

My name is Stephen Best and I am a banana farmer on the Island of St Lucia in the Windward Islands in the Caribbean. My farm is about 7 acres – 5 in bananas and 2 growing vegetables. It provides gainful employment and sustainable livelihood for both my family and 5 workers. My banana farm is both GLOBAL GAP and Fairtrade certified.

I am also the Chairperson of the Mabouya Valley Fairtrade Group, Vice Chair of the St. Lucia National Fairtrade Association, and the Chairman of the Windward Islands Farmers' Association (WINFA)

Prior to the introduction of Fairtrade banana production, I was engaged in conventional banana production which was proving to be non-financially viable for all Windward Island banana producers. Flight away from banana production and the ultimate demise of the banana industry was arrested when WINFA in concert with the Fairtrade Foundation in the UK provided an alternative to address the plight of small disadvantaged vulnerable producers.

My involvement with the umbrella producer organization body, WINFA, entails keeping producers in the Windward Islands constantly aware of the production and marketing problems and measures that should be embarked upon to address those issues so we can maintain market space. It also entails engaging in advocacy and giving pursuit to deepening the collaborative process with local, regional and international organizations in order to create greater awareness of the significance of Fairtrade to small producers.



Pictured on my farm having a closer look at plant development