This primary school assembly has been co-produced by Fairtrade Schools and Trading Visions for Fairtrade Fortnight 2020. It is a role play which tells the story of cocoa farmers working at the edge of a rainforest in West Africa, helping students to understand how Fairtrade can help to protect both people and planet. It is designed to be performed by a class of students to the rest of the school.

Objectives:

- Learners find out about threats to the rainforest
- Learners reflect on how human actions impact upon the natural environment
- Learners find out how Fairtrade is important for protecting both people and planet

Student roles:

You need students to play the following parts:

Farmer 1                       Farmer 2
Farmer 3                       Farmer 4
Chimpanzee 1                  Chimpanzee 2
A forest of trees (the rest of the class)

Preparation:

The class performing the role play should be standing on the stage in a freeze whilst the teacher introduces the scene. Students in the role play are to add sound effects/actions to the teacher’s introduction as detailed below! You will need a drum or tambourine as a prop.

Teacher Script:

Today we are going to hear a story all the way from a rainforest in West Africa. This story is about the farmers who make a living from growing cocoa. Can anybody remember what cocoa is grown for?

[Elicit ‘chocolate’ from the audience]
Yes, that’s right! Cocoa is the ingredient that makes chocolate. And the rainforest is the perfect spot for it to grow! This is because cocoa grows best in the tropics, under the shade of tall trees.

[Trees stretch their arms high]

The sun can be very hot [Trees wipe their brow and sigh ‘phew!] and it can rain a lot [farmers drum their fingers on the ground] so it’s important for the cocoa trees to be sheltered. Growing cocoa can be a very hard job, and it’s important that farmers are paid fairly for their hard work.

I know we’ve got some farmers here that can show us why… So, let’s head to the rainforest!

**Role play:**

[A forest of trees are standing around the stage, standing tall, still and quiet. Three farmers are picking pods. Two chimpanzees sit amongst the trees gobbling cocoa pods, giggling and pointing.]

Farmer 1: Not again! [Farmer 1 puts his head in his hands.]

Farmer 2: Whatever is the matter?

Farmer 1: Those pesky chimpanzees have eaten my cocoa pods! How will I ever make any money now! [Farmer sits down, defeated, whilst chimpanzees giggle in the corner.]

Farmer 2: At least your cocoa pods are tasty! Some of mine have rotted in the rain! [Farmer 2 sits down beside Farmer 1.]

Farmer 3: I managed to grow healthy pods this year but STILL I didn’t get paid enough money to buy food for my family! We have to do something about it!

[Farmer 3 sits down and they all scratch their heads. After a minute, they jump one at a time with an idea....]

Farmer 1: I’ve got it! We can come up with a plan to earn some extra money! I heard that you can cut down trees and sell the timber. I think I’ll try cutting the trees down around my cocoa farm...

   [Farmer 1 begins chopping wood. As she chops, 3 trees fall down.]

Farmer 2: I have a brilliant idea! I’ve heard that there are diamonds in the forest! I’m going to dig a mine but first I need to get rid of the trees around my farm so I can dig a hole. Once I sell the diamonds, then maybe I’ll have enough money to pay for medicine when I get sick.

   [Farmer 2 begins digging a hole. As she digs, 3 more trees fall down.]

Farmer 3: Eureka! Maybe if I clear the trees from the edge of my land, I could plant some rice. Hopefully that would earn be enough money to buy food for my family.
Farmer 3 chops trees and plants rice. As she sprinkles the seeds, 3 more trees fall down.

The farmers continue working until all of the trees have sat down, one at a time. The chimpanzees walk sadly off stage, with no habitat to return to. When the last tree falls, the farmers stop and look around.

Farmer 1: Hey…. guys…. I can't hear the birds anymore! Or the chimpanzees…

Farmer 2: Because there are no trees around my farm, my cocoa trees aren’t protected from the rain. The soil is washing away, and the pods are even more rotten than before! Those trees I chopped down were important…

Farmer 3: There’s no shade from the sun for my cocoa trees and now they’re ruined! We have to protect the forest!

All farmers: How can we protect the forest if we don’t have any money?!

Farmer 4: Farmers! Farmers! I have some amazing news! I’ve just heard that if we work together as a Fairtrade cooperative we can get more money for our cocoa!

Farmer 1: That’s ridiculous!

Farmer 2: I don’t believe it!

Farmer 3: Tell us more!

Farmer 4: If we work together and sell our cocoa on Fairtrade terms, we can earn more money AND protect the forest. We won’t have to cut down the trees!

Farmers jump up and down excitedly.

Farmer 4: Let me show you how we can farm cocoa together in a forest friendly way…

First, let’s plant cocoa trees with lots of space around them so that they have room to grow. This will make them produce even more cocoa pods!

Farmers start planting cocoa trees, 3 trees stand up.

Next, let’s bury all of the black pods so the disease doesn’t spread.

Farmers bury pods, 3 trees stand up.

Now, let’s re-plant the tall rainforest trees around our farm, to shelter our cocoa trees from the sun and look after the soil.

Farmers run around planting trees, all the rest of the trees stand up, waving their arms in delight.

Chimpanzees return, run on to the stage and cause havoc, picking cocoa from the trees, before running off to sit in the corner and eat their stolen snacks.
**Farmer 1:** Oh no! The chimps have returned! How do we stop them eating our pods?

**Farmer 4:** Easy! Just bang this drum and they’ll stay away!

[Farmer 1 bangs drum, the chimpanzees put their hands over their ears and move off the stage.]

**Farmer 4:** Because, we’ve worked together to farm in a forest-friendly way, we’ve been able to make more cocoa than ever! [Farmers cheer!] Now, we can sell this together on Fairtrade terms and earn more money. We won’t have to log the trees because we will make enough money from cocoa farming to look after our family and our community!

[All farmers and trees cheer.]

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**Teacher narration:**

The rainforest cocoa farmers have shown us that if farmers do not earn enough money, they have to make difficult choices to survive. It we want to protect the rainforests of the world; it is important that we make sure the people that live there are paid fairly.

When you buy Fairtrade chocolate, you are helping farmers to support their families and protect the places where they live.