

Updated January 2017

Talking Points

4 Key Messages:

1. In January 2017 the CRS Fair Trade program transitioned to CRS Ethical Trade. With a new expanded vision, website, and resources, we inspire Catholics to act on their faith and values by building on the principles of fair trade and moving beyond its boundaries to include other models of ethical trade. All of the companies/organizations we work with are trading fairly and have a third party verification system in place.
2. The CRS Ethical Trade program provides seamless access to information about ethically traded products from companies and organizations that meet our high standards, compelling content that connects shoppers to their faith and to the world, and opportunities to champion a more just workplace for the most vulnerable producers.
3. The CRS Ethical Trade program mobilizes the Catholic community to live their faith through practicing ethical purchasing grounded in Catholic social teaching with a global focus. We work with more than 20 companies to promote fair and ethically traded products such as: coffee and tea, home décor, chocolate and candy, religious items, jewelry, and products for special occasions for use by Catholic individuals and institutions. We offer an online directory of fair and ethically traded products from companies that meet our high standards and opportunities for parishes, schools and universities to host fair trade sales. In addition to inviting folks to purchase fair and ethically traded products, we provide opportunities to reflect and advocate on issues affecting the most vulnerable- human trafficking, climate change and livelihoods for refugees.
4. When you purchase fair and ethically traded items from our partners, a donation is made to the [CRS Fair Trade Fund](#). The fund supports CRS projects overseas and provides an opportunity to strengthen farmer and artisan cooperatives, products and access to markets. Additionally, the fund supports education, advocacy, and engagement efforts in the U.S.

Will we still be able to host CRS Fair Trade sales through Serrv and Equal Exchange?

Yes! Our traditional parish and school based fair trade consignment, community orders, coffee sales, and fundraisers will continue. We added additional faith formation resources to enhance these events as well as opportunities for Catholic institutions to purchase large orders at wholesale prices from companies featured in our online directory.

What about the CRS Fair Trade Ambassador Program?

We continue to support current CRS Fair Trade Ambassadors however we discontinued recruiting new ambassadors in 2016 due to our Parish Ambassador Corps program currently operating in 11 dioceses. We will continue to support current Fair Trade Ambassadors until the Parish Ambassador program is fully functional.

Why is CRS Fair Trade changing its name to CRS Ethical Trade?

Now more than ever consumers are interested in purchasing goods that have a positive impact on producers and the environment (*Neilson, "Doing Well by Doing Good" June 2014*). This increased social consciousness of globalization and its effects on vulnerable producers has led to the creation of a number of socially conscious business models. These models often align with fair trade principles yet have products and practices that are vetted through alternative systems. In looking at the global landscape, we wanted to build upon our strong foundation of fair trade business partners and include other businesses that are trading fairly and meet our criteria. Additionally, not being tied to one form of alternative trade helps us to focus more broadly on the faith connection and advocacy issues associated with the dignity of work and the rights of workers.

What criteria did CRS use to evaluate new ethical trade partners?

In choosing our new partners a set of criteria was established based on the principles of fair and alternative trading models as well as Catholic social teaching. Evaluations also included a strenuous vetting process which consisted of online reviews, interviews and a third party review of proposed partners. Criteria include:

- *Human Rights*: Ensure fair and prompt payment to workers on the supply chain, special consideration for the rights of women and children, safe working conditions, and a third party verification process;
 - Are not involved in supporting, producing, or providing access to procedures or materials in contrast to Catholic social and moral teaching related to abortions, abortifacients, contraceptives, fetal stem cell research, adult entertainment, military weapons, nuclear arms, and landmines.

- *Environmental Stewardship*: Promote environmental stewardship through company's business practices, product materials, and production methods.
- *Investment in Worker Communities*: Engage in appropriate outreach efforts to support worker communities where goods are sourced or produced with investments in social services, health care, infrastructure, business development or education.

One or more of the following third party verification systems are used by companies in our on-line directory.



There are so many labels, what's the difference?

Visit <http://ethicaltrade.crs.org/partnerships/our-promise/> for helpful explanations of ethical business and fair trade membership, and certification organizations

What types of businesses/organizations did CRS include in the new on-line ethical shopping guide?

Examples Include:

- Existing coffee partners with third party verification systems including: Fair Trade Federation, Fair for Life, Certified B Corp, Fair Trade Proof, Fairtrade America, Fair Trade USA, and the Small Producers Symbol
- Apparel, home décor and health and beauty companies verified by third parties and include membership in the Fair Trade Federation, Certified B Corps and Fair Trade USA
- Branded-wear and promotional products distributor with products certified union made, sweatshop free, and fair trade

What is ethical trade?

Ethical trade is a transparent commitment by a company to treat workers and suppliers fairly, care for the environment, and invest in the community.

What does ethical purchasing have to do with my faith?

Ethical purchasing is a type of consumer activism where conscientious shoppers purchase products based on the company's fair treatment of workers and suppliers, care for the environment, and community involvement. From the U.S. Bishop's letter [Economic Justice for All](#) to Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation [Evangelii Gaudium](#), the Church continues to highlight matters of the economy. Catholic social teaching is filled with guidance on how people of faith can transform the world through acts of economic justice. We believe this can be done through the daily decisions we make as consumers. Every purchase we make has the power to contribute to a system that supports and protects the dignity of workers or a system that disregards the value of the human person and human work.

How can Catholics participate in the CRS Ethical Trade Program?

The [CRS Ethical Trade program](#) offers many ways to be involved:

- Buy ethically traded products from businesses featured on the [ethical shopping guide](#)-CRS receives a donation for every purchase made through the guide!
- Hold a CRS [consignment sale](#) or [community order](#) at a parish, school, or university
- Hold an Equal Exchange Fundraiser with fair trade coffee and chocolate. Make 40% profit for your school!
- Participate in CCGP advocacy efforts around human trafficking, climate change, and refugee livelihoods
- Sign up for E-updates and find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
- Donate to the [CRS FairTrade Fund](#) and support artisan and farmer groups overseas.
- Complement parish and school faith formation efforts with [resources](#) for reflection and action.

How many people does the CRS Ethical Trade program reach?

In 2016, the CRS Fair Trade program engaged over 1,346 Catholic institutions reaching 152,903 people.

How does CRS Ethical Trade connect with CRS' work around the world to support farmers and artisans?

CRS has extensive experience in [agricultural development](#) working with small-scale farmers to help them grow their organizations, strengthen their products and access markets. More specifically, the [CRS Coffeelands program](#) focuses on our work with coffee farmers around the world. Additionally, the [Fair Trade Fund](#) supports CRS projects overseas.