



Fair Trade Tea 101

Use these facts to educate others about the need for Fair Trade Tea

General Fast Facts

- Tea is the **2nd most popular** beverage in the world after water. With 70,000 cups drunk per second.
- The majority of tea purchased in the United States is grown on around **2.5 million hectares** across Africa and Asia.

The Need for Fair Trade Tea

- Fluctuating weather conditions make tea production unstable and create price fluctuations, which affect workers' wages.
- Unlike the coffee and cocoa sectors, there are **no global governance initiatives** to improve working conditions of tea producers.
- Although labor and pay conditions are regulated by the government, tea workers have historically been considered unskilled and therefore paid at minimal levels.

Conventional Tea

- Four companies dominate the tea market and 58% of production is consumed in the same producing countries.
- While market prices for tea have become increasingly high, at the production level the price of tea has **stayed level with or below** that of 30 years prior.
- Poor profitability in tea production over the years has impeded investment in infrastructure and led to cost cutting, which in turn has affected workers and children with few alternatives.

Fair Trade Tea

- **Economic:** Small holder organizations and tea workers from estates that are Fairtrade certified have **received over \$3 million in Fairtrade Premiums**, which pay an average 50 US cents per Kilo.
- **Environmental:** Elimination of harmful agro-chemicals and genetically-modified organisms, as well as environmental assessment plans put in place to protect ecosystems.
- **Social:** In small producer organizations, all members must participate in the decision-making process to make progress.
- **Training & Capacity Building:** Basic health care coverage and workshops, subsidized school entrance fees and funds to repair facility equipment.

Resources

- Tropical Commodity Coalition. 2010. [‘Tea Barometer Report’](#)
- The Sustainable Trade Initiative. 2011. [‘Sector Overview: Tea’](#)

