

## Francisco VanderHoff Boersma

Francisco is a Dutch missionary who, in collaboration with Nico Roozen and ecumenical development agency Solidaridad, launched Max Havelaar, the first certified Fair Trade label in 1988. Francisco's contacts with disadvantaged Mexican coffee producers were key in securing the supply and ensuring the success of what has become an international labeling initiative. Francisco has since become critical of the initiative's lack of willingness to listen to the real concerns of coffee farmers, arguing that the interests of the strongest in the industry seem to come before those of small producers.

Francisco was born in 1939 in a disciplined farming family in Southern Netherlands. He became politically active in student movements during his studies at Radboud University Nijmegen. He later received a PhD in political economy and another one in theology while studying in Germany. In 1970, Francisco moved to Santiago de Chile to work in the barrios as a worker-priest. During the 1973 coup, he moved to Mexico to continue his work in the slums of Mexico City. Seven years later, he moved to Oaxaca in the Southern part of Mexico, where he continues to reside today. As a worker-priest, he quickly integrated the community and started to learn about the misery and economic hardship of local coffee producers. In 1981, he participated in the launch of UCIRI (Union de Comunidades Indigenas de la Region del Istmo\*), a coffee producer cooperative created to pool resources and bypass local traders (also called coyotes). Francisco's passion is improving living conditions for impoverished coffee farmers. He has written about and traveled widely to represent and advocate for UCIRI.

## Publications

The Fair Trade Adventure: An Alternative to Globalization. Nico Roozen and Frans VanderHoff. Available UCIRI webpage: [www.uciri.org](http://www.uciri.org)

Poverty Alleviation through Participation in Fair Trade Coffee Networks: The Case of UCIRI, Oaxaca, Mexico. (2002). Fair Trade Research Group, Colorado State University. ([www.colostate.edu/Depts/Sociology/FairTradeResearchGroup](http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/Sociology/FairTradeResearchGroup)).

Fair Trade: An Adventure in the Fair Trade Market. (2002) Nico Roozen and Frans VanderHoff

Economía y Reino de Dios: Neoliberalismo y dignidad opuestos que viven juntos, (2001) Christus 732, available on-line: (<http://www.sjsocial.org/crt/economia.htm>)>.

## Additional Resources

For information about UCIRI in English, go to: <http://www.uciri.org/english/english.htm>

For information about Just Us!, a Canadian worker-owned co-op in Nova Scotia importing coffee from UCIRI, go to: <http://www.justuscoffee.com>