



*No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them.*

*—Isaiah 65:22-23*



# fair trade AND *human rights*



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.



Pete Pattison

*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 acknowledges and respects the inherent human rights of every individual.*



# fair trade AND. human rights

Eleanor Roosevelt, former first lady and lifelong champion of human rights, once commented, “Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? ...where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

She clearly sent out a call to action for all Americans to begin the difficult work of creating universal human justice by creating support in our own families, parishes and communities. Though it may seem intimidating, there are many small ways we can begin a concerted citizen action close to home. As consumers, when we purchase Fair Trade products, we respect the dignity and daily hard labor of these producers because Fair Trade enables them to negotiate business deals built on trust and long-term relationships. And, because they get a fair price for their products, worker groups enjoy the social premium of surplus funds that can benefit their community.



## HUMAN RIGHTS IN TRADE

The International Bill of Human Rights states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of [sister]hood.” All people are privileged to these rights, regardless of “race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status.” But without access to basic necessities like food and health care, there is little hope of achieving more intangible human rights like literacy and meaningful work.

Trade has the power to create avenues for countries to sell goods at a fair price, for governments to provide greater services to their people, for communities to provide better support to their members and for families to provide better care for each other. Richer and more powerful nations, however, are much better positioned to deal with the negative effects of rapid change in a global trading system. While some may benefit, unregulated international trade has harmful consequences for millions of people in poverty: weakened governments, environmentally unsound business practices and unfair working conditions. Instead of improving lives, many trade deals have made conditions worse for those in need.

## HOW FAIR TRADE SUPPORTS HUMAN RIGHTS

*Fair Trade helps to support many basic rights:*

**FAIR WAGES:** Fair Trade guarantees producers minimum prices that take into account their production costs. This increased income, along with programs that pay them before they sell their products, allow producers to feed their families, stay out of debt and keep their land.

**CHILDREN'S RIGHTS:** Many children's rights are violated when families are forced to send their children into dangerous working situations rather than to school. Fair Trade cooperatives can build schools close to home, pay teacher fees, provide scholarships and support children in their communities.

**WOMEN'S RIGHTS:** Most Fair Trade cooperatives are required to document how many women members they have, how many hold leadership roles and how many own or co-own land. They must also demonstrate that women have equal rights and responsibilities.

**THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE:** Fair Trade promotes direct relationships between international buyers and producers. These democratically organized, producer-run cooperatives, artisan groups or worker unions offer equal employment opportunities for women and men, facilitate access to buyers, provide credit and offer training and technical assistance to members.

**ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS:** Fair Trade standards forbid the use of persistent organic pollutants, dangerous chemicals and other substances harmful to people. The standards also protect wetlands, virgin forests, watersheds, and encourage producers to adhere to strict standards. Approximately 70 percent of Fair Trade coffee sold in the U.S. is certified organic.

**INDIGENOUS RIGHTS:** Indigenous people frequently face discrimination based on language, culture, religion and ethnic identity. Fair Trade cooperatives can serve as a way to address political, cultural, military and territorial assaults on their way of life.

## LWR'S FAIR TRADE PROJECTS

*The following stories illustrate how LWR's Fair Trade projects help communities realize the human rights and fundamental freedoms that every person is entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy. The following stories about farmers and artisans whose products are available through LWR's Fair Trade projects lift up specific examples of how Fair Trade does this.*

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

## Indigenous Rights

Prescraft, an artisans' association in Cameroon, is a project of the Presbyterian Church dedicated to preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Northwest Province by providing employment for local artisans making traditional crafts who would otherwise migrate to cities. Prescraft artisans produce traditional ceramics, baskets, musical instruments and wood carvings. They receive a fair price for their handcrafts and assert their cultural rights by maintaining their lifestyle and traditions in rural areas.

Reflecting on his career at Prescraft, former director Pete Ngeh says, "My 17 years at the helm of Prescraft were full of satisfaction. I have seen lives transformed: artisans building their own houses, sending their children to school and feeding themselves. I believe that this miracle has only come about through Fair Trade – it touches the lives of the most vulnerable."

*Gilbert Atong, who comes from a very poor community in Cameroon, trained at Prescraft Centre – Bafut. ▲ Now employed producing crafts for Prescraft, he was able to marry and raise two children.*



SERRV International

To support artisans like Gilbert 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.



## The LWR Chocolate Project: *Sweet Justice*

### Fair Trade and the Right to Organize

The right to organize has had a significant impact on the lives of many cocoa farmers in Ghana. In 1992, the Ghanaian government partially liberalized the cocoa market, allowing farmers to organize into cooperatives to sell their cocoa directly to the state-owned exporter rather than relying on middlemen. Nana Frimpong Abrebrese worked to organize farmers in the central region of Ghana into a powerful cooperative, predicting this would give them better bargaining leverage with cocoa buyers. In 1993, Kuapa Kokoo was born and today boasts more than 45,000 members.

In addition to better prices, Kuapa Kokoo offers social benefits for its members, including loans to farmers, wells for easy access to clean water, improvements for local schools and mobile medical clinics.

In 1996, Kuapa Kokoo instituted the Kuapa Gender Program, providing micro-loans to women's groups to help women supplement their income and remain economically independent of their husbands' cocoa farms. These micro-loans were used for initiatives like selling soap created from the potash produced from burnt cocoa husks, a waste product of the cocoa harvest.



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.

# The LWR Coffee Project:

## *Pour Justice to the Brim*

### Fair Trade and Environmental Rights

In Colombia, the Alto Occidente Coffee Cooperative of Caldas (CCAOC) created the Association of Small Coffee Producers — ASPROCAFE Ingrumá. Using the social premium from their Fair Trade coffee sales, ASPROCAFE Ingrumá has initiated a wide range of social programs: programs for women and youth, scholarships, school lunch programs and organic farming projects. These organic farming projects empower farmers to assert their right to live in a healthy, clean environment.

Doña Lucia knew nothing about coffee farming when she moved to the Riosucia area years ago. After getting involved with the organic farming projects, she has been able to support her five children by growing and selling coffee. She learned organic farming techniques from the cooperative and sold her coffee at a Fair Trade price. Now, Doña Lucia owns her own beautiful house where she grows organic fruits, vegetables and herbs in addition to running her organic coffee crop. Her gas stove uses recycled coffee pulp and animal wastes. In addition to the money Doña Lucia saves by growing her own food, she appreciates the health benefits of organic living.

“You see my hands?” she asked. “They’re covered in dirt. But they’re no longer burnt from chemicals. And my land? It’s time to give back to the earth a part of what I take from the earth.”

Lutheran World Relief is partnering with ASPROCAFE/Ingrumá, through work with Equal Exchange, to increase food security in the area, improve coffee yield and quality, and obtain organic certification for 451 indigenous coffee producers. This project will help ensure that farmers like Doña Lucia are able to continue making a living off their land for generations to come.

Equal Exchange



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.



- ▲ Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN hosts an annual LWR Fair Trade Fair to engage students, faculty, and community members in LWR's Fair Trade projects.



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## 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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