



# Workshop

## HUMAN RIGHTS FROM FIELD TO FORK



This workshop is ideally for a group no bigger than 20. Suggestions are included for larger groups.

Left photo courtesy of UFCW;  
center photo by EILER

### 1) INTRODUCTIONS (15 minutes)

**Goal:** participants think about where their food comes from

- Ask each person to say their name, what they ate for breakfast, and if they know where their food came from
- Go through 3-4 items on the list of breakfast foods and ask participants what workers were involved in the food system to get that food to the participant's dining table.

#### Facilitator's notes:

- Examples might be: the eggs were from a local farmer who sells at the farmer's market; I drank coffee which I made from fair trade coffee beans and I ate cereal but I don't know where it was grown or processed)
- Write up what people say so all can see (on big pieces of paper, chalk board, or dry erase board – whatever you have available)
- Example of food workers might be – someone ate waffles at a restaurant and the people who did all of the work to get that waffle to their dining table include: for the waffle alone - farmworkers who planted and harvested wheat, the workers who processed that wheat and turned it into flour, the workers who collected chicken eggs and the workers at a dairy farm, the workers who packaged each of these ingredients, the workers at the warehouse where the packages sat, the workers at the distribution companies that sold the packages of ingredients to the restaurant, the waiter/waitress who took the order, the bus boy who brought out drinks and cleaned the table, the cook who cooked the waffle, the dishwasher, the cashier...

#### If your group is bigger than 20:

- Ask each person to introduce him/herself
- Ask for 3-4 volunteers to share what they ate for breakfast and if they know where their food came from
- Write up what they say



Photo by Noah Lanard, courtesy of Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas (CATA)

### 2) WHO'S BEHIND OUR FOOD? (20-25 minutes)

**Goal:** participants understand that the food system is unjust for the workers in it



- Show a video about food workers – see the suggested list below
- Review some facts about food workers overall and the 5 sectors that we have information for (farmworkers, food processing which includes meatpacking, restaurants, grocery stores, warehouses) – use the **“Human Rights from Field to Fork” handout** and the Food Chain Workers Alliance’s **“Who’s Behind Your Food?” info card** as materials.

### 3) FAITH (20-25 minutes)

**Goals: a) Participants understand the interconnections of how food impacts the individual, the environment, the community, and the workers**

**b) Participants agree that their faith requires them to take action to support food workers**



#### a. Medicine Wheel Exercise

##### **Context:**

The medicine wheel is a traditional indigenous spiritual and cosmic concept that connects all living creatures to our environment. It contains 4 parts and is usually represented by a circle with four equal quarters.

##### **Materials:**

In this exercise the facilitator has 4 pieces of paper that put together make a whole circle. Ideally each piece would be a different color (yellow, red, white and black – but that is not necessary), and each piece has a different word: **individual**,

**environment**, **community** and **workers** on it. On the back of each there should be 4 other phrases. On individual it should say “**healthy organic food**”; on the back of environment it should say “**local, sustainably grown food**”; on the back of community it should say “**affordable and accessible healthy food**”; and on the back of workers it should say “**living wages, good working conditions**”.

##### **Action:**

People will be seated in a circle. The facilitator will ask for 4 volunteers to come up to the center. Each volunteer will get a piece of the wheel. The facilitator will then explain the concept of the medicine wheel in indigenous culture and how this concept relates to the food system. Something along the lines of: “We are all interconnected in our small, fragile planet, and what affects the environment will obviously affect the individual and vice-versa.”

The facilitator will then ask each of the 4 volunteers to lift up their piece of the wheel and read out loud the word written on it. After everyone reads their words, the facilitator should ask the rest of the participants to answer “**how does food affects \_\_\_\_\_?** (individual, community, environment and workers – LEAVE WORKERS AT THE END)”.

- With “**individual**” the facilitator should prompt the participants to talk about nutrition, local-sourcing, organics and other effects that food has on the body.
- On “**community**” the facilitator should prompt the participants to talk about access to good food in communities of color, food deserts and the proliferation of fast-food restaurants and liquor stores in low-income communities of color.
- On “**environment**” the facilitator should prompt the participants to talk about genetically engineered foods, pesticides, fossil fuels needed to transport conventional food products and industrial farming methods that are environmentally destructive.
- Finally, on “**workers**” the facilitator should prompt the audience to talk about the reality that workers are involved in every level and at every step in the production and consumption of food, yet they are the ones least visible, often even in the progressive “food justice” movement.

At the end of the exercise, the facilitator should ask the audience what the solution is to these issues of sustainability and justice in each one of these areas of the food system and have the 4 volunteers flip the papers over. Then discuss each of the 4 pieces and wrap up with a clear message about how the 4 solutions are interconnected and thus the solutions are really the creation of a new, just food system by focusing on the power workers can build to do that.

#### b. Discuss: What do the seven UU principles tell us about how workers should be treated?

The seven UU principles include:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.



#### 4) TAKE ACTION (10 minutes)

**Goal: participants decide on an action to take individually and/or as a group**

- Hand out and review the "Take Action" sheet
- Ask the group: what can we do to support food workers during this Thanksgiving/holiday time?



#### 5) CLOSE (10 minutes)

- Ask participants to quickly evaluate the session
- Ask participants what more would they like to learn about food workers

Please email the responses to both of these closing questions to [info@foodchainworkers.org](mailto:info@foodchainworkers.org) and help us improve our materials and this workshop outline! Thank you.

#### SUGGESTED VIDEOS LIST



- The **Farmworker Support Committee - CATA** and the **Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)**, both members of the **Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA)**, are featured in this short video series "**Fair Food: Field to Table**," a multimedia presentation promoting a more socially just food system in the U.S. The videos are online at [www.fairfoodproject.org](http://www.fairfoodproject.org).

- The Coalition of Immokalee Workers has its own channel on **YouTube: CIWVideo**. The latest one is called "**One Penny More**" in support of CIW's Supermarkets Campaign: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=VURs-rsi\\_KQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VURs-rsi_KQ).

- FCWA member **Center for New Community**

created a short video about its Midwest Immigrant Health Project which is organizing immigrant workers and families to secure better health care. The video also talks about the history of meatpacking and the exploitation of workers in this industry. The video is online at <http://vimeo.com/5326041>.

- The **Student/Farmworker Alliance**, a close ally of the CIW, offers a free Campaign for Fair Food discussion guide based on "**Harvest of Shame**." This historic television documentary, presented by journalist Edward R. Murrow on CBS in 1960, illustrated the terrible conditions faced by American migrant farmworkers. Contact SFA for a free DVD: [organize@sfalliance.org](mailto:organize@sfalliance.org).

#### MATERIALS to HAND OUT

**All materials are available at [www.uusc.org/fieldtofork](http://www.uusc.org/fieldtofork):**

- "Human Rights from Field to Fork" handout
  - the Food Chain Workers Alliance's "**Who's Behind Your Food?**" info card - you can also request hard copies of the info cards by emailing [info@foodchainworkers.org](mailto:info@foodchainworkers.org)
  - "Take Action" sheet
- More information at [www.foodchainworkers.org](http://www.foodchainworkers.org) and [www.uusc.org/economicjustice](http://www.uusc.org/economicjustice)!

