

Church Action Guide 2008

In a society where consumers and producers are often worlds apart, this year's Church Action Guide aims to help us bring them closer together. By making the decision to **Change today Choose Fairtrade** we strengthen the bond between ourselves and the farmers and workers who produce our goods. The guide contains prayers and readings to inspire congregations and is packed with ideas for actions that you can take to spread the benefits of using Fairtrade products.

Buying products with the FAIRTRADE Mark means:

- farmers get an agreed and stable price for their products
- extra income for farmers and estate workers to improve their lives
- a greater respect for the environment
- a stronger position for small scale farmers in world markets
- a closer link between consumers and producers.

A message from Harriet Lamb



"It's hard to see how a Fairtrade coffee morning can contribute to a movement changing global economics, but multiply this by 4,000 places of worship working towards the same goal, and it makes sense."

"So congratulations on all your achievements. Victor Perezgrovas, manager of a Mexican coffee cooperative, said that when explaining Fairtrade to the farmers

he used an Ancient Indian saying: 'Many little raindrops falling in the mountains make the mighty rivers swell.' So all your activities will swell the tide for Fairtrade in 2008 and beyond."

Harriet Lamb, Executive Director of the Fairtrade Foundation

CHANGE TODAY CHOOSE FAIRTRADE

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Father God, as we reflect on our responsibilities as Christians, help us to understand the impact our choices and actions have on others. Amen.

Traidcraft

www.fairtrade.org.uk



Guarantees
a **better deal**
for Third World
Producers

Cotton producers in Mali



In Mali the Fairtrade system is helping to improve livelihoods for small-scale cotton producers. Fairtrade guarantees producers a minimum price which covers the cost of sustainable production. The need for Fairtrade has never been greater, as economic pressure on the 200,000 Malian cotton producers is increasing. Decreasing annual rains as well as an unstable and falling world market price has left farmers struggling to protect their families.



The Fairtrade price that producers received for their cotton in 2006/7 was almost 40% higher than the Malian national base price. The extra income can create new opportunities and provides greater stability for farmers and their families, also enabling them to plan for their future.

Cotton farmers' co-operatives receive an additional Fairtrade premium to invest in community development projects of their choice. Village co-operatives in Kita, South West Mali, prioritised building wells to provide access to clean water. The other priority was building a dry and secure warehouse for grain so farmers no longer have to be vulnerable to market prices and can wait to sell their crops at more favourable prices.

In Dougourakoroni village co-operative, the Fairtrade premium has provided students with purpose-built classrooms so that they no longer have to study outdoors under a tree. The co-operative also provides access to loans and training for producers on agricultural techniques and environmental standards.

Fairtrade has also developed a more democratic nature within the union. Female farmers were previously overlooked, but now women such as Bintou Dambile sit on the board of a farmer's co-operative. She explains how Fairtrade standards have allowed women to become an integral part of the decision making process: "Before, the women were not invited, not asked, not consulted. We are pleased now we are included at the same level as the men. Women are valued now."

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Bintou Dambile

Are you a Fairtrade Church?

So far 4,000 churches have met the goals to become a Fairtrade Church. On becoming a Fairtrade Church you will receive a certificate which raises awareness of Fairtrade and encourages others to join the growing movement. The three goals that a church must fulfil are:

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

Fairtrade denominational areas

Denominational areas are increasingly grouping together to give their campaigns a louder voice. Take your campaign to the next level by getting involved in the Fairtrade denominational area campaign. For your area, whether it be a diocese, district, circuit, synod, presbytery, association, or other to become Fairtrade, the following criteria all 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 etc. 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 monitoring that goals continue to be met and developed over time.

Your church can also join the wider Fairtrade Towns campaign, which aims to increase awareness and accessibility of Fairtrade across the whole of a local community. To get involved, visit www.fairtrade.org.uk/fairtrade_towns. If there isn't already a campaign in your area, perhaps your local churches can help to start one.



Fairtrade and Trade Justice



Bananas are the UK's favourite fruit; each week we munch through 140 million of them. But producers are getting a raw deal as a result of unfair global trade rules and changes to EU regulations. By working with Fairtrade, many small-scale farmers have found the market and the tools not only for survival, but for development.



Historically, the UK has had a strong trade relationship with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. Windward Islands bananas are one of the products that have benefited from a special trade relationship, allowing small-scale farmers to compete with the bananas grown on vast, fertile and flat plantations of Latin America. However since 2001, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has forced the EU to agree to a series of reforms to the traditional trading agreements that protected family farms in the Caribbean as they were deemed a barrier to free trade.

Meanwhile, British supermarkets fuelled the crisis for banana growers by waging high street 'price wars'. Prices for bananas dropped as low as 58p/kg in 2007. The combination of commercial price cutting and the loss of special trading arrangements proved devastating for growers in the Caribbean. Many farmers gave up on the land altogether, fuelling poverty and youth unemployment. For the remaining farmers, Fairtrade offered a lifeline.

Fairtrade banana growers have not just survived the crisis, but have invested in supporting new schools and hospitals, building new roads and providing youth sporting facilities. Dr Kenny D Anthony, Prime Minister of Saint Lucia, commented: "Not only does Fairtrade guarantee a fair price to our farmers, but the social premium that is generated through the Fairtrade sales provides invaluable support for projects in rural communities throughout the Windward Islands."

New trading arrangements between Europe and ACP countries, called Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), pose new challenges. Banana farmers and others in the Windward Islands fear that their requirement to remove tariffs on goods imported from the EU will seriously reduce the income that the government relies on to invest in social development projects. Visit www.tjm.org.uk to get involved in campaigning to put the needs and interests of developing countries at the heart of any new European trade deals.

Take Action for Fairtrade

The power of an individual...

- Order our new Fairtrade posters and display them on a notice board outside your church or in your community hall.
- *livesimply* is a challenge being promoted by many Catholic organisations including CAFOD to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with people who are poor. Visit www.cafod.org.uk/livesimply to join others making *livesimply* promises relating to Fairtrade.
- Get your church to serve Fairtrade products by opening a Traidcraft catering account www.traidcraft.co.uk/caterer.

Getting the community involved...

Communicate! Think about all the different groups who use your church hall. How can you spread the Fairtrade message into the wider community? You could give a presentation to a mother and toddler group or youth club who use your church hall. Or run a taste testing session for them...

See the flip side! Get your youth group involved in Fairtrade by asking them to visit www.seetheflipside.co.uk.

Dramatise! Incorporate the theme of Fairtrade in a church service by asking volunteers to act out a play. Visit www.fairplaydrama.co.uk or the Wales Fair trade campaign site for script ideas www.fairtradewales.com

Buy Fairtrade! If you are putting together a hamper or goody bag for Easter, Christmas, or other special occasions, include as many Fairtrade products as possible – from Fairtrade roses and wine, to Fairtrade chocolate and nuts. Look for products in independent and fair trade shops (go to www.bafts.org.uk to find your nearest one) as well as online at www.traidcraftshop.co.uk.

Resources...

- Read our new churches newsletter available on our website from February 2008. We welcome contributions so send in stories and prayers to faithgroups@fairtrade.org.uk.
- Visit our webpage to download a PowerPoint presentation which you can present to your church group. It's great for attracting new supporters, or reviving a congregation's interest in Fairtrade.
- Join the **Fairtrade Faiths e-mail group** and share ideas and information. Visit http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fairtrade_faiths/ to sign up!



Reflections

Father God, as we reflect on our responsibilities as Christians, help us to understand the impact our choices and actions have on others.

Help us to be true disciples of Jesus, living the gospel and bringing social change in an unjust world. Give us courage to challenge unfair trade rules and pray for those who have the power to make far-reaching decisions affecting the world's poor.

As we eat and drink, help us to pray for those who have laboured to bring the food to our table. Fill our hearts with compassion for our brothers and sisters around the world, so that we acknowledge our common humanity and dignity.

Give us insight and understanding so that we can make good choices about how we spend our money.

You have called us to care for the poor and needy and we want to take that responsibility seriously. Help us to be generous with our time and money so that we can honour you through serving others.

Amen.

Traidcraft

Our choice could tip the balance in favour of the poor and lighten the load of those weighed down

We could level inequality
And distribute warehouse mountains
Share out the wealth that was never ours to hoard

Turn the tables
On those who play the markets
We could stockpile generosity
And speculate in hope
Sell up our shares in selfishness
And settle for the dividends of solidarity.

Sophie Stanes, CAFOD

It starts with a change
So outwardly insignificant
That no one would notice
Except the person
Behind you in the aisle.

Just a moment of grace
When instead of seeing
Rows of labels

On a supermarket shelf
You imagine the people
Behind them,
Tilling the earth,
Sowing the seed,
Gathering the crops.

And you pause,
Wondering,
What their names are,
Where they live
What difference it will make

If your hand picks up
This box instead of that,

Wondering: how do I
Love these neighbours?
Can I help change
This child's long journey for water,
Her mother's lack of healthcare,
The prospect her father faces
of another year when he cannot
meet his family's needs

Just a moment.
And the person behind you,
Her impatient baby
Squirming in the trolley,
May never realise
That in that brief hesitation
A life hung in the balance.

Christian Concern for One World

Prayers

God, help me to cherish the last time I treated someone justly, made a fair decision, considered someone my equal, so that I may bring justice, fairness and equality to a waiting world through products I buy.

Amen

Lena Edmondson, Guyana, Mothers' Union

Lord, you blessed us with the gift of life, the beauty of creation, the freedom of speech.

Yet not everybody in the world has a voice.

People are exploited, abused, trafficked, and cannot speak up for their rights or don't know how to.

Lord, open our eyes so that we do not sit indifferently in front of issues of injustice.

Lord, use our voices to give voice to those who cannot be heard.

Lord, bless our campaigning and give us courage when we feel we are working in vain.

Let our skills and voices become a strength for those whose skills and voices are trapped by poverty or exploitation.

Amen

Laura Bigoni, CAFOD Volunteer

Let us bring the needs of producers and families around the world to our loving heavenly father:

For children unable to receive a proper education

Lord, hear our prayer

For farmers struggling because of unfair trade rules

Lord, hear our prayer

For all who do not have proper health care

Lord, hear our prayer

For fledgling industries threatened by EU imports

Lord, hear our prayer

For all who have power to change world trade for the better

Lord, hear our prayer

For the part that we play in making trade fair

Lord, hear our prayer

For Traidcraft producers around the world

Lord, hear our prayer

Lord, thank you that you hear all our prayers, in the name of Jesus.

Amen

Traidcraft



CHANGE TODAY CHOOSE FAIRTRADE

Coffee, tea, herbal teas, chocolate, cocoa, sugar, bananas, grapes, pineapples, mangoes, avocados, apples, citrus & other fresh fruits, dried fruit, juices, smoothies, biscuits, cakes & snacks, honey, jam & preserves, chutneys & sauces, rice, quinoa, herbs & spices, seeds, nuts & nut oil, wines, spirits, ale, confectionery, muesli, cereal bars, yoghurt, ice cream, flowers, sports balls, sugar body scrub, cotton products including clothing, homeware, cloth toys and cotton wool



www.fairtrade.org.uk



Supported by



Fairtrade Foundation:
Room 204

16 Baldwin's Gardens
London EC1N 7RJ

Tel: 020 7405 5942

Fax: 020 7405 5943

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