

The Clothes Line

Lesson plan 12: Fair Trade

Age group: 7 - 11

Aims:

To help children develop a concept of Fair Trade.

What to do:

Photocopy and cut up the **worksheet: Fair Trade stories** (below). Now divide the class into groups of four. Give each group one person's story. (Some groups may have the same story, depending on class size.) Ask children to read their story and talk about this person's conditions of work. What is good about them? What could be improved?

Children should then imagine that they are working for a firm in your country that sells clothes in high street shops. This firm wants to make sure that it buys clothes from companies that treat their workers fairly. As a group, draw up some rules that the shop could use. You could introduce elements of the list below to them.

As a class discuss what makes trade fair or unfair. How can the pupils who buy clothes try to make sure that the people who make them are treated fairly? They might write to companies to show they care about this issue, or carry out a survey to find out what people think about Fair Trade and send this to retailers. (As a stimulus for discussion, you could tell the class that typically out of the £20 that they pay for a new outfit, only £3 will go to the person who made it -- sometimes it is much less than this; only a few pence.)

Curriculum links:

England	Scotland	Wales
Geography: - Topical geographical issues; wider geographical context; interdependence. English: - Drama - improvisation and working in role.	Expressive arts: - Using media; creating and designing; evaluating and appreciating. Environmental Studies, Social subjects: - People and place - developing informed attitudes.	Geography: - Topical geographical issues; wider geographical context; interdependence. English: - Drama - improvisation and working in role.

Further activities on Fair Trade

- Role play. Children could role play a conversation between a garment maker in India or a homeworker in the North, and a retailer selling that garment in a fashionable shop in the North. They could use the photos as a starting point.
- The class could invite someone involved in trade or the textiles industry into the classroom (a shop worker, factory worker, homeworker) to talk about their working day. Children could then write 'A day in the life of ...', comparing that person with one of those involved in the garment industry.
- The class could write to a trade union and find out more about conditions of work and health and safety codes of conduct in the North. They could then compare these with the stories.
- Children could design a poster encouraging people to buy Fair Trade goods or telling people about what Fair Trade is.
- Children could write a letter or send an Email to a retailer in the North telling them about their views on Fair Trade.

A 'clean clothes' code

We will only buy from manufacturers who:

- Pay reasonable wages to their workers
- Give all workers secure jobs
- Give all workers at least one day off a week
- Have an eight-hour working day, with breaks
- Do not force people to work extra hours
- Pay people extra money for extra hours worked
- Make sure that work places are safe

Take a look at the Make Trade Fair website for more information:

<http://www.maketradefair.com/en/index.htm>

Worksheet: Fair Trade stories

Here five different people involved in the garment industry talk about their experiences:

1. Suresh works as a weaver at home in India

"I work as a hand-loom weaver. There is no other work in this area. I start work at 6 in the morning and finish at 9 at night. I get asthma from the dust which comes from the yarn as I weave. I have other health problems because I am sitting down all day. I sell my cloth to a middleman who sells it on to someone else. I know that I get paid a very low price, but I don't know who else to sell my cloth to. My family helps with the work by spinning the cotton and threading the loom with me."

2. Mira works in a factory in India

"I work in a large factory in west India which makes cloth to sell abroad. The pay is good and the women earn the same as men. I work from 7 am to 3.30 pm, with a half hour lunch break and two tea breaks. The work is very noisy, but at least there is plenty of light and air. I get 15 days' paid holiday a year and if I have to work on a festival day I am paid extra. If I am sick I do not lose wages. If I have a baby I will get paid while I take some time off work."

3. Shanti works in a factory in India

"I work in a big factory which makes clothes for export to Britain. I get up at 5 am and do the chores like collecting water, cooking and cleaning before I leave for work. We work from 9 am to 5 pm. During the day we have two short tea breaks and half an hour for lunch. The factory is quite dark and it gets very hot with all the machines. If there is a big order of clothes from Britain, we have to work extra hours. Quite often we work through the night and then the next day. If we refuse, we may lose our job. During these long sessions we are half asleep and accidents can happen when people are tired. When I had my baby I did not get any time off or money. I had to come back straight away. My daughter who is 14 looked after my baby."

4. Chandra works for a small weaving association in India

"A few years ago I joined some other weavers who sell their cloth to a Fair Trade organisation. We get paid a fair price for what we make. It is hard work but I do not have to travel far to work. Besides, I know that the cloth I weave will be bought. This provides me with job security which is important in my family. My husband works as a farm labourer. He has plenty of work during the harvesting season, but at other times he has no work. If it was not for what I earn, we would not be able to feed our four children. With my wages, I can pay for my children to go to school."

5. Karen works at home in the UK sewing collars

"I work at home in Manchester sewing collars for a big firm. I started this work because we needed the money and I could look after the children and work at the same time. I get paid by the number of collars that I make. I work from 7 am to 9 pm to finish enough. Sometimes my pay is late. I work about 36 hours a week and get paid about £46 per week. If I am ill I can't sew so I don't get paid. The mess from the work is a problem. The dust in the air gives me a sore throat and my hands are tired all the time. When the children are at school, I also get very lonely working on my own all day."