

coffee, fairtrade & rwanda



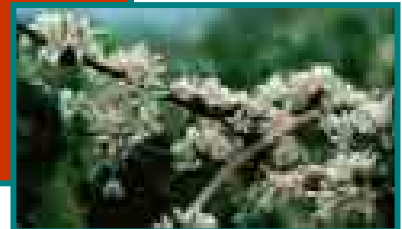
vso rwanda
global awareness syndicate

coffee, fairtrade & rwanda

*Foreword by
Rt Hon
Clare Short, MP*

*I strongly recommend
Maraba Bourbon
Rwandan Coffee. I buy it myself. It
is beautiful – very high quality
coffee – and the price paid gives a
better return to coffee growers in
Rwanda, one of the poorest
countries in the world.
This is Fairtrade. You get beautiful
coffee and people in Rwanda get a
better life.*

*Best wishes,
Clare Short*



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coffee, fairtrade & rwanda

Introduction







WHETHER YOU'RE SIPPING A LATTE in an Italian piazza, having a cappuccino in a break from shopping, or just relaxing with a coffee at home, you're consuming the end product in a chain which touches countless lives, and which may lead back to some of the world's poorest people. This book introduces just a few of those people, the workers at the Abahuzamugambi Co-operative in the tiny central African country of Rwanda. Rwanda may be better known for the genocide which devastated it in 1994, but it is also famous for its coffee, which accounts for up to three quarters of its exports. For years the production of coffee kept its growers in the vice-like grip of poverty. Now, the workers at the Co-operative are finding a way out.

'Coffee, Fairtrade and Rwanda' explains how the world coffee system works and how Fairtrade fits in. It looks at how coffee is produced, and even tells you how to make the perfect iced coffee. You also meet a few of the people whose lives have been radically improved as a result of Fairtrade. Written by volunteers working in Rwanda with Voluntary Service Overseas, it is aimed to be a complete resource for self-briefing for those interested in global education. We hope it will enable you to feel confident to run classroom activities or give presentations, including the ready-prepared PowerPoint which accompanies this booklet - we've also included some ideas for activities at the end - or just encouraged to promote fairer trade for the world's poor. And to enjoy your coffee, fairly traded of course!

Bon appétit,

The GAS team



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abahuzamugambi – a fairtrade co-operative

*The misty
blue hills of
Rwanda*



THE LUSH, MOUNTAINOUS COUNTRY OF RWANDA has near-perfect conditions for growing quality coffee: excellent rain; the right altitude for Arabica beans – between 1,700 and 2,000 m; and its cool climate encourages the much sought-after denser beans, as they mature more slowly on the bush. Why then did Rwandan coffee find itself being penalised on the world coffee markets by 15c/lb because the coffee it produced was considered to be below C grade?

The reasons for this poor quality were manifold. Firstly, everything was done on a small scale, at homes where farmers kept a few cash-crop trees to bolster their subsistence livelihoods. There, conditions were far from perfect for optimum handling of the beans. There might be little or no clean water to wash the beans; there might not be a clean and dry place to process and store them; fermentation of the beans was not controlled; and the simple economic need to make the land used for coffee growing as productive as possible meant that damaged beans might not be weeded out. Coffee growing is very labour intensive, and growers, who also grow their own food, have many other demands on their time. Most importantly, taking care was not rewarded: everyone got the same price from the buyers, who bought by weight not quality, so there was no incentive to produce good quality beans.

The second reason was the system used to market the coffee. Coffee buyers in the capital, Kigali, would loan trucks to minor buyers, who would come to the countryside to buy prepared beans from growers at 25c/kg. These small buyers would then sell the beans onto the big buyers in Kigali for 30c/kg. The buyers in Kigali would then grade the beans, de-hull them, and sell them to the huge international buyers for 75 – 90c/kg. So the growers, who had put the most time and labour in, got least reward; as you go 'up' the ladder the profit margin grows. The system works against producing good quality as there is no incentive anywhere along the line to produce better coffee. Being small-scale producers, the growers had no power to negotiate higher prices. Processing, which requires access to capital to purchase the required machinery, offers far greater rewards, but can only be undertaken by those with money. This illustrates the 'value-addedness' approach to trading, where manufacturing gives greater profits than labour – or, to put it



Collecting from the village

more bluntly, it takes money to make money. It is the same with almost all products: commodities,

which tend to be produced by poor countries, are considered to be less valuable than manufactured goods, which tend to be produced by rich countries. “Coffee,” it says on a Rwandan coffee packet, “is the main resource of the country.” And the picture it uses to illustrate its packaging is testament to just how vital coffee is to this nation. 500,000 of its 8m population are growers.

An OCIR coffee packet lays bare the importance of coffee to Rwanda's economy

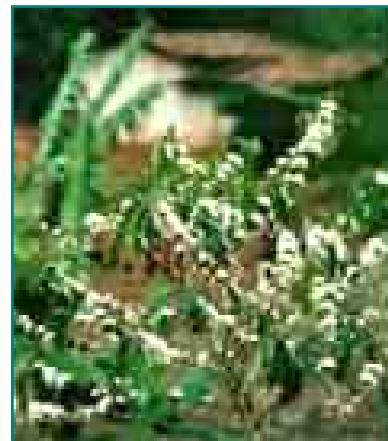


The question facing Rwanda was how it could capitalise on the global boom in quality coffee. All over the world, stylish café-bars were opening; from Kathmandu to Bangkok, from London to Sydney, people were ordering lattes and cappuccinos, doing business and relaxing over coffee. But coffee production in Rwanda was no longer worthwhile. The collapse of the price of coffee had devastated farmers. For many, it was no longer justifiable to use valuable land to produce coffee when it was needed to produce food for the family. Farmers were tearing up their plants – and their investment in coffee.

Maraba has the reputation of being one of the poorest districts in Rwanda, a country where the average income is around US \$220 a year. Many households are headed by children, orphaned by AIDS or the genocide in 1994, or by widows. However, some farmers had not abandoned their coffee fields, but

were continuing to look after their plants: weeding, pruning and mulching them attentively. The fragrant white snow of coffee flowers still dusted the landscape in August. These farmers decided to work together, and so the Abahuzamugambi Co-operative was born. It is this Co-op which produces Maraba Coffee. ‘Abahuzamugambi’ means, ‘together we work for the common goal.’ Half its members are women, and half of these widows. Some of them were also members of AVEGA, an association of widows, and this brought the interest of Comic Relief. Other organisations began to get involved, in particular Project Pearl, a Non-Governmental Organisation working in agricultural development in the south of Rwanda. Working in conjunction with Pearl, the Co-operative decided that the best chance of circumventing the low price of coffee was to enter the specialist, connoisseur market. This had bucked the trend in recent years, maintaining a steadier, higher price.

Rwanda had good base conditions for entry into the speciality market as it already grew the recognised ‘heirloom’ varieties of coffee (e.g. Bourbon) appreciated by connoisseurs. Coffee production is the most complex agricultural process, more involved even than wine. But it needs to be treated correctly, says Pearl’s Tim Schilling. “There was a need to acquire the best quality cherries so it was decided that farmers had to have at least 200 trees, to show they were serious and to make the Co-operative efficient. 110 of the 250 original members did not produce cherries of adequate quality.” So a certification system was implemented, which awarded status to 400 good farmers in 2001. “Now there are 1,500 members of the Co-operative. Pearl has been working on quality improvement for the last two years.”

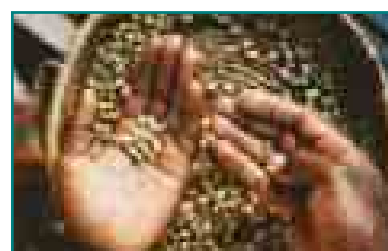


The creamy bloom of coffee



Project Pearl's Tim Schilling

All checking is done by hand



The Co-operative was helped initially with \$80,000 in grant aid from various sources. Local commitment came in the form of materials and labour. Pearl is gradually pulling away from the project, to allow it to become self-sufficient. Abahuzamugambi made a profit of \$30,000 in 2002, \$20,000 of which was re-invested in the Co-op and \$10,000 shared among its members. The community has to be strong financially in order to resist pressure from powerful interests in the local economic/political scene. Whilst the first year of the enterprise presented many difficulties, there have been no major problems in the last year. "We envisage being able to move away completely this year," says Tim. The project has been visited by Rwandan President Paul Kagame twice, the BBC, CNN, ABC, just about every minister, and many other agencies. But to many its greatest distinction came when it became the first Rwandan coffee co-op to be awarded Fairtrade status.

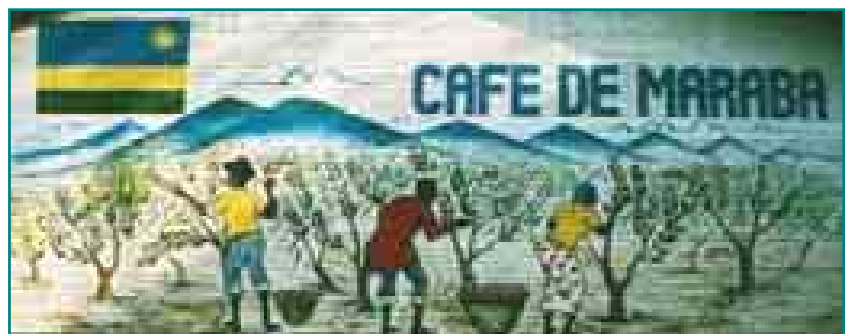
Research has been undertaken into what has been done with the extra income generated by the success of the Co-operative. First on the list is putting the children into school. In Rwanda, only 6% of children can attend secondary school, and Fairtrade gives the children of the Maraba growers a vital chance to be educated. Next was health, particularly buying into the government's health insurance scheme, which helps with the cost of healthcare. In a country where life expectancy is less than 40 years, good healthcare is important. After health came home improvements: many houses have been improved as a result of the scheme, providing safer, more comfortable, but still basic accommodation.

Habimana François pays a visit to the new bank at Maraba



Before the Co-operative started, there was no local bank, and villagers had to make the difficult and expensive journey to Butare, the nearest city, if they wanted a bank account. Now, the Co-operative has organised its own bank branch, which all the villagers can use. It opened in March 2003. About 200-500 financial transactions are undertaken each day from funds kept in Kigali. Although some coffee growers still do not have accounts, they have shown themselves to be very well organised, and those who do have accounts help out those who don't. As well as a valuable service, the new bank has brought more employment opportunities to Maraba.

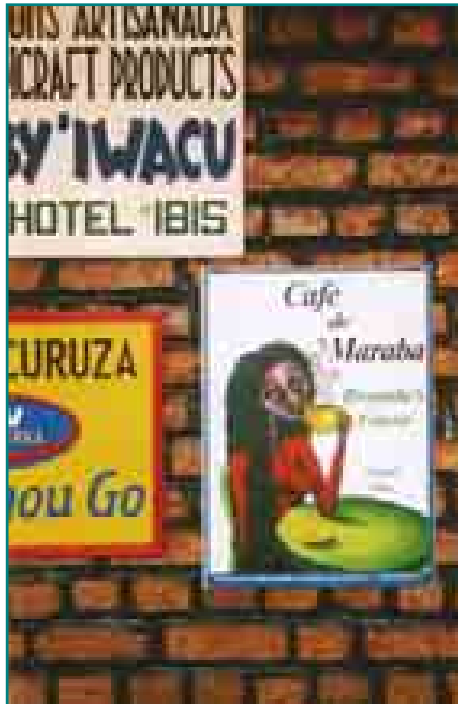
This mural decorates a wall at Maraba



Only after these necessities were provided for were the still important extras bought, typically fabric for the women and beer for the men. There are also programmes to educate the workers about AIDS, poverty reduction and gender issues. A canteen has been built at the washing station to provide cheap food for the workers.

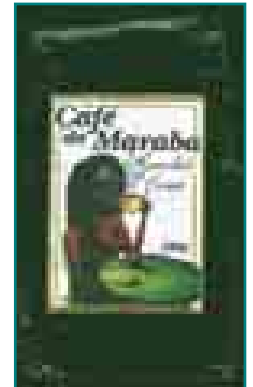
The social impact in the community has been huge. The Co-operative guarantees the growers that their children's school fees, books and uniforms will be paid by providing loans. It provides a security service which protects its growers' coffee from theft.

A company in Butare has started a business roasting the Co-operative's coffee for the domestic market. It buys the beans for \$1.50/kg, roasts and grinds them in the owner's garage, to keep the quality as high as possible, then sells them for \$3/kg. Current clients include the Ibis and Faucon Hotels in Butare, and Chez Lando and



The Ibis Hotel in Butare is just one of the places Maraba coffee can be enjoyed

Rwanda Roasters' Maraba Coffee on sale in a supermarket in Kigali



Planet in Kigali. People in the hotels are trained how to prepare the coffee properly.

Pearl has the task of increasing rural incomes, and began working with four other coffee projects last year. These are awaiting inspection visits for Fairtrade status. Pearl hopes to have another 10 projects this year. In 2002, Maraba was the only coffee cooperative in Rwanda working in this way; by 2003 there were twelve (but Maraba is still the only one with Fairtrade status). The next projects for Pearl are birds-eye chilli peppers, for the foreign market (e.g. for Tabasco); essential oils from geraniums; and cassava flour for the growing overseas African market.

There has been some resistance to marketing Maraba as an individual brand, as Western coffee buyers remain wary of investing money in building a brand image when quality is not certain from year to year – an outdated prejudice. Hence, in the US, there is no Maraba 'label'. It is this same prejudice which helps deter Africans from processing coffee before exporting it, as there remains a perception that they lack the necessary equipment and expertise – an unjust notion.

However, Union Coffee Roasters, a respected UK company, was keen to market Maraba as an identifiable brand. Part of the reason for this was the leverage of the 'story' behind the beans, which, in a highly-competitive environment, is seen as being marketable. But the principle reasons for their interest are the benefit their business brings to the people of Maraba – and of course the exquisite quality of their coffee. Steven Macatonia and Jeremy Torz from Union Coffee Roasters are viewed as ambassadors for the coffee, as their opinion is respected and they have a commitment to ethical trading. Maraba is now seen as a world-class coffee.

Medium roast beans



how coffee is produced

NESTLING IN THE DEEP, GREEN VALLEYS of South-Western Rwanda is the Abahuzamugambi Co-operative's coffee washing station. For most of the year, the station is quiet. But, when the cherries on the coffee trees begin to blaze red in the rainy season, it erupts in activity. This is the story of how those bright, scarlet cherries are transformed into the coffee in your cup.



The Maraba watershed

When they are ripe, the coffee cherries are hand-picked. But only those cherries which are the perfect colour can be picked. This means the bushes need to be tended every day, making the picking very labour-intensive. Training in the hills about the importance of the picking time had only limited success, so a quality-control system was set up at the station.

The cherries are brought to the washing station, carried on the head in baskets made from woven banana leaves. The station may

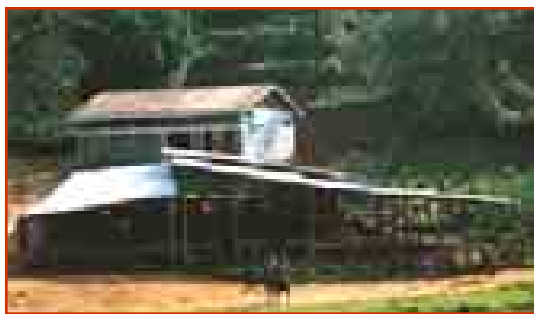
be several hours' walk away. At the station, only the best cherries are chosen. Below, the selection manager, Ahishakiye Olive, right, and the Co-op President, Manyoni Oswald, centre, hand-check the quality of cherries just brought in by a coffee grower. (Although only the red cherries are bought by the Co-op, the others are still saleable through the old system of buyers.) Producers wait expectantly while their cherries are checked. 10c/kg is paid for the selected cherries: up to three times the price available elsewhere. Five kilos of red cherries give about one kilo of parchment coffee, which can be sold for 25c/kg. A second washing station is being built at the moment. Now there are over a million coffee plants in Maraba district, and the first station cannot cope with the cherries from even half of these.

The selected cherries are weighed and their value recorded. No cash is given at the site, but payments are allocated to producers' accounts every two weeks.

Underneath the red skin of a ripe coffee cherry is a slimy coating to the seed beneath. This coating has a



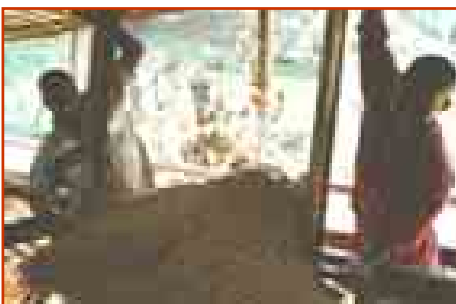
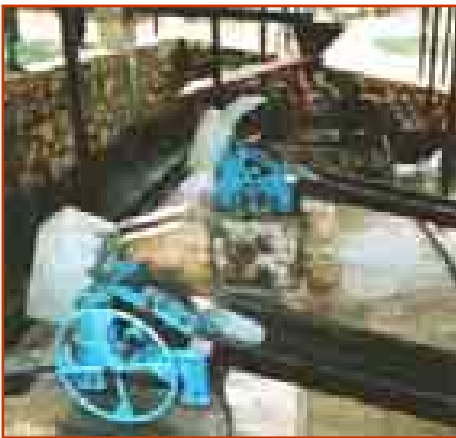
Not all the coffee cherries ripen at the same time



Abahuzamugambi's washing station



Hand-checking the quality of cherries



lot of sugar. If this sugar is kept, the flavour is impaired. There are natural bacteria on the skin of the cherry which, as soon as it is picked, ferment (i.e. eat the sugar). This means the cherries must be cleaned as soon as possible, and processed within 12 hours. The cherries are kept under water. They should sink, and any which float (due to bugs, genetic imperfections etc) are removed and processed separately. The cherries, with the water, are channelled into machines which slough off the skins. There are two manual devices and one recently-acquired, second-hand machine, which came from Nairobi. This can process a tonne of cherries an hour.

The densest cherries (the A grade) are the best. First, the heaviest ones pass through slots as they leave the machine, then the others are sent down a 1% graduated channel with the water. The lightest travel the furthest. Dams are used to pull out cherries in each section. The gracefully curving chute, painted sky-bright-blue, gives the station the air of an aquatic theme park. With the pulp off, the beans have a slimy texture. The B grade beans are separated off in this ingenious way and are processed separately.

The beans are kept in tanks while fermentation removes the sugar. This takes 15-20 hours. Then they are washed five times in clean spring water. They are ready when they squeak ("like a little tree frog") when rubbed in the hand, and when the run-off water is clean. The beans are then re-graded. The grading system works according to the buyers' needs, but is based on the size of the bean. The A grade beans will be kept in water for a further 24 hours, to give them a well-deserved rest.

Kabiligi Alexis weighs the cherries

The pulp-removing machines

The coffee flume

Washing the beans

Laying out the beans in the shade

Then the process of drying begins. In order not to shock the beans, the drying begins with four to six hours in the shade. The beans are turned by hand and more removal of poor-quality beans takes place. You need a keen eye, an alert mind and a quick hand to spot the bad beans. Now the beans have the appearance of parchment coffee, with the papery pale beige hulls visible. At the end of this stage, the beans are still 40% water. At times, the station is extremely busy, with 10,000 to 12,000 kg of coffee being processed. In this season, the end of the rainy season, everyone must work through the night. 80-100 people are seasonally employed by the station. At peak times, 200 extra people, mostly women, are employed in this checking stage.

The beans are then dried in the sun for 10-14 days, to reduce the water content to 12%. They are constantly turned by hand and re-checked by women wearing brightly coloured *pagnes*. They earn \$1 a day, almost twice the national average. It's hot work, out there in the sun, but the women chat easily to the sound of parchment coffee swooshing over nylon nets and the atmosphere is sociable.



A parchment horizon of sun-dried coffee

The beans are kept on nets so that at night and if rain comes, the women can dash out and quickly gather them up to protect them under plastic sheeting.

For the next stage, the coffee beans are relocated to the Co-op's nearby office/workshop. Here, the parchment skins are removed by a modern machine, bought in London for over \$13,000, representing a huge investment for the growing company. Because it can process two tonnes an hour, it has proved crucial in enabling them to meet the growing demand for their coffee. As the machine is switched on, a deep clattering shatters the air, the floor shakes, and the rumbling machine, fed from a bucket, hungrily ingests the beans, only to spit them out a few moments later, minus their

hulls.

A second machine removes any final shell pieces and any bad beans, whilst simultaneously shaking the beans across screens, dividing them into two sizes. And out they come, the raw beans, looking like dully polished shards of the ocean. The bigger beans – the most prized – are exported. The smaller beans are usually sold within Rwanda.



*The hungry de-huller is fed by
Muramutsa Canisius*

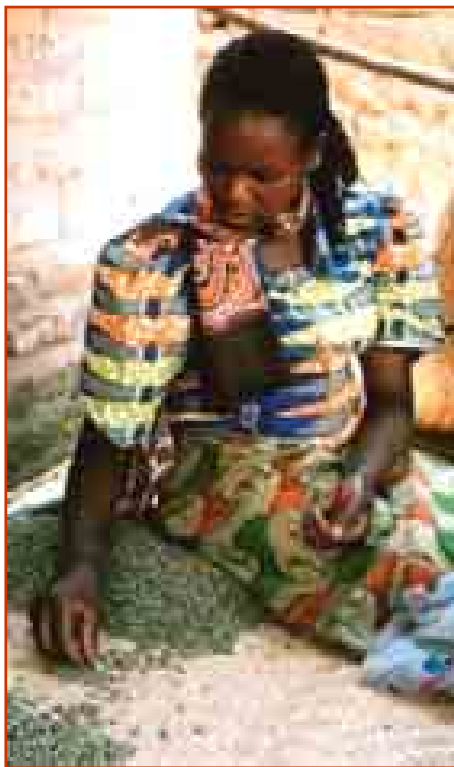
*Nziranziza Védaste operates
the grading machine*



This is not yet the end of the quality control process. A final hand-sorting is carried out by experts among the women. The Co-op is the first organisation to bring this employment to the rural areas of Rwanda. In 2002, 87 women were employed: this almost doubled in 2003 to 166.

Now the coffee beans, packaged in large cloth bags, are ready to go to the roasters. It's now known as green coffee, after the nearly translucent sea-green colour of the raw bean. Most of the coffee is exported to the UK and the US, but some goes to a small roasting company in Butare. Here, the coffee is roasted at 200°C for 25 minutes, during which time the coffee must be constantly moving. Then it is ready to be ground, packaged, and sent out to the shops.

The Maraba coffee began to be sold in 350 Sainsbury's stores in March 2003. It sold out quickly. As consumers become more aware of the effects of their purchasing decisions, Fairtrade's proportion of the market is rapidly increasing: 14% of the coffee bought in the UK is now Fairtrade. It's also popular in Rwanda (right): two VSO volunteers enjoy a cup of Maraba Bourbon in a café in Butare. Being pure Arabica, it has half the caffeine of a Robusta-based coffee; its distinctiveness is shown by its bright, sweet, clean, complex flavour (due in part to the altitude), with positive acidity. And it can be enjoyed safe in the knowledge that the money used to buy it made an essential contribution to improving the lives of some of Rwanda's people.



*A final hand-check by
Nyiramana Séraphine*



*Sacks of coffee
awaiting export*



*VSO volunteers Sally
Donaldson (left) and Sara
Edström enjoy a cup of
Maraba at a café in Butare*

the growers



*Executive Secretary
Habimana François*

HABIMANA FRANÇOIS, seen here proudly showing the President of Rwanda's signature in the Cooperative's visitors' book, has been the Executive Secretary of the Co-op since 2001. An energetic and enthusiastic 40 year-old, and a coffee grower himself, he was born in Maraba. He was one of the founding Co-op members in 1999. He used to sell his beans at the local market. Even with 2,000 plants, his annual income from coffee used to be less than \$100. The success of the Co-op has encouraged him to plant another 600 trees, and now his total income from

coffee has almost tripled, enabling him to buy clothes for his wife and 13 year old son and to rehabilitate their house.

"I have been able to purchase three cows and to diversify my crops to include bananas and sorghum, and, with my credit at the bank increased almost twenty-fold, to invest in the Co-op's canteen." To what does he attribute his increased standard of living? "The Co-operative." And, with the elections for the Co-op President coming up in the near future, he would like to stand for the presidency.

RUSANGAMWA JEAN-MARIE VIANNEY, 43, was one of the first members of the Co-op, and is now the second-biggest producer. Married with seven children, he used to get about \$50 a year for his coffee. By 2002 he was making quadruple this from the sale of his coffee and another \$75 from the Co-op's profit-sharing scheme.

"With that money, I've been able to build a house, rehabilitate my plantation and purchase a plot of land near the road where I want to sell agricultural produce." This will enable him to

provide a secure livelihood for his family, including sending all his children to secondary school. In addition to the extra money the Co-op has brought him, he also finds he now has extra time for other enterprises.

How does he enjoy the fruit of his labours? "Sadly, I don't have the opportunity to taste the coffee as I don't have access to the equipment needed to make it." But the Co-op is planning to get that so that the growers will finally be able to discover how the coffee over which they take such care tastes.



*Grower Rusangamwa
Jean-Marie Vianney*

WITH 67 YEARS and seven children to his name, Manyoni Oswald, the President of the Co-operative, is well placed to observe the changes in Rwanda, and knows a thing or two about coffee to boot!

His career in the coffee industry began in 1957, and by 1990 he was an expert at OCIR, (l'Office des Cultures Industrielles Rwandaises) the national coffee board. He keeps a watchful but good-natured eye on the Co-op.

"Coffee growing has changed tremendously," he



*Co-op President
Manyoni Oswald*

says. "With the Co-op, the money comes directly to the people. This brings its own responsibility and freedom: to use the money wisely, such as educating the children; to manage the business effectively, to benefit as many as possible; and to be worthy of the trust placed in us by the community. People have seen that taking pride in their work, and focussing on quality, brings a reward demonstrated in very simple terms: education, health and security."



WERA GEMA AND MUKAKAREGA VÉNÉRANDE are two of many women who not only cultivate coffee, but who also have a job with the Co-operative. They have observed numerous changes in their lifestyle since they became members of the Co-op in 1999.

Gema, 52, works at the washing station, where she is responsible for the drying stage. She also does some hand-sorting at the hulling station.

"I was able to pay the school fees for my eight children, rehabilitate my plantation, and buy a cow and

hand-sorts the beans at the washing and hulling stations.

"I have bought five cows, a pig, and four goats. No need to say that I eat a lot better! I have also helped one of my sons to build his house, and have provided another one with secondary education. And now, I also drink coffee!"

*Growers and employees
Wera Gema and
Mukakarega Vénérande*

a goat. I even hired some help to work in my plantation. I have bought clothes for my whole family, such as the pagne I am wearing today. And now, I drink coffee!"

Vénérande is 46 years old and lives alone with her four children, since her husband left her in 1994 for exile. She



coffee – the african drink



FOR THE PERFECT CUP, first of all choose your coffee carefully. *Medium roast* coffee beans have been slowly roasted to a nutty chocolate brown colour. The flavour is usually characterised by a bright acidity, and is a good daytime drink. *Dark roast* beans have been roasted for a little longer; the flavour is more complex: fuller, rounder, with more body and perhaps a hint of smoke. It makes an excellent after dinner drink or espresso. *Arabica* beans are generally considered superior to *Robusta*; being more vulnerable to frost and disease, they are also more expensive. Most Robusta ends up in instant coffee, or even used to supply the caffeine for cola beverages. Arabica, with its delicate flavour, suits a lighter roast, while Robusta benefits more from a longer roast.

Next, storage is important. Keep your coffee in the fridge, or at least in a cool, dry place. Keep it well sealed and away from strong flavours or aromas. Buy little and often, so that the coffee you use is as fresh as possible.

To make the perfect cup of coffee, it's best to grind the beans each time you brew it. An espresso maker needs a finer grind; use a coarser grind for a *cafetière*; a filter or percolator is in-between. A too-fine grind will lead to over-extraction, and a bitter flavour to the coffee; too coarse to flat-tasting coffee. Use fresh, clean, cold water. Allow 7g of coffee per person. If you don't use enough coffee, you will get over-extraction. Don't boil the coffee – it impairs the flavour – and don't re-heat it. For a *cafetière*, pour hot water onto the grounds and leave for four minutes. For a cappuccino effect, you can fluff milk in a *cafetière*: put an inch of hot milk in it and vigorously push the plunger up and down.

For a voluptuous hot-day treat, heat one cup of milk per

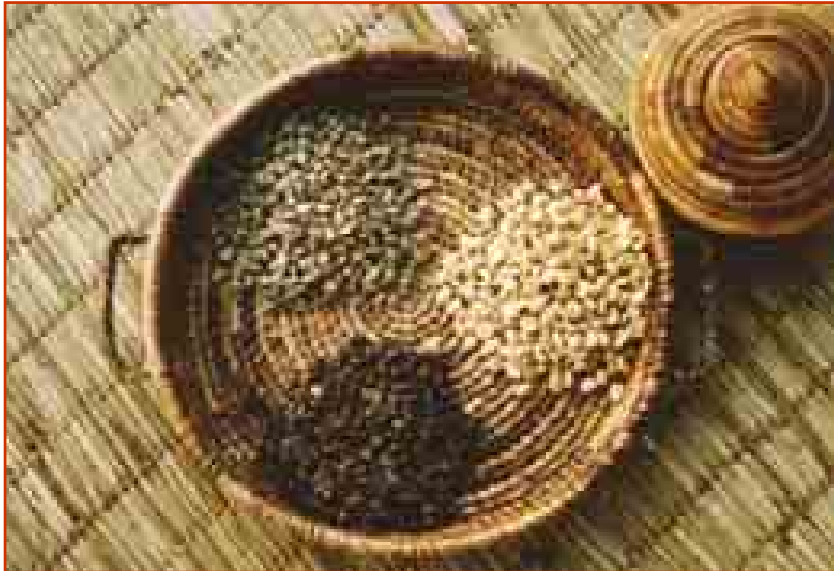
person, having first added one teaspoon of brown sugar per person, one teaspoon of cocoa powder, and one teaspoon of instant custard powder. When it is just boiling, add ground coffee. Leave for four minutes, then filter the grounds from the coffee. Leave to cool, then put in the fridge. Meanwhile, make some strong, black coffee, leave to cool, and then put into ice-cube moulds, and put into the freezer. Now the difficult bit: wait. When the cubes are frozen, put them into the cold coffee. Whisk for a delicious ice-coffee shake.



It's popular in the West these days to add a flavour to your coffee. Whilst that may appal purists, the people on the African island of Zanzibar have been doing it for centuries. Add a little cinnamon, cardamom, star anise, ginger and a hint of clove to your coffee as it brews for a dash of spice.

The source of your coffee is important too. Coffee originated in Ethiopia, and was first cultivated commercially there in the 15th Century. The story goes that a young goat herd named Kaldi noticed that his goats got a little





*Green (top left),
parchment (right)
and roasted beans*

friskier after eating the berries from a certain tree. He tentatively tried a berry himself, and all his tiredness evaporated. He told his holy man, who experimented by brewing the berries in water. The monk found to his delight that he could pray all night. Legend has it that an Arab prince called Mohammed named the new drink *qahwah*, which means invigorating and stimulating in Arabic, although it is also claimed that the word has Amharic origins. The word in Rwanda is *ikawa*.

The drink spread to Arabia and beyond as Suleiman the Magnificent conquered lands up to the Mediterranean. The Ottomans found the drink to their liking too, and soon coffee houses in Vienna were sprouting up. Café culture had

finally arrived in Europe. In the 17th Century, the coffee houses of London and Paris were the places to be seen for intellectuals and artists alike. Meanwhile, large-scale commercial plantations had been begun in Yemen. In Uganda the beans, roasted in their hulls,



had acquired a reputation as an aphrodisiac when chewed, and had assumed ritualistic importance. Dipped in blood from a small cut in the navel, they became symbols of blood-brotherhood between friends. Wrapped in banana-leaf sachets (left), these beans are still sold on the streets of Kampala today, reminding us that coffee is to Africa what chocolate is to South America.

Nowadays, coffee is produced all over the tropical world, and each region has its own distinction. But the most important factors in choosing coffee are these: it should be what *you* like, and it should have been fairly traded.

*Ezra Luggya, (left), a coffee
farmer seeking Fairtrade
accreditation, and Michael
Kijjambu, technical manager
of the 1000 Cups Café in
Kampala, discuss business
over cappuccino*



the world coffee market

"At the same time coffee prices fell: where we had got a hundred pounds a ton we now got sixty or seventy. Times grew hard on the farm. We could not pay our debts, and

we had no money for the running of the plantation. My people at home, who had shares in the farm, wrote out to me and told me that I would have to sell."

*Karen Blixen,
'Out of Africa', 1937.*

KAREN BLIXEN had the luxury of being able to return to her home in Denmark when her coffee farm in Kenya failed financially. Coffee farmers today have no such option, yet remain just as vulnerable to the world coffee market.

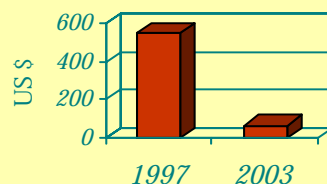
Coffee is the fifth most widely traded commodity in the world. It is also one of the few products that cannot be produced in the Western world. Around 25 million households depend on growing coffee beans for their livelihoods, and many of them live in extreme poverty. Coffee is often grown in remote regions where little else can be done to earn a living.

The world coffee market is dominated by four large companies: Kraft General Foods, Sara Lee, Procter & Gamble and Nestlé. These companies own many of the household-name brands which appear on supermarket shelves. Philip Morris, which owns Kraft, and Nestlé alone have more than half the world market in processed coffee. Coffee sells on the world market for about 55 cents a kilo, but a bag of coffee for use in a café costs around 16 times that price, so their profits are high: Nestlé – the world's largest food company, whose annual net profits are almost quadruple the entire yearly income of the country of Rwanda – has made an estimated 26% profit margin from instant coffee. Sara Lee's coffee profits are estimated to be nearly 17%. These are very high figures compared to other food and drink brands.

communities have had to cut back on health, education and improving agricultural methods. Sometimes farmers are now burning their coffee for fuel instead of selling it, and many farmers are leaving their farms to move to cities in search of work. The price of coffee in the shops has not fallen, however.

The coffee industry is changing from a managed market with some government control (both nationally and internationally) to a free market where anyone can participate and where the market itself sets the coffee price – something that has brought down the raw material prices for the big coffee companies. With only four major buyers in the market, the downward pressure on price is strong. It hasn't always been that way. Not only did there use to be more coffee buyers, before the

*Price per 100 kg
coffee bag*



*In May 1997, coffee traded
on the world market
fetched about \$7 a kilo.*

*That fell to a
low of 99 cents.*

Most of the coffee traded in the world is grown by small producers from developing countries. Between 2000 and 2003 the price of coffee fell by almost 50% to a 35-year low – an all time low in real terms – and many farmers now sell their coffee beans for much less than it costs to produce them. This means that many

days of large mergers and acquisitions, but in 1962 an International Coffee Agreement was negotiated by the UN. The idea was to allocate export quotas so that

each coffee-producing country would be guaranteed a certain share of the coffee market. In 1989 the International Coffee Agreement collapsed when the United States, under pressure from multinational

“In 1997, we produced about 14,500 tonnes of coffee and got from that \$45 million. Last year we produced 19,000 tonnes and got less than half that amount.”

Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda

companies, refused to renew it. Since then there have been no means of controlling coffee supply and small farmers are left helpless against falling prices. 10 years ago, producers worldwide got 40% of the money spent on coffee. Today, they get 16%.

The standardised coffee blends we buy today are sometimes mixed from up to 20 different coffee types, which means that the characteristics and quality of each individual type are of little importance. This makes it easy for the big companies to buy only from the lowest-cost producers at ‘take it or leave it’ prices on the free market to mix their blends. From lack of transport and price information, most of the small coffee growers have no choice but to accept the price offered – if one grower is unwilling to sell at a certain price, there is always someone else who will.

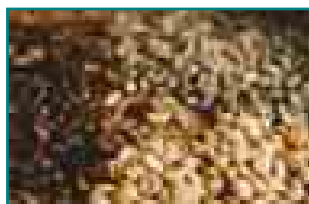
In addition to the lack of price control, there is also a problem of oversupply in the world. At the moment, 8% more coffee is being produced than consumed. For instance, Vietnam has recently entered into the market and now supplies 10% of the world’s coffee and Brazil, already the biggest producer, has increased its production.

The falling price of coffee takes place in the context of accelerating globalisation. Although this

promises a fair and level playing field in the market, some say the richer countries use their economic and political power to influence trading rules and conditions (usually set by the World Trade Organisation or in bilateral agreements between countries). Developing countries traditionally produce commodities (unprocessed or raw materials) as a result of their colonial legacy:

the colonial powers were keen to develop them as suppliers of raw materials for their own manufacturers. Developed countries continue to have strong manufacturing and services bases. These latter industries tend to be more profitable. Because

manufacturers and service providers would prefer to face limited competition, and because governments naturally want to protect their national industries, obstacles are placed in the path of the industrialisation of developing countries. These obstacles might include high tariffs (taxes paid on goods imported into a country) on manufactured goods from poor countries, or quotas (limits) on goods allowed into rich country markets. On average, rich countries charge poor countries tariffs which are four times higher than they charge other rich countries. The tariff Canada charges



Kenya for processed coffee is 12 times higher than that it charges for unprocessed. These policies discourage poor countries from diversifying their economies and from developing their own manufacturing

bases, keeping them reliant on a few commodities, the prices of which are notoriously low and unstable. This reliance makes the poor countries very vulnerable.

Poor country farmers face a further difficulty: they must compete with rich country farmers who benefit from generous agricultural subsidies from their governments; subsidies which poor country governments could not hope to match, and which anyway have been made illegal by conditions on aid set by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

One cup of coffee sells on average for \$2.70 in a rich country.

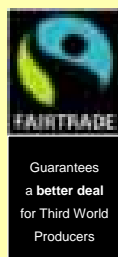
The farmer in the poor country gets, on average, \$0.023.

In Rwanda, the falling price of coffee has increased the trade deficit (i.e. the value of Rwanda’s exports is less than its imports). This in turn has led to depreciation of its currency, the Rwandan franc, against the US dollar. Because Rwanda must buy its oil in dollars, this means that transport costs have become much more expensive. This causes inflation, and also leads to greater national debt, as the government must borrow the shortfall. Rwanda’s debt amounts to \$1,292,000,000.

But there are initiatives on coffee that are meeting with success, albeit a restricted one. One example is Fairtrade. This is a trading

The goals of Fairtrade are:

- *To improve the livelihoods and wellbeing of producers by improving market access, strengthening the producer organisations, paying a better price and providing continuity in the trading relationship.*
- *To promote development opportunities for disadvantaged producers, especially women and indigenous people, and to protect people from exploitation in the production process.*
- *To help consumers exercise their purchasing power positively, by raising their awareness of the negative effects of international trade on producers.*
- *To set an example of partnership in trade through dialogue, transparency and respect.*
- *To campaign for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade.*
- *To protect human rights by promoting social justice, sound environmental practices and economic security.*



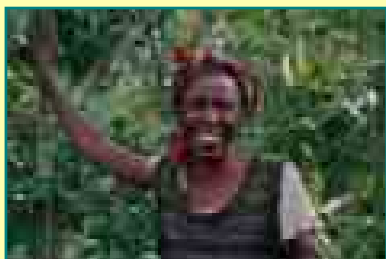
partnership that works for greater equity in international trade. It offers better trading conditions (such as a guaranteed minimum price) to producers in developing countries, thereby contributing to sustainable development of their local communities.

In January 2003, the Fairtrade minimum price paid to coffee

grower's associations and co-operatives was \$2.70 a kilo for Arabica coffee. The agreement is that 11 cents per kilo of the price is to be used for social and commercial development projects in the local communities where the coffee is grown. If the price on the world coffee market exceeds the minimum price, the Fairtrade price will always be 11 cents per kilo more. In Italy, one of the greatest coffee-drinking countries, 39.2% of the retail price of Fairtrade coffee goes to the producer. With non-Fairtrade, the producer gets only 3.75%.

Although Fairtrade and other actions, like the production of speciality coffee, have proved successful in fighting poverty, they only affect a few percent of the world's coffee producers. In order to break the current trend of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, a more systematic solution is needed to make the coffee market work for all.

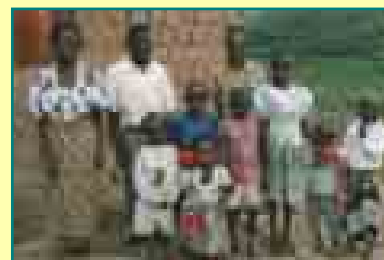
MUKARUZIGA BEATRICE lives in Gisunzu, Kibuye Province. From her one-room mud house on the slopes of the Western Rift Valley the bright blue waters of Lake Kivu can be seen. Down in the valley, small children fill 20 litre bright-yellow jerry-cans of water in the stream, and haul them up the hill. Around her house, which she shares with three generations of her family, coffee bushes hang laden with fat, glossy green cherries. Like all the other small coffee growers in Rwanda, she



not only tends the bushes, but also skins, washes and dries the beans, an exacting process.

But the health of the trees and abundance of the cherries is misleading. Battling against the continually falling price of coffee, she and nine of her neighbours have joined forces to form the Tuzamurane Co-operative. 'Tuzamurane' means 'let us help each other to develop'. Together the members have around 300 trees. They put their crop together to be sold, and then divide the price according to the weight of beans that each person contributes. Even so, they receive very little for their beans.

Mukaruziga Beatrice with her trees (left) and family (above)



"The price is very, very low," says Beatrice. "People are not happy. They have taken down their coffee trees because they no longer bring any money."

Despite trying to stand together to raise the price, the co-operative still only succeeds in getting 18 – 21 cents a kilo for its Robusta coffee; sometimes the price can fall to 9 cents if they have not been able to wash the coffee properly. "Before 1994 the price was higher. Now the price is lowering all the time."

MONDAY MORNING, 8 AM. Ntirampaga Sosthène, the biology teacher from the local school, comes rushing in carrying a plastic bag. Wrapped in the bag is a charred piece of wood. It looks like any other piece of charcoal, the local fuel for cooking. “But this,” he explains breathlessly, “is different. This is coffee. This is unheard of.”



Together we visit the Tuzamurane and Abakumbuye co-operatives.

Women old and young straddle the hillside; hoes flash in the sunlight as they weed their coffee plantation; a tight line of colour and sweat and togetherness traversing the slope. A baby is strapped to her mother's back as she works; older toddlers play on a blanket under the trees. Beatrice looks up from her work and catches my eye and smiles her beautiful smile. All gently greet us. Although the work is hard the women are in good spirits, and I feel a pang of guilt when the atmosphere dulls as Sosthène and I ask about the coffee.

“It's true,” Beatrice says. “We are leaving the cherries on the trees to rot. The price is so low. We lose money if we pick and prepare them. What else can we do?”

All the women are subsistence cultivators. They grow their own food, but need cash to send their children to school, buy them clothes, or get medicine when they are ill. They have no other source of income but the coffee. How much does it bring them, I ask.



Women from the Abakumbuye Co-op

“When we started, before 1994, we used to get 30,000 – 50,000 francs (then \$220 – \$360) a year. Since then, we have invested in a far greater area—” Beatrice gestures around her at the immaculately tended plantation “—but now we receive much, much less.” In fact, the co-op now receives perhaps \$30-50 a year.

All the women have children in primary school; Beatrice has two in secondary school – no small achievement.

“We work with all energy to find money. But it is hard to pay the fees. We buy second-hand uniforms but that means we can't afford to buy tiles to repair our roof and the rain gets in.”

How long is it possible to continue, I ask.

“We are tending the plants for now, but if things don't improve we will have to give up. We have tried intercropping, growing aubergines and cabbages for the local market, but we just can't make it pay. We don't know what we will do.”

I know the economics of this, that this is the market adjusting itself: in a time of oversupply production capacity will be cut. But that doesn't help these people. And it doesn't have to be this way.

The Tuzamurane Co-op with VSO volunteer Jonathan Penson and colleague Ntirampaga Sosthène



TAKE A LOOK AT THE PACKETS OF COFFEE in the photo. Which do you recognise? Chances are, the only one available on your supermarket shelves, if you live in a developed country, is the Nescafé instant coffee. It's a common conception that African countries are only capable of producing raw materials: it is said that it needs the technology and expertise available in Western countries to manufacture instant coffee from raw beans. Yet the other three tins of instant coffee in the picture were all produced in developing countries: Dormans in Kenya, Africafé in Tanzania, and Star in Uganda. They're widely available in East Africa: in fact, all these tins, including the Swiss Nescafé, were bought in a Kampala supermarket. Flavoured Rwandan roasted beans; organic Ugandan Arabica ground coffee – all are available in East Africa. So how come you can buy Nescafé, a European product, in Africa, but you can't buy African products in Europe?

Developed countries' tariffs on imported, manufactured goods from developing countries are part of the answer. But there are other barriers to free and fair trade. The Star coffee company wanted to export its roasted, ground coffee to Europe. To gain the necessary licences from the European Union to import it into Europe, the company was told it would have to change the way it packaged its coffee to meet stringent European guidelines. The equipment necessary would have cost the company its entire earnings for seven years – and would have had to have been imported from Europe.

Together with the extra taxes developing country companies must pay to developed countries to get their products into the affluent Western markets, the costs of these non-tariff barriers eat into the profitability of the African countries' companies. Even if they can get into Western markets in the first place, in order to keep their prices low enough to compete with the products from huge Western companies, who benefit from economies of scale, the African companies cannot afford to be generous in paying their

suppliers or workers – prolonging poverty.

In return for aid or debt relief, poor countries must open their markets to rich countries' products, in the name of free trade. So a tin of Nescafé exported into Uganda will not face the same level of import duty as a tin of Star coffee exported to Switzerland. So the rich country government receives more tax from a poor country company than a poor country government does from a rich country company. And the tin of Nescafé, backed by huge advertising budgets, can be sold more cheaply, competing with local products; often wiping them out completely.

Why is it important that poor countries should be able to export instant coffee? Simply because the profits from processed goods are higher than those from unprocessed. Say you go to the market to buy some soya beans. If beans in one shop are \$1.39 a kilo, and \$1.79 a kilo in the next shop, it's easy to see which shop offers the better value. The supermarkets must therefore compete with each other by offering low prices on products like these. But now let's say that in one supermarket you see a packet of ready-made Quorn Kiev, complete with a prepared side salad, which costs \$4.50. In another supermarket is a packet of sweet and sour Quorn, complete with prepared vegetables, at \$6.50. Which is the better value? It's harder to say. Because of this, the supermarkets can more easily charge higher prices; prices which are higher than the cost of the extra ingredients and processing. The same principle – that of 'value-addedness' – applies to almost everything: manufactured goods – the products of industry – offer disproportionately higher returns than commodities.

the roasters

FAIRTRADE IS ABOUT EQUAL PARTNERSHIPS between producers, traders and consumers: trade where everyone benefits. Steven Macatonia of Union Coffee Roasters, the UK importers of Maraba coffee, explains his company's relationship with Abahuzamugambi.

"Rwanda Maraba Bourbon is a very special coffee grown by the

there were 300 farmers and only a tiny smallholder association. We had never sourced from Rwanda before – but were intrigued by a World Bank report which examined how the country's coffee industry could be restructured after the devastating effects of the genocide, to ensure maximum return to its people. The report concluded the best way to achieve this aim was to focus on the high end, speciality market: upon further investigation we learned of two development agencies (Pearl and USAID) that had taken the recommendations on board, and were beginning intensive crop education for the people of Maraba with the support of the national coffee board.

"This development was key. Working with organised bodies, we soon learnt of the new approach by which coffee in Maraba would be processed in the future. Instead of growers having to hull, wash, dry and sell the coffee cherries to the local mill after harvesting, they would bring the ready-picked fruit to representatives of the new Co-operative where it would be graded, sorted and pulped through a coffee washing station. Growers would now be able to focus on tending and caring for their crop – harvesting only those



*Steven Macatonia
roasting Maraba
coffee at Union
Roasters in London*

most remarkable people – which we at Union Coffee Roasters are immensely proud to include among our portfolio of exceptional hand roasted Arabica single estates.

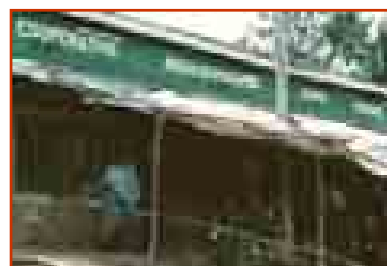
"Our relationship with the Co-operative is highly unusual in world coffee today, but one that we believe is essential to secure the long term future of the industry. It is an example of a mutually beneficial partnership between roaster and grower, focused on improving quality and developing a viable, sustainable mass market for the finished produce.

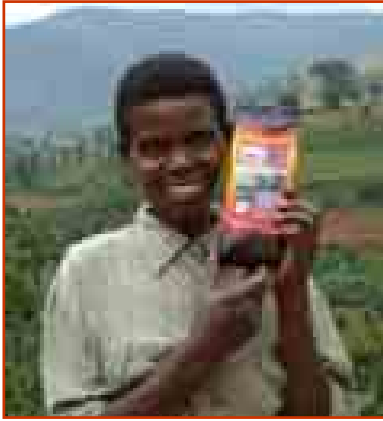
"We began working with the Maraba growers back in 2001, when

cherries that were ripe – while workers at the Co-operative would be paid to ensure the quality was exemplary.

"This was all fantastic news. But the real element that needed to be introduced was a guarantee of a market, and a fair, sustainable and long term relationship with a suitable roaster. We had been working with the growers for some time prior to the introduction of the washing station – through providing support and feedback on further improvements that needed to be made to ensure the quality would be high enough for discerning consumption in the UK. With its introduction, our involvement increased ten-fold – suddenly there was a real opportunity, and we established

dialogues with the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation and Sainsbury's. It was critical for us to gain both parties' support and involvement. Fairtrade was needed because consumers had to recognise quickly and





*Mukakalisa Venantie–
the face of the first pack
of Union Maraba coffee*

Sainsbury's stocked our coffee as part of the Red Nose Day 2003 campaign.

"We categorically support Fairtrade and seek to extend the message in every area of our work today. We not only work with certified producer co-operatives, but also single family farms that – despite caring for their workers and environment – are unable to be a part of the Fairtrade movement because of their estate status. In specific respect to Rwanda, we are amazed to see how sustainable trade, and our money specifically, has helped change the lives of the Maraba growers in just under a year. In 2001, growers were only receiving 120 Rwandan francs per kilo (around \$0.23), but received 400 on receipt of the 2002 harvest! Our colleagues in the development agencies estimate that at least one child per family group was able to go to local school as a direct result of the Maraba project. Of the 650 Co-operative family members in 2002, they also estimate that 150 have bought a grazing animal, 300 have access to healthcare through the mutual system and all have made some kind of improvement to their

efficiently the broader picture that the growers were part of – and the immensely positive nature of this project. A supermarket of Sainsbury's stature had to be on board so that a guaranteed volume market was open, so that as many people as possible could share that story. Happily, Abahuzamugambi received Fairtrade accredited status in 2002 – a landmark decision, as it was the first time a roaster had made a direct application on behalf of a producer group – and

dwellings – from building additional rooms to even completely new houses.

"But the key point here is that this isn't recent history – it's happening right before our eyes. That's the beauty of Fairtrade, it's a continuum that's developing and improving people's lives all the time. We have just recently started taking delivery of the 2003 – the second – crop of the Abahuzamugambi Co-operative.



*Maraba coffee is for sale
in the UK and the US.*

Now, there are 1,500 members directly benefiting from Fairtrade and learning about how Arabica coffee of exceptional quality should be produced. Before Fairtrade, there were just 300. For the first time the people of Rwanda have a tangible hold on a brighter future. We're delighted to be a part of that."



*Mukashyaka Gemima– the
new face of Union's Maraba
coffee – receiving a pack
from Union's Jeremy Torz
at her home in Rwanda*





*Espresso beans from Kenya,
roasted to rich, dark
perfection in Nairobi*



*'Coffee eradicates Poverty':
the slogan of the Ugandan
Coffee Development Board*



*Arabica beans, expertly
roasted by Bancafé
in Kampala*

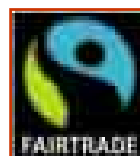
FAIRTRADE, then, is one very effective way of challenging the global trading conditions which disadvantage the poor. Yet it is successful because of the existence of those conditions, offering as it does an ethical alternative to them. Abahuzamugambi has learnt to specialise, but of course, by definition, not every coffee farmer can do so. For every farmer who benefits from Fairtrade there are countless others who do not. So, while we should buy Fairtrade products whenever we can (and not only coffee), never forgetting the very real difference it makes to people's lives, we must also recognise that, by itself, Fairtrade is not a solution to the iniquities in the global trading system. It is at best a stop-gap measure. Increasing Fairtrade's market share is the most effective way to pressure the multinational companies to sit up and take note of the fact that consumers *do* care about the plight of the poor. Faced with losing out completely or accepting slightly reduced profits, the companies *will* change their ways.

But what we really need to advocate is change in the global trading system itself. We need to press the governments which constitute the World Trade Organisation to agree to lower tariff barriers which discriminate against the poor – particularly tariffs on manufactured goods – and to end the outdated system of agricultural subsidies. Rich countries recognise that subsidies prevent true free trade – after all, they condition aid loans on poor countries removing tariffs and subsidies – yet subsidies are actually increasing in rich countries. The International Coffee Agreement needs to be revived. Above all, we need to tell our politicians and our shops that we do not wish our taxes and our custom to be used as weapons against the poor.

Rwanda is a small country which has insufficient land to support its burgeoning population. This means that its people must grow cash crops not only to educate their children or obtain clothes, but simply to survive, by buying food which they cannot produce enough of themselves. It is a precarious balancing act: in weighing up the different uses of land, for income or for food, cash crops must justify themselves with a reasonable market price. It is arguably no coincidence that the escalation of the ethnic crisis in Rwanda which culminated in the genocide of 1994 only really took hold when the entire national economy was obliterated with the collapse of the International Coffee Agreement in 1989. Land hunger becomes a battle for survival in times of acute destitution, and every incidence of genocide in the world has followed times of financial upheaval. Just look at the effects of the 1930's depression on Germany.

Fairtrade initiatives prove that trade can be equitable; that consumers can be guaranteed a high-quality, value-for-money product whilst at the same time producers are offered a fair return. Is it so hard to believe that this mutually beneficial arrangement cannot be applied globally?

Look for this logo



when shopping

activities

Activity: Price Crash

Target group: secondary school, UK/Canada etc

Objective: to raise awareness of the real effect of trade

Action plan:

- Look at the graph on page 16. Work out the percentage decrease in the price of coffee (i.e. from \$550/100kg to \$65/100kg). This percentage is how much the income of coffee farmers has fallen.
- In groups, imagine that your families' incomes suddenly fall by a similar proportion. How would you cope? Together, write an action plan for managing on your reduced income. What would you no longer be able to afford to do? Would you be able to stay in school, for example? How would your diet change? Prioritise your spending cuts in the order you would need to do them.
- Present your action plan to the class, explaining why you have made the cuts you have.

THESE ACTIVITIES WERE GENERATED by VSO volunteers and their colleagues in Rwanda during a GAS workshop. We hope you find the ideas useful as a starting point for your own activities to raise awareness about the impact of consumer decisions on poor countries and the benefits of Fairtrade. We've also provided some photos which you can cut out to use as classroom resources, perhaps to initiate discussions.

Do please share your experiences using this booklet on our website – www.vso.org.uk/thecoffeeproject – where you can also find further ideas for activities.

Activity: Fairtrade for a Fair Future

Target group: community based organisations in Rwanda

Objective: the promotion of Fairtrade co-ops

Action plan:

- Using case study material, compare Fairtrade co-ops with non-Fairtrade co-ops.
- Quizzes (asking questions whose answers are in the booklet).
- Role-plays – choose characters featured in the book to present the benefit of work as co-ops.
- Dramas, stories (using puppets).
- Question and answer sessions using advisors to build interest and give first-hand accounts.
- Brainstorm other possible projects e.g. chilli peppers.

Activity: Dole Out the Dosh

Target group: community groups in the UK/Canada etc; adults, 20+, coffee drinkers

Objective: to raise awareness of where the money for a cup of coffee goes

Action plan:

- Sell/serve a cup of coffee and ask the buyer to play a game.
- Provide the buyer with three saucers labelled 'grower', 'exporter' and 'seller' and coffee beans representing the price of a non-Fairtrade cup of coffee.
- Ask buyer to divide the beans among the saucers to show how much money they think each group gets.
- Redistribute the beans to show the real proportion.
- Ask them to do the same for Fairtrade coffee.
- Encourage discussion, distribute copies of this booklet.

Activity: Card-making activity for coffee production process

Target group: secondary schools, Rwanda or Canada/UK etc

Objective: to learn the coffee-making process

Action plan:

- Create cards with pictures depicting stages of the coffee production process.
- Also make cards with written descriptions of the stages.
- Put students in groups of approximately five.
- Match pictures with written descriptions.
- Sequence cards.
- Match personal case studies to roles in the production process.

Activity: Promotion of Fairtrade Coffee in Canadian/UK etc Supermarkets
Target group: everyone who buys coffee

Objective: to promote Fairtrade coffee

Action plan:

- Install kiosks which give information and tastings of Fairtrade coffee.
- Distribute a résumé of the contents of this booklet.

Buy from shops such as Oxfam and Traidcraft rather than large supermarkets, as more of the price you pay will go to benefit the poor.

Activity: Debate

Target group: senior secondary school, UK/Canada etc

Objective: to discuss the importance of coffee production in a coffee-producing country e.g. Rwanda

Action plan:

- Pre-teach with activities about Fairtrade, coffee consumption in Rwanda, home production, imports and exports.
- Divide class into 'for' and 'against' teams. You could assign roles, such as coffee producers/buyers, or politicians/consumers.
- Debate. Some ideas:
 - "The current system of trading is unfair to poor countries."
 - "Coffee companies should put profits for their shareholders before other considerations."
 - "Fairtrade not Aid."

Activity: Anika's Lesson Plan

Target group: primary school in Canada/UK etc (ages 8-11)

Objective: to introduce and show a clear picture of Fairtrade

Action plan:

- Chocolate taste test! Use good, medium and cheap qualities, and Fairtrade. Which is cheaper? Which tastes better?
- Story: coffee growers' story with two endings. Students choose which ending is the fairer.
- Present information – pictures and facts, reflections and discussion.
- Extension: students write a letter to their 'leader' or supermarket advocating Fairtrade products; skits; design labels and products which inform about Fairtrade.
- Field trip to a supermarket: students can compare prices and products; look and see where the products are placed.

Write a letter to your local MP/political representative, explaining your concern about the effects of trade and asking them what they are doing to promote a fairer system.

Activity: The Grinder of World Trade

Target group: presentation audiences e.g. church groups, employers, schools, colleagues; all ages

Objective: to demonstrate the unfairness of the trade system

Action plan:

- Choose three volunteers from the audience. Give the first a large badge saying 'Coffee Consumer'; the second a badge saying 'Coffee Retailer' and the third a badge saying 'Coffee Producer'.
- Give the Consumer 20 coffee beans. Each bean represents 10 cents. Give the Retailer a cup of coffee. Get the two to act out buying and selling the cup of coffee, using the beans as money.
- Ask the Retailer to pass on some of the beans to the Producer. Involve the audience, asking if they agree that what the Retailer gives is fair. Ask the audience to tell you the approximate percentage that the Producer gets from the price of the cup of coffee.
- Take the beans from the Producer, and put them through a coffee grinder – the Coffee Grinder of World Trade. Give a tiny pinch of coffee grounds back to them. Reveal the actual percentage: 0.05% (see inside back cover). Ask if the audience thinks that this figure is fair.
- This activity makes a great introduction to a session which explores why this figure is so low, what the effects of the figure on producers are, and what consumers can do about it.
- After explaining about Fairtrade, go on to show what you can buy: juice, clothes, footballs, Christmas puddings, muesli...



Activity: Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony

Target group: school or community groups in the UK/Canada etc

Objective: to raise cultural awareness

Action plan:

- Get the participants to remove the skins from parchment coffee by hand.
- Show them how to roast the beans on a charcoal stove.
- When they are roasted, show them how to grind the beans in a mortar and pestle.
- Boil the coffee grounds on the stove in an earthenware coffee pot, fanning the flames.
- Add only a little water, and boil until the coffee is thickening. Then add a tablespoon of cold water, and place the coffee pot at an angle, to allow the grounds to settle. Then decant the coffee into small china cups.
- Drink and enjoy!

Follow-up Activities: Next time you're in your supermarket:

- Find the coffee shelves. Which brands do you notice? Companies pay the supermarkets to display them prominently. This means putting their brands at eye-level, and putting several rows of the same brand. Has the supermarket displayed Fairtrade brands in this way?
- Find out who owns the coffee brands. You could use the book 'Who Owns Whom' in the reference section of your local library, or check on the internet. See if you can find out what other products these companies make. Make a table, showing which companies own which brands.
- See how many other Fairtrade products you can find. What countries do they come from? What do you know about these countries? Are they rich or poor?
- What Fairtrade products do you feel are missing? What would you like the supermarket to stock? Write a letter or talk to the manager of your local supermarket, asking them about their Fairtrade policy, and requesting them to stock these products.
- Carry out a survey of your family and friends. Find out if they buy Fairtrade products, and what they know about Fairtrade. (If necessary, you can explain to them!) Find out how much extra they would be prepared to pay for Fairtrade products. Then check the prices of a range of products in a shop. Are Fairtrade products more or less expensive than your friends are willing to pay?
- Buy Fairtrade whenever you can. Encourage your friends and family to do the same.

**And don't forget the 'Coffee, Fairtrade and Rwanda' PowerPoint presentation:
available from jonathanpenson2000@yahoo.co.uk**





We would like to suggest the following for more information:

www.cafedirect.co.uk
www.careforcoffee.co.uk
www.fairtrade.org.uk
www.makepovertyhistory.org.uk
www.maketrade-fair.com
www.oneworld.org
www.unionroasters.com
www.vso.org.uk

*'Coffee, Fairtrade and Rwanda' is downloadable in English, French and Kinyarwanda at:
www.vso.org.uk/thecoffeeproject*

*Download the latest Global Awareness Syndicate Magazines at
www.vso.org.uk/thecoffeeproject*

The downloads are free, but a donation to VSO would be appreciated:

Voluntary Service Overseas,
317 Putney Bridge Road,
London.
SW15 2PN

For more information about Global Awareness Syndicate publications and activities, including the PowerPoint presentation which accompanies this booklet, please contact gas@vsoint.org

- *A Rwandan coffee grower gets 17 cents for a kilo of green Robusta coffee.*
- *She sells the beans to an agent for an international exporter.*
- *A roaster buys the beans, which shrink in the roasting – so it takes 1¼ kg of green to make 1 kg of roasted.*
- *The roasted beans are sold wholesale.*
- *A café buys the beans, and, using 7g a cup, sells the coffee for \$2.70 a cup.*
- *So each kilo of coffee now fetches \$385 – for which the grower got 20.25 cents. That's \$0.001 per cup. Or 0.05%.*
- *Is that fair?*

Sources:

Guardian Weekly; International Federation for Alternative Trade; Cafédirect; Oxfam, Make Trade Fair; Fair Trade Foundation; Fairtrade Labelling Organisation International; International Coffee Organisation; The Globe and Mail, 17/6/02; Mariagrazia Bonollo, 9/11/03 (<http://lists.peacelink.it/pcknews/msg06628.html>); Philippe Legrain, Open World, Abacus; Sabata Sera, 27/12/03; The Ladybird Book of Coffee.

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Voluntary Service Overseas and Union Coffee Roasters.*

- *Do you know where the coffee you drink comes from?*
- *Do you know how coffee is produced?*
- *What do you know about Fairtrade?*

Coffee, Fairtrade and Rwanda explores the mechanisms of world commerce and Fairtrade, using an example we can all relate to: coffee. In this booklet you will learn how coffee is produced, bought and sold and you will meet the people involved in different steps of the chain: the growers, the processors, the roasters, the sellers and the buyers.

Coffee, Fairtrade and Rwanda has been produced by the Global Awareness Syndicate – a group of VSO volunteers in Rwanda – to help people in their global education work both overseas and in their home countries. Included is a list of suggested activities to use when working with the booklet in classrooms or communities. A PowerPoint presentation to accompany the booklet is available from jonathanpenson2000@yahoo.co.uk

