

Fair trade a-go-go!

Theme: trade

Country focus: Ghana and Haiti

Aim: to reflect on the global stories contained in our bags of shopping in the UK and Ireland; to start to explore the global trading system and the role we all play as consumers within this; to understand fair trade as a positive step we can make towards responsible shopping habits; to understand that the rules governing global trade are unfair.

Materials/preparation:

- a copy of the 'Fair trade a-go-go!' PowerPoint presentation (available from www.christianaid.org.uk/learn)
- a list or range of fairly traded and locally produced items.

Assembly presentation

1. Show the pupils the FAIRTRADE Mark (PowerPoint slide 2).

Ask them to raise their hands if they have ever eaten or bought a fairly traded product. Tell them you are going to show them a range (or read them a list) of products, and that you want them to stand up when they see (or hear) an item that is available as fair-trade and to sit down when they're shown (or told) an item that's not.

Chocolate (fair-trade)

Milk (not fair-trade)

Sugar (fair-trade)

Tea (fair-trade)

Potatoes (not fair-trade)

Nuts (fair-trade)

Cornflakes (not fair-trade)

Bananas (fair-trade)

Coffee (fair-trade)

Did they notice anything about the products that are not available in fair-trade versions (milk, potatoes and cornflakes)? (Answer: they are all things that can be farmed in the UK and Ireland.)

We are very lucky that we are able to enjoy a range of products from around the world – think how restricted our diets would be if we could only eat things that we could farm in our temperate climate!

Fair trade is very important because it ensures that farmers around the world who grow many of the products we enjoy in this country are getting a fair deal.

Ask students to put up their hands if they like chocolate. They're not alone – in the UK people spend an average £72 each on chocolate every year!¹

2. Show them the slide of Raphael Ayapong (PowerPoint slide 3).

This is 14-year-old Raphael Ayapong from Ghana. His father works for a cocoa cooperative, growing cocoa beans that many of us will go on to enjoy in bars of delicious chocolate. Raphael's father is part of a fair-trade cooperative called Kuapa Kokoo, which owns Divine Chocolate Ltd (you can buy Divine chocolate in this country). Because he works for a fair-trade cooperative he is able to get a decent price for his cocoa beans, and Raphael is able to enjoy the benefits of the extra money his father brings home. Raphael says, 'buying fair-trade chocolate makes a big difference to the lives of cocoa farmers, like my dad'. With the extra fair-trade premium from selling cocoa, the cooperative have bought a new bore-hole to provide the community with fresh water. As Raphael says, 'you get delicious chocolate and we get a fair deal'.ⁱⁱ

Buying fairly traded products is an excellent way for consumers (that's all of us!) to show that we care where the things that we buy come from, and to make sure that the people at the other end of the supply chain – the farmers in poorer countries around the world – are getting a fair deal.

But many farmers don't produce things to sell abroad; some grow or make things that they sell to people locally, just as many farmers in the UK specialise in potatoes, milk and cornflakes for us to enjoy in this country. If those farmers have just a small farm, it is particularly important that they are able to sell their products in local markets, as they probably don't make

enough money to pay to package and export their goods to other countries.

Ask the pupils if they have ever tried to grow anything. Can they imagine if their family depended on being able to sell the things they could grow or produce themselves? Invite students to think of all the things that can go wrong – the seeds might not germinate, the weather might not be right, the plants might not get enough water, animals might get sick.

Even if you do manage to produce some nice healthy crops or milk from your animals, you then have the challenge of getting a good price for these at your local market.

3. Show slide 4 on the PowerPoint presentation.

In Haiti, which is a country in the Caribbean, farmers were once able to sell their products easily in the local markets. Rice and dairy farmers used to produce enough rice and milk for the entire population of Haiti.

4. Show slide 5 on the PowerPoint presentation.

Today, it is much harder for local farmers to sell their goods, because rice and milk from richer countries are flooding the market. The international companies that produce these products can afford to package them attractively, and to sell them at cheaper prices than the local farmers. This can have disastrous results. 'Sometimes I have to chuck away the milk I produce,' says Jean Anel, a dairy farmer. 'It's mind-boggling... why can't we get a higher price for our milk?'

The reason they can't get a higher price is that the shops and markets are full of cheaper cans of milk from the US and Europe. In this situation, it would be tempting to give up the hard work of being a farmer. However, giving up farming is not an option, as Jean Anel explains. 'The country doesn't have any alternatives. What else can we do? That's all we know... and that's all we have. We can't do anything else.'

5. Show slide 6 on the PowerPoint presentation.

Luckily, dairy farmers in Haiti are being helped by an organisation called Veterimed, who are supported by the development agency Christian Aid. Veterimed set up a project called Let Agogo, which means 'flowing milk' in the local language, Creole. Let Agogo dairies buy milk from farmers at a good price, and package it so that it can compete with the attractive-looking packs of milk from Europe and the US. Profits from the project go back to the farmers at the end of the year so that they can buy useful things for their community, such as water tanks.

6. Show slide 7 on the PowerPoint presentation.

Christian Aid supports fair trade projects because they help to improve the lives of thousands of farmers and their families around the world. The charity also campaigns for trade justice, asking governments to change trade rules so that all farmers get a fairer price for the products that they produce.

Reflection

Everyday we enjoy a huge variety of produce from around the world, but all too often we take the range of products on our supermarket shelves for granted. Let's try to remember the people behind the packets of rice and bars of chocolate – the farmers who work hard to grow crops, the traders who struggle to sell their produce. Let's remember that we can make powerful choices as consumers and citizens, and let's try to support fairer trade wherever we can through the products we buy and the actions we take.

Prayer

Dear God

Thank you for the abundance of food that we enjoy daily, and for the variety that makes our lives so rich. Help us to remember the farmers who grow our food, especially those who are poor. Thank you for Fairtrade and for helping us to choose wisely so that others may have a better life. We pray that trade rules will become fairer, so that people everywhere can earn a decent wage and have the chance of a brighter future.

Amen.

Action

- your class could attempt to raise £72 (the amount spent on chocolate per person per year in UK) to support the work of Christian Aid - [click here to donate](#)
- find out more about Raphael Ayapong – read his story and see his photos on www.globalgang.org
- Fairtrade Fortnight runs from 23 February to 8 March 2009. Check out www.fairtrade.org.uk for ideas on how your school can raise awareness of Fairtrade products – at school, at home and in your local community
- bring fair trade to life in your classroom with Pa Pa Paa LIVE! webcasts from a rural school in Ghana attended by Kuapa Kokoo farmers' children at www.papapaa.org/live!
- sign up as a Dubble Agent and join thousands of young fair trade supporters on a mission to get fair play for cocoa farmers in Ghana. Sign up at www.dubble.co.uk to order your free MISSION:POSSIBLE pack while stocks last!

ⁱ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2006/apr/13/foodanddrink>

ⁱⁱ From [Mission:Possible, Dubble Chocolate](#)