

Church Action Guide 2009



Unfair trade rules continue to lock millions of people in the developing world in poverty. Two billion people – a third of humanity – work hard to support themselves yet still struggle to survive on £1 per day or less. Through Fairtrade we are trying to help tip the balance in favour of poor farmers and workers. You can help by taking action in Fairtrade Fortnight (23 February – 8 March 2009) and throughout the year. In this guide you can read about the difference Fairtrade is making for producers and find out what you and your church can do to spread the benefits of Fairtrade to more people than ever.

Whenever I attend Fairtrade events I am always enthused by the commitment of business people, faith groups, Fairtrade activists and school children. It's the same wherever I go. It's a reminder that the Fairtrade movement is rooted in an ever broadening coalition of people who want to exercise their consumer power to change the lives of people thousands of miles away. And what a change!

markets from which they have been frozen out for so long. But for every Fairtrade farmer there are countless others who languish in poverty. We are rightly proud of what we've achieved so far but they, and their communities, represent the challenge for next year and many more after that.

George Alagiah
Patron of the Fairtrade Foundation



I will never forget Alex and Fatima, the children of coffee growers I met in Nicaragua. With the help of the Fairtrade premium they are now skilled coffee tasters offering advice to farmers – an example of the way Fairtrade can lift communities into those value-added

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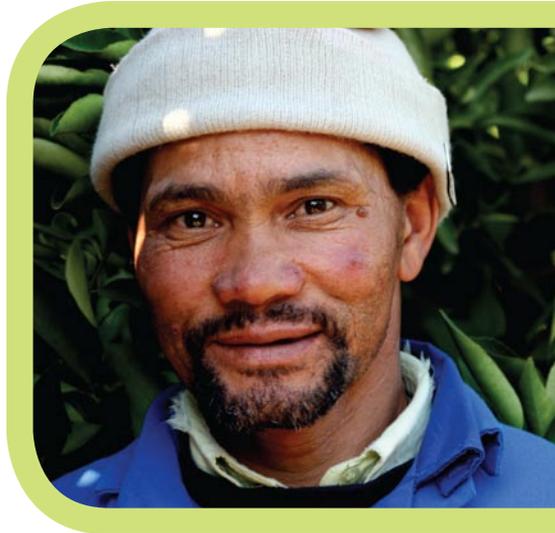
For producers in South Africa



The end of the apartheid in South Africa in 1994 was the start of a new era, but racial inequalities remained, with 85 per cent of agricultural land being held by the minority white farmers. The agricultural landscape was dominated by white-owned large-scale farms whilst the black workforce was largely oppressed and landless. Fairtrade has been working to empower disadvantaged workers. Uniquely in South Africa Fairtrade standards have been developed to include national government requirements on black economic empowerment (Black Economic Empowerment or BEE), which aims to gradually transfer land, business ownership, management skills and knowledge back into the hands of those who suffered most under apartheid.

Almost all Fairtrade certified producer groups in South Africa are large farms that use hired labour. As well as improving lives through the investment of the Fairtrade premium, Fairtrade standards require producers that depend on hired labour to actively contribute to BEE targets, so their employees take a greater share in the ownership and management of the farms they work on.

The effects of Fairtrade go well beyond economic benefits. As well as receiving a minimum price for their produce, Paul Afrikaner, a worker at Citrusdal-Bergendal farm, which produces Fairtrade wine, rooibos tea, oranges and other fruit, explains how Fairtrade standards have made conditions for workers safer: 'The circumstances we work under have changed, for example, if chemicals are sprayed in the orchards, we are no longer allowed to work during that time.'



Paul is also treasurer of the Joint Body at Bergendal. The Joint Body is democratically elected by workers and it decides the best way to spend the Fairtrade premium. Paul says: 'The premium money that we get improves life in the community. The workers also get training. This is very good.' Workers benefit from a programme of training courses on topics including conflict resolution, financial management, food hygiene and health issues such as HIV/AIDS.

You can buy Fairtrade citrus fruit when in season from Asda, Booths, Budgens, Co-op, Marks and Spencer, Morrisons, Sainsbury's and Tesco.



Are you a Fairtrade Church?

Fairtrade Churches

More than 4,500 churches have met the goals to become a Fairtrade Church. On becoming a Fairtrade Church you receive a certificate to display to tell people you have made a commitment to Fairtrade. The three goals a church must fulfill are:

- Use Fairtrade tea and coffee after services and in all meetings for which they have responsibility
- Move forward on using other Fairtrade products such as sugar, biscuits and fruit
- Promote Fairtrade during Fairtrade Fortnight and during the year through events, worship and other activities whenever possible.

Fairtrade denominational areas

Denominational areas like dioceses are increasingly grouping together to give their campaigns a louder voice and to have a bigger impact. Take your campaign to the next level by getting involved in a Fairtrade denominational area campaign whether it be a diocese, district, circuit, or other area. For these campaigns the following criteria need to be met:

- To support and promote Fairtrade, further encourage the use and sale of Fairtrade products and to serve only Fairtrade coffee and tea at meetings it is responsible for.
- Ensure that at least half of the churches or places of worship in your denominational area have become a Fairtrade Church.



- Encourage other local churches, parishes, circuits to adopt a Fairtrade policy. As far as possible, display literature advertising the fact that Fairtrade products are used and served there.
- Attract further media coverage and continue raising awareness of the FAIRTRADE Mark. If possible, make reference to denominational area's Fairtrade status on the relevant website.
- Set up a Fairtrade steering group to take responsibility for ensuring goals continue to be met and developed over time.

Fairtrade and trade justice



The Fairtrade Foundation is a member of the Trade Justice Movement – a coalition of organisations committed to campaigning for trade rules which benefit poor people and the environment. The coalition is critical of Europe's current trade policy which puts big business above the interests of people in developing countries.

As well as continuing to push African, Caribbean and Pacific countries into bad trade deals, the European Union is also setting its sights on a further 34 developing countries in Latin America and Asia where over 970 million live on less than US\$2 a day. These trade deals aim to force open markets for European business, on agriculture and services in particular, that could harm the poorest and most vulnerable groups in the developing world, destroying jobs, small-scale industries and the livelihoods of small farmers, as well as increasing environmental exploitation and the abuse of human rights.

We have a real opportunity to put a stop to this aggressive trade strategy in advance of the election of Members of the European Parliament in June 2009, and the subsequent appointment of a new Commission President and a new Trade Commissioner. MEPs will play a key role in approving these positions, and these two people will have the power to set the agenda on trade for years to come.

In joining this campaign, you will be adding your voice to millions of others through Europe, Latin America and Asia who are opposing these deals.

Help stop Europe's unfair trade deals

What you can do

- Read more about these trade deals at www.tjm.org.uk
- Ask Baroness Ashton, the new EU Trade Commissioner, to stop pushing unfair trade deals on poor countries. Order briefings and postcards from www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources
- Send a message to the current EU Commission President Barroso by email. Go to www.wdm.org.uk/campaigns/trade/action/barroso.php
- Visit or write to your MEP on the issue. Check out the TJM website for the lobby guide which contains all the information you need. Download it from www.tjm.org.uk





Tea producers in Sri Lanka

Thamara Weerasena (43) is married to Sugath Nuwarage (52) and they own a tea farm in Sri Lanka. For years the family struggled to meet their living costs because their sparse tea bushes were neglected and provided little income for the family. The prices paid by middlemen were so low that investing time and money to improve the crops was not worthwhile. Income from Sugath's work as a driver was never enough but Thamara struggled to continue sending the children to school, at times taking high interest loans from banks, pawning her jewellery to pay the interest.

The family's circumstance has greatly improved since Small Organic Farmers' Association (SOFA) was established. Thamara can now sell all her tea directly to Bio Foods, a Sri Lankan exporter, at a Fairtrade price of 31 Sri Lankan rupees per kg (about 18 pence), much higher than the 15 Sri Lankan rupees per kg (about nine pence) paid by local intermediaries. Fairtrade guarantees that producers receive a minimum price which covers the cost of sustainable production and means can Thamara can afford to continue her children's education.

On top of the minimum price producers also receive an extra amount of money, the Fairtrade premium to invest in projects that will benefit the whole community. The co-operative decided to use some of the premium to improve their crops. They are growing their new tea plants organically. Thamara is much happier working without the chemicals that used to make her ill and her tea leaf production has increased nearly tenfold.

The Fairtrade premium has been used to repair and build new roads around the farms, enabling farmers to transport their crops to the market much more easily. SOFA have also used the premium to provide low interest loans to farmers. Thamara has been able to buy roof sheets and other materials to improve and extend her house. She also used a loan to diversify her crops and started growing spices like cinnamon which she now sells through Fairtrade and receives nearly a third more for her crop than she would otherwise. Fairtrade has helped Thamara feel much more hopeful for her, and her children's future.



What can your church do for Fairtrade?



During Fairtrade Fortnight:

- Mark International Women's Day by celebrating how Fairtrade is empowering women around the world. For more information order the Fairtrade Fortnight Action Guide or view it online here: www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources
- Be part of a Fairtrade world record. Get your church and local schools involved in the Fairtrade banana eating record attempt during Fairtrade Fortnight! Look out for more information on this event on our website.
- Organise a talk or debate about Fairtrade and trade justice in your church. There is more information in the Fairtrade Fortnight Action Guide and a presentation for you to download from our website: www.fairtrade.org.uk/fortnight_resources

Throughout the year:

- Look for products with the FAIRTRADE Mark and tell your friends and family about Fairtrade
- Remember impoverished producers around the world at your harvest festival. Raise awareness by putting up posters, include Fairtrade ingredients in your harvest supper or include a prayer from this guide in your service.
- Hold a film showing of *Black Gold*, *The Great African Scandal* or other films about Fairtrade. You can also find several short films on our website or order the DVD: www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources/films/
- Sell Fairtrade products regularly at your church. Find out about Traidcraft schemes to help you here: www.traidcraft.co.uk/buying_fair_trade/fair_traders/ and www.traidcraft.co.uk/caterer
- Use Fairtrade Communion wine at your services (www.poterionfairtrade.co.uk) or host a wine tasting event – there is a guide on our website
- Run a Fairtrade session with your youth group or scout group – you can get ideas for activities by visiting: www.fairtrade.org.uk/schools/support_resources/





Resources

Resources

- Sign up for the Fairtrade Churches e-newsletter at www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources/newsletter_signup.aspx
- Order the Fairtrade Fortnight Action Guide packed with ideas and events that will help raise awareness of the FAIRTRADE Mark, or view it online: www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources
- Order promotional materials and merchandise for your Fairtrade event from posters and leaflets to inflatable bananas and Fairtrade bunting. You can order materials from <http://online.fairtrade.org.uk> or by calling 020 7440 7676

Hot tip

Let local journalists know about your events. It will raise publicity for your event and let your local community know what your church is doing for trade justice.

Hot tip

Contact local retailers or supermarkets to see if they are willing to donate products for a Fairtrade event you are holding.



Reflection and prayers

Reflection

A reflection on Proverbs 31 v.8–9

Proverbs 31 v.8–9 tells us:

‘Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.’ To those who want to speak up, stand up. Be visible to the world around you, guide the world through your actions and let your voice be heard throughout the chaos of life. Do not be complacent about injustice, but be angry. Campaign for change and yearn for justice. Join together in a passionate communion and ask God for strength, as the gospel of Luke says: ‘For nothing is impossible with God’.

Pray that through Fairtrade, impoverished farmers can build stability in their own lives, that together we may tip the balance in favour of the poor, that they may see a road out of poverty. Do not be discouraged by failure, but use your energy to persevere. Lord, as in all that we aspire to do, the spirit is willing, but the body is weak. Help us therefore to keep you at the centre of our actions for justice and to continually pray for your strength and guidance to make change happen. Let us not forget that to defend the rights of the poor and needy is your will, therefore we pray that through us may your will be done.

Caroline Hughesdon, Fairtrade Foundation

Prayers

God of justice, God of the poor grant us energy, resolve and perspective to challenge the injustice we see before us. In the presence of God, in the light of the world, we commit ourselves to this task:

Speak out for those who cannot speak, defend the rights of the poor.

We will.

Speak out with fairness and make your views heard, defend the rights of the poor.

We will.

Speak out on behalf of the silenced and voiceless, defend the rights of the poor.

We will.

We will defend the rights of the poor.

We will speak out, we will speak out.

Amen

Based on Proverbs 31:8-9

Tender God,
with arms stretched out
enfolding each one of us in divine love,
mend our broken hearts,
where we fail to love,
and where we fail to act
to resolve injustice.

Amen

God of all,
you know the desperation
of living with hunger.
You have felt the pain
of living with thirst.
You see the devastation
of people dying.
Come among us,
powerful God,
bring change
within us.

Amen

Rachel Halsall, Mothers' Union

For more prayers and reflections for Fairtrade Fortnight and throughout the year, visit www.fairtrade.org.uk/faiths

fairtrade.org.uk

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