

SUSTAINABLE FOOD 5: FAIRTRADE

INTRODUCTION

The food we eat has many environmental impacts. Making the way we produce and consume our food sustainable is vital in order to feed an ever-growing world population, whilst protecting our environment. As a set, these resources cover the following important themes concerning food sustainability:

1. Farming and the environment
2. Food miles
3. Food packaging and recycling
4. Food waste
5. Fairtrade

FAIRTRADE: KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Why is life difficult for many farmers and workers in LEDCs?
- What is Fairtrade?
- What are the **economic** benefits of Fairtrade?
- What are the **environmental** benefits of Fairtrade?
- What are the **social** benefits of Fairtrade?
- How can **we** support Fairtrade?

NOTE TO TEACHERS

These notes are intended to provide key information and facts to support teachers delivering the topic. They are designed to be used with the accompanying PowerPoint presentation, which has plenty of effective visuals to aid students' learning; all slides are referred to in the notes. Please feel free to modify the presentation by adding your own slides or deleting those you don't need.

You can find a host of other environmental teaching resources on our website:

ypte.org.uk/audiences/teachers

FAIRTRADE: KEY WORDS

Trade - The exchange of goods and services between one country and another.

Fairtrade - Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world.

Fairtrade Foundation - a charity based in the UK that works to empower disadvantaged producers in developing countries by encouraging Fairtrade, in particular by promoting and licensing the Fairtrade Mark.

Fairtrade Mark - a guarantee that products retailed in the UK have been produced in accordance with internationally agreed Fairtrade standards.

LEDC - an abbreviation for Less Economically Developed Country, also known as a **developing country** or **third world country**.

MEDC - More Economically Developed Country, also known as a **developed country**.

Sustainable - able to be maintained at a certain rate.

GMOs - an abbreviation for Genetically Modified Organisms. This is a laboratory process of taking genes from one species and inserting them into another in an attempt to obtain a desired trait or characteristic.

Biodiversity - the existence of many different kinds of plants and animals in an environment.

Cooperative - a farm, business, or other organisation which is owned and run jointly by its members, who share the profits or benefits.

WHY IS LIFE DIFFICULT FOR MANY FARMERS IN LEDCS?

Slides 3-9: An increasingly large percentage of the food we eat is grown in poorer, developing countries (**LEDs**). Some products are grown by small-scale farming organisations, whilst others are grown on large plantations. On both the small farms and the large plantations, many farmers and labourers work under extremely difficult conditions for very little pay and cannot provide their families with a decent standard of living. Life has many challenges for them:

- Low wages
- Poor working conditions
- Often cannot afford to educate their children
- Many children have to work to help their families earn a living
- Women are often discriminated against and do not have the same rights and opportunities as men
- Lack of job security
- Handling unhealthy and environmentally hazardous chemicals without adequate protection
- Changing weather patterns and natural disasters e.g. drought, hurricanes, disease mean that production is unpredictable and unsustainable.

WHAT IS FAIRTRADE?

Slide 10: Some organisations have adopted **Fairtrade** principles to help farmers and workers make a better living. It ensures that they receive a guaranteed and fair price for the food they produce, regardless of its price on the world market.

Slides 11-12: Products with the Fairtrade Mark **must** meet international fairtrade standards. The Fairtrade Mark means that the fairtrade ingredients in the product have been produced by small-scale farming organisations or plantations that meet the Fairtrade standards.

Slide 13: The Fairtrade standards cover economic, environmental and social improvements.

WHAT ARE THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF FAIRTRADE?

Slide 14: As farmers are guaranteed a fair minimum price for their products, they know the price they will be getting and can plan ahead. The minimum price is set to cover the cost of **sustainable** production for that product in that region. If the

market price for the product is higher than the minimum price, farmers and workers should receive the market price. This protects them from fluctuations in the market prices of the products they grow for a living, meaning that they have an assured and stable income.

Slide 15: Fairtrade is also empowering communities to organise into **cooperatives**. Working as a cooperative brings many advantages for farmers - they can share resources, improve their negotiating position and divide the profits between them. Together they can work to meet Fairtrade standards and ensure their produce achieves Fairtrade certification.

WHAT ARE THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF FAIRTRADE?

Slide 16: To be Fairtrade certified, organisations must conform to rigorous environmental standards. These standards promote training for farmers which encourages them to look after the environment where they live and carry out **sustainable** farming.

Slide 17: Training can include advice on switching to environmentally friendly and sustainable farming methods e.g. developing nutrient rich soils that support healthy plants; encouraging wildlife to help control pests and disease; and planting trees to prevent soil erosion.

As farmers are being paid fairly, this means they don't have to earn money in other ways which might damage the environment e.g. by chopping down trees or killing rare animals.

WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL BENEFITS OF FAIRTRADE?

The Fairtrade standards aim to protect workers' basic rights including a safe working environment, prohibiting discrimination and forced or illegal child labour.

Slide 18: Fairtrade means zero tolerance of child labour. Children under 18 years of age are banned from work that endangers them or their schooling. Children under the age of 15 cannot be employed by Fairtrade organisations.

Slide 19: One of Fairtrade's goals is to empower women by promoting their development, rewarding their work fairly and encouraging them as leaders.

Slides 20-23: There is an additional sum of money paid on top of the Fairtrade minimum price that farmers and workers receive; it is called the **Fairtrade Premium**. This money goes into a communal fund and farmers and workers themselves decide how to invest it. It can be invested in social, environmental and economic development projects to improve their communities and business e.g. schools, better housing, transport, health care facilities, sanitation, improved environment, better business equipment.

Slides 24-26: Fairtrade has really improved the quality of life in rural communities. There are many examples from LEDCs all over the world that show how it has turned around the lives of workers, their families and communities. It has given many farmers and workers a real sense of control over their future. It also boosts self-esteem and farmers feel pride that they are supporting their community.

HOW CAN WE SUPPORT FAIRTRADE?

Buy Fairtrade Products

Slides 27-28: Fairtrade products are becoming increasingly widespread and include many products such as tea, coffee, sugar, bananas and chocolate. They can sometimes cost more in supermarkets in MEDCs, but many consumers consider this a fair price to pay for the benefits they bring to the farmers.

Take Part in Fairtrade Fortnight

Slide 29: This is an opportunity to spread the message of Fairtrade. During Fairtrade Fortnight campaigners, businesses, schools and places of worship show their support for the farmers and workers who grow our food in LEDCs. The aim of the fortnight is to raise awareness and help shoppers make choices that will change the lives of farmers and workers around the world.

Become a Fairtrade School

Slide 30: There are now thousands of Fairtrade Schools across the UK. Becoming a Fairtrade School means joining a worldwide movement and learning that together we have the power to make a difference to the lives of farmers and workers around the world. There are 3 levels of Fairtrade Schools and you can find out all about them here:

<http://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/fairtrade-schools-awards/>

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR FAIRTRADE

Fairtrade Assembly

Plan and deliver an assembly that explains what Fairtrade is and how students can be part of it.

The Trading Game

This is a fantastic game aimed at students aged 14 and over, but can be adapted very successfully for younger students. It works well when played as a whole class activity and needs about an hour to play. As a Geography teacher, it is always one of my favourite lessons as students become completely immersed in it and you really see them learning about how trade works. The game leads to excellent discussion about how unfair trade can be and what can be done to make it fairer. Make sure you follow the instructions carefully, have everything you need ready and let the students take the initiative. There will be a few minutes of confusion at the start when groups realise they do not have the same equipment as other groups and they will usually come and tell you; make no suggestions and just repeat the rules or say nothing. It won't be long before they realise they need to trade with each other and the deal making will begin!

Full instructions on how to play the game and guidelines for follow-up discussion can be found here:

learn.christianaid.org.uk/YouthLeaderResources/trading_game.aspx

Class Debate

Fairtrade products can cost more to buy in the shops but how important is it that we try to buy them?

Role Play

It is helpful for students to put themselves in the shoes of the different groups of people involved in trade e.g. the growers, the big companies, the supermarkets and the shoppers. Are they for or against Fairtrade and why?

There are many role play activities available to download online. The **Chocolate Game** can be found here:

http://learn.christianaid.org.uk/Images/chocolate-trade-game-role-play-templates_tcm16-38180.pdf

The **Banana Split Game** is another role play activity that can be adapted for different ages and will provoke class discussion about fairness:

http://cafod.org.uk/content/download/843/6730/version/7/Secondary_Fairtrade%20Banana%20split%20game_2017.pdf

Research a Fairtrade Case Study

Ask students to carry out research on how Fairtrade has benefited a particular community in an LEDC. Areas to cover include:

- Where the community is (located on a world map perhaps)
- The problems faced by farmers and workers before Fairtrade
- How Fairtrade has helped farmers and workers earn a better living
- How Fairtrade has benefited the wider community
- How Fairtrade has helped protect the local environment

Businesses and Fairtrade

Can the students find out what supermarkets and local businesses in their area are doing to support Fairtrade? Do they organise any events during Fairtrade Fortnight and how many Fairtrade products do they sell?

ADDITIONAL FAIRTRADE RESOURCES: WEBSITES

<http://schools.fairtrade.org.uk/>

A huge range of teaching resources including short films, interactive maps, assembly plans, Fairtrade Fortnight quizzes and support with gaining the Fairtrade Schools Award.

www.fairtrade.org.uk

Lots of information and facts about Fairtrade, together with suggestions of how everyone can get involved.

Cafod.co.uk

A range of factsheets, games and activities for learning about Fairtrade.

www.actionaid.org.uk

A range of Fairtrade teaching resources.

www.traidcraftschools.co.uk

Teaching and learning resources aimed at Key Stage 1 through to Key Stage 4. Includes activities, games and assemblies.

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk>

Resources include presentations, lesson plans and classroom activities for teaching Fairtrade.

We value your feedback!

Let us know what you thought of this lesson plan by completing this Google Form <https://forms.gle/cGAwi9AWXfSZgrYa9>. **Thank you!**