

## Team Green Gang (Aurora Yuan and Alice Feng)

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### THINK

When you buy products on your campus, have you ever considered if they are Fair Trade certified? Schools can be a powerful supporter of the Fair Trade movement.

### CHALLENGE

Head to a store, coffee shop, or restaurant on your campus and see how many fair trade products can you spot. List 5 items that are commonly sold on your campus that are *not* Fair Trade certified, but **could be**. For some ideas, check out this list of companies and the products they sell that *are* fair trade.

Take it a step further! Pick one product you identified and see if you can make it happen. Consider talking to a local coffee shop about offering fair trade coffee or contacting dining services about fair trade produce. Send an email or try talking to a manager in person. Research some options for fair trade alternatives and express why you are interested in and support fair trade products, based on what you have learned. Document the process with screenshots or photos. How did they respond? Is it feasible?

For this challenge, I went to our local cafe, Small World Coffee, to see if their coffee is fair trade certified. Though their coffee are from all over the world, I have not found any proof that they are “certified”.

Five Items that are NOT Fair Trade,

1. Colombian Blend (Colombia Narino Reserva del Patrón)
2. Ethiopian Blend (Ethiopian Yirgacheffe Kochere)
3. Guatemalan Blend (Guatemala Antigua La Flor del Cafe)
4. Papua New Guinea Blend (Papua New Guinea Kimel Estate AA)
5. Java Blend (Java Kayumas Estate),

comparing to other coffee in the store, like the Sumatran Blend (Sumatra Aceh Ketiara Fair Trade Beans).

Coffee has a relatively large carbon footprint. Everyone should try to minimize my impact by buying the most sustainably harvested coffee that I can find. Small World Coffee, in Princeton, New Jersey, is a beloved local coffee shop. It is a small local company and hires locally. It serves incredible coffee and University students, as well as community members and tourists alike, all come here to relax and enjoy the exuberant vibe of the Princeton town. The name, “Small World”, seems to indicate a lot. On the Princeton University website, I saw the student life column introducing its “Fair-Trade” coffee.<sup>1</sup> This has caught my eyes- does the name implies its global thinking philosophy of *Fair Trade* with developing countries?

Unfortunately, I found some sources online. A coffee enthusiast has emailed the owner of SWC about their philosophy: “Was it organic, Fair Trade and/or RainForest Alliance Certified?”<sup>2</sup>

The answer that was disappointing. According to him, “the owner’s answer was really such a dance around the issue... (She) claims that farmers wouldn’t harm their sources of income, that good coffee means proper farming methods, that they have long relationships with their sources...” But never a direct response on the issue. After more online research, I only found one blend being a fair trade product (the Sumatran Blend).

The strong contrast between the University advertisement a few years ago and the feedback and products shown online shook me. Due to the time being, I contacted them through their website since there’s no email address (picture attached).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://admission.princeton.edu/blogs/welcome-princetons-small-world>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.defeoassociates.com/small-world-coffee/>

**Feedback** (required)

Dear Small World Coffee,

Hope this reaches you well! My name is Alice and I'm a student from Princeton High School. I'm reaching out (via here since I wasn't able to find an email) because I am doing a project regarding Fair Trade and would love to learn more about what Small World is doing!

**Feedback** (required)

World is doing! Small World is a beloved local coffee shop and has served the community with incredible coffee and exuberant ambience for many many years. Specifically, my questions are:

1. The name, "Small World", seems to indicate much more. On the Princeton University website, I saw the student life column introducing its "Fair-Trade" coffee. This has

**Feedback** (required)

website, I saw the student life column introducing its "Fair-Trade" coffee. This has caught my eyes- does the name implies your global thinking philosophy of Fair Trade with developing countries? It would be great if you could let me learn more about the origin of the name!

2. I took a look at the webstore and it looks like only the Sumatran coffee is Fair Trade Certified. I might have missed many-- Is it possible to let me know what percent of

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Fair Trade is important because it ensures fair prices, living wages and community

**Feedback** (required)

benefits for farmers, workers and their families in developing countries. Fairtrade works in partnership with farmers to empower them, and produce raw ingredients with fairer prices, better terms of trading, as well as additional funds for business and community development. I believe that aligns closely with the philosophy of Small World as well. Thank you so much and I look forward to hearing from you soon!



## FEEDBACK SENT

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback. If your message requires a response you may expect one within two business days.

Contact Content:

Dear Small World Coffee,

Hope this reaches you well! My name is Alice and I'm a student from Princeton High School. I'm reaching out (via here since I wasn't able to find an email) because I am doing a project regarding Fair Trade and would love to learn more about what Small World is doing! Small World is a beloved local coffee shop and has served the community with incredible coffee and exuberant ambience for many many years. Specifically, my questions are:

1. The name, "Small World", seems to indicate much more. On the Princeton University website, I saw the student life column introducing its "Fair-Trade" coffee. This has caught my eyes- does the name implies your global thinking philosophy of Fair Trade with developing countries? It would be great if you could let me learn more about the origin of the name!
2. I took a look at the webstore and it looks like only the Sumatran coffee is Fair Trade Certified. I might have missed many-- Is it possible to let me know what percent of your coffee is Fair Trade certified?

Fair Trade is important because it ensures fair prices, living wages and community benefits for farmers, workers and their families in developing countries. Fairtrade works in partnership with farmers to empower them, and produce raw ingredients with fairer prices, better terms of trading, as well as additional funds for business and community development. I believe that aligns closely with the philosophy of Small World as well. Thank you so much and I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Fortunately, we got a very prompt reply from Small World owner- Jessica Durrie. And fortunately, the email was very specific, unlike the response the reviewer from the website. But unfortunately, the response is disappointing. In summary, the owner stated her understanding of Fair Trade, a very important issue. Yet realistically under the 21st market economy, sometimes the Fair Trade coffee would not be considered because of the market competition. It was disheartening to hear. But this email also revealed some cruel insights-- it would be impossible for market competition to "disappear". Under this economic climate, profits are placed before humanity. Two main takeaways would therefore be: 1. The market needs to shift to a more humanitarian facet. Consumers should put ethics into consideration when purchasing items. 2. Fair Trade farmers should consider to increase the quality. Personally I know that the coffee trade in developing countries is also very problematic and bureaucratic from a previous visit to Kenya. We can't only live in an idealistic realm. Not proud to say, market dictates behavior. **Trade reforms and deals NEED TO be made in the near future to benefit the disadvantaged, improve the quality, and ensure equality.**



**Jessica Durrie** <jessica@smallworldcoffee.com>  
to me ▾

4:01 PM (5 minutes ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Alice,

Thanks for your inquiry!

The name Small World Coffee was inspired by the notion that we truly do live in a small and interconnected world. Both myself and my business partner grew up overseas collectively in Italy, Brazil, Australia, Spain, and Korea. Those experiences had a huge impact on us both and helped us see the universal similarities in humanity, despite cultural differences. So, that was the inspiration for the name!

This topic of Fair Trade is obviously a multifaceted issue. You are correct, all of our coffees are not certified Fair Trade. I believe 2 of them are right now, the Sumatran and our Mexican bean from Oaxaca. However, this is where it gets complicated, we have been working with the same brokers and many of the same farms for well over 10 to 15 years and all of the green beans we purchase garner more than double Fair Trade prices. Sometimes the quality standard for the Fair Trade coffee is not where we want it to be, so we work with farmers who are incentivized to increase the quality and care that they put into planting, harvesting, and processing so that they can earn much higher prices than fair trade coffees would provide. They and their workers know that there is a market for coffees that have no taste defects. This comes from attention, and this attention is then compensated. Sometimes we find Fair Trade coffees that match our quality needs, and we will definitely purchase them. However, we make our purchasing decisions based on taste, and it has been our experience that taste and quality match the socio economic needs of fair pay when you purchase from the right farms and brokers.

Don't get me wrong, the Fair Trade standards are absolutely important, without this benchmark, many coffee farmers would go out of business, switch to different crops, etc. This standard allows for many farms to earn a fair price. But just like any market, there are a variety of standards of quality and consumers who are willing to pay more for farming practices that both create a better product with ethical standards. For instance, we purchase a lot of our green coffee from farms that are run by the quality and care standards set by La Minita Estate. Here is a link to one of the pages on their website: <https://www.laminita.com/sustainability>. They are a great organization that walks the talk.

I hope this all made sense, I'm writing it quickly before going into a bunch of interview!

If you have any other questions, feel free to email me back!

All the best,