

# Problem: The Injustices of

## Free Trade

Free Trade, exemplified by regional trade agreements such as NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), has opened countries up to international trade by eliminating tariffs and trade restrictions.

While trade liberalization has increased trade and generated tremendous amounts of revenue, the positive results are seen only by a fortunate few. While multinational corporations experience high levels of profit, farmers and artisans in developing countries, unable to compete with the giants of the international market, are forced to sell their products at prices below the cost of production. This has resulted in lower living standards, job loss, rural dislocation, global racial inequalities, widespread toxic dumping and environmental degradation. Farmers and artisans are forced into cycles of debt and poverty that ravages themselves, their families, and their communities.



# Solution: Fair Trade

Fair Trade is a growing, international movement and positive, viable solution to the injustices of the current system of global trade. Fair Trade is a strong tool that gives consumers an opportunity to use their power as a purchaser to tilt the system to favor those that have suffered. Fair Trade creates partnerships between producers and consumers to offer high-quality goods that are made under socially and environmentally sustainable conditions. Through MPIRG's Fair Trade

Campaign, students take the individual act of purchasing Fair Trade to higher level, showing that every member of a college or university can make socially responsible choices in their everyday lives that have real and meaningful results.

# The Benefits of Fair Trade:

- Fair Trade offers farmers and artisans a living wage, affordable credit, and direct and long-term trading partnerships.
- Fair Trade creates a system in which producers and workers belong to cooperates and community development organizations that invest in quality housing, schools, scholarships, and health programs.
- Fair Trade supports farmers who use who use environmentally friendly and sustainable techniques, including organic and shade farming.

# Take Action:

Help MPIRG's campaign to change your college or university into a Fair Trade Campus: Work to get Fair Trade products served and sold in the dining halls, residential halls, and cafeterias, at official school meetings, at campus restaurants and cafes, and written into catering contracts.

# Get Involved:

- Join in a petition drive asking students to sign a pledge or postcard saying they support Fair Trade.
- Challenge yourself to take the Fair Trade Pledge: promising to buy at least 5% of their purchases from Fair Trade sources.
- Join MPIRG when we set up tables with information on Fair Trade and how students can get involved.
- Be a conscious consumer: make an effort to buy items like coffee, tea, and fruit that have the Fair Trade label.

# Spread the Message:

- Fill out a comment card at your supermarket and tell them that you would like to see more Fair Trade products on the shelves.
- Bring Fair Trade to work- suggest that your office try Fair Trade coffee for a month.
- Plan a blitz of letters to the editor of your campus paper, educating your student body about Fair Trade.

# Fair Trade Resources



**Ten Thousand Villages**  
[www.tenthousandvillages.com](http://www.tenthousandvillages.com)

**Peace Coffee**  
[www.peacecoffee.com](http://www.peacecoffee.com)

**United Students for Fair Trade**  
[www.usft.org](http://www.usft.org)

**FLO (Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International)**  
[www.fairtrade.net](http://www.fairtrade.net)

**Oxfam: Make Trade Fair**  
[www.maketrade4fair.com](http://www.maketrade4fair.com)

**Fair Trade Resource Network**  
[www.fairtraderesource.org](http://www.fairtraderesource.org)

**Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition**  
[www.mnftc.info/news/en/](http://www.mnftc.info/news/en/)

**TransFair USA**  
[www.transfairusa.org](http://www.transfairusa.org)

**Global Exchange**  
[www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org)

**Land Stewardship Project (Local Food)**  
[www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org)



# Guide to MPIRG's Fair Trade Campaign

Founded by students in 1971, MPIRG is a grassroots, student-directed, non-partisan organization that empowers and trains students and engages the community to take collective action in the public interest statewide. MPIRG works on nine

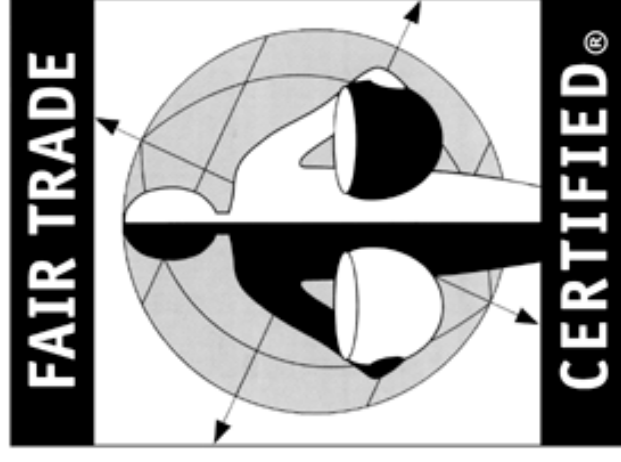
campuses across Minnesota and involves students in every level of the organization. We are the largest organization in the state that works with students to increase their effectiveness in the public policy arena, building skills such as strategic planning, research techniques, grassroots organizing, and advocacy. MPIRG's agenda, which is determined by the elected State Board of

Directors and its student members, includes environmental and consumer protection, women's rights, Fair Trade and good government.

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