



GENDER EQUITY IN THE BANANA INDUSTRY;
A GLOBAL WOMEN'S STRATEGY MEETING

Outcome of the first Global Women ´s meeting in Hannover June 2000



What is BanaFair doing?



- Fair Trade with small-scale producers to support sustainable production and ethical consumption
- Awareness raising and campaigning on the conditions of fruit production and trade
- Financial support for projects in producing countries to strengthen human and workers rights and ecological production



"Smile of Nature?" - Women in the banana industry



- International Conference organised by BanaFair
- At the world exhibition EXPO 2000 in Hannover
- 5 years after the World Women´s Conference
- First international exchange on gender specific problems in the banana production
- In search of strategies for sustainable solutions in the banana production

Southern partners



- GAWU (Ghana)
- COLSIBA (Latinamerica)
- BUSTAMANTE Industrial trade union (Jamaica)
- UROCAL (Ecuador)
- ALTERTRADE (Philippines)
- FORO EMAUS (Costa Rica)
- WINFA (the Caribbean)

Objectives



- Bringing international attention to issues and concerns of women in banana production
- Initiating and intensifying the international co-operation (South-South, North-South) on the topic
- Strengthening the solidarity between producers and consumers in the long-term
- Developing strategies to improve the situation of women in the banana industry



I. Social and working conditions

Principal common problems

- Long working hours
- Lack of/inadequate housing/transport
- Triple working days (productive and reproductive work)
- Sexual abuse and domestic violence
- Lack of social security/job security
- Low wages/income
- Decrease in female employment in the large Latin American plantations because of technological changes and natural disasters.
- Lack of data to womens contribution in this sector

Proposed solutions (1)



- Agreements between women workers, companies and governments to stable employment without discriminations
- Agrarian reform agreements which allow the legal title to land ownership for small producers
- To struggle for the right to a fair income which cover individual and family needs
- To set up child care and training facilities (nearby the farms/plantations) in a safe and healthy environment

Proposed solutions (2)



- To implement effective measures to eradicate sexual abuse in the workplace and to eliminate domestic violence
- To ensure that up to date female labour statistics are available in order to distinguish the impact of socio-economic changes on the lives of both women and men.
- To promote within our own organisations more education
- To seek support for international co-operation projects which aim to improve the quality of life
- To give women access to farm technology and other agricultural skills

II. Agrochemicals and health



Common problems identified

- Insufficient knowledge of the problems caused by agrochemicals. The products come with different labels and often the instructions are not in the local language.
- Chemicals affect the health of women: skin lesions, fungal diseases on hands and feet, miscarriages, children born with deformities.
- The lack of national policies or laws relating to the reduction and control of pesticides.
- Women banana workers experienced difficulties in getting access to specialised medical care.



Proposed solutions

- Effective control by producer country governments of import, use and abuse of agrochemicals.
- Systematic and participatory education and awareness raising on the risks involved in banana production and how to avoid them.
- To facilitate more dialogue on health and safety issues amongst farmers, workers and consumers
- Aim of changing the concept into healthy bananas for all
- To initiate studies and research on the effect of agrochemicals and to create a database of measures for preventative control.
- Governments should extend the coverage of social security to include women farmers

III. Women ´s organisation



Common problems identified

- Insufficient female leadership in the existing organisations
- Need for greater awareness and systemization of gender issues
- Need to improve and promote the organisation of women through committees both amongst small farmers and workers unions
- Lack of self-esteem and empowerment of women result in their inabilities to defend their rights
- Lack of support from governments, private sector and other institutions to assist women in organizing.

Proposed solutions



- Strengthen and broaden the networks through the creation of more women committees and secretariats on all levels
- Initiate (educational) programmes for leadership training, technical training, that will improve value of women ´s work and how to increase their income.
- Make formal financing women-friendly to secure loans.
- Raise men's awareness of the problems facing women
- Governments and institutions to support women organizing and representation on decision-making bodies

IV. Fair Trade



Common problems identified

- Excessive liberalisation of markets as a result of economic globalization has provoked the existing of alternative markets (Fair Trade) which remains small.
- Lack of any regulations of current banana overproduction
- Continuing dominating of conventional banana production with all its negative impact.
- Negative impact of the international banana market on the health and livelihood of women farmers/ workers and their families

Proposed solutions



broaden and strengthen the networks between producers and consumers; establish marketing networks between producers
pressure governments to facilitate and support equal access to resources

establish more fluid communications between Fair Trade organisations and the existing producers organisations

promote training and technical support (production and marketing) by governments and fraternal organisations

enact policies and laws to regulate banana overproduction especially in



¡Muchas Gracias!