



EQUAL EXCHANGE Interfaith Program

FAIRLY TRADED HOT COCOA

Cocoa can be many things. A delicious, comforting hot beverage on a cold evening. The basic ingredient in our favorite chocolate. Or, if you have ever seen it growing, a strange, football-like fruit protruding from the trunk of a tree (see photo at right).

Cocoa, like coffee, is also a vital source of income for small farmers in some of the poorest countries in the world. And like small coffee farmers, cocoa farmers are often isolated from markets and forced to sell their products through middlemen. Affordable credit is hard to obtain, and the cocoa market is always in fluctuation. Much of the world's cocoa comes from West Africa plantations where child labor has become a well-documented concern.

Cocoa is also big business and, like coffee, is an important international commodity. Each year, Americans spend \$13 billion on cocoa products, yet the low prices paid to small-scale farmers have kept them poor and vulnerable.

Finally, cocoa is an opportunity to do justice. If we as consumers consider our role in the global economy and change just a portion of our buying habits, we can make a world of difference for poor farmers and their families.



EQUAL EXCHANGE & FAIR TRADE

In 1991, Equal Exchange became the first U.S. company to adopt international fair trade standards as guiding principles. As a fair trade organization, we are committed to these standards on 100% of our products. By working with democratic farmer cooperatives around the world and paying a fair price, we support their efforts to improve their own communities, putting more control and greater income in the hands of impoverished, small-scale farmers in developing countries.

Equal Exchange's cocoa is certified fairly traded by TransFair USA, assuring the consumer that the cocoa was grown and exported by a democratically organized cooperative of farmers; the cooperative was paid a fair, above-market price for its crop; and that high labor standards, including those for work safety, child labor and the freedom to organize are followed.

ORGANIC & SHADE GROWN

In addition, our cocoa is organically grown under a canopy of shade trees. Biologists have determined that this traditional method of



farming protects the environment, helps to maintain biodiversity and preserves the winter habitat of migratory songbirds, such as warblers, tanagers, orioles, and thrushes. By purchasing shade grown cocoa and coffee, you help small farmers to preserve this vital habitat and continue farming in the traditional way.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

By choosing fairly traded products, you help to create a more just and equitable economy, giving small farming communities more control, more choices and more hope for the future. And you send a message to conventional companies that you want social justice and the environment to be part of their purchasing standards.

SERVE EQUAL EXCHANGE COCOA...

Through Equal Exchange's Interfaith Program, your congregation can help small farmers by serving cocoa at coffee hour, offering it at a fundraiser or holiday bazaar, and spreading the word in your community. Contact us for more information how to get involved.

ASK FOR EQUAL EXCHANGE WHERE YOU SHOP...

Ask your favorite cafe, food store, or supermarket to carry Equal Exchange's fairly traded hot cocoa, coffee and tea. Your requests can influence what products they carry and increase awareness of fair trade. Contact us for materials and sample letters.

SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT FAIR TRADE...

We can also provide you with educational materials to help spread the word in your congregation, at community events, and with other places of worship. •

Equal Exchange's Interfaith Program works in partnership with communities of faith and faith-based organizations to make a difference in the lives of small farmers and their families through Fair Trade. For more information, or to order cocoa, coffee and tea for your place of worship, office or organization, please contact us.

More About the Farmers

Our organic cocoa is grown by the farmers of CONACADO, the National Confederation of Dominican Cocoa Producers, a 9,000 member cooperative in the Dominican Republic. CONACADO was founded in 1988 to help small farmers gain direct access to export markets, obtain a better price for their cocoa beans, and to provide its farmer members with agricultural credit and vital services such as training in quality improvement. Thanks to fair trade, CONACADO was also able to help farmers rebuild in the wake of Hurricane George in 1998, investing premiums in farm reconstruction and the creation of nurseries for growing new cocoa plants.

Cocoa is a vital source of income for the farmers, who also grow bananas, citrus, and vegetables for home use or for the local market. A higher income through fair trade enables farmers to improve their crops and provide for educational expenses for their children.

Organic cultivation is a particular focus of the organization and Equal Exchange's cocoa is

certified organic, meaning no chemical pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers are used.

The organic sugar in our hot cocoa mix is also fairly traded, grown by small-scale cooperative farmers in Paraguay. The co-ops help the farmers market their sugar cane, provide technical support and training and promote crop diversification. Through fair trade, co-op members receive a better price which helps them achieve these goals and provide a more stable income.

Even the organic milk powder in the hot cocoa is cooperatively produced, grown by Organic Valley, the leading organic, farmer-owned cooperative in the U.S. Organic Valley helps support sustainable family farms across the U.S. and is dedicated to humane animal treatment and stewardship of the environment. The 460 member cooperative produces milk, cheese and orange juice. (www.organicvalley.com)

Our cocoa is produced in partnership with La Siembra, a worker cooperative and pioneer in fairly traded cocoa based in Ottawa, Ontario. (www.lasiembra.com)