



Home of Fair Trade
Enterprises

Photo credit: WFTO member Artesol



COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

September 2023

**This manual is designed to equip
and guide you through how and why
WFTO speaks about its community
to advocate for systemic change.**

This guide is the product of several conversations that made us rethink the way we talk about Fair Trade, and why. It is a living document, ready to change whenever a new perspective on trade, social, gender and environmental justice might arise.

For more information, please email communications@wfto.com.

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The World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) is the global community and verifier of Fair Trade enterprises that fully practice our 10 Fair Trade Principles.

We are an association of visionary small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that believes that a new economy is possible: together, we stand as a collective of activists and changemakers who are at the forefront of advocating for an equitable and sustainable world. As a membership organisation, we bring together a diverse network of visionary entrepreneurs that operates in different sectors: from food to fashion, from homeware to tourism, from toys to digital services, globally.

Section 1

What we advocate for

At the heart of WFTO lies a powerful advocacy for a new era of trade that goes beyond traditional profit-driven business models.

WFTO has a holistic approach

Fair Trade Enterprises embrace a holistic approach that extends beyond profit maximisation. It recognizes that **social, environmental, and economic factors are integral** and must be addressed collectively. By fostering transparent supply chains, promoting responsible production and consumption, and prioritising the well-being of communities and the planet, Fair Trade Enterprises embrace a comprehensive and **integrated perspective**. This holistic approach reflects a deep understanding that true sustainability can only be achieved by changing the current business models. Through its **intersectional lens**, WFTO paves the way for a more balanced and inclusive approach to commerce, creating positive change at both local and global levels.

WFTO is aligned with the SDGs

Fair Trade Enterprises are deeply aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as their principles and practices contribute to the broader movement of systemic change. **Our Fair Trade Principles are not isolated efforts but are interconnected with the larger vision** of creating a more sustainable and equitable world. Fair Trade Enterprises recognise that achieving the SDGs requires systemic changes in how we conduct business, and it actively participates in this transformation by demonstrating alternative business models that prioritise people and the planet. By embracing Fair Trade principles, businesses become integral participants in the collective effort to realise the SDGs and create positive, lasting impacts on a global scale.

WFTO's 10 Principles of Fair Trade

The 10 Principles of Fair Trade specify the ways that Fair Trade Enterprises are set up and behave to ensure they put people and planet first. The WFTO carries out verification and monitoring to ensure these principles are upheld.



Fair Trade is not charity

As ethical entrepreneurs driven by a vision for a fair, equal, and inclusive economy, we prioritise doing business that benefits both people and the planet. Fair Trade, at its core, is not about charity. It is a **transformative approach that challenges traditional notions of commerce**. We want everyone (from consumers to buyers and retailers) to choose our products not just because they can trust our dedication to ecological and social responsibility, but because they are high in quality. **We don't want them to work with us exclusively because of our mission, but because we are trusted entrepreneurs committed to excellence**. Our mission serves as the foundation of our values, but it is our reputation as trusted entrepreneurs that drives our desire to be chosen as a preferred partner in the marketplace.

The Fair Trade business model must happen globally

WFTO Principles are not applicable only to the Global South; they provide a roadmap to a mode of business that needs to be embraced globally. While the Global South often faces specific challenges related to poverty and exploitation (the consequences of colonisation), **our principles are relevant and necessary in all regions**. By implementing Fair Trade practices worldwide, we can ensure fair wages, improve working conditions, promote environmental sustainability and reintegrate economically marginalised communities everywhere. **Fair Trade business models transcend geographical boundaries and call for a transformation of the entire global and local economies**. They encourage entrepreneurs, consumers, and policymakers to prioritise social and environmental responsibility, fostering a more equitable and ethical approach to commerce on a global and local scale.

WFTO is for local economies

Fair Trade Enterprises actively encourage the development of strong local economies. Fair Trade initiatives **prioritise direct trade relationships** and ensure that a higher portion of the revenue remains within the local communities. This, in turn, leads to increased income for producers and the ability to invest in local infrastructure, education, healthcare, and other essential services. **North to North, South to South markets are crucial in creating an economy less dependent on import-export trade relationships.** By supporting Fair Trade Enterprises, citizens contribute to the resilience and sustainability of local economies, fostering self-sufficiency, and economic justice at the grassroots level. Ultimately, strong local economies create a solid foundation for sustainable development, poverty alleviation, and a better quality of life for communities around the world and the environment.

Fair Trade is economically viable

Fair Trade demonstrates that ethical business practices can be commercially viable, **challenging the notion that profit maximisation is the sole purpose of business**. While profit-making is essential for sustainability and growth, Fair Trade emphasizes a different approach that takes into account social and environmental impacts. Rather than solely focusing on maximising profits at any cost, Fair Trade Enterprises prioritise the well-being of producers, workers, and the environment. They strive for **a balance between financial success and ethical and environmental responsibility**, recognising that long-term profitability is intricately linked to sustainable practices and positive social outcomes. By considering the broader impacts of their operations, Fair Trade Enterprises demonstrate that it is possible to thrive economically while also fostering a more just and equitable world.

Section 2

Our tone of voice

The way we communicate can stir emotions, inspire new thoughts, ignite actions. At WFTO, we harness this power to amplify the voices of fairness, equity, and positive change.

Our Tone of Voice

Our tone of voice is how we write and speak, what we say and how we say it.

Like a person, what we say is dictated by our principles, experiences and aspirations, how we say it is informed by our personality. It is crucial that everyone who represents WFTO, including Regional teams, WFTO Members and allies as well are speaking with the same tone of voice.

The more consistent and cohesive our message is, the stronger we are and the more likely our messages are to be heard and understood. Try to make your messages action-oriented or solution-focused: rather than making people feel guilty, help them recognise that they have the power to do something to make a positive change, and the alternatives are already available.



Please note that apart from the word "Organization" in World Fair Trade Organization, WFTO adopts English UK, not English US spelling



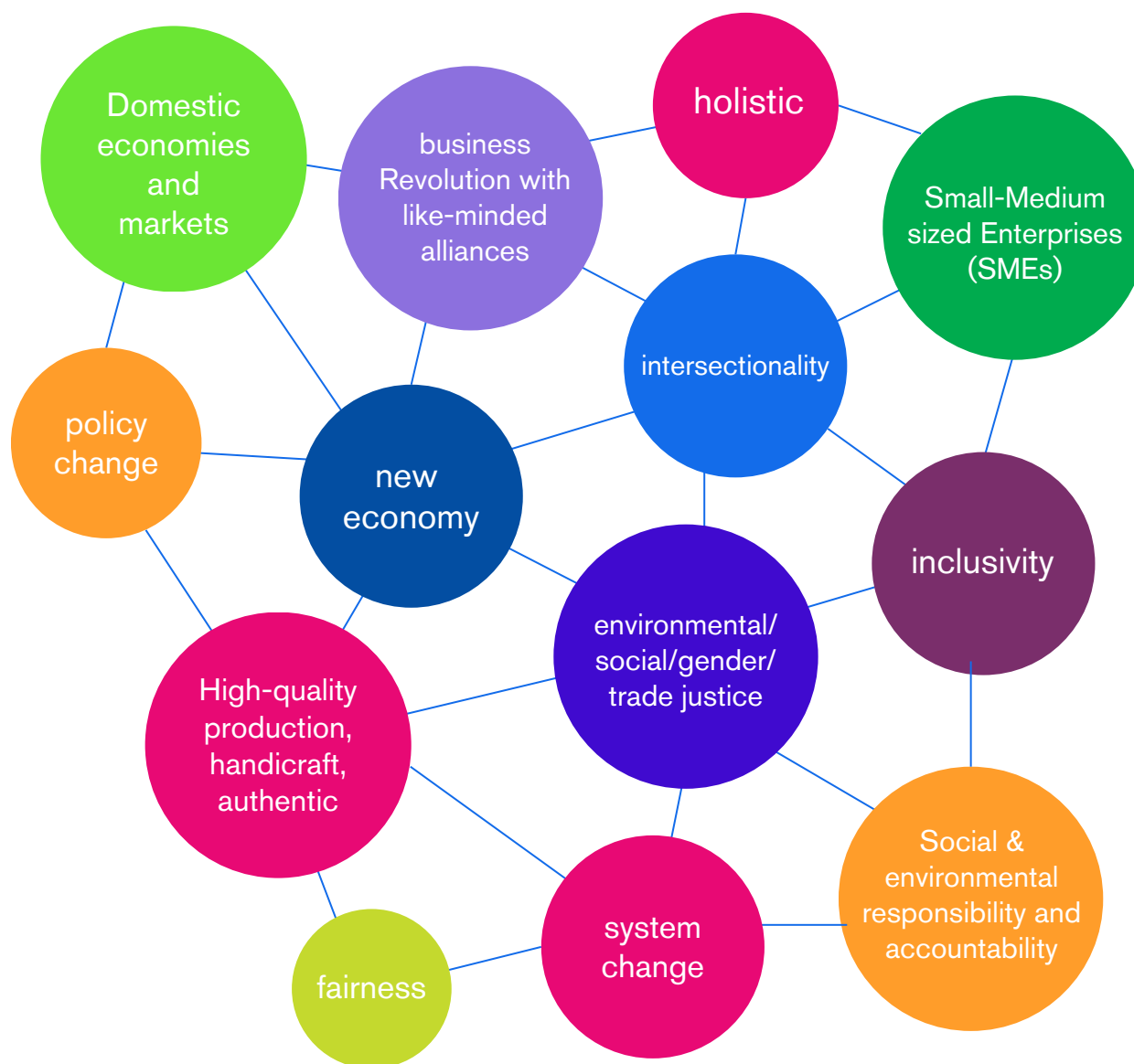
- Bold
- Inquisitive
- Educational
- Inspiring
- Positive



- Overly technical
- Patronising
- Victimising
- Shaming
- Negative

Our Vocabulary

WFTO makes use of certain words to reflect its tone of voice.



Examples

wfto_fairtrade 🌍 To create a global effect, act locally 🌍

💡 When it comes to making a difference in the world, we often feel powerless. It's easy to think that our individual efforts won't lead to real change. But the truth is that when taken collectively, small actions can have an enormous impact. Just like a domino, one piece can set off a chain reaction of effects. 👣

At WFTO, we believe in amplifying this domino effect. 📣 We raise the voices of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), forming a powerful network of sustainable economies that support local communities. Together, we are building a fair and regenerative economy that uplifts everyone. 🤝

💪 Through our movement, we spark that transformative power!

wfto_fairtrade In indigenous schools, the teaching of artisanship is not limited to techniques of making, but extends to the collection of raw materials, in the respect that guides the relationship with the forest and the sacred, ritualistic and cultural meanings that objects bring with them. ☀️

Since traditional handicrafts can only be produced as long as the ways of life that sustain them continue to exist, they serve as an important tool for cultural and political resistance. 🙌 Through handicrafts, indigenous peoples globally assert the uniqueness of their cultures, claiming the importance and the right to preserve their knowledge, ways of doing things, and ways of life.

💪 Handicrafts become a tangible representation of their fight for the fundamental right to continue existing.

Our valued WFTO member, @arteso_l_oficial, based in Brazil 🇧🇷, is one of the many Fair Trade Enterprises at the forefront of this fight: they safeguard the traditional cultural crafts by stimulating the autonomy of artisans and their socio-cultural and economic independence.

Traditional handicrafts can be a weapon of resistance. It's time to honour the indigenous legacy, recognise their contributions, and ensure a brighter, more equitable tomorrow for all. Support indigenous!

Section 3

Words we use (and don't use)

Times are changing and so should the language we use when talking about our practices, what we stand for, and why.



Empowerment

Why not?

The concept of empowerment suggests a power imbalance, where one party grants power or authority to another. We argue that true empowerment involves challenging and transforming power structures rather than simply giving power to individuals or groups.



(Women's)
economic justice



Support someone in
claiming power



Hold others
accountable



Expose and remove
structural barriers to
people exercising
their power



Fostering economic
self-sufficiency

Why?

People we work with already have power in and of themselves. This is not something that can be given to them by others. "Empowerment" risks putting the onus on specific social groups to change themselves in order to fit into the existing economic system, even though it inherently discriminates against them.

Words on WFTO

Social Enterprise

Why not?

because using "social" implies that we are focusing only on the humanitarian aspect, while Fair Trade Enterprises adopt both a social and environmental mission



Verified Fair Trade Enterprise

*as we work with business models, it is important to always include the word "enterprise"

Help

Why not?

because we are entrepreneurs first and foremost, not an aiding organisation. We want to establish valuable trading relationships through the vision of a different, new economy where people and planet come before profit.
We are not just helping "poor people"



 working for system change

 catalyse a business revolution

Fairer / more just

Why not?

because we don't believe that our economic system is already fair nor just. Saying we are making business fair-er implies that it is already, which is not.



 Fair / Just

WFTO certification

Why not?

because WFTO doesn't certify commodities but rather verifies the whole business model.



 WFTO Verification, WFTO-verified Fair Trade Enterprises


Words on people

Poor people

Why not?

because poverty is not an inherent characteristic of a person or community.



 people experiencing poverty

 people currently living in poverty

Third World, Developing Countries

Why not?

why? because it puts countries on a scale of economic power and assumes that the "First World" is developed, while it is actually still far from achieving the SDGs



 high-medium-low income countries

 Global North/South

*Global North-South is a imprecise term (ie: Brandt Line)


Vulnerable people, (wo)men

Why not?

People are not inherently vulnerable; instead, they find themselves in vulnerable positions due to specific situations. The vulnerability they experience is temporary and doesn't define their identity.



 people facing economic exclusion

 people in a vulnerable position because of

 people made vulnerable by

Disadvantaged producers

Why not?

because we want to defy the narrative that sees Fair Trade as charity. Our Principle 1 has been updated accordingly at the AGM that took place in Lima (2019).




 economically marginalised producers

 **Indigenous people**

Why not?
because it generalises the diversity and complexity of Indigenous cultures and societies. There are numerous distinct Indigenous communities with their own languages, traditions, and histories globally.




 **Indigenous peoples**


*unless speaking of a specific group

 **Refugee crisis**

Why not?
Because the word “crisis” denotes a short-term situation, which is not. Secondly, when we use the term “refugee crisis” or “migrant crisis,” it implies that the trouble is the refugees or the migrants.




 **migration as a complex phenomenon**

 **Giving voice to**

Why not?
The people we work with already have a voice of their own. It is not something we can “give” them.



 **amplifying the voices of**

Expressions we use, but depending on the context

Consumers - Citizens

WFTO is an organisation that has a vision for a different economy. We provide Fair Trade Enterprises with market access through our verification, but we do more than that: we envision and fight for systemic change. Therefore, we don't want to address people merely for their role in this current economy (consumer) -- we should not reduce them to the amount of money they have in their wallets. They are first and foremost citizens that can make their voices heard, advocating for a fair, just economy alongside Fair Trade Enterprises.

Fair Trade - Fair Trade Enterprises

At WFTO, we focus on the business model and not only the final product. Therefore, it is key to stress the word Enterprise when talking about WFTO members and our vision, to highlight WFTO's approach which makes it unique within the movement. When talking about Fair Trade, we are talking about the whole movement, which we can't represent in its entirety, as some dissimilarities in approaches and vision might occur. We focus on the business model.

Section 4

Engaging with WFTO

Our voices and actions hold tremendous power in shaping a better future. Join us in embracing this evolving landscape and be a catalyst for global transformation.

WFTO has consistent hashtags across all platforms. If you'd like to talk about us and support our movement, you can use the following hashtags throughout the whole year:

**#FairTradeEnterprises #LetsDoltFair
#BusinessRevolution
#FairTradeForChange**

During campaigns, on top of these hashtags, you might notice that WFTO adds a few new ones, that might change accordingly to the campaign we are supporting and its theme for that year.

Follow us →



@wfto_fairtrade



World Fair Trade
Organization



World Fair Trade
Organization

Informed consent

Informed consent is an ethical practice that ensures individuals are aware of and agree to the use of their images. This is particularly important in today's digital age where images can be easily shared and disseminated, without the consent of the people whose photos are taken.

We ask WFTO members to communicate clearly to their employees who have agreed to be taken a photo of how their photos can be used across different platforms, websites and social media.

[download the form](#) 

At WFTO, we believe in the power of collaboration and collective action.

Are you an enterprise that upholds Fair Trade standards and values? Or perhaps you're a like-minded organisation ready to join forces with us?

We would love to hear from you. We can't wait to hear your ideas, share our expertise, and foster collaborations that push towards a real business revolution.

Contact us! 



Home of Fair Trade
Enterprises

**If you have any questions, or if you
need further clarification, please
don't hesitate to reach out to us!**

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