



*Education is a human right with immense power to transform.  
On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy  
and sustainable human development.*

*—Kofi Annan*



# fair trade AND education



Lutheran World Relief is a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), individuals and parish groups in international relief, development, advocacy and social responsibility.



**The last time you ordered a double espresso**, did you think about the coffee farmer in Central America or Africa who grew and harvested the beans?

**When you ate that luscious dark chocolate bar**, were you aware that it originated from a tree somewhere in the tropics?



**And who wove the lovely basket** you bought on sale at the store last week?



SERRV International

## *Our lives are busy;*

we're looking for good prices and we often just don't realize the effect that something as simple as our shopping habits can have on people around the world — the men and women who produce the goods we take for granted.

Many of these producers live in a state of economic crisis. Without direct access to world markets, they have to sell through middlemen who eat up their profits, often leaving them with less than the cost of production. Small-scale farmers are forced off the land their families have worked for generations, or must abandon environmentally sound farming methods and work with dangerous chemicals and pesticides. Many have to migrate to overcrowded urban areas where jobs are scarce and living conditions deplorable. Without the protection of labor unions or effective laws to ensure their rights, they often work long hours far from home,

with no paid overtime, no childcare and unsafe working environments. Their children are denied the basic human rights of education and decent health care.

Fair Trade offers us an alternative opportunity to exchange goods in a way that promotes care of both the worker and the environment. Fair Trade standards were developed as a way to guarantee human rights at all levels of global trade — from producer to consumer. When our families, communities and churches purchase Fair Trade products, we honor our human connection with workers around the world and respect their right to receive fair prices for their hard work. Fair Trade can help build schools, homes, and health clinics. It ensures quality products for us, and the chance for a better life for them. It reminds us that, until we are all whole, none of us can be, and that the choices we make are truly felt around the world.



*Fair Trade helps farmers and artisans use their skills and expertise to break out of the cycle of poverty. Turning a simple exchange of goods into a human connection that benefits all participants, Fair Trade values the livelihoods of artisans and small-scale farmers. In particular, Fair Trade increases access to education.*



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Ernest Boyer, a great American educator, once stated, “Education must teach us that all our actions on the planet, physical or social, are irrevocably linked.” Most Americans have much greater access to education and the opportunities it brings than the majority of the people in developing nations. We consider education a given right. We assume that our children will be able to get the knowledge and training they need for a fulfilling career and good life. But we don’t always recognize the connections between our everyday activities, such as purchasing coffee, chocolate or jewelry, and life opportunities for the people who produce these goods in other countries.



## EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT

According to the United Nations Population Fund, 115 million children around the world don't attend grade school. Though many factors force kids to stay at home, most are directly related to poverty. Most people earning less than \$2 a day live in rural areas where it is difficult to attend school. The nearest school may be miles away traveling by foot, and every hour children spend away from the home means lost income for their family — something many simply can't afford. In impoverished communities, schools lack basic resources like desks and school supplies or even a budget to pay teachers' salaries. Parents may be faced with the choice between paying school fees and buying food for their families.

For these children, the most serious consequence of not getting an education is loss of empowerment — the ability to make good choices and take advantage of opportunities to improve their lives. Illiteracy limits employment opportunities and prevents workers from knowing their rights in the workplace and at home. It keeps them from seeking advanced degrees for careers that could benefit their communities. And would-be entrepreneurs lack access to technical skills that would give their businesses an edge in the global market.

### *Fair Trade Empowers Producers AND Consumers*

By providing educational opportunities for both producers and consumers, Fair Trade offers a new kind of trade partnership — one based on respect, dignity, and transparency. For individuals, this partnership means the ability to receive low-risk loans to improve their businesses. For families, it means earning enough income to supply adequate food, shelter, and education for children. For cooperatives, it means a guaranteed fair price to strengthen their communities for future generations. With Fair Trade, individuals, families and communities can gain the knowledge to build a better world.

Fair Trade standards require transparency in business practices and increased participation by producers in the export of their goods. Fair Trade cooperatives provide on-the-job training about improving products to meet consumer needs. These new skills give producers control over the success of their harvest or business and the experience they need for skilled jobs in the future.

And when producers get fair prices for their hard work, they gain an important social premium — income that enables them to provide educational opportunities for their communities. Fair Trade cooperatives make their decisions democratically and many decide to reinvest these social premiums in their children by building schools closer to home. Other communities decide to implement skills training or trade education that allows producers to compete more successfully in international markets.

Education also represents an investment in life opportunities for future generations. With math skills, families can create budgets, balance their accounts and learn the best way to save money. Reading and writing skills mean producers can understand information and laws about their rights, and they can learn about new farming techniques and ways to fight disease, or how to read and negotiate contracts. Better education also means greater access to jobs.

Through Fair Trade, consumers also participate in this positive cycle of social benefits by making informed purchases and understanding the history of how goods are produced and where they come from. As Fair Trade consumers, we are empowered to use our knowledge of world trade relationships to become agents of positive change. We have the opportunity to put our faith and values into action by spreading the word among friends, family and community to create a greater demand for Fair Trade products.

## LWR'S FAIR TRADE PROJECTS

*The following stories illustrate how LWR's Fair Trade projects help communities provide educational opportunities for their members. The following stories about farmers and artisans whose products are available through LWR's Fair Trade projects also serve to educate about Fair Trade's wide-reaching effects.*

# The LWR Coffee Project: *Pour Justice to the Brim*

## Francisco's Story

The Society of Small Producers for Coffee Export (SOPPEXCCA), a coffee cooperative in Nicaragua, produces some of the highest-quality coffee in the world. That quality hasn't come easily. For years the cooperative has consistently monitored the quality of its coffee beans by employing "cuppers." Through partnership with Lutheran World Relief and Equal Exchange, SOPPEXCCA trains and employs young adults to detect and label subtle distinctions in aroma, fragrance, acidity and flavor with their sensitive palates. Having people with these important skills on-site enables the cooperative to provide immediate feedback to the farmers growing the coffee beans.

A participant in the cupper training program, Francisco Javier Volle Garcia, from Jingotega, became one of Nicaragua's best cuppers at the age of 21. Farmers in his community gave three- and four-dollar contributions to support his education and training. Francisco recently turned down a well-paying job and citizenship in the United States in order to stay in his country and help the people who helped him. "I won't be able to realize my future until I can ensure that the small coffee producers of Nicaragua achieve the dignity of being able to sell their product in the most demanding markets," he explained. ▲

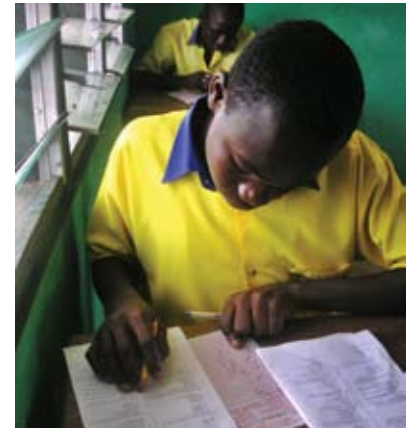


Pour justice to the brim! To learn how your parish or household can be part of the LWR Coffee Project, visit [lwr.org/coffee](http://lwr.org/coffee) or call 774-776-7340. The LWR Coffee Project is a partnership with Equal Exchange, a worker-owned co-operative dedicated to Fair Trade.

# The LWR Chocolate Project: *Sweet Justice*

## The Frimpong Abebrese Methodist School

When Kuapa Kokoo, a Fair Trade cocoa cooperative in Ghana, supplied funds to start the Frimpong Abebrese Methodist School, they provided educational opportunities for at least 250 children throughout the region. With computers and plans to give the school Internet access, children have the unique opportunity to participate in computer training and gain valuable skills. When Kuapa students meet with students from other schools for exams and competitions, they regularly perform better academically. The money for the school comes from the Fair Trade premium Kuapa Kokoo receives by selling their cocoa at Fair Trade prices.



Kuapa schools are preparing children to take on roles that benefit the entire community. Ragina Boatemwe, a student at the Frimpong Abebrese Methodist School, comments, “If I wasn’t in school now, I might be on the farm, or an outside day laborer, or selling things. But I want to be a nurse, so that I can help when somebody is sick.” As assistant headmaster and science teacher Daniel Ampunseh Npenseh notes, “Once a child is well educated, then he becomes a responsible person in the community.”

## Helena’s Story

Philamena Bempong entered her first year at the university in Kumasi, Ghana at the age of 20. An achievement of personal effort and success for Philamena, it is also a great accomplishment for her family and her community.

The annual cost of sending a child to secondary school in Ghana — \$45 — was a considerable drain on her mother, cocoa farmer Helena Bempong. By joining Kuapa Kokoo, she increased her income and gained the stability needed to send her son Paul through secondary school and to the University of Kumasi for a degree in rural development. She could also support Philamena through secondary school and continues to support her as she enters college to study medicine.

Kuapa Kokoo also offers scholarships to give more young people in Ghana a wide range of opportunities. Both Paul and Philamena now see a hopeful future with meaningful work that will allow them to give back to their mother and the other cocoa farmers who, thanks to Kuapa Kokoo, helped them accomplish their goals.



Phil Grout © 2003

Find out just how sweet justice can taste! Call 1-888-294-9660 or log on to [lwr.org/chocolate](http://lwr.org/chocolate) to learn more about the LWR Chocolate Project, and how LWR became part owners of Divine Chocolate, the Fair Trade company that buys Kuapa Kokoo cocoa. The LWR Chocolate Project is a partnership with SERRV International.



SERRV International

## The LWR Handcraft Project: *Gifts that Make a World of Difference*

### Maya's story

Until she joined the Kumbeshwar Technical School (KTS) in Nepal, Maya worked as a maid and did hand-spinning on the side to support herself. Through KTS, she was able to attend classes that helped develop her personal and professional skills. After receiving training in carpet weaving, women's health awareness and adult literacy, she now works as a carpet weaver and has increased her income by 40 percent, enabling her to support her family and educate her daughter.

KTS was founded by Siddhi Bahadur Khadgi, a butcher who donated the proceeds from his successful business to benefit members of the Dalit caste. The lowest rung in Hindi society, the Dalit caste in Nepal are treated poorly by all but their own. In addition to vocational training in carpet weaving, carpentry and knitting, KTS provides an orphanage and primary school for its members.

### Angela's story ▲

United for a Better Life, UPAVIM, is a cooperative of 66 women who live in La Esperanza, Guatemala. Most of them work as seamstresses, creating clothing, bags, and bracelets. UPAVIM strives to improve the quality of life for women in the area with a medical clinic, dental clinic, a primary school, and opportunities for personal and professional development and continuing education. The cooperative's president, Angela Bailon, had a dream to expand the cooperative's facilities into another building to accommodate the many women who wanted to join.

To help realize that dream, UPAVIM founded an alternative learning center with the goal of creating life-long learners. Members of UPAVIM can send their children to school at a reduced cost, and children are eligible for scholarships toward primary school or professional degrees at a public high school. As an organization, UPAVIM understands the value education brings to its individual members and to the entire community.

To support artisans like Maya and Angela through the LWR Handcraft Project, visit [lwr.org/handcraft](http://lwr.org/handcraft) or call 1-888-294-9660. Request an LWR Handcraft Project catalog for your home or organize an LWR Fair Trade Fair for your church. The LWR Handcraft Project is a partnership with A Greater Gift, the handcraft program of SERRV International.



▲ Inspired by their participation in an LWR Study Tour to Nicaragua, **Jim** and **Sondra Mericle** returned to Wyoming, MN and started their own Fair Trade coffee shop.



**fair trade** AND *education*

## YOUR FAIR TRADE STORY

The story of LWR Fair Trade project participants doesn't end here! As Lutherans, we can come together as individuals, parishes and communities to practice what we preach. Fair Trade purchases demonstrate compassion to economically vulnerable communities around the world. Lutheran World Relief wants to hear how your participation in Fair Trade fosters world justice.

Email [fairtrade@lwr.org](mailto:fairtrade@lwr.org) with your Fair Trade story.  
Send us your photos, too!



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