

## VI. LESSON 6 –*Fair Trade*

**Topics:** Fair Trade    **Time:** 50 minutes or longer

**Curriculum Content Area Standards:** Social Studies, Environmental Studies, Language Arts

**Overview:** Students will learn about Fair Trade, and will examine the economic, environmental and social benefits of Fair Trade for small-scale coffee farmers.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to explain:

- *Principles of Fair Trade*
- *Impacts of Fair Trade on coffee-growing communities*
- *Impacts of Fair Trade on the environment*
- *Ways they can support Fair Trade and make a difference in the lives of coffee farmers*

**Assessment:** participation in group discussions, responses to questions on handout

**Rationale:** A first step toward becoming global citizens requires learning about the ways in which we are connected to the rest of the world, and considering the responsibility that connection might involve. Fair Trade offers a valuable alternative to conventional trade, and an empowering way to make a difference in the lives of coffee farmers in many countries.

**Materials:** *Handout 8: What is Fair Trade?*, *Handout 9: Fair Trade Cooperative Profile: Oromia, Ethiopia*; Film *Buyer Be Fair (order from TransFair for free)* or other articles/films, internet access (optional).

**Learning Activities:** 1) Intro to Fair Trade 2) Explore impacts of Fair Trade with a video, reading or internet film clip 3) Brainstorming for Action 4) Taking Action

### Part 1: Intro to Fair Trade – An Empowering Answer to the Coffee Crisis

**1. What is Fair Trade?** Pass out the handouts:

*Handout 7: What is Fair Trade?*

*Handout 8: Fair Trade Cooperative Profile: Oromia, Ethiopia*

**Watch one of the recommended films below**, or read an article listed. Students might be interested in finding a profile of a Fair Trade cooperative from the country their group has focused on throughout the unit. A sample of producer profiles can be found at:

<http://www.transfairusa.org/content/certification/profiles.php>

**Recommended Films on Fair Trade:** (Free copies available at <http://www.transfairusa.org/content/resources/videolist.php>)

**Fair Trade, the Story** (2006) is an eight-minute video with great music, gorgeous images of fair trade communities, and even an interview with Stone Gossard of Pearl Jam. Link to it on your website or blog, show it to friends and family, play it before a presentation about fair trade to set the stage and inspire—the possibilities are endless! You can watch it right from your computer just by clicking on <http://www.eq.tv/>. Running Time: 8 minutes

**Buyer Be Fair: The Promise of Product Certification** (2006) takes viewers to Mexico, the Netherlands, the UK, Sweden, the USA and Canada to explore how conscious consumers and businesses can use the market to promote social justice and environmental sustainability through product labeling, with a focus on Fair Trade coffee and Forest Stewardship Council certified wood. "Buyer Be Fair" is an inspirational and balanced television special that reaches beyond the "choir" to present the promise of product certification to a wide audience. Running Time: 56 minutes

**Birdsong and Coffee: A Wake Up Call** (2005). What is the connection between coffee farmers, birds, and us? Why are 25 million coffee farmers impoverished while we spend more for our coffee? Why are North American songbirds becoming harder and harder to find? What is the difference between free trade and fair trade? This film explores the answers to these questions and many more. We hear from experts and students, from coffee lovers and bird lovers. But most importantly, we hear from the coffee farmers themselves and learn how their lives and ours are inextricably joined in ways that we need to understand. Running Time: 56:00; Produced by: <http://www.OldDogDocumentaries.com>

### Online Articles and Podcast about the Impacts of Fair Trade

The Impact of Fair Trade

<http://www.transfairusa.org/content/Downloads/devo-impact-brochure.pdf>

*Loma Linda: Escaping the Coffee Crisis* **Oxfam America 16 October 2002**

[http://www.oxfamamerica.org/whatwedo/where\\_we\\_work/camexca/news\\_publications/art3661.html](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/whatwedo/where_we_work/camexca/news_publications/art3661.html)

### 2. The Fair Trade Market: A good business choice

Fair Trade is a growing market. Students can explore the business side of Fair Trade:

**Making the Business Case** <https://transfairusa.org/pdfs/BusinessCase11.05.pdf>

**Backgrounder: Fair Trade Certified Coffee**

[https://transfairusa.org/pdfs/backgrounder\\_coffee.pdf](https://transfairusa.org/pdfs/backgrounder_coffee.pdf)

#### **\*\*Graphing and Calculations Activities\*\***

Graph the Fair Trade minimum price of \$1.31 on same graph as in previous lesson.

**Market Growth of Fair Trade** For detailed data on sales growth of Fair Trade products, look on TransFair's website. Calculate the annual % growth:

<http://www.transfairusa.org/pdfs/2007FairTradeAlmanac.pdf>

## Handout 7: What is Fair Trade?

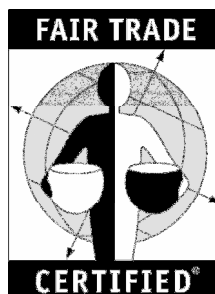
**Fair Trade Certification empowers farmers and farm workers to lift themselves out of poverty by investing in their farms and communities, protecting the environment, and developing the business skills necessary to compete in the global marketplace.**

Fair Trade is much more than a fair price! Fair Trade principles include:

- **Fair price:** Democratically organized farmer groups receive a guaranteed minimum floor price and an additional premium for certified organic products. Farmer organizations are also eligible for pre-harvest credit.
- **Fair labor conditions:** Workers on Fair Trade farms enjoy freedom of association, safe working conditions, and living wages. Forced child labor is strictly prohibited.
- **Direct trade:** With Fair Trade, importers purchase from Fair Trade producer groups as directly as possible, eliminating unnecessary middlemen and empowering farmers to develop the business capacity necessary to compete in the global marketplace.
- **Democratic and transparent organizations:** Fair Trade farmers and farm workers decide democratically how to invest Fair Trade revenues.
- **Community development:** Fair Trade farmers and farm workers invest Fair Trade premiums in social and business development projects like scholarship programs, quality improvement trainings, and organic certification.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Harmful agrochemicals and GMOs are strictly prohibited in favor of environmentally sustainable farming methods that protect farmers' health and preserve valuable ecosystems for future generations.

**TransFair USA**, a non-profit organization, is the only independent, third-party certifier of Fair Trade products in the U.S. and one of 20 members of Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO). TransFair's rigorous audit system, which tracks products from farm to finished product, verifies industry compliance with Fair Trade criteria. TransFair allows U.S. companies to display the Fair Trade Certified label on products that meet strict Fair Trade standards.

**Fair Trade Certified products you can find in the U.S. for coffee, tea and herbs, cocoa and chocolate, fresh fruit, sugar, rice, and vanilla. Look for this label on the package:**



## ***Handout 8: Fair Trade Cooperative Profile: Oromia, Ethiopia***

*“Fair Trade has definitely helped our community—it has helped us improve our school and water supplies. It has also made a big difference in the price we get for our coffee with the guaranteed payment. We simply want you to buy our coffee at a fair price so we can be independent.”*

--- **Workineh Heldaja, OCFCU member**



OCFCU (Oromia Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union), the largest Fair Trade coffee producer in Ethiopia, was founded in 1999 when small cooperatives in Southwestern Ethiopia came together with the goal of exporting their coffee directly to the specialty market.

OCFCU members are dedicated to promoting environmental stewardship and social justice in their communities. Women hold prominent positions throughout the organization and all six varieties of OCFCU’s award-winning coffee are produced with organic techniques in bird-friendly conditions. The cooperative became Fair Trade Certified by Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO) in 2002. Today, OCFCU sells its coffee to Fair Trade markets in the United States and Europe.

### **The Fair Trade price has enabled Oromia to establish various social and productive programs**

#### **Education.**

Member co-ops have constructed 4 schools and 21 additional classrooms with the Fair Trade premium, and four new schools are underway.

#### **Productive Investment.**

Sustainable agriculture. OCFCU hires and trains development agents to teach member farmers sustainable farming methods. OCFCU’s coffee is forest-grown, organic, and bird-friendly.

Infrastructure improvements. Member organizations have purchased washing stations for their coffee, and OCFCU has developed a fund for repairing equipment.

Crop diversification. Members intercrop coffee plants with citrus and bananas for consumption.

#### **Environment.**

A commitment to organic production. OCFCU provides training to its members on organic farming techniques such as composting the by-products of coffee production and utilizing shade trees and natural fertilizers.

#### **Credit Program.**

OCFCU has established a cooperative bank which offers low-interest loans to members, alleviating dependence on outside financing.

#### **Health.**

OCFCU has funded the construction and operation of four local health clinics.

## Part 3: Transforming Learning into Action for Justice

### Brainstorm and Devise an Action Plan

1. **Review and discuss what students can do to make a difference in the lives of coffee farmers around the world.**

2. **Brainstorm what actions can students do –**  
**as a class?** (lots of possibilities!)  
**as an individual?** (buy Fair Trade, tell someone else about Fair Trade!)

Look at what other schools have done: *Join the United Students for Fair Trade*  
[www.usft.org](http://www.usft.org)

Compile a list of ideas to distribute around the school and send a copy home to parents.

3. **Devise an action plan –**

**This should include:**

- **a broad goal** (example: raise awareness about Fair Trade at our school)
- **targeted objectives** (bring Fair Trade bananas to our cafeteria, hold an assembly, put an article in the school paper)
- **concrete action steps** (do research, break down your objectives, assign tasks to individual students or helpers, develop a timeline)

*Carry out your action plan and celebrate your learning!*  
*You can make a difference!*

**Here are a few ideas**, check out the Resources section on the website or at the end of this curriculum for more action resources:

**Find Fair Trade coffee, bananas, chocolate, rice, tea, sugar, fruit, and vanilla in your local store!** With parents or on their own, students can explore the local stores to see which stores offer Fair Trade products. If they don't, try filling out a comment card.

**Supermarket Search and Survey** Visit the manager of your local supermarket, and ask them to offer Fair Trade Certified coffee and other Fair Trade products like tea, cocoa, chocolate, sugar, fresh fruit, and rice. Write a letter to the store manager to express your interest in buying Fair Trade products. How could the students help the supermarket raise awareness about Fair Trade? Could they do a tasting at the store? Would the supermarket sponsor an event at the school? If the manager is not very receptive, bring a list of signatures or encourage other students to write letters to the manager. Present them altogether and explain.

**Convert your Cafeteria, Teacher's Room or PTA Coffee to Fair Trade**

Arrange to make a presentation about Fair Trade at a PTA meeting. Tell them what Fair Trade is and why it is important.

**Write an article to your local paper** about Fair Trade encouraging local residents to buy fair trade and ask for it at their local stores. Be sure to include some of the reasons why Fair Trade is good for the farmer and good for business.

**Make a Holiday Shine with Fair Trade** - Valentine's Day, Easter, Chanukah, New Year celebrations, Halloween, Passover, Christmas, Purim, so many holidays tend to be celebrated with sweets and celebration – why not make it a Fair Trade holiday? For Valentine's Day, for example, students can make valentines and send them to their local store manager or the CEO of a big chocolate company asking for Fair Trade. Visit **Global Exchange** for more ideas <http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/cocoa/>

**Form a Fair Trade Club** at school, or encourage existing student clubs to start a campaign for Fair Trade at your school or in your community. **Fundraise using Fair Trade chocolate!** Several Fair Trade chocolate retailers offer resources for starting a Fair Trade Fundraisers! Check out the Resources section on the website or at the end of this curriculum.

**Organize a school assembly about Fair Trade, hold a Fair Trade Fashion show, or do a film screening of one of the movies** listed here. Get a local band or popular professor to open the show with a brief introduction. Or contact a Fair Trade company and find out when a farmer representative might be in town – maybe he or she could speak at your school!

**Fair Trade Banana Bake:** Use Fair Trade bananas in your favorite banana bread recipe. Hold a bake sale of goodies made with Fair Trade ingredients. Tell your customers and classmates about Fair Trade. Ask them to support your efforts.

**Bringing Fair Trade to Your Community – Join or Form a Fair Trade Coalition!**  
[http://www.transfairusa.org/content/support/Fair\\_trade-resolutions.php](http://www.transfairusa.org/content/support/Fair_trade-resolutions.php)

Local Fair Trade Coalitions are sprouting up across the country! Working together to pass Fair Trade resolutions in their cities, raise awareness and build demand for Fair Trade, expand Fair Trade availability and visibility at local cafes and grocery stores -- and have fun! The coalitions are now creating a network of Fair Trade Towns across the U.S. And if there's not a Fair Trade Coalition in your home town, *start one!* Contact Outreach at TransFair USA for assistance: [dfunkhouser@transfairusa.org](mailto:dfunkhouser@transfairusa.org)

**Organize events to celebrate Fair Trade Month in October and World Fair Trade Day in May!** Check out [www.fairtrademonth.org](http://www.fairtrademonth.org) or [www.fairtraderesource.org](http://www.fairtraderesource.org)

**A Student's Guide to Fair Trade on Campus** (Free copies available at [www.oxfamamerica.org/coffee](http://www.oxfamamerica.org/coffee))

Carry the energy from a national movement to your campus! Share an exciting way that your campus can make a difference with Fair Trade. In this Oxfam-produced video (2005), you'll hear from a coffee producer from a Nicaraguan cooperative as well as student activists from throughout the United States. Running Time: 12 minutes