

# Farmers need Co-ops

## A classroom game to explore the need for Co-ops and its importance for Fairtrade (KS2 – KS4)

“...Co-operative enterprises provide the organizational means whereby a significant proportion of humanity is able to take into its own hands the task of creating productive employment, overcoming poverty and achieving social integration...”  
Kofi Annan

“Co-ops are recognised in many countries and institutions as self-help organisations particularly suited to assisting poor people to work out of poverty. The United Nations estimated (in 1994) that the livelihood of three billion people was made more secure by co-operatives.”  
Co-op College, UK

“Social enterprise is an important part of community development and business. It strongly supports the acquisition of enterprise attributes as an important factor in developing a skilled workforce and a dynamic economy.”  
National Curriculum website QCA

This activity was created with the help of Innocent Muhereza, Uganda Co-operative Alliance, and schools in Tower Hamlets by the Humanities Education Centre as part of the Banking on the World project.



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Tel: 020 7364 6405      [www.global.lgfl.net](http://www.global.lgfl.net)

# A Game based on Co-ops and Farming in Uganda

## Introduction

The following is a class room simulation based on the work of the Uganda Co-op Alliance (UCA). Innocent Muhereza, works for the UCA to support the development of farmer co-ops in Northern Uganda, and advises them on crop diversity, value added and the need to set-up or use credit unions for saving and getting loans to invest in farming. You can see Innocent interviewed about his work as part of the web resource 'Banking on the World' on the website [www.global.igfl.net](http://www.global.igfl.net).

## Aim

The game has been used successfully for year 4 up to sixth form students. It uses 'money' but has yet to be developed to reflect the actual figures for Uganda, in terms of selling and sustaining a family. The aim is simply to show the need for small farmers to act as a group in order to have greater negotiating power over price, and in the end to create a co-op in which the middleman is replaced by the co-op. The game is one that allows the children to discover this need through a sense of injustice.

Fairtrade depends upon co-ops. The co-ops can be seen to be 'schools of democracy', empowering local people to take part in decision-making and sharing risk and profit. When combined with credit unions, savings and loans co-ops that are for the benefit of their members, they allow small farmers to save, and reinvest in their farms.

A starting point for the game could be the banana game, linked to the supply chain. The banana game shows the proportion of the price of a banana going to the different parts of the supply chain. It is important to reflect on two aspects of this – 1. the small amount to the grower 2. the small amount that stays in or goes to the country of production. The end of this co-op game has the growers controlling more of the chain (the middleman and exporter), an example of where they control of the chain is Liberation Nuts (where the growers own the supply chain up to the supermarkets!), that has a great image on its website explaining the chain ([http://www.chooseliberation.com/about us/](http://www.chooseliberation.com/about_us/)) .



Children playing the game for the first time.

Innocent Muhereza, from the Uganda Co-operative Alliance being interviewed by Tower Hamlets school children.



## The Uganda Co-op Game

### **10 minutes**                    **Interactive whiteboard/colour pencils/map handout/ Powerpoint/Katine website**

1. To start the session it is important for the children to have a sense of where Uganda is, and what the farmers might grow and where they might sell their food. You can use the map print out of Africa in this resource. Show the children a map of Africa/the world – where is Uganda – possibly hand-out the map to colour in. The map is the first slide on the powerpoint. It would be good to use a map on the interactive whiteboard (google earth is very good).

### **10 minutes**                    **Powerpoint/Katine website**

2. The powerpoint then shows where Uganda is, and where Katine is, and has links to images of farmers going to Katine market, followed by images from the Uganda Co-operative Alliance of different crops, especially value added ones.

The image of the Ugandan farmer is well presented in the Guardian website <http://www.guardian.co.uk/katine/2007/nov/17/livelihoods> . The site also has a very good picture gallery of produce being taken to market. There are two galleries, one of *Tuesday Market*, the other of *Katine's farmers*. You could locate the Village on Google Earth. In showing the pictures get the children to guess what the product is. The important point is to introduce a range of farming produce and a sense of small plots for family farms. To help there is a powerpoint as part of this resource, using images from the UCA. An important part of the perception of the market at Katine, if you get the children to think about their local market – is that it is a rural village. It would be good to contrast it with a City image of Uganda (in the powerpoint is the image of the UCA's headquarters in Kampala). It is important for the children not to stereotype their view of Uganda, with images only from rural scenes.

### **10 minutes**                    **Crop cards on each table**

3. The children are going to pretend to be small farmers, groups of three-six. They grow a range of foods but do not make enough money to send their children to school or have health care – indeed their children have to work on the farm. Hand-out produce cards to the groups explaining that they are families that farm on a small plot of land and these are their products (give one A4 cut out sheet to each group – see appendix) . Ensure the children have them on the table face up, and that they all own the cards (you may need to repeat this during the game – that they are a family and all work to create the food). Ask each group to name one of their products.

### **5 minutes**                    **Introduce the Middlemen**

4. How are the families going to make money from their food? In this scenario to make money from what they farm every year they must sell it to a middle person, he/she comes around and offers money for what

they have grown. Introduce the two middlemen and their role to go around the families and buy their crops, and that there is no one else to sell them to (in real life this may not be the case – families can sell their crop on the roadside or at market, but if the families cannot get their food to an economic roadside or market the middle person maybe the best financial way of selling the produce).

**10 minutes      Buying the crop, money**

5. Two people (the facilitator and the teacher) act as middlemen only offering £1 for the coffee. You buy the same crop. Half way around you announce that the price of coffee has dropped and you only buy 2 coffees for £1. The middlemen refuse to buy the crop unless it is for the price they quote. You will need a lot of £1 notes. The larger denominations are mainly for the middleman.
6. As the middlemen go around buying they must emphasize that the money is not enough for their families – that you are in control of the price and it is as low as possible. The children, by the act of selling may feel that they are getting money and that that is good by itself. You need to remind them it is not enough money for sending their children to school, for health care, for a good home, or to improve the farming... Another issue is that the children may need to be reminded that the food is produced by the whole family – so they do not keep any money individually but as a group.
7. Stop the game after buying different crops and ensuring it is for the smallest price.

**5 minutes      Selling to a shipping company**

8. The middlemen take their crop cards to a production company, another adult, or the teacher swapping roles, or an image on the interactive board, and sell it for twice/three times the price. They count out the money in front of the class, show the total to the class.

**5 minutes      Brainstorm**

9. Ask the families how much they are holding. Brainstorm within the class how the farmers felt and then within the groups what can they do to help themselves...

**8 minutes – time dependent on children resolving problem**

10. Continue the middlemen going around buying different crops. Each time someone refuses to sell at the low price remind them that you can go to another farmer for the low price... Hint that there is a way that the farmers can sell at a fair price. The students (depending on age) may need hints about working together, but generally if you simply keep going to the groups that are selling cheap, a child will suggest that no one should sell cheap...

**5 minutes      Creating a co-op**

11. as soon as someone suggests that they work together – that person could act as spokesperson... start the selling again and each time a buyer goes to a group the spokesperson advises them on what to sell

at. The child, or the teacher, could even get the whole class to express solidarity by chanting, 'sell at £3! Sell at £3!'... You have now got the class working as a group. The beginnings of a co-op.

**10 minutes      Reviewing the outcome**

12. The teacher can now ask the children whether they are getting a better price and why. They can then ask how the families could work together to ensure that each time they sell they get a fair price. The idea that the families can meet together. But how might they make decisions? By discussing and voting, by democracy. You have then created a producers co-op. The session could even have the farmers voting a leader or representative. A picture of the Uganda Co-op Alliance can be shown to the children, explaining that this is the aim of the organisation, to help farmers to improve their lives through working together as co-ops.

**5 minutes      Getting rid of the middleman**

13. How could they make it even better for the farmers? Show the amount of money they got, even when it was a fairer price and how much the middleman got... How could they get the middle person's money? They could become their own middle man – and instead of getting only the initial money all the families, together, will get the profit the middle man received. This is what happens in Fairtrade (see Liberation Nuts website: [http://www.chooseliberation.com/about\\_us/](http://www.chooseliberation.com/about_us/) )

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## Further information, resources and help:

For further information and advice about co-ops and development, how co-ops are helping rid of the world of poverty, and how your children can set-up and run their own co-op, see the links and suggestions below:

Banking on the World – a DfID funded project creating support materials for business volunteers to work with schools on co-ops and social enterprise. The materials are useful for business people, teachers and children, and include video clips, useful websites, online quizzes and other activities.

[www.global.lqfl.net](http://www.global.lqfl.net) and click on Banking on the World in Highlights.

Many activities that support children learning about co-operative social enterprise have been developed and used by Dynamix and CLADA and First Questions in conjunction with East of England Co-op.

<http://www.clada.coop/> Advocates and Practitioners of Co-operative Learning.

<http://www.dynamix.ltd.uk/> A co-op of facilitators and trainers in co-operative learning.

<http://www.case4us.com/> A website that has complete resources, freely downloadable, with games and participative activities for children to plan, create, run and evaluate their own co-op, with 12 case studies around the country (see sheet in appendix).

[http://www.eastofengland.coop/data/usercontentroot/incs/activities\\_and\\_events/1st\\_Question.asp](http://www.eastofengland.coop/data/usercontentroot/incs/activities_and_events/1st_Question.asp) First Questions is a workers co-op of facilitators and trainers that are working with East of England Co-op to promote co-operative learning in schools and other organisations.

<http://www.youngcooperatives.org.uk/> A network of co-ops set-up and run by young people with the support of the Co-op and Traidcraft.

Make Your School Fairtrade Friendly pack by the co-op:

<http://www.co-operative.coop/Food/Download%20files/FairtradeSchoolsPack.pdf>

Downloadable activities for schools from the Co-op College:

<http://www.co-op.ac.uk/schoolsresources.htm>

School Coop website for teachers and students on co-ops and how to run them, created by the Co-op College and the Co-op Group:

<http://www.beecoop.co.uk/index.php>



Get your children to learn about business, co-ops and fairtrade through visits. Children learning how a business works by visiting Waitrose, which is a worker's partnership. All the staff are partners in the business.

You can organise mini-conferences with business people and experts for the children to interview. Children interviewing the Director of the Tower Hamlets Co-op Development Agency.



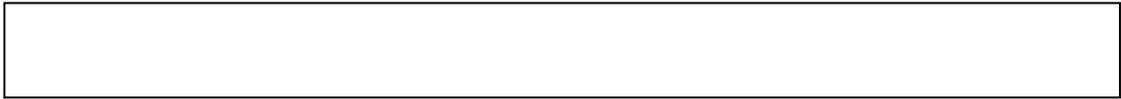
Use the video clips online of important politicians talking about the role of co-ops.



Get your students to run their own Co-op. Bow Boys students being interviewed about their co-op that works with Rothschild Bank.

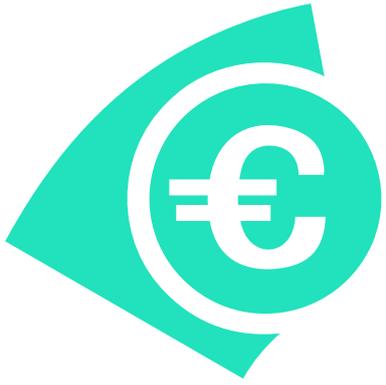


You can find out more about all of the work pictured above on [www.global.lgfl.net](http://www.global.lgfl.net) under Banking on the World.

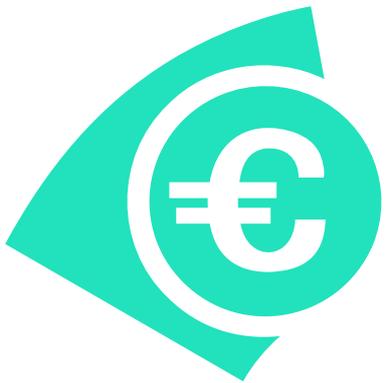


[www.theodora.com/maps](http://www.theodora.com/maps)

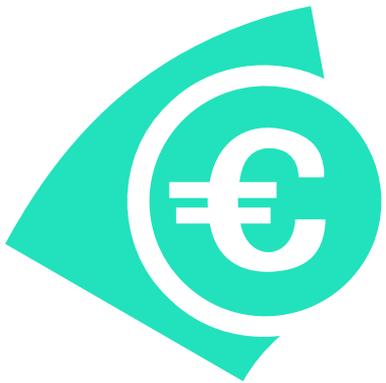
# Uganda



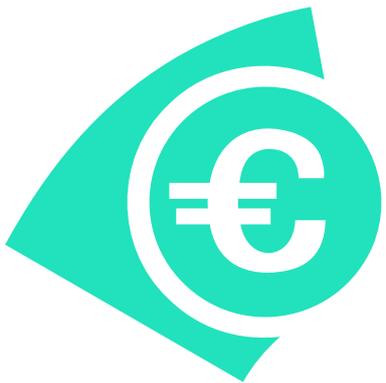
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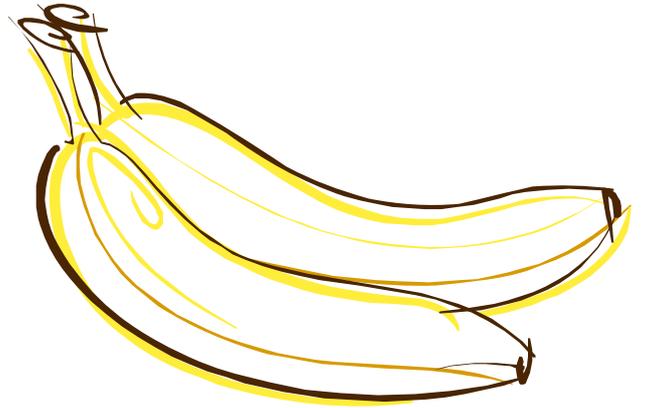


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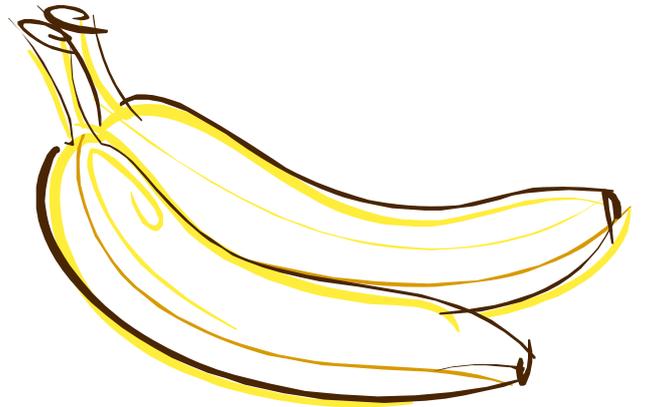
coffee



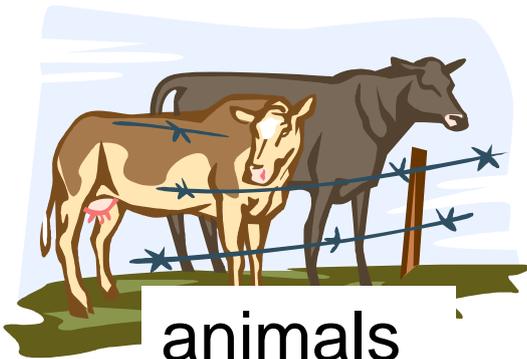
bananas



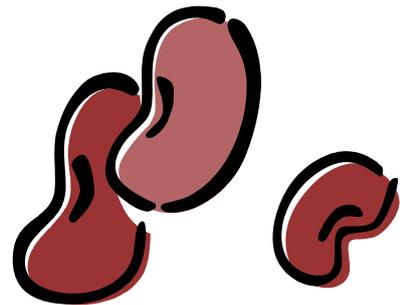
coffee



bananas



animals



beans



trees



potatoes

# Case4us

## Co-operative and Social Enterprise

Case4us is the most complete resource for teachers on supporting their children creating and running co-ops in their schools or communities. If you have access to the web it can be downloaded from their website.

We wish you luck in using it and adapting it to your school's, teacher's and student's needs.

You will find a 14 step, four stages guide for your young people to plan, set-up, run and evaluate a business.

There are facilitators' notes for the teacher, explaining what to do and why.

There are Members Briefings, notes for the young people, who are to be members of the Co-op, and Members Information that give simple information for the students to complete the tasks.

Finally the Toolkit has very valuable activities to do that are highly motivating, educational games, that get the students to think about the issues of co-operation and business.

For further help or support contact:

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