

Assembly: Trade & chocolate

Target audience: KS 2/3

Timing: 15 minutes

Assembly plan

1 This is an assembly about trade.

Hold up the bar of Fairtrade chocolate. Explain that this product reaches our homes as a result of trade.

Ask audience how much chocolate, on average, we each eat per year (7.5kg per person, or 75 x 100g bars).

Read out the Rabbi Yerucham of Mir quote, and ask the children what a seismograph is.

Explain that in this assembly, we are going to explore how the chocolate that we buy can have 'shockwaves' that are felt hundreds of miles away by the producers; and the effects can be good or bad.

2 What do we know about trade?

Challenge pupil's knowledge/perceptions. Read out/hold up statements about trade, or use the PowerPoint presentation. Ask them to raise a hand if they think each one is true (they are all true!)

3 What do we know about the chocolate trade?

Explain that they are now going to see how a bar of chocolate reaches us, the consumers, by finding out about the chain of people involved. Volunteers stand up with appropriate signs

Ask audience to imagine how much each person in the chain would get, if this (non – fair trade) bar of chocolate costs the consumer £1. Ask individuals for their suggestions. Volunteers use second set of signs to reveal answers.

Resources

Fairtrade Chocolate (Green & Blacks Gold is Kosher)

This can be shown using the PowerPoint presentation if preferred

Can be held up or use PowerPoint presentation

Five volunteers, each with two signs: first sign shows who they represent in the chocolate chain, second one shows how much money they would make if the bar of chocolate cost £1 Or PowerPoint presentation



4 What problems do producers, e.g. cocoa farmers, face?

Ask volunteers to hold up cards stating problems, and expand on these as time allows.

5 Is there an alternative?

Fortunately Fair Trade means that there is another option.

Explain that:

- Fair Trade means paying producers a fair price for what they produce.

- We can recognise Fair Trade foods and drinks because they carry the Fairtrade Mark. There are now over 90 products which carry the Mark.

- There are many other products that are fairly traded, and many are also kosher. Unpack various kosher fair-trade items from a shopping bag. If appropriate, you could hand them around. Point out the Fairtrade mark on the items.

6 What difference does Fair Trade make?

Volunteers holding cards which show problems associated with conventional trade, turn them around to reveal some of the benefits of Fair Trade.

7 What can we do?

Explain that, as consumers, we can make a real difference to the lives of producers by buying Fair Trade products. They may cost us a few pence more, but we know that the extra money we are paying goes directly to the people who need it.

Re-emphasise Rabbi Yerucham's point, by explaining how the money we spend can support agricultural systems which deny children an education; expose workers to dangerous chemicals etc.

Five cards stating problems faced by producers, with benefits of Fair Trade on the reverse copy of the Fairtrade Mark
OR PowerPoint presentation

Selection of kosher Fair Trade items in a shopping bag (or powerpoint)
E.g. Green & Blacks Maya Gold chocolate
Ben and Jerry's Vanilla icecream
Calypso Pure Fruit Juices
Sainsbury's Demerara sugar and all their banana's

Cards OR PowerPoint presentation



Or it can fund cooperatives which protect the environment and give people a route out of poverty.

It's easy to feel that there's nothing we can do, as individuals, to help relieve world poverty. The choices we make in the shops can have a positive, or negative, impact on the lives of producers in the developing world

An average 16 year old in Britain will spend £1,000,000 during her/his lifetime. Their choices count! Encourage students to think of the difference they can make.

Encourage students to organise, or take part in, other Fair Trade activities within school. (See What We Can Do What section of the pack)

Conclude by suggesting students find out more, mentioning where Fair Trade products are available locally – suggest visiting supermarket/ local Oxfam shop to see for themselves, and take action!

Assembly resources (to be cut out on card, or alternatively use the PowerPoint presentation.)

1. Rabbi Yerucham of Mir quote

“The seismograph has taught us that a tremor in any part of the world can be felt by a sufficiently sensitive instrument everywhere in the world. The same is true of a person’s deeds. One should not think that his actions do not affect others. Everything one does in some way affects everyone else in the world.”

Rabbi Yeruchan of Mir

2. What do we know about trade - statements

In the last 10 years the price of a bar of chocolate has doubled, but the price of cocoa beans has halved. A bar of chocolate here costs roughly what a cocoa farmer in Ghana earns in a month. Most cocoa farmers and their children have never tasted chocolate!

Some companies make more money than entire countries. In 1998 the world’s five largest companies made more money than the combined incomes of the world’s 46 poorest countries.

One pair of jeans is usually made in more than 10 different countries (e.g. using cotton for denim from Benin, copper for rivets from Namibia, cotton for pockets from Pakistan, wire for zip from Japan, pumice for treating denim from Turkey, labour for sewing jeans in Tunisia).

1.3 billion people live on less than \$1 (70p) per day. World trade has been expanding rapidly for the benefit of richer countries like ours, but poorer countries gain less and less – yet the majority of people live in the developing world.



Signs for volunteers

Cocoa farmer 7p

Chocolate company 40p

Tax collector 25p

Retailer (shop keeper) 28p

Consumer pays £1

Problems for producers involved in conventional trade

- Low prices (world prices often fall below the cost of production).
- Low safety standards (e.g. through use of hazardous agrochemicals).
- Debts (producers often have no choice but to borrow money).
- Poor diet, health care and education (children often have to work to help support families, and are denied education).
- Lack of control (producers feel powerless as world market controls prices).

Benefits of Fair Trade

- Guaranteed better prices (which enable producers to improve their quality of life). On average, a cocoa farmer would get 14p of every pound spent on fair-trade chocolate. That's double the price they get from non-fair trade chocolate.
- Improved health and safety standards (decent working conditions make life better for producers, and with more sustainable practices, better for the environment too).
- Secure contracts (producers can plan for the future, and avoid falling into debt).
- Regular income (producers are more likely to be able to improve diet, afford medicines and schooling).
- Producers have more say (through joining co-operatives or unions, producers have more control over their own lives).

Many thanks to the Reading International Solidarity Centre, on whose assemblies this was based.