

THE SCOTTISH MALAWI RICE PROJECT RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

The Scottish Partners

JTS (Just Trading Scotland) is a small business in Paisley which grew out of the work of two fair trade shops in the Glasgow area (The Balmore Coach House and Rainbow Turtle in Paisley). They had been importing goods from Africa for some years, jams, marmalades and sauces from Swaziland and crafts from Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambique and had seen how even quite small amounts of imports can help producers in Africa earn a better living.

In 2008 they decided to start working in Malawi. The Scottish Government was keen for businesses in Scotland to work with producers in Malawi and they had the help of another Scottish organisation, Imani Development, based in Oban, which also has offices in Malawi.

John Riches from JTS visited Malawi in December 2008 and met Abdul Phiri and NASFAM. NASFAM and the farmers were looking for ways of increasing their sales so that they could encourage farmers to grow more rice. JTS decided to order a container with 18 tonnes of rice.

How do you sell 18 tonnes of rice when you have never sold a grain before?

- JTS spoke to East Dunbartonshire and Renfrewshire who agreed to serve Malawi rice in schools.
- Liz Cotton of JTS thought that it would be good to challenge schools and churches to sell 90kg of rice, as that was what a farmer had to sell to send one child to school for one year. Within a year over 200 schools and churches had each sold (at least) 90 kg of rice, effectively a whole container!
- Fair trade shops across the UK bought the rice and encouraged churches and schools to do the 90 kg challenge.
- Edinburgh University are now serving Malawi kilombero rice in their residences.

This has been a huge joint effort. Councils, schools, churches, shops, universities have all played their part in introducing a new brand of rice to the UK. As a result, Malawi farmers have found new markets which can allow them to increase production. JTS have now bought 70 tonnes of rice from [NASFAM](#) and are looking to buy at least the same amount again in the next year.