

I also attend gift and home trade shows where most of the fair-trade groups exhibit. As much as I appreciate the online access, there is nothing like touching and feeling the products, talking with the importers and producers and networking with other fair traders in general. It's extremely important to know the stories behind the products so we can share those stories with our customers. And, even as an online business, I can still connect with my customers. Every single product that we ship out comes with a description card that I create. The 4-inch by 6-inch card details the product's origin, the artisan group that made it and what fair trade means.

I also promote the concept of fair trade by contacting consumer media regularly. I have been successful in getting picked up by national publications such as Lucky, Natural Health and Oprah at Home.

What's been most gratifying to me as a retailer of fair-trade goods is to see and hear how our sales benefit the women artisans and their families. Through their craft production, women not only improve the lives of their families, but also improve their own lives. Many women report that their work has given them self-esteem and the opportunity to participate in decision making in their communities. Increased income ensures better nutrition, better schooling for their children and an improvement in housing and living standards.

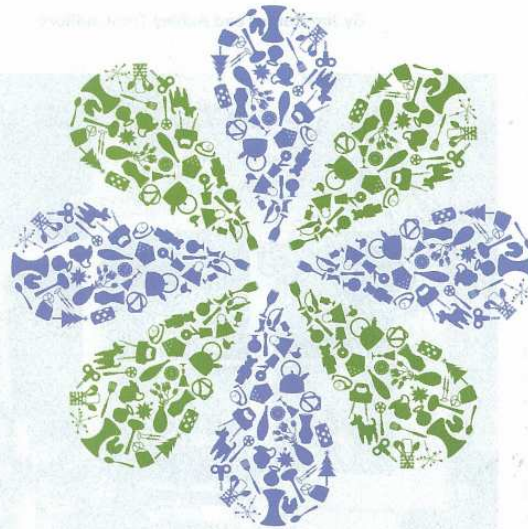
Incorporating fair-trade products doesn't just make good business sense (we turned a profit in 2007); it's good for our world in general. But, at the end of the day, what drives me and my work on World-Shoppe.com is knowing that we are making a real difference for women. And that sounds fair to me.

Megy Karydes (megy@karydesconsultant.com.) launched World-Shoppe.com in 2004. She is also a marketing/public relations consultant specializing in the gift and home industry.



Handmade Expressions. The Tree of Life wall hanging (\$24 wholesale) is handmade in West Rajasthan, India, from locally grown, unbleached and undyed cotton. It measures 52 inches by 32 inches and comes in black, green or red. The design is appliquéd by hand on a cloth base as a single patch. The minimum order is three pieces of the same color or four pieces in assorted colors. The lead time is one to two weeks. See the company in Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco.

WomanCraft. This photo frame (\$12 wholesale) is handmade from 100% recycled paper by women artisans at a nonprofit organization in Chicago that fights homelessness. The frame is decorated with botanical elements that are reclaimed from floral retailers. The frame measures 7¼ inches by 9¼ inches and fits a 4-inch by 6-inch picture. The minimum order is six pieces, and the lead time is two weeks.



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