

Teachers' note: The characters are fictional but are based on true stories. The role cards should be copied for pupils' reference, but the three readers could read out the shorter text (bold):

Lesson 2: Three role cards

Role card 1: CAFOD representative

"My name is Maria and I represent CAFOD.

We know from CAFOD's work in developing countries that many small-scale producers are disadvantaged by unfair world trade rules. When prices fall the small-scale producers can quickly be left without the means to improve their situation, or even to live. CAFOD campaigns, both in the UK and at meetings of the World Trade Organisation, to have world trade rules made fairer.

We also support producers in their local areas. We provide training so that they can improve and increase their produce, and we help them to find markets that will provide a fair price.

In 1992 CAFOD, along with five other agencies, set up the Fairtrade Foundation. We wanted to provide market outlets that would guarantee a fixed price. That way, small-scale producers would receive a living wage, whatever the world market was doing.

CAFOD works to help the poorest of the world because it has values based on scripture and on Catholic Social Teaching. Pope Paul VI said, "The hungry nations of the world cry out to the peoples blessed with abundance. And the Church... asks each and every (person) to hear his brother's (and his sister's) plea and answer it lovingly."

We believe as Christians that we have a responsibility to pay more for our food, if that will provide the worker with a just wage. It is not justice to accept cheap food if the workers who produce it have to suffer as a result.

CAFOD aims to educate about the issues around world trade and to provide opportunities for people in the UK to take action. **Buying Fairtrade products is one simple way that consumers can take action to help producers in developing countries."**

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Role card 2: Mexican coffee grower

"My name is Ramon and I grow coffee in Mexico.

Traders (sometimes called "middle men") buy our coffee at cheap prices and sell it on to big transnational companies for much more than they paid us. When the international price of coffee falls, the traders pay much less to us.

I don't want charity. I work very hard. All I want is a just wage for the work that I do. I don't think it's fair that rich countries or transnationals make all the money while the coffee-growers can't afford to feed their families.

I'm a Christian and I believe that everyone has a right to be able to work and have a decent standard of living. Doesn't the bible say, "The workers deserve their wages"? (1 Tim 5:18).

The Fairtrade system cuts out the middle-men and guarantees a fixed amount for every kilo of coffee. This means that we can develop our business, confident that even if world prices for coffee fall, we will still receive a fair price.

Life has changed for my family since the Fairtrade system was set up. **Now the local farmers have formed a Fairtrade co-operative. With guaranteed prices we can each put in a set amount each month to improve the business.** We've built a small processing plant to process organic coffee. Our coffee is sold in the UK with the Fairtrade mark. **We've used some of the profits to build a clinic. My daughter, Carmen, is weak and often ill. Before Fairtrade she might have died on the long journey to the hospital. Now I know she is safe. St. Paul said that we are all one body in Christ (Eph. 3:6). I am sure my Christian sisters and brothers in the UK feel a responsibility to care for the Body of Christ in other countries.** Perhaps that's one reason Fairtrade products are now popular.

I hope that UK customers continue to buy Fairtrade coffee. But mostly I want world trade rules to change. That way everyone could have a fair wage, whether or not they are selling products under the Fairtrade mark."

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Role card 3: Transnational banana company representative

"My name is Mr. Brown and I represent a transnational banana company. We ship millions of bananas into the UK every year.

I know Fairtrade banana schemes work in some areas. But Fairtrade bananas are more expensive; the consumer pays more so that the growers are guaranteed a fixed price.

Our customers don't want to pay more money for their bananas! The economy is going through a tough time. Everyone's purse is stretched. Our company has a responsibility to serve our customers' needs. People on benefit, workers on low wages, single parents; they all have to feed their families and they want the cheapest bananas they can find. And if we don't give them what they want, they'll go elsewhere.

Our company does not think that Fairtrade is the way to go. Everyone should be subject to the market economy. If there are too many bananas, and the price goes down, the growers who can't make a living should grow something else! That's how the world works. It will take time, but eventually we will have a balanced global economy, with supply matching demand. To say otherwise is unrealistic.

What happens to farmers on the other side of the world is not the consumer's responsibility."