

The Banana Game...

Adapted from a game initially published by Christian Aid

Aim:

to introduce the banana chain; what happens to a banana before it reaches the consumer; and to introduce the reality of 'who gets what' in the chain.

Suitability:

a minimum of 6 players of all ages. Adjust the debriefing as appropriate.

You will need:

nothing, although you may like to use some bananas for props.

1. Tell the group that you are about to play a game that traces the path of the banana as it is exported from its plantation in Latin America to their fruit bowl.
2. Divide the group up into 6 groups that represent links in the chain. You can do this by asking the group who they think are the first people to handle a banana in the supply chain. Whoever says 'worker' chooses other 'workers' to join them.
3. Follow the same process to fill the roles of the plantation owner, shipper, importer, wholesaler/ripeners and retailer. Make sure everyone has a role to play.
4. Space the groups out. Give the groups 5 minutes to imagine what work their role involves.
5. Get the groups to imagine that a banana costs 30p. How much of the 30p **should** they get? Ask them to spend 5 minutes discussing this, and preparing arguments why.
6. Ask each group to present their arguments for the amount they have decided and why. It is very likely the total will come to more than 30p.

Additional Round: If you have time, play a second round in which you ask the group to negotiate so that the total is nearer to 30p. Alliances and deals between players are allowed!

7. Now reveal the true situation of a Latin American banana (you could cut up a banana for added impact):

Worker	1p	<i>Note: This breakdown is fairly accurate, but is obviously simplified for the game. Each banana exporting country will have a slightly different breakdown. There is also a difference in the way profits are distributed from bananas exported from small farms and large plantations.</i>
Plantation owner	5p	
Shipper	4p	
Importer/wholesaler	3p	
Ripener	4p	
Retailer	13p	
Total	30p	

Suggestions for discussion:

- * What does the group think?
- * Who benefits most/least? Is it a fair situation?
- * Why is the distribution of income as it is?
- * Who has power and why?
- * What could be done to improve the situation?
- * What role can consumers play?
- * Would you be prepared to pay more for your bananas if you knew workers and farmers got a price that would enable them to meet their basic needs?

Key ideas:

- ✪ We are connected to people around the world through the things we consume.
- ✪ Many products in our shops are made from raw materials imported from the South.
- ✪ Many plantation workers do not earn enough to meet their basic needs: food, shelter, clothes, medicine and schooling.
- ✪ Fairtrade labelling has been introduced so that consumers can guarantee that producers get a fair deal for their work.