

Banana Fairtrade Assembly

This assembly is suitable for primary school ages.

It's based on an assembly from the Fairtrade Foundation Schools Programme.

Where this assembly has been run before, we've taken in enough bananas for each student to be given one at the end of the session. A healthy Fairtrade break time snack! You might like to do this if the school is near the store and you have some money to support this in your community budget.

You will need:

- Powerpoint slides and your script
- A banana with a Fairtrade sticker.
- A banana without a Fairtrade sticker.
- Supply chain illustrations. Either print out the supply chain images or see if you can find the below props.
 - o Coop apron / name badge
 - o A green banana and a yellow banana
 - o A toy boat
 - o Gold coins / notes (Chocolate coins or monopoly money could work)
 - o A farmer's hat

Slide 1

Good morning everybody! My name is xx and I'm from the Co-op up the road. Do you all know where that is / what that is? It's great to be able to come in and talk to you today...


Today we're going to focus on one simple thing. Something a lot of you eat most days of the week.

Slide 2

[show a banana or slide 2: banana picture]

A banana.

And I'm going to tell you how a banana can help children like you go to school.

 First of all, where do you think bananas come from?

[take answers]

❓ Where do you think they grow? Do they grow in the UK? Why not? Do you think it has to be very hot or very cold to grow bananas?

[take answers] Bananas need tropical conditions to grow, quite hot (27c) and plenty of rain.

❓ Can you name any countries we grow bananas in?

At the Co-op we get our bananas from Ghana (Africa), Colombia (South America), Panama, Dominican Republic (Central America / Caribbean)

Slide 3

Bananas grow on huge plants that look like trees, although they are actually a type of herb.

[show slide 3: bananas growing]

❓ Can anybody guess how many bananas we eat in the UK every year?

[play higher or lower until you reach 5 billion]

We eat over 5 billion bananas each year in the UK alone! If you laid them end to end they would go around the Earth over 200 times... That's a LOT of bananas!

So if we're buying that many bananas the people who grow bananas must be getting lots of money to pay for food, water, health and education – right?

Sadly this isn't true. Many of the people that grow the food we eat do not get a fair price for the food that they grow. Sometimes they do not have enough food to feed their own families, or enough money to send their children to school or pay for medicines.

❓ Why is this?

Bananas are on so many people's shopping lists that the big supermarkets often sell them at a low price so that they can get more customers through their doors.

But let's think about all the people needed to get a banana from here *[point to slide still showing]* to our supermarket shelves.

❓ Can I have five volunteers please?

Line the five students up along the stage to demonstrate the 5 stages of the supply chain. Hand out the supply chain props, or the 5 images you've printed.

For older children, you could hand out the props in the wrong order, and ask them to try and arrange themselves in the order of the supply chain.

So even at its most simple, there is:

- the shopkeeper
- the ripener - somebody who is in charge of ripening the bananas so that they are ready to eat
- the importer - somebody who brings the bananas to the UK on a ship
- the trader - the person who sells the bananas in the country where they are grown,
- and of course the banana farmers themselves.

This is called the supply chain.

This means that when we buy a banana, everyone along the supply chain should make enough money for the work they do. Whether that's growing the banana, transporting it, or selling it to us. When bananas are cheap, it's not always possible for everyone to make enough money.

❓ And who do you think gets the least?

It's usually the farmer at the end of the chain that is the worst affected. Because they are often working on their own, they aren't able to ask for a higher price from the big companies. This means that many banana farmers live in poverty, and struggle to provide for their families.

❓ Does this seem fair?

Not really does it. But there is something we can do and something we make sure we do at the Co-op up the road...

Slide 4

❓ What is different about this banana, compared to this banana?

[show one banana with Fairtrade sticker, one without]

This sticker is different isn't it?

❓ Does anybody know what it means? Have you seen it before in our shops? On what products?

[take answers] Products like tea, coffee, fruit, flowers, nuts

This sticker shows us that this is a Fairtrade banana.

Fairtrade means that the farmers and workers growing the food get a fairer price, which pays them more than enough to cover what it costs to grow the bananas.

We also sell lots of other Fairtrade products, like the ones you identified - tea, chocolate, sugar, coffee, flowers.

All of these work in a similar way, making sure that the farmers who grow the product get a fairer price for their hard work.

These products are often grown on small farms. So, rather than deal with big companies who want to buy their products individually, many farmers with small farms join together in what is called a co-operative so that they have more power against the big companies.

The banana farmers also gets a bit of extra money called the Fairtrade Premium which can be used to help the whole community.

Slide 5

Some of the bananas you find in our coop stores come from Panama. Panama is a hot country in Central America.

[show slide 5: world map]



Can anybody point to Central America on this map

Slide 6

This is Chito. He is a banana farmer in Panama. As I said at the beginning these bananas are helping children to go to school.

This is because these bananas are Fairtrade and this particular co-operative, which is called COOBANA, have spent some of the extra money they earn from Fairtrade on their children's education. They are able to afford to buy school equipment and uniforms and pay the fees needed for children to go to secondary school.

COOBANA have also spent some money from Fairtrade on making improvements to their community. Imagine you were living in a home with no running water, and maybe even no walls and roof.

Well that was what it was like for some of Chito's community. Using the money from Fairtrade, they've made sure that the villages have access to water and that the community have housing with proper roofs, walls and running water. It's not just the families of the banana farmers that benefit, but the whole community as well.

So by ensuring that bananas are Fairtrade we can help somebody in another country go to school, live in a proper house or have clean water.

So everyone, have we learnt today what this means? – Show the Fairtrade Mark again.

Thank you for listening. We've bought in some Fairtrade bananas for your class, so you can remember all about Chito and the difference Fairtrade is making to his community.