

Banana split

Main Activity - role play

source: CAFOD



60 minutes



10-50 people

Topic

Highlight how our consumes influence others people life, how everything is connected and what's our role in a injustice system

Objectives

To introduce the banana chain (what happens to a banana before it reaches the consumer) and to discuss the reality of 'who gets what' from the sale of bananas.



Materials

Role cards provided.

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Board



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INCLUSION

Steps

Divide into five groups to represent each of the different jobs in the banana chain.

Tell them that you are about to play a game that traces the path of the banana as it is exported from its plantation in Latin America (or the Caribbean Islands) to your fruit bowl.

1. Allocate the roles.

(i) Banana worker

(ii) Plantation owner

(iii) Shipper

(iv) Importer and ripener

(v) Shop or supermarket.

(Make sure everyone has a role to play)

2. Space out the groups. Give them their role cards and ask them to read their role information.

Give them a few moments to work out what their roles might involve.

3. Tell them that each banana costs 30p.

4. Ask them to decide how much of the 30p they should get for the jobs/work they do in the banana chain.

5. Ask them to spend a couple of minutes discussing this and preparing arguments why they deserve the amount they have chosen for themselves.

6. Get each group to share the amounts and present their reasons.

7. Inevitably the total from all the groups will be more than 30p. The groups will need to renegotiate.

8. To make more impact, give the group representing the supermarket 30 pence. They keep their share and then pass the rest to the Ripener's group, who keep their share and pass the rest on to the Importers, who keep their share and pass the rest to the Shippers, then the Owners and finally the Workers.

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Debriefing

Do you think this is a fair situation?

Why is the 30p shared out as it is?

Who has power and why?

What could be done to improve the situation?

What role can we play as the people who buy the bananas?

Would you be prepared to pay more for your bananas if you knew workers and farmers got a price that would enable them to meet their basic needs?

Are you aware of similar situations in this country?
(For example, the use of workers from different countries, often led by a gang master, on farms in East Anglia or the workers from China employed as cockle pickers?)

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Key Ideas

- We are connected with people around the world through the things we buy and eat.
- Many products in our shops are made from raw materials imported from poor countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean Islands.
- Many workers do not earn enough to meet their basic needs: food, shelter, clothes, medicine and schooling. This is unfair.
- Fairtrade labelling has been introduced so that we, the shoppers, can guarantee that workers get a fair deal for their work and products.

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Role cards

Banana worker:

12-14 hours per day of hard physical labour in hot conditions.

Selecting the best bananas.

Washing bananas – you will have your hands in water all day.

Cutting bananas – you will have to carry heavy loads of bananas on your back.

Applying fertilisers and pesticides – can lead to health risks such as cancer and other diseases.

Pesticides are also sprayed from planes – they are likely to fall on your home or the local school.

Worry: Will you have enough money to buy food, pay medical bills or to send your children to school? You may not be allowed to meet together with other workers to complain about your pay, the way you are treated at work or where you live. You will be discouraged from joining a trade union.

Plantation owner:

Plantation running costs: You will have to pay for expensive pesticides, fuel for pesticide-spraying aeroplanes, tools and machinery.

Cost of lawyers: In case workers sue you for work accidents.

Waste: Regulations in most countries in Europe and most shoppers want

“perfect fruit” – no mark on the skin, nice shape etc. This takes a lot of skill and

money to achieve. If any of your bananas don't meet these high standards they have to be scrapped – so you lose money.

Risk factor: You bear the cost if the harvest is bad, or a hurricane or pest destroys your crop.

Modernisation investments: You need money to keep paying for the latest machines and ideas, so your plantation stays up to date and you stay in business.

Cost of land: The longer your land is used to grow bananas, the more the goodness in the soil will be used up and you will need to pay for expensive fertilisers, or buy new land!

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Shipper:

You face the following costs:

Ships: Big cargo ships are very expensive to buy and keep in working order.

Fuel: You need to pay for fuel for the ships – one load between Latin

America and Europe may be at sea for up to five weeks.

Insurance: If a cargo is lost or damaged, it may be your fault and

you may have to pay for it.

Refrigeration: On board, the bananas are kept in big fridges to prevent them from ripening during the time at sea. If they ripen too soon they will be spoiled by the time they arrive at the shops.

Port fees: You will have to pay for your ships to be in port at both ends of the sea journey.

Shops and supermarkets:

Staff: You have to pay the people who work in your store.

Running costs: Lighting, transport, designing of staff uniforms, carrier bags etc.

Competition: You need to take on new ideas, maybe build a bigger shop, buy new machinery – all to make sure you make more money than other shops and stay in business.

Risk: If the bananas are handled badly or arrive on the shelves over-ripe, your customers will not be happy – they may decide not to shop at your store any more.

Advertising: You will need to advertise what you sell and to show how good your shop is so that shoppers come to buy their shopping at your store rather than going anywhere else.

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Importer and ripener:

Transport: By truck from the European port to big ripening centres, and from there to the shops.

Contracts: You will have to promise the plantation owner that you will buy a certain amount of bananas each week. You will have to promise the shops you will provide a certain amount of bananas each week. Whatever happens, you will have to keep the promises, even if something goes wrong in the supply chain and you are let down.

Licence fee: You will have to pay for an import license to bring your bananas into the European Union.

Big offices: Importers “need” big, fancy office buildings for the work that their role involves.

Ripening gas: Ethylene is used to ripen bananas.

Repackaging: After ripening the bananas must be repackaged so you will have to pay for the materials and for the workers to do this.

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Answers

- Banana worker 1p
 - Plantation owner 5p
 - Shipper 4p
 - Shop or supermarket 13p
 - Importer and ripener 7p
- Total 30p