How K-12 Students and Teachers Can Promote Fair Trade for Farmers Across the World

When you buy fair trade...
kids can go to school instead of working.

...farmers can afford food and doctor’s visits for their families.

...your food will always be as sweet for farmers as it is for you!
Farming feeds us all and employs half the world’s population. Through increased technology and transportation around the world, we can get any kind of food and large companies are getting lots of profits. The United States is the world’s largest consumer of coffee, cocoa and other crops from the global South such as bananas, tea, and tropical fruits. Unfortunately, the benefits and profits are not shared with farmers and farm workers in the global south and the USA, who work in “sweatshops in the fields.” Industrial agriculture is destroying rainforests and polluting air and water. Agriculture is one of the world’s most dangerous jobs, and involves about 70% of all child workers. These problems are cause by injustices in international and domestic trade. Global coffee prices have plummeted to all-time lows in recent years, leading to malnutrition, loss of farms, and even increased drug cultivation in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Cocoa farmers are so poor they have been forced to use child labor and, in the worst cases, child slaves. Banana plantations are known to deny basic labor rights and use pesticides that harm workers. US family farmers and farm workers face similar problems.

As problems like this become clear, more consumers are asking for products made without exploitation — Fair Trade not “free trade.” Fortunately, coffee, cocoa, tea, bananas, and fresh fruits with the “Fair Trade Certified” and Fair Trade Federation labels can be found in stores across the USA (other food products and crafts also bear the Fair Trade Federation label). These two labels are the only guarantee that a product has been independently verified as fair trade following international standards. In the USA, farmers markets and Community supported Agriculture let consumers return fair prices and appreciation directly to family farmers. About 85% of Fair Trade products are also organic and sustainably farmed, as are crops produced by family farmers in the USA.

Since 1999, Global Exchange has coordinated a Fair Trade campaign involving students, K-12 students, community and faith-based organizations, labor unions, and environmentalists. Thanks to the work of people across the USA, the number of companies offering entirely Fair Trade products has grown and even companies like Starbucks, Procter & Gamble, and Dunkin’ Donuts offer Fair Trade Certified coffee.

This is great, but Fair Trade products represent only a small part of what stores sell and people buy. Fair Trade coops sell 10-20% of their crop at Fair Trade Certified prices. Given the many problems facing farmers and farm workers, we have to keep building the market. This Guide includes all you need to organize your community around Fair Trade. Please share these materials with interested friends and organizations to make the widest impact. We encourage you to get organizing tools from the agricultural groups listed in the resources section, and use them with this Guide to campaign for total social and environmental justics. The best way to get your campaign going strong and have the most impact is to connect with other students working for Fair Trade at a new on-line bulletin board: ecofairstudents.tribe.net (teachers and parents, see fairtradeteachers.tribe.net).

For additional information and support, see the resources in the back of this Guide, visit our website, contact us, and sign up for our listserv. Keep in touch about your efforts so we can share your successes with our network and help you build your campaign. We can’t wait to hear about your first moves! We also encourage you to support Fair Trade producers by shopping at our Fair Trade stores (globalexchangestore.org), and help keep our campaigns running by joining Global Exchange or making a donation. You can do this from our web site or by calling our membership department.

Thank you for working for justice for all who feed the world,

Global Exchange Fair Trade Team
Chocolate is made from cocoa beans, which grow in pods on trees in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia. A cocoa pod has about 50 beans. It takes 400 beans to make 1 pound of chocolate.

The United States buys more chocolate and coffee than any other country. In 2002, Americans ate about 3.3 billion pounds of chocolate, worth $13 billion!

In 2000, The US government reported that 15,000 children age 9-12 have been sold into forced labor on cotton, coffee and cocoa farms in the Ivory Coast. The Ivory Coast produces 43% of the world’s cocoa.

284,000 children on West African cocoa farms work in hazardous tasks such as using machetes and applying pesticides. 60% of children working on cocoa farms in the Ivory Coast don’t attend school.

A huge drop in world coffee prices has led farmers into severe poverty, malnutrition, and even increased drug cultivation.

Banana plantations are known for denying basic worker rights as well as pesticide misuse that leads to severe worker harm.

Farmers and farmworkers get only a little bit of the cost you pay at the store. Cocoa farmers get about 5 cents for every dollar you spend on chocolate!

West African cocoa farmers earn $30-$108 per household member per year. Coffee farmers earn about $300 per year. Most can’t afford to buy the kind of chocolate and coffee we have in the USA, and haven’t even tasted it.

In 2001, US chocolate companies agreed to work to ending abusive child labor. Unfortunately, the plan doesn’t ensure a fair price for farmers, meaning that farmers will be forced to use child labor.

The BEST solution to the problems facing farmers and farmworkers is Fair Trade, which guarantees a minimum price, supports community development, promotes sustainable farming, and prohibits abusive child labor.

Fair Trade helps farmers to meet their basic needs and send their children to school instead of needing them to work.

Sales through Fair Trade give farmers twice as much as sales that aren’t through Fair Trade. Farmers who sell outside of the Fair Trade system sell to “middlemen” who pay them only about half of the world price. Fair Trade farmers sell directly to companies, so they get all of the money.

The Fair Trade cocoa system involves more than 42,000 farmers in co-ops from 9 countries. The Fair Trade coffee system includes more than 550,000 farmers in 300 coops from 22 countries.

Fair Trade products such as chocolate, coffee, tea, bananas, fresh fruits, and nuts are available in the USA, and are marked with the “Fair Trade Certified” or “Fair Trade Federation” labels.

Fair Trade producers sell only 10-20% of their crop at Fair Trade terms. The rest is sold for whatever they can get. These farmers need our help to get more companies, stores, and consumers to buy Fair Trade products!
Frequently Asked Questions

A. Fair Trade involves independent, third-party verification that a product was sourced through international standards for fair labor and wage conditions. Fair trade means that the farmers: 1) receive a sufficient price under direct long-term contracts, 2) are organized into democratic cooperatives (coffee, cocoa, bananas, fruits) or work on larger farms where workers receive a living wage and can bargain collectively (tea, bananas, fruits), 3) do not use abusive child labor or forced labor, and 4) use sustainable farming methods. Fair Trade products bear the TransFair USA “Fair Trade Certified” and/or “Fair Trade Federation” labels.

TransFair USA is a third-party certification agency that places the “Fair Trade Certified” label on coffee, chocolate, cocoa, tea, bananas, and other fruits; and is the USA’s affiliate of the Fair Trade Labelling Organizations International. The Fair Trade Federation is an association of businesses that follow Fair Trade principles across the board; and is an affiliate with the International Federation of Alternative Trade. The Fair Trade Certified or Fair Trade Federation label are the only guarantees that every step from the farm to you followed international fair trade criteria.

Q: Why don’t more companies sell Fair Trade?
A: Even though big companies like M&M/Mars sell billions of dollars of chocolate, they want to keep most of it. Paying farmers more means they have less money for themselves, even if it is just a few pennies per candy bar. Also, these companies need more people to tell them that they want Fair Trade products, not ones made by child workers or poor farmers. Fair Trade co-ops sell only about 10-20% of their crop at Fair Trade terms, selling the rest for much less because companies don’t want to pay a fair price.

Q: What are chocolate companies doing about abusive child labor on cocoa farms?
A: The chocolate industry’s plan involves projects to educate farmers about child labor and help improve their production and marketing, in some cocoa farming areas in Africa. The plan is at candyusa.org

Q: Why is Fair Trade a better solution than what chocolate companies are doing, and projects that other companies are doing to help farmers?
A: Unless companies agreed to pay farmers a fair wage, farmers will remain poor and will see no choice but to have their children work on their farms, or even use abusive child labor. Fair Trade offers the best solution because it guarantees a fair price and prohibits abusive child labor and forced labor.

Q: What does organic or “shade grown” mean?
A: These are two types of “earth-friendly” products. Organic means that farmers cannot use pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

Q. Are organic and shade grown products free of abusive child labor? Do these farmers get paid fairly?
A: Even though organic and shade grown products are good, they don’t require any minimum price and they don’t prohibit abusive child labor. Look for products with both the Fair Trade label and an organic/shade grown label to ensure the best for all.

Q: Where can I buy Fair Trade products?
A: Look for the Fair Trade Certified and Fair Trade Federation labels! You can get company and store listings from Global Exchange (globalexchange.org/cocoa), TransFair USA (transfairusa.org), and the Fair Trade Federation (www.fairtradefederation.com)

Q. If a product doesn’t have the Fair Trade Certified or Fair Trade Federation label but the package talks about fair trade, is it considered Fair Trade?
A: Unless you see the Fair Trade Certified or Fair Trade Federation label on that product, you can’t guarantee any claims about its fair trade status. Unfortunately, some companies use fair trade language to seem more ethical than they really are. If a package has phrases like “fairly traded,” “made with fair trade ingredients,” “our company follows fair trade practices,” or “your purchase supports fairness for farmers,” or something similarly indicating fair trade practices, contact the company to ask what their purchasing practices are. Refer them to TransFair USA and help build the Fair Trade market!

Q: How can I find more information on the Fair Trade system and how farmers can join?
A: See the web site for the Fair Trade Labelling Organizations International: fairtrade.net, and the International Federation for Alternative Trade: ifat.org

Q. Are there other Fair Trade products available?
YES- you can find hand crafts and other items at:
Fair Trade Federation: fairtradefederation.org
Global Exchange Fair Trade Stores: globalexchangestore.org
What You Can Do to Help Farmers!

1. Write letters to big companies like M&M/Mars, asking them to sell Fair Trade. Lots of other schools are writing to M&M/Mars and if we all do this together, we will be more likely to get them to agree with us. We hope you will write to M&M’s and then write to other companies, too.

2. Get your school’s chocolate fundraising program, vending machines, and cafeteria to use Fair Trade (chocolate, bananas/fruit, tea, coffee)! Fair Trade chocolate fundraisers raise money, help farmers, AND educate others! What a deal! If your school doesn’t have a chocolate fundraiser, set one up with Fair Trade and use the money for a class trip or project, donate it to a favorite organization, or lots of other good things.

3. Buy only Fair Trade when you buy chocolate and other products. This might mean spending a few pennies more or buying a different brand, but it will taste even sweeter because you know the farmers were paid enough and no children worked to make your candy.

4. Help your friends and family learn about farmers and Fair Trade. Share this book with them. Ask them to buy Fair Trade products when they shop. Be sure to ask them to write to companies like M&M/Mars, too!

5. Ask local stores, cafes, restaurants, and bakeries to sell Fair Trade chocolate and other products. Store managers listen to their customers and want to make them happy. If you tell them about Fair Trade, they will be likely to sell it.

6. Learn more about Fair Trade farmers and the places they live. Learn to make food from a cocoa, coffee, or banana growing country. Find out about music from these places. Share what you learn with your friends, classmates, and family.

7. Become friends with Fair Trade farmers and their children. Write a letter to tell them about yourself and your school. They will write back with stories about themselves. Be sure to tell the farmers how you love the treats they help make! This will really make them very happy!

Getting Started! This Action Guide has all you need to get started on these projects. For more information and ideas, contact Global Exchange and visit our website.
The following sample letter is for M&M/Mars, maker of M&M's, Milky Way, and Snickers. Lots of other schools are writing to M&M/Mars because if we all do this together, we will be more likely to get them to agree with us. We hope you will write to M&M's and then write to other companies, too. You can find the addresses for other companies at www.radicalthought.org. We have a special web page to post student letters and would love to see yours!

TO: Paul Michaels President M&M/Mars Inc.
6885 Elm St., McLean, VA 22101

Dear Mr. Michaels,

I am writing to ask you to sell Fair Trade Certified chocolate. I am sad that many kids my age are working long hours on cocoa farms. These kids can't go to school, and they are paid little or no money. This makes chocolate taste bad to me!

I think Fair Trade is the best way for you end these problems. Fair Trade gives farmers enough to pay for what they need, send their kids to school, and have enough money to pay their workers. Fair Trade helps farmers stop using child labor and slavery. Fair Trade chocolate will taste a lot better to me!

I have learned that some farmers in the Ivory Coast use child slaves. Many children on cocoa farms in Africa also do unsafe things like using machetes and pesticides. A lot of these kids have no family members near the cocoa farms, which means that they could have been sold to work on the farms. Many of these kids can't go to school like me. In fact, 2 of every 3 kids on cocoa farms in the Ivory Coast can't afford to go to school! Besides all this, cocoa farmers are really poor. I read that cocoa farmers earn only $30 to $110 in one year! This poverty is what causes slavery and child labor.

I know that your company signed a plan to end child slavery and forced labor on cocoa farms. While this is a positive move, the plan doesn't address the low cocoa prices that are causing all the problems on cocoa farms. I am very sad to know that your chocolate will still be made by children, maybe even slaves.

I think that your company has the responsibility to pay cocoa farmers a Fair Trade price because you earn a lot of money selling chocolate and a lot of other companies look up to you. You are one of the biggest companies in the United States so you can afford to use Fair Trade.

A lot of children like your products but we want you to be a better company to cocoa farmers. Please start selling Fair Trade chocolate so we will feel better about buying your products. There is enough cocoa for you to do this now because Fair Trade co-ops sell only about 10% of their crop at fair trade prices, and sell the rest for much less.

Thank you for reading my letter. I hope to hear about your plans to sell Fair Trade soon.

Your friend,
Dear Manager,

As a customer, I care about how what I buy affects other people and would be happy if you would sell and use Fair Trade products. These products ensure fair wages and working conditions for farmers. I go out of my way to buy Fair Trade and would buy them here.

I love things like chocolate and bananas, but have learned that many farmers around the world are too poor to pay for things like food, school for their children, and health care. Some cocoa farmers in the Ivory Coast even use child slave labor! Growing cocoa, coffee, and bananas on large farms has also caused environmental problems such as loss of trees, and air and water pollution because of pesticides and chemicals.

Fair Trade solves these problems by making sure farmers get a fair price, making sure farmers do not use abusive child labor, and encouraging farmers to use environmentally friendly methods. Fair Trade helps farmers take care of their families, send their children to school, pay their workers, and take care of the earth.

This is why kids and adults like me want to buy Fair Trade products like chocolate, bananas, coffee, and tea here. Lots of people in our town asking businesses like yours for Fair Trade products. If you sell/use Fair Trade, this will help your business as well as farmers.

A nonprofit called TransFairUSA (transfairusa.org, 510-663-5260) can help you find Fair Trade products. You can also contact the Fair Trade Federation (fairtradefederation.com) for companies that sell a wide variety of fair trade products.

I also hope you tell the companies whose products you sell that lots of people want Fair Trade and that you would like them to sell it to you.

Please sell Fair Trade so we can buy it from you and enjoy yummy treats and foods that are as sweet for farmers as they are for us! Thank you!!

YOUR VOICE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

A group of students in Washington state went to their local store as a group and asked them to start selling Fair Trade chocolate. They told the store manager about the problems on cocoa farms, and how Fair Trade can help solve these. The children told the store manager that they would not buy any chocolate that was not Fair Trade! The manager listened carefully to the students and agreed with them that they had a good idea. She found out where to get Fair Trade chocolate and now she sells it in the store. You can do this in your town, too!
1. Form a Fair Trade Action group!

Get friends together for an after school group. Ask a teacher or parent to work with you. Be sure to get lots of different kinds of people in your group: teachers, staff, parents, and other student and community groups. Figure out how Fair Trade relates to different kids of interests so you can get wide support. When a new person or group joins the in campaign, ask them for ideas about what other groups you could work with. Don’t forget to work with staff from your school or organization. Staff know the ins and outs of the system and work directly with board members and others who make the ultimate decisions.

2. Choose your goal, or goals

Get your class or school to write to M&M/Mars, asking the company to sell Fair Trade, and hold a meeting or phone call with your class or school. Get your school/group fundraiser to go Fair Trade. Get Fair Trade chocolate in vending machines. Get your school cafeteria to use Fair Trade chocolate, cocoa, bananas/fruit, tea, and coffee. Get local businesses to offer Fair Trade. Educate your school and community.

3. Research the issues

Make sure you have the facts down well enough that you can talk about them in a way that is understood and convincing. Use the resources in this packet and our website to get started.

4. If you are working on a school/group fundraiser or talking to local stores

Find out what company supplies the kind of products you want. This will help you decide what to ask your school, club, and businesses.

5. Find out who makes the decisions about the campaign area you have chosen

This may involve a few people, such as school or organization board members, office staff, student government members, school staff, PTA members, store managers, or regional buyers for chain stores. You should also figure out who might be able to influence key decision makers and how you can get their support. For example, if you have such as a friend, teacher, parent, or staff person who knows the key decision makers, ask them to help your campaign.

6. Outline your plan of action

Using what you’ve learned from your research, make a plan for action (a “strategy”). Be sure to leave room for unexpected turns and ideas from people who get involved later.

If you are collecting letters to M&M/Mars, or organizing an event to educate others

Doing this around holidays or special events associated with chocolate works best. Develop a written plan stating how many letters you want to get sent, and how this will be done: in classes, during lunch, after school, at special events, etc. If you are planning an educational event, write a clear description of what it will involve. Share this educational guide with teachers and parents, and get them to support your plan.

If you are working on a fundraiser, cafeteria, vending machines, or local businesses

If the company your school or the business uses already has Fair Trade (check at www.transfairusa.org), all you have to do is ask them to offer it to your school/group. If your company doesn’t have Fair Trade, the FIRST thing you should ask your school or organization to do is ask the company to offer it. There is a sample letter in this packet for this. If the company says they won’t offer Fair Trade, then you will have to ask your school or organization to switch to a company that does.

7. Make materials for education and action

Be sure your materials are well-formatted, easy to read, and include your contact information. Have a few friends, family members, or other people look over the materials to make sure they are easy to understand and will convince people to support your ideas.

Materials should cover these three main areas:

a. The PROBLEM: Abusive child labor and
Fair Trade Fundraisers (continued)

poverty on cocoa farms
b. The SOLUTION: What Fair Trade is and why it helps
c. The ACTION: The goal(s) you chose in Step 1

Materials should be made for different audiences:
a. For writing to M&M/Mars. Use the flyer in this packet and see letters from other schools and students at the Global Exchange web site
b. For public education and getting parents or teachers to support you develop a flyer that covers these issues with basic facts supporting each main idea, or use the flyers in this packet.
c. For school decision makers and businesses you’ll need more information, but not too much. Put the materials into a packet with a letter (sample in this packet) that covers the problem, solution, and action. You might include:

The problem
• The fact sheet in this packet
• News articles (See the articles in this packet)

The solution
• Background on Fair Trade and how it helps farmers (act sheet, flyer, and farmer story)

The Action
• A list of companies that have Fair Trade (see globalexchange.org, transfairusa.org, fairtradefederation.org)
• A list of schools and organizations that are already using Fair Trade for fundraisers, vending machines, and cafeterias. They can’t say your plan is impossible if others are doing it already! (Contact us for this information.)
• Notes, postcards, or petitions requesting Fair Trade

8. Getting your school/community involved
Public support will help you reach your goal faster, and with the best response. Public education is the key to getting public support.
a. Draft sample letters to M&M/Mars, school decision makers, and local businesses using the materials in this packet as templates.
b. Hand out flyers and collect petition signatures at the entrance of your school at the beginning and end of the day and at major school events.
c. Set up a table and give out your campaign materials - along with samples of the Fair Trade products you are working on - before or after school, at lunchtime and meetings, etc.
d. Ask other groups if you can hand out materials, collect signatures.
e. Give out Fair Trade treats when tabling or at events - you get a ready-made crowd! Ask local stores to donate the samples, and list them as a sponsor if you table or hold an event

9. Hold an Assembly, Event, or Give a Talk
Organize a school assembly or educational event featuring students, faculty, staff, and an outside group with expertise on the issue. To make the issues real and keep the audience’s attention, include some videos and photos, and even a short skit or two. Be sure to leave time for questions and answers at the end. Don’t forget to mention your campaign to set up a Fair Trade fundraiser at the beginning and end of the assembly, and a few more times through the event! See the event organizing guide and the resource lists in this packet to get started. Be sure to have chocolate, cocoa, Public Education materials, petitions and other Action Tools for your campaign, and a sign-up sheet available after the event. In addition to organizing an assembly and public events, ask teachers to let you talk about Fair Trade in their classes and offer to speak at the meetings of local organizations.

10. Get the media interested and show them that the community is supportive.
Ask supportive parents teachers, and children to write op-eds and letters to the editor throughout the campaign. Once you get rolling with your campaign to collect letters for M&M/Mars; get Fair Trade for your fundraiser, cafeteria, or vending machines; or lobby local stores, contact the media in your community and at your school and ask them to do a story about your work. Write letters to the editor and op-eds in support of your campaign. Keep the local press informed at every stage of the process by sending media advisories to local newspapers, radio, and TV.
11. Hold Creative Actions
Organize creative actions with your group and use the media to get your school to take action in your M&M/Mars letter writing campaign or let decision makers know you are serious about getting Fair Trade Certified products at your school and in local businesses. Get classrooms to send cards to key decision makers. Organize a parade to the principal’s office! Set up a web site and use media to make it known you believe in what you are doing!

12. Keep your supporters involved
As you are collecting more and more letters to M&M/Mars, making progress with your school campaign, or getting local businesses to offer Fair Trade, make sure to get more and more people in your school and community to voice their support for your work. Organize a community-wide “call-in” day during which people from every neighborhood will call M&M/Mars, board members, or their local stores in support of the campaign. If a particular board member or business member is opposed to Fair Trade, ask people to call them in particular. It may be helpful to draft sample letters, postcards, and phone call “talking points,” but please remind people that they will have the most effect when they act as individuals, using their own words.

13. Getting support from key decision makers
a. Initial Outreach
First, send or personally deliver the materials you’ve developed to each teacher, fundraising decision maker, or business and ask for their support. Be sure to follow-up with more phone calls and an offer to provide more information and answer questions as needed. Identify a few supportive teachers, fundraising decision makers, or businesses. Once you have enlisted the support of one or two key people, they can help you learn how decisions are made and how to get wider support.

Schedule an initial meeting with some teachers, fundraising decision makers, or business owners. Make sure one of your key supporters can come. Bring in the materials you’ve prepared. Sound excited but reasonable and informed. Take their concerns seriously. They will want to know how Fair Trade works, why it is important, and how it will fit into the school’s curriculum, help fundraising, or help business. Emphasize how important it is for social justice, educational, and environmental reasons so they’ll be more likely take it seriously. Offer to help make materials to help teachers collect letters to M&M/Mars, and promote Fair Trade in your school and businesses.

* Making chocolate sales, vending machines, or your cafeteria Fair Trade: Special steps
For these, will probably have to make a presentation at least one public meeting for your school board or organization’s board of directors. Develop a short, clear, and convincing presentation including the three main ideas mentioned earlier: the PROBLEM, SOLUTION, and ACTION. Present each of these main ideas with a well-chosen selection of information, photos, and video as appropriate. Be sure to give examples of companies you could switch to and name schools/organizations that have already switched to Fair Trade for fundraisers, vending machines, or cafeterias successfully. Practice your talk for your parents, teachers and some friends and ask them to help you improve it.

Be sure to go to all board meetings when your issue is scheduled. From the moment of introduction to the time for vote, make sure your group turns out supporters who can speak on behalf of your campaign. In some cases, committees or subcommittees will consider the resolution before the full board does. Make sure you attend these meetings and present your case when public input is allowed.

Pack the house. On the day your proposal is going to be voted on, make sure the board meeting is filled with supporters of your campaign- especially parents and children! Bring colorful and eye-catching signs to show support. Encourage supporters to speak in favor of the campaign when the public is allowed to speak, and make sure you have a few people ready with prepared remarks. The day of the vote is your final chance to show that the community really cares about your issue.
14. CELEBRATE your victory!
When you reach your goal, organize a press conference- its a newsworthy event. When you collect your desired number of letter to M&M/ Mars, make a display with the letters and some large posters. Invite the media to interview students and take photos of your letter display. Do a skit for the local TV news . If you get your school or organization to use Fair Trade for its fundraising program, or get local businesses to offer Fair Trade Have a ceremony when the first bar of Fair Trade Certified chocolate is delivered for your fundraiser, vending machines, or to the local store; or when your cafeteria first serves Fair Trade foods.

9. Follow Up
After you write to M&M/Mars, you'll get a form letter back

If you do a fundraiser or business campaign, make sure that things are progressing in a timely manner and see how you can help keep things moving. Help promote Fair Trade so it sells- and farmers get the income they need! If things don’t happen as promised, let supporters, board members/businesses and the media know.

SAMPLE LETTER TO DECISION MAKERS

Dear Decision Maker,

We, a group of concerned students, staff, teachers, parents and community members, are writing to ask that our chocolate fundraising program begin to use Fair Trade chocolate and cocoa. We know that our fundraiser is an important part of our budget but want to be sure that our profits don’t come at the expense of cocoa farmers and their kids . To help you understand this request, we are sending information on the hardships of cocoa farming, why Fair Trade is important, and how we can get Fair Trade chocolate and cocoa for our program.

We have learned that most cocoa farmers are so poor the must have their children work, or even use child slaves. The US chocolate industry has agreed to work to end child slavery by 2005 but their plan doesn’t guarantee stable and sufficient cocoa prices, which is the only way to end abusive child labor once and for all.

The BEST solution is Fair Trade, which gives farmers a minimum price, prohibits abusive child labor and forced labor, supports community development, and encourages sustainable farming. Fair Trade cocoa farmers can afford to send their children to school and pay their workers instead of using child slaves.

For these reasons, we would like our fundraising program to use Fair Trade chocolate and cocoa. We are asking you to help with this by writing an official letter to the company that supplies our chocolate and ask them to offer Fair Trade. If they will not offer Fair Trade, we would like to switch to or add a company that has it.

Demand for Fair Trade is growing in our school and community. Selling Fair Trade chocolate would allow us to meet our fundraising needs in a way that helps cocoa farmers and their families much more than our current program does.

Fundraising is a big business for America’s chocolate companies and it is one of the major ways that our children learn about chocolate production. Though chocolate fundraisers have benefited us, they haven’t done much to help cocoa farming families. Fair Trade fundraisers will help us bring better lives to cocoa farmers and their families and teach our children values that will make them good global citizens.

We would like to discuss this issue with you and will call to set a meeting soon. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

CONTACT NAME, PHONE, E-MAIL
Dear,

Our school/organization has used your fundraising company for many years. We enjoy working with you and have found the program to be quite successful. However, we are gravely concerned about child labor and poverty on cocoa farms and want to begin selling Fair Trade chocolate and cocoa so that our profits do not come at the expense of child workers and poor cocoa farmers.

As you may know, child slavery on Ivory Coast cocoa farms was reported by the International Labor Organization and the US State Department. The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) found that over 284,000 children on West African cocoa farms work in hazardous tasks such as using machetes and applying pesticides without protection. In addition, 12,500 children had no relatives in the area, meaning they could have been brought in as slaves. More than 66% of children on Ivory Coast cocoa farms don’t attend school.

These problems are all due to poverty, caused by insufficient cocoa prices. Annual cocoa revenues average $30 to $110 per household member, making "it difficult for families to have sufficient income to meet their needs." (IITA) In the worst cases, farmers have resorted to child slavery.

Though child slavery has been found only in the Ivory Coast, no source of cocoa is immune from these problems because poverty pervades cocoa growing regions across Latin America, and Southeast Asia. Unless you help end poverty among cocoa producers, the problems found in West Africa will spread.

We know about the chocolate industry’s anti-slavery Protocol, as well as associated pilot projects, and development work. Though these are positive moves, they don’t guarantee stable and sufficient revenues for cocoa farmers, which is the only way to end child slavery and poverty for good. The Protocol also involves “voluntary standards,” so companies don’t even have to follow it.

We are deeply saddened by this situation and believe that your company, as a leader chocolate industry, and a company that reaches countless children through fundraising programs that use your products, has the responsibility to ensure that its products are produced under fair labor conditions. You can do this by offering Fair Trade chocolate and cocoa.

We believe Fair Trade is the best way to stop abusive child labor and help cocoa farmers meet basic needs and send their kids to school. It ensures a living wage for cocoa farmers and prohibits abusive child labor, and forced labor. Demand for Fair Trade is increasing among students and schools nationwide so you will have the support of your customers like us if you offer Fair Trade chocolate products.

You can find out how to get Fair Trade chocolate and cocoa from TransFair USA (transfairusa.org), the non-profit, independent Fair Trade certifier in the USA, or the Fair Trade Federation (fairtradefederation.com).

Thank you for your consideration. We would very much appreciate a reply about your plans to seek Fair Trade Certification.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE LETTER TO FUNDRAISING COMPANY

YOUR VOICE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Town Times (Connecticut) June 20, 2003
Board Of Education Hears Student Requests
By Carolyn Wallach

The Board of Education held its last meeting of the school year on June 11. In a well-prepared and convincing presentation, a group of freshmen encouraged the board to restrict the sale of certain chocolate at school fundraisers. The students described the connection between chocolate production and child slavery in West Africa. According to their information, two-thirds of the U.S. chocolate market is controlled by Hershey’s and Mars, companies which purchase cocoa from West Africa but which have not yet actively addressed the problem of child slavery. The students argued that selling chocolate and candies produced by Hershey’s and Mars conflicts with the mission and CORE ethical values of District 13. “It is immoral to allow this to continue when we know that we can do something about it,” they said. The students suggested that for fundraisers such as the junior class candy sale, groups sell candy from “fair trade companies,” companies whose product has been certified "slave free." Board members responded favorably to the students, but pointed out that the issue could not be decided immediately. Joyce Kellish, chairperson of the BOE, thanked the students for their efforts. "I appreciate the work you’ve put into this. It’s obvious you’ve prepared well," said Kellish, before assigning the matter to the policy committee for further study. In the meantime, the board encouraged Superintendent Breck to talk with district administrators and the junior class advisor and let them know that the BOE will be considering policy on this issue.
How to Organize an Educational Event

Educational events are powerful ways to inform and activate members of your community. Videos, plays, and speakers who are experts on the issue are especially great ways to do this. Events are most effective when they supply real solutions - like Fair Trade—and help people get together to promote these solutions. Events should give a boost to your existing campaign and bring in new people to your campaign.

First things first: What to do before you start to organize the event

Find a speaker
Some important factors to consider when choosing a speaker are reputation, availability and cost. Images and videos can be very powerful additions to your event so you may consider showing slides, a short film or an excerpt from a film with the talk. You might also use a longer-length film for the main event and follow that with a discussion led by an outside speaker or someone from your group.

Think about your audience and your goals
What are you trying to accomplish by bringing the speaker? Who do you want to attend the event? How will you get the word out? Do you plan on doing media outreach? Flyers, events, calendars, mail, e-mail, phone calls, public service announcements, press releases and word-of-mouth are all good ways to get people to the event.

Get cosponsors.
Brainstorm and ask other members of your group for suggestions of other groups that may be willing to cosponsor the event with you. Cosponsors are a key component to generating an audience and sharing the work of organizing an event. The point is to get as many people to the event as possible. A larger audience will come if you have outside help. Contact the organizations you think would be interested and explain to them that you are bringing a speaker for an event and that you would like for them to be a cosponsor. When they say “yes,” suggest that they help with outreach by inviting their members. Among other things, they may be able to help publicize the event by putting it on their web site, or adding their name to a press release. Also, don’t be afraid to ask them to contribute funds if you need money for things like making materials, paying speakers, and hosting speakers. This is not too much to ask if the organization’s name is associated with the event. Offer in return to include their name on any publicity materials that will be produced.

Plan the event: The when, where, who and how

Select a date
The date obviously is dependent on other factors, such as the availability of the speakers, availability of a venue, and whatever else is being planned in your community around the same time. Try not to have your event on the same day as other similar events or events that you know everyone wants to go to. Also, it is a good idea to organize an event around a date that has some significance to your theme. For example, Halloween and Valentines Day are great times to talk about Fair Trade chocolate and cocoa.

Find a location
The ideal location is a free one, and one that is fully wheelchair accessible. Try to get a space donated to you. Start with your school first. Faith-based groups, community centers, schools and universities are also good places to check out. Also, consider the what size space you need. This is related to how many people you expect to
How to Organize an Educational Event (continued)
in your community

Have the speaker visit school board officials, classes, local organizations, and local businesses to talk about Fair Trade. Organize visits and/or interviews with the speakers and local journalists.

Evaluation and follow up

After the event has ended successfully, consider what went well and all that didn’t. Learn from the mistakes and remember what worked. Thank your cosponsors, the audience, your members and anybody that helped to make the event a success.

Contact people who signed up to get involved and organize a meeting to get people together and plan your next activities.

Meet with school officials, local businesses, and local organizations to talk about your campaign and how they can support it...

...the possibilities are endless.

Mary Adu Kumi is a member of the Kuapa Kokoo Fair Trade cooperative in Ghana. She came to the USA to talk about Fair Trade in April 2003. She was great!
How to use the media to share your message

(Adapted from Salzman’s “Making the News” and SPIN Project Materials)

If you want to talk to people outside of your group and get them to support what you are working for, you will need to get the support of the media. Telling a story or communicating a point of view to reporters and editors is a special art. You have to be clear and brief and at the same time very thoughtful. You have to know certain tricks of the trade that will help your issue stand out from the hundreds of other interesting things happening in the world. The information on the next few pages will help you get your important issues into the media’s eye through press releases, pitching a story, writing a letter to the editor, and other important tips. If you would like more guidance on working with the media, Global Exchange’s communications team is more than happy to help you! You can contact Tim Kingston, tim@globalexchange.org and 415-255-7296 x 229. Best of luck!

Press Release

A Press Release informs reporters about your event or issue. It should tell all the information a reporter needs to write their piece. Envision, then write the press release as the news story YOU would want to see written. Send it out the morning of or the day before the event.

Elements
• Headline. This will make or break a news release—include the most important information in the headline, and make it punchy. The headline can be up to four lines if necessary, including a sub-head, if used, but keep it short (and remember to use a large font).
• Important information should jump off the page—most reporters will only spend 30 seconds looking at a release.
• Spend 75 percent of your time writing the headline and the first paragraph.
• Use the inverted pyramid style of news writing. Make your most important points early in the release and work your way down.
• Keep sentences and paragraphs short. No more than three sentences per paragraph.
• Include a colorful quote from a spokesperson in the second or third paragraph.
• Include a short summary of your organization in the last paragraph.
• Mention “Photo Opportunity” if there is one. Be sure to send a copy of the release to the photo desk.

Structure / Form
• In the top left corner, type “For Immediate Release.”
• Below “For Immediate Release,” type the date.
• Contact Information: In the top right corner, type names and phone numbers of two contacts. Make sure these contacts can be easily reached by phone. Including the contact’s home phone number, if appropriate.
• Type “###” at the end of your release. This is how journalists mark the end of a news copy.
• Type “MORE” at the end of page 1 if your release is two pages, and put a contact phone number and short headline in the upper-right of subsequent pages.
• Print your release on your organization’s letterhead.

How to Distribute It
• A release should be sent out the morning of, or the day before your event. In some cases, you may want to send an “embargoed” copy to select reporters ahead of time, meaning that the information is confidential until the date you specify.
• Generally, send this to only one reporter per outlet.
• If your release announces an event, send it to the “daybooks.” A daybook lists news events scheduled to take place in the region on that day. Someone from each major outlet reviews the daybooks each morning.
• ALWAYS make follow up calls after you send the release. If your release is announcing an event, make the calls the morning before your event is scheduled.
• Have a copy of the release ready to be faxed when you make the calls.
Holding a Media Event

A media event is an activity intended to generate news coverage. They often involve gimmicky visuals, playful stunts, props, etc.

- Make sure your event is newsworthy. The more of the following characteristics it has, the more likely it will get coverage:
  - Novelty
  - Conflict
  - Humor
  - Action
  - New data, sign of a trend
  - Simplicity
  - Prominent figure involved
  - Local impact
  - Holidays, anniversaries
  - Bright props
  - Build your media event—site, speakers, visuals—around your message and slogan.
  - Make it fun. If you don’t look like you want to be there, why should the press?
  - Don’t be afraid to employ stunts. Clever and surprising events are more interesting than long range things to the media.
  - Consider timing. Is your event competing with other things? It is best to stage an event Monday through Thursday, 10 A.M. though 2 P.M.

- Find a good location. Consider the following:
  - Is the site commonly used for media events? Try to find a unique location.
  - If your event is outdoors, do you have a backup location? A little rain or bad weather won’t ruin an event, but severe conditions will. Consider if it is possible to postpone it if the weather is very bad.
  - Do you need a permit? Check with the police.

  - Have photographers take pictures.
  - Display a large banner or sign with your organization’s logo.
  - The event should last 15 to 45 minutes.
  - Distribute information on your issue & organization.
  - Remember equipment. Will you need a megaphone, podium, or portable microphone?
  - Have spokespersons ready to be interviewed.
  - Find out which reporters attended the event. Follow up with the no-shows.

  - Phone calls are the best way to communicate with reporters. Reporters get a lot of faxes and e-mail and what you sent may get lost in the pile.
  - Contact reporters who cover your issue, and reporters you know of. If you don’t know any reporters, ask the general assignment editor who you should speak to.
  - Show the reporter how your story is significant, dramatic, controversial, timely, or impacts lots of readers.
  - Always pitch the story first, and then ask if they received your release. Immediately capture the interest of the reporter.
  - Keep the call short and interesting. Reporters don’t have time for long calls, so get to the most interesting and important information in the first 90 seconds. Don’t forget the basic facts.
  - Be enthusiastic and helpful. If you’re not excited about your story, why should the reporter be?
  - Never lie to a reporter. They may not like what you have to say, but they must respect you.
  - Be considerate of deadlines. Calls are best made in the mid morning (9:30 to noon). If you sense a reporter is in a hurry, ask them if they are on deadline and offer to call back.
  - Only call one reporter per outlet. If you do talk to more than one person (which sometimes is necessary), make sure the other reporter knows that you’ve talked with someone else.
  - Ask the reporter if they are interested or if they are coming to the event. Most will not commit over the phone but they will think about it.
  - Offer to send information if they don’t commit to attend your event or cannot attend. Send the information right away.
  - Don’t get frustrated. Calls can be frustrating when reporters don’t bite. But, every call keeps your issue on their radar screen, and is an important step in building an on-going relationship with reporters.
Calling all students and teachers!  
Support Fair Trade, Stop Child Labor

More than 284,000 children work in dangerous tasks on West African cocoa farms. Over 60% of kids on Ivory Coast cocoa farms aren’t in school. Some Ivory Coast cocoa farms even use child slaves!

West African cocoa farmers earn about $30-$108 per year- not enough to pay their workers or send their kids to school! Companies can afford to pay farmers more - the owners of M&M/ Mars are each worth $10.4 billion

There is a better way - Fair Trade!!

Fair Trade farmers get a fair price and don’t use abusive child labor. Fair Trade farmers can feed their families, send their kids to school, and pay their workers, and protect the earth. Unfortunately, these farmers sell only a little bit of their cocoa at Fair trade prices because big companies don’t use Fair Trade. We need to support Fair Trade so kids can go to school instead of working on cocoa farms!

You can help!

1. ASK M&M/Mars for Fair Trade. Write the company a letter and call to ask for a conference call or meeting.
2. Get your school/group chocolate FUNDRAISER to use Fair Trade!
3. BUY Fair Trade chocolate and cocoa.
4. Spread the word! Have a poster contest or assembly. Tell your family
5. ASK local businesses for Fair Trade.

Global Exchange coordinates a Fair Trade Chocolate Campaign, and has educational materials for students and teachers, a great web site, and more. Contact us for materials and ideas today!

fairtrade@globalexchange.org, 415-255-7296

Go Fair Trade!! It’s the best!!
The US State Dept. and the ILO have reported abusive child labor and lack of schooling on West African cocoa farms. The cause? Poverty: cocoa farmers earn about $30-$108 per family member.

The Solution? FAIR TRADE CERTIFIED, which guarantees a living wage and prohibits abusive labor. Fair Trade farmers can send their kids to school and pay their workers.

M&M/Mars - the world’s #1 chocolate company, with annual revenues of $16 billion and owners worth $10.4 billion each - refuses to offer Fair Trade despite massive consumer outcry.

Get Involved, Learn More, Find Fair Trade products!
415-255-7296, fairtrade@globalexchange.org
FAIR TRADE
NOT “free trade”!

- A crash in world coffee prices has led to poverty, malnutrition, and drug cultivation.
- West African cocoa farms are home to widespread child labor and even child slavery.
- Banana plantations are notorious for union busting and worker harm from agrochemicals.
- Corporations like M&M/Mars, P&G, and Chiquita bring in billions, while farmers and farmworkers earn $30-$300 per year.
- Plantation-style farming is causing pollution, deforestation, and songbird extinction.
- World Bank and IMF policies leave farmers at the mercy of the market and corporations.

With world market prices as low as they are right now, a lot of farmers cannot maintain their families and their land anymore. We need Fair Trade now more than ever.”

Jerónimo Bollen, Guatemala
Manos Campesinas cooperative.

Fair Trade Benefits

- Minimum sustainable price under direct, long-term contracts and access to credit
- Prohibits forced and abusive child labor
- Farmers are organized in cooperatives. Plantation workers have the right to unionize and bargain collectively.
- Promotes sustainable farming
- Fair Trade benefits over 800,000 farming families in more than 48 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America,
- Fair Trade co-ops sell about 10-20% of their crop at Fair Trade prices. The rest is sold for less, often below production costs.

FAIR TRADE
CERTIFIED

TAKE ACTION
FOR FAIR TRADE

1 BUY Fair Trade Certified organic and Fair Trade Federation products, as well as local organic produce - from co-ops, farmers’ markets, and Community Supported Agriculture groups.

2 ASK local businesses to sell and use Fair Trade organic products, and local organic produce.

3 DEMAND Fair Trade from corporations
M&M/Mars
Paul Michaels, President M&M/Mars
6885 Elm St., McLean, VA 22101
800-627-7852, askmms@mmmars.com

Starbucks
Orin Smith, CEO
P.O. Box 34067, Seattle, WA 98124
800-235-2883, OSmith@Starbucks.com

4 ORGANIZE a Fair Trade action group in your community, campus, work, or school.

5 LOBBY legislators to support Fair Trade over “free trade.” Get your city council to pass resolutions for Fair Trade and opposing the FTAA.

6 TRAVEL with GX’s Reality Tours to meet and learn from Fair Trade producers. Live and work with Nicaraguan coffee farmers on GX’s “Fair Harvest.” info: realitytours@globalexchange.org

7 SUPPORT Fair Trade by joining GX, making a donation, and shopping at our on-line and retail stores. Fair trade producers - and our campaigns- depend on your ongoing support.

8 CONNECT with Fair Traders on our listserve. E-mail fairtradelist-on@globalexchange.org

See globalexchange.org “Fair Trade” for Ideas, Action Tools, Resources, Company Listings, Activist Network, and more!

Shop Fair Trade: globalexchangestore.org

Global Exchange

2017 Mission Street, #303 • San Francisco, CA 94110 • 415.255.7296 • fairtrade@globalexchange.org • www.globalexchange.org
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6885 Elm St., McLean, VA 22101
800-627-7852, askmms@mmmars.com
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The Conacado cooperative
The Conacado Fair Trade cocoa cooperative is located in the Dominican Republic, an island in the Caribbean Sea. Conacado was founded in 1988, and joined the Fair Trade system in 1995. The country has seen an increase in tourism over the past years but this has not helped cocoa farmers too much. Most of Conacado's farmers still have to work on bigger plantations because they do not earn enough from their own cocoa farms to make ends meet.

Conacado has about 9,000 members who are located all over the country. the members have organized smaller regional groups called “bloque” that set up workshops on organic farming and quality improvement, in addition to many other kinds of activities.

The cooperative’s goals are to create work and income for disadvantaged groups, increase quality and productivity of cocoa crops, set up direct trade relationships, and provide credit and technical assistance to producers.

Cocoa production in Conacado
Conacado's members count on cocoa for about 90% of their total income. The producers also grow crops such as bananas, citric fruits, potatoes, other vegetables and coffee. They sell these locally and use them for food at home.

Conacado’s cocoa has always been grown with organic and shade grown methods. The Fair Trade system supports farming methods that are safe for the environment and public health like these, by encouraging earth-friendly growing methods and offering a higher price for organic cocoa than non-organic cocoa.

The country’s tropical weather offers the perfect growing conditions for cocoa but also involves yearly hurricanes that can destroy crops quickly. Farmers in the country were devastated in 1998 when Hurricane George destroyed the majority of cocoa plants and shade trees. The government had little funding, and most of the farmers were poor and could not get loans.

Fair Trade has helped Conacado get through difficult times like these because it ensures that farmers have the income, saving, and other resources they need in good times and bad.

Fair Trade guarantees a minimum price of $.80/pound under long-term contracts, access to credit, and prohibits abusive child labor and forced labor. Fair Trade farmers have to set aside some of their income for community development and farmer training. Fair Trade sales have provided the cooperative with enough income to meet basic expenses and invest in the future.

Isidoro de la Rosa, the director of Conacado, explains: “With the Fairtrade premium of 1999, we had planned to build some important roads, but with Hurricane George, which destroyed many of the farms and reduced our production with 70%, the General Assembly of members decided to use this money to ‘clean up’ the damaged farms and to create nurseries for new planting material.”

Conacado’s capacity for production has improved since its incorporation but remains at the mercy of tropical weather patterns. As a result of Hurricane George, total
cocoa production dropped from 5,799 tons in 1998 to 1,912 tons in 1999 while total exports dropped from 3,724 tons to 1,555 tons across this time. On the positive side, Fair Trade sales rose from 88 tons in 1998 to 234 tons in 1999.

Benefits of Fair Trade
Fair Trade has helped Conacado’s farmers in many important ways in addition to supporting rebuilding after Hurricane George. The cooperative has organized workshops to teach farmers how to improve fermentation techniques, expand sustainable growing methods, increase productivity, and participate more actively in the cooperative. In addition to these programs, Conacado facilitates many other projects, some with funding from other NGO’s. One example is the Juntas Mujeres Campesinas, which is a group of three women’s organizations that oversee the production of wine, bread, liquor, jam, chocolate and organic fertilizers.

Isidoro has expressed just how much the cooperative and Fair Trade system have offered to farmers and their communities: “In our country there was no tradition of fermenting cocoa. With the Fairtrade income, we were able to implement a fermentation programme to improve the quality and to convert our production to certified organic. This improved our position in the export-market. These days the competition for small-scale farmers organizations has become very aggressive, so only niche markets allow us to survive.”

Future plans for Conacado
For Conacado, Fair Trade has paved the way for renewal, and continues to be a foundation of hope for continued growth. However, Conacado’s members still sell much of their cocoa in the conventional market where prices have been below the cost of production for over two years. “We would like to see the Fairtrade sales increase to improve our market position,” says Isidoro. Farmer incomes are sufficient to cover the basic costs of living but do not leave room for savings or extra expenses such as home improvements. Families with especially large numbers of children still can’t afford to send them all to school. In addition, as late as 2000 many cocoa gardens were still covered with dense weeds, awaiting the funds for replanting.

Increased consumer demand is the key that will open up the Fair Trade market and bring Conacado’s members the additional Fair Trade revenues they need so much. By buying Fair Trade chocolate and advocating for it in your local community and beyond, you can help build the Fair Trade market and ensure that chocolate is as sweet for the farmers as it is for you. See the following resources to learn more and get started today!

RESOURCES

**Fair Trade companies that use cocoa from CONACADO**

Equal Exchange
www.equalexchange.com
info@equalexchange.com
781-830-0303

Dagoba Organic Chocolate
www.dagobachocolate.com
dagobachocolate@cs.com
514-664-9030

La Siembra Cooperative
info@lasiembra.com
www.lasiembra.com

Get involved & learn more!

Global Exchange Fair Trade Campaign
415-255-7296, fairtrade@globalexchange.org
www.globalexchange.org

Fair Trade Foundation UK
www.fairtrade.org.uk

Fair Trade Labeling Organizations International
www.fairtrade.net
Fair Trade and the Environment

Traditional Farming
Cocoa, coffee, bananas and other crops are grown on “understory” trees that originated in Latin American and African rainforests. When grown beneath a diverse cover of shade trees, which is the traditional method, these plants provide habitat for wildlife such as birds, butterflies, insects, and animals. Traditional farmers generally use sustainable agricultural techniques including composting, rotating crops, and not applying expensive chemicals and fertilizers. In addition, they typically cultivate cocoa and coffee alongside other plants such as banana and nut trees that provide food for the farmers’ families as well as additional sources of income.

Industrial Farming–Deforestation
To meet the world’s growing demand for tropical crops, high yield sun-grown hybrids were developed during the “Green Revolution” in the 1970’s. Sun cultivation involves clear cutting, resulting in significant deforestation of pristine rainforests in Latin America and Africa. The Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center has identified deforestation from intensive coffee farming as one of the major threats to songbirds in the western hemisphere. The Sierra Club reported 15% of the Ivory Coast’s rainforests had been deforested for cocoa production by 2000. Sun cultivation is also associated with single-cropping or “monoculture,” removing the biodiversity needed to sustain plant and animal life, and threatening local food security.

Industrial Farming–Pesticide and Fertilizer Pollution
Industrial farming also require large amounts of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, which poison local air and water. This has put local animal populations and those who live and work in the community at the risk of being exposed to dangerous levels of these compounds. DDT, an insecticide that affects the nervous system, liver, and kidneys, was banned in the US in 1972 but is still used widely in coffee cultivation. On top of this, pesticides use is actually increasing the problems they were designed to control. In 1998, the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute concluded that the overuse of pesticides in cacao cultivation had actually encouraged the development of more virulent strains of pests and diseases. This has forced farmers to abandon their farms after only a few years and move on to a new area of the rainforest to start the cycle of catastrophe all over again.

Genetic Modification
Action Aid in the UK reported industry research to develop GMO coffee that can be ripened all at once, increasing yield and decreasing labor costs. Widespread application of GMO coffee are poised to change coffee production fundamentally, at the risk of putting millions of small farmers out of business.

Shade-grown & Organic Farming
There is good news: Agriculture can be beneficial if done properly. Sustainability is in fact the traditional way of family for small-scale producers. The World Watch Institute noted that traditional cacao farming could bring the damaged Brazilian rainforest back to its richly diverse natural state. In addition, because traditional methods allow for more room between plants, they naturally minimize the spread of the common diseases that bring farmers to use chemical pesticides. As for the many species that thrive in the shady rainforest, Jeff Parrish of the Nature Conservancy stated that “Cacao habitats can harbor high species richness equal to or even surpassing that of forest. Although cacao should not replace forest, as many bird species can only survive within large intact tracts of forest habitat, cacao has been shown to clearly supplement forest habitat and enhance the survival of threatened species in an increasingly fragmented landscape. Since cacao can buffer national parks and reserves from more damaging practices, it serves as a mutually beneficial land use for both farmers and conservationists alike.” The same is true for coffee.

Organic and Shade-grown Certification
Many small-scale farmers still use traditional methods, growing their crop organically under a shade canopy. These farmers benefit not only by having cleaner air and water, but may receive better revenues because organic products yield a higher price than conventional ones. Thanks to the involvement of several certification organization and increasing consumer demand, environmentally sustainable products are becoming easier
Fair Trade and the Environment

to identify and more widely available in the US. Organic products are certified in the US by organizations approved by the USDA. “Bird-friendly” or shade-grown products bear the seal of the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center or the Rainforest Alliance. Support sustainable practices and the farmers who use them by looking for these labels on Fair Trade Certified products.

Fair Trade certification and sustainability
It is important to remember that Fair Trade, shade-grown, and organic mean different things, even though they share some of the same criteria or may make similar claims. Sustainable farming is the traditional route for the small farmers who make up Fair Trade co-ops because they tend to be the best stewards of the land and possess the highest interest in keeping the natural environment healthy for their families and future generations. In addition, small farmers typically do not have the money to cut down forests or purchase large amounts of chemicals.

Although Fair Trade criteria do not mandate organic and shade grown methods, several aspects of the Fair Trade system support sustainable production and farmers are actively encouraged to seek organic certification. Fair Trade criteria ban certain pesticides and require the use of integrated crop management, where organic methods of pest/disease control and fertilization are emphasized over chemical ones. Fair Trade cooperatives are also required to set aside revenues for technical workshops, which often address the benefits and proper use of sustainable techniques and thus promote their increased use. As a result, most Fair Trade Certified products are shade grown and either passive or certified organic. To be sure, look for the organic and shade-grown labels on Fair Trade products!

One key difference between Fair Trade and eco-friendly labels is that only Fair Trade guarantees that producers receive the stable, minimum price they need. Some certified organic products are purchased from Fair Trade cooperatives, but unless a product is Fair Trade Certified, there is no guarantee that the farmer received the benefit or that adequate prices will continue. In the Fair Trade system, farmer cooperatives are paid directly and receive a minimum price per pound. Fair Trade cooperatives receive a higher price for organic than non-organic, representing another incentive for organic production in the Fair Trade system.

Fair Trade farmers speak about sustainability
Fair Trade farmers realize both the environmental and economic benefits of using organic methods. Cayetano Ico, chairman and farmer from the TCGA cooperative in Belize stated: “Our objectives for the next years are to ... promote production of organic cocoa among our members, to promote education and awareness concerning the ecosystem and to diversify production. We still need to learn a lot and gain experience in trading and marketing. Fairtrade gives us this possibility.”

Paying farmers a fair wage and offering incentives for ecological practices is the best way to encourage sustainable farming. Organic and shade-grown labels have made important contributions in promoting sustainable techniques that benefit farmers, the environment, and consumers. However, we still need to ensure that the benefits reach the farmer as well as consumers and the environment. Fair Trade guarantees this. Consumers who want to do what is good for workers, trees, birds, and our shared environment can buy products that are multiply certified: Fair Trade, Organic and Shade Grown.

Get involved & learn more!
Global Exchange Fair Trade Campaigns
415-255-7296, fairtrade@globalexchange.org
www.globalexchange.org

Organic Consumers Association
www.organicconsumers.org

Rainforest Alliance
www.rainforest-alliance.org

Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center
www.si.edu/smbc

Where to find Fair Trade Products
TransFair USA www.fairtradedecertified.org
Fair Trade Federation www.fairtradefederation.com
January 29, 2002

By Cara Solomon

The microphone stood at the ready. The sequence of speakers had been set. The East Coast phone number for Mars Inc. lay by the phone. But before she dialed into the 11 a.m. conference call, Christina Todd had something she wanted to say. “I don’t want to hear any zippers zipping or any pencils tapping,” said the seventh-grade teacher, looking out at a sea of children’s faces.

More than 60 students at Chinook Middle School in Clyde Hill gathered in the library yesterday to hear one company’s side of the child-labor story. Since learning about forced child labor on cocoa farms in West Africa, the students in Todd’s world-cultures classes have snapped into action.

They wrote nearly 80 letters to Mars Inc., one of the largest chocolate makers in America, asking the company to sell products certified under the “Fair Trade” international system of monitoring and certification intended to guarantee farmers are paid a fair price for their product. Liliana Esposito, head of Mars’ public relations, said she was impressed by the quality and quantity of the letters she received. In the spirit of educating young consumers, she set up two conference calls — the first to discuss the company’s position, the second to allow the children to make recommendations.

“They were so excited that they got a response,” Todd said, adding that she hadn’t anticipated anything more than a form letter. “I think they just felt really empowered.” Twelve students volunteered to represent their class in the conference call and signed a contract with Todd promising to take the responsibility seriously. In recent weeks, the students spent their after-school hours poring over labor contracts and joint agreements, highlighting agricultural surveys and boning up on statistics online.

Jack Gonya stepped to the microphone yesterday morning and read aloud a summary of the joint agreement signed by chocolate manufac-
LIFE ON COCOA FARMS


News: globalexchange.org/cocoa, “Updates”

FAIR TRADE

Fair Trade Labelling Organizations Int’l www.fairtrade.net


FARMER STORIES/PHOTOS

globalexchange.org/cocoa
“Farmer Profiles” “Resources”

Grout, Phil. *Harvest of Hope.* 2003. (From serrv.org/divine or globalexchangestore.org)

Fairtrade Federation UK www.fairtrade.org.uk

Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International www.fairtrade.net

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Global Exchange K-12 materials and lesson Plans, Fair Trade Toolkit, links and more. globalexchange.org/cocoa “Resources” and “Links”

HISTORY, PROCESSING, FACTS

Chicago Field Museum of Natural History www.fmnh.org/Chocolate/exhibits.html

International Cocoa Organization www.icco.org

FAIR TRADE GROUPS

TransFair USA 510.663.5260 info@transfairusa.org www.transfairusa.org

Global Exchange 415-255-7296 fairtrade@globalexchange.org www.globalexchange.org

SERRV 1.888.294.9657 www.serrv.org

Fair Trade Federation 202.872.5329 info@fairtradefederation.org www.fairtradefederation.org

Fair Trade Resource Network 202.302.0976 info@fairtraderesource.org www.fairtraderesource.org

Interfaith Fair Trade Initiative 410-230-2700 lwr@lwr.org lwr.org/fairtrade/ifti

Oxfam America 617.482.1211 info@oxfamamerica.org www.oxfamamerica.org

GROUPS WORKING TO END ABUSIVE CHILD LABOR

Free the Slaves 202.588.186 info@freetheslaves.net www.freetheslaves.net

Free the Children www.freethechildren.org

International Labor Rights Fund 202.347.4100 laborrights@igc.org www.laborrights.org

Save the Children Canada 416.221.5501 or 1.800.668.5036 sccan@savethechildren.ca

AFRICA ISSUES


Africa Faith and Justice Network 202.832.3412 afjn@afjn.org www.afjn.org

Africa Trade Policy Working Group 202.547.7503 woa@igc.org www.woaafrica.org

ECOLOGICAL ISSUES

Organic Consumers Association www.organicconsumers.org

Rainforest Alliance 212.677.1900, 1.888.MY EARTH canopy@ra.org www.rainforest-alliance.org
More Resources from GX! (website or mail)
Educational materials: K-2, 3-6, JH/HS
Fair Trade Toolkit
Fair Trade and the Environment
Fair Trade cocoa farmer stories: Belize, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Nicaragua
Fair Trade coffee farmer stories: El Salvador, Ethiopia, Mexico, Nicaragua
M&M/Mars Campaign flyer

From Global Exchange’s On-line Fair Trade store

globalexchangestore.org
storemaster@globalexchange.org
415-553-4412

We Need to Go to School: Voices of the Rugmark Children. Compiled by Tanya Roberts-Davis

In their own words and drawings, Nepalese children talk about their early years in poverty-stricken villages, their work as virtual slaves in carpet factories in Kathmandu, and how they felt when they were given a chance to attend school and pursue their dreams for the future. ($19.95)


Fair Trade primer that offers chapters on NAFTA, Fair Trade coffee, chocolate, and bananas, blue jeans, where to buy Fair Trade goods, and more. ($10)


This book traces the journey towards a ‘borderless’ world and shows how the promise of globalization is seductive, powerful - and ultimately hollow. Chapters include a history of globalization, the Bretton Woods Trio, debt and structural adjustment, corporations, global economies, poverty, environment, the market, and ideas for redesigning the global economy. ($10).


A comprehensive perspective on the WTO from some of the leading voices from the South. The authors show how trade agreements fail to benefit the Third World or the poor, and have created extra burdens. ($15)


Anita Roddick presents a vibrant collection of photographs, essays, montages, and quoted on the driving issues behind globalization from impassioned writers and activist organizations. This is the definitive handbook for anyone who wants to learn about the issues and make informed choices. ($24.95)


Bringing together case studies from the Americas and Asia, this collection addresses the interplay between craft production and the global market. It contributes to current debates on economic inequality by offering practical examples of relevant political, economic, and cultural issues. ($19.95)

AND.. Fair Trade chocolate, hot cocoa, baking cocoa, coffee, tea, and more treats!
Global Exchange is an international human rights organization dedicated to promoting environmental, political and social justice. Since our founding in 1988, we have increased the US public’s global awareness while building partnerships among peoples around the world.

This Student Action Guide can be downloaded for free at www.globalexchange.org/cocoa.

To order copies of this How-To Guide for a $5 donation, e-mail fairtrade@globalexchange.org, 415-255-7296.

2017 Mission Street, Suite 303
San Francisco, CA 94110
Telephone: 415-255-7296
Fax: 415-255-7498
www.globalexchange.org