

# Addressing issues of Global Citizenship

## Food

### | Important topic information

## Food for thought

*Children are inevitably linked to the wider world on a daily basis through the food they eat. Few issues demonstrate more clearly the complex relationship and links between people and environments north and south.*

*The huge range of food we have become accustomed to is largely dependent on Third World producers 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 the north. Conversely in the countries of the south it has often limited choice, reduced access to productive land and led to*

### **What price our food?**

Check out an average supermarket and it will reveal our food demands and habits. The fact that the fruit and vegetable section offers any product, at any time, from anywhere around the world demonstrates our desire for an ever greater variety of foods all year round.

In addition Supermarket 'price wars', where supermarket chains battle for customers through food pricing, demonstrate our desire to pay less and less for the food we eat.

So what's wrong with paying less and getting more?

The problem is that we are not paying the *true* cost for our food. By examining only 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 wildlife and the environment.

**Social costs** Much of the food we buy relatively cheaply, in the UK, is grown by people in developing countries. Land is often converted from valuable 'eco-systems' such as rainforest or from land which would otherwise supply food for the needs of local people to land for growing cash crops for export. Furthermore the market price is often so low that many Third World 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 don't have enough to eat.

**Environmental cost** Many modern farming methods involve the use of toxic chemicals and fertilizers which damage soils, leach into water systems and harm wildlife and the environment. Transporting food products hundreds of miles also causes pollution and contributes to global warming. For example, it takes up to five litres of fuel to carry just one kilogram of fruit or

### | Classroom

#### **EXERCISING RIGHTS, AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY: THE WORLD OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP**

*Global citizenship education identifies key areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes which foster concern for social justice and the environment.*

*It helps develop critical thinking skills and enables these to be applied to complex and controversial issues.*

*A Global Citizen is someone who:*

- *has an understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and environmentally*
  - *understands the links between their own lives and those of people throughout the world*
  - *is outraged by social injustice*
  - *participates in and contributes to the community at a range of levels from the local to the global*
  - *is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place*
- (based on Oxfam Curriculum for Global Citizenship)*