

Fair Trade Scotland

A brief history

As a social business committed to sustainable economic development, Fair Trade Scotland is working with Villageworks in Cambodia, with which they are developing a range of Fair Trade tartan products. In March 2018 they also announced a collaboration with Malawi Coffee Planters Cooperative Union, through which they will import coffee that is grown, roasted and packaged locally, to ensure more of the added value is captured locally, to benefit livelihoods of the Mzuzu communities and the Malawi economy overall.

Trade, not aid

Fair Trade Scotland is working with Villageworks in Cambodia on their Fair Trade Tartan line. Villageworks are not just weaving the fabric, but making the entire finished product. This allows the Cambodian weavers to retain more of the final selling price, by giving them a Unique Selling Point (USP).

While Fair Trade Scotland also markets Scottish kilts, which are woven by machine in Scotland, the off-cuts from this production process are sent to Villageworks in Cambodia, where the artisans craft them into smaller items, like purses or business card holders. This serves the dual purpose of giving the Cambodian artisans another line of Fair Trade products made with up-cycled material, and of ensuring that no manufactured material is wasted during production.

Fair Trade Scotland is currently the only WFTO Guaranteed importer member in Scotland with two product lines that promotes Fair Trade and they are simultaneously encouraging and supporting Scotland in retaining its position as a Fair Trade nation. The Fair Trade tartan played a role in this, too, as it was designed and marketed on occasion of World Fair Trade Day on 13th May 2017 to celebrate Scotland's Fair Trade nation status.

Local added-value industry

With the Mzuzu Golden Coffee from the Malawi Coffee Planters Cooperative Union, which is soon to be launched, Fair Trade Scotland is striking at the very core of Fair Trade: Contributing to sustainable economic development of marginalised communities by supporting them with market access, as well as helping them retain a greater share of the added value from production and processing. The principle is the same with Villageworks, where the weavers both weave the fabric and fully craft the finished product, while working as highly skilled labour - weaving by hand. All this allows them to retain a larger margin since they take care of more of the added-value work. However, the Mzuzu Golden Coffee goes a step further, since both roasting and

packaging of the high-quality coffee is done locally. These are highly skill-demanding, high added-value industries, and especially in the coffee industry the roasters and retailers have long been capturing most of the added-value by far, while coffee farmers have struggled to make a living wage.

In this fashion, Fair Trade Scotland are an example to follow in their support for marginalised communities, not just by trading with them on fair and predictable terms - but especially by supporting them in building local industry that allows them to capture a larger share of the final selling price. This is truly promoting sustainable development through trade, not aid.