

Women and Fair Trade

Vendors

Fair Trade Principles

Artists

Sponsors

Trade Matters



Women and Fair Trade

Craft Sale & Education

Austin, Texas

Craft Sale and Cultural Event November 2009

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Location

Southwest Corner of
Attayac and 6th
Street
1221 E. 6th St.
Austin, TX

Craft Sale

Saturday, Nov. 21
10:00am-6:00pm
Sunday, Nov. 22
10:00am-6:00pm

Cultural Arts Lunch

Karibu Restaurant
Saturday, 2pm
1209 East 7th Street



Elvia Arriola at the 2007 Fashion Show

"I cannot change the economic conditions of the world but I can change my personal choices" Josefina Castillo

Welcome to the Women and Fair Trade event page organized by the American Friends Service Committee - Austin office. We invite women's cooperatives to come from all over the world to tell their stories about globalization and to sell their beautiful, handmade items. Each year, we hold this event hosting these cooperatives who sell fair trade products. This year it will be part of the East Austin Studio Tour (E.A.S.T.) on November 21st-22nd, in the open space at 1221 East 6th Street (southwest corner of Attayac and 6th) Austin, Texas. ([Map](#))

This sale is about much more than purchasing quality products. It is about:

- Supporting women's cooperatives which serve as a living alternative to dominant forms of production and distribution that exploit rather than support the creators of the goods we purchase.
- Influencing buyer's purchasing habits to favor small producers instead of adding to corporate profits.
- Shortening the gap between producer and buyer while

listening to their stories about their local communities and buying directly from them..

Fair trade acknowledges the human beings that make our products. It means that small producers receive fair prices for their products, helping them build a better future for themselves and their communities. This helps to reverse current trends that reward the middle man or woman more than the producers themselves.

The AFSC-Austin staff and volunteers have long been committed to moving the debate around trade out of the realm of theory and into real life. There is nothing more real than women searching for ways to provide for their families while maintaining dignity and preserving their culture.

The sale showcases cooperatives that work at the grassroots level in enabling their communities to prosper and continue their cultural traditions based on weaving, sewing, basketry, ceramics and other local crafts. We also include cultural and educational aspects such as musical performance, poetry reading, and documentary film.

Purchasing fair trade products is a very good way to do your part, but we encourage you to take one step further. If you look closely, each vendor participating in this sale has a story that can offer you a window into the lives of the producers' family, their livelihoods, and how they are impacted by the broader global economy. So take the time to read the producer profiles and chat with the vendors.

10% of all proceeds go to the AFSC-Austin office to help ensure this event continues on an annual basis. To volunteer call (512) 474-2399 or email nem@afsc.org

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Craft Sale & Education

Austin, Texas

Vendors

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The following vendors will be participating in this year's event. Please click on the links below for more information on each vendor.

[Marigold, Gateway to India](#)

[Colores del Pueblo](#)

[Dignity & Justice Maquiladora](#)

[Palestine Children's Welfare Fund](#)

[Ten Thousand Villages](#)

[Mulago Positive Women's Network](#)

[Fuerza Unida](#)

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Fair Trade Principles and Practices

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Fair Trade practitioners are committed to the following principles and practices in their trading relationships:

[FAIR WAGES](#)

[COOPERATIVE WORKPLACES](#)

[CONSUMER EDUCATION](#)

[FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT](#)

[ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY](#)

[RESPECT FOR CULTURAL IDENTITY](#)

[PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY](#)

FAIR WAGES

Producers are paid fairly for their products, which means that workers are paid at least that country's minimum wage. Since the minimum wage is often not enough for basic survival, whenever feasible, workers are paid a living wage, which enables them to cover basic needs, including food, shelter, education and health care for their families. Paying fair wages does not necessarily mean that products cost the consumer more. Since fair trade organizations bypass exploitative middlemen and work directly with producers, they are able to cut costs and return a greater percentage of the retail price to the producers.

COOPERATIVE WORKPLACES

Cooperatives and producer associations provide a healthy alternative to large-scale manufacturing and sweatshops conditions, where unprotected workers earn below minimum wage and most of the profits flow to foreign investors and local elites who have little interest in ensuring the long term health of the communities in which they work. Fair trade organizations work primarily with small businesses, worker owned and democratically

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run cooperatives and associations which bring significant benefits to workers and their communities. By banding together, workers are able to access credit, reduce raw material costs and establish higher and more just prices for their products. Workers earn a greater return on their labor, and profits are distributed more equitably and often reinvested in community projects such as health clinics, child care, education and literacy training. Workers learn important leadership and organizing skills, enabling self-reliant grassroots-driven development. Safe and healthy working conditions are maintained and producers gain greater control and decision making power over the use of their local resources.

CONSUMER EDUCATION

Fair trade organizations educate consumers about the importance of purchasing fairly traded products which support living wages and healthy working conditions. By defining fair trade and conducting business in a manner that respects workers' rights and the environment, the fair trade movement strives to educate consumers about the often hidden human costs of their "bargains." By providing information about producers' history, culture and living conditions, fair trade Organizations enhance cross-cultural understanding and respect between consumers and communities in the developing world. They also educate consumers and policy makers about inequities in the global trading system.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Fair trade organizations encourage producers to engage in environmentally friendly practices which manage and use local resources that are sustainable. Many [Fair Trade Federation](#) members work directly with producers in regions of high biodiversity to develop products based on sustainable use of their natural resources, giving communities an incentive to preserve their natural environments for future generations.

FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Small-scale farmers and artisans in the developing world lack access to affordable financing, impeding their profitability. [Fair Trade Federation](#) members that buy products directly from producers often provide financial assistance either through direct loans, prepayment or by linking producers with sources of financing. Unlike many commercial importers who often wait 60-90 days before paying producers, many fair trade organizations ensure prepayment so that producers have sufficient funds to cover raw materials and basic needs during production time. They also often provide other critical technical assistance and support such as market information, product feedback and training in financial management. Unlike commercial importers, fair trade organizations establish long term relationships with their producers and help them adapt production for changing trends.

RESPECT FOR CULTURAL IDENTITY

Fair trade organizations encourage the production and development of products based on producers' cultural traditions adapted for Western markets. They seek to promote producers' artistic talents in a way that preserves cultural identity.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Organizations' finances, management policies, and business practices are open to the public and monitoring by the [Fair Trade Federation](#) (applies only if they are members of the Fair Trade Federation).

This information was obtained from the [Fair Trade Federation](#). Visit them to learn more about fair trade!

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Artists - Biographies Fair Trade Sale

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ALEXIS ORDOÑEZ

Alex is committed to the perfection of whatever he does. He is a skilled musician, specializing in Andean folk music and the crafting of traditional Andean wind instruments. Since arriving in the U.S., he has found himself immersed in a culture different from his own, and has found a creative outlet through art and drawing. As a dedicated father, proud of his roots, and, in wanting to leave a legacy for our children, he has created a series of watercolors that captures the beauty and innocence of his Andean homeland. He has shared these talents by way of workshops and presentations in schools, colleges and organizations. His work as an artist is a skilled expression of the essence of his character and culture.

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AFSC would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their generous support to the Women and Fair Trade: Craft Sale & Cultural Arts event!

Please let them know how much you appreciate their support of our efforts.

Organizations:

Bringing Light into Darkness
Cafe Pacha
Einstein Bros Bagels
Karibu Restaurant
Peace & Social Concerns-FMA
St. Hildegard's Community
Texas Fair Trade Coalition

Individuals:

Alexis Ordóñez
Barb Luetke
Perry Lorenz
Tom West

Organizing Committee:

Carole Metellus
Cynthia Waide
Josefina Castillo
Judith Rosenberg
Natalia Em
Tomás Aguilar

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Colores del Pueblo (Guatemala, Ecuador and Mexico)

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Fair Trade and Preserving Culture

Deborah Brown, the founder of Colores Del Pueblo, primarily works with Mayan artisan cooperatives led by women. Her policy is to pay a fair price for the crafts, thus helping worker-artisans break through the cycle of poverty. In Guatemala the competition is so fierce and when it is a daily struggle to survive, people will often sell their hard work for much less than its value just to be able to feed their families.

Colores Del Pueblo asks participating artisans to track how

long it takes them to make each item in order to establish a fair price. Not only has this given the women an incentive to continue the art of weaving (and younger women the desire to learn), but it also ensures a level of quality not often found in the marketplace. Whenever they are able, artisans incorporate the traditional Mayan designs into western style products, thus encouraging the continuation of weaving traditions while sharing with consumers the beauty and intricacy of Mayan art.



A Mayan woman practices the traditional arts of weaving.

About the Vendor

Deborah was involved with a non-profit organization called Pueblo to People that started in 1979, but closed its operation in 1997. She felt there was too great a need, so she picked up the pieces and started Colores del Pueblo. She realized that the producers she encountered needed a market to sell their beautiful hand woven textiles and other crafts.

Deborah continued doing business with some of the smaller cooperatives in Guatemala that did not have other outlets for sales. Guatemala is unique in the world in that over half the population has indigenous heritage. Keeping the Mayan culture intact and strong is a big part of the mission of Colores del Pueblo. Allowing the Mayan women to work in their own communities and to earn a living wage not only helps keep communities strong but empowers them and gives them a sense of pride. Deborah travels to Central America three times a year to work directly with the women. Colores del Pueblo has now expanded to working with two groups of artisans in Mexico and a cooperative of women in Ecuador.

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About the Producers

Colores Del Pueblo has been a member of the Fair Trade Federation since 1997. They are dedicated to directly assisting Latin American artisans and farmers by providing a market for their beautiful hand crafted products in North America. Colores buys from democratically organized, artisan-founded cooperatives and pays them a fair price, thus enabling their communities to prosper from the grassroots up.

This relationship also gives indigenous peoples an incentive to continue their important cultural traditions of weaving, basketry, and ceramic making. The U.S. consumer also benefits because it involves them in a partnership which sustains rather than exploits the rich craft heritage of Latin America and addresses the problems of poverty at the community level first.

Please visit www.coloresdelpueblo.org for more information.

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Dignity & Justice Maquiladora (Mexico)

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Fair Trade and Dignity

For decades, manufacturing firms have relocated their factories to take advantage of lower labor costs. Advances in technology and the opening of borders to trade have made it easier for multinationals to produce their products farther and farther from their headquarters and markets. The ability of corporations to locate elsewhere has resulted in a "race to the bottom" in which firms compete by seeking lower labor costs, while workers are forced to compete for jobs by working for less and communities are forced to compete for investment by requiring less of employers.



The Maquiladora Dignidad y Justicia was established to provide employment to sewers who lost their jobs in the border city of Piedras Negras, Mexico when large assembly plants operated by Levi's and Dickies closed and moved their plants to locations where wages were lower. Sara Lee has recently announced plans to close another plant in Monclova, which is about a couple of hours from Piedras Negras.

The Vendors

The Maquiladora Dignidad y Justicia (D&J) partners with North Country Fair Trade to carve out a market in the United States for their products, and to acquire financing and technical assistance in the business start-up process. D&J is sponsored by Comité Fronterizo de Obrer@s (CFO), a Mexican non-profit organization, that has advocated for workers rights in assembly plants for the past 24 years.

The Producers

Maquiladora Dignidad y Justicia (D&J) offers employment to the community of Piedras Negras at a level superior to that offered by foreign maquiladoras. Part of the mission is also to offer economical clothing to the community, create a model of business

development that can be replicated by other communities, and to work consistently toward the goals of “justice, liberty and autonomy” not just for cooperative members but for the wider community.

D&J was founded by five women who manage the business based on principles of cooperation, equal distribution of earnings, and a democratic decision-making process. Although small now, there are plans to expand the cooperative.

D&J has adopted a model of producing fairly made goods for export in the form of bulk orders. Starting with t-shirts and tote bags, D&G plans to expand production to include sweatshirts, aprons, school uniforms and blue jeans.

Please visit the [D&J website](#) for more information.

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Jolom Mayaetik

Information about Our Cooperative and Our Products



In January of 1996, 250 craftswomen from the mountains of Chiapas created a new life for ourselves. We founded the Jolom Mayaetik Cooperative, which in Tzotzil, a highland Mayan language of the region, means “Mayan Women Weavers.”

The organization is composed of women from the municipalities of San Andres, Chamula, Huixtan and Oxchuc. This diversity allows us to produce all of the traditional designs of the region. Though the majority of us weave with the backstrap loom, some of us embroider as well. For weaving and embroidery, all of us use cotton and self-produced wool.

The Jolom Mayaetik Cooperative is made up of 10 groups of craftswomen from 9 different communities. Two representatives from each group form the “General Assembly of Representatives” which meets to discuss and make decisions based on each community’s needs. All of our members elect the President and the Secretary of our organization, and it is their job to assist in administering our store in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, México.

In 1999, we began creating the Center for Production and Training of Indigenous Women. In this Center, women are able to take courses in administration, bookkeeping, and the use and handling of the pedal loom and sewing machine.

We learn to adapt ourselves to the demands of the market without forgetting the traditional designs we weave and embroider. Production, Commercialization, Training, and Administration; all of this we take into our own hands to better the quality of our lives. The growth of the Jolom Mayaetik Cooperative and the Training Center has shown us that the creation and use of collective spaces for women allow us to develop relationships of a more equal nature, both within our communities and the larger public. Our work thus contributes to the development of a more just society.

For more information on solidarity/fair trade marketing of textiles in the U.S., health, reproductive rights, women’s and indigenous rights, anti-globalization work, or for info on Mexico solidarity networks and social justice delegations, please contact Kate O’Donnell at Hartwick College. (607)431-4894, o_donnellk@hartwick.edu



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The [Comité Fronterizo de Obrer@s](#) (CFO: Border Committee of Women Workers) is an independent organization of current and former maquiladora workers in seven Mexican border towns. The CFO facilitates home meetings, where workers learn of their legal rights under

Mexico's Federal Labor Law, and develop strategies to assert these rights in their factories. For over two decades, the CFO has helped thousands of workers gain economic benefits, improve labor conditions, and strengthen their communities.



[Fuerza Unida](#) (United Force) emerged from the sustained struggle of Levi Strauss workers to gain a just settlement when the company abruptly shut down its San Antonio plant in 1990, firing 1,150 workers. Today, former Levi Strauss workers

continue to lead this community organization in human rights and economic justice initiatives. Fuerza Unida has created several programs in benefit of the community, including its sewing cooperative, catering service, food bank, and youth program.

[Inmigrantes Latinos en Acción](#) (ILA: Latino Immigrants in Action) is a unique grassroots organization in Austin, whose founders and members are all immigrant volunteers. Today, ILA is educating immigrants on their rights and responsibilities and

empowering them to become more active members of their communities. It is bringing the experiences and concerns of immigrants to public policy debates and contributing to public understanding on immigration issues.



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Ten Thousand Villages (Global)

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Fair Trade and Hope

Shantha Lakshmi is a palm leaf artisan who is a member of the artisan group called SHARE near the town of Vellore in Tamil Nadu, southern India. Many families living near Vellore do not earn enough income to be able to afford the good medical care provided by the local Christian Medical Hospital. As part of its community outreach program the hospital started the SHARE program as an effort to provide income earning opportunities for women who can not afford medical care for themselves and their children. Over the last 25 years SHARE has grown to include more than 500 women making palm leaf products ranging from baskets to decorative streamers. Because of Ten Thousand Villages, many of the women, including Shantha, now have regular work most of the year and are now able to afford medical care and education for their children.

Shantha was not able to go to school because her family could not afford to send her. She is looking forward to sending her young daughter to school now that she is working as a full time member of SHARE making palm leaf streamers and other products. Her employment and income has given her self-confidence and hope for the future.



Shantha Lakshmi, a palm leaf artisan and member of the artisan group SHARE in Tamil Nadu, southern India.

One of Shantha's colleagues at SHARE, Rani Kempu, said, "This income (from fair trade) lets me make my own decisions and helps me care for my children and family. I don't ask my husband or parents to help me meet my basic needs, I cover them myself."

The women of SHARE have hope for the future as a result of their working together. The income they earn helps them to look after their families and build up their community.

The Vendor

Ten Thousand Villages is a voice for 110 artisan groups in more than 30 countries. With exquisite home décor, textiles, baskets, jewelry and musical instruments made by talented artisans in Africa, Asia and Latin America, Ten Thousand Villages offers consumers in North America an opportunity to buy locally to

Craft Sale:
**Fri & Sat
10 am - 7 pm**
**Community
Forum:**
**Saturday
Nov 19
2 pm**

directly affect global change.

The Producers

Ten Thousand Villages is a nonprofit, self-supporting alternative trading organization headquartered in Akron, Pa., that provides vital, fair income to artisans in developing countries by marketing their handicrafts and telling their stories in North America. Ten Thousand Villages has been working around the world since 1946 and has 180 North American stores. For more information, visit www.tenthousandvillages.com.

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