Pedagogical Innovations in Sustainable Development:

Fair Trade in the Classroom

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My Fair Trade Journey:
From the Classroom to the Community
What is Fair Trade?

- Fair trade is an **organized social movement** and **market-based approach** to empowering developing country producers and promoting sustainability.

- Fair Trade products originate from producers and workers committed to Fair Trade principles.

- Certifying bodies include FLO (fair trade certification mark), inspects producers and certifies product.
Challenges Facing Small-Scale Producers

- Small producers have no direct access to importers and markets
- Middle people/brokers take too much profit
- Difficult to obtain reasonable credit: producers in chronic debt
- Volatile market: prices often too low to support a family
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<th>Fair Trade Principles:</th>
<th>What Fair Trade Means:</th>
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<td>• Pay a guaranteed minimum price with a social premium (a separate additional payment to producer groups for investment in social and economic development).</td>
<td>• Cooperatives can improve community infrastructure using fair trade social premiums (health clinics, processing plants, warehouses, offices, schools); Children can attend school</td>
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<td>• Work only with democratically-run farmer cooperatives</td>
<td>• Producers get financing, access to markets, membership in cooperatives</td>
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<td>• Develop long-term, direct buying relationships</td>
<td>• Creates stability for producers; generates trust between buyers and producers</td>
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<td>• Encourage ecologically sustainable farming practices</td>
<td>• Protects wildlife, water supplies</td>
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<td>• Prevents family and worker exposure to dangerous chemicals</td>
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Cooperativa Ixoq aj Kemool “The Women Who Weave”

• Cooperative founded in 1991, managed through general assembly (one member = one vote)
• 30 members, ages 17-60
• Women weave an average of 6 hours a day in their homes on a traditional backstrap loom
• Cooperative connects weavers with consumers, eliminating a market “middleman” who would not adequately pay the weavers.
• Income from weaving provides for food, children’s school supplies, and other expenses.
• Cooperative sells textiles in gift and “boutique” shops in larger cities; expanding markets a major concern
Equal Exchange

- First US food or beverage company to adopt the international Fair Trade standards (1991)
- Works with 39 small farmer coffee, tea, and cacao cooperatives in 19 countries
- Worker-owned cooperative: owned and democratically controlled by its employees
- Committed to building a food system that empowers farmers and consumers, supports small farmers, and uses sustainable farming methods.
KSU Nonviolence Studies

- Activities:
  - Season for Nonviolence
  - Movies on the Grass
  - Noontime yoga and evening meditation

- Works with:
  - the Women’s Center
  - campus feminist group
  - Wildcats against Rape
  - SafeZone (Students, Administrators and Faculty for Equality)

- Nonviolence Studies Undergraduate Certificate Program
Fair Trade in Action

- Nicaragua Delegation to visit coffee farmers
- KSU Fair Trade Week 2006 & 2007
- Fair Trade Advocates Hunger Banquet
- Fair Trade Designs in the Classroom
Sustainable Feminism:
Redefining Sustainable Development in a Global Context
Women’s Studies: Promotes Sustainable Development

Women’s Studies is an academic, practice-informed discipline that examines:

- how and why in global society, there has been the ongoing social creation of interconnected inequalities: gender inequality and other inequalities (based on dominant social interpretations of sexuality, age, ableness, “race”/ethnicity and ethno-national/linguistic and religious cultures, class, global location—global South-North and (neo)colonial/imperialist divisions—AND

- how and why social change theories and practices can promote long-term transformations, which includes inclusive, democratic, egalitarian, ecological, and peaceful development that nurtures human beings and other biological life on Earth.
Promoting means implementing the basic premises of feminism, and placing these in a holistic framework. The basic premises of feminisms include core commitments to:

- value the equal worth of women and men, girls and boys;
- address male privilege;
- end all inequalities and break up intersecting hierarchies;
- promote social change through movements, collective activities, and the remaking of social and personal relationships and national/global institutions (for a summary, see Estelle Freedman, No Turning Back 2002: 7-8)
• Sustainable development requires the establishment of new social and ecological relationships that are fully inclusive and egalitarian, democratic, nonviolent, and in tune with long-term, cross-generational harmony between the world’s people and Earth.

• Women’s studies is about the process of participating together in the personal/collective process of transformations, and changing the ways that global society and future societies are structured so that together, as interdependent Earth dwellers, we will do our best to regenerate all life on our planet and in space around it.

• I ask my students to think about social change as educational processes that involve the joining together of thinking and action in cyclical and ongoing stages of knowledge development and applications.
Feminist Thought & Practice: Action Processes for Groups

- **First process:** talking as a group, assessing and defining women’s and other groups’ needs, family and community needs, and sometimes global concerns. Democratic and egalitarian participation are central to the process of making inclusive change.

  **Continuation of the first process:** Examine society’s adverse impact on the group and begin the ongoing process of evaluating the extent of progress that the group is making. Pay special attention to who is being left out and change group processes to be fully inclusive. Value women’s invisible work, identify how it is changing, and recognize women’s initiatives and skills as a resource.

- **Second process:** Defining the group’s priorities, exploring various approaches for bringing about change, and deciding on an approach or “program” for meeting the group’s needs. Make an effort to address more than one priority through selected action. Try to extend women’s power in at least two spheres (e.g., home, paid work, and support networks).

- **Third process:** implementing group plans and carrying out social action or group project.

- **Fourth process:** Evaluating the impact and inclusiveness of the project at all stages, especially following the implementation of the social action plan. Using this knowledge to challenge sexism and other intersecting hierarchies as the group considers new social action steps. Linking North/South actions through related projects, &/or doing inclusive, regional projects that help end interlocking hierarchies. Developing feminist/holistic women-valuing movements that work for: reproductive control & bodily integrity, the end of compulsory heterosexuality; the end of male/state/corporate violence against women, the full valuing of women’s paid/unpaid work, the end of social dependency on heterosexist-gender & racism, new forms of reciprocity/redistribution & cooperation, the ecological reclamation of the commons/civil society, & the rise of peaceful, egalitarian, ecological, democratic, work relations/cultures.
To learn about ways to promote sustainable development, my students work on fair trade activities. As students participate in fair trade work on campus, they acquire knowledge about ways to reorganize work, consumption, decision-making, and the redistribution of wealth and power from the global North to the South.
Fair trade promotes an effective, cooperative model of ecological, women inclusive development based on restoring the civil commons and interconnected eco-systems (a model that relates directly to restoring the endangered eco-system and the economy on the prairies of the Great Plains).

- Students have organized and held a fair trade fashion show, which included promoting recycled clothing.
- Students have organized and carried out KSU’s Fair Trade Marketplace, which has been held for the last three years. These events have led to the equivalent of about $2 million dollars of support being sent back to producers and their cooperatives in countries of the global South.
- To do research and educate others about fair trade, graduate and undergraduate students have worked with me on writing and editing Democracy Works: Joining Theory and Action to Foster Global Change (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2008).
Conceptual Designs for a Fair Trade Cooperative near Matagalpa, Nicaragua
College of Architecture, Planning and Design’s
Green Building Committee
“All studio…designs must engage the environment in a way that dramatically reduces or eliminates the need for fossil fuel.”
The Fair Trade Design Exercise
near Matagalpa, Nicaragua
Student Learning Outcome:

- To better understand the impact of fair trade
Fair Trade Impact
Fair Trade Impact
Student Learning Outcome:

- To introduce and further increase knowledge of applicable strategies of sustainable principles of design
Student Learning Outcome:

- To better understand the principles of fair trade versus free trade, coffee production and ecotourism, and Nicaraguan culture (including social, ecologic, and economic issues)
10 STEPS TO COFFEE

1. PLANTING

2. HARVESTING THE CHERRIES
   Stripped picked
   Selectively picked

3. PROCESSING THE CHERRIES
   The dry method

4. DRYING THE BEANS

5. MILLING THE BEANS
   Hulling
   Polishing
   Grading and Sorting

6. EXPORTING THE BEANS

7. TASTING THE COFFEE

8. ROASTING THE COFFEE

9. GRINDING COFFEE

10. BREWING COFFEE
Student Learning Outcome:

- To define the parameters for the designers (i.e. the required needs within the program, functions, spaces for residential units, landscape, organic garden design, and site design)
Readings & DVDs


• “Is Fair Trade Becoming ‘Fair Trade Lite’?” from Business Week

• *Black Gold* Movie

• Morgan Spurlock’s *30 Days: Season 1*, Episode “Off the Grid”
Student Learning Outcome:

- To be actively involved in on- and off-campus activities directly related to the exercise's principles
Conclusion

Questions & Comments
Credits

• Logos: Equal Exchange, Transfair USA, & KSU Campaign for Nonviolence
• Photographs taken by Katrina Lewis, Torry Dickinson, & Summer Lewis
• KSU Fair Trade Marketplace
• First-Year Women’s Studies Seminar (WOMST 105), Fall 2008
• Second-Year Student Work Examples from IAPD Design Studio I (IAPD 307) for Exercise 4: Fair Trade Housing, Fall 2007 & 2008