

Synagogues back launch of scheme to partner churches

A NETWORK of Fairtrade Synagogues is being established alongside the Fairtrade Churches scheme in the UK.

The Birmingham group of the MakePovertyHistory Jewish Coalition, supported by the Representative Council for Birmingham and West Midland Jewry, are together promoting the launch of the Fairtrade Synagogues Campaign.

Plans for a Kosher Fairtrade Guide and a Jewish Fairtrade Cookbook were also announced at an event addressed by Simeon Greene of Windward Island Bananas and Arsene Sourabie and Issaka Sommande, Fairtrade dried mango producers from Burkina Faso.

The meeting took place during this year's Fairtrade Fortnight which had the theme 'Make Fairtrade Your Habit' – a call on consumers to buy right across the range of Fairtrade products.

The MakePovertyHistory Jewish Coalition is actively raising awareness of issues of global poverty in 2006 and beyond.

Steve Miller, chair of the MPHJC, said: "Last year the Jewish community demonstrated its concern for world poverty issues by forming the MPH Jewish Coalition. This year our coalition of more than 20 organisations will be raising the stakes and challenging synagogues, youth movements and other community groups to put that concern into tangible forms – the first of these initiatives is the Fairtrade Synagogue scheme. We aim to have 50 synagogues signed up to the scheme by Shavuot and a further 50 by the end of the year.

Harriet Lamb, Executive Director of the Fairtrade Foundation said: "The Jewish community has been involved with Fairtrade from the start, but this development is exciting because it puts the community's involvement on to a new level. This will allow us to reach more people who haven't yet 'made Fairtrade their habit'."

Another development is the news that Canterbury Cathedral has now joined the list of the 2,000 churches that have received Fairtrade status.

In a message to the celebratory service, The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, said: "Fairtrade is a reminder of what big results can be achieved by lots of people taking small but clear decisions about lifestyle."

Traidcraft captures Sustainability prize

CHRISTIAN-BASED Traidcraft's approach to social reporting has earned top honours in the prestigious 2005 ACCA UK Sustainability Awards.

In a 22-strong field which included the biggest names in the City, industry, the public sector and the media, Traidcraft plc collected the award for the best social report – the fourth year in succession its name has appeared on the trophy list.

"After three years in which we have been joint runner-up, joint winner and sole runner-up respectively, it is wonderful to be sole winner of the award at last," said Traidcraft chief executive Paul Chandler.

In their citation, the judges praised the strong focus on stakeholder views in the Traidcraft report as well as the appropriateness of the indicators measured and the methodology used.

They concluded: "It is very readable, with limited 'gloss' and 'PR fluff'. It communicates the most relevant and pertinent social issues facing the organisation in a concise and well-presented way."

Accepting the award, Paul

Chandler challenged those who claimed social accounting was too costly or too difficult for any but the largest organisations.

"I hope our success demonstrates that, with a little thought and commitment, sustainability reporting can be done well, without the need for an unreasonable level of resources. If a small organisation like Traidcraft can do it – and benefit from it – then so can everyone!"

"We are committed to innovating and to promoting good practices in sustainability reporting which is why we are engaged with some of our European partners in a project called The Responsible Purchasing Initiative, which seeks to develop better indicators for the impact of corporate purchasing practices on communities in the developing world.

"We believe that sustainability reporting can make a major contribution towards our vision of fighting global poverty through trade. We are delighted that many companies, of all sizes, are now adopting the approaches that we played a key part in pioneering."

Cathedral is backing diocesan bid for Fairtrade recognition

MEMBERS of Chelmsford Cathedral celebrated the beginning of Fairtrade fortnight with a display in the north aisle, tea tasting and Fairtrade refreshments.

The cathedral is backing the drive by the Diocese for Fairtrade status by using Fairtrade products on various social occasions linked to the life of the Cathedral community.

The borough of Chelmsford is already designated as a Fairtrade town.

The leader of the Fairtrade initiative in the cathedral is the Revd Canon Genny Tunbridge,

precentor and responsible for the liturgy of the church.

"Worshippers have been supporting the well-stocked Traidcraft stall after the Eucharist and church folk have been encouraged to use the products in their own homes," said cathedral spokesman Tony Allen.

The Bishop of Chelmsford, the Rt Revd John Gladwin, is Fairtrade's national chairman.

More information about the Fairtrade scheme is available from the national charity, Christian Aid on 020 7654 5330/1 or the Cathedral Office on 01245 294482.