

Welcome to

Ana a Topa



**The GASP Project to support children who work in the
tobacco industry in Malawi**



Tobacco is a global industry.

Every cigarette smoked in Guernsey has been produced in tobacco fields across the world from the USA to China to Malawi.

In Guernsey, we have been successful in persuading young people to turn away from smoking. We can now describe Guernsey as a world leader in tobacco reduction amongst young people.

Following the introduction of the smoke-free legislation, GASP believes it can be ever more successful in persuading young people not to smoke.

In 2005–2006 GASP staff led 350 sessions in island schools. We work with pupils of all ages, from junior school to post-16. We never underestimate how difficult it is to persuade young people not to smoke.

However, one persuasive feature has been their disgust at the antics of [REDACTED] – those tobacco companies who have, over the years, used every trick to sell more cigarettes and increase profits.

Tobacco companies have made our job much easier for us. They have lied about the health impact of tobacco, targeted and exploited vulnerable users of tobacco, such as women and young people in underdeveloped countries, and they have encouraged malpractice in the production of tobacco.

It is this last trick that has particularly incensed young people in our lessons. In particular, they have found the experience of Malawi to be unjust, exploitative and something that they want to address.

For that reason we are planning to create a special project called Ana a Topa – a scheme to make Guernsey children aware of the working practices imposed by the tobacco industry on Malawi and the demands placed on children to work in tobacco fields.



1. Tobacco Growing in Malawi

Third-World tobacco production is labour-intensive and involves clearing bushes and thickets, levelling termite mounds, mechanical or manual field cultivation, transplanting the seedlings, irrigation, weeding and applying pesticides.

Harvesting takes place over several weeks and is generally performed by hand. After harvesting the leaves are cured in barns using hot air and smoke from fires. This takes several days. The cured leaves are then graded and bundled before being machine-compressed and baled in waterproof tobacco paper lined with tar.

Malawi has the highest incidence of child labour in southern Africa. It produces 6.6% of world tobacco exports and this accounts for over 70% of Malawi's foreign earnings. In order to keep Malawi in the cycle of debt created by growing tobacco, transnational tobacco companies provide pre-financed seeds and fertiliser for farmers – for which they charge exorbitant fees.

It would cost \$10 million to replace child labour with adults in Malawi. Each tenant family in Malawi has on average 5 children and 40% (78 000) of these children are working on a full- or part-time basis in the tobacco fields. Of the child workers, 45% are aged 10–14 years and 55% are 7–9-year-olds (the same age as our Guernsey Smokebusters). This number is high, yet the real number of children believed to be working is likely to be much greater due to underestimation.

Child labourers in Malawi perform a range of potentially hazardous tasks on tobacco farms, such as clearing fields, making nursery beds, watering nurseries, uprooting, transporting and transplanting tobacco seedlings and weeding during the second phase, picking, transporting, tying the leaf, picking the dried tobacco and bundling during the last phase. Some landlords prohibit tenants living on estates sending their children to school during harvesting.

Major safety and health hazards

- Green tobacco sickness from skin contact with tobacco crops, causing vomiting, dizziness and diarrhoea.
- Injuries from cutting tools (they do not use protective equipment or clothing)
- Injuries from contact with and entanglement in machinery
- Musculoskeletal injuries from repetitive and forceful movements
- Heat exhaustion
- Snake and insect bites



2. The GASP Project

At GASP we will establish the **Ana a Topa** project. **Ana a Topa** is a Malawi saying that means 'the children are tired'. The aim of our project is to make Guernsey children aware of the plight of other children in less privileged countries and to help some of those children who are forced to work in the tobacco fields.

The project will have four phases:

Phase 1: Establishing the project

We will undertake research to ensure that our project is based on the following principles:

- Our project relies on validated, unbiased evidence
- It meets the needs of young people in Malawi
- It makes Guernsey young people aware of tobacco-industry malpractices
- It becomes a sustainable project which has long-term benefits in Malawi

To achieve this, we have been liaising with experts in tobacco control, especially those who have worked in Malawi. We have also made contact with non-governmental organisations such as Save the Children, Oxfam and other voluntary organisations that have experience of similar projects.

Finally, we have been working with local teachers and advisers to ensure that our project can integrate into the local citizenship and geography curriculum.

In the initial phase we will be visiting Malawi to see for ourselves how projects might be effective.

Phase 2: Educating Guernsey young people

We have already produced lesson plans that explain how tobacco is produced in Malawi and the abuses it causes for children in Malawi. Pupils are asked to compare their lives with those of children in Malawi. We also engage them in activities in the project, including fund-raising.



Phase 3: Fund-raising for Malawi

Initially, it is our aim to raise £12 000 for the **Ana a Topa** project. The money will be spent on:

- A building project or community activity that will directly support children in Malawi
- Funding a local research project to assess the frequency of child labour abuses in Malawi

We plan to coincide our fund-raising activities with the annual No Smoking Day in March 2007.

Phase 4: Making the project sustainable

We plan to make the project sustainable by establishing links between youth groups and our contacts in Malawi.

3. Local Support

We have always received tremendous support for our work in Guernsey. Without community support we simply would not have achieved the levels of success that we have. Therefore, we are hoping that we can call upon your assistance again. We need support in the following ways:

- Advice and expertise – people who live and work in Guernsey operate on a global stage. We have already received very valuable advice on the project from interested parties, especially from those who have worked in Africa.
- We need people to help us communicate our message. Di and I would be very pleased to talk to groups of any size who would be interested in the **Ana a Topa** project and the whole business of [REDACTED].
- We would welcome any financial support. Our main aim is for Guernsey young people to raise money; however any pledges of matched funding would be gratefully received!

