

## How does Gerardo Arias Camacho convince the reader of the benefits of Fairtrade? [10]

*Text D is taken from The Guardian newspaper. The story of a coffee farmer Gerardo Arias Camacho is a coffee farmer in Costa Rica. He is a board member on his village co-operative, which is a member of the Fairtrade consortium COOCAFE. He is married with three children.*

In the 1980s, the price of coffee was so low that it didn't cover the cost of production. Many farmers abandoned their land and some even left the country to find work. In the mid-90s, I went to America to make money and support my family. After eight years, I had earned enough to buy the family farm so that my parents could retire. But coffee prices were still so low that I was forced to return to America for another two years.

Then the coffee business was unstable. We did not have a local school, good roads or bridges. Now that we are Fairtrade-certified, prices are stable and we receive a guaranteed amount for our coffee. We spend the money on education, environmental protection, roads and bridges, and improving the processing plant. We have a scholarship programme so that our kids can stay in school. I believe that my farm would be out of business if it wasn't for Fairtrade. Free trade is not responsible trade. When prices go down, farmers produce more and prices drop further. Fairtrade is the way trade should be: fair, responsible and sustainable.

My oldest son is in college, my ten-year-old has already had as much education as me, and my little girl is in her second year at school. With the help of Fairtrade, they might all be able to go to university and get a degree. They won't have to jump the border from Mexico to America, like me. They can decide what they want in life.

Since Fairtrade, our farms have become more environmentally-friendly. Our coffee is now produced in a sustainable way. We plant trees and have reduced the use of pesticides by 80% in 10 years. We used to cut 50 acres of forest down every year to fuel the ovens at our processing plant. Now we have a new oven which is fuelled by coffee waste products and the skins of macadamia nuts that we buy from farmers on the other side of Costa Rica. It is a win-win business.

Fairtrade is not a closed system. It is open to everyone but we need more and more people to buy Fairtrade so other farmers can become certified. We already educate other producers around us about market prices so that buyers have to offer them a competitive rate and this benefits the wider community. When there was a hurricane, the main road became blocked and the bridge came down. We could afford to open the road and fix the bridge.

When you are shopping, look for the Fairtrade label – you can be sure that the money is going straight to the producers. It will help us, and it will help people around the world, because the benefits of protecting the environment are for everyone. It is a matter of helping each other.

As a Fairtrade farmer, I finally feel competitive. It has given me knowledge so that I am more able to defend myself and my people. I feel there is a future in front of us because we can stay in our own country and make a living growing coffee. Fairtrade is not charity. Just by going shopping, you can make a difference