



# Peace and Global Education begins with me...

## Share with others

“And before you  
finish eating  
breakfast in the  
morning, you’ve  
depended on more  
than half the world.”

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

[bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6214](http://bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6214)

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## Committee for Action on Social Justice (Peace and Global Education Action Group)

### **Economic justice: Moving from free trade to fair trade**

In today's world of globalization, so often characterized by the negative effects of "free trade" (neo-liberal, "laissez-faire" economic globalization), it is comforting to know that there are people, organizations, and movements that are working towards creating, supporting, and sustaining economies that represent and cultivate equity, solidarity, shared agency, and fairness. Instead of unquestioningly participating in trade that leads to the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, these people make informed decisions about their consumption—choosing to reduce their consumption, refrain from supporting exploitative economic situations, and buy certified fair-trade products.

Fair trade is a movement to seek economic fairness for farmers and labourers in the global South; there are rules governing the ways in which fair-trade certified products are produced and traded. Fair-trade certification is designed to prevent exploitation and promote economic fairness and sustainability and create opportunities for people and communities in the global south to participate meaningfully in the trade relationships that they depend upon for their livelihood. For us, in the global north, fair trade helps us to develop awareness of our ability to impact the world in positive ways with the choices that we make about the things that we buy and the way that we live.

The international fair-trade system is structured to produce the following outcomes for farmers and workers in developing countries:

- fair compensation for their products and labour
- sustainable environmental practices
- improved social services
- investment in local economic infrastructure.

### **Peace and global education begins in your class: Lesson idea**

You can work towards making your school or community a "fair trade and no sweat" school or community. Start by reading about, learning about, researching about, and talking about conditions faced by farmers and labourers in the global South and the implications that unfair, exploitative trade relationships have for people in the global South and for consumers.

It is important that students recognize that consumption and trade patterns, that we participate in, have implications for people that manufacture, transport, and grow the products that we use every day. It is also important for students to recognize that they have alternatives available to them and that their choices have implications for themselves, too.

Have your students discuss possible ways of influencing their school, group, or community to practice ethical consumption or on how to adopt and implement an ethical purchasing, or "fair trade and no sweat" policy. Such ethical consumption may include the purchasing and selling of supplies, clothing, food for the cafeteria or hot lunch programs, school store, and many other aspects of institutional and individual consumption within your community.

Most importantly, help your students make a personal plan and put it into action. They can change their own consumption habits, write letters, share information with others, and conduct informational and advocacy campaigns.

### **Check this out:**

[transfair.ca](http://transfair.ca)  
[tiny.cc/c5sdA](http://tiny.cc/c5sdA)  
[www.cocoacamino.com/en/links.php](http://www.cocoacamino.com/en/links.php)  
[www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org)

"Fair Trade teaches us that consumers are not condemned to be only bargain-hunters... Fair Trade reminds us that trade is about people, their livelihoods, their families, sometimes their survival."  
*Peter Mandelson, EU Trade Commissioner*