

## **The Conscious Consumer: Fair Trade relationships improve the lives of 5 million people in Africa, Asia and Latin America.**

Fair Trade, or alternative trade, refers to the direct exchange of goods based on principles of economic and social justice. Fair Trade empowers low-income artisans and farmers around the globe to better their conditions, and promotes understanding between them and people of developed regions.

Fair Traders support these principles:

**Opportunities for economically disadvantaged producers:** Fair Trade creates sustainable development opportunities for producers for whom conventional trading systems do not work. Many of these producers are rural artisans, mainly women.

**Gender equity:** Fair Traders emphasize the value of the work women perform as producers and as organization leaders. Women and men are paid equitable for comparable work.

**Transparency and Accountability:** Fair Traders insist on transparent management and accountable commercial relations. This comes through independent verification processes reflected in product labeling.

**Capacity Building:** Fair Traders help develop producer independence by committing to long-term relationships with partners, helping them develop management skills, access to markets and financial expertise.

**Payment at Fair Price:** A “fair price in the regional or local context” is one that is developed through dialogue and participation. A fair price covers the costs of production; helps improve the standard of living for the producer’s family, cooperative and community; supports environmentally sound practices.

**Healthy Working Conditions:** Fair Trade means a safe, healthy working environment for producers. Any children who participate in Fair Trade production are assured security, well-being, and educational and recreational requirements in accordance with the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, as well as local norms and laws.

**Environmental Sustainability:** Fair Trade encourages practices that manage and use local resources sustainably and often work with producers in regions of high biodiversity to help preserve natural environments.

**Promotion of Fair Trade Principles:** Fair Trade organizations educate the public about purchasing fairly traded products, highlight the need for changes in conventional trade practices and demonstrate how Fair Trade advances social justice and environmental sustainability. .