

CRS Faculty Learning Commons

Discussion Guide

Spring 2016 Session 1: "Fair Trade and Ethical Trade: State of the Movement"

Discussion #1: What is the current state of the fair trade movement?

Readings:

- a) "Fair Trade: The Long Journey That Informs the Current Reality" by Jonathan Rosenthal, *Fair World Project*, Spring 2012, pp. 15-16
- b) Jonathan Rosenthal Shares an Interview with the Foodery (video, 42:04 minutes), February 26, 2014
- c) Global Journalist: Is Fair Trade Really Fair? (video, 28:34 minutes), July 9, 2015

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) What surprised you most about Jonathan Rosenthal's video interview? What resonated most with you?
- 2) Which elements of fair trade do you think need to be better understood by the American public? Imagine you are talking to your family and friends about what you've been learning about fair trade, particularly as it impacts the world's poor. Do you think Americans are sufficiently informed about fair trade?
- 3) Has learning about fair trade informed your understanding and views about climate change and sustainability issues? Do you see links among fair trade, sustainable development, and climate change?
- 4) In the increasingly cluttered landscape of product definitions -- i.e. fair trade, natural, organic, healthy, gluten free, locally sourced, etc. -- and consumers' changing consciousness about their food and other products, what do you see as the future for fair trade? How can it share space with these other food movements and at the same time address global poverty?

Discussion #2: Consider multiple viewpoints on the impact of fair trade in addressing global poverty and promoting economic justice.

Readings:

- a) "The Economics of Fair Trade" by Raluca Dragusanu, Daniele Giovannucci and Nathan Nunn, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Summer 2014, pp. 217-236
- b) SOAS Summary Comments on their report "Fairtrade, Employment and Poverty Reduction in Ethiopia and Uganda" (website), May 24, 2014 (access available to the full 143-page report published in April 2014)
- c) Fairtrade International's (FTI) Response to the SOAS Report "Fairtrade, Employment and Poverty Reduction in Ethiopia and Uganda" (website link to the following resources)

Short Summary Response from FTI, dated May 20, 2014

FTI's Official Response, dated May 16, 2014

"Unpeeling the Impacts of Poverty" by Harriet Lamb, *Huffington Post*, May 28, 2014

Interview of Harriet Lamb on Al Jazeera (video, 3:15 minutes)

d) Taza Chocolate Talk on Direct vs. Fair Trade (video, 31:11 minutes), September 2012

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) Considering its history as a movement for social justice, where is fair trade? In addressing global poverty, is fair trade passé, cutting edge or somewhere in between? How can the fair trade movement have more of an impact and, therefore, be more relevant?
- 2) Based on what you have learned about the fair trade movement, is it doing its job of reducing poverty? Is fair trade fair or merely fairer? Fair or fairer about what? How can it be made *fairest*?

Discussion #3: What is the future for fair and ethical trade in the broader context of fair labor and global supply chains?

Readings:

- a) "Fair Trade: The Long Journey That Informs the Current Reality" by Jonathan Rosenthal, *Fair World Project*, Spring 2012, pp. 15-16
- b) "Women in Ghana Find an Innovative Way to Flourish" by Dr. Meghan J. Clark, *US Catholic* (website), October 2015
- c) Aurret van Heerden's talk "Making Global Labor Fair" at TedGlobal 2010 (video, 17:46 minutes), July 2010
- d) Keynote Address by Harriet Lamb, 9th International Fairtrade Towns Conference (video, 23:10 minutes), June 2015

Questions for Discussion:

- 1) What stood out to you as you learned about the issue of fair labor within global supply chains? How can consumers play an active role in demanding higher standards for the goods and services they receive in a complex global supply chain?
- 2) Should the *messaging* about fair trade be more about "fair labor" and operation of global supply chains? Considering where fair trade fits in the ongoing dialogue about climate change and sustainability, will its connection with these topics require different *messaging* about fair trade?
- 3) What ideas do you have to influence the economic system to incorporate a higher degree of fairness and economic justice, especially in relation to labor within the global supply chain?