

# FOR A BETTER WORLD

IDEAS AND ACTION FOR A JUST ECONOMY



## FAIR TRADE:

A VISION FOR A NEW ECONOMY

Soda or Sovereignty:

A Tale of Two Food Systems

The High Cost of a Cheap Banana

The Climate Change

Solution in Your Cup



Fair World Project is a non-profit that advocates for fair trade policies that support small-scale farmers, artisans, and workers. We publish the perspectives of farmers, farmworkers, mission-driven business people, and activists working to build a better world.

#### WHY WE EXIST:

- Conscious consumers, armed with informed purchasing power, can create positive change and promote economic justice.
- Family-scale farmers and workers in both the Global South and Global North often face volatile prices, low wages, and poor working conditions as a result of unfair trade policies and corporate practices. FWP promotes policy changes and market-based initiatives that address these systemic problems.
- Existing certifiers and membership organizations vary in their criteria and philosophy for qualification of products and brands certified to display eco-social labels or claims, such as fair trade. FWP educates organizations, retailers and consumers on the standards reflected in various certification schemes, and works to keep eco-social terms meaningful.

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## ISSUE 19

### COVER

**Photo:** Transporting bananas at the farm of Vicente Matute, a founding member of the fair trade banana cooperative, El Guabo, in Ecuador.  
**Credit:** © Eric St-Pierre

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

**T**he theme of this issue, fair trade, is obviously near to my heart. I've worked in the fair trade movement for nearly two decades now running a fair trade business and advocacy organization, managing supply chains, and meeting with people from all around the globe. These days, I travel a lot and give presentations on what fair trade is. For me, the answer is increasingly complex; fortunately, we have a whole issue with many different voices to help answer the question.

For so many of us, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has defined the opposite of everything that fair trade should be. In the last 25 years, NAFTA has fueled a race to the bottom across Canada, Mexico, and the United States. The winners: multinational corporations' bottom lines. The losers: all the rest of us. Alyshia Gálvez, the author of the book *Eating NAFTA*, tells us what that means for our food. From corn and beans to processed food, from community-controlled aquifers to a country where soda is cheaper than water, NAFTA has transformed Mexico's food system — and our own.

Like so many others, I have found inspiration in the Zapatista Movement. Rising up in the shadow of NAFTA, their call for indigenous autonomy and global solidarity has rippled across the movements to oppose neoliberalism and corporate globalization. Hilary Klein's reflections on their movement retell an important piece of our history and give us inspiration as our own movements build.

Solidarity vs. corporate control is playing out in the fair trade world today. Anna Canning shares reflections of small-scale farmers in Ecuador who are organizing to export their bananas, finding themselves in competition with massive multinational fruit companies bearing the same mark. Who will control the story of what fair trade means: those small-scale farmers or the multinationals using the label to "fairwash" their exploitation of workers? Gabriela Rosazza of the International Labor Rights Forum weighs in, driving home just how exploitative these multinational fruit companies are.

Today, the effects of climate change are devastating crops around the world. Coffee has been hit particularly hard, and world market coffee prices have hit historic lows. Yet we learn that there is a vision of hope. By organizing in our communities and committing to organic, climate-friendly regenerative growing practices, there are ways to move forward — especially when supported by global solidarity.

For me, "fair trade" has always been shorthand for what I hope for in this world: a vibrant, just economy that supports people and their communities. One where work is valued, not exploited. One where stewardship of our planet is the norm, not exploitation. "Another world is possible" is a rallying cry that came out of the Zapatista Movement. And I believe it.

**To a Better World,**

*Dana Geffner*

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



**ANNE COSTELLO**

Director of Coffee at Peace Coffee, a 100% fair trade, organic and Certified B Corporation coffee roaster. Anne oversees the company's value chain, from sourcing coffee to tracking impact on producers. She is continually inspired by how coffee connects people and places thousands of miles away.



**HILARY KLEIN**

Author and community organizer for social justice for more than two decades. She spent several years working with women's cooperatives in Zapatista territory and is the author of "Compañeras: Zapatista Women's Stories" (Seven Stories Press, 2015).



**ALYSHIA GÁLVEZ**

Cultural and medical anthropologist and professor of Food Studies and Anthropology at the New School. She is the author of several award-winning books. Her latest, "Eating NAFTA: Trade, Food Policies and the Destruction of Mexico" (UC Press, 2018), focuses on changing food policies, systems and practices in Mexico and Mexican communities in the United States, including impacts from trade and economic policy and their public health implications.



**GABRIELA ROSAZZA**

Campaigner with the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF). She coordinates ILRF's work in Honduras, advocating for labor rights on agricultural plantations exporting fruit to the U.S. market. Her work is influenced by her background as the daughter of immigrants and by her dedication to cross-border solidarity with workers in the Americas.

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PHOTO: Gerardo Goicochea, Peru. CREDIT: Cooperative Coffees.



## GARMENT WORKERS, LABOR RIGHTS ACTIVISTS FIGHT TO SAVE BANGLADESH ACCORDS

The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, also known as The Bangladesh Accords, is a safety agreement that was signed by trade unions and apparel brands after the Rana Plaza building collapsed in 2013, killing 1,134 garment workers. The accord covers 1,668 factories in Bangladesh, providing inspections and remediations on fire, electrical, and structural safety, as well as in-depth occupational health and safety training for 1.6 million workers. Today, the accords are under threat. Garment workers and labor rights activists around the world are fighting to maintain the independence and functionality of this landmark, legally-binding agreement from those who would weaken and undermine it.

## MAYA WOMEN Sue to Control Rights TO THEIR IMAGES

In Guatemala, the National Weavers Movement has taken the Guatemalan Institute for Tourism (INGUAT) to court over the Institute's profiting from the appropriation of work and images of Maya women featured in their tourism campaigns. The legal battle has been in motion for years, and in March 2019 a public hearing and press conference was held. Although INGUAT failed to appear, the Presidential Commission Against Discrimination and Racism (CODISRA) was in attendance and voiced support for the women, calling on the courts to issue a ruling in their favor. Such a ruling could help to influence and establish future laws protecting the use of Maya images and artwork.



## FARMWORKERS IN NEW YORK WIN THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

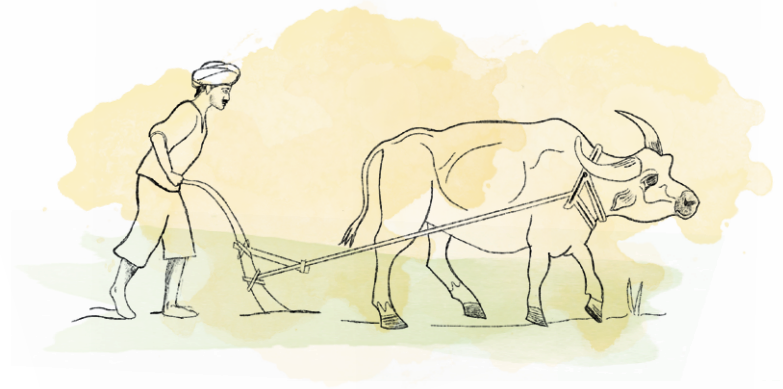
New York has joined the handful of states in the United States that will legally recognize and protect farmworkers' constitutional right to organize. In a 4-1 ruling, the Appellate

Division of the state Supreme Court sided with farmworkers and labor advocates who have been pushing the issue for years. Since the 1930s, provisions within the State Employment Relations Act, rooted in discriminatory Jim Crow-era laws, have allowed states to exclude farmworkers from constitutional rights extended to other laborers. With the freedom to organize and join a union, farmworkers across the state will now be able to advocate for fair wages and safe working conditions.

# Small-Scale Farmers Shape Fairtrade International's Updated Standards

Fairtrade International has updated its smallholder standards with changes that seek to strengthen small-scale farmer organizations and their capacity to respond to climate change. Voices and perspectives of more than 500 producer organizations from 70 countries weighed in on how the standard should be improved. The new standards, effective July 2019, will now address many issues, including responding to forced labor, promoting greater gender equity, and increasing safety standards for the use of hazardous materials. With a focus on farmer empowerment and resilience, the standard aims to improve current economic, social, and environmental realities for its small-scale farmer stakeholders.

**Learn more at:** [fairtrade.net](http://fairtrade.net)



## UN CLIMATE REPORT RECOGNIZES EFFORTS OF SMALLHOLDERS AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

This year, The United Nations issued a climate report authored by hundreds of the world's leading scientists. The report confirmed that human-caused climate change is degrading our planet at an accelerating rate, and the primary causes are industrial agriculture and fishing.

Smallholder farmers and indigenous communities offer an alternative: many of these communities are already managing land and water with climate-friendly agricultural practices that enrich biodiversity and conserve natural resources. We can stop the negative trends, the report says, but we will have to abandon business-as-usual and radically rethink our approaches across society, politics, economics, and technology.



## SMALL-SCALE FARMERS STAND UP TO NESTLÉ

In December 2018, Nestlé announced plans to build a massive \$154 million instant coffee processing plant in Veracruz, Mexico. Small-scale coffee farmers took to the streets to protest the move. Despite being the world's second biggest food and beverage company, the multibillion-dollar corporation requested government subsidies to fuel its expansion. Nestlé's plan also included the planting of 80,000 hectares of low-quality Robusta coffee, changing the country's coffee industry and undercutting small-scale farmers. Amid an international outcry, the government retracted some plans for subsidies, but coffee farmers continue to struggle in an increasingly consolidated industry.

**Learn more at:** [fairworldproject.org/small-scale-coffee-farmers-stand-up-to-nestle/](http://fairworldproject.org/small-scale-coffee-farmers-stand-up-to-nestle/)



# HUMAN-CENTERED TRADE: still possible?

WRITTEN BY ALYSHIA GÁLVEZ

In early May 2019, U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to impose tariffs on Mexican tomatoes, pushed at least in part by Florida tomato farmers who couldn't compete with Mexican growers. The current North American tomato market is a product of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), in which Mexico turned toward large-scale industrialized fruit and vegetable export agriculture and free trade was imagined to level the playing field. Why would tariffs, the antithesis of free trade, be proposed as a solution to a free trade produced problem? First, we have to see what NAFTA intended to do and what it has actually done.

In the late 1980s, when Mexican President Carlos Salinas Gortari (1988-1994) began to approach major economic powers — first in Europe, then in North America — with the idea of forging a trade deal, he and his U.S.-trained economic advisers aimed to alter the basic structure of the relationship between the government and its people. The globalized, free-market model that would come to define NAFTA (which went into effect Jan. 1, 1994) centers on the idea that multinational corporate investment is the driver of prosperity and development. Thus, decades of robust, state-driven economic intervention were framed as antiquated and ineffective for bringing Mexico into the 21st-century global economy and slated for dissolution.

While the effects of this shift rippled into all sectors of life, the food system was an area of particularly radical change. Previously, the Mexican state saw its role as one of bridging producers and consumers, with a network of programs and institutions that supported prices, assisted farmers in obtaining agricultural inputs, distributed farm goods to cities, and ensured that neither rural producers nor urban workers would go hungry. All of this was swept away in anticipation of NAFTA. The U.S. negotiators did not need to say aloud that Mexico would have to eliminate any protectionist policies; because of a currency devaluation prior to the deal and the resulting loans from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, structural adjustment was well underway prior to the start of negotiations.<sup>1</sup> Further, Mexico, as the weakest member of the deal, knew that it would have to cede the most to get Canada and the United States to sign. Therefore, most of the work of radically altering

the state's contract with its people was done before negotiations began. The elimination by the Mexican Congress of Article 27, the provision of the 1917 constitution that had ensured communal landholding and land distribution after the Mexican Revolution,<sup>2</sup> was the starkest example of how radical Mexico's advance preparation for NAFTA was.

## UNDER NAFTA, SMALL-SCALE FARMERS STRUGGLE TO COMPETE

What followed was both spectacular in its scope and mundane in its ubiquity. Within a decade of NAFTA's implementation, one in ten Mexicans would come to reside in the United States, most of them without the benefit of a legal way of migrating. NAFTA had ensured the mobility of goods and capital but pointedly excluded mobility of people. Even more invisible and ubiquitous were the subtle ways that the entire social and economic landscape was transformed. Without the supports that had protected small-scale agriculture, many farmers struggled to get their goods to market. Many gave up on farming and looked to other sectors in the economy. Before long, the flood of cheap corn and other products from the United States — which never stopped its billions of dollars in commodity grain subsidies — made it even harder to compete.

Key to all of this was a shift in logic on the part of policymakers from a model of food sovereignty<sup>3</sup> to one of food security. Food sovereignty is the notion that a place should produce all or most of the food needed by its population. In contrast, national food security is the idea that a place can produce no food so long as

it has purchasing power to meet its food needs by importing foods from the global marketplace. Soon after NAFTA's implementation, Mexico would import 42% of its food and almost fully withdraw from supporting small-scale agricultural producers. At the same time, NAFTA favored the consolidation of land and productive capacity into fewer and larger farms dedicated to export agriculture, leading to Mexico producing and exporting a good portion of the tomatoes, avocados, limes, mangoes, cucumbers, and peppers consumed in the rest of North America.

### WORKING PEOPLE CONTINUE TO PAY THE COSTS OF FREE TRADE

Contrary to the ways politicians sometimes frame it in the United States, Mexico was not “winning” in this trade deal, and we also should not assume that the United States and Canada “won” either. Even though the diet of the average person living in a cold climate improved with much more available and affordable fruits and vegetables, even in winter, for most people, NAFTA has not meant “winning.” My analysis leads me to the conclusion that in all of the signatory countries, working people were and continue to be disadvantaged by the shifts in the economy that NAFTA brought. The greatest beneficiaries are the corporations that have seen their capacity to operate multi-nationally greatly enhanced; they can move production where labor and raw materials costs are lowest while finding new consumers across the continent.

The result? We can see what NAFTA has meant for Mexico by looking at three simple numbers: 45.5%, 176, and 80,000. The first number is the poverty rate. The second number, 176, is the number of liters of soda consumed by each person in Mexico annually as of 2012, and even after a massive public health intervention and soda tax, the consumption rates remain among the world's highest. The third, 80,000, is the number

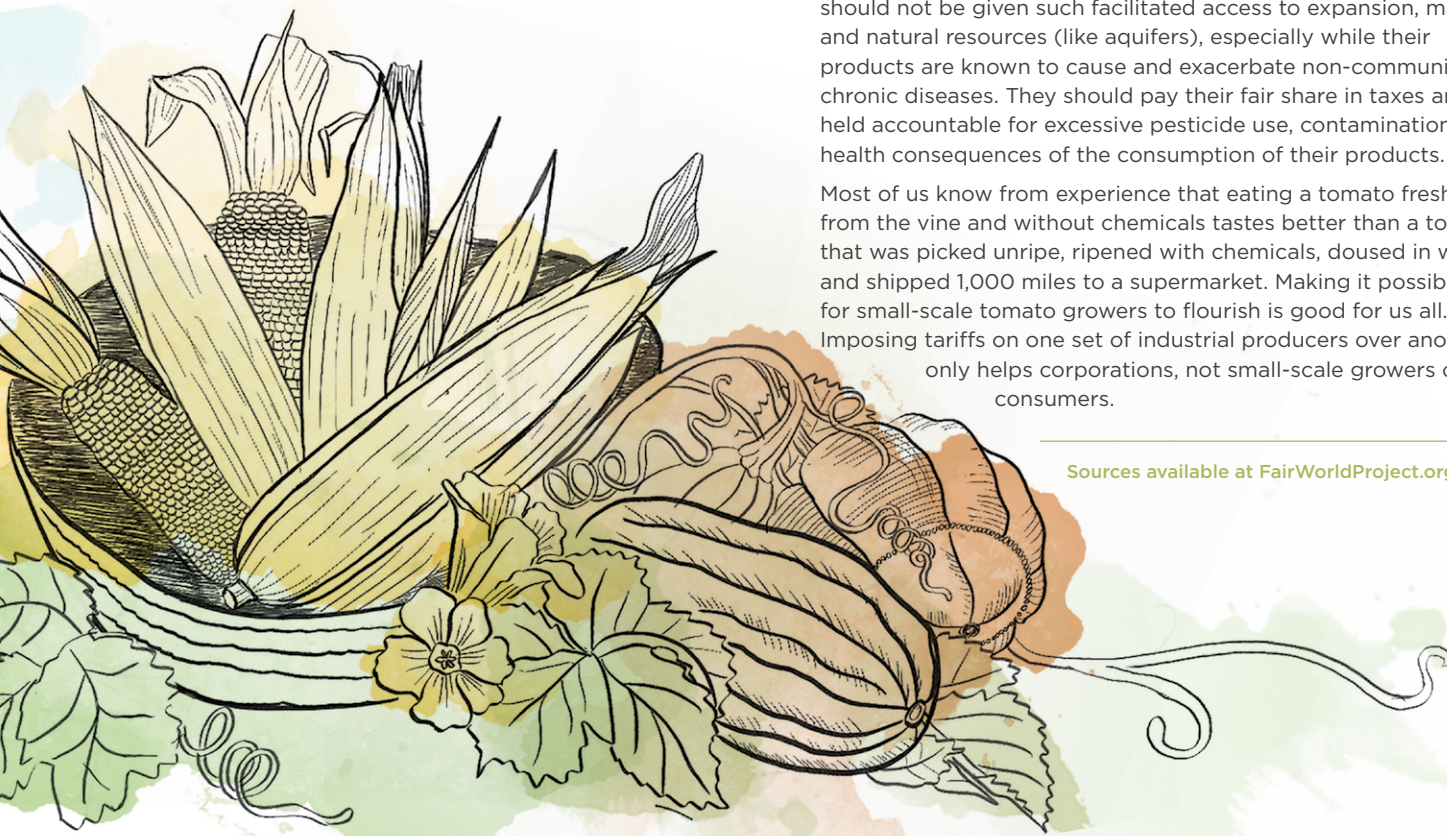
of diabetes deaths in Mexico annually. While political leaders in the three signatory countries of NAFTA promised increased prosperity and development, Mexico's poverty rate has remained stubbornly close to half of the population, even as a tenth of the population left the country, and other Latin American countries that did not sign trade deals have seen double-digit drops in poverty over the same period. Transformed food and economic systems have displaced people from land and agriculture-based ways of life, leading to longer working hours, longer commutes, and family separation. The same trends have simultaneously made processed foods and beverages more affordable and accessible, while milpa-based cuisine (corn, beans, chiles) is harder to come by. Even water has become less accessible due to the privatization of aquifers by soda bottlers and a neglected infrastructure makes potable water dear, as even soda is cheaper. Finally, the country has experienced the onset of a diabetes epidemic, with more people diagnosed at a younger age than ever before, claiming more lives than any other cause and more than the annual death toll of the drug war. Together these numbers paint a picture of how Mexico and the health of its people have been transformed by NAFTA.

### BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES WITH HUMAN-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT

What are the alternatives? Human-centered development would take into consideration the well being of communities and the sustainability of the environment. Rather than a continual trend toward expansion and mechanization of agriculture, it would sustain small-scale agriculture and distribution systems for connecting producers to consumers. Fruits and vegetables would be framed not as commodities but as health resources as crucial as access to healthcare. Not everyone wants to work the land, but those who do should be able to do so viably, and their contributions to the economy, cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, and health should be celebrated. Corporations should not be given such facilitated access to expansion, markets and natural resources (like aquifers), especially while their products are known to cause and exacerbate non-communicable chronic diseases. They should pay their fair share in taxes and be held accountable for excessive pesticide use, contamination, and health consequences of the consumption of their products.

Most of us know from experience that eating a tomato fresh from the vine and without chemicals tastes better than a tomato that was picked unripe, ripened with chemicals, doused in wax, and shipped 1,000 miles to a supermarket. Making it possible for small-scale tomato growers to flourish is good for us all. Imposing tariffs on one set of industrial producers over another only helps corporations, not small-scale growers or consumers.

Sources available at [FairWorldProject.org](http://FairWorldProject.org)





# Product Picks

The ways goods are traded impacts all of our lives, from the products that are available on grocery store shelves, to the environmental and social impacts on the communities that produce them. Too often, trade deals are cut with a single bottom line designed to extract as much as possible, by any means possible, and for as much profit as possible. But it is heartening to know that there are companies who are practicing trade differently.

We asked members of our staff and editorial board to share some of their favorite fairly traded products by organizations that are working to create a mutually beneficial and just global economy.



## FAIR. QUINOA VODKA

I'm quite fond of a good cocktail every now and then. FAIR's Quinoa Vodka is my go-to vodka because of its mild, pleasant nuttiness. Plus, the company emphasizes supporting small-scale farmers. When quinoa got "discovered" as a superfood a few years ago, market prices went up, and big producers entered the market to cash in, making it tough for those for whom this was a traditional staple to compete. How can fair trade support food sovereignty? That seems like a great topic to discuss with a cocktail! - ANNA

[fair-drinks.com](http://fair-drinks.com)



## LITTLE GREEN RADICALS RED CLASSIC DUNGAREE

As a new parent, it feels like there's always new stuff to purchase for my growing child, and it takes extra digging to find products that I can really feel good about. One company that makes it easy is Little Green Radicals. Their supply chains are transparent, they use fair trade and organic cotton, and their fabrics range from classic solids to on-trend patterns. My only complaint is that they don't make anything in my size! - JENICA

[littlegreenradicals.co.uk](http://littlegreenradicals.co.uk)



## MATA TRADERS SHIMMER FAN EARRINGS

I love Mata Trader's beautiful pieces and unique designs. In the fashion and apparel world, it can be difficult to find fashionable pieces without an exploitative backstory. With a commitment to fair trade and gender equality, each Mata Trader's purchase has a strong social impact. The simple and bold design of these fan earrings is sure to get compliments, and you can feel good telling your friends that you supported women's fair trade cooperatives in India. - JULIA

[matatraders.com](http://matatraders.com)



## ALAFFIA VANILLA SHEA BUTTER BODY LOTION

I love all of Alaffia's body care products, but my favorite is the Shea Butter and Lemon-grass Body Lotion with Vanilla. Knowing that they only use fairly sourced ingredients helps me rest at night, and I'm inspired by their dedication to empowering Togolese women and creating economically sustainable communities. - DANA

[alaffia.com](http://alaffia.com)



## AGROECO COFFEE FROM COMMUNITY AGROECOLOGY NETWORK (CAN)

AgroEco Coffee is an alternative trade model developed by the Community Agroecology Network (CAN) and supported by Santa Cruz Coffee Roasting. Partnering with small-scale farmers in Mexico and Nicaragua, it emphasizes the leadership and participation of farmer families in the ecological production of coffee. What I especially like about this model is the explicit commitment to a women's unpaid labor fund, which compensates women for their uncompensated and often overlooked contributions to childcare, eldercare, and other household activities. - RYAN

[canunite.org](http://canunite.org) | [santacruzcoffee.com](http://santacruzcoffee.com)

# CHOCOLATE

## LAND RIGHTS

Many cocoa farmers in West Africa do not have clear legal rights to their own land, and women often have an even harder time proving ownership.



## LOW PRICES

The average household income of cocoa farmers in West Africa is \$2,707 per year, well below the poverty line.



## CHILD LABOR

An estimated 2 million West African children are engaged in hazardous labor in the cocoa sector, with a significant percentage in forced or slave labor.



## DEFORESTATION

Nearly all of Côte d'Ivoire's native forests have been cut down, driven in part by bad prices and low productivity, forcing poor farmers to expand their cultivation.



## FOREST EXTRACTION

Ghanaian law grants the government rights to all timber, including on private land. This law discourages farmers from growing shade trees on cocoa farms.



## CLIMATE CRISIS

Increasing temperatures and a changing climate in West Africa could reduce cocoa production by up to 30-40%.



## STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

1

**BUY CHOCOLATE FROM COMPANIES COMMITTED TO FAIR TRADE.**

Find a list at [FairWorldProject.org](http://FairWorldProject.org).

2

**INVEST IN FARMER-LED AGROFORESTRY PROJECTS.**

Learn more at [GrowAhead.org](http://GrowAhead.org).

# UNWRAPPED

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## LIVING INCOMES

Too often, cocoa prices are based on the distant commodity market. To better support farmers, Fairtrade International is piloting a program that focuses on living incomes, starting with what a farm family needs to live and building from there.



## MORE FAIR TRADE CHOCOLATE

67% of fair trade cocoa is sold into the conventional marketplace, robbing farmers of the benefits of the fair trade system. If more companies sourced more fair trade cocoa, more small-scale farmers could escape poverty.



## LAND REFORM

Clear land titles can safeguard farmers and provide them with the security needed to invest in their crops. Supporting women's access to land could double farm profitability.



## INCOME DIVERSIFICATION

Biodiversity isn't just good for the planet. It also gives farmers additional crops to eat and sell. A diverse food forest can almost double a farm family's income.



## AGROFORESTRY

Growing fruit, shade trees, and timber alongside cocoa can help sequester carbon and combat climate change. These diverse agroforestry systems also protect cocoa trees from heat spikes and pests.



3

### IS YOUR CHOCOLATE SUPPORTING FORCED AND CHILD LABOR?

Ask your favorite chocolate company what steps they are taking in their supply chains.

4

### SUPPORT SMALL-SCALE FARMERS AND COMBAT CORPORATE CONSOLIDATION.

Find current campaigns at [FairWorldProject.org](http://FairWorldProject.org).

# A Spark of Hope:

## Reflections on the 25th Anniversary of the Zapatista Movement

WRITTEN BY HILARY KLEIN

January 1, 2019, marked a quarter-century since the Zapatistas captured the world's imagination with their brief but audacious uprising to demand justice and democracy for indigenous peasants in southern Mexico. Since its 1994 uprising, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) has become better known for its peaceful mobilizations; dialogue with civil society; and structures of political, economic, and cultural autonomy. With the Cold War drawing to a close, the EZLN provided an important example of what a new wave of popular movements might look like, and the Zapatista movement influenced grassroots activists and social movements like few others of the late 20th century.

### NAFTA AND GLOBAL CAPITALISM THREATEN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The legacy of colonialism — centuries of racism and exploitation — was the historical backdrop of the Zapatista uprising. The EZLN was founded in 1983 as a small guerrilla cell named after Emiliano Zapata, a hero of the Mexican Revolution. After 10 years of clandestine organizing, the Zapatistas decided to risk dying from a bullet rather than continue watching their children die from preventable diseases. They chose a symbolic date for their uprising: Jan. 1, 1994, the day the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) went into effect. The EZLN was one of the first popular movements to recognize neoliberalism as a dangerous new stage of global capitalism, calling NAFTA a death sentence for the indigenous peasants of Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

As dawn broke on New Year's Day, Zapatista troops occupied seven towns throughout eastern Chiapas, including San Cristóbal de las Casas, a quaint colonial city and major tourist destination nestled in the misty highlands. The uprising lasted less than two weeks, but transformed the EZLN into one of the most well-known social movements in the world. Soon after the 1994 uprising, the EZLN and the Mexican government began peace negotiations. Simultaneously, however, the Mexican government was waging low-intensity warfare against the EZLN's civilian support base. In 1996, the EZLN and the Mexican government signed the San Andrés Peace Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture. The Mexican government, however, never implemented the San Andrés Accords. In 2001, the Mexican Congress passed the Indigenous Law instead — a watered down version of the San Andrés Accords that the EZLN rejected out of hand. The center-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) voted for the law, which the EZLN considered a deep betrayal. Current Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador was mayor of Mexico City at the time and a key leader of the PRD. The Zapatistas have been critical of López Obrador ever since, and this conflict could shape their relationship with Mexico's first left-leaning president in decades.

### BUILDING INDIGENOUS AUTONOMY

Although never implemented, the San Andrés Accords created a framework that the Zapatistas have applied on their own. After the Indigenous Law passed in 2001, the EZLN turned away from any further engagement with the Mexican government. Since then, the group has concentrated on constructing indigenous autonomy in its territory.

The Zapatista structures of indigenous autonomy have extended access to rudimentary health care and education to rural villages in Chiapas. The Zapatistas exercise self-determination through local and regional autonomous governments. Economic cooperatives invest resources back into their communities, developing an economy based on collective effort and community wellbeing, rather than competition and profit.<sup>2</sup>

Over the past 25 years, the Zapatista movement has had significant local,

PHOTO: Zapatista women's gathering. CREDIT: Tim Russo.

national, and international impacts. In Zapatista territory, in addition to its project of indigenous autonomy, the EZLN carried out a series of land takeovers, occupying large ranches and redistributing the land to peasants. This distribution of wealth continues to shape living conditions for Zapatista villages farming on reclaimed land today.

For many people throughout Mexico, the Zapatistas represented the voice of the voiceless. By empowering civil society and challenging the status quo, the EZLN arguably contributed to ending decades of one-party rule in Mexico when the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) lost the presidential elections in 2000.

Since 1994, the EZLN has also engaged in dialogue with international civil society, inspiring a generation of young activists to organize for social justice in their own contexts. The First Intercontinental Gathering for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism in 1996 and other international gatherings organized by the EZLN helped jumpstart a worldwide anti-globalization movement.

### **RADICALLY REDEFINING GENDER ROLES IN THE ZAPATISTA MOVEMENT**

People around the world have been inspired by images of Zapatista women: Major Ana María wearing a black ski mask and brown uniform, leading indigenous troops during the uprising; Comandanta Ramona standing next to Subcomandante Marcos during peace negotiations with the Mexican government, the top of her head barely reaching his shoulder; and Comandanta Ester, draped in a white shawl with embroidered flowers, addressing the Mexican Congress to demand respect for indigenous rights and culture. The dignity with which these women carried themselves embodied what the Zapatista movement has come to represent: the resistance of the marginalized and forgotten against the powerful.

When the EZLN began organizing in rural Chiapas, women there were experiencing an extraordinary level of violence and discrimination. They were often married against their will, and commonly had a dozen or more children. Domestic violence was generally considered normal and acceptable, and a woman could not leave the house without her husband or father's permission. Women's confinement

to the private sphere translated into very limited participation in public life.

But gender roles were radically redefined in the context of the Zapatista movement, as women became guerrilla insurgents and political leaders, healers and educators, and members of economic cooperatives. A handful of Zapatista women in key leadership roles, combined with a broad push from women in the Zapatista base, succeeded in passing the Women's Revolutionary Law and achieving some remarkable transformations around women's rights. Women's organizing also led to the banning of alcohol in Zapatista territory, which women credit with a significant reduction in domestic violence.

## The Zapatista movement has come to represent the resistance of the marginalized and forgotten against the powerful.

### **THE ZAPATISTA MOVEMENT INSPIRES A SHARED VISION FOR A JUST SOCIETY**

Although the EZLN no longer occupies the place it once did in the popular imagination, the Zapatista movement continues to offer lessons for social justice advocates that are more relevant than ever. In 1994, the Zapatistas had the chutzpah to declare war on the Mexican government, and to take on global capitalism and patriarchy. But they also had the humility to know that none of us have all the answers — that we make the road by walking. The Zapatista movement also continues to offer a viable model for local alternatives to global capitalism, albeit on a small scale.

In this moment of heightened polarization in the United States and around the world, it is worth looking back on the Zapatistas' legacy to remind us of what we have in common. The Zapatistas were fighting for land reform and indigenous



autonomy in rural Mexico, but they succeeded in communicating a vision of a just society so universal that people all over the world felt included in their struggle. A quarter-century after their uprising, perhaps the most meaningful, lasting lesson from the Zapatista movement is a spark of hope and a sense of what is possible, even in dark and uncertain times.

Sources available at [FairWorldProject.org](https://FairWorldProject.org).

PHOTO: Zapatista woman making candles. CREDIT: Mariana Mora.





# CONFRONTING THE Crisis in Coffee

WRITTEN BY ANNE COSTELLO

Coffee serves as a way for many of us to start our days and provides some much-needed energy to our morning hours. For the farmers of over 12 million small coffee farms in the world, their days start with coffee as well, but instead of enjoying it in a cup, they are walking the steep inclines of their parcels to tend to their coffee trees. For these farmers, coffee isn't a delicious beverage or a delivery vehicle for caffeine, rather it's the means by which they feed their families. In coffee communities around the world, there is a consensus that a crisis isn't coming — it's already here.

The word "crisis" is deliberate and not used lightly. The unfortunate combination of climate change and low prices is causing extreme stress to coffee producers around the globe and is forcing many to face food insecurity. This crisis is now being acknowledged by many of the participants in the value chain.

Temperatures are increasing, weather patterns are changing, and diseases are impacting crops at higher rates. By 2050, an estimated half of the world's coffee-producing regions will no longer be suitable for coffee production. Climate change has an immediate and sustained impact by reducing crop yields and increasing costs of operation. Furthermore, climate change negatively impacts coffee quality, resulting in lower prices paid to farmers.

An extremely volatile international market is pushing coffee prices down even further. The coffee market has been trading under a dollar per pound, far below the cost of production. To many, the market price seems irrational as it does not reflect the economic reality that coffee farmers face, nor does it take into account the investment required to produce high-quality, sustainably grown coffee. Consequently, farmers debate whether or not they can continue to build their lives around coffee production. For young people, the answer is often a resounding no. Resigned to that reality, many must decide between staying in their communities to pursue a different crop or migrating to more prosperous countries, often the United States.

## WORKING TOGETHER TO SOLVE THE COFFEE CRISIS

In my role as Director of Coffee at Peace Coffee, a 100% fair trade and organic coffee roaster, I spend a lot of time reflecting on these issues. I often think back to the many conversations I have had with coffee farmers around the world. I remember listening to a group of women in Northern Peru discussing the extreme challenges they faced as mothers when a sustainable price wasn't paid. I recall, during my time with farmers in Guatemala, realizing that low prices and reduced yields could compel coffee farmers to migrate to the United States, risking their lives to support their families. Conversely, I witnessed the miraculous achievements of Honduran farmers who are leveraging innovative organic agricultural practices and the support of cooperatives to combat the direct impacts of climate change, helping to secure their futures as coffee farmers.

By 2050, an estimated half of the world's coffee-producing regions will no longer be suitable for coffee production.

The current crisis hitting the coffee lands can be boiled down to statistics, but thinking of this issue only in numbers glosses over the daily struggles of those involved in the supply chain. "Crisis" is not a word that immediately elicits hope. But thinking back to my conversations with coffee farmers gives this crisis a human face, and I see the power that we have to innovate and build resiliency. If we can acknowledge the existence of this crisis



practices to increase yield, and teaching soil regeneration methods to improve carbon sequestration. At Peace Coffee, we are not coffee farmers, but by helping to provide access to resources and training that address the concerns and needs of our farmer partners, we can build climate change resiliency in our value chain.

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## Coffee grown by small-scale farmers who use regenerative organic agricultural practices is climate-friendly.

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together, we can begin to build real, sustained, and meaningful change to the way coffee is grown and valued.

Currently, strategies are being employed that create an immensely positive impact on the coffee value chain. Fair trade has shown that by building alliances, farmers and roasters can disconnect from international market prices that fail to take the true cost of production into account. This is a powerful reminder that low, unsustainable prices do not need to be a reality for coffee farmers or coffee drinkers. Additionally, through fair trade, farmers are organized into cooperatives, which provide training and support to entire communities impacted by climate change. By purchasing coffee from dedicated fair trade brands, consumers know that prices support a sustainable livelihood for coffee farmers and cooperatives providing vital assistance to vulnerable communities.

### **CURBING CLIMATE CHANGE WITH ORGANIC AGRICULTURE**

The coffee grown by small-scale farmers who use regenerative organic agricultural practices is also climate-friendly. Coffee farmers who engage in these practices do not use chemical fertilizers, pesticides, or monocropping practices, all of which can contribute to climate change. Instead, these small-scale farmers are creating a natural balance in their plots to overcome disease and pests, rebuild their soil health, and protect the shade cover and biodiversity on their land. These practices turn farms into carbon sinks, further reducing the impact of climate change on all of us. Lastly, many actors in the value chain are now partnering with coffee farmers to provide the solutions needed to combat climate change. At Peace Coffee, we invest in the Carbon, Climate, and Coffee Initiative. This fund focuses on helping farmers adapt to the new reality of climate change by supporting farmer-to-farmer training in climate adaptation strategies, promoting field renovation and pruning

Coffee has the incredible ability to connect people and places thousands of miles away. I believe that, through this connection, coffee farmers, roasters, and drinkers can all play a role in overcoming the crisis caused by climate change and low coffee prices. By supporting and valuing fair trade and organic coffee, we can make this moment a turning point, away from crisis and toward sustainability. This path values every person who makes a delicious cup of coffee possible.





# THE MANY vs THE MIGHTY:

## A Story of Small-Scale Banana Farmers

WRITTEN BY ANNA CANNING

Walk into the produce department of your local grocery store anywhere in the continental United States and regardless of the season, there will be bananas. Their average price? Just \$0.54 per pound. By comparison, the average price for a pound of apples: \$1.35 per pound.<sup>1</sup> That's right; a highly perishable, easily bruised tropical fruit costs less than half the price of a fruit that is easily stored for months and readily grown all over the United States. How does this happen? The answer to this question says so much about our global food system and the history of U.S. involvement in Latin America.

In June 2018, I traveled to Ecuador with Equal Exchange and their partners along the supply chain to visit members of AsoGuabo, a cooperative of approximately 130 small-scale fair trade banana farmers. Since 1998, their grassroots organizing has built something rare in the banana industry: a small-scale farmer banana supply chain.

Bananas are big business in Ecuador. Drive through the countryside, and the trees line the road like corn in Iowa — an unending blur. The brands Dole and Chiquita are everywhere: on packinghouses along the roads, on buildings, trucks, and boxes discarded along the highway.

Bananas are such a massive enterprise that there are two ports side by side in Guayaquil, where most of the country's imports and exports pass through. Dole owns one, and the other is for the rest of the country's exports. It's staggering to see just how big this business is.

### THE MANY VS. THE MIGHTY: TWO BANANA SUPPLY CHAINS

As we visited AsoGuabo members' farms, we saw the other side of the banana trade: small-scale farmers growing bananas, some intercropped with other crops, often cocoa. Their plots of land are small, so each week they produce just a few pallets of the highly perishable fruit. To get their bananas to market, members have to pool their resources. On each farm, one day a week is reserved for harvesting and packing the bananas. Starting at dawn, each farmer begins cutting the bananas, hauling them from the field, washing them, and packing them into the same cases you see in the back of your local supermarket. All across the region, small-scale farmers are packing boxes, stacking pallets, and loading them onto a few rented box trucks making the rounds and ferrying the pallets to AsoGuabo's central warehouse. Slowly, together, they fill a shipping container.

Unlike other bananas, AsoGuabo's leave the port without the name Dole or Chiquita on the box. This is a big deal; it means that a cooperative of small-scale farmers controls every aspect of their business. And they do it using just a few rented box trucks and a small warehouse. Meanwhile, their main competitor owns massive ocean freighters and an entire port.

### BIG FRUIT: A BLOODY HISTORY

In many ways, it's fitting that this story of bananas has become a story about logistics. The history of this fruit — and the reason for its ubiquity in our supermarkets



today — is intertwined with the story of one man and the banana trees he planted along railroad easements at the turn of the last century. While Minor Keith and his brothers set out to make a fortune building railroad lines, they ended up building the infamous United Fruit Company. United Fruit Company, now Chiquita Brands, is notorious for its dealings in Latin America. The company gained control of large swaths of land in Central America through a series of shady business deals, in which they promised to build railroad lines in exchange for land and the rights to profit off of the railroads. Those landholdings gave them tremendous power in the region as the company had their tentacles in transportation, communication services, and governments. Perhaps most infamously, they collaborated with the CIA to overthrow the democratically-elected government of Guatemala in 1954. Their goal was to prevent land reform that would break up their plantations and diminish their profits. That coup led to a 36-year civil war that left an estimated 200,000 dead or disappeared.

United Fruit's marketing efforts made the banana a staple fruit; their logistics systems made that possible. Frederick Upham Adams, a writer of the time, wrote of "the banana of commerce," representing "man's profound triumph over nature."<sup>2</sup> The triumph he was referring to was making such an improbable fruit available so cheaply.

### THE HIGH COST OF A CHEAP BANANA

Yet that cheap price tag hides high costs. Big fruit companies built their wealth on the backs of hundreds of thousands of unpaid and underpaid workers across Central and South America, many thousands of whom died from exploitation and labor rights abuses.<sup>3</sup> This is not just ancient history; the banana industry is still plagued by injustice.

A recent study<sup>4</sup> quantified the hidden costs of growing bananas, from underpaid farmers and workers, water exhaustion, and other environmental factors. For every case of conventional, plantation-grown bananas, that number stands at \$7.33/case.

That's \$7.33 per case that continues to enrich the big fruit companies at the expense of communities in countries throughout Central and South America. The exploitation and extraction of wealth continues.

### BUILDING AN ALTERNATIVE TO CORPORATE FRUIT

Small-scale farmer organizations like AsoGuabo offer an alternative model to corporate fruit. Instead of enriching multinational corporations, these cooperatives are building a supply chain by and for small-scale farmers. They are also creating professional jobs and investing in their surrounding communities, including in healthcare and income diversification opportunities for families. As we drive through the country visiting fields, we stop at the farm of Don Vicente and his wife, Ana, in the community of Tenguel. Once a United Fruit plantation spanning over 7,600 acres, striking workers and small-scale farmers in Tenguel came together and seized the land in the 1960s. Today, they grow bananas on their own land using organic farming techniques. In so many ways, it is the opposite of Big Fruit's extractive plantation model.

And yet these small-scale farmers are still expected to compete against Dole and Chiquita. Too many grocery stores expect these small-scale farmers' bananas to sell for the price dictated by the system built by United Fruit, now Chiquita, over a century ago.

Dole and Chiquita have both jumped on the fair trade bandwagon. Both companies now sell some bananas with a fair trade certification, their costs subsidized by their conventional banana sales, and the massive economies of scale

and externalized costs they've built up over a century of exploitation. While the fair trade seal on these big fruit companies may be the same, the supply chain behind it is completely different from the small-scale farmer's supply chain. This is why so many fair trade advocates have long been skeptical about the entry of the big fruit companies and their plantations into the fair trade certification system.

In the 1900s, the hidden costs of banana production may have looked like a "triumph of man over nature." But, in 2019, the bill for those cheap bananas is coming due. Climate change, growing concern about wages and water, and a creeping disease that threatens the extinction of the common Cavendish banana—all mean that it is high time to consider how our bananas are grown.

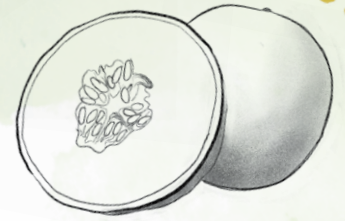
Small-scale farmer cooperatives and their allies along the supply chain offer an alternative to the Big Fruit companies and their continued extraction of wealth from producer communities. Thriving communities or continuing the legacy of exploitation? These bananas offer us a choice—and a model for a fairer future.

Sources available at [FairWorldProject.org](https://FairWorldProject.org)



# Unfair Fruit:

## The Multinational Corporations Driving Migration



WRITTEN BY **GABRIELA ROSAZZA**

**M**edia reports on migrant caravans from Honduras show images of families separated at the border and kids in cages, heightening an already polarizing debate on immigration. Yet, time and again, the media fails to question the root causes of poverty and violence from which Central Americans are fleeing.

According to the World Bank, 66% of Hondurans live in poverty, and one in five live in extreme poverty. Pundits talk about poverty as if it were an accident or an abstract concept — it is not. It is born of a global economy that is designed to create poverty wages and inhumane working conditions. Multinational fruit companies, like Dole, Chiquita, and Del Monte take advantage of this throughout Central America, under the guise of “job creation” and “sustainable development.” But instead of providing dignified work, their global supply chains are fundamentally based on underpaid and disposable workers. The people who grow our food are treated like silent machines that service the world’s food system.

### WHEN WORKERS UNITE: CONFRONTING FYFFES’ LABOR ABUSES

Thousands of miles away from U.S. supermarket shelves, in southern Honduras, melon workers are confronting this race to the bottom by standing up to a global fruit giant that has long used their labor but never respected their rights.

Fyffes is the billion-dollar fruit company that Americans have never heard of. They are the top supplier of bananas to Europe and of winter-season melons to the United States. For over a decade, Honduran workers have reported rampant wage theft and exposure to toxic agrochemicals on Fyffes’ melon farms.

In Honduras, Fyffes employs up to 8,000 seasonal melon workers, mostly women. By 2016, these workers had had enough and organized a union with El Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Agroindustria y Similares (STAS). In response, local bosses fired dozens of union leaders and launched a violent union-busting campaign, physically, verbally, and psychologically

harassing the union members. The violence peaked in April 2017 when Moises Sanchez, STAS’ Secretary-General, was kidnapped, beaten and threatened with death by unknown assailants. Sanchez survived the attack, but the crime remains unpunished.

According to the AFL-CIO, at least 31 trade unionists have been killed in Honduras since 2009. Local employers use violence against workers and suppress their rights to keep costs low and remain competitive in the global economy. Multinational companies often threaten to leave when governments enforce environmental, indigenous, and labor rights. Under free trade agreements, companies have even filed multimillion-dollar suits against Latin American governments that have enacted laws protecting communities, claiming that these restrictions reduce their profits. As a consequence, governments often ignore even blatant labor rights abuses such as those on Fyffes’ melon plantations.

When their workers organized, Fyffes did what most companies do: Instead of recognizing workers’ universal rights, they spent tens of thousands of dollars hiring expensive consultants and lawyers, created management-controlled “unions” and distracted from the issues with diluted “women’s rights” programming.

### WORKERS ARE THE BEST DEFENDERS OF THEIR OWN RIGHTS

The difference between STAS’ organizing efforts and Fyffes’ Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives is that the former is worker-led and can hold bosses accountable through a legally binding union contract. Meanwhile, the latter is a corporate-led, voluntary public relations scheme with no real teeth. Fyffes has used CSR initiatives to allow local management to continue their abuses and to cover up union busting. Fair Trade USA (FTUSA) certified Fyffes’ farms in Honduras despite ongoing labor conflict, and only de-certified them after thousands of people sent emails directly to FTUSA’s CEO demanding the removal of the fair trade label.

At the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF), we have seen firsthand how

unenforceable codes of conduct and third-party audits have tragically failed workers for the past 30 years, from the deadly factory fires of Bangladesh and Pakistan to toxic pesticide exposure in the sugarcane fields of Nicaragua. Workers in global supply chains do not need more labels and certifications. They need their right to organize to be respected. They need to be able to denounce workplace abuses without the fear of reprisal. Workers are the best defenders of their own rights. They don’t need top-down solutions from corporations that are merely an extension of colonialism and white supremacy.

“Charity is not the same as justice. The farmworkers want Fyffes to follow the law, not to create programs in order to distract from the company’s obligation to remediate labor rights violations,” said Ahrax Mayorga, an organizer with STAS-FESTAGRO. “We’re not against gender programming, but we’re against it when it’s used to cover up labor abuses and circumvent the law.”

Fyffes’ charade is coming to an end. The company was recently expelled from the Ethical Trading Initiative. However, this has not been enough to stop their union busting. An international campaign is now calling on U.S. supermarkets to hold Fyffes accountable.

The fight on Honduran melon farms is a microcosm of a larger struggle against a system that keeps people in poverty while extracting massive profit for corporations. Violence against trade unionists and other human rights defenders in Central America directly contributes to a lack of decent work in the region, one of the many factors that fuels poverty and pushes people to migrate. While every human has a right to seek asylum, they also have a right to stay in their communities, feel safe at work, and earn a living wage.

Understanding — and addressing — the root causes of migration requires Americans to take a hard look at the legacy of U.S. foreign policy, and how multinational corporations help create the conditions people are running from.

Learn more at: [laborrights.org/fyffes](http://laborrights.org/fyffes)

# REFERENCE GUIDE



## TO FAIR TRADE AND LABOR JUSTICE PROGRAMS

Many labels appear on products you eat, wear, and use. But not all labels are created equal. The letter grades below are based on the analysis in the International Guide to Fair Trade Labels, created by a global coalition of fair trade advocacy organizations and academics.

	FOCUS <i>Who is this label and its standards designed to benefit?</i>			STANDARDS <i>Does this label emphasize these key elements of fair trade and labor justice?</i>					BRAND REQUIREMENTS <i>What do these labels require of a brand to sell certified products?</i>	
	Small-scale Farmers, Artisans	Farm-workers	Factory Workers	Price Based on Cost of Production	Fair Wages	Premiums Paid	Emphasizes Freedom to Organize	Formal Participation of Intended Beneficiary	Commitment to Grow Fair Trade Purchases	Forbids Corporate Fairwashing
	✓	✓		A	A	N/A	A	A	✓	✓
	✓	✓		A	B	A	A	D	✓	✓
	✓	✓	✓	C	D	C	D	D	X	X
	✓	✓	✓	B	B	A	A	A	X	X
	✓			A	B	A	A	A	✓	✓
	✓			A	B	N/A	B	A	✓	✓

The Fair Trade Federation is a North American membership organization that verifies company practices and commitments to fair trade principles through self-reported evaluations. While they do not audit supply chains, many of their members' products are certified by a fair trade certification. Their label can be seen on product packaging.

## HOW TO CHOOSE AUTHENTIC FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS

- EVALUATE.** Look for full company commitment, membership organizations and strong fair trade certifications to distinguish products made by dedicated fair trade brands.
- AVOID BAD ACTORS.** Do not buy from corporate bad actors who happen to have a few fair trade products.
- LOOK BEYOND CERTIFICATIONS.** Learn which brands positively impact the communities where they operate and source from.
- READ LABELS.** Determine which ingredients (and what percentage of those ingredients) in the product are certified fair trade.
- BE AN ACTIVIST.** Ask your local grocer to carry more authentic fair trade products and get involved to change policy.

Learn more about the standards behind these labels and find companies committed to fair trade values at [FairWorldProject.org](https://FairWorldProject.org)

# WHY CHOOSE FAIR TRADE?



## FAIR PAYMENT

A fair price covers the cost of production, pays workers fairly, and still leaves enough profit to reinvest.



## TRACEABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Open communication and fair contracts are the building blocks of fair trade.



## CAPACITY BUILDING

Support for local, community-led development. Fair trade premium funds are one way that buyers can support those efforts.



## EDUCATION

Learning is key to empowerment. Fair trade organizations raise awareness about the structural inequities of the global trade system.



## NO FORCED OR CHILD LABOR

Labor exploitation is forbidden. Standards go beyond prohibition to address the root causes of forced and child labor.



## RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Additional premiums are paid for organic farming, recognizing the additional work required and valuing environmental stewardship.



## ENSURING GOOD WORKING CONDITIONS

Organizations are committed to following worker protection laws, reasonable work hours, and healthy conditions for all.



## DEMOCRATIC AND TRANSPARENT ORGANIZATIONS

Democracy is central to fair trade, empowering small-scale producers and workers with a voice and a vote.



## CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED PRODUCERS

Small-scale producers are often the most marginalized by colonialism and the current systems of trade.



## LONG-TERM DIRECT TRADING RELATIONSHIPS

The fewer steps between small-scale farmers and artisans and the end user, the more money can return to the producer.



## BUILDING POWER AND PROTECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE

Organizations are committed to non-discrimination. They actively support gender equity, equal pay, and access to resources. Workers have the right to organize and bargain collectively.



**W**hile there are many certifications with different levels of credibility, the fair trade movement generally agrees on a few key principles. Applied together all along supply chains, these principles can guide us towards building a more just solidarity economy.