

Fair Trade

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To see the world of today from below, from the poor, does not make the world nicer, but at least more hopeful and challenging. To live together in this world of poor small Indian farmers in the mountains of southern Mexico is not only a privilege, but also a divine privilege. To see in the eyes and in the hands of farmers, women and men, is to see the divine of the poor God with different names and stature. And taking this serious in your own life, body and soul, is turning poverty into a divine challenge: to create a world as a good and pleasant place to live in for everyone, always starting on the spot you are.

When we, Nico Roozen, a friend of my and me, on the urgency of the small Indian farmers of UCIRI, Oaxaca, Mexico, established the Max Havelaar market in Holland we did not have a clue where we would end up. But with the farmers I learned that

- To protest against exclusion, discrimination, exploitation does not make any sense when you don't make at the same time a good, reasonable and valid proposal.**
- That the highest spiritual act is sharing the bread with your fellow traveler who is going hungry.**
 - Happiness is not for sale**
 - Happiness we cannot buy**
 - Sharing the scarce goods to become common goods for everyone is a constant building, movement and a life fulfilling happiness. Development is therefore not a one way street hillside up, but a leveling off of unsustainable mountains of greed and mismanagement of today's economy.**
- Fairtrade as such is not development, but a tool that creates the proper conditions for small producers to get on the road of their own empowerment for development in their own way on their own terms and with their own goals. Small producers have suffered enough of government programs, of international aid and the likes.**
- We know bit by bit what good government means: working and struggling together to have food in all the families, in time and with quality, having access to clean water, having access to the communication means and using them for the empowerment, having access to the market in such a way that the consumer can**

buy our product that covers in the price all the real production, social and environmental costs.

Therefore the Indian farmers of UCIRI called for fair-trade and not aid.

Our goal is: Poverty with and in dignity by means of Organization, housing, roads, transportation, different production manners (organic, biodiversity, maintenance of the forests, ecotourism etc.) and we promote above all good governance inside the organization helping out on municipality level to create infrastructure for good democratic and transparent government where the authorities obey the people and act according the real needs of the communities and families;

Quality, Diversity, Organic production, betterment of environment, Fairtrade, are some elements that create real conditions for autonomous development in the regions.

In one sentence: To create a better future for our next generation.

The tortilla has always to sides. So also the Market:

Producers, small producers of coffee, honey, tea, cocoa, corn, etc. in the south

And consumers in the north and lately also in the south as we have in Mexico our own Fairade. Both market players are connected by means of above all small marketers, cooperatives as we see here Just Us.

The two pillars of this fair-trade market, - I call this market often: the different market in the market - are the producers and consumers, but they cannot get together without the roasters and retailers.

One of the goals of Fairtrade has always been: create democratic rules in the market and each in his own way. Producer's organizations, industrial and retail cooperatives are the means to make the market democratic. It is therefore a great pleasure and satisfaction to see here in this place and time a tremendous important step visually to demonstrate this struggle together, on same footing, with the same goals in mind, with the same spirit, with the same endurance. The Museum is not a fiction, a simulacrum of romanticizing the chain of production of coffee. It tries with tools, pictures and text to take away the cloud of not knowing of not wanting to know.

Poverty within dignity is harsh, but solid, with charm and real happiness with two feet on the soil and once and a while in the mud. It is art of what I call the 'Great Tradition' and therefore I would to cite an old text out of the BIBLE:

The Creator-Spirit and Lord-Mother says
The wise should not boast of their wisdom
Nor the strong of their strength
Nor the rich of their wealth.
If any want to boast,
They should boast that they know and understand me;
Because my love is constant,
And I do what is just and right.
These are the things that please me. (9, 23-24)

Therefore Jehoiakim, son of your father
Does it make you a better king and ruler
If you build houses of cedar,
Finer than those of others?
Your father enjoyed full life
He was always just and fair
And he prospered in everything he did.
He gave the poor a fair deal
And all went well with him.
That is what it means to know me,
The Lord of Earth and Heavens (Jeremiah 21, 13-16).