

# Win Win Solutions:

## An Introduction to Fair Trade and Cooperative Economics



A curriculum connecting children around the world  
through the power of fairness and cooperation.

GRADES 4-9











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# Curriculum Standards

This curriculum addresses the following U.S. curriculum standards:

## SOCIAL STUDIES

- III. People, Places, and Environments
- VII. Production, Distribution, and Consumption
- IX. Global Connections
- X. Civic Ideals and Practices

## GEOGRAPHY

### The World in Spatial Terms

- STANDARD 1: How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information.
- STANDARD 2: How to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments.
- STANDARD 3: How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface.

### Human Systems

- STANDARD 11: The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface.

### Environment and Society

- STANDARD 14: How human actions modify the physical environment.
- STANDARD 15: How physical systems affect human systems.
- STANDARD 16: The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources.

### The Uses of Geography

- STANDARD 17: How to apply geography to interpret the past.
- STANDARD 18: To apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

## LANGUAGE ARTS

- Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, and vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
- Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with

different audiences for a variety of purposes. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprinted texts, artifacts, and people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, and video) to gather and synthesize information, and to create and communicate knowledge.

## HISTORY

- WORLD HISTORY STANDARD ERA 8, STANDARD 6B: How increasing economic interdependence has transformed human society.
- WORLD HISTORY STANDARD ERA 9, STANDARD 1: Global and economic trends in the high period of western dominance.
- STANDARD 6: Promises and paradoxes of the second half of the 20th century.

## MATHEMATICS

- STANDARD 1: NUMBER AND OPERATION
  - Understand numbers, ways of representing numbers, relationships among numbers, and number systems.
  - Use computational tools and strategies fluently and estimate appropriately.
- STANDARD 5: DATA ANALYSIS, STATISTICS, AND PROBABILITY
  - Pose questions and collect, organize, and represent data to answer those questions.
  - Interpret data using methods of exploratory data analysis.
  - Develop and evaluate inferences, predictions, and arguments that are based on data.
  - Understand and apply basic notions of chance and probability.
- STANDARD 6: PROBLEM SOLVING
  - Build new mathematical knowledge through their work with problems.
  - Develop a disposition to formulate, represent, abstract, and generalize in situations within and outside mathematics.

Apply a wide variety of strategies to solve problems and adapt the strategies to new situations.

Monitor and reflect on their mathematical thinking in solving problems.

STANDARD 9: CONNECTIONS

Recognize, use, and learn about mathematics in contexts outside of mathematics.

STANDARD 10: REPRESENTATION

Use representations to model and interpret physical, social, and mathematical phenomena.

## ECONOMICS

STANDARD 1: Scarcity

STANDARD 2: Marginal Cost/Benefit

STANDARD 3: Allocation of Goods and Services

STANDARD 5: Gain from Trade

STANDARD 6: Specialization and Trade

STANDARD 7: Markets – Price and Quantity Determination

STANDARD 8: Role of Price in Market System

STANDARD 9: Role of Competition

STANDARD 14: Profit and Entrepreneur

## SCIENCE

Science in Personal and Social Perspectives:  
Personal health

Populations, resources, and environments

How to balance risk-taking and creative entrepreneurial or academic activity with social, personal, and ethical concerns

## ART

STANDARD 1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.

STANDARD 6: Making connections between the visual arts and other disciplines.

## INFORMATION LITERACY STANDARDS

### Information Literacy

STANDARD 1: The student who is information literate accesses information efficiently and effectively.

STANDARD 2: The student who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently.

STANDARD 3: The student who is information literate uses information accurately and creatively.

### Independent Learning

STANDARD 6: The student who is an independent learner is information literate and strives for excellence in information seeking and knowledge generation.

### Social Responsibility

STANDARD 7: The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and recognizes the importance of information to a democratic society.

STANDARD 8: The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and practices ethical behavior in regard to information and information technology.

STANDARD 9: The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and participates effectively in groups to pursue and generate information.

# Introduction

Global politics have become increasingly complex in the areas of trade, agriculture, food distribution, and the environment, in large part due to influence from the highly-centralized corporate world economy. The gulf between rich and poor has grown and natural resources continue to be depleted. Young adults require a new set of tools to grasp these difficult issues. In this curriculum, we raise students' awareness of the core issues surrounding food production and trade. Concurrently, students learn that through advances in technology and increased globalization, the world has become increasingly accessible and that they can make an impact on farmers' lives through their purchasing choices. This curriculum assists students in identifying critical topics so they can work both individually and together to create more viable systems of trade. It provides a link between personal actions and community efforts that create a more just and sustainable world.

## *Assumptions About the Learning Process*

Students will be given information and asked questions so they can draw their own conclusions and make sense of the world in new ways. The learning process will focus on active learning, using a wide range of participatory activities that will include:

- visual, auditory, and experiential modes
- an art (visual/image, music) component
- inquiry learning

Each class includes exercises in which students are asked to address a key question together. These dialogue sessions are the heart of this curriculum. It's important for the instructor to establish a relaxed environment in which students can focus together.



## *Equal Exchange*

Equal Exchange is the largest and oldest for-profit Fair Trade organization in the United States. It offers organic and Fair Trade coffee, tea, and chocolate from farmer cooperatives in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Recently, Equal Exchange began applying Fair Trade principles to small-scale farmer cooperatives in the United States and has added domestic pecans, cranberries, and almonds to its collection of products. In addition, the Equal Exchange workers who process and market these products are organized as a cooperative in order to attend to their needs as workers. Equal Exchange's commitment to fairness and empowerment makes the organization stand out as an important example of economic democracy. Its members are living the values of sustainability and justice in practical and powerful ways. When students learn what Equal Exchange is accomplishing today, they will be able to envision new ways to address the challenges we're facing in our complicated world and will provide valuable leadership for the future.



**LYNN BENANDER**

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION CONSULTANT  
SHELburnE FALLS, MASSACHUSETTS

# Using These Curriculum Materials

This curriculum was developed for students in grades four to nine. The activities become more complex as each unit progresses. There are a wide variety of materials from which to choose. Following are the key assumptions and ideas addressed in each unit.



## UNIT I: OUR CHOICES MATTER

Many farmers have trouble making a living, whether here in the U.S. or around the globe. When farmers who are trying to support their families by growing food or raising livestock don't earn enough money, their whole family may go hungry. When crops don't produce because of drought, war, or disease, many inhabitants of a country will go hungry. More than 30,000 children die of hunger each day worldwide.

This curriculum is based on the premise that the farmers who grow the food we eat are important to us because they help supply food for everyone. We have a responsibility to treat them fairly. When we buy food grown by farmers who are treated with respect, we're supporting an entire network of people committed to agricultural justice. What we purchase in the supermarket has a direct and meaningful impact on the quality of farmers' lives and the communities in which they live. The choices we make about everyday items matter to people thousands of miles away.

“With Fair Trade, we have enjoyed many benefits. Some families have used their increased incomes for home improvements, better clothing, better education for their children. Our association has used Fair Trade premiums to buy land where before we were renting.”

**JUAN DE DIOS PÉREZ,**  
PRESIDENT OF APECAFORMM,  
PRIMARY LEVEL COOP OF MANOS  
CAMPESINAS, GUATEMALA

“Fair Trade offers us a dignified way of doing business. We don't beg. Selling one or two containers is not begging. We just ask for business to be done in a fair way and we get this from Fair Trade. We hope that sympathetic people in the U.S. will spread the word about Fair Trade coffee so that more of our coffee can get into the Fair Trade market.”

**RAYMOND KIMARO,** GENERAL MANAGER, KNCU, TANZANIA

## UNIT II: UNDERSTANDING FAIR TRADE



Many farmers in the world own their farms, but large corporations are controlling an increasing number of farms—both in the United States and abroad. They move their offices, factories, and farms to countries where they can pay workers as little as possible in order to reduce their costs. Most of the time, large companies do not have the best interests of small farmers and workers in mind when they make these kinds of business decisions. Their main goal is to increase their profits. Farmers in other countries may work long hours without health care or proper housing while the corporations and their employees prosper.



Over time, small producers and farmers working for these large companies for little pay can no longer support themselves and their families through farming. They are forced to abandon their land and their homes to seek work in factories in the cities. Sometimes they are driven to find a job in another country, such as the U.S., where salaries are substantially higher.

The Fair Trade system encourages farmers to stay on their own land by giving them a fair price for their crops. It is an economic system that finds creative ways to support small farmers so they can feed their families and send their children to school while at the same time producing food for others. The Fair Trade system also encompasses practices that help protect the land, air, and water around farms. Fair Traders become partners with the farmers. They care about improving the lives of small farmers and treating them with the respect they deserve.

“Things have changed a lot since 1980, when we got our land. When I was 17 I used to work on a coffee plantation owned by one of the richest families in El Salvador. I would work two weeks and get paid for one week. I would ask them where the rest of my pay was, and they would say, ‘It’s because you didn’t work hard enough.’ Now we have respect...If it weren’t for all of you, the story I’m telling you would be very different.”

**JORGE GARCIA ROJAS**, PRESIDENT OF THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE IN EL PINAL, A PRIMARY LEVEL COOPERATIVE OF APECAFE, EL SALVADOR

“We work in Fair Trade and organic agriculture because it protects the environment, improves the quality of the coffee, and gives a better economic stance for small farmer families.”

**EDGAR FLORES MIGUEL**, GENERAL MANAGER, FIECH, CHIAPAS, MEXICO

## UNIT III: UNDERSTANDING COOPERATIVE ECONOMICS



A cooperative is an enterprise that is owned and democratically controlled by the people who use it. Farmers, workers, consumers, and small businesses form cooperatives to

meet their members’ needs. Farmers form cooperatives to buy seeds, equipment, and other supplies they need less expensively, and to get better prices for the products they grow. Workers form cooperatives so they can work for a business they control. Consumers form cooperatives to buy things less expensively or to get products and services they might not find anywhere else. Cooperatives make decisions based on their members’ needs, rather than on what makes the most profit. They help create an economy that spreads benefits across the communities they serve.

“The (co-op) growers in Peru get two and a half times more than what the non-Equal Exchange farmers do. This helps the Peruvians and their families to educate each other about organic farming and help them live better and at higher standards.”

**ARNALDO NEIRA CAMIZAN**, CO-FOUNDER OF CEPICAFE, PIURA, PERU



## UNIT IV: MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Students can make a difference in the world around them. When they learn how to approach problems creatively as individuals, they can create positive change. In Unit IV students are given the tools to identify, strategize, and implement a solution to a problem through a six-step process. This in-depth, long-term project offers students a constructive method to apply the information they have learned about

Fair Trade and cooperatives in the previous units of the curriculum.

# Credits

## *Author:*

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## *Additional Thanks:*

Nancy Evans, Grade 7, Lake Ridge Middle School, VA.

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## **WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU**

Equal Exchange and the other developers of this curriculum would like to know how useful the curriculum was for you and your students.

To share your thoughts, go to: [www.equalexchange.coop/fundraiser](http://www.equalexchange.coop/fundraiser) and click on “Educational Tools.”

Thanks in advance for letting us know what you liked and what could be made better.