CHURCH ACTION GUIDE

FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT
SHOW OFF YOUR LABEL

28 February – 13 March 2011
DURING FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2011

we want the whole nation to get loud and proud about Fairtrade, so we’re asking everyone to Show off your label. Show off your passion, your favourite product and the story behind it. Two weeks to load the FAIRTRADE Mark with meaning and get more people excited about the difference their everyday choices can make. Let’s show off a different way of doing trade and why we campaign for it.

‘Fairtrade is a great example of the power of ordinary people to be ‘good news to the poor’. Last year I visited a brand new health centre built by a local co-operative in Ivory Coast on the strength of the extra money they receive because of Fairtrade. The co-op members were rightly proud of their achievement, which is already saving lives. Getting fair prices and a fair trade premium makes all the difference for farmers and producers. As a Christian, I want trade to be an expression of the reality that all men and women are my brothers and sisters, to whom I owe justice, respect, and the best possible future.

Fair trade really took off more than 20 years ago because the churches took it up. There has been fantastic progress – even some multinationals now have their Fairtrade products. But there is much more to do. I hope this resource will both inform and inspire churches to participate fully and campaign for further changes.’

Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr John Sentamu, Archbishop of York

MOUSSA’S STORY

Growing cotton in Mali is not easy. It’s a very thirsty crop, and soaks a huge amount of nutrients from the soil. But because it’s the only cash crop grown in the area which sells for a decent price, the farmers need to keep investing in it. With farmers reporting lower rainfall each year, they are seriously concerned for their livelihoods.

Moussa Keita has eight children and two wives. Like other farmers in the region he struggled to fend for his family on a low income and with poor access to healthcare and education. On top of this, lack of agricultural equipment and poor roads made it difficult to earn a living. But six years ago he started farming Fairtrade cotton and has seen the positive changes over time. Moussa is part of the Dougourakoroni village co-op but he is also the Secretary of UC-CPC de Dijdian, which is the umbrella co-operative for the 37 smaller, village-level co-ops. Moussa said it was difficult to get by before and he was only able to send three of his children to school. ‘Today, all my children can go to school because I can afford to pay the school fees; we eat every day, we are able to eat when we are hungry. I can also meet the costs of medicines should we need them.’

As well as earning enough money to meet his basic needs through the Fairtrade minimum price, Moussa’s co-operative receives a Fairtrade premium – extra money to invest in the business or community. Children used to have to walk 2.5km to get to school each day so part of the premium money was used to build two classrooms and a staffroom, which has benefitted 119 children so far. Moussa says: ‘Thanks to the profits from Fairtrade many parents are able to meet school fees and the number of children going to school has increased.’

The co-operative has a long list of other projects they would like to invest in and people in Moussa’s village are generally feeling more secure in their future and their livelihoods with Fairtrade.

‘I am happy that my children will get a better education and my hope is that they will go to university. This wouldn’t have been possible before Fairtrade’, Moussa Keita, Fairtrade cotton farmer in Mali
WHAT CAN YOUR CHURCH DO FOR FAIRTRADE?

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SHOW OFF YOUR BUNTING
This year we want to break the world record for the longest line of hand made bunting and show our support for cotton farmers in developing countries.

We are asking you to get creative in your church by holding a Bunting Party. Get everyone designing and decorating pieces of Fairtrade cotton flags to contribute to the world’s longest piece of bunting. You can order bunting kits from the Fairtrade Foundation to show off your support for Fairtrade in a colourful way.

It’s also a great way to reach out to your church schools or other local groups and invite them along to church to take part.

We need to create a bunting more than 1.65 miles long to break the record, so get creating!

TRADE JUSTICE FOR COTTON FARMERS

Conventional trade just isn’t working for the world’s poor. Despite international trade being worth $10 million a minute, poor countries account for only 0.4% of this trade. Cotton is a stark example of the effect of unequal trade rules in global trade on people’s lives. For many poor people in West and Central Africa, cotton is the only viable way to earn an income so even small price declines can mean families struggle to meet basic needs like food, medicines, schoolbooks and tools.

Despite ups and downs, over the last 40 years, the real price of cotton has fallen significantly. Recent falls can be directly attributed to huge subsidies granted by rich governments to their own cotton farmers. The US in particular has a big impact on global prices as the world’s second largest cotton producer and is by far the largest exporter. US producers currently receive about $4.2bn in subsidies, equivalent to the total value of their crop.

Subsidies mean farmers in developing countries – despite having lower production costs than their American counterparts – are not able to compete with the artificially lowered prices. Experts estimate global cotton prices would be 15% higher if all subsidies were eliminated. In the meantime Fairtrade offers shoppers a chance to choose an alternative vision of how trade can work and what it can achieve.

In the run up to the likely World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Meeting in late 2011, join us in calling for cuts to unfair, trade-distorting cotton subsidies. Watch out for campaign updates and actions throughout 2011, including our cotton trade report, The Great Cotton Stitch-Up, from www.fairtrade.org.uk/cotton

Make Fairtrade Fortnight the start of something powerful and take one of the following actions:

- Organise a public debate on the theme of global trade and inequality. You might even want to invite your local MP to participate.
- Run an interfaith event on trade justice, asking members of different faiths to present their faith perspectives on trade in their scriptures and traditions.

VISIT FAIRTRADE.ORG.UK/COTTON to read about Fairtrade cotton farmers and their projects
Dear Heavenly Father,

We know that you have called us to stand up to the injustice we see in the world around us and to fight for justice. Help us not to be afraid or embarrassed about standing up for those things which we know are right and opposing those things which we know are wrong. Help us to continue to remember that your desire for justice should impact every area of our life, and that as we continue to shout about Fairtrade we are helping to spread the message of your Gospel of good news one choice at a time.

Amen

James Hughesdon,
Parish of the Isle of Dogs

A REFLECTION ON LUKE 18:1-8

The parable of the widow and the unjust judge: In this parable Jesus describes a situation where a woman forces an unjust judge to ensure that justice is done for her despite the fact that the judge does not want to. How does she do this? She makes so much noise and constantly harasses (literally ‘wears out’) the judge that eventually he gives in to get some peace. Jesus uses this parable to talk about the importance of prayer but I think it can also be taken very literally as a parable about overcoming injustice. Today the global power of many large multinational companies is similar to the local power a judge would have had in Jesus’ time, and like us as individual consumers the widow had little power. Yet even though we have little power as individuals we can do what the widow did and shout out loud about justice and expose the injustices in our world. So let’s use Fairtrade Fortnight as an opportunity to make some noise, from our homes, schools and pulpits, about how Fairtrade is helping to overcome the injustices in our global system of trade, and let’s pray that the unjust companies will be forced, like the unjust judge, to sit up and take notice.

James Hughesdon, Parish of the Isle of Dogs

COTTON ONTO JUSTICE...

How long does it take for God to be heard? How long is a piece of string? Why are we so quick to queue for the sales yet so slow to move our hearts? Why are we so prompt in turning the tap yet so sluggish in saving the water? Why is the light switch an instant decision yet helping the poor a long term vision? Why is the food we eat a matter of when and not if yet the hungry go starving before our checkouts? How long does it take for God to be heard? How long is a piece of string?

God in the midst of the weak and the strong, who stood in Christ in the stable bare, who stands with us in the shopping street, who stands with us in face of the poor, grant us grace:

Amen

Fleur Dorrell, Mothers’ Union
One way is through the mundane choices we make, such as when we are shopping. Are our choices consistent with the Kingdom we seek – a Kingdom which upholds justice and generosity, which strives to safeguard the integrity of creation and which brings good news to the poor?

6 MARCH
Exodus 24:12-18
Revelation is accompanied by cloud and fire.

Psalm 2
Why do the nations conspire? The psalmist warns rulers not to set themselves against the Lord by casting off restraint.

or Psalm 99
Lover of justice, you have established equity; you have executed justice. The psalmist recalls how God has spoken to his people.

Matthew 6:25-end
Jesus calls us to remember that we are children of a heavenly father who eternally provides for our needs. Strive first for the Kingdom of God.

Creation in all its splendour and an eternal, Kingdom perspective are key themes running through these passages. They challenge us to make choices about our outlook, our lives and our priorities.

Jesus calls us above all else to seek the Kingdom of God, putting our trust in the God whose love is for all time.

Who creates, provides and redeems, and whose love endures forever.

Romans 8:18-25
Suffering creation groans for redemption. Hope for the future.

Psalm 32
The wasting power of unrepented sin.

Romans 5:12-19
The gift and grace of God: life for all.

Matthew 4:1-11
Jesus rejects the temptations of personal satisfaction, abuse of position, and worldly power, choosing instead the service and worship of God.

Lent offers us the opportunity to take time to reflect with Jesus in the wilderness on our fallen world, to decide what words and principles we will live by, to face our temptations and to determine how we will repent and respond.

Today's world is one of gross unfairness, where half the world's people live in poverty – despite there being enough for all.

The rich world's refusal of restraint and the temptation to put our material comfort before godliness are part of the problem. We have created an unfair global trading system that allows us to enjoy cheap clothes and food but causes others to suffer (see section on cotton subsidies).

But God wills life and offers the healing power of repentance. And we, by grace and following Christ's example, can reject temptation. One way is through Fairtrade, which is a strategy for poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Its purpose is to create opportunities for producers and workers who have been economically disadvantaged or marginalised by the conventional trading system. Fairtrade is good news – and a way we can respond practically to our hurting world.

Elizabeth Perry
Last year another 1,000 churches in the UK met the goals to become a Fairtrade Church, bringing the total to a whopping 7,000. 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 Fairtrade Church must fulfil 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 getting together to give their Fairtrade campaigns a louder voice and a bigger impact. Take your campaign to the next level by joining a Fairtrade denominational area. It could be a diocese, a district, or other area. For these campaigns, you’ll need to meet the following goals:

- 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

Check [www.fairtrade.org.uk/faiths](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/faiths) or call 020 7405 5942 to find out more about becoming a Fairtrade Church and to download the application form.