



**Scottish  
Fair Trade  
Forum**

## **Case Study of East Dunbartonshire Council and Just Trading Scotland Kilombero Rice Project - A Recipe for Success**

The journey started in 2004 when the East Dunbartonshire Fairtrade steering group was set up, bringing together Fairtrade enthusiasts from both within and outwith the Council. This group introduced the Council's Commercial Manager for Facilities Management to the locally-based Director of Just Trading Scotland, a joint venture between Balmore Coach House in East Dunbartonshire and Rainbow Turtle in Renfrewshire. From this meeting was born the idea for the Rice Project.

The National Association of Smallholding Farmers of Malawi (NASFAM) represents key producer groups whom Just Trading Scotland works with. Fairtrade has become a growing interest in East Dunbartonshire's schools, which have become significant, symbolic markets for Just Trading Scotland's Kilombero Rice.

Introducing the rice to Scotland presented many challenges, but East Dunbartonshire Council and Renfrewshire Council ensured value for money by providing warehouse facilities for storage. The Rice Project was further boosted by grants. The Scottish Government provided funding for initial transport costs and rice cleaning; a grant from the Lorna Young Foundation enabled the rice mill on site in Malawi to be upgraded; Renfrewshire Council provided funding for fitting out and purchasing other necessary equipment.

Kilombero Rice made its debut in Scotland with an initial order for 500kg. The Council was able to purchase the rice competitively, highlighting their support of the project financially. The rice project was a justifiable proposal, complementing existing Council contracts, and adding value through feeding back into the local economy and adding educational value to local schools.

East Dunbartonshire Council featured the rice in a week-long Fairtrade Fortnight promotion at their HQ's canteen before taking it to local schools. By July, every East Dunbartonshire school had held a rice-based Fair Trade week. The Council supported the production of posters, pop-up banners and leaflets; education packs were also developed for follow-on learning. The rice has since replaced previous non-fairly traded supplies and will continue to be used regularly in all Council outlets. Renfrewshire council is following this lead and is also serving the rice during Fairtrade fortnight and running promotion campaigns in its local schools. Through the Rice Project, East Dunbartonshire Council is backing up its commitment to giving producers a fair deal through tangible action. Fairtrade helps the council run its day-to-day business efficiently, while delivering benefits locally to schools and the business community.

Although Kilombero rice does not currently bear the Fairtrade Mark, which shows certification from the Fairtrade Foundation, the Fairtrade Foundation welcomes broader Fair Trade campaigns that create direct fair trading relationships like the one between Just Trading Scotland and Malawian rice producers Rice. The Fairtrade foundation therefore recognises Local Authorities' use of Malawian fairly traded rice as a part of a formal commitment towards the goal of achieving Fairtrade zone status.

The Rice Project's success has led to its growth within and beyond East Dunbartonshire. Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire Councils have begun buying Kilombero rice for use in their own schools, and local residents have taken part in the 90kg Rice Challenge. This campaign challenges churches, schools and other groups to sell 90kgs of fairly traded Kilombero rice, enough to send one child to a local high school in Malawi for a year. Groups taking part in the rice challenge receive posters, a power point presentation, leaflets and information sheets to help promote it. The Scottish born project

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has won the hearts and minds of local communities and over 70 groups have got involved. East Dunbartonshire Council and Just Trading Scotland plan to roll out more Fair Trade weeks in local schools through running competitions for pupils, regularly updating school information packs with up-to-date information about the Malawian communities and people being positively impacted and by creating other educational material for Religious Education and Modern Studies.

East Dunbartonshire Council and Just Trading Scotland encourage other Councils to follow their lead:

*“Join this pioneering campaign to benefit local schools and businesses in your area while improving the lives of Malawian farmers. Enjoy Kilombero Rice with us; value can benefit everyone.”*

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