



Fair Comment



Welcome to the winter edition of MCIC's Fair Trade Manitoba e-newsletter. In these pages, we will provide you with the highlights in local and international fair trade news, while giving you ideas on how to engage your school, workplace or community group in fair trade issues.

We at MCIC are getting ready for a Fair Trade holiday season, full of ethical chocolates and cards and gifts made by fairly paid workers. Read on to find out how to make your festive season fair and just. Looking forward to next year, MCIC will be planning International Development Week 2011 with events including a Fair Trade Fashion show, and will be finding out how many Manitobans are up to the One Month Challenge. Stacey Toews, head of Level Ground Trading will also be speaking here in Manitoba during that time. All that hard work will be toasted with a glass of Fair Trade Certified wine.

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Fair Trade Manitoba - a program of the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC) - works with retailers, consumers and organizations to inform people about the benefits of fair trade and encourage its wider availability in the province. To find out more about Fair Trade Manitoba and fair trade issues in general, visit www.fairtrademanitoba.ca.

Contact us at (204) 987 6420 or fairtrade@mcic.ca.

Visit us at www.fairtrademanitoba.ca to access

- > A Fair Trade Shopping Guide for Manitoba
- > Information on fair trade and its benefits
- > Resources for bringing fair trade issues to the classroom
- > Details on upcoming fair trade events
- > The latest international news on fair trade
- > A video on fair trade in Manitoba

Manitobans Up to the Challenge

MCIC is gearing up for its annual One Month Challenge: an opportunity to show support for producers in the Global South by consuming only fair trade brands of coffee, tea and chocolate for 30 days, starting on Valentine's Day, 2011. Are you ready to take the One Month Challenge?

Last year, over 700 Manitobans took the challenge by pledging their commitment and getting friends and colleagues to sign on as well. Start thinking about encouraging your friends and family to sign up for the 2011 One Month Challenge. Why not ask your parents, siblings or children to take the challenge? How about seeing if your entire office can go Fair Trade for a month and help out producers in developing countries?



When you buy fair trade, it means that producers in the developing world have received a fair wage for what they produce, so they are able to better support their families and communities. This alternative approach to trade encourages more sustainable farm management practices, better conditions for workers, and more democratic procedures within the workplace. Fair trade also means no child labour has been used in production.

Sign-up information will be posted on the Fair Trade Manitoba website in the new year. In the meantime, consider whom you are going to ask to sign up for the challenge and contact MCIC at (204) 987-6420 or omc@mcic.ca for more information and to

MCIC to promote Fair Trade at IDW 2011

MCIC will continue to promote fair trade initiatives within Manitoba during International Development Week 2011. The events are still in the planning stages, however, a Fair Trade Fashion Show showcasing Fair Trade and ethically sourced clothes and a series of video profiles of youth from our province making a difference in our world are in the pipeline. Keep an eye on the MCIC.ca website for news as it unfolds.

International Development Week, held annually, the first full week of February, is proclaimed by the Canadian International Development Agency and highlights and illustrates the work of Canada's development community. IDW will take place from February 6-12, 2011. Keep an eye out for events taking place around Manitoba.

Wanting to buy Fair Trade gifts for your loved ones this holiday season? Wondering where in your town you can get that Fair Trade necklace, ornament or pack of Christmas cards? Take a look at the Product Finder at fairtrademanitoba.ca where you can search for the Fair Trade items you are looking for and find out exactly where they can be found. Whether you live in Winnipeg or somewhere else in Manitoba, the Product Finder will allow you to enjoy this holiday season, safe in the knowledge that your presents for your friends and family have been made in safe conditions and that the producer has been paid a fair wage. If you are a retailer who stocks Fair Trade products in Manitoba, and would like to be added to our directory, please contact MCIC at (204) 987 6420 or fairtrade@mcic.ca.

Stacey Toews in Manitoba

MCIC is excited to announce that Stacey Toews, head of Level Ground Trading, Canada's largest supplier of fair trade coffee, will be visiting Manitoba again in February during International Development Week.



Stacey is a very engaging speaker and leads a company that is socially conscious, green and boasts of a governance model that encourages staff innovation and participation. Stacey will be speaking to Ten Thousand Village audiences in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and will participate in MCIC

Did You Know?

The MLCC stocks twenty-one Fair Trade Certified (FTC) wines at its stores here in Manitoba. This means that every Liquor Mart in the province sells fairly-produced wines from Argentina to Chile to South Africa. The prices of these FTC wines begin at \$10.98 and retail at prices comparable to the other wines to be found in the store. So there is no reason not to choose a FTC wine this holiday season, and toast to equity and safe working conditions for all.



schools programs, such as our Generating Momentum Middle Years Conference in Gimli on February 9th. He will also be a headline speaker at Menno Simons College's annual Social Justice Fair, speaking at the University of Winnipeg the evening of February 9th. Stay tuned for further details as the date approaches.

Follow Fair Trade Manitoba on Facebook and Twitter



Become a fan of Fair Trade Manitoba on Facebook. Search for the 'Fair Trade Manitoba' group.



Get all of MCIC's latest tweets and the latest Fair Trade news at twitter.com/MCIC_CA.

Environment, Social Causes Play a Role in Holiday Giving

It's that time of year again! A recent market study, done by eBay Canada, showed that more than one quarter of working Canadians have considered, or actually have called into work with the "holiday shopping flu". Many consumers told the survey that their jobs, and even their families, got in the way of needing to get their shopping done. Of course, the on-line retail companies, through CyberShopping.ca, argue that you don't need to avoid your office or your home! You can shop from the comfort of your computer terminal and, unless your co-workers or your family members are shadowing you, no one will be the wiser and everyone ultimately will be the happier.

Whether you shop in person or on-line, celebrating the holidays in a greener and more socially conscious way has become a much more mainstream act in recent years. Our decorations are "greener"! Over a third of Canadian households now use LED (light emitting diode) lighting rather than the conventional incandescent bulbs, and municipalities across the country have developed programs to compost or recycle the large volume of trees, wrapping and packaging that comes with the season. Of course, if we avoided some of our consumer habits, we might not need those programs!

To reduce the cost of the holidays and to show one's love in deed, rather than in dollars, many people now give homemade gifts or gifts of time and effort (babysitting, house cleaning, snow shoveling). Craft fairs have become major events and an alternative to malls and web sites. A trend that we are all

participating in, with our difficult economic times, is getting people what they need or would normally buy themselves. In our family, rather than purchasing something "special", we take our children clothes shopping or for supplies they need for school or work.

Fair trade, buy local, green and organic products are now part of everyday life. They are all pieces of the puzzle of ensuring people's livelihoods, at home and overseas, while protecting the Earth. Whether one purchases a craft or food products made in Manitoba, or fairly traded coffee or handicrafts from a developing country, the consumer knows that the impact on the primary producer will be to support their dignity and their family.

You may choose to support small businesses or individual entrepreneurs. In some locations, where only the big company product is available, you still have a choice. When purchasing, for instance, a Cadbury's chocolate bar, buy the Dairy Milk or Thins variety with the Fair Trade Certified logo. These will benefit cocoa and sugar farmers in Ghana and avoid the use of child labour. Thanks to a program implemented by the United Nations and Cadbury, 350 million fair trade chocolate bars are circulating in the marketplace.

In Brandon, the major sellers of fair trade products are Ten Thousand Villages and the Marquis Project, both located downtown. Both of these organizations have forged long-term relationships with communities overseas and support their development through project work and product sales. As well, many grocery and other

retail chains have joined the fair trade movement in recent years, especially in food items. On-line, fair trade and globally oriented products are available from the New Internationalist, JustShirts, Jolica and many others – just Google "fair trade shopping".

As well, many families now give gifts of donations to international development agencies, getting a tax receipt for their generosity and offering very meaningful presents to loved ones. You can purchase gardening seed and supplies or some livestock (cows, goats, chickens) for a family or community in a developing country, or a school or health kit aimed at children or mothers, or a small business starter loan through a variety of agencies. These include World Vision, Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR), Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and several others. For a complete list of MCIC member agencies to which you may like to donate, visit mcic.ca

Or donate, in someone's name, to a group working in disaster relief in one of the world's trouble zones (Haiti, Pakistan, Sudan), be it the Red Cross, Doctors without Borders or Save the Children. The gifts that you give during the holiday season are a representation of who you are. More and more, we are becoming aware that our consumer power is another way that we can bring about a better world. Have a good "holiday shopping flu" season!

By Zack Gross, originally published in the Brandon Sun newspaper.

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