

Fair Trade Tea Overview

Written by {ga=fair-trade-community}

Saturday, 27 March 2010 17:48 - Last Updated Tuesday, 09 August 2011 16:11

By Fair Trade Community

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{rokbox size=|500 667| thumb=|images/content/200/tea_leaves_001.jpg| title=|Tea :: Tea Leaves| album=|tea1|}images/content/500/tea_leaves_001.jpg {/rokbox}

Fair Trade tea certification verifies that teas meet internationally recognized fair trade standards that include:

- Wages that meet or exceed legally established minimums.
- Absence of forced work practices or under-aged labor to produce tea.
- Freedom of association and organization among tea workers.
- Safe working conditions on tea plantations and cooperatives, including protection from exposure to harmful agrochemicals.
- Adherence to national and international worker protections, including those established by the United Nations.

Fair Trade tea practices promote the use of sustainable farming methods that are safer for humans and the environment.

In addition, teas produced by gardens and cooperatives establish a fair trade premium or fund that is managed by the workers for the benefit of their community.

Making a Difference

Tea pluckers have the capacity to play an active role improving their own lives. Here's how some worker communities have chosen to use their Fair Trade tea premiums:

- At the Makaibari tea estate in India, the workers have created a community load fund. Small loans have been distributed to families to address specific medical and educational needs.

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They also have utilized funds to support women and children's health programs that focus on nutrition and family planning.

- On the Da Zhan Shan tea cooperative in China, tea farmers have placed an emphasis on education. A portion of the premiums have been invested in building library and computer facilities for students.

Funds have also been allocated to each of the tea farmers' children to support their enrollment in high school and university.

- At Herkulu estate in Tanzania, workers have dedicated funds to repairing dilapidated housing and constructing new village facilities, including a medical center, grain mill and food dispensary.

- The small farmers of the SOFA tea cooperative in Sri Lanka have chosen to use the premiums toward tea-quality improvement initiatives, including organic inputs and tools, which increase efficiency and production.

They have also used their Fair Trade tea funds for income diversification projects such as bookkeeping and dairy cows.

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Article by Fair Trade Community

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