

UNIT
4

Make a Difference

FOCUS

Students work in small groups to choose one way they would like to make a difference in the world. They pick a problem they care about, spend time understanding the problem, brainstorm strategies to address it, choose a strategy, and implement it. Then they look back to see how effective their strategy was in addressing the original problem.

SUMMARY OF CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

This unit gives students a sense of how to make a difference in the world using a time-tested model for solving a problem. Once they've used it, they can use the tool whenever they come up against something that needs to change.

Handout #1: What Do You Care About?

Students brainstorm a list of things they care about and decide together as a group which topic to pick for their project.

Handout #2: Understand the Problem

Students gather information about the topic they have selected and frame their focus statement in five different ways in order to identify the best way for them to approach their topic.

Handout #3: Brainstorm Solutions

Students brainstorm possible ways to solve the problem they have identified.

Handout #4: Make a Plan

Students make a plan to solve their problem.

Handout #5: Make a Difference

Students implement their plan, making changes as required.

Handout #6: Look Back

Students look back to see how effective they were in addressing the topic they selected.

CLASSROOM NARRATIVE

ASSIGNMENT: In this unit you're going to get a chance to solve a problem you care about. Get together in groups of 3-4 students. Over the next month, you'll have time every day to brainstorm possible problems you'd like to solve. You'll then choose a problem together, research information about it, brainstorm ways to solve the problem, make a plan to solve it, implement your plan, and then review how well you did. In a month, each group will give a presentation to the class, our principal, and any parents who would like to join us. The presentation will describe the problem you worked on and what you were able to accomplish. The important thing is: be sure to choose a problem you all care about, something you'd like to see change. Think back on all you've learned in this work we've done on Fair Trade and Cooperative Economics and see if there is something you can do to make a difference in the world. Maybe you'll find Fair Trade or Cooperative Economics will be a solution to a problem you care about.

Be sure to come and get my initials each time you complete a handout or if you need help at any point.



Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial 3.0 License 2004 Lynn Benander. Lynn Benander hereby grants the holder of this work the right to copy, distribute, transmit, alter, transform, or build upon this work, the curriculum materials in Unit Four, provided the holder attributes authorship to Lynn Benander and does not use this work for commercial purposes. Lynn Benander reserves all rights other than those expressly granted herein.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

What Do You Care About?

Change can happen in many ways.

There are many causes people are working on to improve our world and build a happier, healthier planet. These are a few issues people are dedicated to:

- Fair Trade
- Organic food
- Environmental protection
- Cooperatives
- Safe food sources
- Sustainable farming
- Economic equality
- Gender and racial equality

With your group, brainstorm a list of 15 problems you care about—things you wish were different in your own life, at home, at school, in your town, in your state, in the U.S., or in the world.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 8. _____ | |

Now put a star next to the problems that are important to every member of your group and that are something your group can do something about. Choose the starred item that you all want to work on most and write it here:

Our Project Topic: _____

Have your teacher initial your work when you're done: _____

NAME:

DATE:

Understand the Problem

Make a list of all the information you have about the problem you picked.

Collect some new information that might help you solve your problem.

Now rephrase your problem in five different ways by filling in these blanks:

- 1) How can we _____
so that _____.
- 2) How can we _____
so that _____.
- 3) How can we _____
so that _____.
- 4) How can we _____
so that _____.
- 5) How can we _____
so that _____.

Put a star next to the statement that best describes your problem.

Design a table, graph, diagram, or model to represent the problem.

Have your teacher initial your work when you're done: _____

NAME:

DATE:

Brainstorm Solutions

Brainstorm at least 15 ways you could solve your problem. Think as creatively as you can.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

Put a star next to the solutions you'd like to try.

Have your teach initial your work when you're done: _____

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Make a Plan

List the steps you're planning to follow to solve your problem.

Who	What	By When

Have your teacher initial your work when you're done: _____

NAME:

DATE:

Make a Difference

Check off each step in your plan when you get it done. Make changes in your plan if you need to. Answer these questions at the end of each week to help you stay on track.

WEEK ONE	DATE
----------	------

What's going well?

What's hard?

Is our strategy working to solve our problem?

Do we need to make any changes in our plan?

Have your teacher initial your work when you're done: _____

WEEK TWO	DATE
----------	------

What's going well?

What's hard?

Is our strategy working to solve our problem?

Do we need to make any changes in our plan?

Have your teacher initial your work when you're done: _____

NAME:

DATE:

Make a Difference

WEEK THREE

DATE

What's going well?

What's hard?

Is our strategy working to solve our problem?

Do we need to make any changes in our plan?

Have your teacher initial your work when you're done: _____

WEEK FOUR

DATE

What's going well?

What's hard?

Is our strategy working to solve our problem?

Do we need to make any changes in our plan?

Have your teacher initial your work when you're done: _____

NAME:

DATE:

Look Back

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS

What did you do?

What did you learn from it?

Were you able to make a difference?

What strategies were most successful in solving your problem?

What went well?

NAME:

DATE:

Look Back

What would you do differently next time?

Prepare a poster that describes what you did and what difference it made. Give a 10-minute group presentation. Every group member needs to have a meaningful part in the presentation. Remember, not all problems can be solved quickly. Your presentation and poster just need to show what you did and why.

You'll be graded using the following point system:

4 POINTS for a presentation that clearly presents the problem you were solving, what you did, and why you did it

3 POINTS for creativity

3 POINTS for an effective group process that values and encourages each person's contribution

TOTAL: 10 POINTS

Have your teacher initial your work when you're done: _____

FOLLOW-UP PROJECTS

Get local produce into your school cafeteria.

Educate kids in your school about how to eat well at lunch time and give awards for the kids who bring the healthiest lunches.

Start a community garden on your school grounds.

Meet with local farmers to see what meat and produce s/he has available, then let the public know.

Sponsor a “local food day” where people agree to eat only foods that have been grown locally.

Sell Fair Trade products for your next fundraiser.

Raise money to help pay for a school, health center, or other community development project that a Fair Trade farmer co-op is working on.

Correspond with a pen pal who is a child from a cocoa farming family. Learn about his or her life. Educate others about what it’s like to farm cocoa and what they can do to support the cocoa farmers who grow the chocolate they enjoy.

Start a food buying group if your town doesn’t have a food co-op.

Educate people about Fair Trade, co-ops, and local economies.

Start a student co-op at your school focusing on a specific issue.

Start a worker-owned cooperative that will give you and your friends a way to work and get paid. Figure out if people will hire you to mow their lawns, do odd jobs, fix their computers, make them websites, or clean their houses.

Run a “Buy Local” campaign for your community. Publish a directory of local businesses.

Develop a local shopping guide for your community.

Sponsor a contest to see who can use less energy, produce less waste, spend less money, or spend the most money locally.

Educate students about local entertainment options. Challenge them to enjoy a week with only local entertainment options.

Do an energy audit for your school and reduce your school’s energy use.

Make your school a zero-waste school by composting all food scraps, recycling your plastics, cardboard, and paper, and by not buying things you can’t compost, recycle, or reuse.

Fair Trade and Cooperative Economics Resource List

AV resources, websites, and print materials for further research

ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Local Harvest: WWW.LOCALHARVEST.ORG

Find farmers' markets, family farms, and other sources of sustainably grown food, such as produce, grass-fed meat, and other goodies.

Oregon Tilth: WWW.TILTH.ORG

Oregon Tilth is a non-profit research and education organization certifying organic farmers, processors, retailers, and handlers throughout Oregon, the U.S., and internationally.

Organic Consumers Association:

WWW.ORGANICCONSUMERS.ORG

The Organic Consumers Association (OCA) promotes food safety, organic farming, and sustainable agriculture practices in the U.S. and internationally. It provides consumers with factual information they can use to make informed food choices.

Organic Trade Association: WWW.OTA.COM

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the membership-based business association for the organic industry in North America. OTA's mission is to encourage global sustainability through promoting and protecting the growth of diverse organic trade.

Sustainable Table: WWW.SUSTAINABLETABLE.ORG

Sustainable Table celebrates the sustainable food movement, educates consumers on food-related issues and works to build community through food.

ON FAIR TRADE

Film: "Black Gold" (on the Ethiopian coffee trade)

Fair Trade Research Group:

WWW.COLOSTATE.EDU/DEPTS/SOCIOLOGY/

FAIRTRADERESEARCGROUP/

The Fair Trade Research Group (FTRG) was established at Colorado State University in 1999 to research:

- What are the real benefits of the Fair Trade movement?
- Can the benefits of Fair Trade be sustained over time?
- Can Fair Trade grow to encompass a greater number of farmers and communities throughout the developing world?
- Can Fair Trade be expanded to encompass not only poor farmers, but other sectors that connect Southern producers and Northern consumers?

Fair Trade Resource Network:

WWW.FAIRTRADERESOURCE.ORG/

The Fair Trade Resource Network raises consumer awareness about how Fair Trade alternatives can improve people's lives.

Fairtrade Labeling Organizations

International (FLO): WWW.FAIRTRADE.NET

FLO is an umbrella organization of Fair Trade labeling initiatives in countries such as Europe, Canada, the United States, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. FLO sets and reviews international Fair Trade standards.

Global Exchange: WWW.GLOBALEXCHANGE.ORG

Global Exchange is an international human rights organization dedicated to promoting environmental, political, and social justice.

Interfaith Fair Trade Initiative: WWW.LWR.ORG/ADVOCACY/TRADEJUSTICE/IFTI/INDEX.ASP

WWW.LWR.ORG/ADVOCACY/TRADEJUSTICE/IFTI/INDEX.ASP

IFTI works with Fair Trade coffee companies and a coalition of faith-based international organizations and religious denominations to significantly expand the purchase of Fair Trade coffee in the U.S., increase advocacy on behalf of Fair Trade, and improve the lives of small coffee farmers.

International Fair Trade Association (IFAT): WWW.IFAT.ORG

IFAT is the global network of Fair Trade organizations.

La Siembra:

WWW.COCOACAMINO.COM/EN/TOOLKIT.PHP

La Siembra, a Canadian Fair Trade company, created an easy-to-use Fair Trade educational toolkit for grades 1 – 12.

Oxfam America: WWW.OXFAMAMERICA.ORG

Oxfam America is a Boston-based international development and relief agency and an affiliate of Oxfam International. Working with local partners overseas and domestically, Oxfam delivers development programs and emergency relief services, and engages in campaigns to change global practices and policies that keep people in poverty. Oxfam’s “Make Trade Fair” campaign calls on decision makers to make trade part of the solution to poverty.

TransFair USA: WWW.TRANSFAIRUSA.ORG

TransFair USA, a non-profit organization, is the only independent, third-party certifier of Fair Trade products in the United States. Through regular visits to Fair Trade farmer cooperatives conducted by Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International (FLO) and partnerships with U.S. companies, TransFair verifies that the farmers who produce Fair Trade Certified products are paid a fair price. TransFair does not, however, make any claims about the companies or organizations selling a Fair Trade certified product.

United Students for Fair Trade:

WWW.USFT.ORG

USFT is a national network of student organizations advocating around Fair Trade products, policies, and principles. The core objective of USFT is to raise the awareness of, and expand the demand for, Fair Trade alternatives, both on campuses and in communities.

ON COOPERATIVES

Cabot Creamery:

WWW.CABOTCHEESE.COM/F1.PHP?LEFT=MENU-EDUCATION.HTML&RIGHT=COLOR-GAMES.HTML

The National Cooperative Business Association and Cabot Creamery sponsored a Girl Scouts Co-ops for Community patch with resources and activities to teach about cooperatives.

Co-op America: WWW.COOPAMERICA.ORG

Co-op America’s mission is to harness economic power – the strength of consumers, investors, businesses, and the marketplace – to create a socially just and environmentally sustainable society.

Cooperative Development Institute:

WWW.CDI.COOP

The CDI is the northeast’s center for cooperative business training, education, and technical assistance.

International Co-operative Alliance:

WWW.ICA.COOP

The International Co-operative Alliance is an independent, non-governmental association which unites, represents, and serves co-operatives worldwide.

Mondragón Corporación Cooperativa:

HTTP://WWW.MONDRAGON.MCC.ES/ING/INDEX.ASP

Mondragón Corporación Cooperativa, MCC, is a business group made of 218 cooperatively organized companies and entities in the Basque region of Spain.

National Cooperative Business Association:

WWW.NCBA.COOP

NCBA is the leading national membership association representing cooperatives of all types and in all industries.

ON KIDS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Center for a New American Dream and World Wildlife Fund teamed up to reach youth with a “Be Different, Live Different, Buy Different—Make a Difference” campaign:

WWW.NEWDREAM.ORG/BUY/BUYDIFFERENT.PHP

This campaign engages youth in consumer actions such as choosing environmentally friendly products and advocating for more options. Along with lots of consumer information, the site features an online resource conservation calculator, shopping tips, and a free, downloadable Community Action Guide with 30 activity ideas and some step-by-step advice on how to organize community projects.

Kids Can Make a Difference:

WWW.KIDSCANMAKEADIFFERENCE.ORG/TEAC.HTM

[Finding Solutions To Hunger: Kids Can Make A Difference](#) is a teacher guide that contains 25 lessons that provide valuable background and creative suggestions to help students answer the difficult questions dealing with hunger and poverty.

[Where Food Comes From: The FEED Program at Edmunds Elementary School](#) is an online account of a kindergarten teacher in Vermont who helps her students understand where their food comes from: [HTTP://WWW.VERMONTCOMMUNITYWORKS.ORG/EXEMPLARS/REFLRETREAT04/FEED-EDMND/FEED-EDMND.HTML](http://WWW.VERMONTCOMMUNITYWORKS.ORG/EXEMPLARS/REFLRETREAT04/FEED-EDMND/FEED-EDMND.HTML)

Peace Corps Teens:

WWW.PEACECORPS.GOV/TEENS/

Teens are making a difference supporting schools where volunteers work and live around the globe.

Glossary of Terms

ALTERNATIVE TRADE ORGANIZATIONS (ATO): non-governmental organizations committed to the Fair Trade movement. They seek to address structural inequities in the global economy through direct, equitable trade.

COMMODITY: unprocessed or partially processed goods, such as coffee, cocoa, vegetables, or precious metals, that are traded on the global market. Commodity prices determined on the New York Stock Exchange fluctuate with market demands, and do not account for the costs to producers of those products.

COOPERATIVE: Cooperatives are enterprises owned and democratically controlled by the people who use them. There are consumer-owned cooperatives, producer-owned cooperatives, worker-owned cooperatives and business purchasing cooperatives.

FAIR TRADE: an alternative approach to trade. Fair Trade partnerships are long-term, mutually-beneficial relationships based on trust and transparency and seek to establish greater equity in international trade.

FERMENTATION (OF COCOA BEANS): the biochemical changes cocoa beans undergo after harvesting and before drying. During the fermentation process, the pulp surrounding the beans is removed, the beans stop germinating, and flavor development begins.

MIDDLEMEN (or “coyotes” as they are called in some areas of Latin America): the intermediaries to which farmers are often forced to sell their crops. Small farmers are especially vulnerable to exploitative middlemen because they may live in remote locations with little access to information about market prices and may lack the power to demand a fair price. Bypassing middlemen, Fair Trade buyers are able to trade directly with farmers, offering them a higher, consistent price, and providing farmers with decision-making power.

ORGANIC: refers both to food and the process of food production. Organic foods are produced without chemicals, pesticides, artificial fertilizers, or irradiation, and they are not genetically modified. While Fair Trade certification does not also certify a product as organic, many Fair Trade foods are organic, since Fair Trade encourages environmentally-sound farming practices.

PRE-HARVEST CREDIT: credit made available from Fair Trade buyers to farmer partners at lower rates, providing a source of income between harvests and allowing farmers to remain out of debt. It is also referred to as “advanced credit.” Outside of the Fair Trade system, this credit is usually unavailable or offered at prohibitive interest rates.