

Bigger and better than ever!

Fairtrade Fortnight 6–19 March

Last year's Fairtrade Fortnight was an award-winning one for Leeds. The Fairtrade City Group won the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Fairtrade Foundation – given in recognition of the imaginative use of events to raise awareness of Fairtrade to a wide variety of organisations and markets. Leeds has been at the forefront of the Fairtrade movement in recent years and there are a wide variety of events in this year's Fairtrade Fortnight to keep the momentum going in 2006.

Most of the events are listed in the brochure, including the University of Leeds Fairtrade Declaration and Fairtrade City Celebrations on Tuesday 14 March. Other opportunities include watching the powerful film *Life and Debt in Jamaica* or maybe you'd prefer to sing along in fancy dress to the *Sound of Music!* You could also drink Fairtrade beer and cider at the Pudsey Beer Festival and have a laugh at the *Just Fair Laughs* at the Comedy Cafe.

Some events that didn't make it in time for the brochure are:



Find out how your TIDAL T-shirt was manufactured.

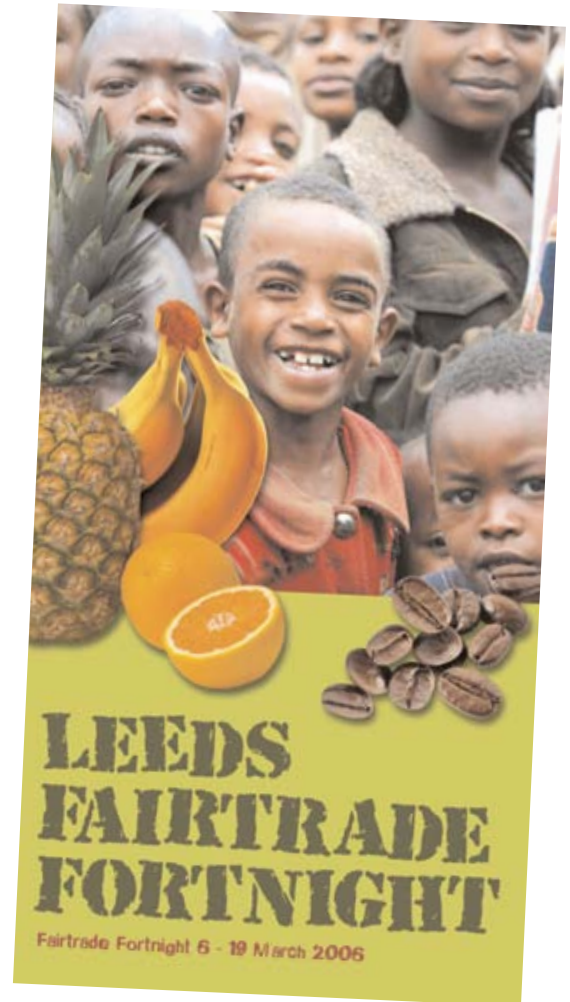
Meet Shailesh Patel

Tues 7 March, 17.00–18.00
Lecture Theatre 2, Man-made Fibres Building, Leeds University.

Shailesh is a Cotton Project Manager with Agrocel – the people who supplied our TIDAL T-shirts. He assists the 50 farmers from the Agrocel Pure and Fair Cotton Growers' Association to convert to or improve their organic cotton production, protect their environment and access new markets such as Fairtrade and organic. Agrocel cotton is available in products from Bishopton Trading, Epona, Gossypium, People Tree and Traidcraft.

Ethical business debate

Wed 8 March, 18.15–20.45 at Leeds Civic Hall. A free ethical debate for businesses in the Yorkshire and Humber Region. Entry is by registration only – contact Sarah Wells 0113 2474129 or sarah.wells@leeds.gov.uk



Fairtrade wine tasting

Thurs 9 March, 18.30–20.00 at the Radisson SAS Hotel. Entry is by registration only – contact Sarah Wells 0113 2474129 or sarah.wells@leeds.gov.uk

Fairtrade fashion show

Sat 18 March, 19.00 at South Parade Baptist Church, Headingley. Trendy clothes from Traidcraft, People Tree, Arkadash and Bishopton Trading. Tickets £1 on door or in advance from Pam Roe on 0113 2781955.

Further information from Sarah Wells or www.leeds.gov.uk/international

Still working to **MAKE POVERTY HISTORY**



This year is going to be different from last year without the big MakePovertyHistory campaign. However, there will be lots of things to keep you busy throughout 2006! Several TIDAL events are at the planning stage, so keep a look out for details in future newsletters. If anyone would like to help plan any of the following events please get in touch:

- Company Law event – April/May
- Cut the Strings Debt event – early July
- Climate Change working group – from March
- Fundraising Ceilidh – September

Since January we've been job-sharing the Campaigns Manager's role and although we've both really enjoyed working at TIDAL, circumstances mean we can't continue. Hopefully a new Campaigns Manager will be in post by Easter. We'd both like to keep involved with the work and we'll see you at a TIDAL event soon. Thanks for all your support for TIDAL

Annie & Helen, Campaigns Managers

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Climate Change

In late January we invited Ashok Sinha, Director of Stop Climate Chaos, to come up to Leeds to talk about the links between poverty and climate change. Ashok is in a good position to do this, as his last job was Co-ordinator of Jubilee Debt Campaign. We also heard from Natasha Clayton of Friends of the Earth.

The eighty or so people who attended all felt very strongly about the need to campaign on climate issues; that if we are working towards eradicating global poverty we must take account of the effects of climate chaos on the poor.

At the TIDAL Steering Group's Planning Day in February, we voted to become a member of Stop Climate Chaos. We'll be forming a working group to explore how this issue fits alongside the rest of our campaigning. If you would like to be involved, please email mary@keynes.wanadoo.co.uk or ring the TIDAL office.

'Without urgent action, climate change will devastate life on earth. Hundreds of millions of people, particularly the world's poorest and most vulnerable will be put at severe risk of drought, floods, starvation, and disease. By the middle of the century up to one third of land-based species could face extinction.'

Politicians have so far failed to take sufficient action to avoid this. Yet the choices made in the next five to ten years will determine the extent of the devastation faced by future generations. We can save millions of lives and a multitude of species by keeping the average global temperature increase under 2°C. To achieve this, global greenhouse gas emissions must peak and be falling irreversibly by 2015.'

...from: www.stopclimatechaos.org



Photo: Joanna Brown

Ashok Sinha, Director of Stop Climate Chaos, at the recent TIDAL meeting.

Cut the Strings

Although there has been progress on debt cancellation in 2005, it still comes with damaging strings attached. In return for debt relief, poor countries must still privatise services, cut public spending and harm their own farmers and producers by opening their markets. These strings must be cut: they hurt poor people, undermine democracy and delay vital debt relief. Debts should be cancelled because they are unjust and unpayable, and countries should account to their own people for how they spend their money.

TIDAL will be campaigning on this issue through the year and is hoping to have a big event – probably in early July.

TIDAL benefit concert

We hope that the pianist Ludovico Einaudi will be giving a benefit concert at Leeds Town Hall on Friday 19 May. Keep an eye on the TIDAL website for more information. Booking will be through Leeds Town Hall.

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

Now what?

2005 was one of TIDAL's busiest years yet!

Although we have a long way to go to achieve the goals of MAKE POVERTY HISTORY, there were significant gains in the areas of Debt and Aid and an unprecedented increase in awareness of the issues amongst the general public.

Although the national MAKE POVERTY HISTORY campaign will not be continuing in 2006, the organisations that were part of the coalition will have the opportunity to join a new national economic justice network. There will be twice-yearly forums and an e-newsletter to help keep the groups informed. The international

coalition, GCAP (Global Call To Action Against Poverty) will be continuing, along with MAKE POVERTY HISTORY campaigns in other parts of the world.

TIDAL will continue to work locally to 'make poverty history'. We also hope to meet with other local and regional groups from across the country to discuss how we might work together and support each other. We will keep you informed about how these things develop.

The full MAKE POVERTY HISTORY verdict can be seen at: www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk

Joanna Brown



Photo: Simon Rawles / Fairtrade Foundation

Company Law Reform Bill

Multinational companies carry out two thirds of international trade. Done well, trade has enormous potential benefits. It can empower individuals and entire communities to earn an income, become self-reliant, and lift themselves out of poverty. But unfair trade rules and the poor behaviour of some multinational corporations mean that international trade has all too often caused harm to poor communities, workers and the environment.

The Corporate Responsibility (CORE) Coalition and the Trade Justice Movement (TJM) are campaigning for these international rules to be changed in favour of the poor, but we also need the rules that govern the way companies operate to be amended, to drive better corporate behaviour and to hold them accountable for their actions when they cause harm. Until now, companies have adopted a voluntary approach to protecting people and the environment – ‘Corporate Social Responsibility’ policies that promise they will do more to protect people and the environment. The UK Government has backed this voluntary approach, saying it goes far enough to tackle the problem. But many companies who have publicly said they are doing good work have continued to cause harm to poor people and the environment. We need laws to ensure all businesses respect the rights of communities, employees and the environment. At present, UK companies are only accountable to their shareholders for delivering profits. There is no requirement for them to take steps to protect the health, environment, and livelihoods of the poor communities around the world who are affected by their operations.

Company law sets out the basic legal requirements companies and their directors must comply with when making business

decisions. It affects all UK companies in all their activities. The UK Government has been in the process of modernising company law since 1997 and the Company Law Reform Bill is going through Parliament from Nov 2005 to July 2006. CORE and TJM are calling for the Bill to be amended so that, in particular, directors must:

- be aware of the social and environmental impacts of their decisions
- take into account the interests of ‘stakeholders’ (eg: employees, the environment, suppliers and communities) when making decisions
- report on the social and environmental performance of their business decisions and take steps to reduce negative impacts.

What can you do?



Send a letter to your MP asking them to sign EDM 697 ‘Modernising Company Law’, and emphasise it is not EDM 679, which many of them will have already signed.

Ask your MP to raise CORE and TJM concerns with the Minister for Trade and Industry, Rt Hon Alun Michael MP.

Meet with your MP face to face in March, April or May.

Look out for further information from TIDAL and on www.tradejusticemovement.org

TIDAL SURGE Are you in a Union?

Avid followers of Surge’s work will realise that it’s nearly a year since we launched this project! Thanks to all who have supported our work. Our aim for the beginning of 2006 is to reach out to as many trade unions as possible and strengthen the links that exist between our groups.

If you belong to a trade union and want to know more about how trade and debt affect all of us or want to support our campaigns for 2006 – then call or email us today and book one of our many speakers. We also want to know what your group is getting up to in Leeds – so keep us in the loop and call today.

Even if you’re not affiliated with a union but still want to learn more, don’t hesitate to call. You can speak to me, Jacinta Kent, on 07812 140 720 or email: surge@leedstia.org

2005 was a spectacular year to start the Surge project and to date we have spoken at over 25 events and reached about 2,000 people – but there is still so much to be done! Regardless of whether our work wears a title or is part of a campaign, the problems surrounding trade and debt still exist. It is up to us to continue raising awareness and campaigning for a world in which everyone benefits, not just the rich. Call today and join an ever-growing community of people who want to see change – and can make it happen.



Photo: Joanna Brown

Surge speaker, Na Ncube, at the Hunger Banquet.

World Debt Day

Jubilee Debt Campaign will mark World Debt Day on Tuesday 16 May 2006 with a lunchtime lecture at St Philip’s Cathedral, Colmore Row, Birmingham. The main speaker will be Ann Pettifor, former Director of Jubilee 2000 Coalition.

Exhibitions and refreshments from 12.30pm, lecture from 1.10pm, session ends at 2pm. www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk

WTO fails to make poverty history

The World Trade Organisation Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong in December could have been a turning point in making poverty history. Rich countries had the capability to correct some of the gross imbalances in world trade at a strategically important moment in the so-called Doha 'development round' of trade talks. But the potential for justice for the world's poorest people was squandered.

Despite standing together, the demands and concerns of developing countries have been repeatedly sidelined. In Hong Kong, strong-arm tactics and pressures were used to obtain agreement to the market-opening proposals of the developed countries.

The conduct of the EU negotiators was in such direct contrast to their stated commitment to development, that the Global Call to Action Against Poverty demanded Europe's trade commissioner Peter Mandelson remove the white band he wore in Hong Kong.

Extract from TJM/MPH statement – full text at www.tjm.org.uk/wto/statement191205.shtml

Hull Debate: The role for international trade in making poverty history

What really happened at the WTO negotiations in Hong Kong in December and what still needs to be done? Did the British Government keep its promises on trade and development in 2005? Is free trade fair trade? Where next on trade?

Here's your chance to ask the questions that need asking and to get some answers!

Speakers include: Alan Johnson (Secretary of State for Trade and Industry) and Adrian Lovett (Director Of Campaigns and Communications, Oxfam).

Friday 17 March, 3–4pm at Hull University, Leslie Down Theatre, Ferens Building (ring 01482 465056 for directions).

Fairtrade refreshments, provided by the Co-op, will be available from 2.30pm.

Contact Lucy Hurn at Oxfam Campaigns, 0113 394 4293 or leeds@oxfam.org.uk

Dear Gordon Brown,

I am writing to you in support of efforts currently being made to secure debt cancellation for the world's poorest countries.

The cancellation of debt is an act not of charity but of justice and I applaud the UK and Nigerian governments' efforts to secure international agreement on debt cancellation for Nigeria. The resulting deal means that \$18 billion of Nigeria's debt will be cancelled, which will be hugely beneficial in the long term. But I am deeply concerned by the huge \$12.4 billion payment that Nigeria must make first. Of this, \$3 billion (£1.7 billion) is coming to the UK: this is twice as much as the UK is giving in aid to the whole of Africa in 2005.

Nigeria is one of the world's poorest countries: more than 80 million Nigerians live on less than 60p per day. The democratic government in Nigeria has been praised by the World Bank for its 'transparency and willingness to commit funds to the poor', but its efforts to tackle poverty have been hampered by huge debts built up during former dictatorships. Despite having already repaid more than it originally borrowed, Nigeria's debts to rich countries total more than \$30 billion. Wealthy creditors should not now be demanding any of this money from Nigeria.

It would be shameful for the year in which the UK government called for a focus on Africa to end with the UK accepting a huge payment from Africa. I urge the UK government to return this money to help end extreme poverty in Nigeria.

Yours sincerely...

ACTION

Nigeria, one of the poorest countries in the world, is in the process of giving a huge sum of money to the richest countries. Organisations which are members of the Jubilee Debt Campaign are urging the UK government to return its share of this money to Nigeria to fight poverty. Here's an example of a letter you might like to send to Gordon Brown.



Photo: Joanna Brown

A meal to remember

A hundred people attended a Hunger Banquet in December at the Town Hall. The Chinese meal was shared out randomly according to the split of wealth in the world. 15% of the world's population have a high-income so 15 people sat on the top table enjoying a waiter-served two-course meal with wine.

Twenty-five people representing the middle-income population helped themselves to a curry and sat on tables. However, 60% of the world has a low-income, so the remaining 60, including Hilary Benn (pictured), sat on the floor to eat a bowl of rice. It was an enjoyable event with interesting speakers and helped to emphasise that the majority of the world do not have an adequate income.

What's on: 2006

March

6–19 **Fairtrade Fortnight**

April

8 **Debt & Power JDC Conference**
London, with Susan George

tbc **TIDAL Company Law Event**
(end of April or beginning of May)

May

16 **World Debt Day**

17 **Hull Debate on Trade** (0113 3944293)

19 **Ludovico Einaudi piano concert**

20 **CAFOD Campaigning Conference**
(0113 2618057)

July

tbc **TIDAL Debt Event**

15–17 **G8 Summit**, St Petersburg

September

9 **TIDAL Ceilidh**

16 **Christian Aid Drumming at Home**
London (0113 2444764)