

# The Fairtrade Towns Initiative

Lessons from across the ocean



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## Executive Summary

This research project aimed to accomplish three main goals: 1) to investigate the history and level of success of the Fairtrade Towns initiative in the United Kingdom; 2) to examine whether the Fairtrade Towns model might be appropriate for the US context, by visiting Fairtrade Towns and existing campaigns, and interviewing key players and local campaigners within the UK Fairtrade movement; and 3) to provide a clear set of recommendations for the implementation of a Fairtrade Towns initiative or similar model in the United States.

In contrast to the US, the high profile of Fairtrade in the UK is remarkable, due in great part first to decades of tireless effort by mostly faith-based groups, followed by the effective collaborative effort of various key organizations working together to develop and support the Fairtrade Foundation. Most notably, the recent explosion in awareness of Fairtrade is the result of tremendous energy, commitment and vision of many local leaders in a truly powerful grassroots campaign effort – the Fairtrade Towns initiative. The Fair Trade movement in the UK continues to evolve into an increasingly coordinated and empowered campaigning network –claiming a total of 178 Fairtrade Towns, islands, boroughs, and cities, as well as 250 or so additional existing local campaigns as of March 2006.

Feedback from surveys and interviews with campaigners and Fair Trade movement leaders in the UK highlighted several valuable learnings relevant to the US.

The first is that a clear set of criteria for achievement of Fairtrade Town status is key in motivating activists toward a concrete, yet rewarding goal. The criteria also inherently require coordination and collaboration at the local level, involving faith groups, city councils, small businesses, inspired individuals, and even major retailers, with the added benefit of community-building from the process (following the principles of Fair Trade!).

Another valuable learning is that collaboration at the national level is also vital for success. The various organizations historically involved with Fair Trade in the UK are generally (and more importantly, publicly) united in support of the Fairtrade Foundation's efforts, encouraging their supporters to be supportive of Fair Trade while efficiently limiting the amount of their own dedicated resources. Another important element that ties closely to the success of Fair Trade Towns is the stalwart support of a national UK retail chain, which has been effective both at the national and local level.

One concern regarding the Fair Trade Towns initiative in the UK is the exclusive focus on the FAIRTRADE Mark. Although this concentration has been important in rapidly raising brand recognition of Fairtrade in the UK, it has also resulted in some exclusion of alternative traders. Another concern is how to maintain momentum of campaigning groups once status is achieved. Despite clear challenges within the movement, grassroots groups do not appear to be aware of significant tensions at the top-level, and enthusiasm for the initiative remains high.

The author strongly recommends developing a Fair Trade Towns initiative in the US. Fair Trade Towns is a powerful way of providing direction and inspiration to scattered, sometimes overwhelmed grassroots activists, and could be an effective means for developing improved collaboration within the US Fair Trade movement as a whole.

Specifically, the US Movement should closely replicate the highly effective criteria of the UK Fairtrade Towns initiative, with several important adjustments: 1) Criteria should explicitly reflect support for alternative fair traders, in order to make the initiative stronger from the start and as a concrete step towards developing cohesion in the larger Fair Trade movement; 2) Additional criteria should be added to maintain campaign momentum even after achievement of Fair Trade status (various ideas are suggested within the paper).

A US initiative should be hosted by a single organization, with clear input and backing from representatives of the entire Fair Trade movement, a sort of 'Leaders Forum' which would include NGOs, faith-based organizations, alternative traders, and lead activists. Given the current independent nature of Transfair USA, the national FLO initiative in the US, the author does not recommend Transfair as the lead organization unless formal mechanisms are put in place to enable healthier influence by the broader fair trade movement. However, the author strongly suggests that as a vital player in the movement, it is appropriate that Transfair USA be closely involved with the initiative's inception and development.

It will also be useful to identify a strong retail ally and/or move forward a national supermarket campaign in tandem with the development of the Fair Trade Towns initiative.

In conclusion, the author fully recommends carrying forward this positive initiative that has great potential for strategically building the Fair Trade movement in the US - raising awareness of Fair Trade, helping to increase sales of Fair Trade products, empowering activists, and contributing to a sense of community that reflects the concept of cooperation inherent in the principles of Fair Trade.

# Introduction

## **Aim of the Research**

This project aimed to accomplish three main goals: 1) to investigate the history and level of success of the Fairtrade Towns initiative in the United Kingdom; 2) to examine whether the Fairtrade Towns model might be appropriate for the US context, by visiting Fairtrade Towns and existing campaigns, and interviewing key players and local campaigners within the UK Fairtrade movement; and 3) to provide a clear set of recommendations for the implementation of a Fairtrade Towns initiative or similar model in the United States.

## **Report Format**

The structure of the Project Report follows the aims described above, beginning with a brief history of Fair Trade and the UK Fairtrade Towns movement in Chapter 1. This chapter also includes an assessment of the impact of the Fairtrade Towns initiative on general awareness and level of sales of Fairtrade products in the UK. Chapter 2 addresses challenges faced by the Fair Trade Movement today, and how some of these issues play out in the local context of Fair Trade Towns. In Chapter 3, the specific criteria required for achieving Fairtrade status are described, followed by a closer look, in Chapter 4, at local Fairtrade steering groups, some key motivating factors for their formation, who is involved, and a few challenges encountered by different groups. This is followed in Chapter 5 by an examination of the ways in which various types of national organizations and institutions each supports the Fairtrade Towns initiative. In Chapter 6, there is a description of where Fairtrade Towns might be headed in the future. The report concludes in Chapter 7 with the author's recommendations for the US movement. In this chapter, the author shares her opinions on the benefits and drawbacks implied in pursuing a Fairtrade Towns Initiative based on the UK model in the US.

## **Methods**

Research was conducted during March and April of 2006, primarily utilizing site visits, direct semi-structured and open interviews (in person and by telephone) with key actors within the Fairtrade Movement in the UK. These include staff and volunteers from many of the primary organizations involved either historically or currently with Fair Trade in the UK, as well as a sample of individual Fairtrade Town campaigners, for a total of 30 interviews. Additional data was collected using email correspondence, as well as a structured web-based survey to which 21 Fairtrade campaigners responded. Relevant website searches, Fairtrade Foundation print resources, as well as printed information from other organizations served as valuable background material. Finally, popular media including newspaper articles provided additional contextual information. Please note that in order to preserve the anonymity of participants, individual's names are not used in citing responses except where appropriate.



## About the Researcher

Elisa Arond organized several local and national actions in support of Fair Trade during her various roles with Oxfam America's Coffee Program; as Interim Coffee Organizer, Special Projects Associate, and Intern with the Coffee Program. She also helped to establish the Boston Fair Trade Coalition, a local Fair Trade campaigning group that aims to raise awareness and increase sales of Fair Trade products in the Boston area.

### Note on the terms 'Fairtrade', 'fair trade', and 'Fair Trade Certified™':

'Fairtrade' is used throughout this report to refer to products certified by the Fairtrade Foundation, the UK's national initiative of the international certifying body, the Fairtrade Labeling Organization (FLO). Products certified under these terms are entitled to carry the label shown below, referred to herein as the 'FAIRTRADE Mark' (figure 1). 'Fairtrade' is also used to refer to towns, cities, schools, churches and other areas or institutions that have achieved the goals set out by the Fairtrade Foundation in order to be awarded the status of Fairtrade Town, Fairtrade School, etc.

Other fairly-traded products and the alternative trading system within which they are sourced are referred to as 'fair trade' or 'fairly-traded'.

Similarly, 'Fair Trade Certified™' refers to products certified by TransfairUSA, the national initiative of FLO for the US. Although Fair Trade Certified™ products sold in the US fall under the same international standards as those sold in the UK under the Fairtrade Mark, TransfairUSA uses a different label from other national initiatives (figure 2).



**Figure 1** The FAIRTRADE Mark, logo of the Fairtrade Foundation



**Figure 2** The Fairtrade Certified™ label, logo of TransfairUSA

# Chapter 1 Fairtrade in the UK: A Brief History

## **It's been a long journey, but recent success is highly visible**

The last five years in the UK have seen a boom in the visibility of Fairtrade<sup>1</sup> – in product availability, media highlighting and celebrity support, general popular awareness, and even academic research – suggesting that Fairtrade is a recent phenomenon. However, the true story of fair trade in the UK is actually decades long. It was borne on the tireless work of faithful activists, many within church networks, who have slowly built the foundation for dramatic change that is seen today.

The earliest fair traders included churches and organizations such as Oxfam, which began selling fair trade goods through its network of charity shops in the 1960s.<sup>2</sup> Others such as Traidcraft, a Christian poverty relief agency, also began importing fair trade crafts as early as 1979, selling out of the back of a warehouse run by a few volunteers.<sup>3</sup> Today, there are now over 1500 Fairtrade products available in the UK, certified by the Fairtrade Labeling Organization (FLO), sold by companies licensed by the UK's national initiative of FLO, the Fairtrade Foundation.<sup>4</sup> In addition, thousands of other non-certified fair trade products such as crafts and clothing (screened via other alternative fair trade<sup>5</sup> schemes) are sold through Fair Trade Organizations or members of the various alternative trading networks such as the British Association of Fair Trade Shops (BAFTS), the European Fair Trade Association (EFTA), and the International Fair Trade Association (IFAT).

The market for fair trade goods continues to grow. Today, 20% of coffee sold in the UK carries the FAIRTRADE Mark. A 2005 MORI poll commissioned by the Fairtrade Foundation showed 50% recognition of the FAIRTRADE Mark among UK adults, compared with 20% in 2002.<sup>6</sup> Currently, around £200 million worth of Fairtrade products is sold annually, a significant increase from 2004 when sales reached £140 million.<sup>7</sup> Large retailers are now on board with all major British supermarkets carrying at least one Fairtrade product, and several having converted their store-brand coffee and tea lines to 100% Fairtrade. Coffee giant, Nestle, recently launched its own Fairtrade product – the Partner's Blend, amidst significant controversy. One major retailer even announced in March that it would introduce Fairtrade certified cotton in its store-

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<sup>1</sup> Fairtrade refers to products that have been third-party certified in accordance with international standards for fair and equitable trading conditions as agreed upon by the Fairtrade Labeling Organization. See Glossary for more details.

<sup>2</sup> Oxfam website.

<sup>3</sup> Traidcraft website.

<sup>4</sup> Fairtrade Foundation website.

<sup>5</sup> 'Alternative fair trade' refers to a system of trade based on dialogue, transparency and respect following the international definition of fair trade, but not necessarily certified under the FLO system. In the US, companies like Ten Thousand Villages, SERRV, and World of Good are examples of 'alternative traders' that are members of the IFAT network.

<sup>6</sup> Fairtrade Foundation press release: [http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/about\\_consumer\\_research.htm](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/about_consumer_research.htm).

<sup>7</sup> Fairtrade Foundation website.

brand clothing line.<sup>8</sup>

Cafedirect, a Fairtrade business venture launched jointly by Oxfam Great Britain, Traidcraft, Equal Exchange and Twin Trading, now stands as the 4<sup>th</sup> largest roast and ground coffee company in the UK, and the 8<sup>th</sup> largest tea brand.<sup>9</sup> Public institutions using Fairtrade products include the House of Commons, the Scottish Parliament, the Department of Health and the Department for International Development.<sup>10</sup> On the alternative trade side, today there are 70 BAFTS members with over 100 world shops across the UK, with a total net retail value of over £7.1 million. The recent report by IFAT on *Fair Trade in Europe* describes the UK Fair Trade landscape in the following terms:

In the last five years the United Kingdom has proved to have probably the most dynamic Fair Trade structures of all European countries. They have undergone a far-reaching restructuring process and have simultaneously experienced incredible growth rates. [...] The UK seems to be the fastest-growing Fair Trade market in the world.<sup>11</sup>

The movement's success is attributed to two major factors: effective collaboration amongst the primary organizations and networks involved with fair trade in the UK, including faith-based and secular NGOs, mission-based companies, and in particular, one major supermarket chain; and the tremendous grassroots effort exerted by individual activists, faith networks, university students and most recently, Fairtrade Towns campaigns groups.

### **Collaboration between Key Organizations**

NGOs such as Oxfam Great Britain, Christian Aid, CAFOD, and the World Development Movement, have had vital roles in the Fair Trade movement in the UK, as founder members of the Fairtrade Foundation in 1992 and also as members of the Fairtrade Foundation Board. Each of these organizations has recently lowered the profile of their Fairtrade campaigning, allowing the Fairtrade Foundation to take the lead role. However, each continues to exercise its influence on the integrity of the FAIRTRADE Mark and to leverage their campaigning muscle by encouraging their supporters to take action in support of Fair Trade.<sup>12</sup> This collaboration has meant that a clear, concise public message is presented to the public while extended networks of supporters strengthen collective organizing efforts.

### **Grassroots Support and the Fairtrade Towns Movement**

Supporters acting through community networks such as churches, universities, and local campaigns groups, have been important throughout much of the history of the movement.

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<sup>8</sup> In March, at the launch of Fairtrade Fortnight 2006, Marks & Spencer, major high street retailers announced it would begin to carry Fairtrade certified cotton clothing in several London stores. See press release at:

<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/pr190306.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Cafedirect website: <http://www.cafedirect.co.uk/>.

<sup>10</sup> Figures from *Fair Trade in Europe 2005: Facts and Figures in 25 European Countries*, published by FLO, IFAT, NEWS, and EFTA and available on the IFAT website, p. 68-70.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Oxfam, Christian Aid, WDM, *Pers. Comm.*

Churches built the foundation and continue to be active, but many, including the Executive Director of the Fairtrade Foundation, Harriet Lamb, attribute much of the recent success of Fairtrade in the UK to the efforts of hundreds of localized campaigns under the Fairtrade Towns Initiative. In her words, “The Fairtrade Towns movement is vital, and is making a huge difference. It is a grassroots social movement and together with the producer forms the beating heart of changing the world trading system.”<sup>13</sup> This effort to coordinate and give direction to local campaigns by providing concrete targets and involving local authorities has exploded in popularity in the last few years especially. There are currently 178 Fairtrade Towns, islands, boroughs, and cities that have been declared across the country after achieving the 5 goals required,<sup>14</sup> as well as 250 or so additional existing local campaigns that are working to achieve Fairtrade status.<sup>15</sup>

This year in March close to 8,000 events were held for Fairtrade Fortnight, the annual March campaigning push – from parades to tea dances, panel debates, festivals and radio shows. Local Fairtrade Towns steering groups coordinated many of these events.

### **Fairtrade Towns: It all began in a little town called Garstang**

Remarkably, the Fairtrade Towns initiative began with the inspiration of one man and the dedication of one small group of local campaigners. In 1999, in Garstang, a small market town of 5000 in northwestern England, Bruce Crowther, an energetic and visionary Oxfam campaigner and Chair of the local Oxfam group had an idea about how to spark their stagnated Fairtrade campaign. “The campaign to make Garstang ‘the world’s first Fairtrade Town’ caught the imagination of local activists, galvanized the support of local shopkeepers, businesses and council, and engaged the attention of the local and regional media. It significantly raised awareness of Fairtrade and the Fairtrade Mark in Garstang.”<sup>16</sup>

Aiming to raise awareness of Fairtrade in Garstang, the local Oxfam group organized a meal of entirely Fairtrade and local ingredients and invited many key figures in town to attend. Guests pledged their commitment to either buy, sell, or serve Fairtrade products to their clients or members (depending on whether the individual represented a business, church, or school). At the next Town Meeting, the vote was put to the council to decide about declaring Garstang a Fairtrade Town, and it passed. A sign was placed at the entrance to town declaring “Garstang: World’s First Fairtrade Town” for all visitors and residents to see.

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<sup>13</sup> Lamb, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>14</sup> The five criteria for becoming a Fairtrade Town include: 1) the local council must pass a resolution in support of Fairtrade; 2) there should be a range of Fairtrade products served at local catering establishments; 3) Fairtrade products should be used at a number of local workplaces and community organizations; 4) the local campaign should attract media attention; 5) a Fairtrade Steering group should be established to support the ongoing activities of the campaign. These criteria will be discussed in more depth in a later chapter of this report.

<sup>15</sup> Crowther, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>16</sup> Fairtrade Towns Action Guide, available on the Fairtrade Foundation website at: [http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get\\_involved\\_fairtrade\\_towns.htm](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get_involved_fairtrade_towns.htm)

Bruce saw the potential of this model in raising the visibility of Fairtrade in other towns across the country. He contacted both the Fairtrade Foundation and Oxfam to lobby for an organization to take on the initiative and replicate it on a larger scale. There was concern that the initiative would require more resources than were available at that time, as the Fairtrade Foundation was still very small. But as more towns started to exhibit interest in the wake of Garstang's achievement, the project was embraced. Other towns were soon clamouring for Fairtrade status, and soon the first Fairtrade City was declared, followed by declarations in Scotland, southern England, Wales, and Ireland.<sup>17</sup> Interest has continued to grow over the few years since Fairtrade Towns began.

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## Chapter 2 Achieving Fairtrade Status: Motivation, Criteria and Impact

### **Achievement of Fairtrade Status: what is the motivation?**

Of 21 respondents to an online survey of Fairtrade campaigners, all considered achieving Fairtrade status as at least somewhat important to their group.<sup>18</sup> What motivates groups to form, requiring hours of volunteer time, energy and personal financial resources?

For some towns, getting started on the road to achieving Fairtrade status is a natural segue from existing campaign activities, while for others, it requires a bigger step, an intentional effort to gather a group of active, engaged supporters to help organize events, lobby the council, meet with store managers, and speak at schools and churches. One of the strengths of the criteria is that the clear, achievable goals serve as a basic guide for that process.

Working toward achieving Fairtrade status adds a different appeal to general campaigning:

[Fairtrade] designation gives the issue of fair trade more weight and prominence amongst the populace, recognising its seriousness and demanding attention. Advocates in Kingston have found official status has made 'those on the periphery sit up and take notice, and ask pertinent questions'. Fiona (Bath) describes how official recognition "gives the campaign more backing, and more 'teeth'!"<sup>19</sup>

Fairtrade Towns also gives small towns an exciting goal, to enhance the town identity, perhaps compete with neighboring towns in a friendly way<sup>20</sup>, and contributing positively to a sense of

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<sup>17</sup> Crowther, *Pers. Comm.* See Appendix for more detailed information on the Fair Trade Towns budget.

<sup>18</sup> All respondents rated the importance of achieving status between 8 and 10 (on a scale of 1 to 10). See Appendix Section 1.3 for complete responses.

<sup>19</sup> Woods Dissertation. p. 37.

<sup>20</sup> Survey Respondents. Many campaign groups were formed upon inspiration of hearing about the success of other Fairtrade towns.

community pride.<sup>21</sup> Fairtrade Towns helps in “bridging some of the divides between communities across the county. It is an additional accolade for a city to celebrate, but also helps as a leverage tool for campaigners in convincing new outlets to switch to Fairtrade products, as well as for attracting support from the local council.”<sup>22</sup>

## **Fairtrade Town Criteria**

The Fairtrade Town Criteria were first established in consultation with the original group that carried the campaign forth in Garstang, several high level Fairtrade campaigners in other towns, and the existing campaign managers at the Fairtrade Foundation. Though Garstang first declared itself a Fairtrade Town in 2000, the standards were not officially finalized until 2002 and the only modification since then has been to clarify the targets for the number of retail outlets required per population, amidst ongoing discussion as to how to ensure fair review of applications from towns that were already aiming for the previous targets.

The aim of the criteria, and the root of its success, in the opinion of many, is its comprehensive approach requiring **community collaboration** while providing a **specific set of accomplishable targets** that help provide groups with a concise vision of what they are trying to achieve.

The Fairtrade City/Town Criteria, in short, are the following:

- 1) Local council must pass a resolution in support of Fairtrade and agree to serve Fairtrade coffee and tea in its meetings, offices and canteens.
- 2) A range of Fairtrade products are readily available in the area’s shops, cafes/ catering establishments.
- 3) Fairtrade products are used by a number of local work places (estate agents, hairdressers, etc) and community organizations (churches, schools, etc).
- 4) Local campaign must attract media coverage and popular support.
- 5) A local Fairtrade steering group is convened to ensure continued commitment to Fairtrade Town status.<sup>23</sup>

## From Fairtrade Town to: Fairtrade Borough, Village, City, Zone, County, School, University, Church, Diocese, Mosque, Synagogue – and then?

Following the growth of Fairtrade Towns, other institutions started clamouring for Fairtrade Status - from primary schools to universities and churches. But also in a geographic sense, the concept of Fairtrade Towns began to diversify. Fairtrade Villages, Islands and Zones have also sprouted up. In 2005, Somerset County in the south of England was declared the first Fairtrade County, followed recently by Cumbria, to the north. As each of these has evolved, new relevant

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<sup>21</sup> Woods, Annabelle, 2006. p. 38. One interviewee is cited saying that their local Fairtrade campaign “ensures that Thornbury retains it’s market town vibrancy”.

<sup>22</sup> Online Survey Respondent. See Appendix for complete survey responses regarding the importance of achieving Fairtrade status and the motivation for initiating a local Fairtrade Towns campaign.

<sup>23</sup> From Fairtrade Towns Action Guide, available on the Fairtrade Foundation website, [http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get\\_involved\\_fairtrade\\_towns.htm](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get_involved_fairtrade_towns.htm) .

criteria have been designed together with the Fairtrade Foundation.<sup>24</sup>For bigger cities, the concept of Fairtrade Boroughs was devised, encouraging localized campaigns for what would otherwise be a daunting organizational task.<sup>25</sup>

## The Impact of Fairtrade Status

“I suspect in terms of impact on [the] part of community that already knows bits about it, it has had a huge impact, but whether that’s moved on to the whole sector and increased sales, I don’t know. It’s hard to say. Overall it *feels* that an enormous amount has happened that wouldn’t have happened otherwise.”<sup>26</sup>

It is difficult to quantifiably measure the impact that Fairtrade Towns has had on the Fairtrade movement in the UK. Perceptions of positive influence are unanimous, by grassroots activists as well as those involved in managing the initiative. Although data to support this general perception are lacking, there are several convincing indicators that support the claim.

### Surveys

In the summer of 2001, after having been officially declared a Fairtrade Town, the Garstang group conducted a survey of Fairtrade awareness in town. They found that 71% of those surveyed showed recognition of the FAIRTRADE Mark. Of those who were surveyed who were not “local”,<sup>27</sup> only 20% showed recognition, closely matching the national average of Fairtrade awareness as determined by Fairtrade Foundation research at the time.<sup>28</sup> This first evidence of the potential effectiveness of Fairtrade Towns on raising awareness was strong, yet few later campaigns have used this tool for measuring impact. Research conducted by Christian Concern for One World indicates that the likelihood of a church becoming involved with Fairtrade correlates positively with its proximity to a Fairtrade Town.<sup>29</sup>

### Exposure in the Media

“We constantly chase the media and make full use of the council’s press machine.”

Fairtrade Towns campaigns regularly draw coverage of events, especially where celebrities or local dignitaries are present, beginning with local, regional and even international coverage of Garstang as Worlds First Fairtrade Town.<sup>30</sup> Some campaigners in small towns have managed to

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<sup>24</sup> Cochrane, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>25</sup> For London to achieve Fairtrade City Status, the Fairtrade Foundation, in consultation with local campaigners, decided it would be most effective to encourage a target number of city boroughs to achieve status independently. This strategy has encouraged diverse campaigns in the various parts of the city.

<sup>26</sup> Oxford Fairtrade Town campaigner, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>27</sup> For this survey, the Garstang group surveyed 200 locals, and 40 non-locals, where non-locals were defined to live more than 3 miles from the centre of town. From Garstang campaign archives, care of Bruce Crowther.

<sup>28</sup> Results of the 2001 Fairtrade Foundation poll showed 19% recognition of the Fairtrade Mark. Details can be found on the website at: [http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/about\\_consumer\\_research.htm](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/about_consumer_research.htm).

<sup>29</sup> Maranda St John Nicolle, Christian Concern for One World, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>30</sup> Fairtrade Foundation: Fairtrade Towns and Cities Grant Proposal, April 2003 – March 2006, p. 1. “The initiative captured the imagination of the media and the story was covered extensively in the local papers, on regional TV and national radio. Recently a Japanese TV crew has been to Garstang to cover the story and interview the man behind it all, Bruce Crowther.”

secure a regular column that is used to update readers about the progress of the campaign, upcoming events, and which serves as an informational forum for key issues in fair trade. Some councils provide media support by lending the services of their press team to help with publicity.

Many Fairtrade steering groups, whether tiny rural villages<sup>31</sup> or large capital cities<sup>32</sup>, have websites where members post information about the campaign's progress, celebrate successful events, and indicate where to buy Fairtrade in their area. An Oxford campaign activist explained the local media's particular interest in their campaign due to the unique nature of fair trade in tying together both local and global issues:

[Fairtrade] is the one campaigning activity that receives major interest [in local media]. Local activists campaigning about their thing try and get press interested but it's hard, [media are] more interested in local things. One thing about Fairtrade is it brings it down to local level.

#### Collaboration at the Local Level: Fairtrade Steering Groups Build Community

"The City Steering Group is the main powerhouse for generating ideas, broadcasting the concept of fair trade and encouraging purchases of Fairtrade products."<sup>33</sup>

By requiring the involvement of many facets of a community, the standards necessarily force campaigners to leverage different means to reach each of these sectors, generating awareness in the process. Campaigners also learn from the challenge, strengthening their group, adding to their toolbox of skills in networking, and refining their arguments in support of Fairtrade. Still, a local champion is also an important ingredient for a successful campaign, a person who has strong leadership skills and can help guide the entire group.<sup>34</sup>

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## Chapter 3 Challenges for Fairtrade Towns

Despite the general sentiment that the Fairtrade Towns criteria are fair, useful and effective, some concerns and subsequent suggestions were voiced for revision of specific criteria. Though many of the Fairtrade Towns groups have shown savvy planning and effective success, there have been and continue to be challenges along the way. For example, some relate to the demographics of Fair Trade, others are inherent in community organizing, such as lack of support by the council, lack of supportive retailers, or insufficient commitment by volunteers to carry out all the

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<sup>31</sup> Criccieth Fairtrade campaign website: <http://www.cricciethfit.fsworld.co.uk/>

<sup>32</sup> Fairtrade London campaign website: <http://www.fairtradelondon.org.uk/>

<sup>33</sup> Woods, Annabelle. Undergraduate Dissertation, 2006, p.38.

<sup>34</sup> Vibrant and successful campaigns almost necessarily require a local champion that is extremely dedicated to the campaign - invariably a retired person, church member, local fair trade shop owner, or sometimes a paid member of the council. According to research results described by the coordinator of Christian Concern for a Better World, the factors that influenced a church signing up to the Fairtrade Diocese campaign were two-fold: 1) leadership of a good champion and 2) proximity to a Fairtrade Town. However, at the same time, a campaign cannot be sustained by one individual, and still requires collaboration, building additional support at the local level. Nicholle, *Pers. Comm.*



necessary tasks required to achieve the targets. Other challenges reflect issues facing the greater Fair Trade Movement.

### **Perceived Bias in the Criteria**

Concern regarding varying level of difficulty for different towns with different size populations in achieving the same criteria was characterized by one participant as an urban bias in the criteria,

One thing I would argue - you get a very small community that would love to be a Fairtrade Village that may have very few retail outlets at all. For example, [the village of] Grove has 2 stripmall and 10 stores. One is a Fair Trade store. Three others sell Fairtrade goods. From the Fairtrade Foundation, [Grove] does not qualify [for Fairtrade status] because there are not enough retailers. This is astounding - [the campaigners] are a Fairtrade powerhouse, but [the town] doesn't have much retail. It is a great set of criteria overall and works really well in lots of contexts but gets tricky when dealing with special case scenarios. For example, you may have a massive population for a dormitory town for a larger town, but few retailers. There should be more flexibility to deal with how you certify [Fairtrade status] - to make it rigorous but not leave out people who should really get it.<sup>35</sup>

In contrast, another campaigner in a larger city campaign responded with the opposite perception of bias in favor of areas with smaller populations, "The dynamics in a larger city are quite different. In a small city, the number of [Fairtrade] outlets that have to be reached is quite manageable. I know the criteria were sensitive to that issue, but I'm not sure how that works."<sup>36</sup> These comments point to the difficulty in having standards that, to be fair, require both rigor and flexibility.

### **Challenges in the UK Fair Trade Movement**

Various challenges faced by the UK Fair Trade Movement as a whole are also reflected at the local level to varying degrees within Fairtrade Towns, and many relate to the narrow focus of Fairtrade Towns on the FAIRTRADE Mark. For example, tension exists within the movement in regards to promoting fair trade beyond the FLO-certified system, i.e. supporting alternative traders selling fairly-traded goods. Also, questions that revolve around the mainstreaming of Fairtrade and the involvement of large multinational corporations (MNCs) with evidence of either historical or current unethical trading practices is expressed in local groups' level of willingness to promote Fairtrade products from such companies. There is also concern that by concentrating awareness-raising activities around the Mark sometimes the bigger picture of trade justice may be lost, encouraging a relatively superficial understanding of Fair Trade.<sup>37</sup> See Appendix for an elaboration of strengths and limitations of Fairtrade Towns focusing on the Mark.

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<sup>35</sup> Nicholle, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>36</sup> Naveed, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>37</sup> Online survey respondent. Still, various groups indicated that their "overall objective includes the wider trade justice issues."

## Exclusion of Alternative Fair Traders: Fairtrade Towns Identity and the FAIRTRADE Mark

“Britain is obsessed with the Fairtrade Mark,” says a representative from a pioneering mission-based Fairtrade company in the UK.

As sole steward of the FAIRTRADE Mark in the UK as well as the Fairtrade Towns Initiative, the Fairtrade Foundation concentrates first and foremost on promotion of the FAIRTRADE Mark, and Fairtrade Towns criteria match that expectation. Although the value of the FAIRTRADE Mark is evident,<sup>38</sup> there are some who are concerned that by focusing solely on the Mark, and “as [fair trade] becomes more commercialized under the Fairtrade Foundation, which is ongoing, there is no support of alternative traders.”

Although the Mark is easier to promote, the wider ethical issue is important and the One World Shop is the only outlet for non-food ethical craft products. At times it feels like the [Fairtrade] Foundation is on a mission to take over the world and does not make the time or take the opportunity to promote other non-Fairtrade Marked ethical trade [products or companies].<sup>39</sup>

Although it seems most campaigning groups put similar emphasis on the FAIRTRADE Mark as the center of their local awareness-raising efforts, many also maintain awareness either individually or within their group as to the concept of fair trade beyond the Mark, and structure their campaigning activities accordingly. Some are more open to supporting local fair trade shops<sup>40</sup> at the same time that they promote the FAIRTRADE Mark willingly in educational outreach efforts, while others include trade justice in their campaigning. Though some groups may be particularly loyal to mission-based companies, many are also staunch supporters of the value of mainstreaming Fairtrade too.

Like any branding, it takes time for recognition but once there, it works very well. If a whole town is modelled on fair trade, then it is impossible for it to centre on the fair trade mark. You will get a mixture of home grown products (which are fine and good), fair trade imported products and non-fair trade goods. These will always co-exist, but you need to swing the balance towards fair trade (and lets be fair – home grown too).<sup>41</sup>

It seems the grassroots are sometimes more open-minded than those at the “top”, despite some local tensions in defining fair trade in terms of local context and players.

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<sup>38</sup> Woods Dissertation, p. 45. Woods qualifies this branding association as adding positive value to the achievement of Fairtrade status as “a place brand, marketing the city as one that promotes high values, where the community works well together....”

<sup>39</sup> Online survey response to the question “Which would you say more closely matches the aims of your campaign: raising awareness of the Fairtrade Mark specifically, or raising awareness of the concept of fair trade in general? Please explain.”

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. In many of the towns campaigns interviewed, the local alternative fair trade shops play a vital role in the Fairtrade Town campaign, despite the acknowledgement that the achievement of status is wholly centered on the Fairtrade Mark. For example, various groups indicated their efforts to raise awareness of “the concept of fair trade in general” through support for local fair trade shops, even “encouraging retailers to investigate becoming BAFTS affiliated.

## Encouraging Diversity

Concern was voiced about how the criteria might be revised to better include non-Christian faiths, a wider age range, and non-White British communities.<sup>42</sup> In terms of diversity of income and in contradiction to the perceived association of privileged consumer with higher-priced Fairtrade goods, there is some evidence that the “take-up of Fairtrade among churches doesn’t fit the standard profile. [...] The percentage of Fairtrade Churches in poorer areas was similar to wealthier areas.”<sup>43</sup>

## Maintaining Momentum

“We’ve struggled a bit to keep the momentum going. Some are still involved. To some extent, people have separated. It’s got a certain life in it, but it’s almost drifting.... What does status mean? What is it for? For me it was creating the profile. About creating a kick into it over the couple years. Can only continue for a short while with that kind of energy. Have ideas, but not sure how to maintain the momentum since we achieved status, which, if you like is a bit of an arbitrary thing [to] reach a certain level.”<sup>44</sup>

Although the Fairtrade Foundation does encourage Fairtrade Towns that have achieved status to review themselves and submit an application for renewal of status annually, the Fairtrade Foundation does not have the capacity to do outreach or followup in order to ensure that groups continue to campaign and show progress. “The danger, and it does happen, is that once a town achieves status, they [the Fairtrade group] give up. [The danger is] that they are interested in the title, the status, and not so focused on building Fairtrade continually.” In order to strengthen motivation for continued campaigning, one participant recommended, “Make the requirement of progression to retain status, e.g. have to demonstrate raised awareness/sales every 3 years.” Another suggestion was to create a range of achievement awards, or different levels of status. “Standards are really not very high. There is a need for a ladder of steps....e.g. Fairtrade Towns with gold, silver, etc.”<sup>45</sup>

Though the criteria seem very successful in inspiring groups toward organizing for Fairtrade, Fairtrade status appears to be having a significant impact on Fairtrade awareness, there are still some aspects of the initiative that might be improved in the future, in particular regard for long-term motivation, fairness, greater diversity and better inclusion of alternative fair traders.

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<sup>42</sup> The author found limited definitive data regarding diversity in the Fair Trade Movement in the UK. All 21 participants in the online survey were White Christian or agnostic British professionals, except for one teenager. Although this is a self-selected group, its demographics match the perception of most interviewees – that the UK Fairtrade movement is largely white, British, Christian, middle to senior age. However, it appears that younger people are increasingly gaining interest and involvement in Fair Trade as both consumers and campaigners. Additionally, the recent announcement of first Fairtrade Mosques and Fairtrade Synagogues demonstrates a recent expansion in religious diversity within the campaign. Additionally, some of the urban campaigners described attempts to outreach to non-white British communities. One online survey respondent from a London borough campaign wrote “We have a large ethnic population (Asian and East European) in the area and have not yet been able to gain their support on an institutional level, though we are still trying, and we have several individual supporters from the Asian community.”

<sup>43</sup> Nicholle, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>44</sup> Oxford Fairtrade Town campaigner, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>45</sup> Various online survey respondents.

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## Chapter 4 Resources: Funding, Support, and Coordination

The Fairtrade Towns initiative took off with remarkably few resources outside a tremendous contribution of volunteers' energy and time. However, as it has grown, the Fairtrade Foundation has realized the importance of resourcing the movement through certain vital channels, and has achieved two major grants to support their efforts. At the local level, successful groups have developed strategies for accessing and creatively stretching resources for maximum benefit. Resources available to Fairtrade steering groups range from direct financial support in the form of grants from sympathetic organizations, community funds, private donations, or membership dues, to in-kind donations of Fairtrade products for sampling, promotional materials, and advice and access to information networks, and especially volunteer time.

### **Human Resources: Utilizing NGO Networks, Churches, Local Government Representatives, and Local Businesses**

Steering groups have developed from a diverse base, and vary widely from one town to another. Members of existing local campaign groups associated with various international NGOs such as Oxfam, the World Development Movement, CAFOD, and Christian Aid have formed some groups, while others stemmed from formalized networks that had developed around other specific campaigns such as the Jubilee 2000 Debt campaign. Still other town campaigns developed from passionate individual efforts or in coordination with various local institutions from retailers, to churches, town councils, and local businesses or even civil society groups that see Fairtrade Towns as a positive community-building initiative. Local fair trade shop owners are often vital in both initiating and providing continuity to local fair trade campaign efforts.

Few, if any, steering groups actually have a hired coordinator specific to the Fairtrade Towns status campaign, and most groups rely heavily, if not entirely, on volunteer efforts. Some towns have a dedicated council member or staff person who includes Fairtrade Town status as a component of their duties.

### **Finding Funding at the Local Level**

Steering groups don't require large sums of money to function effectively, and most groups functioning on a budget somewhere between "hardly any" to £3,000 (about \$5,000). For what they do need, groups have addressed the issue of necessary funding in a number of different ways. In many towns, the Co-op has made a direct financial contribution to local groups, or has

sponsored the printing of materials or particular events. One participant remarked, “The Co-op has been incredibly good at giving little grants to organizations working on Fairtrade. For campaign groups that is important.”

In describing their budgets and resources, survey respondents demonstrated the diverse range of resources utilized, from raffles and donations, to corporate donations and individual support. Some groups benefit from funding from the Council, and others from community grants. All function on very limited budgets. See Appendix for more extensive survey responses.

### **Local Fairtrade Directories**

One of the key resources developed by many of the campaigns is the development of local Fairtrade directories listing local businesses carrying Fairtrade products. Some groups have printed their own directories and many maintain an online guide on their local website. Others have benefited from collaboration with the supportive ethical magazine the *New Consumer* and their contribution to the design and development of attractive pamphlets for various cities and towns which “gives people something they can get out there [that they] don’t have to put together themselves.”<sup>46</sup> Groups cover the cost of printing Fairtrade directories through selling advertisements to local businesses, as in-kind donations from printing companies, or using direct donations of individuals and local fair trade retailers.

### **General Support by the Fairtrade Foundation**

The Fairtrade Foundation has dedicated specific resources for the Fairtrade Towns initiative since 2003,<sup>47</sup> when the first government grant was approved from DFID (Department for International Development) that provided close to £100,000 for the Fairtrade Towns Initiative over a three-year period. This included logistical support, materials, and staff support. That grant has just ended in March 2006, and the next funding cycle will be covered by a recently approved grant from the European Commission, an exciting endeavor that will not only involve strengthening the UK Fairtrade Towns movement over the next three years, but will also include coordination and shared learning with other European Fairtrade Towns initiatives in France and Belgium.<sup>48</sup>

### **The Fairtrade Foundation’s Support of Local Groups**

Although the Fairtrade Foundation does not give specific grants to individual campaign groups, it does provide certain useful resources that at least some groups enjoy. The Fairtrade

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<sup>46</sup> *Pers. Comm.* Interview.

<sup>47</sup> “The Fairtrade Foundation is requesting £99,526, or 45% of the costs of this project over 3 years from DFID’s Development Awareness Fund.” From p. 6 of Fairtrade Foundation Fairtrade Towns and Cities Grant Proposal to DFID, April 2003-March 2006.

<sup>48</sup> Fairtrade Foundation: Fairtrade Cities and Towns Grant Proposal to DFID, April 2003-March 2006, p. 6. More generally, “the Fairtrade Foundation’s own sources of income, other than for specific projects, include support from 3 development agencies and some income from the licence fee which licensees pay for use of the Mark on their products.” But the Fairtrade Foundation does “not have access to individual donors’ support.” For more details on the Fairtrade Foundation’s budget for Fairtrade Towns, see the Appendix.

Foundation supports local groups' campaign efforts by providing a general structure for targeting Fairtrade Towns activities throughout the year, developing print resources and managing the Fairtrade Towns applications. A member of the Oxford group responded to the question, "How does the Fairtrade Foundation or other NGOs support your campaign efforts?"

[Most is] self-sufficient activity, locally generated, but it was the national Fairtrade Towns initiative that kicked it off. [Having] clear criteria that everyone was working towards was really important. Also, materials, a national campaign and different themes. Fairtrade Fortnight was when most happened. National support on the local level worked together. Without the national scheme and the level things have reached in UK, local activities wouldn't have happened in the same way.

"The Fairtrade Foundation does a good job of resourcing groups - that is key," said one survey respondent. By providing promotional materials, the Fairtrade Foundation helps ensure the consistency of the message and appropriate use of the Fairtrade Mark, though many groups still decide to produce their own, more locally-relevant materials. While some campaign groups see the contributions of the Fairtrade Foundation as helpful or even requisite to the success of their campaigns, others see themselves as independent or too far-removed from access to Fairtrade Foundation resources.

Our distance from the Fairtrade Foundation makes support impractical. We have found it very difficult to get producer visits as the perception is that Aberdeen is "too far" and when I went to a campaign supporter day in London last October, I was the only person from Scotland to have done so. They don't have the budget or the personnel to do much.<sup>49</sup>

Other groups appreciate additional support from the Foundation in the form of producer tours, website information, the valuable ready advice of the extremely dedicated, though part-time, Fairtrade Towns Coordinator, both in person and through the Fairtrade Towns email list-serve. This Yahoo group connects over 200 campaigners from across the country, allowing them to share feedback and ideas freely. Many cited this discussion group as one of the most important resources available to them, set up and monitored by the Fairtrade Foundation.

### **Vital Retailer: The Co-op Supermarket**

In terms of direct involvement in Fairtrade towns, the only retailer involved on a formal, comprehensive scale, is the Co-op. The local manager of the Co-op supermarket in Garstang was a key element in the success of their Fairtrade Town campaign bid. The local manager brought up the issue of Fairtrade products up to management at the regional office, and since then the commitment has been staggering, providing small grants to local Fairtrade steering groups,<sup>50</sup> sponsoring the printing of materials, developing an extensive array of their own Fairtrade materials, curriculum and activities for schools,<sup>51</sup> and even their own "Fairtrade Towns Packet", with useful advice and suggestions, available both by download and by order from the Co-op

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<sup>49</sup> Survey respondent

<sup>50</sup> The Co-op sponsored over 500 local events during Fairtrade Fortnight 2006, up from 350 in 2005. Personnel from the Co-op directly support many Fairtrade Fortnight events, attending and donating Fairtrade products for tastings, and many are active members of the local steering group.

<sup>51</sup> Young Cooperatives.

website.<sup>52</sup>

## **Resourcing the Future of Fairtrade Towns**

In the words of George Foulkes, as quoted after Garstang's declaration of Fairtrade Town status, the Fairtrade Towns concept is "spreading like wildfire". Fairtrade Towns are already sprouting up across the UK, in Scotland, England and Wales, and Ireland, as well as Norway, France and Belgium. The number of applications received by the Fairtrade Foundation continues to grow each year, and the number of events organized by local campaign groups for Fairtrade Fortnight each year has increased dramatically each year. It is very likely that this trend will continue, with more towns, and also other institutions achieving status.

For the Fairtrade Foundation, the challenge of success will be processing the high volume of applications, keeping up with activities and addressing the needs of so many active supporters. Additionally, the Fairtrade Foundation will also need to find ways to encourage existing Fairtrade Towns to maintain their momentum, continue campaigning efforts and work toward developing a deeper understanding of Fairtrade in their community.

In recognition of this challenge, the Fairtrade Foundation has developed a proposal for the future of Fairtrade Towns, and has gained the financial support of the European Commission to actually advance this vision. The proposal details the resources required to address the tremendous interest in Fairtrade Towns, as well as a plan to move the initiative forward towards a self-sustained, grassroots-run network independent of the Fairtrade Foundation. Criteria may be added as an incentive for towns that have achieved status to continue striving toward increased commitment to Fairtrade.<sup>53</sup> Evaluation will also be included as a key component, aiming to quantitatively describe the impact of Fairtrade Towns on awareness and sales of Fairtrade products.

## **Coordination for Deeper Understanding**

One campaigner suggested that in the future, Fairtrade will continue as an "alternative" option in the supermarket, but as other movements grow, they will continue to work in tandem, improving coordination and collaboration for greater consciousness and deeper understanding regarding consumption and also larger issues of injustice. This will involve not only FLO and Alternative Traders working more closely together, but also developing and resourcing innovative ways to

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<sup>52</sup> OxfamGB internal document. In November 2002, the Co-op published a report on chocolate in which they consulted with Oxfam policy staff and quoted figures from Oxfam. At the same time, in a major step toward mainstreaming Fairtrade and also making it more affordable they launched their Fairtrade chocolate line, converting all their store-brand chocolate to Fairtrade sourced from Kuapa Kokoo. In 2003, the Co-op also published their own report on the coffee crisis: "Coffee: What a difference a penny makes", and in 2004, all store-brand coffee was converted to Fairtrade as well.

<sup>53</sup> Fairtrade Foundation Grant Proposal April 2003 – April 2006, p. 2. "The goals for becoming a Fairtrade Town have evolved over time with early goals seeming too cautious and undemanding and current goals still not satisfying the ambitions of some Fairtrade groups. The detailed criteria needed to meet each goal require constant revision and adaptation to meet the needs of different groups, town versus city criteria for example, and their particular situations, and to maintain a momentum in their campaigning and educative work."

convey the message of Fair Trade.

People may understand Fair trade through different channels – poverty as tied to either lack of access to markets, information, or lack of power or influence, and always best through identification with personal experience. It is important to raise people’s awareness, helping them see the potential value of fair trade as an empowering alternative system of trade, not just an active choice of consumer charity in that moment in front of the coffee section in the supermarket aisle. This aim is already included in the trajectory of current Fairtrade Towns activities in areas where there is already a basic understanding of fair trade, as can be perceived by questions and level of discussion in the audience at debates and presentations focused on Fairtrade. It is in these contexts that questions, concerns, and criticisms of the Fairtrade system are raised. In the author’s view, regular reevaluation is a healthy practice to insure that the system remains dynamic and flexible to change, and most importantly, inclusive and aware of the people that the system aims to represent, benefit, and engage.

This discussion brings us to the possibility of what can be created in the US: how might we use this opportunity to develop a consciousness beyond brand, beyond Marks and icons, that will ideally both help disadvantaged producers abroad, but also raise consciousness and community within the US? How might we take this chance to build on existing learnings and develop something our own? Can we build something bigger, better, deeper, stronger? What has been accomplished in the UK is a tough act to follow, an impressive example of success, but given some of the points raised in the previous chapters, there are also some clear concerns and criticisms. This is a unique opportunity for the US to learn from these challenges, face our own unique issues in context, and move forward. The following chapter provides a few considerations, ideas and suggestions.

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## Chapter 5 Recommendations for the Movement in the U.S.

A local Fairtrade Town campaigner shared these words of advice for launching Fair Trade Towns in the US:

*“Take time to explore what people want to do. People will have their own axes to grind, their own perspectives. But this is about alliance building. Need to spend the time to make sure there is buy-in to a shared goal. Need some people with experience doing this – otherwise it increases transaction costs as local campaigner. [This process] can be seen to distract you, but the level of impact [achievable by] working together outweighs that. Invest in relationship-building upfront.”*

Right now there exists an amazing opportunity for strengthened campaigning efforts at the



grassroots level both within the United States and between the United States and other countries (i.e., intentional shared learning between campaigners and organizations). The experience of the UK in growing the Fair Trade movement is extremely useful as a learning tool for other countries. Europe seems to already be moving on that shared learning track, and the US should jump on board!

It is the author's hope that beyond this research project, there will continue to be an exchange of knowledge and ideas, perhaps through shared conferences, workshops, trainings, and other means. The author's full recommendations are provided below after a brief analysis of lessons that can be gathered from the UK experience.

### **Fairtrade Towns: An opportunity to give direction to the US Movement**

The author became convinced through the course of this research that the Fairtrade Towns campaign is a powerful means to give direction and inspiration to the Fair Trade Movement, mobilizing Fairtrade supporters both in rural and urban areas, including those who until now may have been hesitant to be involved, encouraging local media coverage, empowering local committed activists and providing local campaigns with an achievable target.

In addition, there is the perhaps unprecedented cooperation between facets of a community, such as local businesses, councils, faith groups, schools, and different political parties. This endeavor is bringing an international development issue to the local level in a manner people can understand, and strengthening their own community in the process. Each of these points demonstrates the development of an increasingly coordinated campaigning force.

### **Fairtrade Towns UK – Fair Trade Towns USA: Key Lessons**

As exciting as the developments in the UK Fairtrade Towns movement are, before initiating implementation of the Fairtrade Towns model in the US, it is important to consider some of the challenges evident in the greater movement in the UK, as some may parallel issues faced by the US movement. It is also necessary to look at relevant differences between the UK and US contexts in order to evaluate whether Fairtrade Towns is appropriate in the current US Fair Trade landscape.

Main differences include (elaborated further below):

- 1) Position of the Fairtrade Foundation within the UK Fair Trade Movement compared to the position of Transfair USA. In particular, differences between the Fairtrade Foundation and Transfair USA in terms of level of receptivity to influence by other key players in the Fair Trade movements (i.e. Oxfam, Alternative Trading organizations, faith-based organizations) for each country respectively.
- 2) Importance of collaboration and potential for tapping into existing supporters sympathetic to development issues who might be interested in taking on an issue like Fair Trade (e.g. in the UK, local campaigning groups like Oxfam, World Development Movement, CAFOD, Christian Aid groups)

- 3) Harmony between FLO-related initiatives and IFAT or other non-FLO-related initiatives
- 4) Role of student campaigners and student networks in Fair Trade
- 5) Supermarket Strategy
  - a) Gaining allied support of a major supermarket chain(s)
  - b) Extent of high-level pressure being applied by Fair Trade allies to supermarkets to carry more Fair Trade products.

### **Fairtrade Foundation and TransfairUSA: Key Differences**

The UK's FLO national initiative, the Fairtrade Foundation, has a different history and current structure as compared with Transfair USA. The Fairtrade Foundation was founded by the leading NGOs involved with Fair Trade in the UK: Oxfam GB, Traidcraft, Christian Aid, CAFOD, World Development Movement, New Consumer, and the Women's Institute. Most of these organizations continue to have an active role as Members of the Board of the Fairtrade Foundation. This structure helps (or at least intends to help) in guiding the Fairtrade Foundation through sometimes difficult and controversial decisions, for example, involving the use and management of the Fairtrade label by multinationals. In addition, the Fairtrade Foundation has a scheme of involving "charity shareholders", other non-governmental organizations, who also have voting rights (though at a different level from the Board) that influence the function and direction of the Fairtrade Foundation. This contrasts with the history and current structure of Transfair USA.

Transfair USA was founded without the involvement of organizations that informally share leadership of the Fair Trade Movement in the US (Oxfam, Lutheran World Relief, Catholic Relief Services, Co-op America, etc). Nor does Transfair USA include representatives of these organizations on their Board. In contrast, Transfair's Board is comprised of a variety of members, from those with proven international business acumen (e.g. a former Gillette Co. executive), to others with experience in philanthropy, legal counsel, environmental advocacy, and international development experience, and a producer representative.<sup>54</sup> Though likely valuable in terms of the contribution to Transfair's success in development and permeation into the market, negotiation with large multinationals, and perhaps in producer relations, it appears that the Board lacks sufficient involvement of key organizations with sensitivity or awareness of development challenges in combination with campaigning experience – vital contexts in which Fair Trade is rooted.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, without a formal mechanism for control or support of the national initiative (depending on how it is used), it is unclear whether the input of these diverse viewpoints actually influences decisions made by those at TransfairUSA. This situation can lead to tensions within the Fair Trade Movement in the US, particularly in relation to agreements made between TransfairUSA multinationals corporations.

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<sup>54</sup> List of board members and advisors is available on TransfairUSA's website:  
<http://www.transfairusa.org/content/about/board.php>

<sup>55</sup> Please note that this is a perception based on the author's observation and may be unwarranted.

## **Transfair USA: Carrier of the Torch?**

The differences between TransfairUSA and the Fairtrade Foundation are relevant to Fairtrade Towns because in the UK it is the Fairtrade Foundation that has carried the Fairtrade Towns initiative forward. Following the model established in the UK, it would seem logical for Transfair USA, as national FLO initiative, to lead Fairtrade Towns in the US. This path presents some genuine strategic and logistical advantages, however, there are several important considerations.

The characteristics mentioned in the previous section – of the potential for independent, non-collaborative decisionmaking – could prevent TransfairUSA from being the appropriate organization to carry forward Fairtrade Towns. In order for a comfortable arrangement to exist regarding who maintains power of a national towns initiative, it seems there need to be sufficient checks and balances in place.

At the same time, there is strength in the simplicity of choosing to allow the national initiative to lead Fairtrade Towns. It seems logical and appropriate that the national initiatives take on a lead role in Fair Trade campaigning in addition to their licensing and marketing activities. Several reasons include: a) It is less confusing to supporters as messaging is more likely to be consistent;<sup>56</sup> b) It is more efficient for each of the organizations that have historically been important to the Fair Trade movement to direct requests and supporters to one central place for materials, information, advice, etc., thereby limiting redundancy of efforts;<sup>57</sup> c) It allows these other organizations to focus resources on other campaigns such as the broader picture of trade justice, keeping their relevance to fair trade to: providing backup support, encouraging supporters to take action during key Fairtrade campaign moments, and safeguarding the integrity of the Fairtrade Foundation.<sup>58</sup>

Fair Trade Towns must fit appropriately into a long-term plan for the Fair Trade movement. For example, the decision of who takes forward the initiative must consider both the capacity for handling logistics as well as the long-term needs and expectations of such a project.

## **The Role of Key Allies in the Movement**

For an organization such as Oxfam or Co-op America to take forward Fairtrade Towns alone might also be disadvantageous to the future of the movement as well as risky to the individual organization. If a coalition of organizations were to lead Fairtrade Towns in the US, there might be better success at attracting a diverse range of supporters than if a single organization takes on the initiative. By leveraging the support of Oxfam, CAFOD, Christian Aid, WDM, etc. the Fairtrade Foundation has been able to outreach to many more potential supporters than it would have been able to otherwise without the significant support of these organizations. These

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<sup>56</sup> Cochrane, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>57</sup> Byrde, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>58</sup> Southworth, *Pers. Comm.*

organizations might not have been willing to do that outreach effort if they were not confident that the actions and decisions of the Fairtrade Foundation were balanced and/or influenced by their own input.

Following this argument, different organizations may be uncomfortable conducting outreach on Fairtrade Towns if TransfairUSA is the sole leader. Given its current seemingly independent structure, Transfair USA seems a potentially unstable option for carrying forth an important and symbolic initiative such as Fairtrade Towns. But this does not suggest abandoning the initiative, or handing it over to another single organization. Instead, the lesson should be that collaborative efforts would better build a movement in support of Fair Trade.

### **Strategic Long-term Planning: Importance of Collaboration**

One lesson that can be gathered from the UK movement as it has progressed is the necessity of collaboration amongst major players, in combination with careful consideration of feedback gained from volunteers and supporters, as well as regular evaluation of progress and methods. Tensions will always exist, but can be diminished by maintaining an open, inclusive process. Whether the UK has fully accomplished that ideal participatory method may be disputable, but it sets a start from which to work toward an ideal model. Maintaining an open communication process is vital to avoid misunderstanding or exclusion, and works to strengthen the movement as a whole, developing a much more powerful network for the future.

The effectiveness of the campaign can also be magnified by coordination with effective top-level campaign efforts such as the leveraging of pressure through negotiation with large retailers or private companies. Simeon Green, of Windward Bananas, says,

“Here in the UK, had there been lack of cooperation with all stakeholders, the movement wouldn’t have been as great as what’s going on. That in my view is a contradiction of what everybody is saying about controversy. [...] To me as an outsider in the UK, the most important driver for this movement, or the second-most important driver for this movement, is this broad coalition that I find in the UK. In this country it’s the church coalition, the development movement coalition, the main parties are on it. It is this coalition that is making this thing a success.”<sup>59</sup>

### **Mutual Support: FLO initiatives and Alternative Traders**

An important element for a strong, broadly successful Fair Trade Movement will be to improve cooperation between FLO Fairtrade national initiatives and the alternative Fair Trade initiatives. Local campaigners appear to be largely unaware of friction at the top level. Controversy at the top level has so far been mostly private; helping the movement appears to be more-or-less cohesive to those at the grassroots level.<sup>60</sup>

Some efforts are underway to improve dialogue and collaboration, and research has also been done examining the possibility of combining marks, or to certify crafts producers under another

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<sup>59</sup> Greene, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

new FLO standard.<sup>61</sup> However, regardless of whether the two systems actually do come together under one clear umbrella (which seems highly unlikely in the near future)<sup>62</sup>, there is much that could be done to demonstrate mutual respect, strengthen the work of each and benefit the entire Fair Trade movement as a whole.

In the UK, some efforts have been made to show support, with apparent interest in working together towards a viable solution in support of fair trade as the bigger picture. Evidence of positive support for alternative traders includes the Fairtrade Foundation publicly promoting World Fair Trade Day, supporting IFAT on their website, and giving credit for their vital role in the movement and also providing suggestions of how to support craft and other non-FLO marked products, as well as links for taking action on trade justice.<sup>63</sup> In general, this demonstrates a continuous positive trajectory in Fairtrade in the UK, ideally pointing towards improved coordination and collaboration amongst its major actors and also at the grassroots level. Also, the existence of organizations like Traidcraft that hold respect in both IFAT and FLO, and are represented on the Fairtrade Foundation board, each help to enable dialogue.<sup>64</sup>

In the US, the author is unfamiliar of such collaboration or even dialogue between the major Fair Trade Organizations (such as Ten Thousand Villages, SERRV, the Fair Trade Federation) and the national FLO initiative, TransfairUSA. Such dialogue might be facilitated by a more neutral organization such as Oxfam or Co-op America in order to eventually move toward conscious collaboration. Improved dialogue and mutual support should exist in order to avoid a fractured, less-effective movement.

### **Fairtrade Universities and the Role of Student Networks**

The student network in the UK is quite different from the US. In the UK the “student network is not very strong, but individual campuses have achieved fantastic results, enabling a longer-standing structure.”<sup>65</sup> The student network in the US is better-resourced as evident by the United Students for Fair Trade. Successful UK student campaigners provided several useful suggestions for how students might contribute to town campaigns. An active student campaigner might be a member of the town’s fair trade steering group and serve as liason between the town and university communities. Students can be helpful when recruited as volunteers for events, and universities serve as affordable venues for events.<sup>66</sup>

The US might consider the model of Fairtrade Universities as a way of formalizing Fair Trade campaigning currently happening at the university level in the US. The author is unfamiliar with the current status of USFT’s “Full Monty” campaign to encourage campuses to convert to Fair

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<sup>61</sup> Wills, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Fairtrade Foundation website: <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/wft.htm>.

<sup>64</sup> Tucker, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>65</sup> Lyne, pioneering Fairtrade University organizer

<sup>66</sup> Taylor, *Pers. Comm.*

Trade coffee. Perhaps USFT might consider taking on a similar model of Fairtrade Universities as a way to both formalize and ensure a sustained commitment to fair trade at the policy level of the university's administration. Given the increasing strength and resources of this organization, it seems appropriate for USFT to handle any Fairtrade University initiative perhaps with the oversight or support of any organization(s) that may lead Fairtrade Towns.

### **Retailers: From Mission-based Companies to Mainstream Supermarkets**

"One hundred percent fair traders are so much the backbone of what's happened over the last 10 years. But their importance has grown less as supermarkets have taken it on."<sup>67</sup> Mission-based companies have been key in the UK Fair Trade movement, just as they have in the US, as pioneers and early advocates. In the UK, many committed companies continue to support local town campaigns by donating products, sponsoring events, lending speakers or sponsoring producer tours. Dedicated employees are also sometimes involved as volunteers in local campaigns as well.

However, the mainstream retailers role in Fairtrade Towns in the UK grown increasingly important and may also provide some insight on supermarket campaigning for the US fair trade movement. A key element of Fairtrade in the UK has been the support of the Co-op supermarket chain. As pioneer amongst retailers, the Co-op has set the standard in terms of commitment to Fairtrade, building the steppingstone for competition amongst other retailers as they became interested in Fairtrade. The increasing commitment to Fairtrade as seen amongst most major supermarket chains in the UK has clearly helped local Fairtrade Towns campaigns proceed. While the grassroots have applied pressure on the store level, demonstrating demand for Fairtrade products, a complimentary factor in engaging supermarkets in Fairtrade has been the work of Oxfam and other high-level organizations in leveraging existing relationships and key opportunities for dialogue. It is the combination effort which is helping Fairtrade to reach a new level of integration into the mainstream.<sup>68</sup>

Nick, regional membership coordinator for the Co-op describes the increasing involvement by competing retailers in Fairtrade, Nick added,

Now other companies want to get on the fairtrade bandwagon. We welcome converts to the fairtrade family. We see other companies doing huge marketing, e.g. Marks & Spencer got huge press over the Fairtrade cotton launch. This shows the "boost to a failing brand that Fairtrade can be" [referring to Marks&Spencer]. Despite their size and power, plc's are timid and dislike controversy. They like to be doing things behind doors. Fairtrade forces them to become political because they can't ignore it. Progress is not unassailable. Now when we ask, "Does Walmart really support Fairtrade?" Consumers must keep up the pressure. Co-op will still support Fairtrade as long as members ask for it. If you make Fairtrade your habit, big business just may make it theirs.

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<sup>67</sup> Nicholle, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>68</sup> Cochrane, *Pers. Comm.*

## Issues of Branding

It is important to discuss the advantages and disadvantages in envisioning a model that is not hung completely on the TransfairUSA label. One problem with using the Fair Trade Certified™ label for towns that are demonstrating improved commitment toward Fair Trade is confusion regarding a label intended for a product, that is being widely and perhaps inappropriately used as a brand identifier for a campaign scheme.<sup>69</sup> Another concern with focusing on the label is the potential exclusion of alternative traders.

At the same time, one advantage of constantly and consistently using one label is that there is rapid public uptake achieving broad, massive recognition. By keeping the scheme simply focused on one recognized label, it is less likely (allegedly) to be corrupted or co-opted by large companies with big marketing budgets. And realistically, to move sales, it is important to create a widespread awareness. However, concern about the shallow understanding brought about by focusing solely on the Fairtrade Mark brings us back to finding a way to consider moving beyond a brand icon.

How can this be done without becoming, as described by one participant in the UK, “obsessed with the Mark”?<sup>70</sup> This is a serious dilemma – to ensure high enough awareness of the label, and also integrity of the label, so as to prevent large companies from developing their own insufficient “ethical” standards, without becoming so wholly stuck to the label as to exclude alternative traders and limit the discussion beneficial to an evolving Fair Trade movement. But this delicate balance is achievable, with intentional broad inclusion of input in the initiative’s development and implementation, careful design of criteria, focused and efficient use of resources, strategic mapping of the movement’s long-term goals, and willingness to evolve based on continuous learning and self-evaluation. The same participant cited above suggests: “But if you have more than one Mark, or something else...you’d get a more interesting discussion and start to feed people’s interest in different ways. People need to complicate the message of Fairtrade.”

First, given the relatively low level of awareness of the Fair Trade Certified™ label in the US currently, any other type of branding is still viable, in accompaniment (or even replacing, if deemed necessary) the existing TransfairUSA label. Such a model might embrace the new FTO Mark of IFAT in addition to the FTC label for products. If IFAT and FLO were to develop a matching (not identical but similar) branding scheme<sup>71</sup>, then it might simplify the issue of confusing consumers. It is helpful to have some kind of label on which to ‘hang’ the initiative so that it is easily recognizable to anybody. In terms of such a Fair Trade Towns label, perhaps IFAT would permit the FTO Mark to be used for a Fair Trade Town status, as a town is more accurately qualified as an institution rather than a product, and therefore seems more appropriately

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<sup>69</sup> Wills, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>70</sup> Rogers, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>71</sup> Wills, *Pers. Comm.*

associated with the FTO mark than the FTC mark. Or alternately, perhaps towns could become members of the Fair Trade Federation, under another set of screening standards distinct from businesses.

But at the same time, the benefits of branding are significant, and contribute to success of the movement's spread. And practically speaking, it is very easy and convenient to promote the product label everywhere if that is what you are trying to convince consumers to look for when they shop. Another possibility would be to develop a third mark, specific to Fairtrade Towns, which incorporates design elements of the other two marks.<sup>72</sup> If this possibility were to be explored, it would be useful to converse with other national Fair Trade Towns campaigns, and perhaps to develop one international Fair Trade Towns mark.

### **Specific Recommendations**

Despite clear challenges within the movement, grassroots groups do not appear to be deterred by tensions contained at the top-level, and enthusiasm for the initiative remains high. Therefore the author fully recommends carrying forward this positive initiative that has great potential for strategically building the Fair Trade movement in the US - raising awareness of Fair Trade, helping to increase sales of Fair Trade products, empowering activists, and contributing to a sense of community that reflects the concept of cooperation inherent in the principles of Fair Trade.

#### Balancing Promotion of FLO and Alternative Fair Traders

The author recommends developing a Fair Trade Towns model in the US that is housed (logistically) by a single organization with least FLO or Alternative Trader bias, and with formal mechanisms for input from key players in the US Fair Trade movement. In general the initiative should not be as heavily based on the Fair Trade Certified™ label or FLO branding as the Fairtrade Towns initiative in the UK. The author's suggestion would be to house the initiative at the Fair Trade Resource Network (FTRN), both for convenience and because the aim of FTRN includes both support of FLO-related initiatives and IFAT/FTF efforts, thereby placing the Fair Trade Towns initiative closely aligned with the broader goals of FTRN. Regardless of the chosen branding for the campaign, the initiative should aim to be welcoming, and help in uniting, all elements of the Fair Trade movement in the US.

#### Suggested Standards

Standards for achieving "Fair Trade Town" status should be strongly supportive of Fair Trade Certified™ products, but also inclusive of traditional alternative traders (clearly specified) in their scope. Additional modifications to the criteria include encouraging groups to conduct baseline awareness surveys at the start of their campaign. This effort simultaneously raises

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<sup>72</sup> However, a third mark might also confuse consumers already overwhelmed with various labels and marketing schemes.



awareness of Fairtrade, heralds the launch of the campaign for Fairtrade status, and allows for evaluation of the campaign's impact if the survey is followed up with a second questionnaire.

A suggested set of standards for Fair Trade Towns USA is as follows:

- 1) Local council must pass a resolution in support of Fair Trade and agree to serve Fair Trade Certified™ coffee and tea in its meetings, offices and cafeterias, considering the management of current service contracts restrictions as necessary.
- 2) A range of Fair Trade Certified™ products AND/OR fair trade goods from IFAT or FTF member organizations\* are readily available in the area's supermarkets and/or convenience stores (follow example of UK, # per population).
- 3) Fair Trade Certified™ products are served in local cafes/restaurants (follow example of UK, # per population).
- 4) Fair Trade Certified™ products AND/OR fair trade goods from IFAT or FTF member organizations\* are used by a number of local work places (offices, industries, hairdressers, etc) and community organizations (churches, schools, etc).
- 5) A local Fair Trade steering group is convened to ensure continued commitment to Fair Trade Town status.<sup>73</sup>
- 6) Fair Trade should receive local media attention and popular support.
- 7) Campaigners are encouraged to conduct a local market survey at the beginning of their campaign.

\*There should be a list of "approved" fair trade companies or organizations available to campaigners.

#### Managing the Initiative Collaboratively

The US should implement a formal strategy for the active participation and input of all major actors in the US Fair Trade movement. This might be accomplished by establishing a 'Leaders Forum' including representatives from each of the key lead organizations including Oxfam America, Co-op America, Lutheran World Relief, Catholic Relief Services, the Fair Trade Federation, etc., AND TransfairUSA, which should also back the Fair Trade Towns initiative.<sup>74</sup> There should be a concerted effort to include the large Fair Trade Organizations in the US (such as SERRV and Ten Thousand Villages who do not necessarily need IFAT or other branding because they already have strong individual brand recognition), as well as some representation from smaller FTF members. Their input is vital and these organizations will also likely benefit from a successful Fair Trade Towns initiative. Additionally, high-level grassroots community and student activists should also be represented on the Leaders Forum.

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<sup>73</sup> From Fairtrade Towns Action Guide, available on the Fairtrade Foundation website.

<sup>74</sup> *Fair Trade in Europe 2005: Facts and Figures in 25 European Countries*, p. 68, published by FLO, IFAT, NEWS, and EFTA and available on the IFAT website. The Fair Trade Leaders Forum provides an informal mechanism for such dialogue to occur. This informal group includes chief executives from all the main Fair Trade Organizations in the UK, including BAFTS and members of IFAT, and meets three times per year. The group discusses "common concerns related to the development of fair trade in the UK; it engages with other networks [e.g. the Fairtrade Foundation] and tries to have an impact on the international debates on trade."

These leader members will help develop the initiative and oversee the review of the first applications. They will also be responsible for securing funding or at least overseeing fundraising of resources required to support the development of this initiative. Logistics, materials and coordination require dedicated staff time. A Fair Trade Towns coordinator should be hired to handle these tasks.

If chosen as host, FTRN would likely require a significant infusion of financial resources in order to strengthen its ability in supporting the campaign. Simple materials developed for the campaign will require funding from outside sources as well. TransfairUSA might support the development of materials for the campaign, or if appropriate, FTRN and/or the Fair Trade Towns Coordinator could distribute TransfairUSA materials or refer campaigners to order them directly.

One aspect of the UK Fairtrade Towns model that might be helpful to the US is the existence of predisposed campaigning groups. The author recommends exploring inviting other trade justice allies to the table for the discussion (such as the Citizens Trade Campaign which depends on localized campaign groups).

#### Identifying a Retailer Ally

The author recommends strategically moving forward with a supermarket campaign that will be useful to the growth and success of Fairtrade Towns and vice-versa. This would entail finding a retail ally willing to make a serious commitment to Fair Trade in the US, as well as utilizing local Fairtrade Towns campaigners in guided supermarket campaigning activities such as the "Collecting the Supermarket Receipts campaign" mentioned previously.

Though Wild Oats does not have the number of stores nor national distribution equivalent to the Co-op, it is the most vocally supportive chain retailer in the US, and might be a willing and interesting partner for a pilot effort. The other supermarket that claims to have ethical standards and represents an extensive network of stores across the US would be Whole Foods. However, given their apparent lack of support for Fair Trade, it might be more appropriate to first demonstrate success under a pilot program with Wild Oats and then approach a company like Whole Foods.

#### Reviewing Applications for Fair Trade Status while Developing Grassroots Ownership

Applications can be reviewed by a panel of activists and staffpeople from various Fair Trade-related organizations and businesses who agree to serve as part of a small pool of reviewers. Applications can be reviewed by 2 panelists independently, then the response given in collaboration with a third reviewer. As the initiative expands and after towns achieve status, "Chairs" of successful steering groups can be invited to participate on the application review panel committee. In this way, as the initiative progresses, there will also be increasing input by activists represented in the pool of reviewers. After some appropriate length of time, this group

of reviewers can be invited together to review the standards and the structure of the initiative in order to make any vital recommendations for change.

#### Maintaining Momentum: Ideas for Next Steps

As already mentioned, continuous energy in the campaign is another major challenge, especially for towns that have already achieved Fairtrade status. Once status is achieved, what are the next steps? Are they raising continuously higher levels of awareness of Fairtrade, just maintaining status, actually raising the standards, or moving on to trade justice...? One campaigner's vision for maintaining momentum provides some innovative and powerful suggestions:

If want to consolidate gains, try and establish some kind of Fairtrade retail outlet that also functions as info center. All really successful towns have one of these, also function as forum to become more involved. Work on deepening everything where you are. See how well things can be written into purchasing agreements, for example. Important to maintain sense of excitement; have something clearly (haven't done good job on this) demarcate where fair trade is available in town so have sense still important. I.e. stickers. Hoping to go for - if have time and volunteers - integrate into structures at all possible levels - i.e. when town talks to B&B pple, leisure center, write something into bid to talk about FT. are schools writing into purchasing contracts?

There should be agreement as to what the next steps are after achieving status, but three strong options are: 1) demonstrate continued growth in Fair Trade availability with renewed status required every three years; 2) establish a fair trade shop or business that serves as a community fair trade forum or benefits the local community's growth in another way (i.e. economically); 3) set up twin town or sister city project (If pursued, this scheme should be carefully mapped and developed so as to avoid some of the pitfalls of such programs when handled naïvely).

See Appendix for elaboration on these and additional recommendations.

### **Conclusion**

This entire discussion returns us to the question of ultimate aim of the Fair Trade movement: is the aim to change the rules of trade and make real an alternate vision; is the aim to encourage more thoughtful, conscious consumption and actually transform people's shopping habits in the US; or is the aim purely to sell as much Fairtrade product in the US market as possible, by whatever means, in order to maximally benefit more farmers selling through Fairtrade? And are these aims mutually exclusive? By focusing only on maximizing sales, where, when and how does the sustainable change occur? Where is the paradigm shift that is necessary to make the bigger picture difference, the lasting change?

A representative from a mission-based company gave her forecast of the future of fairtrade in the UK:

What will it be like in 10 yrs time? Different issues will come into play. The environment will notch up in terms of consciousness - food miles, recyclable packaging. It's happening more in Europe. Personally, I disagree that we have [Fairtrade] roses and apples and new potatoes. [It is] making the message very difficult because then it isn't about foods we can grow here. The Slow Foods movement will grow and organics will be big - local foods. Fairtrade will just be part of

something. There are too many issues. It's stupid to buy roses in Kenya when we can grow them here. How does that help people in Kenya?

On the other side ...our sector has the values of a new paradigm. May take 10-20 yrs, but values are there.<sup>75</sup>

Fairtrade Towns is one means through which to work toward that new paradigm, but requires a careful effort to use this opportunity wisely. In order for Fairtrade to have the impact on producers that is hoped and aimed for, what is needed for the future is more than a continuing broad effort to raise awareness of Fairtrade, but also for its sustainability, to deepen the understanding of people towards a greater consciousness of the issues behind Fairtrade.

This paradigm shift can be enabled, or at least helped along by Fair Trade Towns, if the initiative is carried forth effectively. Evidence for this can be found in the empowerment and sense of satisfaction described by Fairtrade campaigners involved with successful local campaigns in the UK, their clarity of vision about what they are trying to accomplish and the energy and enthusiasm involved, their increased sense of purpose; all this contributes to a bigger change in consciousness that is positively reinforced by the community spirit of the initiative. In particular, the sense of community pride that seems to be renewed and strengthened by the efforts of fair trade campaigning at the local level, as was mentioned earlier, is more than just an added benefit, but is what seems to make the initiative so successful.

Isn't Fair Trade about building community? In this case, it seems it is not only about producers getting organized, but really is about consumers getting organized and improving their communities as well. Communities in consuming countries may be wealthy enough to pay premiums for organic and fair trade products, to waste money on subsidies, and dispose of innumerable material items, but one thing that is a serious but common problem in many countries worldwide is the disintegration of community.

If Fair Trade can help enable communities of disadvantaged farmers to stay together, wouldn't it be fantastic if it could foster perhaps more privileged communities of disillusioned, industrialized areas to increase their sense of community? Fair Trade is about fair prices and direct, equal trading relationships based on dialogue and respect. Fair Trade is also about building community and increasing empowerment. But ultimately, to achieve this greater vision of fair trade requires another level of true global solidarity. Solidarity of this kind, of communities organized and improved in both consuming and producing countries, has to be part of that vision.

Fair trade means allowing hope to flourish, both North and South, so that we, as a human nation, can build a better, fairer world, together. The most valuable aspect of Fair Trade Towns is that Fair Trade Towns has the potential to build hope and a stronger sense of community, and also, indirectly, to the communities to which they are linked. This is the power and value of Fair

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<sup>75</sup> Rogers, *Pers. Comm.*

Trade Towns; the future relies on our vision, and humanity cannot survive without hope.

# Appendix

## I. Brief Timeline of Fair Trade in the UK<sup>76</sup>

1965 – Oxfam begins its “Helping-by-Selling” project aimed at more directly benefiting producers of handicrafts in the ‘Third World’, later to become the Bridge project, and eventually Oxfam Fair Trading Company.

1979 – Traidcraft begins to import fair trade crafts

1980 – Traidcraft imports fair trade coffee and tea

1987 – European Fair Trade Association (EFTA) is born with the help of Traidcraft and others

1989 – The International Fair Trade Association is formed by Traidcraft, Oxfam, and others.

1991 – Oxfam GB conducts surveys to test the launch of a Fairtrade Marked product

1991 – Cafedirect founded with the help of Oxfam, Traidcraft, Twin Trading and others (now the UK’s sixth-largest coffee brand)

1992 – 7 organizations together set up the Fairtrade Foundation. These are Oxfam GB, Traidcraft, CAFOD, Christian Aid, World Development Movement, New Consumer, and the Women’s Institute.

- Fairtrade Foundation conducts first MORI poll

2000 – Garstang declares itself the “World’s First Fairtrade Town”

2001 – The Fairtrade Foundation awards Garstang recognition of Fairtrade Town status

2002 – The Fairtrade Foundation publishes guidelines for becoming a Fairtrade Town

- Awareness of Fairtrade amongst consumers in the UK reaches 20%

2002 – Co-op Supermarkets converts all its own store-brand chocolate to Fairtrade

2003 – Co-op Supermarkets converts all its own store-brand coffee to Fairtrade

2005 – Retailer Marks & Spencer converts all its cafes to 100% Fairtrade coffee.

2005 – the 100th Fairtrade Town is declared during Fairtrade Fortnight

- Recognition of the Fairtrade Mark is 50% amongst surveyed adults

- Sales of Fairtrade coffee account for 20% of entire coffee sales in the UK

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<sup>76</sup> Data for timeline drawn from Oxfam, Traidcraft, Fairtrade Foundation, and Co-op resources.

- in October, Nestle announces the launch of its first Fairtrade product, Partner's Blend

2006 - Marks & Spencer announces it will introduce Fairtrade cotton into its clothing line

2006 - By Fairtrade Fortnight, 178 Fairtrade Towns have achieved status, and another 250 have campaigns and are actively working toward Fairtrade status.

## II. Budget of UK Fairtrade Towns

The Fairtrade Foundation requested £99,526, for the Fairtrade Towns project over 3 years from DFID's Development Awareness Fund. The Fairtrade Foundation's own sources of income, other than for specific projects, include support from 3 development agencies and some income from the licence fee which licensees pay for use of the Mark on their products." But the Fairtrade Foundation does "not have access to individual donors' support."<sup>77</sup>

Among the proposed components of the proposal were included:

Research and document past Fairtrade Towns accomplishments

Develop materials including an education packet for schools

Develop website content

Facilitate local groups' ability to network with each other and advise groups on working with councils

Support the Patron Roadshow with George Alagiah visiting FT towns

Develop a media kit for local groups

Support for a spokesperson (i.e. Fairtrade Towns Coordinator)

Evaluation of the project

## III. Breakdown of local Fairtrade Steering Groups Sources of Funding

...Our annual turnover is approx £3000. We have a grant of £1000 annually from the United Co-op Members Relations Committee. Individuals and some churches give donations. We have received donations towards costs of producing our Bolton Fairtrade Guide from Starbucks and Percol. The Council do not give us finance, but allow to use the facilities of the Environment Dept - in particular the services of their graphic designer.

"No regular budget but the Council give us about £600 a year (it varies). We get sponsorship for our publication (local shop and the Co-op). Not much money is really needed. Time is more valuable. Volunteers did our website and keep it up to date for instance."

"We have raised money at events, concert, film, etc. and had raffles. We don't spend much and get things donated."

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<sup>77</sup> Fairtrade Foundation: Fairtrade Cities and Towns Grant Proposal to DFID, April 2003-March 2006, p. 6.

“Small fund, approx £200 - some from a Town Centre Christian Ministry donation, other raised by running a Fairtrade cafe at a Community event.”

“The council gives me some core funding for my Fairtrade work. Over and above this, money is usually forthcoming from the Sustainability budget.”

We have not received any grants. Our local council does not contribute financially but has waived the fee for holding a couple of events on council property. For the first year or so we operated without a budget at all but now have a bank account and aim to raise funds through donations, raffles, holding stalls at local events and organising events. Our first major event only just broke even. Most money raised will be spent on promoting Fairtrade in the area, but if we raise enough funds the idea is to donate some to one or more producer groups.

“[Council] person put in huge amounts of time and resources from the council in the 6 months before achieving status. Must have put in effectively several thousand pounds.”

#### **IV. The strength of the Mark in the UK Movement**

As mentioned above, consumer surveys have shown that recognition of the Fairtrade Mark is now above 50% of adults in the UK, and the highest recognition of the FAIRTRADE Mark is now among the 25-34 age group, a positive sign for continuing growth of Fairtrade in the UK.<sup>78</sup>

Although it is unclear whether success can be attributed to the efforts of Fairtrade Towns campaigners specifically, the correlative evidence supports this claim – that the work of awareness-raising, education and visibility of the Mark at the local effort, has contributed to this rate of recognition in the UK. According to the same surveys, not only are consumers recognizing the green, black and blue Fairtrade symbol, but many (51% of those surveyed in 2005) are correctly associating the symbol with its accompanying text ‘Guarantees a better deal for third world producers’ and many value on its independent guarantee.<sup>79</sup>

And this awareness-raising seems to be helping to convert new shoppers as over three quarters (78%) of those aware of the FAIRTRADE Mark say they have bought a product carrying the Mark.<sup>80</sup> The above results provide evidence that awareness and understanding of the Fairtrade Mark is increasing, and more importantly, people’s purchasing decisions are being influenced, a positive sign to encourage continued campaign efforts of Fairtrade Towns and nationally.

Our success in winning public recognition is in no small part a result of our single-minded focus on the FAIRTRADE Mark. We carried out a local survey which shows that 7/10 of shoppers recognise and can correctly identify the meaning of the Fairtrade Mark! Many people find out about Fairtrade through retailers, and for Fairtrade to become mainstream/consensual we need to use the communications channels of supermarkets/chains to their customers.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> “Four out of five people who recognise the Mark say its independent guarantee of a fair deal for growers in developing countries is ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ important. The strongest feelings about the independent guarantee exist among 25-34 year olds and those who regularly purchase Fairtrade products. Over half of them (52%) feel it is ‘very’ important.” Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> This has risen substantially from the year before when a similar question showed 63% had done so. One-third of those who recognise the Mark regularly buy one or more products at least once a month. Fairtrade Foundation press release “Awareness of the Fairtrade Mark rockets to 50%”, 2005.

<sup>81</sup> In words of BAFTS shop owner.



## Strengths in Focusing on the Mark

### Clarity and Convenience are Key

A single clear Mark helps avoid confusion, is convenient for campaigners to promote, and allows for relatively rapid brand recognition.<sup>82</sup> In fact, recognition of the Mark is exceedingly high in the UK, in great part for the ingenuity of its simplicity – an icon that has been reproduced and pasted on everything from pamphlets to shop windows, printed on letterheads and banners, draped from buildings, used as a motif for flower beds, t-shirts and face-painting.

### The Independent Standard Helps Get Fairtrade ‘Safely’ to the Mainstream

The value of the Fairtrade Mark as an independent guarantee is important, provides a clear set of parameters and a seal of integrity that British consumers can trust. Also, strict regulations on how the FAIRTRADE Mark can be distributed<sup>83</sup> help to avoid false advertising by companies that do not adhere to Fairtrade standards. One grassroots Fairtrade campaigner described the necessity of focusing on the Mark in their campaign:

[Our group focuses on] raising awareness of [the] FT [Fairtrade] Mark specifically. The problem for the consumer is that they have no ready means to judge the value of an organisation's Fairtrade pledge if there is no independent verification of their trading practice. The FT [Fairtrade] mark is that independent verification and reduces the scope for bad news stories down the line.<sup>84</sup>

There is tremendous value in the ability of the FAIRTRADE Mark to rapidly gather support for Fair Trade in the UK. However, it is important to place this success in perspective. As one BAFTS shop owner wrote, “the Fairtrade label is both a blessing and a problem.”<sup>85</sup>

## Limitations of Focusing solely on the Mark

### Misuse of the Mark in Advertising

One of the major concerns regarding the Mark again goes back to the mainstreaming of Fairtrade and the potential for misuse of the Mark by MNCs. Many Fairtrade supporters are concerned about the use of the Mark in extensive advertising by MNCs misleading consumers into believing that the company as a whole meets ethical standards instead of just a product. A greater danger is that this can undermine the public image of the Mark. For example, the launch of Nestle’s first Fairtrade product in October 2005 led to an uproar in the Fairtrade community,<sup>86</sup> especially among those faithful to mission-based companies, who felt that this mainstreaming of Fairtrade was a compromise to the integrity of the label. One interviewee in Oxford said, “If anything has split movement in [the] time I’ve been involved that’s been it.” Fairtrade Towns advocates then

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<sup>82</sup> Crowther, *Pers. Comm.*

<sup>83</sup> The Fairtrade Foundation has a specific manual on use of the Fairtrade Mark, carefully detailing how and in what contexts it is appropriate for “supporters, campaigners, and companies” to reproduce the Fairtrade Mark. On the Fairtrade Foundation website at: [http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/downloads/pdf/promo\\_mark\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/downloads/pdf/promo_mark_guidelines.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> Online survey response.

<sup>85</sup> BAFTS respondent, *Electronic Comm.*

<sup>86</sup> Baby Milk Action website: <http://www.babymilkaction.org/resources/yqsanswered/yqanestle07.html>

choose which products, companies and positions they promote in their educational efforts.<sup>87</sup>

## V. Fairtrade Town Case Study: Keswick/Cumbria County

Keswick is a picturesque small town in the Lake District of England, one of the most popular summertime vacation spots and the home of various famous literary greats, from Wordsworth to Beatrix Potter. It is a “fairly conservative small town” full of bed and breakfasts and retired people. The Keswick Fair Trade group is one of the most dynamic, innovative, and strategic Fairtrade steering groups the author met, largely due to the incredible vision of one of its lead campaigners, Joe Human, former Oxfam staffperson and currently active retired person.

The Keswick group is interested in both trade justice and Fairtrade, and organized activities for Make Poverty History and Live 8 (an unfair soccer game in a farmer’s pasture). Although the current focus is mostly on Fairtrade, the “original three goals were: 1) promote Fairtrade, 2) campaign on trade justice, and 3) explore how fairtrade might be used to support local farmers.”

Joe adds,

Towns like this [Keswick] like to function on ‘brownie points’ and Fairtrade Towns fits into this. We use the Fairtrade Town status as a lever for campaigning. I.e. with guesthouses, [when we approach one, we say] ‘We’re trying to achieve FT status, if you convert to FT we’ll be that much closer’ or ‘Now that Keswick is a Fairtrade Town, what are you doing about it?’” There is a competitive element within and between towns.

Still, despite extensive public support for the campaign, similar to Garstang, the Town Council is not vocally supportive of the campaign, and actually rejected the proposal initially. The group has since succeeded in lobbying the council to “grudgingly” pass the resolution, but the council voted against it the first time the Fairtrade resolution was presented. Joe puts it this way, “Unfortunately, here in Keswick the Town Council will not “sing” about [Fairtrade]. Still, we [the Fairtrade Group] sing about it and sing and sing.”

### Resources, Organization and Structure

Keswick gets its resources through a membership model. Members pay £5 per head per year. This structure is fairly unusual, according to Joe Human, lead campaigner. For example, the small town of Kendall gets funding from the World Development Movement. Currently, the Keswick campaign has about 200 members. Members receive periodic communications from the steering group. The group prints a newsletter three times per year, which is sent out with a copy

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<sup>87</sup> Another point of tension that also relates to companies taking advantage of market opportunity is the issue of Fairtrade products pricing. As the market increases, some consumers and advocates have accused retailers of being more interested in “jumping on the Fairtrade bandwagon” to reap a profit, as opposed to being motivated to do “the right thing”, and taking advantage of consumers’ goodwill by charging unfair premiums above the actual Fairtrade price. This also ties to concern about how to make Fairtrade more accessible to less wealthy communities, which may be a more relevant issue as Fairtrade Towns campaigns diversify. Some of this tension may be shifting, however, since as greater variety of Fairtrade products and brands enters the market, prices have dropped to more reasonable margins. Simeon Greene, UK marketing representative of Windward Bananas, Fairtrade Banana cooperative, *Pers. Comm.*

of the Fair Comment, a magazine published by the Fairtrade Foundation. There are about 8 active committee members and others who are occasionally involved.

In regards to how the Keswick group positions itself strategically within the local community, Joe Human says,

Aim of the group is not just to be a side do-good organization in the town, but rather become an active member of the community. This helps to position ourselves in the mainstream. For example, the Keswick group became a member of the Tourism Board, have a listing [in the Keswick tourism pamphlet]. We were able to work with the Tourism board to put info in the pamphlet... - to include a mark in the listings for guesthouses that serve FT coffee and tea (in dining room and also in [guest] rooms). Worked with guesthouses to establish criteria for inclusion [in the pamphlet].

The Fair Trade Group also became members of the "Market Towns Initiative", whose mission is "community, social and environmental enhancement." "Therefore we get our mark on their newsletter, and we can use their mark in our press releases and letterhead. It gives us something else in the community." The Keswick group has also been in touch with the "Tourism and Conservation Partnership" which promotes sustainable practices in the tourism industry and as a result of Keswick's outreach efforts, will be including Fairtrade in its criteria.

Keswick is succeeding at promoting Fairtrade as part of responsible, sustainable tourism. Campaigners have savvily demonstrated the appealing element of "Fairtrade as a value-added; high quality, giving a market edge" as Joe refers to the business argument for Fairtrade. He described the response in Keswick: "When I asked a hotelier in Keswick why he switched to Fairtrade, he responded, 'Because this fits my customer profile.'"

Another interesting innovation has been working with the organizers of an annual evangelical Christian conference that takes place in Keswick. Together, the organizers and the fair trade Group have decided to use the conference as a chance to educate about Fairtrade and also perhaps boost local supporter guesthouses. The organizers agreed to send a bed & breakfast directory in advance to all 10,000 conference attendees along with a letter from the conference organizers encouraging visitors to stay at bed and breakfasts marked in the directory with the Fairtrade designation.

### Challenges

"One of the biggest challenges is that most of those involved with the steering group are also active on many other issues. It is hard to keep people's focus on Fair Trade, or even to keep it somewhat focused. People bring in many other issues, which disperses our energy....Key factors for success have been maintaining frequency and regularity of meetings. Also, influential people have helped; our MP is a member of the campaign...."

Bringing together the issue of Fairtrade and local is difficult for Keswick for the specific reason of [what happened during the] Foot and Mouth breakout, and how farmers received payment afterwards...somewhat hostile response by councilor who said, "How can you have 'fair trade' for local producers on the back of EU subsidies?" I.e. sheep and sugar beets are heavily subsidized, so it is a complicated issue. So, Keswick group doesn't actually campaign on local, but encourages people to buy Fairtrade and buy local.

### Cumbria: The Fairtrade County model

Cumbria has recently declared been awarded its status as Fairtrade County. An important and exciting aspect of the Cumbria County campaign was the development of a County Network of Fairtrade Towns. This has been “vital – very useful” according to Joe. The network started in January 2004, when, after collecting names of different groups, Joe and several others brought together various campaigners working on Fairtrade from across the country. Joe also invited several county councilors “and other high-ups”. He remarked that “Perhaps it was premature [to invite them], but it ended up being a very important move. One of the councilors who came to that first meeting was the one who ended up proposing the [Fairtrade] motion to the county council.” The network continues to be active, and there is a county-wide open meeting held twice per year, when key activists attend. One of the significant benefits of the county campaign has been media support, which has improved with the support of the County council.

Although the Keswick campaign has had some success in the local papers, when individual campaigners submitted written articles, the Cumbria County campaign “has had huge media coverage”.

When we do events, they are with the input and sponsorship of the council. Therefore, it comes under the responsibility of the council to publicise. The Communications Director for the County council writes a press release, puts info on the website, will be putting info on the Fairtrade campaign into a print document to be distributed to all the households in the county. The council will also field questions. Therefore communications has been institutionalized which is very valuable.

Keswick is an inspiring model Fairtrade Town that also has its own challenges, but continues to strive to meet and rise above them. Thus far, progress is impressive, and strategic shared learning is vital.

## **VI. Sample structure of church involvement at local level**

The structure that has proved helpful is dividing the diocese into smaller groups of churches. Each of these subgroups includes about 15 churches, and has an appointed champion to cover and support Fairtrade activities for those 15 churches. This champion is a local resident and active member of the faith community. Therefore he or she knows the local landscape very well, which is critical, according to Maranda Nicholle. Each of these champions is familiar with Fairtrade to begin with, and goes to the churches to ask them to sign on to the campaign. Christian Concern for One World collects the applications that are then sent on to the Fairtrade Foundation. Christian Concern also sends out regular mailings with information about events, alerts, questions and useful resources. They have also managed to have “good coverage from the Diocesan newspaper, and have run Fairtrade competitions through newspaper, with give-aways of Fairtrade chocolate, etc, in association with some big Fairtrade companies.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> St John Nicolle, *Pers. Comm.*

## Fairtrade Towns Steering Groups' Keys to Success

Some of the successful practices pointed out by campaigners themselves included basic organizing tactics such as maintaining meetings on a regular basis and distributing tasks evenly. Others suggestions included involving universities and local schools in the campaign, and ways to leverage media attention. Campaigning skills take time to develop, but persistence, coordination and cooperation are still always vital to the success of the campaign. Various groups described working with local MPs and other authorities beyond the limits of their own town, as time devoted to developing long-term relationships can later prove to be well spent.

Campaign support is likely to develop when personal relationships are leveraged. By starting with existing networks of people who already have trusting relationships, and also by using existing channels such as approaching local representatives first, campaigns can gather a diverse array of support to get started.

## VII. Future of Fairtrade Towns in the UK

### Maintaining the Momentum: Innovative ideas for raising the standards

The Fairtrade Foundation and various high level campaigners have proposed interesting ways to “develop strategies to maintain momentum of participating groups”:

Initial ideas which we would want to explore include tiers of goals and criteria to develop *Bronze, Silver And Gold Awards* of Fairtrade status, creating an ongoing challenge and demanding higher standards of activity; developing an annual award for *Best of Fairtrade Towns*, with targets to take campaigners on a continuation of their development of Fairtrade in their locality.<sup>89</sup>

Other strategies for maintaining momentum are in effect inherent in the Fairtrade Towns secondary benefit already described in this report, that of helping to build community – in stimulating civic pride, positive community identity, and competitiveness.<sup>90</sup> One participant suggested that “if want to consolidate gains, we should try and establish some kind of fair trade retail outlet that also functions as an information center. All really successful towns have one of these – it also functions as a forum to become more involved.”<sup>91</sup>

### Deepening the Connection: Sister Cities

Another suggestion for deepening understanding of Fairtrade and issues of global poverty is for Fairtrade Towns that have achieved status to “twin” with a community in the “global south”. Some towns have already done this, for example, Keswick has twinned with a town in a coffee-

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<sup>89</sup> Fairtrade Foundation's EU Fairtrade Towns Proposal, 2006.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.* “Taking action in support of Fairtrade as part of a group engenders feelings of ownership and common purpose enhancing both people's sense of belonging in the group and the group's identity. It creates a virtuous circle, supporting Fairtrade is what the group does and in supporting Fairtrade the individual has a heightened sense of belonging to the group. These motivations are fundamental to the sustainability of the Fairtrade Towns actions.”

<sup>91</sup> Fairtrade Town campaigner.

growing area in Ethiopia, and Garstang has found a 'sister town' in the cocoa-growing community of New Koforidua, Ghana. Campaigners see this initiative as a positive step beyond achieving Fairtrade Town status that helps to develop a closer connection between community members in all four towns.<sup>92</sup>

### **A Network of self-regulating, regionally-organized review panels**

The Fairtrade Foundation aims, over the next few years, to more intentionally incorporate the key involvement of visionary campaigners like Joe Human in Cumbria, in establishing "Regional Adjudication Committees", empowering activists to take leadership of the initiative. Tasks would involve reviewing applications but also strengthening local and regional networks for cooperative efforts and sharing of best practices, helping to "take the campaign to the next level in a self-sustaining format."<sup>93</sup>

### **Shared Learning: the United Kingdom, France and Belgium**

The Fairtrade Foundation, in partnership with national initiatives Max Havelaar France and Max Havelaar Belgium, aim to carry forward a plan for a vision of shared learning and implementation as Fairtrade Towns Europe, through the organization of 3 annual conferences, hosted by each of the three partner countries, the first to be held in Liverpool, UK in the November 2006. Each conference would bring together delegates from all facets of the Fairtrade movement, including each "national initiative, as well as local and regional authorities, commercial businesses, universities, and colleges and other organizations within the public sphere."<sup>94</sup> In addition, the development of a Best Practices manual toward the culmination of the grant period could prove useful to other starting campaigns.<sup>95</sup>

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation are important elements of determining success of the initiative. This is a piece that has been largely lacking thus far, but that the Fairtrade Foundation expects to address. "As part of the monitoring and evaluation we intend to identify and quantify the effect of Fairtrade Towns campaigns on local sales of Fairtrade products."<sup>96</sup>

### **Implementation into Policy structures**

Several campaigners suggested that one way to insure that work continues beyond the time and energy limits of a few committed campaigners is to incorporate Fairtrade into policy structures,

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<sup>92</sup> See Appendix for further information.

<sup>93</sup> Fairtrade Foundation's EU Fairtrade Towns Proposal, 2006. See Appendix for further details.

<sup>94</sup> Fairtrade Foundation's EU Fairtrade Towns Proposal, 2006, p. 8.

<sup>95</sup> EU Fairtrade Towns Proposal, 2006. "A Best Practices Manual comprising action guidance, model promotional materials and designs, model procurement guidelines, with country specific requirements referenced, for use by Fairtrade National Initiatives, Local and Regional authorities, etc., and capable of being adapted and further developed and enhanced for use by organisations within a Fairtrade Town or similar campaign structure...."

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

either at local institutional levels (e.g. a university or school) or into city/town council or even national government resolutions. This includes actually including Fairtrade explicitly as part of an employee's job description, or including Fairtrade into ethical purchasing policies.<sup>97</sup>

**Comment [dwax1]:** I don't understand what this means: "including FT explicitly as part of an employee's job description."

## Moving to the big picture: trade justice

Various campaigners voiced interest and/or concerns that localized Fairtrade Towns campaigns should raise awareness about trade justice in addition to Fairtrade, or after achieving Fairtrade status. Many consider this as part of the 'deepening of understanding of Fairtrade' and that awareness of Fairtrade products is a way to get people engaged, draw them in and then introduce them to the bigger issues. Bruce Crowther, Fairtrade Towns Coordinator, says "the obvious answer comes to me, and I hope this is true of the Fairtrade Foundation, that we are going to use [the campaign network] in the trade justice lobby." Working with other movements can help broaden understanding of where Fairtrade fits within the bigger picture of social change, but also to strengthen efforts and perhaps break out of the habit of narrowly focusing on Fairtrade brand expansion, as tends to be the case in the UK.

The Fairtrade Foundation describes interest in pursuing "developing links between North/South" possibly by working through "Foundation on the Building Understanding through International Linking for Development (BUILD), a coalition of over 50 UK-based governmental, charitable, commercial sector, faith based and international non-governmental agencies, convinced of the power of international cross-cultural community partnerships":

Research from organisations involved with links, shows that creating partnerships between communities in the North and the South fosters a better understanding of issues concerning global poverty. Within the actions to develop Fairtrade Towns, we would want to explore ways to link Fairtrade Towns with communities in the South to foster mutual understanding and enhance the impact of campaigning and development education with activists, multipliers and the public.

One Fairtrade advocate at the faith-based organization described this idea as expanding the "self-policing" nature of Fairtrade Towns at the local level to incorporate more responsibility and involvement in approval or review of applications for Fairtrade status, as well as providing input into any discussion of revising the general criteria. She described the efforts of local groups across regions like Oxfordshire and Cumbria counties to create networks of local committees to monitor their local areas. She recognized the need for a "uniform standard" but suggested having local committees that can feed into the larger certifying body [i.e. the Fairtrade Foundation] in order to be fair in addressing the varying level of challenges to achieving status faced by different communities, "so if a question comes up about a place [then you] have someone nearby on the ground that can go and look but is not actually involved, so it can be fair."

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<sup>97</sup> Oxford Fairtrade Campaigner.

“Once a critical mass of Fairtrade Towns have been declared across the regions of the UK, (150 towns), this action proposes to set up pilot projects to explore effective institutional structures within the Fairtrade movement to take on the maintenance activities of the Fairtrade Towns campaign and to drive the campaign forward. Research and consultation would form the initial activity of this item but would include putting forward ideas such as establishing a monitoring body of regional committees comprised of local Fairtrade towns activists, local council members, other members of development agency networks, *Regional Adjudication Committees*. This body would be charged with assessing applications from groups wanting to achieve Fairtrade status taking the responsibility for awarding Fairtrade status away from the Foundation and into the community.”<sup>98</sup>

And also “developing a strong identity for the campaign” in order to logistically move towards an identity not grounded in the national initiative, but still based on the Fairtrade Mark:

A strong Fairtrade Towns identity, centred on awareness of the FAIRTRADE Mark but distinct and separate from the certifying body of the Fairtrade National Initiative (in this case the Fairtrade Foundation) facilitates the transference of ownership of this campaign to the grassroots activists. This action will research and consult with the current Fairtrade network in the UK to determine the elements of this identity; to test a number of options for logos, supporter materials, names and other branding mechanisms to breed a distinct identity for the campaign; to produce fact sheets about Why Fairtrade is good for Business? Why Fairtrade is good for your Youth Group? etc. and to take these ideas to the European level (to the annual conferences within this action) to test the ideas as part of a *European Fairtrade Towns* identity.<sup>99</sup>

Given the level of organization such a shift might require, it appears a daunting task, but at the same time, given that many Fairtrade Towns have demonstrated tremendous success in functioning with minimal support by the Fairtrade Foundation, this may be possible and would be quite exciting to see.

## VIII. Monitoring and Evaluation

In the UK, we expect to see at least 200 Fairtrade Towns declared by the end of the action, with 50 universities declaring themselves Fairtrade and 1,500 churches committed to support of Fairtrade. We would also anticipate that the mailings which go out to multipliers and are currently serving 4,000 individuals would increase to 7,500 by the end of the action. Another indication for the Fairtrade Foundation of increased support is the number of individuals who are signed up for on the supporter database to receive a free newsletter, Fair Comment. This database currently has 29,000 individuals listed and we would expect this to increase by 20% annually.

In France, Max Havelaar have 130 local authorities from all over France which have signed their campaign, 50% are towns under 20 000 inhabitants, 20% are towns from 20 000 to 50 000 inhabitants and 30% are towns of over 50 000 inhabitants.<sup>100</sup>

Through the actions in other European countries we would expect to see at least 50 Fairtrade Towns local actions in progress with measurable increases in the local levels of awareness of Fairtrade where these actions occur.

In total we expect to raise awareness and understanding of Fairtrade with a new audience of 2 million people across Europe.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Fairtrade Foundation EU Commission Proposal.

<sup>99</sup> European Commission grant proposal

<sup>100</sup> European Commission grant proposal, p. 8.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.



## IX. Further thoughts on Trade Justice in the Fairtrade Movement

Simeon Greene, of Windward Bananas, a Fairtrade banana company from the Windward Islands, who spoke at a Fairtrade Fortnight event, eloquently described this vital awareness of Fairtrade within the greater context of injustice in trade rules:

What we see is that the Fairtrade movement is one aspect of the trade justice movement. Trade justice is a broader thing. I like to put it this way: The house is on fire. Until the fire degrades or the fire service arrives, the local people in the village must throw buckets of water. And that's what we are doing in Fairtrade. We are throwing buckets of water. We are not sitting down and allowing the fire to rage. But eventually, the transformation of the international trade rules is broader than the Fairtrade movement.

## X. Recommendations from UK Campaigners to US Campaigners

The author asked survey respondents and interviewees to provide their own advice to the US in responding to the question, "If you were to advise the launch of a FT Towns campaign in the US, what recommendations would you make to groups starting up? What would you suggest doing differently?" Here are their answers:

Use some of strengths inherent in fairtrade itself, the fact that it can be localized very easily. Fairtrade is about people overseas but can bring it home. For example, in Garstang it was crucial that people could see it was about farming which is not part of the national messaging. They linked to local sustainable farming; if possible tie it in with local issues. In some cities worked very differently.

Active campaigners are very knowledgeable but they don't always realize the rest of the world doesn't think like them - they try to get in lots of details, try to get rest of world to think like them but are not so good about simplifying messages. Fairtrade helps them but really have to go to where people are at.

Just talking is most important - because if it is not sustainable it isn't going to work - needs to be looked at and planned for. The same goes for university campaigns and towns campaigns. What can easily happen is once you've achieved status then lose interest and go on to next thing. There needs to be a commitment to stay involved or plan to keep energy there from somebody, either within university, within the council or elsewhere.

Too early in our campaign to offer guidance to others... but fair is FAIR - somebody said to me "how can any reasonable person not endorse this" - so never be afraid to make a case! ...In the words of Barry Manilow "all it takes is one voice" - every campaign needs that one voice. tell your people they can be that voice!

Encourage plenty of people to join the steering group so as to spread the load. get as much help from the Council as possible. Make good links with local media. Raise awareness within churches - where there will be a lot of interest and practical support. Affiliate to a larger body eg. Fairtrade Foundation for advice and support.... We have the support of a local MP who organised a visit of the Leader of the House of Lords to meet with folk interested in the Fairtrade town initiative. This helped to raise awareness of the Campaign.

Start by building a group of interested people to work together on the target.

The foundation built by the years of work in raising public awareness of trade justice issues by the WDM/Oxfam group had proved invaluable.

Involve as many local groups as possible in your campaign

Have someone in 'post' to organise/administer the group to keep everyone together and up to date. Also, have a budget for events etc, from local gov't, business or ethical banks. We are just a group of people in a small city who are working together to do big things.

We have found a lot of support in the local community so advertise the campaign as widely as possible to individuals. The internet discussion group has been invaluable.

I am also a member of a local Oxfam campaigns group and have found that people are much more interested in joining the Fairtrade group than the Oxfam group. I think this is because it has very specific, tangible and achievable aims.

Just do it. It depends on what you have locally but if you can link with buying local campaigns such as Farmers Markets as we have in the UK then that gives you a local angle. Try not to promote FT goods that challenge local growers products- except for rice and cotton for which i am afraid the US has a bad dumping reputation. Make it personal to people, after all its only buying a cup of coffee.

Although lots of people signed up for our steering group, in practice it is the same few people that do all the work. The more people who are involved, the better (even if they don't necessarily all take part in the steering group).

Get your Council behind you.

Political goodwill across the spectrum is essential and also the involvement of representatives of all areas of the community.

I feel the most important thing we did was to obtain the support of our local council right at the start. I also feel that it has been good for all the churches in our community to work in unity on this committee.

Our most touching moment was having two mango producers from Burkina Faso speak at our recent Fairtrade Fair and Wine Tasting. Three years ago their mangos were worth nothing and rotted every year. Now they are international business men sending their dried mangos all over the world. It really drove home to us the importance of local communities helping local communities. They were equally touched when we were able to report that our local Health Food shop stocks their mangos and that they are selling lots of them to local school children who prefer them to buying sweets.

Set small realistic targets on the way. Engage with schools/colleges to raise awareness and aim for support of high profile local businesses.

Communicate with each other a lot, learn from each other and share resources and ideas. However things that work in one area mayn't work in another, and each group is composed of individuals with different talents etc, so you have to use what you have.

We've often been surprised that people/organsations we've thought would be supportive haven't been, and vice versa!

get some money behind you so you are not stressed about funding. get the council on board first because they can help you with the rest of it but don't rely on them because they have other agendas to full fill at the same time

Be sure that it will take a lot of time and energy but it is worth it. There must be as many people as possible to start and they must be committed. It should not be down to one person or it won't be sustainable

Set up collaborative systems (such as the mailing list) so that individual groups can learn from each other.

Get like minded- passionate people on board. You need an eloquent speaker. Just get started- don't

be daunted by the prospect- we are all humble individuals who feel passionately about fairtrade.

Use local networking groups to talk about fairtrade- all business lunches, rotary, ladies groups, church groups etc want speakers- get in there!

## **XI. Additional Recommendations for US**

### Twin Towns US/UK

Have willing existing successful Fairtrade Towns in the UK 'adopt' a US Fairtrade town and advise them in their efforts

### Trainings

Set up a workshop scheme at the next Fair Trade conference. Invite Joe Human (campaigning workshop/coalition-building, motivational speaker) to provide vision of what FT Towns can look like.

### Build Connections with other Fair Trade Towns Initiatives

Keep abreast of EU Fairtrade Towns initiative. Maintain communication with the Fairtrade Foundation, send delegates to conferences, including Fair Trade leaders, as well as grassroots coalition leaders.

Explore producer perspectives on what a "Fair Trade Town" should look like.

Set up a Fair Trade Towns USA email list-serve.

### Finding a Famous Spokesperson

The US Fair Trade Movement would benefit from the help of a celebrity dedicated to Fairtrade. Such support is vital in raising the profile of Fairtrade in the mainstream and attracting media attention. One famous face consistently associated with Fairtrade in the UK is George Alagiah. As the BBC 6 o'clock newscaster and former war correspondent, George Alagiah is a well-known, highly respected public figure in British media. A knowledgeable, articulate and sensitive spokesperson, he has made a hugely valuable contribution to raising awareness of Fairtrade, as "Patron" of the Fairtrade Foundation. He consistently speaks at Fairtrade Towns launch events across the country, thrilling local steering groups with his attention, and attracting media to their events.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> The Fairtrade Foundation Fairtrade Towns and Cities Grant Proposal to DFID April 2003-March 2006, p. 6, elaborates on the role of George Alagiah as Patron of the Fairtrade Foundation.

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### **Online Survey Respondents**

There were a total of 21 online survey respondents from various Fairtrade Towns campaigners. These responses were used as case-study evidence for observations made by the author, but no quantitative analysis was conducted for the purposes of this report.

### **BAFTS Members**

There were a total of 5 respondents to a brief set of questions sent to the BAFTS member list-serve.

### **Other Research Participants**

Alberti, Joe. Chair, Keswick Fair Trade Steering Group.

Attwood, Harmony. Oxfam Great Britain.

Blackpool Fairtrade Steering Group, various members.

Brighton Fairtrade Steering Group, various members.

Burgess Hill Fairtrade Group, various members.

Byrde, Rosemary. Oxfam Great Britain, Fair Trade Advisor.

Cafedirect

Cochrane, Meredith. Campaigns Coordinator, Fairtrade Foundation.

Coventry Fairtrade Steering group, various members.

Farr, Ann. Chair, Coventry Fairtrade Steering Group.

Garstang Fairtrade Steering Group, various members.

Gowland, Becks. Trade Campaign, Oxfam Great Britain.

Christian Aid.

Crowther, Bruce. Fairtrade Foundation Coordinator, Fairtrade Foundation, UK.

Graham, Garstang Fairtrade Steering Group.

Greene, Simeon. UK marketing representative of Windward Bananas, Fairtrade Banana cooperative.

Human, Joe. Fairtrade Towns campaigner, Keswick.

Jamie, Fair Deal Trading, 100% Fairtrade company selling Fairtrade sports balls.

Maytum, Charlotte. Coventry Fairtrade steering group, Fair Trade Fashion show coordinator.

Naveed, Oxford Fair Trade Town campaigner.

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Robathan, Frances. Fundraiser, Fairtrade Foundation.

Rogers, Sam. Equal Exchange, a mission-based Fair Trade company.

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Tucker, David. CAFOD.

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