

## Is Fair trade worth it?

There are two sides to every argument and while many people think Fairtrade is a good thing, there are others who have criticisms. Read these opinions and classify them into 'For Fairtrade' and 'Against Fairtrade'

Fair trade farmers get paid a fair price and on top of that, a 'Fair Trade premium' - an extra sum of money paid on top of the minimum Fair Trade price. The money from the premium goes into communal funds which are for the workers and farmers. Together they may spend these funds in order to help improve and develop their environmental, social and economic circumstances.

24% of the Fairtrade premium is spent on education

Cocoa framers spent 46% of their premium on improving the productivity and quality of their goods

Fair trade products are often more expensive than 'normal' products. These non-fairtrade products are probably very cheap for a reason, either poor working conditions, cheap ingredients or both. Many people, especially those struggling on low incomes, cannot afford to pay the difference

There is a minimum price guaranteed, but farmers can earn more if their products are good quality or in demand

In good times, when a product is in high demand, farmers may get paid more for their products than from Fairtrade companies. However, this is not guaranteed - if the demand goes down, the price will go down. Fairtrade companies offer a guaranteed minimum price, which will ensure farmers can have reasonable living standards always.

Almost 40 per cent of all our bananas are now Fairtrade but Fairtrade certifies lots of other products, including gold and prawns, cocoa, cotton and flowers

Fairtrade cannot solve all the problems of poverty, though - only a small proportion of global commodities are sold on Fairtrade terms, and challenges like climate change, market volatility and armed conflict pose an urgent threat to farmers' livelihoods

Farmers and co-operatives have to pay to be registered as a Fairtrade provider

Many people feel that governments should be addressing unfairness, not charities

Fairtrade cannot help all farmers. Some poorer or remote farmers cannot organise and join up; others cannot afford the fees; still others will be working for larger producers who are excluded from many Fairtrade product lines.

There are lots of fair trade organisations e.g., Fair for life, Naturland Fairtrade - all approved by the Fair World Project as well as Rainforest Alliance, Traidcraft, OneVillage- most of them need subscriptions - are poor producers to be expected to pay the costs involved to join every labelling scheme?

Fair Trade aims to offer better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. Farmers are given special advice on better farming techniques

If fair trade farmers getting more money, sometimes that can make non-fairtrade goods more expensive too

People who are responsible for transportation, storage, and sales of 'normal' goods are hurt by fairtrade

In order to be 'Fairtrade' farmers are not allowed to use child or forced labour, they must use organic or environmentally sustainable methods, and having high standards of animal welfare. Workers are free to join unions and bargain collectively to help improve their lives. Fairtrade sends inspectors to these farms around the world, ensuring they are still compliant.

Unless it reaches mass markets, there's a danger that fair trade remains a token gesture- it makes people feel good about helping but doesn't have a huge effect on world poverty.

Communities come to rely on Fairtrade, then big companies- such as Sainsbury's who stopped selling Fairtrade tea suddenly in 2017- can withdraw their custom and that can be a huge problem,

Here are some comparative prices (from the same shops) of Fairtrade and non-Fairtrade goods. They are for the same amount of goods (e.g. 100g)

Fairtrade	Non-Fairtrade
Cocoa £2.99	£2.50
Cashew nuts £2.20	£0.70
Peppercorns £2.50	£1.50
Turneric £0.21	£ 0.52
Sugar £0.80	£0.75
Biscuits £1.23	£1.15
Tea bags £2.62	£2.35
Banana £1.25	£1.09

So you can see that there is a difference in price, not huge, but generally more expensive. Some goods are cheaper.

In 2014, a controversial study in Africa by the University of London was unable to find any evidence that fair trade has made a positive difference to the wages and working conditions of those employed in the production of the commodities produced for Fairtrade-certified export.

Despite criticisms, people believe that Fairtrade is better than nothing

Some retailers charge even more for Fairtrade products because they know people will pay it, but much of this does not get to the farmer

Critics argue that Fairtrade, but not all other Fair Trade businesses, harm all non-Fairtrade farmers. Fairtrade claims that its farmers are paid higher prices and are given special advice on better techniques, both of which will lead to increased output being sold on the global market

In order to join Fairtrade, cooperatives must meet quality and political standards which means their farmers must be relatively skillful and educated

Fair trade makes free trade work for the world's poor, who can't afford to go up against rich cooperatives in price etc

Fairtrade ensures fair trade practices at every level of the supply chain