

# Our Recommendations for Working with Churches on Fairtrade

1. First, provide the churches, parishes etc. with basic information on Fairtrade scheme and why it was created. Only after some time, add more details about the Fairtrade certification. Within churches, church organizations and parishes, it is not individuals who decide about such projects – it is usually some kind of board who have to approve it. Individuals, however, have the power to inspire them.
2. Don't submit the proposal for the certification to the highest representative of the church (e.g. a bishop, patriarch etc.) – they are usually quite busy and lack the necessary information. It is much more effective to find an enthusiastic member of the church who will win over others for the cause.
3. Find out who within the church already has some knowledge of Fairtrade schemes and try to convince those groups/individuals to apply for Fairtrade certification.
4. Speak with pastors who already know something about fair trade and give them more information, offer them some special sessions (Fairtrade breakfast etc.). Building up closer contacts can bring about a multiplication effect as well as enable growth of the contact network itself. It can also open up opportunities for new projects.
5. Organise a Fairtrade breakfast or seminar for the church members or the parishioners.
6. Offer information on the reliability of the Fairtrade schemes as schemes which really make a difference. Try to prove that Fairtrade is not fraud. (Czechs in general tend to be rather distrustful, and this applies to church members, too).
7. Offer materials with pictures and information leaflets showing participation of foreign churches in Fairtrade scheme and certification (e.g. from the UK, Denmark and other countries where this is quite common)
8. Have arguments ready for objections such as "Fairtrade goods are more expensive than regular ones" (in fact, they are the same price as comparable good quality food or goods)
9. Don't be discouraged when asked for reasons why a church/ church organisation/parish etc. should strive for Fairtrade Church certification (some church representatives can think they are exceptional and fair enough and do not need any certificates to prove that). Be prepared for the discussion about fair trade in general.
10. Don't push too hard! If you're not ready to discuss fair trade, you can only increase mistrust in the whole scheme which many still perceive as something new and strange, and thus block further attempts to promote it in future. Make one step after another ...

## Further information

- Ecumenical Academy Prague: [www.ekumakad.cz/](http://www.ekumakad.cz/)
- Non-governmental organisation NaZemi: [www.fairtrade.cz/](http://www.fairtrade.cz/)
- Czech Republic Fairtrade Association: [www.fairtrade-asociace.cz](http://www.fairtrade-asociace.cz)

Prague, January 2013

Author of the recommendations: Jiri Silny

Photos: © Ecumenical Academy Prague

## Project "Awareness for Fairness"

[www.be-fair.eu](http://www.be-fair.eu)

Project lead: Berlin State Office of Development Cooperation (LEZ)

Project Coordination:

BGZ Berlin International Cooperation Agency GmbH,  
Augsburger Str. 33, 10789 Berlin, [www.bgz-berlin.de](http://www.bgz-berlin.de)

The project "Awareness for Fairness" has been co-financed by the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.



# Fairtrade Churches



# Fairtrade and Church Communities

The idea of Fair Trade actually originated in the church environment. The Mennonite Church USA's initiatives are generally named as the first initiatives of this type. After the Second World War it began to support its sister church in Jamaica by selling its handmade products in the community. In Europe, churches and church communities also became involved alongside non-governmental organisations from the beginning on. Wholesalers, such as the GEPA (the Fair Trade Company) also came into existence through the church initiatives. The certification of churches, religious communities and individual communities was aimed at by those who wanted to make their involvement in Fair Trade more effective.

In such an active church community, a minimum of one person for example, who actively looks after Fair Trade, will be assigned. Community boards should decide on the support of Fair Trade and make this known. Community shopping should be based on Fairtrade products as much as possible. Topics of poverty in the world and the end of poverty should have sufficient room at church services and other events. At least every now and again, a sales campaign for Fairtrade products in the community should be organised.

## The first steps ...

In the Czech Republic, the church initiatives can also be found at the beginning of Fair Trade. The first ever One-World-Shop with handmade products was opened in Prague in 1994 – jointly by 4 evangelical communities. This initiative – named One World - currently has two shops in Prague communities. In 2004 the first wholesaler was opened – at the same time this was the beginning of food imports. This time it was also about a church-related initiative, with the Ecumenical Academy Prague the operator. Soon after, other non-governmental organisations – also secular – and commercial retailers focused on Fair Trade.

In the Czech Republic, there are still only a few specialised One-World-Shops, not even 10 in the whole country. Most of the products are sold in shops with healthy foods or in supermarket chains. The small shops, which drive the communities or the non-governmental organisations, are all the more important. To support these initiatives, we have developed a concept, compiled recommendations and are publicising them.

## We only need one cupboard ...

It is very simple.

Basically, you just need an active person and a cupboard. Fairtrade products will be stored and displayed in the cupboard. The cupboard can be in a communal room or in another fitting, easily-accessible place. The cupboard is opened after mass or during other events and serves as a selling point.

One person to organise the sale and the supply of goods is sufficient. It could also be a youth group, for example, which looks after the cupboard and Fairtrade products.

With the retailers (from whom the Fairtrade products are obtained) there is often possibility to obtain the goods on commission. That means, the retailer remains the owner of the goods until the sale, and the community only pays for what was sold. Other goods can be returned if necessary. This praxis proved to be the easiest way to set up such a selling point. This also applies to every other place, where people regularly come together.

Fairtrade coffee and tea will of course also become the usual drinks at events or events held here.

## The certification

To achieve a selling opportunity is one of the conditions for the certification of the church community as a "Fairtrade Church". The other conditions are mentioned on the previous page.

What does the title "Fairtrade" mean for a community, school or a church?

The title is awarded by the Czech Republic Fairtrade Umbrella Association. Two other organisations participate in the certification process:

- The Ecumenical Academy Prague
- The non-governmental organisation for fair trade NaZemi

After the entries have been received, a small team assesses the information and requests, where required, additional information or explanations. The team also gives the applicant tips. When all questions have been satisfactorily answered, the team decides whether the title can be awarded.

The community is then informed. The team and the community discuss together, how and where the official presentation of the certificate should take place – to achieve the maximum public impact.

At the award ceremony, a representative of the Czech Republic Fairtrade Association presents the certificate to the community. From this point on, the community can use the Fairtrade campaign logo.

## We are Fairtrade!

As part of the project "Awareness for Fairness", we in Bohemia began the Fairtrade certification with the cities, then came the schools and finally the churches, too.

Soon after the official start of the campaign, the first communities also applied. Communities were advised and assisted by us with the preparation. The Ecumenical Academy Prague compiled a guideline for this.



At the moment, there are 3 communities, who have already attained this title. We are certain: more will follow ...