

WORKSHOP: HUMAN RIGHTS FROM FIELD TO FORK



This workshop is ideally for a group no bigger than 20.

Left photo courtesy of UFCW; center photo by EILER; right photo by Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas (CATA)

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 geographically came from. Write up on butcher paper or chalkboard the food items that are stated.

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

Goal: participants understand the multitude of workers in the food system

Divide participants into 3 or 4 small groups.

Option A) Ask groups to go through 3-4 items on the list of breakfast foods and ask participants to discuss and write out all the workers who were involved in the food system to get that food to the participants' dining tables.

Option B) Ask each group to discuss and write out all the workers who were involved in getting a prepared chicken caesar salad with lettuce and tomato to someone's dining table in a restaurant and to a grocery store as a pre-packaged meal. Time permitting, ask each group to go through 2-3 breakfast items.

Then ask each group to report back on one time or if the groups only discussed the chicken caesar salad, ask one group to go first and the other groups can add in any other workers that the first group did not list.

Facilitator's notes:

If the groups need help during the report back, here is a list of food workers involved in the chicken caesar salad:

- * the farmers and farmworkers who grew and harvested the lettuce and tomato
- * the workers who cleaned and packed the lettuce and tomato
- * the workers who drove the trucks to ship the lettuce and tomato from the farm/ packinghouse to a warehouse and then to the grocery store or restaurant
- * the workers in the warehouse
- * the workers who raised the chicken
- * the workers who transported the chicken to a slaughter/poultry processing facility
- * the workers who killed, cleaned, cut, and packed the chicken
- * the workers who transported the chicken to a warehouse and then on to the grocery store or restaurant
- * the grocery store workers, including those who unload the produce and chicken, who stock the shelves, and who clean the store, and the cashiers
- * the restaurant workers, including those who unload the produce and chicken, the prep cook, the waiter/waitress, the busser, the hostess, and the dishwasher

Suggestions for questions to help prompt the groups to think about workers that maybe don't readily come to mind:

- * Who transports the food?
- * In a restaurant and a grocery store, who are all the workers that handle the food or in some contribute to its sale.

3) VALUES and PRINCIPLES (15-20 minutes)

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

b) Participants begin to think of the possibilities of convergence between their own personal or professional work related to food and the struggles of food workers



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**”
- * On the back of **workers** it should say “**living wages, good and equitable 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 the structural racism of the food system, which impacts 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, and the racist structure of the food system keeps people of color and immigrants in most of the lowest-paid, dangerous jobs.

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 which can be achieved by focusing on the power of the 20 million U.S. food workers to dismantle racism and to build this new system.



Photo by Scott Robertson

4) WHO'S BEHIND OUR FOOD? Part II (20-25 minutes)

Goal: participants understand that the food system is unjust for the workers, especially workers of color and immigrants



- Show 1 or more videos about food workers – see the suggested list below
- Ask participants if any of them have worked in the food system and to share their experience
- Review some facts, especially discrimination-related 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.

4) TAKE ACTION (15-20 minutes)

Goal: Participants agree that their personal values and principles require them to take action to support and work in partnership with food workers

- Discuss: **What are issues and values that you think you/ your organization/ your community have in common with food workers?**
- Discuss: **What do your own values and principles tell you about how workers should be treated?** - Ask participants what values and principles do they hold that relate to how people, and food workers specifically, should be treated.
- Discuss: **How can we take action to support and in partnership with food workers?**
 - Ask participants how they think they can take action to support and work in partnership with food workers
 - Prepare beforehand a **“Take Action”** sheet using the template provided by the Food Chain Workers Alliance - fill in actions to support food workers in your community, look at the Alliance’s website for actions, and list food workers’ organizations in your community that you can reach out to talk about mutual support and collaborative work - **hand out the Take Action sheet**
 - Ask the group:** What on this Take Action do we want to do as a group? What can you do individually to support food workers?



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

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 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 section on farmworkers is 5 minutes long and can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIH7-O1jOx0.

- The Coalition of Immokalee Workers has its own channel on **YouTube: CIWVideo**. The latest one, 2 minutes long, is called **"One Penny More"** in support of CIW's Supermarkets Campaign. The CIW is urging major grocery chains to sign a Fair Food Agreement so that tomato farmworkers in Florida can be paid a decent wage, create their own health and safety committees, and participate in monitoring and ensuring good working conditions: 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 5 1/2-minute 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.

- FCWA member **Restaurant Opportunities Centers United** issued a report called "Serving While Sick" about the lack of paid sick days and health insurance for restaurant workers. CBS News' Katie Couric gave a 1-minute commentary about this problem and in support of legislation to provide all workers with paid sick days: www.youtube.com/user/chinoliva357#p/f/0/_e5Jr1ISjgA

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- The **United Food and Commercial Workers** union is assisting **Walmart Workers for Change** to organize across the country to demand a voice in the workplace and improve the dismal wages and working conditions at Wal-Mart. The video Walmart Workers for Change includes information about the anti-worker tactics of the world's largest retailer: <http://www.youtube.com/user/UFCWInternational#p/u/2/vvAZ-f0yt00>.



MATERIALS to HAND OUT

All materials available at www.foodchainworkers.org :

- **"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

- **"Take Action"** sheet template

More information at www.foodchainworkers.org and www.uusc.org/economicjustice!

