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WELCOME NOTE

Welcome to the April 2007 Edition of the Realise A Better World Newsletter.

In the month of March I have been privileged to have been personally inspired by some of the efforts of individuals and groups in society. I was informed of a teacher who was raising awareness to their students about the positive things they can do to contribute to a better world. To emphasise their importance the teacher was sneaking it into subjects like Maths and English. It occurred to me that for thorough, lasting, positive developments in society we depend on the wisdom of future generations which is what this education technique was aimed at. Future generations require subtle education in this way to give them the information required for them to make their own judgements on what they want.

Mitchelton Football Club has recently undergone development which has seen its canteen committed to healthy food. The move has been inspired by numerous elements in society and has been possible through the availability of healthy products. Very few sporting clubs have made the leap to a healthy canteen but Mitchelton FC's pioneering leadership has paid off immediately with approximately 300% profit from the previous year. By making this commitment the club has tapped into a market of people who want healthy food. It is estimated between 30,000-40,000 people are exposed to the club's facilities and canteen every season. This commitment complements the club's goals and ensures healthier product options in following years.

These examples demonstrate to me that society is now in transition to a better world. This becomes most evident in what we want - primarily what we want in our life but also what choices we make in our daily lives to achieve what we want in our life. Trends are dictated by what individuals want. So I've been inspired by the fact that people are realising they want a better world and understand how to achieve it.

INDYCARS GOING TO ETHANOL

The US Indycar series has announced that its 2007 series will run all cars on 100% fuel-grade ethanol. This comes in response to new national goals that aim to

diversify fuel supply and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is expected that this publicity will promote ethanol as a fuel source in domestic vehicles.



Indycar on ethanol: <http://www.prnewswire.com/mnr/ethanol/21328/>

As a fuel source it has its benefits over fossil fuels. It can be produced from a variety of grains and yams which allow it to be classed as a renewable fuel source. E10 (a mixture of 90% petrol and 10% ethanol) fuel can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 30% with little effect on engine performance.

Even with a renewable source and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions mass production of ethanol has been found to have its issues:

- Agricultural methods on a mass scale can be unsustainable.
- The energy spent in the production can be more than the energy in the fuel produced making it unviable.
- There are concerns that crops to produce ethanol are replacing crops for food in developing nations affecting their ability to support themselves.
- There is a large quantity of water required for production of ethanol which could create problems in drought affected areas.

Such a trend towards something that people perceive as a benefit to the environment is inspiring at the very least. It provides a step away from what many considered an addiction to oil and marks the first steps towards a sustainable solution.

Ethanol has a few benefits that can be an advantage to a better world:

- An easy first step for those who prefer a gradual transition.
- Reducing the chances of conflict caused by dependence on oil.
- Production can be kept local which would benefit local economies.
- It can be produced privately so fair prices at the bowser will be maintained.

By diversifying our use of fuels we can spread more evenly the environmental impacts caused by our lifestyle. It is a step towards

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becoming more efficient. Diversifying our fuels is a step closer to reducing our dependence on travel and will allow efficiency through design of the places where we live. Eventually this will mean the places we work, rest and play are all within a short walk from where we live.

References:

Ethanol Promotion and Information Council - <http://www.drivingethanol.org/>
Indycar.com "Ethanol" - <http://www.indycar.com/tech/ethanol.php>
Make your own fuel - <http://runningonalcohol.tripod.com/>

FAIR TRADE

The fair trade movement is a global movement. Over a million small-scale producers and workers are organised in grassroots organisations in over 50 developing countries. Their products are sold in developed nations, educating consumers about the product and where it came from. Disadvantaged communities are then able to gain a fair price for their product.

Amongst the fair trade products available are; food, coffee, cotton, clothing and footballs.

Producers must be accredited to trade under the fair trade certification. Fair trade producers are committed to the following criteria:

- Paying a fair wage in the local context to workers.
- Offering employees opportunities for advancement.
- Engaging in environmentally friendly practices.
- Being open to public accountability.
- Providing healthy and safe working conditions within the local context.
- Ensuring that there is no abuse of child labour.

"Fair trade has helped farmers provide for their families' basic needs and invest in community development." (<http://www.gxonlinestore.org/aboutfairtrade.html>).

Some of the benefits of fair trade for producers and their communities are:

- Building long-term trade relationships.
- Regular income.
- Security of workers' pay and conditions.
- Cleaner environment.
- New housing.
- Health and sanitation.
- Increased efficiency.
- Water supply.
- Education and sporting opportunities.

"Fair trade ...proves that greater justice in world trade is possible. It ...shows how a successful business can also put people first." (<http://www.ifat.org>)

By including environmentally friendly practices in the criteria there is a need for farmers to

consider the long-term future of their land. This benefits the environment through:

- Small-scale farms using organic methods which are more sustainable.
- Encouraging local traditional farming practices which limit the impact on the environment.



Fair trade in Singapore: <http://www.lynkgroup.org/>

The aware consumer then is able to benefit in the following ways:

- Allows consumers a clear conscience about their purchases
- Empowers consumers with an ethical choice.
- Allows consumers the ability to support a social justice movement.
- Allows consumers to help make a positive impact on the lives of people in developing nations.
- Purchase of a product with an education element.

The sale of products always goes alongside with information on the production, producers and their conditions of living.

Buying fair trade products means supporting developing countries in their pursuit of self-determined sustainable development. In a slogan calling for "Trade not aid" at the UN Conference on Trade and Development Delhi (1968), fair trade campaigns worked to allow developing nations to determine their own future through earning their keep rather than accepting handouts.

In developed nations there are a number of things that an individual can do to support fair trade:

- Purchase fair trade products when you can.
- Volunteering at a fair trade organisation in your area.
- Make a donation to a fair trade organisation.
- Look for fair trade campaigns you can join.
- Raise awareness to others about what fair trade is, what products are available and the opportunities to contribute to a better world.

References:

Cooperative Coffee 'Facts About Fair Trade' - <http://www.cooperativecoffee.com/resources/papers/facts.html>
Fair Trade Foundation - http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/about_benefits.htm
Fair Trade Online Store - <http://www.gxonlinestore.org/aboutfairtrade.html>
International Fair Trade Association - <http://www.ifat.org>

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