

Fair Trade



What is fair trade? Why should we support it?

Coffee from Kenya, textiles from India, tea from Sri Lanka, nuts from El Salvador, ceramics from Mexico and chocolate from Ghana. Many of the things we buy are grown or made in Less Economically Developed Countries, like the ones listed here. But do the people who produce these goods get a fair price for them, and what are their working conditions like?

For most workers, wages are low, there is no job security, and working conditions are often unhealthy and unsafe. When the goods they produce are traded for high prices, it is not they who benefit. So what can we do to help these people to get a fair reward for their labour? One answer is to buy goods that are produced and sold by fair trade organizations.

Does fair trade really make a difference? YES!

Akasuwa, a 43 year old cocoa farmer from Ghana explains: “Why do I sell my cocoa to fair trade organizations? Because they are honest and fair and do not try to cheat us. They give me a good price and pay me straight away. They also share what they make with us and every year the farmers earn a bonus. So now we are better off and can afford to spend a little more on the children's school fees and other basic things.”

Activities

- Make a display using a map of the world and packaging from fair trade products to illustrate where the products come from.
- Decide who gets what from the sale of products. For example, if a banana costs 10p to buy, how much will the following people get: growers, banana development company, shipping company, packaging and importing company, wholesaler, retailer? This could involve the use of role-play.
- Use displays of posters, packaging and information leaflets as the basis for a question-and-answer Fair Trade Quiz.
- Design a poster about fair trade.
- Design an 'influence tree' and lobby a local supermarket to stock fair trade products. The tree should chart all the decision makers whose support you will need within the organization.
- Write letters to local shops telling them your views on fair trade and how they can help to promote it.