



# growing BANANAS



a simulation  
about fair trade  
for KS 2-3

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# introduction

This simulation can be used with pupils in KS2/3. It raises awareness of problems faced by many of the people behind the food products we buy and introduces Fair Trade as an alternative to conventional 'free' trade.

As an introduction to banana growing in the Caribbean, teachers/facilitators could use Oxfam's *Go Bananas* pack and/or the *Going Bananas* assembly in the *All you need for a Fair Trade Assembly* pack.

A colour version of this pack can be downloaded from [www.risc.org.uk/teaching\\_resources.html](http://www.risc.org.uk/teaching_resources.html).

# background to fair trade

Fair Trade is an alternative approach to conventional world trade. It is a partnership between producers and consumers, based on reciprocal benefit and mutual respect. Fair Trade ensures producers in the South (countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and S America) receive a fair price for the work they do, and gain better access to markets in the North. It aims to tackle the long-term problems of the South through sustainable development for excluded and disadvantaged producers. For Southern producers, Fair Trade means:

- being paid a fair price for the work they do
- commitment to long term relationships between producers and buyers, providing stability and security
- producer organisations are supported in their social development projects, such as providing health care and education facilities
- sustainable environmental projects and practices are supported, such as tree planting and farming without using harmful chemicals
- respect for people's rights, for example promoting gender equality to change the traditional low position of women in society
- being able to have more control over their own lives.

# credits

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designed by **Dave Richards**

thanks to **AgroFair, Banana Link, Fairtrade Foundation**

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# growing bananas! 60-90 mins

## aims

- ☞ To enable pupils to empathise with Caribbean banana growers in the Windward Islands.
- ☞ To introduce the concept of Fair Trade and the benefits it can bring.
- ☞ To develop group work skills – cooperation/communication/decision making.
- ☞ To develop numeracy skills through the use of a balance sheet.

## resources

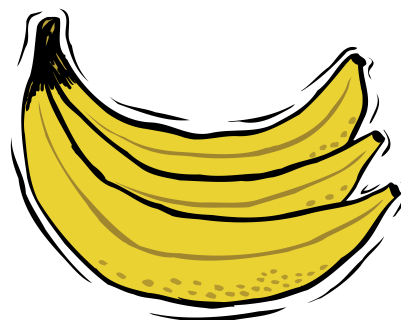
- ☞ scrap paper, crayons, scissors, enough for each group
- ☞ pupil instruction sheet, one per group
- ☞ balance sheet, one per group.
- ☞ 'Chance cards', photocopied onto two colours, as indicated
- ☞ the Fairtrade Mark

## activity

- ▷ Organise students into groups of 4 or 5.
- ▷ Each group of students represents a family growing bananas in the Windward Islands, in the Caribbean.
- ▷ The simulation should run for at least 3 rounds, each round representing a year of banana growing.
- ▷ At the start, each group should allocate a member to complete their 'balance sheet'. Stress that this needs to be completed for each round/year.

### during each round

- ▷ The groups use scrap paper to 'grow' bananas, by drawing, colouring and cutting them out. They should 'grow' bananas of a realistic size and colour (most groups begin by colouring their bananas yellow – refuse to accept these – they will be over ripe by the time they reach British supermarkets). Stress the importance of quality – the buyer will accept only perfect bananas!
- ▷ Offer each group an event card from a selection of upturned chance cards. They should respond to the information on their card by entering it on their balance sheet. In each round you may want to ask each group to tell the class what is on their card. If the event card a group chooses is for 'everyone' it should be announced to the whole class and they should respond to it on their balance sheet.
- ▷ Once each group has an event card, announce that it is time to trade. Each group should deliver their completed bananas to the teacher/facilitator, along with their chance card. Collect/reject the bananas as appropriate and collect the chance card. Tell each group how much they have earned (roughly \$100 works best). They must then add or subtract according to the instructions on their chance card. Finally each group decides how to allocate their money.



# Give Fair Trade Bananas A Fair Chance.



## in round 1

- ▷ Offer the groups the **A** cards so they all experience how difficult life can be for producers involved in conventional trade.

## in round 2

- ▷ Offer the groups the **B** cards. These include some **Good News!** Fairtrade cards so that 2 or 3 groups will have the opportunity to sell some, or all, of their bananas through Fairtrade.

## in round 3

- ▷ Offer the groups the **C** cards. Make sure each group picks out the same colour card as in round 2 (so that the Fairtrade producers get the Fairtrade benefits).
- ▷ Further rounds can be played if appropriate, using extra **B & C** cards, to bring other groups into the Fairtrade system.
- ▷ The outcomes of the game should be that some students experience the benefits of becoming Fairtrade producers, while others remain 'locked' into the injustices of conventional world trade. The events should not only develop students' understanding of Fairtrade and how it works, but also show that it isn't a 'quick cure' for the problems faced by producers.

## debriefing

- ▷ Ask each group to report back on what had happened to them including:
  - ☹ Their financial situation as the simulation progressed, and how they felt about it?
  - ☹ If they were able to join Fairtrade, what benefits it had brought?
  - ☹ How well they worked together?
  - ☹ What was realistic/unrealistic about the simulation?
- ▷ Ask the class what they have learnt about the impact of Fair Trade, eg it brings many benefits, but producers still have problems to face.
- ▷ Summarize what has been understood about the importance of Fairtrade and explain the use of the Fairtrade Mark. Wider discussion about the people who produce the wide range of products we buy can follow from this – and our impact as consumers.

# growing bananas! pupil sheet

- ☞ You are banana growers in the Caribbean Windward Islands.
- ☞ Every year you hope to earn about \$100, or more, for the bananas you grow.
- ☞ You then have to decide how to spend the money – you may have to make some difficult decisions about what you can afford.
- ☞ Keep a record of the decisions you make on your balance sheet.

## what it costs to live

### These costs are for your whole family, for one year

Each year you must pay for these items – it's hard to survive without them. If you can't afford them, you'll have to borrow money.

☞ basic housing	\$10
☞ basic food	\$50
☞ basic clothes	\$30

### Desirable items

Each year try to buy all these things for your family if you can.

☞ school	\$50
☞ school books	\$10
☞ shoes	\$10
☞ more food or clothes	\$25
☞ home improvements	\$15



Fairtrade bananas on sale at the Coop photo: CWS/Banana Link

# A cards

copy onto first colour

Your roof is leaking badly, and you have to fix it.

One person can't grow bananas this round

Your children need to start secondary school.

It will cost you \$50 each year.

Your mother is ill. You must take her to the hospital (a two day walk, each way).

One person can't grow bananas this round.

**EVERYONE!!**

World banana prices have fallen, with a glut of bananas from plantations in South America.

You'll receive 20% less for your crop this year.

Heavy rains have washed away the road. Half your bananas will over ripen before you can get them to the shippers.

Throw half this years crop away.

You've produced a bumper crop this year –

you make an extra \$20!

Your water supply has become polluted. Everyone is ill as a result.

Only produce one banana each this year. (This represents 1 box of bananas)

Your son is ill.

You need to spend \$10 on medicine this year.

**EVERYONE! CARNIVAL!**

Spend \$2 on a party.

Pests have attacked your banana trees.

You'll only receive half price for your lower quality crop.



# B cards copy onto first colour

Your children need some school books.  
It will cost you \$10 this year.

**EVERYONE!**  
The government has introduced a new tax.  
You'll need to pay \$15 each year to cover it.

**EVERYONE! WORLD BANANA PRICES HAVE RISEN!**  
Everyone's income goes up by \$10 this year.

Pests have attacked your newly formed bananas.  
You must throw them away and start again.

Your water supply has been contaminated.  
Two members of your group are unable to work this year.

The company you sell your bananas to will only pay you 75% of your normal price, because their shipping costs have risen unexpectedly.



Ebenezer Agbenyo and Charles Eti, Volta River Estates Ltd (VREL) banana plantation, Ghana, where Charles' mum works – VREL supports local schools with donations of books etc, paid for with the Fairtrade premium *photo: Pete Stevens/AgroFair*

## B cards copy onto second colour

### **GOOD NEWS!**

**A Fairtrade company have offered to buy your entire crop – as long as you stop using pesticides.**

**This year you'll receive 50% more for your crop.**

### **GOOD NEWS!**

**A Fairtrade company have offered to buy your entire crop – as long as you stop using pesticides.**

**This year you'll receive 50% more for your crop.**

### **GOOD NEWS!**

**A Fairtrade company have offered to buy 25% of your crop, as long as you are following their sustainability guidelines.**

**You'll receive 10% more for your crop.**

### **GOOD NEWS!**

**A Fairtrade company will buy half your crop, as long as you meet their requirements, eg you won't use pesticides.**

**You'll receive 25% more for your crop.**

## C cards copy onto second colour

**UK consumers are buying more of your Fairtrade bananas – you can sell another 25% of your crop through Fairtrade and receive an extra 10% more money.**

**With your Fairtrade premium, you can now improve your home.  
Spend \$10 on new concrete floors this year.**

**The Fairtrade company have helped you to buy new equipment – you can produce more and earn more – an extra \$10 each year.**

**Thanks to Fairtrade, you've been able to improve your water supply.  
This saves you time, so you can concentrate on looking after your crop.  
Earn an extra 20% for your high quality crop.**





# C cards

copy onto first colour

<p><b>EVERYONE! HURRICANE!</b> All your partly grown bananas are destroyed.</p>	<p><b>EVERYONE! BANANA PRICES HAVE FALLEN!</b> Everyone's income falls by \$30 this year (unless you are selling to a Fairtrade company).</p>
<p>Your daughter is ill. You need to spend \$15 on medical care this year.</p>	<p>Your children need shoes. \$10 to buy shoes for them all.</p>
<p>Rats have attacked your food store and eaten the food you were saving. Pay \$10 to replace it.</p>	<p>You've produced a bumper crop – you make an extra \$15 this year.</p>

## spare cards

<p>Pests have attacked your banana trees. You'll only receive half price for your lower quality crop.</p>	<p>With Fairtrade, you can no longer use weedkillers. One person must stop growing bananas to weed between the trees.</p>
<p>With Fairtrade, you no longer use pesticides and artificial fertilisers. Lose two bananas while you get used to working without chemicals.</p>	<p>The extra money you get from selling your bananas to the Fairtrade company means you can afford electricity for your home. Cost: \$10 each year.</p>

# growing bananas! balance sheet

	costs + information from cards	\$ made from selling bananas	balance
Year 1	Basic housing, food and clothes =		
Year 2	Basic housing, food and clothes =		
Year 3	Basic housing, food and clothes =		



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# key concepts

- ☞ the rules of international trade favour the rich countries of the 'North' over the poorer countries of the 'South'
- ☞ the supply chain, from producer to consumer is often a complex one, with products changing hands many times before they reach our shops
- ☞ working conditions for producers in the South are often poor, with low wages, a lack of safety standards, and no job security
- ☞ environmental damage is often a consequence of production
- ☞ Fair Trade offers an alternative to traditional trade – it works to overcome the injustices of 'free' trade, and promotes more sustainable development.
- ☞ as consumers, our choices can have an impact on individuals in other parts of the world.

## the banana song

Fair trade bananas  
Are the best of the bunch  
You can have them for your breakfast  
You can have them for lunch  
You can have them for your dinner  
You can have them for tea  
So fair trade bananas  
For you and for me!

*chorus:*

It's a jolly little packet  
In its green and yellow jacket  
But behind this famous jacket  
There is a pretty dirty story  
For you may be unaware  
That the system is unfair  
For chiquita dole del monte  
It's all money power and glory!

People buy bananas  
Which are yellow and sweet  
They are beautiful to see  
And most delicious to eat  
But the workers are exploited  
And the wages very low  
The plantations are polluted  
And they've no where else to go!

Fair trade bananas  
Come fresh from the tree  
To be shipped across the ocean  
For the family to eat  
But everyone agrees  
That the fruit of that tree  
It's a bargain in the market  
You can get it almost free!

Banana Link 1997



tame the

# WILD BUNCH



**Stick  
up for  
banana  
workers**



Illustration: World Development Movement campaign poster [www.wdm.org.uk](http://www.wdm.org.uk)

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# banana production

Fairtrade bananas are imported by AgroFair from Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru and Ghana. This set of photos was taken from Volta River Estates Ltd (VREL), Ghana, by Pete Stevens and is reproduced by kind permission of AgroFair ([www.agrofair.com](http://www.agrofair.com)).



Elizabeth pruning a stem of bananas *photo: Pete Stevens/AgroFair*



Measuring the fruit *photo: Pete Stevens/AgroFair*



Carrying the stem to the cableway – a cushion prevents bruising to the fruit *photo: Pete Stevens/ AgroFair*



Cableway used to transport bananas to the processing plant; blue plastic bags are impregnated with powerful insecticide to protect the growing fruit *photo: Pete Stevens/AgroFair*





Trimming the stem into clusters of bananas *photo: Pete Stevens/AgroFair*



Spraying bananas against crown rot and labelling *photo: Pete Stevens/AgroFair*



Packing bunches ready for shipping *photo: Pete Stevens/AgroFair*



Loading skids into containers ready for transport to the port *photo: Pete Stevens/AgroFair*

# banana plantation

Export banana plants grow 5-10 metres high, in long rows on large irrigated plantations. Most bananas consumed in Europe & North America are grown in the lowlands of Central & South America.



- 1 herbicides used to kill weeds; chemicals are toxic & wash into the ground
- 2 nematocides used to kill nematode worms that attack the roots; highly toxic & leave area dangerous for 1-2 days after application
- 3 banana plants tied down with string — easily knocked over in storms (it is an herb with densely packed leaves forming a trunk)
- 4 aerial spraying is used on most commercial banana plantations to combat black *Sigatoka*, an airborne fungus that can destroy a crop
- 5 water used to wash pesticides off the bananas usually comes from the irrigation canals & returned to the water supply
- 6 blue plastic bags impregnated with the powerful chemical *chlorpyrifos* to protect the growing fruit from insects
- 7 average banana plant produces fruit every nine months; a stem usually has 150 bananas; it is cut green from the plant & dropped carefully on the back of a worker carrying a cushion to stop bruising of the fruit; the stem is placed on a large overhead cableway that transports it to the packing plant, where it is cut into smaller bunches
- 8 the bunches are put in a trough — selectors choose the bananas & cut into shipping size (5-6 fingers); pesticides washed off in troughs
- 9 bunches are placed on a conveyor belt & new pesticides applied to prevent 'crown rot', a fungus that attacks the extremities
- 10 banana bunches are packed into boxes & put on large skids for shipment; trucks loaded with the skids; they are shipped around the world in large refrigerated containers; bananas ripened (turned yellow) in special sheds with a gas mixture of ethylene & nitrogen before being sold 2 to 3 weeks later at shops & markets

illustration: Paul Girling/Greystoke Graphics  
used with kind permission of Banana Link

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# resources

## **Go Bananas KS 1/2**

Oxfam 1995 £14

*Curriculum links:* Citizenship, Geography, Literacy/Numeracy

Photo pack with information and activity booklet. 18 colour photos illustrate journey of bananas, from tree to table. The activities are for use with mixed ability classes, with children working in small groups or independently. Skills developed involve questioning, sequencing, interpreting, research, presenting information and negotiating. Concepts developed include the links between our own lives and those of others, world trade and globalisation. UK Fair Trade bananas can be introduced to extend the activities.

## **Bananas & (Cocoa) Beans KS2**

RISC 2004 £3.50

*Curriculum links:* PHSE/PSE/PSD, Citizenship, Literacy, Geography

The pack investigates our links with people across the globe through trade in food and drink products. It is divided into four parts, each of which can stand alone, be used in sequence, or be used to build a new dimension into existing schemes of work. It starts by raising awareness of our global links, and then goes on to look at the negative impact these links can have. Fair trade is introduced as a positive alternative, and ways in which we can all take action for positive change follow on from this. Designed for minimum teacher preparation and maximum pupil participation.

## **All You Need For A Fair Trade Assembly KS 2/3**

RISC 2002 £1

*Curriculum links:* PHSE/PSE/PSD, Citizenship, Literacy, Geography

Three adaptable 15 minute assemblies, focusing on different Fair Trade products (chocolate, bananas, clothes/fashion). Each assembly explains the problems faced by producers and the choices we have as consumers – with plenty of opportunities for student participation.

## **Banana Links Poster**

Banana Link 2003 £2

*Curriculum links:* PHSE/PSE/PSD, Citizenship, Literacy, Geography

A3 colour poster clearly shows the links between consumers and producers – what you buy and how it is produced and what this means for you and the banana worker. It uses simple and effective illustrations and facts, and gives ideas on how to take action.

## **Bananas Unpeeled**

Banana Link 2000 £10

*Curriculum links:* Geography, Business Studies, Art

26 minute video introduced by Mark Thomas, investigating the social and environmental conditions facing banana plantation workers and farmers in Latin America and the Caribbean. It examines Fairtrade as an alternative. Includes action ideas and teaching notes.

## **Best of the Bunch! Fairtrade Bananas From Producer to Consumer KS3+ Banana Link 2001 £2**

20 page A4 colour booklet with information about Fairtrade bananas. Contents include the history of fair trade, the situation in the Windward Islands, how Fairtrade works, what the benefits are for producers, and the future challenges for fair trade bananas.

## **The Fairtrade Banana Song**

Banana Link £5

For *Chiquita Dole Del Monte, its all money, power and glory!* CD and song sheet of the fair trade song, produced especially for Banana Link.

## **Fair Trade in Action KS 3/4**

Fairtrade Foundation 2002 £15

*Curriculum links:* Citizenship, PHSE, Geography

An interactive resource which introduces Fair trade as an alternative to conventional trade. It encourages students to participate as active global citizens, while raising awareness of world trade issues. The pack can be used across the curriculum, and includes:

- a video, *Forum on Fair Trade*, with differentiated worksheets
- producer case studies and activity sheets ready for photocopying
- five copies of a board game, including role cards, student instruction and record sheets
- A Teachers' Guide including background information, curriculum links, how to use the pack, action ideas, further resources and useful contacts.

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# websites

- AgroFair** [www.agrofair.com/](http://www.agrofair.com/)  
Importer and distributor of Fairtrade and organic tropical fresh fruit. Co-owned by its producers.
- Banana Link** [www.bananalink.org.uk/](http://www.bananalink.org.uk/)  
Campaigns for small producers in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. Excellent weblinks and teaching resources including exhibitions.
- British Association for Fair Trade Shops (BAFTS)** [www.bafts.org.uk/](http://www.bafts.org.uk/)  
Network of independent Fair Trade and World Shops across the UK. It seeks to raise the profile of Fair Trade.
- Co-operative Group** [www.cooponline.coop/about\\_campaigns.html](http://www.cooponline.coop/about_campaigns.html)  
Supermarket chain which now uses fair trade coffee in all its own-brand products.
- Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI)** [www.eti.org.uk/](http://www.eti.org.uk/)  
Coalition of trades unions, business and NGOs working together to identify and promote good practice in the implementation of codes of labour practice.
- Fairtrade Foundation** [www.fairtrade.org.uk/](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/)  
Promotes Fair Trade and awards and monitors the Fairtrade Mark.
- Global Eye** [www.globaleye.org.uk](http://www.globaleye.org.uk)  
Online interactive magazine on development issues for young people.
- Oxfam** [www.maketradeair.org](http://www.maketradeair.org)  
Oxfam's campaign to change the rules governing the world trade system.
- Traidcraft** [www.traidcraft.co.uk/](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/)  
Distribute Fair Trade food and crafts
- Waitrose** [www.waitrose.com/food\\_drink/foodexpertise/fairtrade/fairtradeatwaitrose.asp/](http://www.waitrose.com/food_drink/foodexpertise/fairtrade/fairtradeatwaitrose.asp/)  
Supermarket chain with a well established commitment to Fair Trade, including bananas.
- World Development Movement (WDM)** [www.oneworld.org/wdm/](http://www.oneworld.org/wdm/)  
Development agency which campaigns for political changes which directly benefit the poor, including people before profits campaign.



Hoezita? campaign to subvert the Chiquita brand because of its poor employment record in Central America



**risc** Reading International Solidarity Centre

### what does RISC do?

Our activities include:

- developing an urban roof garden for local & global education
- organising a programme of events & exhibitions on global issues & speakers from the 'South' (poor countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America)
- providing training for teachers & youth workers on development education resources
- producing resources such as teaching packs, AV aids & exhibitions for use by schools, &/or youth & community groups
- selling books & development education resources; fiction & non-fiction for children & adults on global issues
- promoting campaigns on local & international issues
- providing a loan service of artefacts & education packs for schools & youth workers
- selling fair trade, organic & environmentally friendly products, and world music CDs
- giving work experience opportunities for volunteers.

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