

Background

After travelling around the UK on an open-top bus, Christine Broom is back home in London. She feels the Fairtrade Fortnight Bus Tour has been a **resounding** success but still has some **lingering** doubts about a number of issues that came up. We asked her about her fair-trade adventure.

1 _____

It is the **annual** event that tries to raise the public's awareness of the work the Fairtrade Foundation does and also encourages people to look out for and buy products that carry the Fairtrade logo.

2 _____

Well, small farmers are often exploited by corrupt middlemen because they have no knowledge of the true **market value** of their goods. Other workers have to endure low pay or terrible conditions. Fair-trade is an alternative approach. It deals directly with the suppliers and cutting out the greedy middlemen and it builds partnerships based on dialogue and transparency. Put simply, it is about paying producers and workers a fair price without deception or prejudice.

3 _____

We thought it would be a good way to get out and **engage** people in dialogue. We had fairground rides, interactive displays, live music, discussions, something for everyone. We even gave people the chance to sample delicious fair-trade goods and meet fair-trade producers. Some people think that they can't make a difference but we show them they don't have to **donate** time money or energy but they can still easily reduce the impact their actions have on the developing world by buying ethical alternatives to their usual brands.

4 _____

Yes and no. We certainly got a lot of visitors to the bus – we went to eight cities around the UK and had a steady stream of people coming up to the bus. But the feedback we got was that although the produce was good, the consumers have difficulty finding it in stores and when they do find it, it is usually more expensive than their non-fair-trade equivalents.

So you found they didn't stay true to their principles when faced with higher prices or less choice?

It is the same with anything, people won't change lifelong habits if it is going to be more difficult to do so. A shopper has not got time to shop around, so if their local supermarket does not stock fair-trade produce then they will buy the goods in stock. In fact we found people were more willing to donate money to the cause but not spend time shopping around for fair-trade produce. It is frustrating because on the Fairtrade Foundation website is a list of produce that consumers can buy but the supermarkets don't stock it all and farmers want fair-trade not charity.

5 _____

Yes, **fair** play, they have been very supportive – many of the big chains have run special offers on their fair-trade produce during the fortnight. But often they only sell a limited selection, so consumers often have to go to the smaller supermarket chains or **charity** shops if they want a wider choice.

6 _____

Put it this way, the feedback that we received from the bus tour told us more people would try fair-trade produce if it were readily available. People want to know their food has come from a **credible** source, so it would be in the big supermarkets' interests to stock more of it.

So the bus tour and Fairtrade Fortnight is over, what now?

Well the campaign goes on. We will try to persuade big business that it is in their interest to act responsibly when sourcing their produce. We are already seeing more and more companies developing an ethical approach whether they are tea companies or supermarkets and that can only be a good thing but we need the consumer to put pressure on them by buying fair-trade produce to make sure the good work is continued.'

Exercises

1 Discuss these questions with a partner.

- 1 What do you understand by the term 'fair-trade'?
- 2 Are fair-trade products available in your country?
- 3 Have you ever bought a fair-trade product? Why did you buy it?

2 Read the text quickly and choose the best title for the article.

- a Can't say fairer than that
- b All fair's in love and war
- c Fair today, fairer tomorrow

3 Below are the questions that the interviewer asked. Put them in the correct gap in the text 1–6. Give reasons for your choice.

- a Why is fair-trade so important?
- b So you would like to get more goods into the main supermarkets then?
- c So did you feel the bus tour was successful?
- d Do the supermarkets stock any fair-trade produce?
- e What is Fairtrade Fortnight?
- f Why the Fairtrade Bus?

4 Read the text again and answer the questions. Try to use your own words for each answer.

- 1 What is the goal of the Fairtrade Foundation?
- 2 Why was the tour a success?
- 3 What was the main negative feedback that they got?
- 4 Why don't the farmers want charity?
- 5 What is the next step for fair-trade?

5 Match the words in bold in the text to definitions 1–9.

- 1 what people are prepared to pay for certain types of goods: _____
- 2 to give money, food, clothes, etc. especially to people in need: _____
- 3 relating to a period of one year: _____
- 4 an organization for helping people in need: _____
- 5 very great: _____
- 6 slow to end or disappear: _____
- 7 to take part in something; to make somebody take part in something: _____
- 8 acceptable and appropriate in a particular situation: _____
- 9 that can be believed or trusted: _____

6 Match the words from the list in 5 to one of the words below to make collocations. Then check your answers in the text.

Example: *resounding success*

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1 _____ shop | 5 _____ doubt |
| 2 _____ money | 6 _____ source |
| 3 _____ price | 7 _____ value |
| 4 _____ dialogue | |

7 Look back at the text and choose three words you could use in your day-to-day work.

8 Work with a partner. Discuss these questions.

- 1 What do you think of the 'tour bus' idea?
- 2 Would something like this work in your country?