

Suffolk Association of Fairtrade Towns (SAFT)

Live Schools Link to Kenya - Fairtrade Fortnight 2021

Introduction

This paper sets out plans for a live link up between schools in Suffolk and Patrick Kaberia, a Fairtrade tea farmer, from Michimikuru in Kenya. The link will be during Fairtrade Fortnight 2021, which takes place between 22 February and 7 March.

Background

SAFT was formed in 2016 following a tour of Suffolk by Patrick organised by the Fairtrade Foundation during Fairtrade Fortnight. All eight active Fairtrade towns in Suffolk are members – Ipswich, Lowestoft, Bury St Edmunds, Felixstowe, Framlingham, Beccles and Leiston. Its aim is to promote Fairtrade throughout Suffolk and to support its members by exchange of information and encouraging good practice. We hold an annual conference in June or July with a guest speaker. We have maintained close contact with Patrick who, in 2019, agreed to become our Patron.

In 2020, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, we were unable to hold a physical conference. Instead we organised a 'virtual conference' via Zoom addressed by Mike Gidney, the Chief Executive of the Fairtrade Foundation and with a live link to Patrick in Kenya. The success of this has inspired the current initiative, which is supported by Patrick and all of SAFT's constituent towns.

Description

The basic idea is for a question and answer session via Zoom lasting about 30 minutes and aimed broadly at 8 – 13year olds. Three key schools, from different parts of Suffolk, will be involved in selecting questions and pupils to ask them. It is anticipated that two pupils from each school will be involved in asking the questions, making a total of six. The questions will be chosen to avoid duplication and shared with Patrick in advance.

Each of the six chosen pupils will be individually logged on to their own terminal and be 'on screen' for the full 30 minutes. Other pupils/schools will be invited to take the live feed but will not be able to interact during the 30 minute session. (It is possible that the link could be kept open longer to allow some informal interaction but this option has not been fully explored as yet.)

Participating schools will be encouraged to prepare for the live session using teaching resources available on line. The aim is for SAFT to signpost a number of useful sources, mainly those produced by the Fairtrade Foundation – several of which feature Patrick.

To guard against any possible failures of the technology on the day, the three key schools will have a 'dress rehearsal' several days before the live session. This will be recorded and will provide a back-up should there be difficulties with the live feed.

Next Steps

The proposal is now being more widely shared. It is in a formative phase and could well be modified as a result of comments received. All suggestions as to how the proposal can be improved and implemented will be gratefully received and considered. Comments should be sent to secretary@suffolkfairtrade.org.uk, if possible by 6 November.

Conclusion

The proposal is an ambitious one and difficulties can be expected. It does, however, provide an opportunity to reach a new audience with the Fairtrade message and keep that message alive during the current national and international crisis.