

Council Promotes Fairtrade at Schools' Event

10 March 2017

COOKSTOWN, Northern Ireland: Over 90 pupils from 25 Primary and Post-Primary Schools in Mid Ulster attended a schools' event this week to mark Fairtrade Fortnight which takes place from 27 February – 12 March.

The event organised by Mid Ulster District Council took place at Cookstown Leisure Centre and was attended by P6, P7, Year 8 and Year 9 students from schools across the district.

The purpose of the event was to get students thinking about the importance of supporting Fairtrade and about the impact their actions have all across the world.

Buying products with the Fairtrade Mark supports farmers and workers in developing countries as they work to improve their lives and their communities.

The Fairtrade Mark on a product shows that it meets international Fairtrade standards which were established to support the sustainable development of small-scale producers and workers in the poorest countries of the world.

The standards include protection of workers' rights and the environment, payment of the Fairtrade Minimum Price that covers the cost of sustainable production and an additional Fairtrade Premium to invest in business or community projects.

Students heard first-hand how supporting Fairtrade can really benefit and improve the lives of farmers and coffee producers in the developing world. Haris Ulises Lopez Picado, a coffee and cocoa producer from the Soppexcca cooperative in Nicaragua spoke about his life and the difference Fairtrade has made to him, his family and his community.

He said, "Fairtrade has transformed my life – my family's lives. We have a different standard of living than we had before, it has so much improved! It has brought support for all the producers in our organisation and consequently it brought about positive change in our community."

One example of such positive change is free health screening for women to detect various forms of cancer.

Pupils were then given the opportunity to put questions to Mr Lopez Picado which included what the size of farms were in Nicaragua, whether coffee farmers had big machinery and how much more do they get paid for their Fairtrade coffee?

The Chair of the Council's Development Committee, Councillor Dominic Molloy attended and spoke at the event. He said, "I am thrilled this event has taken place today. By getting our local schools involved in Fairtrade Fortnight we are helping our young people to understand the impact of their actions right across the world.

"They can then make an informed choice to make a difference to the lives of farmers and workers in the developing world by choosing to buy Fairtrade products and by also promoting this message outside the school to family and friends.

“This is how change happens, by spreading the word and relentlessly endorsing the message until people take notice and follow suit. Today’s event has definitely got the ball rolling on that front and I really hope the good work continues long after the event ends.”

Students also took part in a Fairtrade Quiz at the event where they could win one of three Fairtrade hampers for their school. The winners were Cookstown High School, Bush Primary School and Castledawson Primary School.

Other speakers at the event included Kieran Durnien from Fairtrade International, Dr Christopher Stange from the All Party Group on Fairtrade as well as students from Culnady Primary School and St Colm’s High School who highlighted their schools’ activities to date regarding Fairtrade.

Mid Ulster District Council is committed to supporting the Fairtrade campaign and actively promotes the purchase of products with the Fairtrade Mark including the introduction of Fairtrade coffee, tea and sugar at all internal meetings.





For more information on Fairtrade contact Yvonne Zellmann, on 03000 132 132 or email yvonne.zellmann@midulstercouncil.org.