

PRESS RELEASE

Making a Stand for Fair Trade

During Fairtrade Fortnight, you may have attended one of the many activities that went on in and around Midlothian – you may have been one of the Penicuik High School students or SQA staff who met Towera Jalakasi, a Malawian business advisor who has been brought to Scotland for Fairtrade Fortnight by the Scottish Fair Trade Forum. You may have danced the night away at the Fair Trade party at The Scottish Mining Museum, you may have even taken part in the nationwide Fairtrade banana eating competition on March 6th and 7th!

Penicuik High School students make a stand for Fair Trade



Towera Jalakasi works with small producer communities in Malawi helping them to access fair prices for their materials, and creating links between them and a UK consumer market. On Tuesday 24th February, Towera talked to students at Penicuik High School about her work. She compared what a Malawian child of the same age would have done that morning.

A Day in the life of a 14 year old Malawian child

- Wake up
- Walk three or four miles to get clean water
- Return and wash
- Walk four or five miles to school if they are lucky - most Malawian children are unable to go to school at all as their parents can not afford the school fees.
- Arrive at school and sit on cold floors with drafts blowing through the rickety wooden walls of the school building, if they were lucky enough to have a building – many of these were shacks. Some students were educated under a tree.
- Go home from school (having not yet eaten at all)
- Eat dinner with their parents, the only meal of the day. This meal is not guaranteed. Some days there would be no meal.
- Go to sleep on a mat on the floor of a wooden shack

"In Malawi, over half the population live on less than 70p per day and life expectancy is just 40 years. Communities in my country can't wait for global trade rules to be rewritten. What they need is to be paid a fair price for their products, whether it's rice, sugar or handcrafts.

People in Scotland/ in Midlothian can help us by supporting fair trade and buying Fairtrade products. With the fair price given by the Fairtrade system, communities can build schools for their children make their farming more environmentally friendly.

In a country where 90% of people work on the land, this means a great deal and has a huge impact on people's lives. By buying Fairtrade products and supporting Scotland's campaign to become a Fair Trade Nation, people in Scotland are making a genuine difference." Towera Jalakasi



SQA in Dalkeith hosted a lunch with Towera Jalakasi, also attended by members of Fair Trade Midlothian. SQA highlighted some of the wonderful work SQA has been doing as a workplace to support Fair Trade (including having Fairtrade snacks on Fridays). Liam Campbell of SQA Fair Trade Action Group said *"It was really interesting to hear first hand exactly what a difference Fairtrade and the extra premiums farmers get from it can make to local communities and individuals. Listening to Towera talking about how it can mean the difference between having clean water, electricity and shoes on children's feet really brought it home to me how important giving a fair deal to producers in these communities is."*

Fair trade is the best standard of ethical trading and promises a future for producers needed now more than ever in a world gripped by recession. Fair trade has given producers in places like Malawi access to global markets and a means to improve their lives and communities through their own hard work.

"Fair trade sales are continuing to grow, even in this economic downturn. In fact, 73% of Scots polled in January 2009 said they would continue to buy the same amount of fairly traded products in spite of the current economic climate. As Scotland works to become one of the world's first Fair Trade Nations, this shows that Scots are committed to doing what they can in their everyday lives to address poverty in the developing world"
Betsy Reed, Coordinator, Scottish Fair Trade Forum

"I felt very privileged to have been able to meet Towera Jalakasi during her visit to Midlothian. She really brought the message home when explaining how we as consumers can positively affect the lives of others - how it can mean the difference between having electricity, clean water, and shoes on children's feet. She is not only an inspirational woman, but she has an infectious passion to improve the world in which we live"
Shona Maguire, Development Officer, Social Enterprise Alliance Midlothian (SEAM)

Midlothian Party for a Fairer Planet

Fair Trade Midlothian organised a sell-out event at The Scottish Mining Museum in Newtongrange on Friday 27th February. With a fantastic line up and an enthusiastic crowd, the event raised funds and awareness of Fair Trade in Midlothian – and was great fun too!

"Fair trade allows us to express our values as citizens in a society that increasingly treats us as consumers. By making decisions when we do our everyday shopping we can transform the lives of people working to remove themselves from poverty. I will continue to promote fair trade and trade justice as a political movement and am grateful to Midlothian Council, Scotmid, Social Enterprise Alliance Midlothian and their partners in Fair Trade Midlothian for their work in promoting fair trade and organising the Fairtrade Fortnight event, which was extremely successful". David Hamilton MP



Stone Coal Creek entertain the audience at The Scottish Mining Museum

