



## GLOBAL FAIR TRADE AND EGYPT'S EXPERIENCE

### The beginning of Fair Trade movement

Earliest Fair Trade experiences in Europe and in USA date from the late 1950s when Oxfam in the UK and Ten Thousand Villages in the USA started to buy products directly from some producer groups in Latin America and Asia. The first Fair Trade shops, or 'World Shops' were opened to sell these products, to campaign the cause and to ensure that the producers received their fair share. By the early 1960s parallel initiatives were taking place in the Netherlands and the importing organization, Fair Trade Organisatie, was established.

By the mid 80s there was a desire for Fair Trade organizations worldwide to come together. The end of the decade saw the foundation of **EFTA** (the European Fair Trade Association - in 1987) and **IFAT** (the International Federation of Alternative Trade - in 1989). In the 1980s a Dutch NGO conceived the idea of a Fair Trade label to identify Fair Trade products so that they would stand out among ordinary products on store shelves. Today, Fair Trade is a global movement.



### Fair Trade In Egypt

The concept of Fair Trade in Egypt is not widely spread despite the pionerring efforts of a select number of 'fair trade minded' organizations. Fair Trade Egypt is the only Fair Trade handicraft store in Egypt. It was established in 1998 with the aim to link artisan producers to national and international markets. The greatest

challenge to achieving this goal is to communicate the concept of Fair Trade as a socially-just cause. Community awareness needs to be raised in order to create a market for fair trade goods.



Egypt's first Fair Trade Event. June 2005

A further challenge in applying the concept of Fair Trade in Egypt is the overriding community attitude that 'old fashioned, traditional' products are 'not cool'. There is little value placed on traditional skills and crafts as the country moves towards modernity. However, attitudes are changing. Thus, the challenge remains - how can a fair trade organization educate consumers about an alternative and socially just method of trade when there are more immediate and pressing concerns for Egyptian citizens? How can Egyptian consumers be motivated to empower communities when it may be a struggle for these people to be empowered themselves? The answer lies in appealing to people's social conscious, social responsibility and social marketing. As global citizens it is time to make trade fair!!