

Why is it important to buy Fairtrade products?

There are many reasons why it is important to buy Fairtrade. There is a wide range of Fairtrade products on the market. For example, bananas, coffee, sugar, cotton, and even gold. Making the swap to fair trade products benefits the environment, communities all around the world, and the 1.65 million farmers and workers, and their families, in Fairtrade certified producer organisations.



The first benefit to buying Fairtrade is that Fairtrade offers a minimum price to producers which acts as a safety net. This means that if prices in the global market drop below this level, farmers will still receive a fair price. This is important as it helps keep the farmers/workers and their families out of poverty and gives greater financial security enabling them to plan for their future. This could be planning for their children's education, or buying a house, or even planning to set up their own business.

In addition to this, a Fairtrade Premium is also into a communal fund for the farmers to use how they see fit. 26% of worker spend their Premiums on education which helps to break the cycle of poverty. Farmers could also spend their Premium on healthcare or improving infrastructure. However the Premium is spent it improves the lives of workers and their families.

Another reason why it's important to buy Fairtrade is that it is much better for the environment. This is because within the Fairtrade standards there are a number of criteria that farmers must meet in relation to the environment. One of the criteria is that the use of potentially hazardous chemical fertilizers is minimised. This is important because it reduces the amount of chemicals in the rivers and the water cycle as a whole. The true extent of the long-term effects of chemical fertilisers and pesticides on a person's health are not known but its suggested that the use of pesticides negatively affects a person's nervous system and could cause cancer. Ensuring that these chemicals are minimised helps the communities and ecosystems that rely on rivers and streams near plantations. Other criteria include the obligation to source water sustainably and reduce water use as much as possible. In Asia where cotton is grown for the fashion industry, entire lakes and seas have been drained to provide water to the crops. This has had a devastating effect on local communities as many have had to move away as the water shortage also meant there was a food shortage. Sourcing and using water responsibly help to prevent problems like this in the future.

Another reason why it is important to buy Fairtrade is that it helps to keep children in school. Fairtrade organisations have a zero-tolerance policy on child labour. Children under the age of 18 cannot work if it threatens their schooling and children under the age of 15 can't be employed. This is important as an education is the best way to break the cycle of poverty. A good education also ensures that the doctors, lawyers, and engineers of the future are trained. This has a positive impact on the lives of the individuals, but also the community as a whole.

In conclusion, I think it is important to buy Fairtrade because it improves the lives of so many people and communities around the world by providing them with financial security, a fair wage, and an education for their children. Fairtrade is also important to reduce the environmental impact of producing the goods we consume on a daily basis. Buying Fairtrade is important because it can change the world we live in.

By Hannah Kelly, University of Lincoln, Student, March 2019