

#ClimateJusticeNow

The GEPA Climate Justice focus

Fair trade is a concern that not only serves economic justice, but also climate justice. This means a fair distribution of the burdens in the fight against climate change. GEPA is strongly committed to this movement - because there is no climate justice without justice in trade.

What does climate justice mean?

The idea of climate justice addresses the fact that it is particularly people in the Global South, who contribute least to the climate crisis, who often suffer the most from its consequences. The aim of this approach is, among other things, to strongly reduce greenhouse gas emissions on the one hand and to fairly distribute the efforts to combat climate change among all people worldwide on the other.

Why is the issue of climate justice becoming a central issue for GEPA?

The short answer is „No climate justice without trade justice“ (from: policy statement „Trade Justice - the key to strengthening the climate resilience of Smallholders“, Forum Fairer Handel, 2018 on the occasion of COP24).

For years, we have had to witness that our trading partners in the Global South have been increasingly affected by the climate crisis. Rainy and dry seasons are shifting, resulting in increasingly lower production and harvests. Extreme droughts or floods can lead to the total loss of the harvest and formerly fertile land is lost.



„Due to climate change, the weather has been very changeable in recent years. And that has hurt us at some point: We had honey with a higher water content or the honey production dropped due to too few flowers.“ Angel Burgos, Export Manager of the Mexican coffee and beekeepers' cooperative Tzeltal Tzotzil

The effects of the climate crisis are one of the most existential challenges of our generation. GEPA as a global fair trade trade actor lives the active trade partner relationships in its everyday life, in accordance with the motto of the World Fair Trade Organisation WFTO: „People and Planet before Profit“. We experience the threat posed to our partners by the climate crisis in direct

contact and therefore place the issue of „climate justice“ at the centre of our work. For us, trade justice is the central basis for people at the beginning of the supply chain to be able to tackle climate change. There is much more at stake than whether we will still be able to enjoy coffee and chocolate tomorrow. Our acting and trading will determine whether and how we humans will live in the future.

GEPA's climate justice profile

For years, GEPA has been strongly profiled as a player in the climate debate. We started in 2011 with the first measurement of GEPA's carbon footprint in Germany; since then, we have been supporting a reforestation project with our trading partner ATP in the Philippines in cooperation with Pur Projet.

In 2015, we had the first trading partner workshop on the topic of „the impact of climate change on partner organisations in Fair Trade“, followed by a second trading partner workshop in 2017. Concrete results from this were on the one hand the climate activities with trading partners in Peru and Uganda, and the systematic survey of many of our trading partners on the topic. For the general public, we organised the 2017 panel discussion in Wuppertal: „Climate First - How to achieve the eco-fair turn by 2030“, which brought together representatives from trading partners, politics, research and churches.

Many other activities have followed, e.g.:

- Promotion and advice for partners: Through our trading partner fund and day-to-day business, adjustments to the to the climate crisis and the conversion to organic farming have been promoted. For example, WORC in South Africa received financial support to provide advice on adaptation of rooibos cultivation to climate change.
- Organic labelling: In the meantime, 85.4% of GEPA foodstuffs are certified organic.
- Campaign product: #Choco4Change including mark-up for specific climate projects with two trading partners (KCU > energy efficient stoves, and CECAQ-11 > reforestation).
- A plastic-free range in the handicraft sector is being established and expanded, e.g. with products for transport, storage and gift wrappings.
- Green electricity: GEPA works with 100 % green electricity from the Wuppertal public utility company. At the same time, we also generate green electricity and heat with our own combined heat and power plant. The green electricity we generate is fed into the public electricity grid.
- Job bike: All GEPA employees have the opportunity to purchase a job bike at a reduced price. There is a charging station for e-bikes.

- Electromobility: 3 charging stations with 6 electric charging connections have been installed. The GEPA fleet will gradually be converted to hybrid or electric cars.

At the political level, we play a leading role in the development of the climate policy statements of the international Fair Trade movement with regard to the global climate conferences in recent years, give presentations and hold lobby talks at national, regional and local level.

We support the goals of #FridaysForFuture and have written a position paper under the motto #FairTradeForFuture, which you can find at www.gepa.de/fairtradeoffuture. We take part in the Wuppertal climate strikes of FridaysForFuture and are usually invited there for one of the opening speeches.

What happens next?

One component of climate justice is „climate neutrality“, which focuses on offsetting or compensating for unavoidable emissions. Already a few years ago, we launched various activities in this regard, e.g. offsetting the transport of our coffee range by ship.

Now it is to continue: In addition to the activities at GEPA in Wuppertal, with our trading partners and at the political level, we want to achieve by 2030 that GEPA, in all its activities in Germany and in the Global South to become „climate neutral“. To achieve this, we will gradually calculate the carbon footprint of the various product ranges and of GEPA in Germany and offset them or support climate protection projects.

The first step was the relaunch of the honey range at the beginning of this year. Further information is available at www.gepa.de/honig-klimaneutral.



„As a partner of GEPA, we were able to support reforestation with bee-friendly, flower-rich and pollen-producing plant species. Unfortunately, the major world powers do nothing to control or reduce greenhouse gases, so it's up to us, as small producers, to do this work.“ Lucas Silvestre García, Managing Director of the beekeepers' and coffee cooperative of Guaya'b in Guatemala

With our comprehensive approach to climate justice, we go beyond climate neutrality, because as GEPA we have a holistic view of the climate crisis and want to address it at different levels with a variety of activities. In addition to the avoidance and reduction of CO2 emissions, these include various reforestation projects, the promotion of organic cultivation and biodiversity, educational and public relations work and political lobbying, e.g. on EU climate legislation.

All this takes place in cooperation with our trading partners and other cooperation partners such as the Klimakollekte and the Fair Trade networks.

GEPA's aim is to act in a climate-friendly and climate-responsive action in all its work and impact.

A European campaign at last

In autumn 2021, starting during Fair Trade Fortnight, we will carry out the EFTA #ClimateJusticeCampaign in the context of EFTA (European Fair Trade Association). This is a combined communication and political campaign with the climate conference (COP 26) in Glasgow in November as the target point. Under the motto: „Climate Justice - Let's do it fair“ with a corresponding campaign image, film clips and other materials, we are working together with EFTA members in five other countries to draw attention to the urgency of climate justice action for partner organisations in the Global South.

From the beginning of September you will find more information on this at www.gepa.de/klimaschutz.

This campaign will formulate the political messages and demands of Fair Trade to the World Climate Conference COP 26 in Glasgow.

GEPA's campaign product is the vegan variant of the #Choco4Change, a vegan date chocolate in which the sugar is replaced by finely ground dates.

From the beginning of September, more information will be available at www.gepa.de/choco4change.

The main message of the campaign and also for our work as GEPA is: Fair Trade is part of the solution, among other things because it supports small-scale producers in adapting to the climate crisis, because small-scale and ecological agriculture is more climate-friendly, and because fair supply chains have greater crisis resilience!

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