



# Fair Trade Sugar 101

*Use these facts to educate yourself and others about the importance of Fair Trade sugar.*

## General Fast Facts:

- Around **80 percent** of the world's sugar is derived from sugarcane, grown by millions of small-scale farmers and plantation workers in developing countries.
- Sugarcane is a tall, bamboo-like grass that grows to a height of **20 feet** and is largely grown in tropical countries.
- The remaining **20 percent** of the world's sugar supply comes from sugar beet, a root crop resembling a large parsnip, grown mainly in the temperate zones in the North.

## The Need for Fair Trade Sugar:

- Without Fair Trade prices and credit programs, sugarcane farmers earn on average between \$750-1200 per year and many have to sell their belongings in order to finance the next year's crop.
- Traditionally, the international trade laws that govern sugar imports have made it difficult for smallholder farmers to access the more lucrative markets of Europe and North America. These laws force them into competition with more powerful, wealthy countries that have greater financial resources to dedicate to sugar production and greater political power to subsidize and promote their sugar industries.

## Conventional Sugar:

- World sugar prices are highly volatile, and the price of raw sugar, in particular, frequently falls below production costs.
- The price that smallholder farmers receive for sugarcane can fail to cover the costs they incur to produce it, leaving them in a debt trap and with little capital to reinvest in farms.

## Fair Trade Sugar:

- Fair Trade creates direct trade links between farmer-owned cooperatives and buyers, and provides farmers with access to affordable credit.
- Farmers and their families are earning a better income for their hard work, holding on to their land, keeping their kids in school, and investing in the quality of their harvest.
- On Fair Trade farms, producers adhere to strict standards regarding the use and handling of pesticides, the protection of natural waters, virgin forest and other ecosystems, and the management of erosion and waste.