



## CASE STUDY: Wendy's Shareholder Engagement

Shareholders can work together with communities that are affected by a company's social, environmental, and good governance practices. Rather than simply responding to resolutions filed by fellow shareholders, colleges and universities can join the causes raised by **other stakeholders, such as employees and directly-impacted communities.**

Shareholders have acted as **allies** in the nation-wide movement for food justice. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), an organization made up of low-wage farmworkers in southwestern Florida, has campaigned and organized rallies to demand Wendy's participation in the Fair Food Program. Unlike its competitors in the fast-food industry, Wendy's still refuses to participate in the Fair Food Program, a certification that holds tomato producers and suppliers accountable for fair working standards. The Fair Food Program was created and continues to be enforced by farmworkers themselves. McDonalds, Burger King, Taco Bell, and Subway all have agreed to participate in the Fair Food Program.

The Responsible Endowments Coalition (REC) coordinated with shareholders to provide proxies ("tickets") for CIW representatives to attend Wendy's shareholder meeting on May 23, 2013. In front of other shareholders, CIW member Gerardo Reyes Chavez spoke to CEO Emil Brolick and criticized the company's refusal to participate in the Fair Food Program as an agreement to the exploitative, slavery-like conditions that Florida farm-workers are exposed to on a daily basis. Outside the meeting, over 300 workers, students, and faith-allies rallied on the streets of New York City to protest Wendy's insistence on lagging behind industry standards.

CIW is made up of mainly Latino, Haitian, and indigenous Mayan immigrant workers in Immokalee, southwestern Florida, who are primarily employed in low-wage agricultural jobs with no union representation. The coalition has campaigned for the Fair Food Program, an environmental and social responsibility program for producers that would ensure, among others, an extra penny for each pound that a tomato picker harvests. Currently, tomato pickers are paid 50 cents for every 32-pound bucket of tomatoes, a rate that had previously stagnated for over thirty years. Monitored by the Fair Food Standards Council (FFSC), the Fair Food Program also ensures that farmworkers have access to a complaint resolution system, a participatory health and safety program, and a worker-to-worker educational program.

As of early July 2013, the Wendy's has yet to sign an agreement, with 150 Quaker youth marching in Greeley, Colorado as the latest rally against Wendy's lack of action towards food justice issues. Wendy's CEO, who stated that the company simply "expects its tomato suppliers to take care of their employees," will still hear a lot more from shareholders, farmworkers, and their allies.