliates were able to shape USFT's national programs and get involved in the areas they are passionate about.

## **Popular Education**

The Convergence explicitly focused on integrating popular education into our work as activists and teacher/learners. USFT and presenters worked to meet participants where they are at in the Fair Trade movement and built upon people's experiences. Students left the Convergence with a better understanding of popular education, having engaged in active learning and praxis throughout the weekend.

## **Sustainable and Waste-Free**

Throughout the course of the planning process and the event itself, USFT was focused on making the event environmentally sustainable. We were remarkably successful as we used only tree-free or recycled paper, served only local vegan organic food with biodegradable/ vegetable-based flatware, offset carbon emissions through greentags, reduced paper with electronic communication as much as possible, provided compost and recycling stations. Additionally, we educated participants about our greening and celebrated the process of becoming a more sustainable organization.

**USFT is grateful to all of our supporters who made the Convergence possible, including:**

**Movement Sponsors:** Catholic Relief Services and Wild Oats Marketplace

**Regional Sponsors:** ENGAGE, Oxfam America, Global Exchange, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, and TransFair USA

**International Producer Sponsors:** Equal Exchange, Pura Vida, Lutheran World Relief

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**Workshop and Activist Sponsors:** Choice Organic Teas, Grounds For Change, Green Line Paper Company, Guayaki, Larry's Beans, Melbourne International Hotel and Hostel in Denver, CO, Pixie Mate, Project Hope and Fairness

**Collaborators:** Amnesty International Student Group at Auraria Camps, Community Agroecology Network, Fair Trade Resource Network, Ethical Trade Action Group, Students for Positive Social Change at the University of Denver, SURGE, Wholly Tomato

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