



E-NEWSFLASH FEBRUARY 2009

Oromo Coffee Enterprise Goes Direct Trade!

James Purnell, UK *Secretary of State for Work and Pensions*, launched the LYF's latest venture, commenting "This is a unique initiative that could make fair trade even fairer – and the coffee tastes great too!" Backed also by the Bishop of Manchester, the former Lord Mayor of Manchester, Afzal Khan, and Muslim and Christian faith groups, we are working with recently settled refugees from the Oromo region in Ethiopia who contacted the LYF to see if we had any ideas about how they could set up a self help project, rather than being reliant on state benefits.

With our support, the Oromo community (who have legal residential status) have now created a direct trading 'community to community' social enterprise - 'The Oromo Coffee Company'. As the birthplace of coffee, the Oromo region of Ethiopia provides some of the finest quality beans in the world. This direct trade initiative will cut out middlemen and ensure an even greater level of profit for



Zemzem Ibrahim (above)

We have been living here with very little, with very low spirits. It is excellent to be able to work with LYF and Bolling Coffee, and to get advice from our local Council. We believe that we can teach British people a lot about coffee heritage as well as working hard ourselves - and in doing so, we are helping the smallholders back home".

How Can YOU Help? Get Practical!

The OCC received a small start up grant from Tameside Council but in order for the project to succeed, the community needs longer-term support from the LYF: HERE'S HOW TO HELP:

- Contact the LYF to **place an order** for the OCC's coffee for your business/community group/workplace/yourself
- Provide some 'in kind' support – individuals with skills such as **business mentoring, PR/ Marketing** and **financial expertise** are needed by the enterprise
- **Make a donation** to the LYF in order to support the project/ sponsor the OCC

What is so different about the LYF?

We will work with any smallholder farmers in developing countries who need help with business and marketing support and learning. We are a registered UK education charity that seeks to level the playing field for smallholder producers, so that they can compete fairly in the marketplace. We are all about empowerment in action - we aim to assist producers to make the transition from being providers of raw product to becoming managers of their own businesses, building their commercial/ marketing skills and helping them to develop local brands and add value to their products.

Who Was Lorna Young?

The Lorna Young Foundation (LYF) is named in memory of Lorna Young, a marketing specialist seconded from Equal Exchange, to be the first Sales and Marketing Manager for Cafédirect. She was a driven and dynamic Scotswoman who secured the first supermarket listings for Cafédirect products, and almost single-handedly too Fairtrade coffee from the margin to the mainstream. She saw the need for smallholder farmers to be able to gain the skills and confidence to break into their own local and regional markets, as well as internationally.

Lorna died in 1996 at the age of 44 but her name, and her fierce commitment to championing the cause of producers live on through the LYF.

Contact us now on **07538 690072 or 07944 979721**



(from left) Chris Longden (LYF), Afzal Khan, Bishop of Manchester, Elsa Lelissa and James Purnell

smallholder farmers than would be possible even through Fair Trade. James Purnell was aware that the Lorna Young Foundation has come this far with no funding to date—just a lot of good will—and backed our appeal for sponsors and help. He added "The Oromo Coffee Company has been set up by a group of people who have said quite clearly that they want to contribute to

society and to help smallholders back home at the same time. And this is an outstanding example of what can be achieved when people work together to develop their different skills in an innovative way... I will certainly be asking whether this coffee could be stocked at the House of Commons in future."

This exciting new venture is being assisted by Bolling Coffee, a Yorkshire based family-owned roaster, which has generously agreed to support the OCC with roasting and packaging of the coffee. There has been a huge amount of interest from retailers and the public and the new Fairtrade certified range of coffees will be available in May 2009.

Garedew Yadessa, one of the Oromo community leaders emphasised the importance of this self-help initiative: "You can already see what a difference this project is making to the morale of our community.



Members of the Oromo community (above)