



Directly Traded Coffee Goes *Further than Fair Trade* for Oromo Ethiopians...

The **Oromo Coffee Company** (OCC) is a fledgling social enterprise created to support both the Oromo refugee community throughout Greater Manchester and indigenous Oromo coffee growers from their native Ethiopia.

The Oromo Coffee Company – ‘Fair Trade and Beyond...’

The company which is owned by members of the Oromo community settled here from Ethiopia is now carrying out DIRECT TRADE – going that extra mile than Fair Trade can give and are engaged in the process of creating and selling their own brand of roast and ground coffee, sourced directly from smallholders in Ethiopia. By shortening the coffee supply chain involved, a greater level of profit will be retained for both the enterprise based in Tameside and for the Oromo Ethiopian coffee growers.

How It All Began...

Asylum seekers initially settled in Stalybridge were offered friendship and support by the Parish of St George in Stalybridge. Links were made with the **Lorna Young Foundation**, well known for their work with farmer communities in Africa. The LYF specialises in devising and managing projects with smallholder farmers in developing countries, equipping them to compete more effectively within

the business world, and so it was not too far a leap in the imagination to suggest linking Oromo coffee growers with the



Oromo residents in Greater Manchester in a new trading initiative. The LYF contacted **Tameside Council** who were pleased to be able to support the initiative by providing small business support assistance. The LYF also approached **Bolling Coffee** to assist with coffee industry expertise.

The LYF is supportive of Fairtrade and other ethical trading initiatives but recognise that smallholder producers also need access to alternative, sometimes radical new approaches to trade. One way of assisting communities in the developing world is to support them to engage in **direct trading** – cutting out middlemen and shortening the supply-chain so that producers get an even better share of the profits. The newly established OCC is one way towards achieving this, whilst at

the same time creating meaningful employment, new skills and building self-esteem for a community who remain marginalised and living on the poverty line.

The interest of faith and community groups in this enterprise is pivotal to its success. Many churches, mosques, third sector organisations etc. support Fairtrade by purchasing craft items or food and drink products. This new initiative provides an alternative stepping stone for those who are committed to ensuring a better deal for producers, whilst at the same time, helping a local refugee community.



The Initiative

The OCC will source green coffee beans from the Oromia Coffee Grower Co-operative in Ethiopia (*highlighted in the Black Gold movie*). The initial batch of coffee will be freely provided by Bolling Coffee, who will also donate their expertise, roasting and processing facilities. The OCC will produce and market high quality, affordable, roast and ground fresh coffees for the retail and food service sectors. Profit from the



sale of the coffee will be used to grow the company and create additional employment and training opportunities for the community. It will also be used to support the Oromo Community Association in Greater Manchester and ensure that enhanced prices are paid to smallholder coffee growers in Ethiopia. The venture is being backed by Tameside Council, with commercial support coming from Bolling Coffee, a West Yorkshire based coffee company who are experts in importing and roasting coffee from around the world; Bolling will assist the enterprise in importing the new product and by providing the first batches of coffee for free, along with their expertise and processing facilities.

The OCC will be staffed by members of the Oromo community who will make up the management, back office and sales force. The OCC is receiving start-up support from Tameside Council but will need a great deal of additional on-going support and mentoring from local businesses and entrepreneurs. The LYF is providing the overall project management and governance to the partners.

What's so 'special' about this Initiative?

This initiative is unique in many ways. It is the first 'community to community' traded coffee in the UK and it is directly supporting farmers in Ethiopia and Ethiopian refugees in the UK. It provides skills, employment, income and self esteem to those involved, whilst also helping to dispel the myth of the 'hand-out reliant' asylum seeker. This initiative is also a great example of how charities, communities, Government (local and national) and private enterprise can all work together to achieve something totally special and sustainable.

The Partners



Lorna Young Foundation (LYF)

A key individual in founding Cafédirect, Lorna Young secured the first supermarket listings for Cafédirect products, launching the brand from its niche market to the mainstream. LYF is a UK registered charity and aims to reduce poverty by:

- Providing business and marketing education for the developing world;
- reducing supply chains and adding value to products,
- enabling fairer competition for farmers in national and international markets places, and
- promoting ethical trading

Contact: Christina Longden - The Lorna Young Foundatio Tel:07538 690072 www.lyf.org.uk

Oromo Ethiopians

The Oromo Ethiopians are a group of around 250 households living primarily in Manchester, Ashton under Lyne, Stalybridge, Bury, Bolton, Oldham, Sheffield, Stockport and Salford as legal refugees with full residential status. They were resettled in the UK during 2006/07 following persecution in Ethiopia.

Bolling Coffee

Based in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, Bolling Coffee is a long-standing family-owned business which specialises in sourcing, blending and roasting high quality coffees from around the world.



Bolling is committed to upholding ethical trading standards. Its coffees come from farms, estates and co-operatives where there is a drive to improve quality but never at the expense of the local environment or communities.

Contact: Damian Murphy Tel: 01484 852601

<http://www.bollingcoffee.co.uk/>
<http://www.grumpymule.co.uk>

Tameside Council - *The Oromo Coffee Company would also like to thank Tameside Council's Enterprise Team for*



their support and backing for the venture

Newsflash! LYF and the Oromo Coffee Company are **looking for a business or volunteer** who is experienced at **web design** and would be willing to create a new website for the company so that they can begin to meet the demand for orders that they are already experiencing! Here is a chance to demonstrate your company's dedication to corporate social responsibility OR to boost your own CV!

How Can YOU Help?

This amazing initiative has gathered momentum to date with no cash whatsoever – simply hard work, dedication and a belief in its success. However, in order to move it forward we do need some help. We need:

- **Donations AND business sponsorship** to be able to support the Company so that it can operate effectively as a business (i.e. *marketing materials, a website, training* for the community etc)
- Volunteers who could assist with *coaching/ support* to the company on financial matters
- Businesses and Community Groups/organisations faith groups and institutions (schools, colleges, local authorities, hospitals etc) who would like to **SERVE OR SELL** the new coffee to their customers*Don't forget – its already Fair Trade certified!* (and if

you already provide a Fair Trade coffee – surely you have room a LOCAL brew too!?)

Contact **Christina** or **Ian** at LYF now with your enquiry about sales or with offers of how you can help:

Call 07538 690072 or 07944 979721 or Email projectmanager@lyf.org.uk



We are grateful to Messrs 'Wilson and Phillips Photography' for permission to reproduce their photographs.

Get Planning for International Fair Trade Day: 9th May 2009

If you need a reason to have a party in the Summer sunshine, get thinking about planning for International Fair Trade Day in partnership with the newly named 'World Fair Trade Organisation' (previously IFAT) It's a Saturday so an even better reason to join in with the most discerning and ethically minded of celebs and stars. You need to log your event ASAP

in order to be ahead of the
crowd though – go to:
www.worldfairtradeday09.org