

Your College and Fairtrade

Introduction

College and coffee go hand in hand. Whether it's waking up for that 9am science lecture, meeting friends for a relaxing break or pulling an all-nighter, college days are fuelled by coffee. Do you ever stop to think about the stories and lives of the people behind the coffee in your cup?

Around 125 million people worldwide depend on coffee for their livelihoods. Coffee is the most valuable and widely traded tropical agricultural product and 25 million smallholder farmers and their families produce 80% of the world's coffee, in some of the poorest countries in the world. Fairtrade helps lift up these communities by enabling them to build successful businesses. And you can help.

You may not be aware of it, but you have the power to create change not only with your individual choices but in the decisions of your university. Harness the power of your college to raise awareness among students, faculty and staff about the benefits Fairtrade offers to small-scale producers and workers.

The goal of the Fairtrade Colleges campaign is for third level institutions to become part of a growing national network of organizations promoting the values and benefits of Fairtrade and, to contribute to the growth of the global Fairtrade movement. Bringing Fairtrade products to your campus is not only a great way to support economic and social change in communities that desperately need our support, but it is also an important step towards large institutions recognising their global social responsibility.

What is a Fairtrade University or College?

A Fairtrade University or College is one that has made a commitment to supporting Fairtrade farmers by ensuring that as many Fairtrade products are available in as many places as possible in and around their university or college. There are many Fairtrade products available to choose from – coffee, cocoa, sugar, tea, bananas, cotton and purchasing them contributes to better livelihoods for the hardworking people in the developing world who produce them. Supporters within Fairtrade Colleges also raise awareness of Fairtrade with students and staff about the benefits that increased sales of Fairtrade products brings to farmers and their communities.



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Why become a Fairtrade University or College?

Smallholder farmers grow 70 per cent of the world's food – in cocoa, as much as 90 per cent. But many farmers are trapped in a cycle of poverty, made worse by decades of price volatility and underinvestment in agriculture, and they are increasingly facing new threats from a changing climate. This phenomenon is threatening the very sustainability of many of the products we enjoy on a daily basis. Our global food system is dangerously out of control: out of control for consumers, out of control for farmers and out of control in the way food is traded and distributed.

Fairtrade is working to promote fairer trading conditions by increasing transparency in the global supply chain and thus better connecting farmers and workers with consumers. Fairtrade's vision is a world in which all farmers and workers can enjoy secure and sustainable livelihoods, fulfil their potential and decide on their future.

Through our work in key programme areas, we are empowering farmers and workers to address issues such as climate change, living wage, gender inequality, and child labour. Fairtrade farmers receive higher prices, have greater access to credit, perceive their economic environment as being more stable, and are more likely to engage in environmentally friendly farming practices. There are now 1.5 million Fairtrade farmers and workers in 74 countries worldwide and we are committed to increasing the number of farmers and workers that benefit from Fairtrade.

Join the movement to promote social justice and economic empowerment for farmers, workers and their families in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean by embedding Fairtrade principles within your administrative policy and the social fabric of the academic community. It is a great way of enabling students and staff alike to spread the word about Fairtrade, and show their support for producers and their communities in developing countries. Fairtrade Colleges program also offers students valuable leadership experience designing and implementing a multifaceted social campaign.

In 2005 Waterford Institute of Technology became the first Fairtrade College in Ireland. Mairead Bonnar, Catering Manager at the Waterford Institute of Technology, says that her institution is proud to be the first college in Ireland to have started the Fairtrade programme in college sector. On their procurement document they have invited all suppliers through eTenders to supply Fairtrade tea/coffee and ancillary products. WIT's commitment to Fairtrade is built on many aspects - good ethics for their company, positive results over time for the



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coffee growers, and building awareness among their students and staff. Over the years they have had some wonderful talks hosted by cotton farmers, coffee farmers, banana plantation workers, all engaging with their students and building the awareness of the impact of Fairtrade globally.

Achieving Fairtrade status means recognition of your institution's commitment to social and economic justice while offering students valuable leadership experience in designing and implementing a multifaceted campaign.

To find out how you can maximize **THE POWER OF YOU**, have a look at our [How to become a Fairtrade Ambassador in your College/University](#).

