



## Mr. Vittorio Leproux

### Project Manager, Fair Trade and International Development Expert

I hail from Rome, Italy and have been working on Fair Trade and Social Business initiatives in developing world, especially in South and South-East Asia, and in Italy, since more than 10 years. Since my childhood, I have been volunteering for many different causes. The most memorable one was when I started studying Development Economics at my University. I decided to dedicate part of my free time to something related to my studies. I knew a Fair Trade organization that was managing a World Shop. I got to know about it through the Church during the church summer camps one of my former catechists used to bring Fair Trade chocolate for all. So I decided to become member of that cooperative and to start helping in the shop. I've volunteered in many different ways, and I have worked in many ways too. When I was young I've volunteered 8 years in our world shop in Rome, helping the shop manager and organizing events (ex. meeting with producers). Then I started working in my local organization in Rome as finance manager. But I'm still volunteering as president of my local cooperative. On

national level I've been working for the main Italian Fair Trade Organization (Ctmaltromercato) and for 9 years have been a member of chief board and project manager for projects carried on in Italy or abroad (India, Nepal, Viet Nam). Now I'm still managing a project on advocacy for Fair Trade toward European institutions and I'm volunteering ad member of the chief board of AGICES (the Italian network of Fair Trade organization...the "Italian FTFI"!).

**I consider Fair Trade a very good tool for India. In fact Fair Trade needs to make potentialities emerge in India. Beautiful craft traditions, biodiversity, a variety of cultural traditions, an emerging purchase power of part of population, a deep spiritual tradition and an important story of conceiving the economic behaviour of each one a tool to build a better society (esp. Gandhi is a polar star for everyone in the world). Fair Trade could have less impact in other kind of situation but in an emerging country as India, that have to face poverty reduction challenges of a huge share of population, it could be a key factor in this context. But, to do that, Fair Trade movement should also be connected to what's happening around it and have a voice talking about sustainable development models, cooperation among people, religions and countries. In India, Fair Trade movement has great richness, a long story behind and great challenge. Aim is double, to support some specific group of artisans and farmers (the ones behind our products) but also to propose a different model of development.**

**From India, the Fair Trade products I mostly love is the textiles and garments: traditional woollen scarfs or recycled sari dress for women. The coffee drink every morning is a blend with Indian coffee. All these I can find in the world shops in Italy. Then I cannot forget organic cotton shirts, also in the world shops! And black pepper from Nilgiri.**

**I think Indian Fair Trade organizations have improved a lot since I was last time in India. FTF-I communication is stronger (I follow you on social media) and the branding system for shops is expanding. So, good job! I do not have a deep knowledge of local consumers in India, but we can improve on communication, capillary distribution, and reliable monitoring system. And then Fair Trade should be well connected with a lifestyle proposal. Choosing Fair Trade is choosing for a better India.**

**I have been very fortunate to meet many Fair Traders from India. I've shared a lot with Mr. O P Yadav from FTF-I during the Fair Trade cotton project. I met his family and enjoyed the meal in his house. We are good friends. It was also a privilege to meet Mr. Mathew John and visit Keystone Foundation. It's great to discuss about football with him. And last time he came to FAO in Rome he did not forget the black pepper for me! Mr. Avani Kumar, he is the first person I met from Indian Fair Trade movement. Since many years we are in touch and he introduced me to many Fair Traders in India like Ekta Parishad and many other places in Delhi. A friend with the highest sense of hospitality. Mr. Sri Nair, though he is not anymore directly involved in Fair Trade, but Fair Trade people are Fair Trade people for ever. He hosted me in his house in Chennai and he always demonstrated to me friendship, loyalty. It was a pleasure to work with such a lucid mind. Ms. Roopa Mehta, listening to her it was important for me to develop an idea of how Fair Trade can innovate being traditional. And then she represents a model of class and Indian strong femininity. Fantastic woman whose presence pushes you to be a gentleman!**

Fair Trade organizations have to be able to keep their role of pioneers of an alternative economy while opening road to lack newcomers. **In India, I said before, I trust great possibilities could be explored, but it will be important to find or strengthen alliances within Indian Civil society (ex. with Organic Movement) to have a louder voice.**

I believe FTF-I can reach better to the consumers by connecting it with a Fair lifestyle and with what's happening around the globe. This, together with improvement in distribution, communication, guarantee and alliances, is a key factor.