

# When sets rules of global trade that benefit

[Economics](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

When you buy a cup of coffee in Starbucks every morning to keep you awake through the day, do you ever think of the origins of these coffee beans? How much of those three dollars you pay in Starbucks goes to the Farmers?

Personally, I am not a coffee drinker.

After watching the documentary Black Gold, I have realized the effects of European colonialism on countries such as Ethiopian. Through social, economic and political policies Western nations have forced developing nations to remain dependent upon them for survival. In the documentary it explains the story about Ethiopian coffee farmers who struggle to seek higher prices for their coffee beans. Ethiopia is the largest producer of coffee in Africa and makes up 67 percent of export revenue in Ethiopia. With over 15 million individuals depending on coffee farming and production for their income. Throughout the documentary, the manager of the Oromia Coffee Farmer Co-operative Union, Tadesse Meskela, narrates their battle for the their right for a fair wage.

Tadesse goal is to cut out the middlemen in the chain of coffee production because by the time the green coffee will have traveled through several channels: processing, importing, roasting, packaging/distributing, retailing. The farmers see the smallest percentage of income earning less or even lose money for growing coffee beans. So the slight fluctuations in price will greatly affect the local farmers.

Ethiopia heavily relies on coffee as a single production economy, it also makes their economy dependent upon Western companies and consumers. As a result most of the citizens are born into coffee-growing families and

have very little chance to escape. Compared to other countries where farmers get subsidies from the government Ethiopian coffee farmers do not. It creates an ongoing cycle of uneducated coffee farmers fighting for a better life, but do not have the resources to pull themselves out of poverty. The international organization World Trade Organization are the ones who set the prices for coffee, and behind closed doors they sets rules of global trade that benefit the dominated larger, richer developed countries.

Leaving developing nations outcasted unable to voices their opinion or have their problem. This is why consumer awareness of the farmers' conditions is vital. While large multinational corporations and middlemen are benefiting from coffee production, the farmers themselves get almost nothing.

Consumers need to be aware and ask for fair trade products. Fairtrade coffee beans are labeled and available at most grocery stores.

In this age of increased globalization, it is important to be aware of how we are impacting the lives of other people, and how we are impacting the planet. When we go to Starbucks and buy that cup of steaming coffee, we do not see the human lives that have been put into that cup. We do not see the coffee bean farmers praying for the weather to be kind. We do not see the women who pick the coffee beans for less than a dollar day. We do not see their children who go hungry. We only see the coffee in our cup and we are satisfied.