What do you think about when you go shopping? 
The look of the item? How useful it will be? A fair deal on the price?

What about the people who produce the things you buy, should they get a fair deal too? 
Many people think so! That’s why they support something called **Fair Trade**.

**Food for Thought**
We are inevitably linked to the wider world on a daily basis through the food we eat. The wide range of food we have become accustomed to depends on producers in the developing world satisfying our demands for year-round variety and choice. This trade in food has led to greater opportunities for a varied and interesting diet in Ireland. Conversely in poorer countries, this unfair trade has led to the exploitation of people and environments.

**What’s Wrong with Paying Less and Getting More?**
We are not paying the **true** cost for our food. By only examining the checkout price of food we ignore the many hidden costs associated with food production: costs to people’s health, quality of life and costs to the environment.

**Social and Environmental Costs**
Much of the food we buy relatively cheaply in Ireland is grown by people in developing countries. Land is often converted from land which would otherwise supply food for the needs of local people to land for growing crops for export. Often the market price is so low that many producers cannot even afford to feed their own children properly. In Brazil, for example, the world’s second-highest food exporter, a quarter of the population do not have enough to eat. Furthermore, many modern farming methods involve the use of chemicals which damage the soil, water system and the environment.

**What is Fair Trade?**
Fair Trade is a partnership between producers and consumers which ensures producers receive good working conditions and fair prices.

Fair Trade seeks to improve the lives of producers through the following principles:
- Producers receive a fair, steady price
- Working conditions are healthy and safe
- Forced labour and child labour are not allowed
- Producers are supported in their social development projects, including health and education facilities
- Buyers and producers trade under direct long-term relationships, providing stability and security
- Producers have access to financial and technical assistance
- Sustainable production techniques and environmental responsibility are encouraged
- There is respect for human rights, for example the promotion of gender equality and equal employment opportunities

**Does Fair Trade Make a Difference?**
The Fair Trade logo is an independent stamp of approval which is only awarded to producers that meet specific requirements as outlined by the Fairtrade Foundation. The producers must show democratic organisation, allow participation in a Trade Union, and guarantee good housing and health and safety standards.

**Why Should We Support Fair Trade?**
Fair Trade enables consumers to declare their support for social justice in trade with producers in developing countries. Buying Fair Trade products is about using your power as a consumer to make the world a fairer place. Fair Trade shows companies that you can treat workers with respect and still make a profit. When we buy Fair Trade products we show that we really care for others – no matter how far away they live.