

all you need for a **FAIR TRADE ASSEMBLY**

These three assemblies involve minimal preparation and maximum participation!

They are all adaptable, and could be used with any audience, although each one was designed for the age group indicated. They each take approximately 15 minutes to run – preparation time will depend on the level of student involvement.

The assemblies aim to:

- raise awareness of the inequalities caused by conventional world trade
- use different types of trade (chocolate, bananas and fashion) to demonstrate problems faced by producers in the poorer countries of the 'South' (poor countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America)
- show how Fair Trade can work as an alternative
- emphasise the link we, as consumers, have with producers in the South
- to demonstrate the power of consumers, and enable students to recognise the choices they have, and take action to support Fair Trade.

What's Fair Trade all about?

Fair Trade is an alternative approach to conventional world trade. It is a partnership between producers and consumers, based on reciprocal benefit and mutual respect. Fair Trade ensures producers in the South receive a fair price for the work they do, and gain better access to markets in the North. It aims to tackle the long-term problems of the South through sustainable development for excluded and disadvantaged producers.

For Southern producers, Fair Trade means:

- being paid a fair price for the work they do
- commitment to long term relationships between producers and buyers, providing stability and security
- producer organisations are supported in their social development projects, such as providing health care and education facilities
- sustainable environmental projects and practices are supported, such as tree planting and farming without using harmful chemicals
- respect for people's rights, for example promoting gender equality to change the traditional low position of women in society
- being able to have more control over their own lives.



This booklet is produced by **The British Association for Fair Trade Shops (BAFTS)** and **Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC)** as part of the *People Behind the Products* project. This aims to produce materials which raise awareness of trade issues, including Fairtrade. For more information contact:

People Behind the Products, c/o RISC • 35-39 London Street • Reading RG1 4PS
Tel 0118 958 6692 • Email louise@risc.org.uk • www.risc.org.uk/

Supported by the European Commission & the Community Fund

risc

Assembly one: Trade & chocolate

Target audience: KS 2/3

Timing: 15 minutes

Assembly plan

1 This is an assembly about trade.

Unpack a shopping bag containing a range of Fair Trade products. Explain that these products all reach our homes as a result of trade.

Martin Luther King quote could be used here, with appropriate groceries from shopping bag!

2 What do we know about trade?

Challenge audience's knowledge/perceptions. Read out/hold up statements about trade. Ask them to raise a hand if they think each one is true (they are all true!)

3 What do we know about the chocolate trade?

- Hold up chocolate bar from your shopping bag. Ask audience how much chocolate, on average, we each eat per year (7.5kg per person, or 75 x 100g bars).
- Explain that they are now going to see how a bar of chocolate reaches us, the consumers, by finding out about the chain of people involved. Volunteers stand up with appropriate signs – they could be wearing hats/simple costumes.
- Ask audience to imagine how much each person in the chain would get, if this bar of chocolate costs the consumer £1. Ask individuals for their suggestions. Volunteers use second set of signs to reveal answers.

4 What problems do producers, eg cocoa farmers, face?

Ask volunteers to hold up cards stating problems, and expand on these as time allows.

5 Is there an alternative?

Fortunately Fair Trade means that there is another option. Explain that:

- Fair Trade means paying producers a fair price for what they produce.
- We can recognise Fair Trade foods and drinks because they carry the Fairtrade Mark. There are now over 90 products which carry the Mark.
- There are many other products that are fairly traded, including those available in World Shops – further products could then be unpacked from shopping bag.

6 What difference does Fair Trade make?

Volunteers holding cards which show problems associated with conventional trade, turn them around to reveal some of the benefits of Fair Trade.

Resources

bag of Fair Trade products, including large bar of Fair Trade chocolate.

Martin Luther King quote

statements about trade, on large sheets of card or OHTs

large bar of Fair Trade chocolate.

five volunteers, each with two signs: first sign shows who they represent in the chocolate chain, second one shows how much money they would make if the bar of chocolate cost £1

five cards stating problems faced by producers, with benefits of Fair Trade on the reverse

copy of the Fairtrade Mark

further selection of Fair Trade items from shopping bag

cards, as in 4

7 What can we do?

Explain that, as consumers, we can make a real difference to the lives of producers by buying Fair Trade products. They may cost us a few pence more, but we know that the extra money we are paying goes directly to the people who need it.

- It's easy to feel that there's nothing we can do, as individuals, to help relieve world poverty. The choices we make in the shops can have a positive, or negative, impact on the lives of producers in the developing world.
- An average 16 year old in Britain will spend £1,000,000 during her/his lifetime. Their choices count! Encourage students to think of the difference they can make.
- Encourage students to organise, or take part in, other Fair Trade activities within school. (See ideas overleaf).
Conclude by suggesting students find out more, mentioning where Fair Trade products are available locally – suggest visiting supermarket/ local world shop to see for themselves, and take action!



Assembly resources (these could be reproduced on card or OHTs)

In the morning we drink coffee provided for us by a South American, or tea by a Chinese, or cocoa by a West African. Before we leave for our jobs we're already indebted to more than half the world.

Martin Luther King

Statements about trade

- **In the last 10 years the price of a bar of chocolate has doubled, but the price of cocoa beans has halved.** A bar of chocolate here costs roughly what a cocoa farmer in Ghana earns in a month. Most cocoa farmers and their children have never tasted chocolate!
- **Some companies make more money than entire countries.** In 1998 the world's five largest companies made more money than the combined incomes of the world's 46 poorest countries.
- **One pair of jeans is usually made in more than 10 different countries** (eg using cotton for denim from Benin, copper for rivets from Namibia, cotton for pockets from Pakistan, wire for zip from Japan, pumice for treating denim from Turkey, labour for sewing jeans in Tunisia).
- **1.3 billion people live on less than \$1 (70p) per day.** World trade has been expanding rapidly for the benefit of richer countries like ours, but poorer countries gain less and less – yet the majority of people live in the developing world.

Signs for volunteers

Cocoa farmer	7p
Chocolate company	40p
Tax collector	25p
Retailer (shop keeper)	28p
Consumer	pays £1

Problems for producers involved in conventional trade

- Low prices (world prices often fall below the cost of production).
- Low safety standards (eg through use of hazardous agrochemicals).
- Debts (producers often have no choice but to borrow money).
- Poor diet, health care and education (children often have to work to help support families, and are denied education).
- Lack of control (producers feel powerless as world market controls prices).

Benefits of Fair Trade

- Guaranteed better prices (which enable producers to improve their quality of life).
- Improved health and safety standards (decent working conditions make life better for producers, and with more sustainable practices, better for the environment too).
- Secure contracts (producers can plan for the future, and avoid falling into debt) .
- Regular income (producers are more likely to be able to improve diet, afford medicines and schooling).
- Producers have more say (through joining co-operatives or unions, producers have more control over their own lives).



Fairtrade Mark is downloadable from www.fairtrade.org/

Assembly two: Going bananas

Target audience: KS 2/3

Timing: 15 minutes

Assembly plan

1 Begin the assembly with a mystery

How did the item in this box get there?

In suitably dramatic tone, explain that the box contains a severed hand, hacked off by a machete on a Caribbean island, then specially preserved, carefully packed, and sent to England in the hold of a refrigerated ship. It was unloaded in Barry, South Wales, and driven to a special warehouse (known as 'the ripeners'), after which it was brought here, to (name of town). You came across this hand in (name of nearest supermarket selling FT bananas). Open box to reveal hand of bananas!

Explain that these bananas have traveled a long way, with many people involved in their journey – from the growers in the Windward Islands to the people working in the supermarket.

2 What do we know about bananas?

Challenge audience's knowledge/perceptions. Read out/hold up statements about bananas. Ask them to raise a hand if they think each one is true (they are all true!).

3 Does anyone here like bananas?

Ask audience to raise hands if they do, then ask for two volunteers. Show the two bananas, and ask the volunteers to comment on differences – colour, size, shape, smell and finally taste (Cut two small slices from each!) Suggest looking for another difference – in who produced them, and how they were grown

4 Who grew these bananas?

Two groups of volunteers needed. First group represents banana growers on a Central American plantation. They hold up cards/information describing their working conditions and some of the difficulties they face.

Second group represents banana growers on small farm in the Windward Islands. Their cards describe what its like to be Fair Trade banana growers.

The audience may not appreciate the difference, until two more volunteers, representing buyers from 'Big Banana Corporation' and 'Fair Trade Banana Company', present the growers with appropriate 'pay cheques'. Growers look dismayed (first group) and delighted (second group) with payment. Explain that:

- Fair Trade means paying producers a fair price for what they produce, and this can bring a wide range of benefits
- We can recognise Fair Trade bananas because they carry the Fairtrade Mark. There are now over 90 products that carry the Mark, including chocolate, tea, coffee,

Resources

shoe box, or similar containing a 'hand' of Fairtrade bananas

four statements about bananas, on large sheets of card

two very similar bananas, marked 'A' and 'B', on plates, and knife for cutting bananas

two groups of volunteers (3 in each) with information cards

two volunteers, each holding name of company, with pretend 'cheques'

Fairtrade Mark card

honey, biscuits and fruit juice. These are available in most supermarkets. Some supermarkets also have own-brand Fair Trade products.

- There are also other products that are Fair Trade, including clothes, jewellery, paper and gifts available in World Shops.

5 What can we do?

Refer back to bananas 'A' and 'B'. Reinforce idea that they seemed the same, but every time we buy a Fair Trade banana, we are having a positive impact on banana growers. Emphasise that:

- If we don't buy Fair Trade products, we are part of a trading system which makes life very hard for producers.
- It's easy to feel that there's nothing we can do, as individuals, to relieve world poverty – buying Fair Trade products means we have a direct impact on the lives of poor producers.
- An average 16 year old in Britain will spend £1,000,000 during her/his lifetime. As the new generation of shoppers their choices count! Encourage students to think of the difference they can make.

Conclude by mentioning where Fair Trade products are available locally – suggest visiting supermarket/local world shop to see for themselves, and take action!



Assembly resources (these could be reproduced on card or OHTs)

Statements about bananas

- Bananas are the world's most popular fruit.
- On average we each eat 120 bananas a year.
- Bananas are the fruit of the world's largest herb.
- Most bananas in our shops come from the Caribbean.

Information cards for banana growers in first group

Banana Plantation in Costa Rica, Central America
Working 12 hour a day, 6 days a week – hard labour
No job security, could be out of work any time
Using toxic chemicals – bad for health and environment
Poor housing, education and medical care
No unions, no say

Information cards for banana growers in second group

Small banana farm, Windward Islands, Caribbean
Working hard, long hours
Guaranteed contracts give security
Not using toxic chemicals – benefits for health and environment
Improving homes, education and medical care
Member of a co-operative – able to make own decisions

Suggested labels and cheques for banana buyers

- Big Banana Corporation – cheque for \$50 to be given to plantation banana growers
- Fair Trade Banana Company – cheque for \$100 to be given to Fair Trade banana growers

Assembly three: Food & fashion

Target audience: KS 4

Timing: 15 minutes

Assembly plan

1 Unpack bag of shopping

Explain that you'd like to share your breakfast with the audience.

2 Where did my breakfast come from?

Read out Martin Luther King quote, and explain that these breakfast products are produced by people in the poorer countries of the 'South' (Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America). They are all here as a result of trade – although we may know that these products have come a long way, we don't often think about the people behind the products. Many producers in the 'South' are poor, and getting poorer, as a result of international trade. Ask volunteers to hold up cards showing problems faced by many producers.

Fortunately the people behind these breakfast products are involved in an alternative form of trade – Fair Trade.

This means they were paid a fair price for their products, and as a result of the extra money they and their communities have received, they've been able to plan for the future, and improve their lives. As 'consumers' we can have a direct impact on people in the South by telling people about Fair Trade, and whenever possible buying Fair Trade products. How do we know if something is Fair Trade? Look for the Fairtrade Mark. Over 90 Fairtrade Marked products now available.

3 Are farmers the only producers in the South facing difficulties?

No, Martin Luther King could have been referring to the clothes we put on, not just the breakfast we eat. We all shop for clothes – but how much do we know about what's behind the labels we buy?

Challenge audience's knowledge/perceptions. Read out/hold up fashion statements. Ask them to raise a hand if they think it is true (they are all true!).

4 What do we think about when we buy clothes?

What they look like? What they cost? How well they fit? Usually we have no idea of where they have come from, or how they are produced.

Where? A pair of jeans is likely to have been produced in how many different countries? Guess? Maybe 10 or more – show pair of jeans.

How? The workers who make them are mainly women who sit at sewing machines producing the clothes that line our shops. Some work in hi-tech factories, some in small cramped workshops, and some at home. Often they have no choice – they work long hours in poor conditions, for very low wages, eg workers making garments for GAP earn

Resources

bag of Fair Trade breakfast products (tea, coffee, muesli, sugar, bananas, fruit juice, hot chocolate)

Martin Luther King quote

cards showing problems

Fairtrade Mark

six fashion statements

pair of jeans, with labels to add stating where different parts were produced

extracts from workers' stories

as little as £3/day in Honduras – while the chief executive was earning £23,000/day. Read extracts from workers' stories.

5 What's this got to do with us?

In spite of all their difficulties, women workers are finding ways to organise themselves, to try to improve their situation. There are many ways we can support them.

This doesn't mean we should stop buying clothes, but it does mean we can encourage retailers to improve working conditions:

- When you go shopping ask for information about where clothes are made, and in what conditions.
- Write letters to retailers expressing your concern and requesting further information.
- Find out more by contacting organisations like 'Labour Behind the Label' and 'Clean Clothes Campaign'.
- Tell other people what you know and what you find out.
- Support Fair Trade – a growing number of Fair Trade clothes are available in World Shops, and through organisations like Traidcraft.

An average 16 year old in Britain will spend £1,000,000 during her/his lifetime. Explain to students that, as the new generation of shoppers, they have tremendous purchasing power. Their choices count, they can make a difference.

↑ **Assembly resources** (these could be reproduced on card or OHTs)

In the morning we drink coffee provided for us by a South American, or tea by a Chinese, or cocoa by a West African. Before we leave for our jobs we're already indebted to more than half the world.

Martin Luther King

Cards showing problems faced by many Southern producers

- Low pay, unpredictable prices.
- Lack of safety standards.
- No job security – or social security..
- Lack of education – children don't go to school
- No way of improving homes.
- Unable to afford medical care.
- No electricity, no piped water, no transport.

Fashion statements

- **In the UK, we spend £2.5 billion per month on clothes.** What we spend on clothes in three months would more than pay off Africa's entire debt to the UK.
- **A quarter of all pesticides used in the world are sprayed on cotton crops.** 20,000 deaths per year are linked to the use of pesticides on cotton.

- **People in the UK dump over 100 tonnes of clothes each week.** A lot more in fact – one company alone processes 90 tonnes of dumped, mainly reusable garments, each week.
- **In Haiti, a clothes factory worker receives 5p for sewing a Disney garment, which sells here for £19.** Buying food there takes up half their daily wages – think of all the other things they need money for.
- **In some clothes factories young women workers are asked to take the pill so they don't become pregnant.** Some of the women are as young as 14. They have to take the pill if they want to keep their jobs – companies don't want to have to pay for maternity leave.
- **The average person in the UK consumes 35 times more than the average person in India.** The word consume comes from the Latin word 'consumare', meaning to destroy – are there times when our being fashion conscious means destruction for people in other parts of the world?

Labels for a pair of jeans

- cotton from Benin, West Africa, workers paid 60p/day
- stonewashed using pumice from Turkey
- brass rivets made from Namibian copper & Australian zinc
- zip teeth made in Japan
- thread produced in Northern Ireland
- sewn together by worker in Tunisia, paid 58p/hour

Padmini's story

Padmini works in a British-owned factory in Sri Lanka. She sews a range of different clothes. "Different types of clothes are sewn here, so I work in different sections. When a new design comes in they give us a demonstration for about 5 minutes, then we have to try it out ourselves on a piece of cloth – only then can we begin to meet our production targets. All the items we sew are sent to UK shops. We work from 8am-5pm, but when there are urgent orders we have to work through the night. This means we work a day shift, then through the night, then another day shift. We get a short break for dinner, then a short break between 2-3 in the morning. We try not to sleep during these breaks because it makes it more difficult to work."

Eleodora's story

Eleodora works in the Dominican Republic, in the Caribbean. She worked in a shirt factory, where health and safety was a problem. "The material throws off a fine dust, which makes the women cough – there are no fans, so the heat and dust asphyxiate you. Women have to be taken out when they become dizzy. If you go to the toilet, that's your problem – it's hard to keep up with the hourly quota that has to be produced. Women are sacked if they refuse to work overtime – when my father was ill I couldn't stay late every night – they sacked me without warning. My neighbour was also sacked – she was 5 months pregnant, and couldn't sew her quota of 340 trousers a day. There are many cases of workers having accidents in the factory – the company won't pay anything and these people are left ill or paralysed, without anything."

Martha's story

Martha works in a factory in Guatemala, Central America. "The supervisors treat us like machines – they shout at us and threaten us. Most women are forced to do overtime, and are threatened with lower wages if they don't comply. No one can speak out because they will get sacked – if they get sacked they will go back to even worse poverty."

Emilia's story

Emilia is an Indonesian workers representative. "I used to work in a factory that makes jeans for a US company – they subcontracted work to smaller factories where conditions are worse – many of the workers are children."

Assembly follow up: Action!

- Set up a 'Fair Trade Trail' as a fun opportunity for students to find out more about Fair Trade. This could be based on materials displayed at different locations around the school, eg posters, leaflets, maps and packaging from different Fair Trade products.
- Run a Fair Trade competition with a Fair Trade chocolate prize at the end.
- Set up a Fair Trade tuck shop.
- Run a Fair Trade coffee morning for the staff.
- Liaise with the school canteen/cafeteria to hold a Fair Trade Breakfast, or Lunch, serving as many Fair Trade items as possible.
- Produce display materials – posters to promote Fair Trade, giant Fair Trade packaging, profiles of producers and their products.
- Link up with your local supermarket and/or World Shop. Arrange for students to visit them and carry out a product survey or consumer questionnaire to gauge public awareness of Fair Trade. Analyse the results, and send a report to the shop manager!
- Complete a 'Fair Trade audit' of the school, using student and staff questionnaires. Devise a Fair Trade policy for the school – become a 'Fair Trade School'.

For more information and ideas for schools' work on Fair Trade

- **Banana Link** www.bananalink.org.uk/
Campaigns for small producers in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America.
- **British Association for Fair Trade Shops (BAFTS)** www.bafts.org.uk/
Network of independent Fair Trade and World Shops across the UK. It seeks to raise the profile of Fair Trade.
- **Clean Clothes Campaign** www.cleanclothes.org/
Comprehensive reports on different companies, eg Nike, Adidas, Levi Strauss.
- **Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)** www.eti.org.uk/
Coalition of trades unions, business and NGOs working together to identify and promote good practice in the implementation of codes of labour practice.
- **Fairtrade Foundation** www.fairtrade.org.uk/
Promotes Fair Trade and awards and monitors the Fairtrade Mark
- **Labour Behind the Label** www.labourbehindthelabel.org/
Campaigns and resources on sweated labour.
- **Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC)** www.risc.org.uk/
Largest Development Education Centre in UK, with Global Café and World Shop, selling teaching resources on global issues and Fair Trade products – foods, clothes, gifts and more!
- **Traidcraft** www.traidcraft.co.uk/
Distribute Fair Trade food and crafts
- **Women Working Worldwide** www.poptel.org.uk/
Organisation supporting the struggle of women workers in the global economy, through information and international networking.
- **World Development Movement (WDM)** www.oneworld.org/wdm/
Development agency which campaigns for political changes which directly benefit the poor, including *people before profits* campaign.

