



# Fair Trade Alliance

August 2005

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Dear Fair Trade Alliance Members,

Many of you have written to us and asked where you can find Fair trade clothing. As many of you plan for back-to-school or the change of seasons, you are looking to make clothing purchases that support your commitment to fair treatment of workers and the environment. As you know sweatshops and other exploitative labor practices have become all too prominent in the garment industry. The good news is that there are a growing number of Fair Trade and sweat-free garment companies that can help meet your needs. Plus, we're making free copies of our "Guide to Ending Sweatshops" available to members of the Fair Trade Alliance. Email us at [fairtrade@coopamerica.org](mailto:fairtrade@coopamerica.org) to request up to twenty free guides. These guides are great resources for educating yourself and others about sweatshops and how to take action to ensure better working conditions in garment factories here and abroad.

Also in this issue, you'll find a resource list of green and Fair Trade businesses offering sweat-free clothing for men, women, and children. For a complete listing, check out Co-op America's *National Green Pages* online or call 1-800-58-GREEN to order a copy of the print directory.

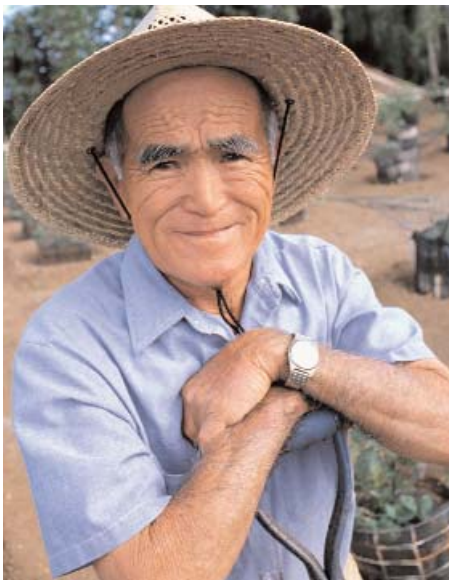
In cooperation,  
Erin Gorman, Fair Trade Director

## Fair Trade Producers Flooded in Mumbai

Ten days of record rainfall and flooding have devastated Mumbai (Bombay), India. The 37 inches of rainfall in a 24-hour period have left more than 1,000 people dead. The poor living in low-lying areas were the hardest hit.

This disaster also destroyed the offices of MarketPlace: Handwork of India, a long time committed Fair Trade businesses working to support the empowerment and employment of women artisans in India. The cost of rebuilding the offices and the work areas, including purchasing new sewing equipment, is estimated at close to \$19,000.

The artisans of MarketPlace rely on this work as their primary source of income. If you would like to donate to support the rebuilding efforts visit [www.marketlaceindia.com](http://www.marketlaceindia.com).



## Your Support Makes a Difference

Co-op America's Fair Trade Alliance is funded through the generous support of our members. While many other organizations rely on foundations to provide the financial resources needed to run their programs, Co-op America's work is largely funded by individuals and organizations like yours that share our vision for the world. By making a modest contribution to Co-op America's Fair Trade Alliance, you help us provide resources and support to Fair Trade advocates across the country so that together we can grow the grassroots movement for Fair Trade in the US.

Give online at [www.fairtradeaction.org](http://www.fairtradeaction.org).

Or send a check by mail to:  
Co-op America's Fair Trade Alliance  
1612 K Street NW Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20006

## Build a Sweat-free and Fair Trade Wardrobe

Today's market is defined by competition and profit margins. In many instances, corporations, in hopes of increasing their profits, will seek out the cheapest labor possible in a continued pursuit to lower their cost of goods. The impact of this race to the bottom is the devastation of workers and communities that are most vulnerable to exploitation and least positioned to demand better wages and better treatment.

You can make a big impact on the clothing industry by switching your purchases to more ethically produced attire when possible and putting pressure on major corporations to take steps to improve conditions in factories they contract with both here in the US and around the world.

Using both sets of strategies is crucial for improving conditions for workers in the garment industry.

There is a number of highly innovative Fair Trade solutions in progress. Some new models are offering hope to garment workers including the formation of a successful women's sewing cooperative in Nueva Vida, Nicaragua and a democratic union-run sewing factory in El Salvador. Purchasing Fair Trade and sweat-free garments is important for the ongoing success of this market.

While clothing is not a commodity that is certified as Fair Trade, you can use the Fair Trade Federation's list of Fair Trade businesses as a way to find more ethical threads. These businesses are committed to providing fair wages and good employment opportunities to economically disadvantaged artisans and farmers worldwide. By purchasing clothing handicrafts, or decorative items for your home from these businesses, you can be sure that the workers have earned a fair price and that your purchases are contributing to greater self-sufficiency of communities abroad.

While more Fair Trade garments become available each year, it may not always be possible to find what you need in the Fair Trade marketplace. When you shop in the conventional market, please ask major corporations to commit to improving conditions for workers and to submit to third-party monitoring to verify progress.

The goal of asking corporations to be accountable to workers in their supply chain is NOT to close factories and leave already impoverished people without employment. Indeed, some companies have used consumer pressure as an excuse to 'cut and run' on garment workers. That's why Co-op America's Sweatshop Program focuses on helping consumers pressure corporations to transform factories into healthy and responsible worksites while at the same time helping consumers find green and Fair Trade products whenever possible.

Being a supporter of Fair Trade and an opponent of sweatshops goes hand in hand. E-mail us at [fairtrade@coopamerica.org](mailto:fairtrade@coopamerica.org) to request our "Guide to Ending Sweatshops."

For a list of Fair Trade Federation retail and wholesale members, visit [www.fairtradefederation.org](http://www.fairtradefederation.org).

To find green businesses offering sweat-free and Fair Trade garments, check out Co-op America's *National Green Pages* at [www.greenpages.org](http://www.greenpages.org). Or call 1-800-58-GREEN to order a copy of our print directory.

To get a back issue of Co-op America's *Real Money* article on Sweat-Free Back-to-School clothing, call 1-800-58-GREEN and order a copy of the July/August 2005 *Real Money* newsletter.

For more on Co-op America's Sweatshop program, visit [www.sweatshops.org](http://www.sweatshops.org).



## Looking for Fair Trade Coffee, Tea, Chocolate, or Crafts?

Check out Co-op America's *National Green Pages* for a complete listing of business members of the Fair Trade Federation and for green businesses offering a range of Fair Trade products.

Call 1-800-58-GREEN to order a copy of the *National Green Pages*.

## **Fair Trade and Green Businesses Offering Sweat-Free Clothing**

The following businesses are a good place to start when looking for a more just and sustainable wardrobe. A more complete list can be found in Co-op America's "Guide to Ending Sweatshops," which also includes a listing of union-made garments.

As a member of the Fair Trade Alliance you are eligible to receive up to twenty free copies of the Guide to Ending Sweatshops when you email us at [fairtrade@coopamerica.org](mailto:fairtrade@coopamerica.org). Include your name, mailing address, the number of guides requested, and your intended use for the guides so we can keep track of how this resource is helping educate others about ending sweatshop labor.

### **Casa Bonampak**

Casa Bonampak sells blouses made by Mayan artisans from 100 percent organic cotton.  
[www.casabonampak.com](http://www.casabonampak.com)

### **Cheppu Himal**

Cheppu Himal works with artisans of Nepal to provide amazingly beautiful clothing and crafts. Clothing is made 100 percent organic with hand carved coconut shell buttons.  
[www.cheppu.com](http://www.cheppu.com)

### **Ecochic, inc.**

Ecochic proves that social and environmental awareness can be coupled with fashion. The Arkansas-based company offers a variety of stylish clothing, all made from eco-friendly materials.  
[www.ecochicinc.com](http://www.ecochicinc.com)

### **Far East Handicrafts**

Direct importer from indigenous craftspeople of Nepal, Tibet. Established 1988.  
[www.fareasthandicrafts.com](http://www.fareasthandicrafts.com)

### **Global Exchange**

A unique, not-for-profit, non-exploitative, alternative supporting artisan cooperatives in over 40 countries.  
[www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org)

### **Kusikuy**

Works with Bolivian alpaca farmers to create a market for organic cotton, llama, and alpaca wool.  
[www.kusikuy.com](http://www.kusikuy.com)

### **Maggie's Organics**

Maggie's Organics manufactures clothing made from organic cotton, wool, and linen. Maggie's helped start a women's sewing collective in Nueva Vida, Nicaragua that now supply a large majority of Maggie's t-shirts and camisoles.  
[www.organicclothes.com](http://www.organicclothes.com)

### **Marketplace: Handwork of India**

Marketplace is a non-profit organization that works with artisans in India to create a market for their work and a more personable connection between products' wearer and creator.  
[www.marketplaceindia.com](http://www.marketplaceindia.com)

### **No Enemy Organics USA**

100% organic women's and men's clothing, made sweatshop-free in California.  
[www.noenemy.org](http://www.noenemy.org)

### **Indigenous Designs**

Natural-fiber wholesale clothing company offering Fair Trade, sweatshop-free, cooperative-made clothing  
[www.indigenousdesigns.com](http://www.indigenousdesigns.com)

*More listings on the next page . . .*

## **Additional Sweat-Free Clothing Options ...**

### **North Country Fair Trade**

T-shirts and sweatshirts produced by women's co-ops in Nicaragua and Mexico.  
Phone: (651)698-1698

### **Village Imports**

Fair Trade -- shopping with a social conscience. Jewelry, clothes, and great gifts from 50+ countries.  
[www.villageimports.com](http://www.villageimports.com)

### **Just Goods**

Beautiful selection of stylish, sweat-free clothing for men, women, and children.  
[www.justgoods.net](http://www.justgoods.net)

### **Ganesh Himal Trekking & Trading Co.**

Unique handcrafted clothing, textiles, jewelry, drums, paper accessories, and hemp from Nepal. Fairly traded since 1984.  
Web site: [members.aol.com/ghimal/dnr.htm](http://members.aol.com/ghimal/dnr.htm)

### **Global Girlfriend, LLC**

Featuring artisan quality jewelry, handbags, and apparel made by US women's nonprofit programs and women's Fair Trade cooperatives worldwide.  
[www.globalgirlfriend.com](http://www.globalgirlfriend.com)

## **Fair Trade Alliance Profiles**

### **World Shoppe**

[www.World-Shoppe.com](http://www.World-Shoppe.com) was founded by Megy Karydes in the summer of 2004 to make beautiful, handmade Fair Trade gifts and home accessories available to any US consumer. "My friends and family members always loved to receive gifts that were Fair Trade because it meant that a real human being actually made the item by hand. The person had a name and it meant something to the artisan who made it, unlike a mass-produced item I could have quickly picked up at a big box retailer," says Megy Karydes, founder of [www.World-Shoppe.com](http://www.World-Shoppe.com). "When my friends and family starting asking me where they could buy the same gifts online, I had a hard time finding a resource, so I decided to make Fair Trade gift and home accessories available online." From this realization, [www.World-Shoppe.com](http://www.World-Shoppe.com) was founded. From stunning silk scarves or jewelry from India to exquisite bamboo bowls lined with powerful red lacquer from Vietnam and even fun children's toys from Sri Lanka, Karydes's online business is aimed at being an alternative for those who give gifts that make a difference in someone's life. Additionally, each item from [www.World-Shoppe.com](http://www.World-Shoppe.com) comes with a description card that includes information about the artisan who made it and about the item. "I'm not naïve enough to think I, alone, can change the world," Karydes said. "But if I can help change the world for even one person, I am delighted."

To shop online and find out more information: [www.world-shoppe.com](http://www.world-shoppe.com)

### **ClothingChange Exchange**

ClothingChange is a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organization based in Central Vermont. The organization is committed to the ideals of sustainable clothing for radical personal and social change. They are dedicated to implementing sustainable practices into the daily life of all who wear clothing and they are a proud member of the Fair Trade Alliance. Through workshops and informal gatherings, they teach traditional garment-making techniques and educate on social issues related to clothing and identity in order to encourage everyone to make meaningful clothing choices based on careful individual, social, and environmental considerations. They also host a series of events, such as the very special touring event The Clothing Change Exchange. The Clothing Change Exchange is a sampling of many of the integral philosophies of Clothing Change. It is a colorful event in the spirit of a cacophonous marketplace where many cultures converge through the common medium of clothing. At the Exchange, patrons bring their unwanted clothing to swap, create new ways to wear old clothing, and then donate what is left to people in need.

You can see the Clothing Change Exchange in action by attending the Fair Trade Pavilion at the Green Festival in DC on Saturday, September 24th.

For more information: e-mail Trish at [ClothingChange-owner@yahoogroups.com](mailto:ClothingChange-owner@yahoogroups.com) or call 802-728-9859.

## **Fair Trade Rice to Hit Supermarket Shelves this Fall**

Fair Trade Jasmine Rice will hit the US this fall and there are quite a few ways that you, as a consumer and Fair Trade advocate, can become involved in the campaign to foster a wider and more sustainable Fair Trade rice market.

While studying in Thailand, a group of students was amazed at how rice found its way into so many facets of life in the East. This cultural dependence coupled with the Global North's importing of huge quantities of the product found the students questioning why these farmers were still living in utter poverty. The students returned to the US after their life changing experience to create a nonprofit organization called ENGAGE, Educational Network for Global and Grassroots Exchange. They aim to facilitate global and grassroots understanding of world-wide connectedness and solidarity.



Jasmine rice, in particular, is one of the most sought after strains of rice in the world and grown by over 5 million farming households in northern Thailand. In 1999, the average annual income of a Jasmine rice farmer was US \$600, one third as much as the average Thai household. Rice trade has been threatened a great deal by the recent invasion of the biotech industry and its attempts to engineer products at a much cheaper price.

For the over 7,000 rice farmers that have already been organized within the Fair Trade system, benefits have already been far-reaching and most promising. Fair Trade farmers receive US \$0.24/kg, as opposed to the traditional market's US \$0.12-0.16. By engaging in Fair Trade, farmers have the opportunity to double their income. You have the opportunity to help grow this market further.

ENGAGE has invested a great deal of time educating people about the Jasmine rice market and organizing people around the Fair Trade campaign. They have suggested that you become involved in the following ways:

**1. Buy Fair Trade Rice! Fair Trade Jasmine rice will be available by two different certified companies this fall, Alter Eco ([www.altereco.com](http://www.altereco.com)) and Ahaar Organics ([www.ahaarorganic.com](http://www.ahaarorganic.com)).**

**2. If you do not see the shelves of your local grocer stocked with the rice in the coming months, be sure to educate the manager about its availability and demand that it be sold in the store. Encourage others to do the same and write letters to supermarkets.**

**3. Start or join a coalition of ENGAGE members to educate others about Fair Trade rice and its importance to the global market. For more information, see [www.engage-humanity.org](http://www.engage-humanity.org)**



*photos: ENGAGE*