

Cooperative Coffee's Position on Fairtrade (prompted by TFUSA withdrawal from FLO)

Today, with TransFair USA leaving the FLO system and launching its own version of “Fair Trade for All” – we see a lot of jostling for position on who has the ultimate “authority” to dictate the future path of fair trade and to re-write the standards. There is still a lot of dust left to settle. Yet we can already categorically reject the theory promoted by “Fair Trade for All” that by working with large scale plantations and with trans-national corporations – the volume of transactions will trickle down and translate into greater economic impact for marginalized farmers and farm workers.

At Cooperative Coffees, we see this as a perfect opportunity to reiterate our vision and our values:

We are committed to **small-scale coffee farmers** working within their cooperatively organized structures. We recognize the challenge of achieving *fairness* in trade. Yet we **strive toward true partnership with producer organizations**, forming deep and long-term relationships that empower farmers and encourage financial stability and improved quality of life in their communities.

We value **meaningful relationships** based on open and respectful dialogue, mutual commitment and equity. We believe that relationships can only be fair – when people come to the table as equals. It is time for producers to have full representation and at least 50% of the voting voice in defining new directions in this movement.

We work both locally and internationally to **create social and economic change** through transparent and fair trading practices. And while we believe that our producer partners and consumers can trust us, we would never ask them to trust us blindly. We attempt to offer **total transparency** through our www.fairtradeproof.org website and invite scrutiny, feedback and suggestions.

We recognize the importance of fair trade returning to its roots as an **alternative model for trade** benefitting small producers in a way that is economically and socially sustainable. We believe the integrity of these values outweighs the size of our operation; and we trust that an authentic example of best practices can have reverberations beyond the scope of our next horizon.

We also believe it is important to recognize that we are merely at the beginning of our journey and that it is essential to continually educate ourselves and our customers about the fundamentals of authentic fair-trade – we are not motivated to denounce others, but rather to demonstrate our values and to lead by the example of our own practices.

