



# FONCHO'S ASSEMBLY

## AIMS

- To think about the global trading system and the role we play in it
- To explore Fairtrade as a choice that can have a positive impact on others

You need students to play the following parts:

**A NARRATOR**  
**THE SHOPPER**  
**THE BANANA FARMER**  
**THE EXPORTER**

**THE IMPORTER**  
**THE RIPENER**  
**THE SHOPKEEPER**

## SCRIPT

*[The shopper picks up some bananas without a Fairtrade sticker and takes them to the narrator]*

**Shopper:** 'I would like these bananas please.'

**Narrator:** 'Mmm, bananas – my favourite. Did you know that in the UK we spent £550 million on bananas in 2012? *[asks audience]* If we're spending all of that money on bananas, do you think that banana farmers earn a decent amount of money?' *[Take students' answers]*

**Narrator:** 'Despite their hard work, a lot of banana farmers don't earn much money at all because they are not paid a fair price for their bananas. Most of the money we spend on bananas doesn't go to the farmer.'

**Shopper:** 'Where does it go then?'

**Narrator:** 'Well let's work backwards. Imagine these seats represent the journey a banana goes on so we can buy it. It's called a supply chain. Now, where do you buy your bananas?'

**Shopper:** 'A shop.'

**Narrator:** 'Right so we need the shopkeeper.'

**Shopkeeper:** 'That's me! I buy the bananas and sell them to customers in my shop - I need to make a profit on them to keep my business going.' *[Shopkeeper sits in chair on right]*

## YOU WILL NEED

- Four chairs set up at the front and one spare chair out of sight
- Two bunches of bananas displayed at the front (one bunch clearly showing the FAIRTRADE Mark and one bunch without – this can be a drawing of a Fairtrade and a non-Fairtrade banana if this is easier)
- A print-out of the FAIRTRADE Mark.



**Shopper:** 'Who do you buy the bananas from?'

**Shopkeeper:** 'From a ripener.'

**Ripener:** 'Hello, I'm the ripener. I buy the bananas when they arrive in the UK and store them until they're ripe. I need to cover my costs of storing them and, of course, I want to make some profit for my business.' *[takes seat next to shopkeeper]*

**Shopper:** 'Fair enough. And who do you buy your bananas from?'


**Ripener:** 'From the importer.'

**Importer:** 'I'm the importer. I buy the bananas when they're on a container ship and pay for transporting them. They travel thousands of miles – it's really expensive so I need to cover my costs and obviously I need to make some profit too.' *[takes seat next to ripener]*

**Shopper:** 'OK. How do the bananas get to the ship though?'

**Exporter:** 'That's my job! I'm the exporter. I take the bananas to a port, inspect them and load them into containers. I have to pay lots of people to drive lorries and carry the bananas and I need to make some profit.' *[takes last seat]*

**Narrator** *[to shopper]:* 'So this is the supply chain and everybody gets some of the money from the bananas you buy.'



**Shopper:** 'Hang on, where does the exporter get the bananas from?'

**Farmer:** 'From me! I'm Foncho, I'm from Colombia and I grow the bananas! I plant the seeds and after about six months a bunch of bananas begins to grow. I have to look after my banana plants every day and weed and water them so they grow properly. Sometimes they get diseases or are destroyed by a storm. After nine months they're ready to be harvested so they are cut down with a sharp knife. We carry them to the processing building where they're washed and dipped in a special liquid that protects the top of the banana, called the crown, and stops it going mouldy. They dry on a special drying rack so that they do not get bruised. They are then labelled and boxed and delivered to the exporter.'

**Shopper:** 'That is a lot of hard work – you definitely deserve some of the money from the bananas! Take a seat!'

*[Farmer perches on the end of the final chair]*

**Narrator:** 'But there is no room left. Most of the money that we pay for our bananas is already being split between all of these people.'

**Shopper:** 'But that's not fair at all – the farmer has worked so hard and had the risk of storms and diseases and he only gets a tiny bit of the money – everyone needs to move up!'

*[Everyone shuffles around]*

**Shopkeeper:** 'But I need to cover my costs and make a profit!'

**Ripener:** 'So do I!'

**Importer:** 'Me too!'

**Exporter:** 'And me!'

*[Farmer perches on the end again]*

**Narrator:** 'When the farmer is squeezed at the start of the supply chain he/she can't make enough money and this can leave him/her trapped in poverty.'

**Farmer:** 'Farmers like me can't always pay for what their families need. We sometimes can't afford to pay medical bills. It is difficult for farmers' families to get enough to eat.'

**Shopper:** 'That's a shame ... but there's nothing I can do about it.'

**Narrator:** 'Well, one thing you can do is to choose Fairtrade bananas *[hands Fairtrade bananas to shopper]*. They are the ones with this label.' *[holds up FAIRTRADE Mark]*

**Shopper:** 'What does that mean?'

**Narrator:** 'Well, the farmers are guaranteed a minimum price which aims to cover the costs of growing the bananas. They also get some extra money called the Fairtrade Premium. Groups of farmers decide together how to spend this extra money to improve their communities and their farming.'

**Shopper** *[points to the five students struggling on the four chairs]*: 'So what will that mean for this supply chain?'

**Narrator** *[pulls over an extra chair for the farmer to sit on and hands him/her the FAIRTRADE Mark]*:

'Now that the farmer is getting a fair price he/she can cover their running costs.'

**Farmer:** 'Now that I get a fair price for my bananas, I can pay my bills, make sure my children go to school and save for the future. Thanks to the Fairtrade Premium I've got water pipes and fertiliser so my farm produces more bananas.'

**Shopper:** 'Does Fairtrade mean I have to pay more?'

**Narrator:** 'Sometimes it may be a bit more yes, but it means that the farmer can continue farming and can look after his/her family.'

**Shopper:** 'So ... if a banana isn't Fairtrade, does this mean that the farmer didn't make enough money to provide for his/her family?'

**Narrator:** 'No not necessarily. Not all farmers are paid badly. But Fairtrade does guarantee that the farmers' receive at least the Fairtrade Minimum Price'

**Shopper:** 'I don't know – should I pay a bit extra for my Fairtrade banana if I know that the farmer will definitely get a fair price?'

**Narrator:** 'Well, choosing Fairtrade makes a huge difference to the people who put in so much work to grow our food. *[to audience]* What do you think?'