Canada's Investment In Fair Trade Movement

To be “fair” is to provide equitable and just treatment— free from prejudice and oppression. In the world of business, fairness is the act of treating both consumers and producers with equality. With the assistance of fair trade, this can be made possible. Fair trade can be defined as a “movement whose goal is to help producers in developing countries to get a fair price for their products so as to reduce poverty, provide for the ethical treatment of workers and farmers, and promote environmentally sustainable practices”. Specifically, the goal of this movement is to assist small scale farmers in ensuring they receive a fair price for their product.

With fair trade in place, third world countries are given the opportunity to export their goods to developed countries such as Canada. It makes an effort to equalize the ability of farmers on an international level to be involved in trading. This is done so in a respectful and honest manner. This concept supports open communication between the trading countries, along with hands on assistance for the farmers. Over recent years, there has been a number of campaigns to raise awareness of fair trade, what it means to consumers and the reasons as to why it is important to be supportive of this movement. Making the conscious decision to use fair trade products can have a significant impact on both the life of the consumer, as well as the producers in the developing countries. These people are often living in poverty-like conditions. The main food products exported to Canada include sugar, cocoa, coffee beans, and bananas and the non-food items include such things as crafts, flowers, and materials. (www.fairtrade.ca). Canada is heavily involved in this movement, as the country both buys and sells fair trade products. In turn, Canada assists in improving wages and working conditions in developing countries and strives to educate individuals and communities regarding the benefits of purchasing and supporting fair trade movement.

Given Canada is a huge source of consumers and one of the largest countries in the world which supports fair trade, the country supports fair wages of those in third world countries. With this support of developed countries such as Canada, more money is generated and invested back into these developing countries. Nearly 200 companies in Canada buy and sell fair trade products, including Ben and Jerry’s, Highland Farms, Keurig Canada, ME to WE, and Pizzelle Cookies. As Canadian companies such as these choose products with the fair trade label, farmers and workers receive an increase in financial support. Canada itself works hard to “license Canadian companies to use the FAIRTRADE Mark on their products, and ensure that they abide by strict standards”. In turn, this increase in equity allows the farmers to invest not only in their own farms and businesses, but also funds future projects in various communities. An increase an income will also allow farmers to plant additional crops which will generate even further monies for themselves, the workers, and their families. As a developed country, Canada’s investment into the fair trade movement supports improved wages in a number of countries and offers families a stable income. This ultimately encourages them to build and plan for a better future.