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Gerardo Arias Camacho is a coffee farmer, and he is from Llano Bonito, San José, Costa Rica. He is a board member of his village's cooperative which is a member of the fair trade consortium COOCAFE. In the 1980s, the price of coffee was so low that producing it did not even cover the cost of production. The prices were so low that many of the villagers were forced to leave the country or move to the city. Gerardo was forced to relocate to the United States to support his family financially. Gerardo spent eight years in The United states; working, and saving his money so that he could buy his parents farm. Even after Gerardo had enough money to buy his parents farm, he had to stay in the United States for two extra years, because the price of coffee was still in an awful condition. Gerardo says that now that their consortium has become a Fair Trade, they are able to receive a guaranteed premium price on their coffee. The money that the community has gained has been used to better the lives of community members. Gerardo is certain that their consortium would have gone out of business without Fair Trade. Now that their consortium has become Fair Trade, they are more environmentally friendly. Gerardo's village has reduced the use of pesticides by 80 percent in the last 10 years, and now they have stopped cutting down trees to fuel their processing plant.. Buying fair trade is not only ethical, but it guarantees us that the money is going straight to the producer. This in turn helps marginalized communities prosper. Gerardo's children now have the opportunity to go to college, and not have to relocate like their father did. So Fair Trade provides a brighter future for people who would not have had such opportunities.

The part of the story that resonated with me is how Gerardo moved to the United States and worked 10 years to help support his family. Both of my parents are immigrants, and the stories of other immigrants resonate with me, because I see those immigrants as my parents on their first day in the United States. A lot of people do not come to The United States because they want to, it is because they need to. If they had the choice, they would stay in their home country, but that is not a possibility in many cases.



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Just now ·



This is Gerardo Arias Camacho. He is a coffee producer in Costa Rica, who benefits from Fair Trade. You can think of Fair Trade as a form of leveling the playing field between large corporations and marginalized producers. Gerardo swears that without Fair Trade, his farm would have shut down. Everyday, marginalized communities are forced to relocate into cities or move to new countries, because their form of life has been compromised by unfair trade practices. These corporations take advantage of the producers ignorance and abuse them for profit. Because of Fair Trade, Gerardo is able to work on the farm his family has owned for generations, and his children are able to go to college in Costa Rica.

Fair Trade is a promise that the food you are receiving pays a sustainable wage to producers and workers. Fair trade is a promise that marginalized communities are receiving the money we spend on products. Fair Trade is a promise that these communities are able to prosper. Fair Trade is a promise that children were not forced to work for the product you are buying.

