

PGC Day 18 - Greenest

Team: Green Tec Mty

- Sandra Vazquez
- Naomi Gonzalez
- Alan Mata
- Denisse López

Username: greentecmty

Email: alanmata99.11@gmail.com

School: Tec de Monterrey Campus Monterrey

Fair Trade

List 5 items that are commonly sold on your campus that could be Fair Trade certified. For each item, tell us one way that the conventional manufacturing practices negatively impact people and planet and one positive impact that purchasing the fair-trade version can have?

1. Fresh Fruit

Negative Impact of conventional manufacturing:

- Plantation workers in the fresh fruit industry are often employed without labour contract, receive very low wages and have to work excessive overtime hours.
- The fresh fruit industry is also marked by environmental, and health and safety issues. The high usage of agro-chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides endangers the health of farmers and workers, who are often continuously and massively exposed to these toxic substances.

Positive Impact of fair trade:

- Most Fairtrade certified small-scale fruit farmers and plantations benefit from Fairtrade Minimum Prices for their products. These prices vary by product, region and cultivation form (organic or conventional), and aim to cover the average cost of sustainable production as well as offer protection from sudden regional or international price drops.

2. Coffee

Negative Impact of conventional manufacturing:

- Given price volatility and a low share of the final price, farmers find it difficult to make long-term plans. For example, coffee bushes need to be regularly replaced to maintain productivity, but newly planted bushes take four years to yield fruit and five to six years to produce optimal yields.

Positive Impact of fair trade:

- Fairtrade aims to give farmers stability in this unpredictable market environment by offering a Fairtrade Minimum Price, which protects them from volatile price drops.
- In addition, coffee farmers receive a Fairtrade Premium of 20 cents per pound for conventional coffee and additional 30 cents per pound if produced organically. At least five cents per pound of the Fairtrade Premium is dedicated to improved production or quality.

3. Tea

Negative Impact of conventional manufacturing:

- The low wages paid to tea estate workers is one of the biggest problems in the tea sector. Even when national minimum wages are met on a tea estate, these do not always qualify as a living wage and workers often rely on in-kind benefits.

Positive Impact of fair trade:

- Globally more than 13 million smallholder farmers and plantation workers cultivated around 5 million tons of tea in 2013. Large plantations produce most of this tea, which is why Fairtrade certification is open to tea estates and small-scale farmers. Tea is a year-round crop and many of the workers live on or near the estate, making it possible for Fairtrade to have a strong impact. Fairtrade's labour standards and investment of the Fairtrade Premium have provided tea estate workers with improved working conditions and terms of employment, and the opportunity to plan for the future.

4. Juices

Negative Impact of conventional manufacturing:

- Over the past few years, prices for fruits used in juices have dropped significantly. Orange prices are often so low that they do not even cover production costs for small- and medium-sized producers. Furthermore, orange juice production is concentrated in the hands of a few powerful multinational corporations that control the market.

Positive Impact of fair trade:

- Workers have freedom of association and collective agreements. They have the right to establish or join an independent union, elect their advisors and design their own programmes.
- Salaries must be equal to or higher than the regional average or the minimum wage. If wages are below living wage benchmarks, employers and workers representatives negotiate annual increases on real wages.
- Health and safety measures must be established in order to avoid work-related injuries.

5. Sugar

Negative Impact of conventional manufacturing:

- The world sugar price tends to change its direction both quickly and sharply. This makes planning a challenge for smallholder sugar farmers who face high input costs. They also often live in areas with poor infrastructure, which hampers regional development and makes access to markets difficult.

Positive Impact of fair trade:

- Unlike for other Fairtrade products, there is no Fairtrade Minimum Price for sugar cane, because price setting mechanisms in the sugar market are highly complex and often distorted. However, most farmer organizations benefit from revenue sharing systems with the sugar mills that process their sugar cane into brown and raw sugar. Fairtrade regularly reviews pricing policies and consults with stakeholders throughout the sugar supply chain.

Fair Trade College or University

I did a small investigation about my university but I couldn't find if they were into fair trade. Although in the interactive map provided by the challenge there wasn't any university in Mexico involved in fair trade, so I will assume that it is an area of opportunity for my campus.

Now, to start a fair-trade campaign in my school, first there has to be a team of at least five persons to implement the campaign objectives and create awareness of the project. Then we would have to commit to fair trade education and events, to create awareness in students about why fair trade is important. Finally, the university will have to offer fair trade products in the cafeterias, vending machines, etc. To achieve this last objective, the university must have at least two products offered at permanent outlets (cafeteria, cafes, vending machines, etc.) or four products offered at occasional outlets (bake sales, fundraisers, etc.) each year.

I would really like for my university to start a free trade campaign to create awareness of the benefits that this has, and for students to realize what is happening outside their comfort zone.

References:

- Fairtrade International. (n.d). Fairtrade Products. Retrieved October 18, 2017, from <https://www.fairtrade.net/products.html>