

# 10 REASONS TO BUY FAIR TRADE

by Miles Litvinoff and John Madeley

adapted from Miles Litvinoff & John Madeley, *50 Reasons to Buy Fair Trade*, Pluto Press, 2007, 256pp, £7.99

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## 1. FAIR TRADE BENEFITS SMALL-SCALE PRODUCERS

With Fair Trade, small-scale producers in developing countries receive good and stable prices and greater security. This makes a big difference to their lives. It can enable them to escape from poverty.

Small-scale farmers are often the poorest of the poor. But if they come together in a co-operative and meet Fair Trade standards, their produce can qualify for Fairtrade certification. This guarantees them a minimum price, based on local economic conditions, and covers production costs plus provision for household members to enjoy a decent living standard.

Fair Trade buyers pay a minimum “floor price” when world market prices are low - plus, for all Fairtrade-certified produce, a “social premium” for community purposes. But they pay the going world market rate when the market price rises above the “floor”. In recent years the “floor price” paid to farmers for Fairtrade-certified coffee has averaged \$1.21 per pound, compared with an average world market price of only 70 cents a pound.

Nicaraguan coffee grower Blanca Rosa Molina is among those who benefit. Blanca farms three hectares of land and sells about a third of her coffee through the Fairtrade-certified system. When Blanca was asked about the difference that selling through Fair Trade makes, she replied: “It makes the difference between whether my family eats or does not eat.”

In 2002 coffee prices fell sharply to 30-year lows. “Most people who worked on large coffee plantations lost their jobs,” says Blanca. “The Fair Trade price allows us to eat, to keep our land. It means our children can stay in school and that we can have basic health provisions.”

The Fair Trade market for bananas – the world’s second-most-traded food community, after coffee – works similarly. The “floor price” is set based on the fact that smaller-scale banana growers use fewer chemical pesticides than large plantations, and so have higher production costs because more handwork is needed. They also have higher organisational and transport costs. In 2005 the minimum Fair Trade export price for Ecuadorian bananas was \$0.13 per pound – roughly double the non-fair-trade market rate.

Under the Fair Trade system traders also sign contracts that allow for long-term planning. This gives small-scale producers greater security.

(361 words)

### Self-test questions

Fill in the gaps in these sentences using one of the words or phrases in brackets:

1. Small-scale farmers who form a co-operative and meet Fair Trade standards can qualify for (Fairtrade / official) certification.
2. The Fair Trade “floor price” is paid when world coffee prices are (high / low).
3. When coffee prices fell in 2002, many people who worked on plantations (kept / lost) their jobs.
4. Fair Trade makes a difference to whether Blanca Rosa Molina’s children can (stay in school / go to work).
5. Bananas are the world’s (fifth / second) most traded food community after coffee.

### Activities

1. Use an atlas or online world map to find out where the Windward Islands are. Then visit this web page about small-scale banana producers in the Windwards:

[www.fairtrade.org.uk/downloads/pdf/dominica\\_profile.pdf](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/downloads/pdf/dominica_profile.pdf).

Make notes under these headings:

- Which islands make up the Windwards group?
- How Windward Islands bananas are grown
- What happened when the price of Windward Islands bananas fell?
- How did Amos Wiltshire describe the benefits of Fair Trade to banana growers?
- What other benefits have there been?

2. Enter the phrase "fair trade bananas" in your web browser and find out how sales of Fairtrade-certified bananas have grown in the UK since 2004.

3. Access the website and find out about one of these Fair Trade producer organisations:

- Soppexcca: [www.soppexcca.org](http://www.soppexcca.org)
- Agrocel: [www.agrocel-cotton.com/English](http://www.agrocel-cotton.com/English)
- Kuapa Kokoo: [www.kuapakokoogh.com](http://www.kuapakokoogh.com)

Make notes under these headings:

- Name of organisation
- Country where it is based
- Type of organisation and its activities
- What the organisation produces and sells
- Benefits from Fair Trade for local people

4. Read chapter 2, “Pay small-scale farmers a fairer price”, in Miles Litvinoff & John Madeley, *50 Reasons to Buy Fair Trade*, Pluto Press, 2007.

(300 words)

## 2. FAIR TRADE MEANS A LIVING WAGE FOR PLANTATION WORKERS

People who work on plantations are often among the very lowest paid. Take tea, for example - Britain's most popular drink. Most tea is plucked on plantations (sometimes called estates or gardens) mainly in India, Sri Lanka, China and Kenya. Tea plantations are labour-intensive, with planting, maintenance and harvesting usually carried out by hand. The crop is picked year-round, mostly by women with baskets or bags on their backs to carry the leaves plucked from the growing tips of the shrubs.

Working under a scorching sun, carrying heavy baskets and sacks, tea plantation workers are usually paid on a "piece rate" system. The amount they earn depends on how much they pick. When only one or two pickers support a family, their low earnings may work out at less than US\$1 per day per family member.

Some tea estates have now joined the Fair Trade system, and this has made a big difference to the lives of their workers. On Fairtrade-certified tea plantations, workers receive a decent wage, are allowed to join trade unions, and are provided with good-quality housing when necessary. Health and safety and environmental standards are good. No child below the age of 15 can be employed, and forced labour is not allowed.

The price of Fairtrade-certified tea includes an extra "social premium" of €0.50 to €1.00 per kilo. The estate workers invest this money in social, economic or environmental projects that they choose together. They may decide to use it to pay secondary school fees for their children, for example, or to build a community clinic, to improve their crops, to bring electricity into their homes, to set up small businesses, or to fund pensions for retired tea pickers.

Most tea plantations in the Fair Trade system have received the equivalent of a few thousand or perhaps a few tens of thousands of pounds through the "premium". But some larger estates in India and Sri Lanka have earned several hundred thousand pounds. This money goes a long way in helping plantation workers to improve their lives.

(350 words)

### Self-test questions

Fill in the gaps in these sentences using one of the words, phrases or numbers in brackets:

1. People who work on tea plantations are often among the (lowest / highest) paid.
2. Tea is picked mostly by (hand / women).
3. No child below the age of (13 / 15) can be employed on plantations that grow Fairtrade-certified tea.
4. Tea estate workers invest the "social premium" on projects that they choose (together / individually).
5. Some tea plantations in India and Sri Lanka have earned several (thousand / hundred thousand) pounds through Fair Trade.

### Activities

1. Go to the UK Tea Council website at [www.tea.co.uk](http://www.tea.co.uk) and find the page on the history of tea. Make notes about how tea became the UK's favourite drink.

Then go to the Tea 4 Schools web page at [www.tea.co.uk/index.php?pgld=117](http://www.tea.co.uk/index.php?pgld=117), choose one of four main tea-producing countries and use the activities shown to learn more about your chosen country.

2. Enter the words "Fair Trade tea" in your web browser and search for an article or case study showing how Fair Trade has helped tea plantation workers. Make notes on what you find out.

3. Read chapter 7, "Ensure plantation workers earn a living wage", in Miles Litvinoff & John Madeley, *50 Reasons to Buy Fair Trade*, Pluto Press, 2007.

(219 words)

### **3. FAIR TRADE PROVIDES A "PREMIUM" FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

The "social premium" in the price of Fairtrade-certified products is the extra money – on top of the guaranteed price or fair worker wage – that the producer community receives. Spent on projects agreed by the community, the money can go a long way.

The premium is paid into a community bank account and carefully managed by the farmers' co-operative or "joint body" of elected estate workers' and management representatives. Producers and workers invest their premiums in a wide range of projects, such as building and equipping schools and clinics, installing water supplies and toilets, start-up business loans, environmental improvements, and school or medical fees.

The Mabale Growers Tea Factory in Uganda has invested premiums worth about US \$30,000 a year in training and plant husbandry so that growers can produce better-quality tea. "Fair Trade is significantly contributing towards the social improvement of our community," says Mabale's chairperson, Silver Kasoro-Atwoki.

In St Vincent in the Windward Islands, banana growers decided to use the premium "to help our schools – our producers, nurses and teachers of tomorrow", explains Leneff Hector.

The Valle del Chira banana co-operative in Peru is buying an office computer, desks, accounts books and a phone line with the premium.

Tea pickers in Herkulu, Tanzania, are building a maize mill to save local women a 15 km walk. They also plan to buy sewing machines and set up a technical college to train the community's young people.

In Sri Lanka, Sivapackiam, a tea picker who represents other workers on her estate's "joint body", says: "A year ago, we didn't have any electricity in our houses. All the members of the joint body got together and discussed how we could pay to install it. Some money came from the Fairtrade premium and we each took out a loan. With electricity, my children can study at night."

At the Nilgiris tea estate in southern India, workers used the premium to start a pension fund, helping provide security for estate workers when they reach retirement age.

Costa Rica's Coocafé coffee growers' association have invested the premium in tree planting, environmental education and small plots for landless families, as well as maintaining local primary schools and providing secondary school and university scholarships for local youngsters.

(379 words)

#### **Self-test questions**

Fill in the gaps in these sentences using one of the words or phrases in brackets:

1. The “social premium” in the price of Fairtrade-certified products is the extra money that goes to the (producer community / supermarket).
2. The social premium is paid into (a community / each farmer’s) bank account and carefully managed by the farmers’ co-operative or “joint body”.
3. Fair Trade producers invest their premiums in a wide range of projects, such as (buying luxury goods / building and equipping schools and clinics).
4. Tea pickers in Herkulu, Tanzania, are building a (railway line / maize mill) to save local women (a 15 km walk / money).
5. Costa Rican coffee growers have invested the social premium in (tree planting / selling timber).

### Activity

1. Research one of the products listed on the Fairtrade Foundation’s website at [www.fairtrade.org.uk/products.htm](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/products.htm), and describe some of the ways in which producers have used the Fairtrade social premium to benefit their community.

2. Read chapter 4, “Help producers believe in tomorrow”, in Miles Litvinoff & John Madeley, *50 Reasons to Buy Fair Trade*, Pluto Press, 2007.

(187 words)

## 4. FAIR TRADE BYPASSES “MIDDLEMEN” AND CHALLENGES BIG BUSINESS

How much of the price we pay for coffee, bananas or sugar goes to the “middlemen”, the people in between the grower and the consumer? It can be a sizeable amount. Middlemen can play a useful role, but they can also exploit farmers, especially poor small-scale farmers who lack knowledge of prices.

And there are often too many people “in the middle”. When sold outside the Fair Trade system, coffee, for example, can be bought and sold up to 150 times before it reaches your cup.

Fair Trade food and drink, by contrast, is usually sold direct from co-operatives to manufacturers. Fair Trade cuts down, and sometimes even cuts out, the middlemen. Juan Valverde Sánchez, for instance, a sugar cane farmer in Costa Rica, sells his sugar to Asoproduce, a local farmers’ association that markets 60 per cent of its produce through Fair Trade.

Juan says: “I know that if I bring my sugar to the association they’ll buy from me at a fixed price. I’ve got security. Whereas in the old days, selling was more difficult. Sometimes the middlemen bought sugar from one person, sometimes from another. You never knew. There were always changes in the national price. There were very bad months.”

Many Fair Trade products also bypass the transnational corporations - the huge international companies that control more than two-thirds of world trade. Fair Trade is a challenge to these business giants, because to have a share in the growing Fair Trade market they need to treat the farmers and workers who supply their produce more fairly.

By insisting on Fair Trade products, shoppers are sending a powerful message to the supermarkets and other major retailers. And the message is being heard. All the UK’s major supermarkets now stock a growing range of Fair Trade food and drink items. And Fair Trade clothes are available more and more on the high street.

By law, large corporations have to make a profit for the people who own them – their shareholders. Selling more Fair Trade products helps them to fulfil that obligation. Not to respond to consumer demand would be bad for business.

(363 words)

### Self-test questions

Fill in the gaps in these sentences using one of the words, phrases or numbers in brackets:

1. Outside the Fair Trade system, coffee can be bought and sold up to (10 / 150) times before it reaches your cup.
2. Juan Valverde Sánchez is a sugar cane farmer in (Costa Rica / Mexico).
3. Before Fair Trade, says Juan, there were always changes in the (weather / national price).
4. Transnational corporations are large (companies / countries) that control more than (a quarter / two-thirds) of world trade.
5. (All / None) of the UK's major supermarkets stock Fair Trade food and drink.

### Activities

1. Enter the words “Fair Trade” and “middlemen” in your web browser and find out about how middlemen sometimes exploit smaller farmers, and how Fair Trade helps bypass middlemen.
2. Find out and make notes on what happened during the “supermarket banana wars”:  
[www.fairtrade.org.uk/ps170407.htm](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/ps170407.htm)
3. Visit your nearest supermarket and make a list of all the Fair Trade food and drink items on sale there.
4. Read chapter 21, “Bypass the intermediaries”, and chapter 33, “Make transnationals trade more fairly”, in Miles Litvinoff & John Madeley, *50 Reasons to Buy Fair Trade*, Pluto Press, 2007.

(202 words)

## 5. FAIR TRADE IS BETTER FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

Modern farming has increased food and drink production but often harms the environment and human health. Many years ago coffee was mainly grown under shady trees and without chemicals. But since the 1970s many farmers have switched to growing coffee in full sun and using chemical fertilisers and pesticides. The result? Trees and wildlife habitats gone, water supplies polluted, human health damaged.

Not just coffee, but cocoa, bananas, cotton and many other crops are regularly sprayed with potentially dangerous chemicals to control pests and disease. Each year in developing countries, millions of farm workers suffer the health effects of pesticide poisoning.

Nicaraguan coffee grower Oscar Zamora, who has now switched to Fair Trade, recalls: “Very often, poison from the chemicals ... burnt my eyes ... I wore a knapsack sprayer to treat the coffee plants ... the liquid escaped and wet my back ... I made myself wash all the poisonous chemicals off, because if you don't there's a risk that you may become terminally ill.”

Tropical fruit, vegetables, coffee and chocolate sold in the UK sometimes carry pesticide traces. One test on chocolate found that nearly every sample to contain residues of lindane, a chemical linked to breast cancer.

Fair Trade is different, because it requires farmers to protect the environment. So Fair Trade coffee and cocoa producers use more natural methods and grow their crop side by side with shady trees, providing habitats for insects and birds, protecting the soil and reducing pollution.

With the extra money – the “social premium” – that Fair Trade brings, producers can invest in tree planting, water conservation, organic compost making and other environmental improvements.

Fair Trade banana farmers in the Dominican Republic, for example, organise regular clean-ups of the plastic bags used to protect growing bananas and often left lying around on farms and roads and in rivers. And they have set up an organic composting system. “Organic fertiliser gives to the soil what the chemical fertiliser takes away,” one farmer says.

There are no regrets for Fair Trade coffee grower Oscar Zamora: “I am now protecting my health. The consumer of my coffee can ... drink a healthy, organic product, without any fear that they are putting themselves at risk.”

(379 words)

### **Self-test questions**

Fill in the gaps in these sentences using one of the words or phrases in brackets:

1. Many years ago coffee was mainly grown under (plastic / shady trees) and without (chemicals / fertiliser).
2. Each year in (developed / developing) countries, millions of farm workers suffer the health effects of pesticide poisoning.
3. Fair Trade requires farmers to (protect / ignore) the environment.
4. Fair Trade producers also have (less / extra) money to invest in tree planting, water conservation, organic compost making and other environmental improvements.
5. Fair Trade banana farmers in the Dominican Republic (organise clean-ups of plastic bags / leave plastic lying around).

### **Activities**

1. Find out about the difference between organic and Fair Trade farming on the Fairtrade Foundation web page at [www.fairtrade.org.uk/about\\_organic.htm](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/about_organic.htm). Note down the main differences between the two systems.
2. Choose one of the Fair Trade recipes at [www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources\\_recipes.htm](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources_recipes.htm) and try it out.
3. Choose one of the pictures from the Fairtrade Foundation’s photo library at [www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources\\_photo\\_library.htm](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources_photo_library.htm). Imagine you are one of the people in the photo and describe your working day. Use the internet to find out about how the crop in the picture is grown and processed.
4. Read chapter 25, “Stamp out pesticide poisoning”, and chapter 27, “Be a friend of the earth”, in Miles Litvinoff & John Madeley, *50 Reasons to Buy Fair Trade*, Pluto Press, 2007.

(231 words)

## **6. FAIR TRADE HELPS PROTECT CHILDREN**

Children aged twelve and over are allowed by international law to do light work, provided it does not harm their health, safety or education. But millions of children around the world, many of them younger than ten, are forced to work long hours by adults, often in dangerous situations. Poverty is the main reason. With adult wages often too low to feed, clothe and house a family, parents send their children to work.

Child labour under harmful conditions is common in the production of coffee, cocoa, sugar, fruit, cotton, textiles, carpets, rugs, jewellery, sportsballs and other goods.

Cocoa, the basic ingredient of chocolate, is one of the worst cases. A few years ago the world began to hear about the trafficking of boys and youths as forced labourers on cocoa farms in West Africa. In Côte d'Ivoire, where much of the world's cocoa is grown, an estimated 200,000 children were made to work on plantations. Some were as young as nine. Many were never paid. Beatings were common. Boys who tried to escape were sometimes killed. They were, in fact, child slaves.

Something similar has been found with bananas. In Ecuador, the world's largest banana exporter, child labour is officially illegal. But thousands of children work for up to twelve hours a day or more on the country's banana plantations, often exposed to dangerous pesticides.

The problem of child labour needs worldwide solutions. Campaigning organisations such as Save the Children and Anti-Slavery International are working for change. Fair Trade can help too. It allows poorer households to earn a decent living, so they don't have to send their children to work. And it guarantees that some goods, at least, are produced without exploiting children.

When you buy food, drink and other produce that carries the Fairtrade Mark or the Fair Trade Organisation Mark, you can be sure that children aged under 15 have not been forced to work in producing it (children are permitted to help with light farm or craft work in the family). Older children can be involved only if this does not harm their education, development or safety.

Fair Trade rules make the world a kinder, safer place for children.

(369 words)

### **Self-test questions**

Fill in the gaps in these sentences using one of the words or phrases in brackets:

1. With adult wages often too low to feed, clothe and house a family, parents send their children to (work / school).
2. The world has come to hear about the trafficking of boys and youths as forced labourers on (banana plantations / cocoa farms) in West Africa.
3. Thousands of children work for up to (twelve / two) hours a day or more on banana plantations in Ecuador.
4. Fair Trade allows poorer households to (change jobs / earn a decent living), so they don't have to send their children to work.
5. You can be sure that children aged (under 15 / over 18) (have not / have) been forced to work in producing Fair Trade goods.

### **Activities**

1. Access one or more of these websites, or search the web, to find out about child labour:

- Save the Children - [www.savethechildren.org.uk](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk)
- Anti-Slavery International - [www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org)
- Oxfam Cool Planet - [www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet)
- Rugmark - [www.rugmark.net](http://www.rugmark.net)

Make notes on which countries and the production of which goods child workers are exploited in.

2. Enter the words "children" and "Fair Trade" in your web browser and search for an article or case study showing how Fair Trade has helped children. Make notes about some of the benefits that children have gained from Fair Trade and include a note of:

- which country your example comes from
- the names of any Fair Trade organisations mentioned
- the URL of the web page where you found your example and the date you accessed the page.

3. Read chapter 28, "End child exploitation", in Miles Litvinoff & John Madeley, *50 Reasons to Buy Fair Trade*, Pluto Press, 2007.

(296 words)

## 7. FAIR TRADE EMPOWERS WOMEN AND GIRLS

More than half of the world's poorest 1.2 billion people are women and girls. Women work longer hours than men, for less pay, often in worse jobs. They do hours of unpaid work in the home. In developing countries most women work without employment contracts, often as low-paid farmworkers. Many support their families through small-scale farming or crafts production. Women factory workers are less likely than men to demand better working conditions.

Women's poverty goes hand in hand with disempowerment – not having a say in decisions that affect their lives. Yet women often offer the best solutions for poverty reduction. Giving women and girls more of a say is crucial to improving the lives of the world's poorest people.

One of Fair Trade's goals is to promote women's development, reward their work fairly and encourage them as leaders. Fair Trade organisations aim to give women the same opportunities as men and to provide for their needs. Women are usually well represented on the committees that decide how Fair Trade's "social premium" is spent. Indian Fair Trade cotton grower Punjiben says: "Our voices are strong in the decision-making process."

Fair Trade supports many programmes that target women and girls. For example, Traidcraft imports South Asian crafts made by poor rural women, including widows, and its trading partners in Africa support projects that benefit women especially, such as water boreholes - which save village women a long daily trek - and health clinics. "From our Fairtrade proceeds we have built two maternity wards," says Juliet Ntwirebabo of Igara tea producers in Uganda.

Nicaraguan community leader Janixce Florian works with a Fair Trade coffee co-operative whose 650 members include 190 women. Women have proved excellent quality coffee growers, Janixce says, winning national prizes.

Fair Trade helped teenager Rijayatu Razak, daughter of Ghanaian cocoa cooperative members, go to secondary school. Rijayatu won an essay competition and visited the UK one Fairtrade Fortnight. "At school I have started my own co-operative for girls only," she says. "We think that it is not fair that the girls have to do all the housework while the boys can ride around the village on their bicycles and play football. We think the work should be equal between the girls and the boys."

(381 words)

### Self-test questions

Fill in the gaps in these sentences using one of the words or phrases in brackets:

1. Women workers in developing countries often work (longer / shorter) hours than men for (more / less) pay.
2. Many women in developing countries support their families through (small-scale / large-scale) farming.
3. Fair Trade (tries / does not try) to provide for women's needs.
4. Traidcraft (exports / imports) South Asian crafts.
5. Teenager Rijayatu Razak thinks that boys (should / should not) share the housework with girls.

### **Activity**

1. Enter the words "women" and "Fair Trade" in your web browser and search for an article or case study showing how Fair Trade has benefited women in a developing country. Make notes about some of the benefits that women have gained by being involved in Fair Trade. Also try to include notes on:
  - which country your example comes from
  - the goods that the women have been involved in producing
  - the names of any Fair Trade organisations mentioned
  - which country or countries the goods were being sent to for sale as Fair Trade items
  - the URL of the web page where you found your example and the date you accessed the web page.
2. Read chapter 8, "Empower women and girls", in Miles Litvinoff & John Madeley, *50 Reasons to Buy Fair Trade*, Pluto Press, 2007.

(230 words)

## **8. FAIR TRADE HELPS RAISE AWARENESS OF TRADE JUSTICE**

Fair Trade is a worldwide movement. Over a million small-scale producers and workers in 500 certified producer groups in 60 countries are actively involved in the system. Their products are sold in thousands of "world shops", Fair Trade shops and supermarkets, online, and at many other sales points in richer countries. Fair Trade unites producers in developing countries with millions of consumers in the West.

Fair Trade organisations in 20 countries in Europe, North America, Australasia and Japan buy Fair Trade goods, many of them labelled with the international Fairtrade Mark. These goods often carry an information label that explains how they benefit poor people. This helps to raise awareness about the conditions under which many people in developing countries live. By buying and enjoying Fair Trade products in increasing amounts, people in Western countries show that they want fairness in the international trading system. They buy these products as a practical demonstration of their demand for trade justice.

Trade justice means a fair international trading system, based on rules that ensure that everybody benefits. Many rules, agreed internationally, control how countries do business with each other. They are supposed to make sure that countries compete openly and fairly. But they don't. The rules are loaded in favour of the wealthier countries and the largest companies. No matter how hard poorer people developing countries may work, trade rules benefit the rich world most. The result is misery for hundreds of millions of people. Trade justice is about changing the rules that keep people in poverty.

The Trade Justice Movement - supported by more than 80 UK organisations with over 9 million members - is urging Western governments to ensure that poor countries can choose the best solutions to end poverty. It wants an end to the dumping of surplus goods that damage the livelihoods of poor communities, and laws that stop big business profiting at the expense of people and the environment.

Fair Trade helps spread the trade justice message.

(339 words)

### Self-test questions

Fill in the gaps in these sentences using one of the words, phrases or numbers in brackets:

1. Fair Trade unites producers in (developed / developing) countries with millions of consumers in the West.
2. There are Fair Trade organisations in (16 / 20) countries in Europe, North America, Australasia and Japan.
3. Trade rules are loaded in favour of the (wealthier / poorest) countries.
4. Trade justice means a fair (international / national) trading system.
5. The Trade Justice Movement is supported by more than (75 / 80) organisations and urges Western governments to ensure that (rich / poor) countries can choose the best solutions to (end poverty / dump surplus goods).

### Activities

1. Make a list of the 20 countries (Europe, North America, Australasia and Japan) that have “Labelling Initiatives” to promote and market the Fairtrade Mark in their countries. You can find the information on the website of Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International: [www.fairtrade.net](http://www.fairtrade.net).
2. There are two main international Fair Trade organisations, and each has its own mark or label:
  - Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International – the Fairtrade Mark ([www.fairtrade.net](http://www.fairtrade.net))
  - The International Fair Trade Association – the Fair Trade Organisation Mark ([www.ifat.org](http://www.ifat.org)).From their websites find out about and make notes on the differences and similarities between the two bodies and what their marks mean.
3. Make notes about the Trade Justice Movement ([www.tjm.org.uk](http://www.tjm.org.uk)) under these headings:
  - Members
  - Aims
  - Past and present events.
4. Enter the words “trade justice” in your web browser and find an interesting article or case study.
5. Read chapter 43, “Vote for trade justice”, in Miles Litvinoff & John Madeley, *50 Reasons to Buy Fair Trade*, Pluto Press, 2007.

(281 words)

## 9. FAIR TRADE MEANS PARTNERSHIP – NOT EXPLOITATION

World trade often exploits people. Many of the clothes that we in the West buy, for example, are made by low-paid people working in unpleasant and sometimes dangerous garment factories in developing countries.

Most textile (cloth) and garment workers are unskilled women. They often live in overcrowded dormitories, work without a contract or sickness pay, and are forced into long hours of overtime. Workplace accidents are common. Protesting workers risk losing their jobs and may even be attacked by the police.

Exploitation in the clothing industry results from fierce competition between Western buyers, brands and retailers, who can force suppliers to accept unreasonably low prices. In recent years many leading brands and retailers have adopted codes of conduct, which has led to some improvements. But for many workers little has changed. For instance, Oxfam reported in 2006 on the exploitation and mistreatment of Asian workers producing sports kits for world markets.

In place of exploitation, Fair Trade offers a genuine partnership between developing-country clothing suppliers and developed-country retailers. Buying clothes made of Fairtrade-certified cotton helps by ensuring that cotton growers earn a fair wage. But cotton production is only the first step in the supply chain. The Fair Trade movement is working to agree standards for the whole industry.

In the meantime, we can buy from Fair Trade clothing and trading companies that have signed up to the International Fair Trade Association code of practice. Among UK companies specialising in Fair Trade clothing are Bishopston Trading, Chandni Chowk, Epona, Ethical Threads, Ganesha, Gossypium, Howies, Hug, Natural Collection, Pachacuti, People Tree and Traidcraft. These firms operate in partnership with their suppliers and take a close interest in wages and working conditions.

People Tree, for example, is committed to “mutual respect between producer, trader and consumer”, to paying a fair price, equal pay for women and men, safe and healthy working conditions, no child exploitation, and helping disadvantaged people. People Tree’s partners include small-scale clothes producers and co-operatives in Africa, Asia and Latin America that give work to people with disabilities, low-income women, members of rural communities, and traditional craftspeople.

The Fair Trade clothing industry is still small but is growing steadily and offers a real alternative of exploitation-free clothes to choose from.

(378 words)

### Self-test questions

Fill in the gaps in these sentences using one of the words or phrases in brackets:

1. Many clothes that we in the West buy are made by low-paid workers in (developing / developed) countries.
2. Textile and garment workers often work without a contract or (sickness / holiday pay), and are (offered plenty of / forced into long hours of) overtime.
3. Exploitation in the clothing industry results from (fierce competition / a written agreement) between Western buyers, brands and retailers.
4. Fair Trade offers (more competition / a genuine partnership) between developing-country clothing suppliers and developed-country retailers.
5. Fair Trade firms operate in partnership with their suppliers and (have no / take a close) interest in wages and working conditions.

### Activity

1. Find the website of one of the following UK Fair Trade clothing companies: Bishopston Trading, Chandni Chowk, Epona, Ethical Threads, Ganesha, Gossypium, Howies, Hug, Natural Collection, Pachacuti, People Tree and Traidcraft. Make notes on:

- the clothing items they sell
- in which countries the clothes are produced
- the partner organisations the company works with
- what the company says about the benefits of Fair Trade
- the URL and date you accessed the website.

2. Read chapter 34, “Put paid to sweatshops”, in Miles Litvinoff & John Madeley, *50 Reasons to Buy Fair Trade*, Pluto Press, 2007.

(225 words)

## 10. FAIR TRADE IN THE FUTURE – HOW FAR CAN IT GO?

Fair Trade is one of today's success stories. Between 2000 and 2006 the number of Fair Trade products on sale increased more than 25 times.

Originally Fair Trade meant just handicrafts. Then it spread to coffee and chocolate – then on to include a widening range of foods and drinks. Today Fair Trade clothes, bed-linen, shoes, furniture, flowers, carpets, footballs, wine, herbs and fruit juice are all available.

As dramatic as its growth has been, and for all its increasing influence, Fair Trade still represents only a small fraction of world trade. A fairer way of trading has huge potential but needs to keep on growing so that more of the world's poor people can benefit.

Could everything we buy, everything we use, eventually be Fair Traded? Harriet Lamb, director of the Fairtrade Foundation, expects more manufactured products from developing countries to carry the Fairtrade Mark so that more income is earned by the poor. Many manufactured goods are currently produced in conditions that are a long way from giving decent work and a fair wage to the people who make them.

Think of computers, for example. These are often made from components that come from many countries, so there would be a need to go beyond finished products – most Fair Trade goods at present – and see how the components could be Fair Traded.

If enough people want this to happen, if enough people insist that they want everything they buy and use to give the producer a fair return, then the Fair Trade system could replace the present unfair trading system as the chief way goods are produced, bought and sold.

The more that Fair Trade goods are sold, the sooner this can happen.

Paul Chandler, chief executive of Traidcraft, expects non-food Fair Trade products to become increasingly available to shoppers. But, he says, "this will require new approaches to Fair Trade production to cope with the quantities, consistent quality and competitive prices".

We can also expect that developing countries will exchange more Fair Trade goods between themselves in the future. This again will mean the benefits reach more producers.

Fair Trade needs to go a lot further - and it can.

(373 words)

### Self-test questions

Fill in the gaps in these sentences using one of the words, phrases or numbers in brackets:

1. The number of Fair Trade products has increased more than (25 /15) times since 2000.
2. Originally, Fair Trade was just (handicrafts / coffee and chocolate).
3. Many manufactured goods are produced in conditions that are (close to / a long way from) giving decent work and a fair wage to the people who make them.
4. Computers are often made from components that come from (two / many) different countries.

5. Developing countries can be expected to exchange (fewer / more) Fair Trade goods between themselves in future.

### Activities

1. Imagine a Fair Trade future.
  - *Either*: Take a well-known product that is not yet sold on Fair Trade lines – such as computers, CDs, mobile phones, or drinks cans. Find out about the different materials and components that are used to make the product, where they come from and how they are processed. Imagine how the people who produce and process the components at each stage could work and be paid under Fair Trade conditions.
  - *Or*: Think about non-Fair Trade food and drink items in the supermarkets: milk, for example, or UK-grown salads, vegetables or lamb. Find out about the different stages in bringing the product to the supermarket shelves. Imagine how the people who produce and handle the food or drink at each stage would work and be paid under Fair Trade conditions.

When you have completed your research, write a short description of how Fair Trade could work for people involved making or supplying the product or item that you have chosen.

2. Find out about Traidcraft from their website: [www.traidcraft.org](http://www.traidcraft.org). Make notes about how they are different from an average mail-order company.

3. Read chapter 50, “Change the world!”, in Miles Litvinoff & John Madeley, *50 Reasons to Buy Fair Trade*, Pluto Press, 2007.

(319 words)