



# Our Commitment to Equity

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## Equity Statement

Rooted in the struggle of coffee farmers in Nicaragua in the 1980s, Fair Trade USA™ was born from a time and place of societal upheaval – and in response to the inequities that persisted in that space. Ever since, our model has centered on addressing issues of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, using methods that create market opportunity for a wider set of stakeholders and deliver more equitable benefits.

Equity and impact are not our means to an end—they are our intended end, our goals. Inclusion is the path we have chosen to reach that end. We know that in order to expand the benefits of the fair trade model to more people and communities worldwide, we need to reach greater scale. As we invest in increasing inclusion, we drive growth and, more importantly, the shared power and agency at the core of our mission. In order to realize that end, we know that we must center principles of JEDI within our own organization. We must create space for diverse voices and experiences to ensure that our practice is consistent with our model and mission.

Our future state is one of increased partnership, multi-stakeholder inclusion, and recognition among consumers of the myriad benefits that greater equity brings. Building on our roots, we continuously improve our internal structures to amplify the voices of underrepresented and marginalized colleagues and partners and ensure their role as integral actors on the road towards equity. By creating, maintaining, and optimizing systems to ensure that the farmers, workers, and fishers we seek to serve are co-authors of our strategies, we unlock our ability to reach more communities with deeper impact. By focusing on broadening the demographics of our consumer audience, we enroll new changemakers into our model and seek to equitably extend the opportunity to make a difference through the simple act of a purchase.

As the leading third-party certifier of fair trade products in North America, we see opportunity to use our position to effect greater change at the industry level. As we continue enrolling more industry partners, we will seize the opportunity to demonstrate the tangible benefits of investing in equity to the sectors in which we operate. As we scale, we will model the effectiveness of inclusive

development and governance. The business case for the principles that we hold dear is clear, and we will continue to leverage that to invite a diverse range of industry partners to join us in shifting the way that companies think about global sourcing and responsible supply chains.

The principles that guide our work are unwavering, but how those principles come to life is not. There is no absolute truth – no single approach or solution – for achieving an equitable world. We remain committed to constantly learning and evolving, piloting and adapting, and testing as many theories of change as we can to cement the principles upon which we were founded – justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and above all fairness – into the fabric of the way the world conducts trade.

## **Illustrative Practices**

- Advancing an infrastructure through which producers and workers exercise agency and elevate their voices in their workplaces, communities, industries, and within our organization.
- Incorporating the inclusion of diverse voices and centering their perspectives in our strategic and annual planning and vision for Scaling the Impact of Fair Trade.
- Incorporating justice, equity, diversity and inclusion principles into our core organizational values, strategic planning, and annual goals.
- Conducting an equity assessment of our organization and taking appropriate steps to better achieve our goals of an equitable, inclusive values-based and performance-driven culture.
- Considering questions of diversity, equity, and inclusion and justice when we develop and implement internal programs and practices to advance an equitable workplace and work culture.
- Launching a multi-year cultural competency professional development program, available to all staff globally, including quarterly facilitator-led programs on Unconscious Bias, Anti-Racism, Belonging, Allyship and other key facets critical to fostering an inclusive, progressive, and equitable workplace.
- Collecting data about the diversity of our workforce at all levels and pursuing measures to combat the role of implicit and structural biases in our talent acquisition, development, succession planning, promotion, and retention.
- Achieving material gains in the hiring and promotion of traditionally underserved / marginalized groups, especially by racial, ethnic and gender identity and achieving outcomes of 49% BIPOC colleagues in 2022.

- Achieving 50:50 gender equity at Leadership Team; promoting gender equity across our organization to align with our focus on women empowerment and gender equity globally.
- Striving to build a diverse board by searching for candidates outside traditional and familiar networks.
- Striving to advance equitable practices and Supplier Diversity in our vendor relationships, to align with our JEDI principles.

Last Updated: November 17, 2022

## **About Fair Trade USA**

Fair Trade USA, a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is the leading certifier of fair trade products in North America. Offering award-winning, rigorous, and globally recognized sustainable sourcing certification programs that improve livelihoods, protect the environment, and build resilient, transparent supply chains, its trusted Fair Trade Certified™ seal on a product signifies that it was made according to stringent fair trade standards. Fair Trade USA is building an innovative model of responsible business, conscious consumerism, and shared value to eliminate poverty and enable sustainable development for farmers, workers, their families, and communities around the world.