



Faith Groups and Fair Trade

The history of Fair Trade really started with faith groups. Through relationships established by Christian mission groups working in Latin America and Africa, fair trade emerged as a way to connect marginalized farmers and artisans with communities in North America and Europe who wanted to make a difference.

These farmers and artisans are vulnerable to exploitation by large companies, have little infrastructure, and lack connections to world markets. These are among the more than 2 billion people living below the international poverty line of less than \$1.25 / day. Fair Trade today encompasses millions of producers and artisans, dozens of products, and has emerged as a successful economic alternative that supports equity and global justice.

Learning more about Fair Trade

Around the world, many poor farmers and producers struggle under unfair trading conditions and practices. Fair trade is a response to low and fluctuating world market prices, unfair international trade rules, and lack of access to markets, credit and technology, as well as poor working conditions and environmental concerns. The principles of fair trade work to empower producers to create a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency, and respect that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the South.

It's about creating a closer connection between producers and consumers, so that we know how and under what conditions our products are created. For consumers, this means real choices and the opportunity to be responsible consumers. It also means high quality products crafted with care.

The concept of Fair Trade is simple, but if you are looking for more information on Fair Trade, please check out some of the following websites.

- Fairtrade Labelling Organization: http://www.fairtrade.net/history_of_fairtrade.html
- TransFair Canada: <http://transfair.ca/> (TransFair will also send you promotional items, such as buttons and stickers for free) - <http://transfair.ca/en/get-involved/promotional-materials>
- WFTO: http://www.wfto.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=17
- Fair Trade Federation: <http://www.fairtradefederation.org/ht/d/sp/i/2733/pid/2733>
- Fair Trade Resource Network: <http://www.fairtraderesource.org>

Learn more about the direct benefits to producers:

- Fairtrade Foundation (UK) - <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/producers/default.aspx>
- Fairtrade Labelling Organization - <http://www.fairtrade.net>
- TransFair USA's profiles - <http://www.transfairusa.org/content/certification/profiles.php>
- Just Us! Coffee Roasters' – producer partners - <http://www.justuscoffee.com/Producers.aspx>

Faith and Fair Trade Resources

Faith communities are part of the history and future of Fair Trade. Many fair trade initiatives started through the dedication and support of faith groups around the world.

Other useful links include:

- a. Traidcraft Resources (UK)
(http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/get_involved/churches/church_resources.htm)
Material from the Anglican Church in the UK, including blessings and worship material, Covenant Services, Lent & Easter resources, etc.
- b. Fair Trade Church Campaign (UK)
(http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get_involved/campaigns/fairtrade_places_of_worship/fairtrade_churches/default.aspx)
Fair Trade Faiths online discussions, e-newsletter, ideas for activities, resources for more information, and connections to other churches around the world who all care
- c. Catholic Relief Services (USA) (<http://www.crsfairtrade.org/>) – Information on International Development, the role of Fair Trade, and Fair Trade resources for religious communities.
- d. Fair Trade Resource Network (<http://www.fairtraderesource.org/category/spirituality-and-ft-blog/>) – new resource for spiritual groups.
- e. Equal Exchange (US Fair Trade co-op) Interfaith Program:
<http://www.equalexchange.coop/interfaith-program> has a variety of farmer stories, news information for inserting into church bulletins, etc.
- f. “Balancing the Scales: A liturgy for justice in the global marketplace” by Helen Boothroyd in *Holy Ground. Liturgies and workshop resources for an engaged spirituality*, written by Neil Paynter and Helen Boothroyd (2005).

Getting Involved & Other Organizations

It's simple to get involved – here are some ideas:

1. Spread the word – talk to others about Fair Trade
2. Visit our museum in Grand Pré, Nova Scotia
3. Watch some movies about Fair Trade (<http://www.fairtraderesource.org/learn-up/fair-trade-films/>), including our movie – *Coffee Comes Alive* (available from Just Us! www.justuscoffee.com) or *Looking for Justice* (the story of the CCDA and Breaking the Silence, available from the Tatamagouche Centre).
4. Look and ask for Fair Trade certified products
5. Start a Fair Trade buying club
6. Get involved in some of the national and international campaigns with Fair Trade:
 - Make Trade Fair: www.maketradefair.com
 - Make Poverty History: www.makepovertyhistory.ca
 - Reverse Trick or Treat: www.reversetrickortreat.ca
 - World Fair Trade Day: www.fairtraderesource.org/wftd/wftd-09/ & www.wftday.org/

Other churches in the Maritimes are doing:

1. Hosting Fair Trade discussion groups by reading the *No Nonsense Guide to Fair Trade* together
2. Hosting Fair Trade coffee breaks
3. Participating in buying clubs
4. Engaging their youth in Fair Trade
5. Participating in collective actions (e.g. Reverse Trick or Treating)
6. Having guest speakers
7. Partnering to raise funds to support community initiatives in Fair Trade producer communities

Getting in touch with JUDES: info@judesfairtrade.ca or www.judesfairtrade.ca

Telephone: 542-7474 ext 235 & Fax: 542-4436