

united students against sweatshops

During the last seven years United Students Against Sweatshops has partnered with the Student Labor Action Project to organize over 1000 actions and events during the National Student Labor Week of Action.



United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS) is a grassroots network of high school, college, and university students from across the U.S. and Canada organizing around issues of worker justice and youth empowerment. USAS' organizing model is one of solidarity. We follow the lead of workers organizing for their rights, and use our unique leverage as students to help them achieve the goals for which they are fighting.

SWEAT FREE CAMPUS CAMPAIGN

The Sweat-Free Campus Campaign is a multi-faceted, extremely successful program in which students organize anti-sweatshop campaigns on their campuses, mandating that the clothes bearing their collegiate logos be manufactured under fair and ethical conditions. Through our work first on collegiate codes of conduct and obtaining factory disclosure information, to our ongoing work to affiliate schools with the Worker Rights Consortium (an independent monitoring agency charged with investigating factory conditions in collegiate apparel producing facilities), we are able to exert continuous pressure on administrations and corporations, resulting in significant and concrete victories supporting the mainly young women of color who are fighting for fair working conditions around the world. The Sweat-Free Campus Campaign has recently taken on a new challenge, mandating that collegiate apparel producers manufacture a significant portion of their collegiate apparel in factories where workers have democratic representation and are paid a living wage. This new campaign requires that apparel brands pay more per good in order to ensure that workers can successfully negotiate that living wage.

ETHICAL CONTRACTING CAMPAIGN/CAMPAIGN TO STOP KILLER COKE

USAS' Ethical Contracting Campaign seeks to expand the leverage that students have obtained over licensing to other areas in which educational institutions do business, such as purchasing, contracting, and investing. Our current focus in this regard is the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke. We are targeting Coca-Cola for worker and human rights violations in Colombia, India, Turkey, Guatemala, and Indonesia. Eight Colombian union leaders from Coca-Cola plants have been murdered by paramilitary forces since 1989. There is substantial evidence that managers of several bottling plants have ordered assaults to occur and made regular payments to leaders of the paramilitary groups carrying out the attacks. The Colombian workers' union, SINALTRAINAL, has appealed for solidarity and allies in the U.S. labor and social justice movements have answered their call. USAS chapters across the U.S. and Canada are working to get Coke kicked off of their campuses until the company cleans up its act and adopts and enforces a human rights policy that includes the rights of bottlers, distributors, and suppliers.



NATIONAL CAMPUS LIVING WAGE CAMPAIGN

Through the National Campus Living Wage Campaign, students stand in solidarity with workers as they struggle for better workplaces on college and university campuses. Campus service workers are a frequently exploited workforce. Primarily female and often majority people of color and immigrants, these workers support families while sometimes averaging 90-hours a week, receiving poverty wages, and lacking proper healthcare. In

many areas, colleges and universities are the leading employers, and their working conditions depress service sector wages for the region, making it nearly impossible for women with children to move out of poverty wage jobs. USAS' National Campus Living Wage Campaign includes union organizing drives, contract negotiation campaigns, living wage campaigns, code of conduct campaigns, and all other campaigns that seek to improve the wages and working conditions of campus workers. Additionally, in the fall of 2006, we will be launching a new campaign around the right to organize – demanding that our universities commit to remaining neutral in the event of union organizing, and do not put university resources into union busting.

WHAT YOU CAN DO DURING THE NATIONAL STUDENT LABOR WEEK OF ACTION

There are many ways to get involved during the week of action! Here are a few suggestions:

- Hold a teach-in about one of these campaigns or bring a speaker to campus
- Hold a worker appreciation breakfast/dinner
- Hold a rally
- Collect petition signatures or hand out flyers
- Hold a mock sweatshop, anti-sweatshop fashion show, soda taste-test, or other street theater activity

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Thinking about doing an action or launching a campaign? Call United Students Against Sweatshops at 202-NOSWEAT (667-9328) or e-mail us at organize@usasnet.org. You can also find us on the web at www.studentsagainstssweatshops.org.