



ACTIVE YOUTH INCLUSION INITIATIVE IN FAIRTRADE SUGAR CANE PRODUCTION IN BELIZE



Invitation

Dear Stakeholders,

Fairtrade and Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA) are delighted to invite you to a launch and joint stakeholder discussion on active youth inclusion in the production of sugar cane.

Youth are the largest generation in human history, with almost half of the world's population younger than age 30. **Currently there are 106 million young people between 15 and 24 years living in Latin America and the Caribbean, which makes up 20% of the total population.** Based on the population estimate in 2020, slightly more than half of Belize's 421,464 inhabitants live in rural area and roughly 111,000 of them are between the ages of 15 to 29 and approximately 25% of them are unemployed.

Despite these numbers, globally 40% of the world's unemployed are youth and more than 80% of youth live in developing countries. Youth are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. Since 2016, there is a growing number of young people who are not in employment, education, or skills training, and in 2021 this number was estimated to be 24% of global youth population. **There is a lack of an enabling environment, in terms of appropriate policies, laws and regulations, including norms and practices, to facilitate the engagement of youth in agriculture.**

Fairtrade's ambition is to correct this imbalance and exclusion, recognizing that youth understand and care about human rights and inclusive development more than ever before, inspired by the chance to drive meaningful change and prosperity and eager to use their time, skills, and commitment to enable thriving communities. It is why Fairtrade have included a focus on youth in its Global Strategy (2021-2025). The agricultural sector, particularly the sugar cane production areas of Belize present multiple opportunities to enable decent youth employment, skills development, and business opportunities, including provision of inputs to production and processing, technology, value addition and support services.

In August 2021, Fairtrade and BSCFA worked collaboratively to pilot a rights' based, youth informed approach to actively enable an environment for youth involvement in BSCFA's decision making processes, delivery of services, premium funded program development and implementation, including capacity building and learning opportunities. BSCFA has since 2015, supported youth inclusive system for monitoring and remediation of child labour and forced labour, youth generated data collection and analysis and more recently through the ILO and Government of Belize Social Innovation Pilot, conducted scores of focuses groups with young people in the northern sugar care sector of Belize.

BSCFA is therefore moving forward in consolidating and formalizing its inclusion work by having developed a Youth Inclusive Policy and Framework of Action, which has been noted in the Belize Draft's National Child Labour Policy and Strategy (2022-2025),



ACTIVE YOUTH INCLUSION INITIATIVE IN FAIRTRADE SUGAR CANE PRODUCTION IN BELIZE



“To be developed in partnership with Fairtrade International, this Policy seeks to enable youth to access decent employment, skills development, and business opportunities. A youth working group consisting of farmers, farm workers and BSCFA staff will be convened. The group will be trained to conduct focus groups in the collection of information on: a) supply and demand constraints and root causes facing youth in securing decent employment, skills development and/or business opportunities in agriculture; and b) The type, terms and conditions of agricultural work of youth who secured employment, skills development and/or business opportunities at BSCFA and members operations, including recommendations to make these better. The youth working group is expected to submit its draft policy to the BSCFA Management Committee. The Committee will, in turn, review, adjust and present it to the General Assembly for a formal ratification.”

We are excited to invite you to the launch of BSCFA’s Youth Inclusive Policy and Framework of Action and to a joint stakeholder discussion, facilitated by Diana Shaw, to agree on a Common Vision for Enabling Youth Inclusive Practices in Belize Sugar Cane Production and Processing. The agenda for this launch and discussion is as follows:

1	Government of Belize's Opening Remarks	Aida Reyes , Senior Labour Officer, Child Labour Secretariat, Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government	9:00 - 9:20
2	BSCFA's Rational for Developing a Youth Inclusive Policy and Framework of Action	Andy Westby , Chairperson, BSCFA	9:20 - 9:30
3	Fairtrade Rights Based Youth Inclusive Initiative	Anita Sheth , Senior Advisor, Social Compliance and Development, Fairtrade International	9:30 - 10:00
4	BSCFA's Youth Inclusive Policy	Zune Canche , Senior Accountant/Protection Focal Point; BSCFA	10:00 - 10:20
5	BSCFA's Youth Inclusive Policy Action Plan	Jeser Correa , BSCFA's Youth Working Group Member	10:20 - 10:35
6	COFFEE BREAK		10:35 - 10:45
7	Stakeholder discussion: Agreeing on a Common Vision for Enabling Youth Inclusive Practices in Belize Sugar Cane Production and Processing	Diana Shaw , Facilitator	10:45 - 11:45
8	Moving forward	Oscar Alonzo , CEO, BSCFA	11:45 - 12:00



ACTIVE YOUTH INCLUSION INITIATIVE IN FAIRTRADE SUGAR CANE PRODUCTION IN BELIZE



The venue for these activities is ***Escuela Secundaria Tecnica Mexico, San Roman Village, Corozal District***

Strict Covid-19 rules will operate and as such we will need to limit the number of participants invited to this joint session. For those invited who feel they are ill, we ask you to kindly pass your invitation to another person and not attend. We need to work together and mitigate the likelihood of anyone getting Covid-19.

Please RSVP by June 10th at the latest to bscfacom.management@gmail.com (Ms. Mariol Chan).

We look forward to our engagement and collaboration with each of you on this important initiative,

Sincerely,

Andy Westby

Chairman
Committee of Management
Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association