

Building the Fairtrade Towns Movement in the UK

October 2009

A report for the Fairtrade Foundation by Seeds for Change

www.seedsforchange.org.uk



Executive summary

The Fairtrade Foundation Campaigns Team has a vision for the Fairtrade Towns movement. That vision is:

“A vital, dynamic, interconnected network of local groups, inspired, informed and empowered by each other and campaigning with producer partners to call for fairer trade practice and policy/ trade justice” from - Creating a vision for the Fairtrade Towns network: Campaigns Team

This report attempts to pull together a number of strategies for making that vision a reality.

The Fairtrade movement in the UK is at a junction. Fairtrade Towns¹ are an undoubted success. The mass mobilisation of dynamic and motivated campaigners across the UK in towns, schools, universities and churches has worked wonders in raising the profile of Fairtrade as an issue and in increasing sales of Fairtrade products. The Fairtrade Mark is an obvious sign of that success, with current recognition running at 72% of the population. However success can have its problems . Recent high profile commercial partnerships such as the Cadbury Dairy Milk and Starbucks certifications have left some campaigners feeling as though their work is done:

"Events like Cadbury's Dairy Milk going Fairtrade has a huge impact on Fairtrade outlets quotas, how will we continue to lobby them when they will all be selling Fairtrade?" Paper survey

“I started getting a church to use Fairtrade coffee. Then Fairtrade town was the driving force. Now Fairtrade sales have grown dramatically. What is the new motivation?” Supporter Conference zone session

Combine this with the urgency of other campaigns, particularly climate change and it is inevitable that campaigners will begin to put their energy elsewhere. The campaigns Team has recognised that if the Fairtrade Foundation wants to continue in partnership with these campaigners and to work with them to bring about wider trade justice, it needs to re-engage and re-motivate them.

This consultation is the first step in that process.

During the consultation a large number of relatively small and specific issues emerged. We've included detailed summaries of these in the Appendix 3. In most cases the specific 'niggles' raised by campaigners are symptoms of larger issues. It's these issues that we've chosen to focus on.

Three themes emerged very clearly from the consultation:

- 1. the strong desire to have approaches and processes that work for *people***
- 2. a reminder that the work of the Fairtrade Foundation is *campaigning work***
- 3. that *producers* and their welfare are at the heart of that campaign**

These themes provide useful benchmarks against which the Fairtrade Foundation can measure all of the recommendations and ideas in this report.

¹ For the sake of this report, we are using the phrase 'Fairtrade Town' to represent all Fairtrade zones, from village to county, unless otherwise specified

A whole raft of specific recommendations have also emerged from the consultation and report writing process. The core recommendations are:

Fairtrade Town campaigners are ready and waiting to be given a voice within the Foundation, and the Foundation needs to explore and implement structures that will allow that voice to be heard. However those structures will only work if the Foundation successfully builds a *culture* of democracy to underpin them.

In order to create a deeper sense of a Fairtrade *movement* the Foundation needs to strengthen links within the movement, especially direct links between Fairtrade Town campaigners and producer partners. Links between Fairtrade and other aspects of the wider movement also need to be reinforced, whether between Fairtrade and trade justice, or Fairtrade and other issues such as climate change and wider sustainability. Where these links already exist they need to be shouted from the rooftops.

Fairtrade Town campaigners need a higher quality of support if they are to continue to campaign with vigour and enthusiasm. This support should take the form of:

- regional support workers, ideally working in teams, to link Towns together, to enable the sharing of skills, ideas and best practice, and to access regional funding.
- a revised and enlivened process for attaining Fairtrade Town status and for renewing it. This process should be full of challenge. It should encourage creativity and innovation whilst retaining credibility and consistent high standards.
- small grants and fund-raising advice for Town steering groups.

The Foundation makes this report available to Town campaigners. Many campaigners gave freely of their time to make this consultation possible and now feel some ownership of the outcomes. The report (and subsequent decisions) should be communicated to them.

With the right resources, and in partnership with the Towns movement, there is no reason why the Campaign Teams' vision for the future cannot be made real. There is no reason why the Fairtrade campaign in the UK cannot go from undeniable strength to strength.

Contents

Executive summary.....	2
Contents.....	4
The consultation: aims, objectives and key areas for review	7
Aim:	7
Objectives:	7
Key areas for review:.....	7
Consultation Methodology.....	7
The structure of this report.....	8
Structures:	8
Democracy:	8
Movement:.....	8
Recommendations.....	9
Structure.....	9
The issues.....	9
Ways forward.....	10
The five goals.....	10
The renewal process.....	10
Recommendations: Goals and achieving Fairtrade Town status.....	11
Recommendations: The renewal process.....	12
Democracy.....	13
Recommendations.....	14
Movement.....	15
Recommendations: links with producer partners.....	16
Recommendations: links to the wider campaign movement.....	17
Recommendations: links with commercial partners.....	17
Recommendations: Tension between campaigning and commercial partnerships.....	18
Recommendations: Regional links.....	19
Regional support roles.....	19
The benefits of regional support.....	20
The issues.....	20
Should the regional support post be voluntary or paid?	20
What can the Foundation reasonably expect from regional support workers?.....	21
Support for support workers.....	21
Do the capacity building role and a possible representative role work together or need to be separate?.....	21
What do we mean by a region?.....	22

Recommendations.....	22
Appendix 1 – Democracy and the Ladder of Participation.....	24
Rungs on the ladder.....	24
Effective decision making / consultation.....	25
Tools for decision making, consultation and feedback: pros and cons.....	26
Surveys.....	26
Web survey **.....	26
Written survey **.....	27
Phone surveys ***.....	28
Email survey **.....	28
Other web techniques.....	29
Internet dialogue / prioritisation sites **.....	29
Online 'chat' discussions *** / forums **.....	30
Face-to-face techniques.....	31
Facilitated face-to-face discussion at national level ****.....	31
Facilitated face-to-face discussion at regional level ****.....	32
Facilitated face-to-face discussion at local level ****.....	32
Unfacilitated face-to-face discussion at local level **.....	33
Video conference ****.....	33
Campaigner Advisory Groups ****.....	34
Other techniques.....	35
Phone Interviews *** /conferences ****.....	35
Written documents *.....	35
Vox Pops **.....	36
Appendix 2 - Participants in this consultation.....	37
Participating Fairtrade Towns.....	37
Participating individual campaigners.....	37
Participating staff.....	38
Appendix 3 – Graffiti walls, surveys and transcripts.....	38
Phone Survey.....	38
The questions.....	38
The answers.....	39
Regionalisation.....	39
Campaigning.....	39
Group process.....	39
Maintaining the impetus of the campaign.....	39

Miscellaneous.....	40
Supporter Conference – Paper survey.....	40
The questions.....	40
The answers.....	41
The campaign group.....	41
The groups' activities.....	41
The outcomes.....	42
Contact with other Fairtrade Towns in the region.....	43
Developing relationships with Fairtrade partners	44
Producer partners	45
Commercial partners.....	45
NGO partners.....	45
Broadening the Fairtrade campaign to include other issues.....	46
Involvement in the future direction of the Fairtrade Towns movement	47
Supporter Conference - Zone session	49
How much say would you like to have in the future direction of the Fairtrade movement?	
What kind of decisions do you want to have a say in?.....	49
Where do you see the Fairtrade movement going in the UK?.....	49
Anything else that you would like the Fairtrade Foundation to hear?.....	50
Campaigner meeting – Sunday 11th October.....	50
Democracy.....	50
Structure.....	51
Goals and renewal.....	51
Movement.....	51
Producer links.....	51
1st working group – Movement.....	53
2nd working group - Structure.....	53
3rd working group – Democracy.....	54
Staff meeting – Monday 12th October.....	54
Structure group:.....	55
Movement group.....	55
Democracy group.....	56
Appendix 4 - Acronyms used in the report.....	56
Appendix 5 – About the authors.....	57

The consultation: aims, objectives and key areas for review

The Aims, objectives and key areas for review for this consultation, as set out by the Fairtrade Foundation Campaigns Team staff, were:

Aim:

To explore some of the current issues facing Fairtrade Towns in the UK, and to develop a strategy that will keep the movement active, dynamic and effective.

Objectives:

- To identify the key successes of the initiative and ways of building on these
- To explore and clearly identify the things that aren't working well in the Fairtrade Towns initiative
- To do some creative thinking around ways forward for the Towns Movement – new opportunities, interests, needs
- To come up with 3 or 4 innovative ways of developing the Fairtrade Towns scheme in the coming years
- To involve campaigners in the process as far as possible

Key areas for review:

- Structures: are the goals and systems fit for purpose? Should the scheme allow for development beyond the five goals and recognise / encourage other, broader ways of taking action around Fairtrade?
- Democracy: how do we involve supporters in Fairtrade Foundation decision making and development of strategic direction?
- Movement: what are the best ways to support groups at a regional level – is there a need for regional support in addition to what's available at a national level or through regional networks? What would this look like?

Consultation Methodology

To deliver on these aims and objectives the Fairtrade Foundation and Seeds for Change have undertaken a series of consultation exercises. Detailed summaries of each of the exercises can be found in the Appendix 3, but in brief they were:

Phone survey of 46 Fairtrade Town group contacts	September 2009	Fairtrade Foundation
Paper-based survey of 54 individuals attending the Supporter Conference	October 10 th 2009	Seeds for Change

Graffiti Wall at Supporter Conference asking the questions: <i>Where do you see the Fairtrade Towns movement in 5 years time?</i> and <i>How could the Fairtrade Foundation help you to be more involved in the Fairtrade movement?</i>	October 10 th 2009	Seeds for Change
Focus group of 7 self-selecting supporters in the 'zone' session of the Supporter Conference	October 10 th 2009	Seeds for Change
Face-to-face interview with an experienced campaigner at Supporter Conference	October 10 th 2009	Seeds for Change
Focus group meeting with 12 campaigners and 3 Campaigns Team staff	October 11 th 2009	Seeds for Change
Focus group meeting with 10 staff from the Commercial Relations and Policy and Communications Team	October 12 th 2009	Seeds for Change

The structure of this report

We have structured this report around the three key areas for review: structures, democracy and movement. There is an inevitable overlap, and some issues are raised and dealt with in more than one section of the report where we have found this useful for emphasis.

We have tried to make the main body of the report brief enough to be accessible. For this reason detailed findings from the consultation can be found in Appendix 3. These will give the reader a clearer idea of the conversations that have led to the recommendations we make.

During the consultation, and in this report, we have used the following working definitions of these three concepts:

Structures:

The processes and support systems for achieving and renewing Fairtrade Town status – what one meeting called 'the beast that is Fairtrade Towns'.

Democracy:

Involving campaigners in the work of the Fairtrade Foundation whether through direct and formal representative decision making structures, or through informal and cultural changes that leave campaigners feeling more involved.

Movement:

Making the connections and drawing the links between all of the stakeholders in the

Fairtrade movement, and between the Fairtrade movement and related campaigners in the wider social justice and environmental movement(s).

What follows is a critique of current Fairtrade Foundation structures and processes, with some suggestions for what could be improved. Wherever possible, we have drawn on the voices of grassroots campaigners and staff to illustrate points, and for recommendations of where to go next. At some points we have added recommendations based on our own expertise in working with grassroots campaign networks.

To put these criticisms in context, it's very clear on even a cursory examination that in developing the Fairtrade Town movement the Foundation has been hugely successful. The Foundation has established and nurtured a very passionate and committed campaigner network. It is this passion for trade justice and commitment to the welfare of producers that drives campaigners to want even more effective ways to campaign.

Recommendations

Structure

There is a significant appetite amongst both campaigners and staff for changes to be made to the five goals of a Fairtrade Town and to the Fairtrade Town status renewal process.

The issues

1. The current process limits campaigners rather than inspiring them. Definitions of 'Town' are unsatisfactory because they currently don't foster links with local institutions such as hospitals, schools and prisons.
2. The renewals process is regarded as unnecessarily bureaucratic. It's an administrative chore - a turn-off rather than a turn-on for more creative campaigning. Experienced campaigners bemoaned the lack of challenge and ambition in the renewal process. They have asked for new targets to reinvigorate and inspire their campaign.
3. Along with new targets they would like new processes that provide more tailored and personal support for their campaigning whilst not threatening the credibility or the consistency of Fairtrade Town status.
4. Some groups, especially smaller towns and villages feel that they are supported less well than their larger town and city cousins.
5. Many steering groups feel fragile and struggle to recruit new campaigners, especially younger people or those from the black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, and especially people willing to take responsibility within the steering group.
6. Some Town steering groups feel that lack of funding is holding them back, and are looking to the Foundation to source (or even provide) funding for them.

Ways forward

The five goals

The members of the campaigner focus group agreed that goals 1 and 5² provide essential structure to support a successful local campaign, but that there should be flexibility to reinterpret goals 2 to 4 in order to tailor Fairtrade Town status to the needs and energy of each local campaign. The staff focus group strongly resisted the idea of dropping the five goals altogether.

A strong theme emerging throughout was the need to loosen the definition of a 'Town' so that other forms of Fairtrade community could gain recognised status, and that Fairtrade institutions would then find it easier to co-operate rather than operating in isolation from each other, as they sometimes do now – an example being a Fairtrade school or university seeking its own status within a Fairtrade Town.

At the supporter conference we heard from a Fairtrade village who were struggling to maintain their status because they only had 1 shop and 1 pub they could draw on to fulfill the five goals. The pub had changed landlord/lady three times in a short space of time, and each change threatened their ability to hold on to their status. Similarly another aspiring Town campaigner told us of how her group lost their opportunity of reaching Fairtrade Town status simply because the local Coop supermarket closed down. These examples demonstrate the need for a wider palette of options to give campaigners the opportunity of achieving or maintaining Town status.

The renewal process

The issues with the renewals process centred around its administrative nature, and the lack of inspiration it provided. In fact it was even seen as a drain on inspiration. Throughout the consultation a new approach to renewals emerged with the key characteristics of:

- new challenge – sparking renewed and dynamic campaigning
- being a process rather than a single step
- serving a useful function in focusing the group on its future direction
- being much more human – about dialogue between people and not form-filling

This solidified into the idea of a face-to-face renewals meeting that both assessed and forward planned.

However, there were concerns that there had to be comparable standards between Towns. Core qualities that staff and campaigners want to retain include:

- growing the market for Fairtrade to support producers
- continued council involvement

New ideas for increasing the challenge include:

- taking on responsibility for mentoring newer Town groups
- making links with the producers in a way that allows producer voices to be heard in

² **Goal 1:** Local council passes a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and agrees to serve Fairtrade products (for example, in meetings, offices and canteens). **Goal 5:** A local Fairtrade steering group is convened to ensure the Fairtrade Town campaign continues to develop and gain new support.

the Town

- reaching new audiences

Recommendations: Goals and achieving Fairtrade Town status

The Campaigns Team should consult with campaigners with the aim of revitalising the five goals. Specifically the consultation should aim to clarify, and if necessary replace goals 2 to 4. The desired outcomes would be goals that have the flexibility to allow innovation and linking within Towns, but maintain the overall rigour of Fairtrade Town status.

Campaigners should be assured throughout that change does not mean a watering down of standards. See our recommendations on conducting effective consultation in the Appendix 1.

Campaigners working towards Town status should be given more direct person-to-person support. As an absolute minimum they should have a scheduled phone 'check-in' every 4 to 6 months, at a time that works for the campaign's key contacts. This is an opportunity for the Foundation to assess the development of the campaign, but primarily to offer support. That support might come in the form of ideas and resources from the Foundation, but could equally be the offer of linking the campaign to another Town or aspiring Town, who are dealing with similar problems, or have successfully overcome them. Aspiring Towns should be under no doubt that the Foundation is taking a direct interest in their campaign and is standing shoulder to shoulder with them.

There is a strong argument that this support role should be carried out by regionally-based paid staff or contracted volunteers. These roles are discussed elsewhere in this report.

Recommendations: Supporting steering groups

Geography plays a role in the success of Fairtrade Towns groups. Whilst specific issues were not always raised to illustrate the point, we heard from smaller Towns or villages that they were struggling, not just because the task they had to do was substantially different to large Town or city groups, but also because they received less support from the Foundation. Our recommendation at this stage is simply that Campaigns Team staff are made aware of this situation and ensure that they treat all Towns with an equal measure of enthusiasm and respect.

Steering groups should be offered more support. The Foundation needs to invest in capacity building³ to ensure the health and activity of steering groups, and particularly their ability to recruit and retain new members. This is especially, but not exclusively, relevant to recruiting young people and members of BME communities.

Part of this support should be aimed at increasing the steering groups' awareness of impact of their meeting styles and internal group dynamics on potential new recruits. Our experience shows that problems in recruiting from specific demographics are commonly because groups and meetings are not made fully accessible rather than because those demographics are less interested in the issues. This is an area that requires an ongoing programme of training – firstly training regional support workers

³ capacity building is a broad term for any action and support that leads to an increase in the impact of a campaign, whether through the same number of campaigners being more effective, or by recruiting a larger number of campaigners. Traditional capacity building involves support for recruitment and retention of volunteers and increasing the level of skill and motivation of volunteers through training and networking.

to support groups, and then training steering groups themselves. See our recommendations below on regional support workers for more on this.

The Foundation should consider starting a modest small grants programme, to distribute small pots of money to steering groups to support their work and allow them to express some of their more ambitious ideas. Ideally this would involve a minimum of paperwork. Perhaps the grants could be graded - smaller grants of say £100 to £500 could be made available on a rolling fast-track and low-paperwork basis. Larger grants of perhaps £500 to £2000 might involve a more rigorous application process with one or two annual deadlines. However this process shouldn't be needlessly bureaucratic. There's no reason why the paperwork couldn't be turned into a useful exercise for Towns - asking a series of intelligent planning-related questions (in clear English / Welsh) that ensure that the Town's idea is sound. In order to minimise staff time, a peer review committee drawn from the Town network could administer the programme against a set of criteria agreed between the Foundation and Towns.

Both staff and campaigners liked the concept of a 'life-cycle' tool – a guide to the typical cycle that a Fairtrade Town group goes through. The guide would aim to reassure newer Town groups by showing that the highs and lows each group goes through are normal, and by providing suggestions for maintaining highs and avoiding lows. Whilst this is not a replacement for contact with experienced capacity builders, it is a useful first step towards self-help and a useful accompaniment to capacity building staff or volunteers.

The staff focus group came up with the idea of a national Fairtrade league table for councils. The idea gathered a lot of energy around it and should be explored. The league table would be a mechanism for campaigners to use to hold their council to account, both as a carrot and a stick. It wasn't devised as another burden for Town groups to carry. It fits in with proposals for a revised renewals process, giving campaigners the opportunity to set themselves a target of improving their council's ranking as part of their renewal agreement.

Recommendations: The renewal process

The renewals process should cease to be form-filling and be replaced with a face-to-face conversation between the Foundation and Town seeking renewal. Over the course of that conversation the Town would be assessed against the five goals but would also be asked to look forward and plan its direction and targets for the next period of its campaign. Targets should provide challenge and take the Town further along its journey.

There is a need to ensure that each Town is assessed with consistency to preserve the credibility of the overall process. With this in mind, the assessment and forward planning process should be carefully constructed so that the staff member is doing more than just 'getting a feel' for the Town's campaign. There should be a quantitative as well as a qualitative side to the conversation – concrete 'core' boxes that the Town has to tick. However the conversational nature of the assessment means that these can be approached in different ways to suit different towns, and needn't take on the feel of 'form-filling'.

In order to inject an element of cross-fertilisation and peer review into the renewals process, the staff member could be accompanied by an assessor from within the Towns movement – drawn from another Town campaign.

Both staff and peer assessors would need to be adequately trained and prepared in order to:

- understand the needs and aspirations of Towns of different sizes and at different stages of the life-cycle of a campaign.

- understand specific regional challenges and opportunities.
- facilitate the process impartially.
- listen to criticism of the Foundation and feed it back appropriately.

Democracy

Over half of the campaigners we surveyed at the Supporter Conference were keen to have a louder voice within the Foundation. The experienced campaigners we met in the campaigner focus group were very strong in their desire to be involved. Indeed they felt lack of involvement was leading to experienced Fairtrade campaigners moving away from the campaign:

“Unless our needs, and we are just 11 of the hundreds of people out there that have been doing it for years, are recognised and dealt with, then people will be lost. And people are already going to other campaigns and getting more deeply involved in other trade justice or climate change or whatever it might be... Implicit in this is the need for clarity and the need for greater transparency. It's not just that we don't have enough of a voice, it's that we don't have enough of an understanding of what's going on. It's the need for the Foundation to give voice to us.” Campaigner focus group

“Campaigners will move on unless the Fairtrade Foundation stops taking them for granted and opens itself up to democratic control by local campaigners. We need to feel part of an evolving Movement that responds to us rather than the footsoldiers of a one dimensional success story.” Paper survey

“There needs to be more formal mechanisms for Fairtrade Towns controlling the future direction of the Fairtrade Foundation....Something like the local group of a membership organisation, an Amnesty group or a Climate Camp neighbourhood i.e. a structure that is formally linked to a national campaign with real democratic influence on its future direction.” Paper survey

The staff focus group supported this desire. As the above quotes illustrate, tied up in the democracy debate are 2 further issues – transparency and flow of information. The phone survey showed that campaigners, even experienced ones, simply don't understand the day-to-day work of the Foundation. That lack of understanding is an obstacle to the sense of full involvement. Group contacts are asking for such basic information as clarity on the difference between 'Fairtrade' and 'fair trade', on the certification process and so on.

An interview with an experienced campaigner raised similar issues. She was aware that the Foundation had moved office and had taken on new staff but asked:

“What are they all doing? There's no noticeable change at local level... How is the £12 million⁴ being spent?” Campaigner interview

It's worth noting that this information may all be readily available. But it's clear that campaigners aren't aware of that fact if it's the case, so there's a need for better communication of information, preferably through a range of media.

⁴ this refers to the £12 million grant package from the UK Government announced on 10th October 2009

“Today's conference is great, because its a rare glimpse of the real ups and detail behind the unrelenting positive media façade that we campaigners are fed, but we need more of that detail and politics if we are to stay interested and involved.” Paper survey

This discussion also demonstrates the campaigners' desire to be heard, taken seriously and valued by the Foundation. It's essential that campaigners' passion and sense of ownership of Fairtrade is overtly recognised. Clearly campaigners are valued by the Foundation, but the fact that they can be left feeling that they are not shows that more needs to be done to communicate that value. Much of the work of listening to and valuing campaigners should take place on a day-to-day basis and not within formal structures or annual decision making meetings.

“Everyone is lovely but distant. They're too busy to give us their time.” Campaigner interview

“We don't seem to get enough communication from you. Its not enough to put things on your website - we're too busy to look! You need to email us the things that are important to us.” Paper survey

Whatever final decisions are taken on involving campaigners in the Foundation, we would strongly recommend that you create a *culture* and not just a structure of democracy. Structure in the absence of underlying cultural values is easily subverted and can become hollow and uninspiring. It's essential that the whole Foundation, and the wider movement, understand the values that any structures represent, understand their role within it and feel empowered and not disempowered by it. These are not changes that can be made overnight.

Recommendations

The Foundation takes a policy decision on campaigner involvement in formal decision making. The making of this decision should model the values of involvement that the Foundation wishes to enshrine. In other words it should be made in collaboration with campaigners and other stakeholders, and should model a high degree of transparency of decision making. Taking such a decision involves identifying an appropriate level of campaigner participation. We refer the Foundation to the concept of the *Ladder of Participation* (reproduced in Appendix 1).

If involvement in formal decision making is agreed, the Foundation should set a clear and realistic timetable to:

- **explore and develop an appropriate decision making model that takes into account the geographical spread of the Towns, and the limited time available to campaigners.**
- **agree with campaigners what issues and decisions they are most concerned to be involved with, what time and resources they can bring to those decisions, and how they would like the voice of producers to be heard in the process. Be sensitive to volunteer time and set reasonable limits on the number of major decision making or consultation exercises in any given year.**

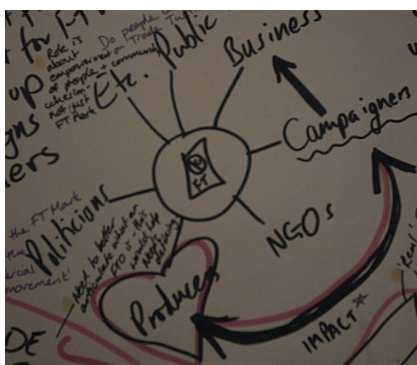
- train the necessary staff and campaigners in order to ensure fluency with the process and the facilitation of the process.
- if appropriate, invest in necessary technology, for example web cameras.
- monitor, evaluate and review the first stages of the process, ideally including all stakeholders in the review process.

We suggest that the Foundation explores the democratic structures of a wide variety of organisations and networks from the Co-operative Wholesale Society, through the NGO community to grassroots networks such as the Climate Camp.

Aside from formal decision making, the Foundation should explore systems for ongoing dialogue and feedback between campaigners and itself. There are a number of tools that the Foundation could use, such as focus groups, internet polls, web-surveys and regional consultation meetings. We have outlined some of these tools along with the main pros and cons for using them in Appendix 1.

However it is clear that none of these will work unless supported by enough staff and/or volunteer time. This will as a minimum involve the recruitment and training of appropriate volunteers. It may well require the recruitment of new staff and a change of job description and focus for existing staff to ensure time is available for interaction with campaigners (see discussions on regional staff under *Movement*).

Movement



'Movement' is a difficult term. The campaigner focus group wrestled with it for a considerable length of time without coming to a definite conclusion. What did emerge from the movement discussion was the need for greater links throughout the Fairtrade movement, and beyond. The key link was that between campaigner and producer. The value of interaction with producers is widely recognised as being very high. Some saw producer-campaigner links as being a motivating force. Others also saw them as part of the ideal model of fair trading, wanting more direct buying links with producer partners, along with

from the staff focus group movement discussion

more direct selling links with consumers. Ideas such as direct buying co-ops made up of a number of Town groups emerged. In tandem the idea of direct selling 'markets' inspired by the

Traidcraft retail model and by the farmers' market movement also emerged.

Many campaigners, in the paper survey, showed us that they see definite links with other campaigns such as climate change and broader food and sustainability issues. We were left with the feeling that there is a desire to be part of a movement, but that it's not necessarily an exclusively Fairtrade (or even trade justice) movement. Campaigners in our focus group talked about concentric circles of movement. Not everyone sees beyond the individual circle they're in to the wider picture, some see the whole. Here are some quotes gleaned from the paper survey:

'These campaigns [climate change, local food] are also very important and all three need to be brought together in an overarching development / sustainability programme.'

'[in five years time] We'd probably be more linked to Transition Towns and other

ethical movements too'

'Liaising more with other justice groups e.g. climate change, Amnesty'

However, whilst many campaigners see connections between the issues, that doesn't always translate as seeing connections between their Town and its work and the wider movement. Town campaigners will often be absorbed in their local or regional work, and on a day-to-day basis feel quite isolated. Our experience is that they see the big picture in terms of issues but not in terms of their own actions. If asked what their own role was within Fairtrade they might well struggle to answer. Many of our recommendations are about making links. The link between individual action or collective group action and the big picture changes that have happened should not be neglected.

The concept of movement can throw up more questions than it answers. What did become clear was that definite recommendations could be made around the strength of the desire to build more links. Links with producers, and links between Towns on a regional level came first, but links of all kinds were suggested – links between Towns and schools, between UK Towns and Towns in other countries, and links with other campaigns. We used climate change and local food as examples in our paper survey, but these are not the only examples we could have chosen.

These discussions raised some potentially uncomfortable issues. Town campaigners are being asked difficult questions about Fairtrade's role in the wider social justice / environmental movement. It's clear that many Town groups, especially those in rural areas, have already made local food part of their Fairtrade campaign. It's also clear that other groups see climate change in the same way. But there are contradictions that cause them problems. Examples include the flying of Fairtrade flowers to market, and commercial partnerships with supermarkets who are often seen as diametrically opposed to local food and not regarded as the farmer's friend. It's not for us to make judgments, but it seems obvious that Town campaigners work would be made easier were the Foundation to find coherent and consistent ways through the maze of issues.

Recommendations: links with producer partners

The Foundation should continue to foster links between producers and campaigners through producer tours, case studies, videos etc. You should also explore the possibilities of direct links between campaigners and producers, especially those afforded by technology. Ideas mentioned by surveys and focus groups included:

- **twinning: from Town or school to producer group.**
- **working to engage the diaspora from producer countries here in the UK (which might also allow first hand experience of life in the producer communities to be shared without the need to fly producers to the UK, helping to ease tensions with climate campaigners).**
- **using the internet for video conferencing (but clearly it also has potential for blogging and social networking).**

Recommendations: links within the Fairtrade Movement

The Foundation should use all of its available communications channels, and events, to

regularly and repeatedly communicate:

- the links within the movement.
- the Foundation's identity as a campaigning organisation.
- the roles within the movement, to give context to Town campaign work. This would help aid campaigners' understanding of what it is that the Foundation does. It would also help them place their own action in the bigger chain of cause and effect.
- that the relationship of campaigners to the Foundation is a journey. One focus group represented this as a ladder. The Foundation's work is about taking campaigners up the ladder rung by rung. The journey goes beyond just Fairtrade. Each step of the way should be supported by different resources appropriate to campaigners at that level, rather than the 'one size fits all' campaign approach that the Foundation is perceived to have at the moment.

Recommendations: links to the wider campaign movement

The Foundation needs to use its communications and events to articulate links more clearly in order to:

- link the issues of Fairtrade to wider issues of trade justice so that the Foundation's success in inspiring personal action on Fairtrade leads to inspiring personal action on trade justice.
- link beyond trade justice to the wider sustainability movement. The Foundation has an opportunity to connect Fairtrade with climate change, by drawing on its relationship with producers to find case studies of how climate change is effecting the world's poor (and how Fairtrade is helping them to combat the negative impacts).
- link to the wider food agenda, particularly local food by developing direct connections between UK food growers and Fairtrade producer groups and highlighting the issues that they have in common – for example the dominance of the transnational corporations that can set the price for commodities and 'outsource' the risks, whilst reaping most of the benefits. There are of course potential conflicts here with commercial partners, especially supermarkets. See recommendations below regarding tension between campaigning and commercial partnerships.

where Fairtrade seems to come into direct conflict with other campaign agendas the Foundation should explore alternatives. If none can be found then a clear statement of intention, which makes the connections discussed above should be given to provide a lead to campaigners.

As the Foundation develops the campaign from solely focusing on Fairtrade to wider trade justice issues (assuming it does so), it would be worth bearing in mind that current Town activity is incredibly practical – getting products onto shelves and then into consumers' shopping bags. For campaigning work, the results are remarkably visible and easy to monitor. The outcomes of any trade justice campaign actions that the Foundation asks campaigners to take should be communicated as clearly to avoid disempowerment.

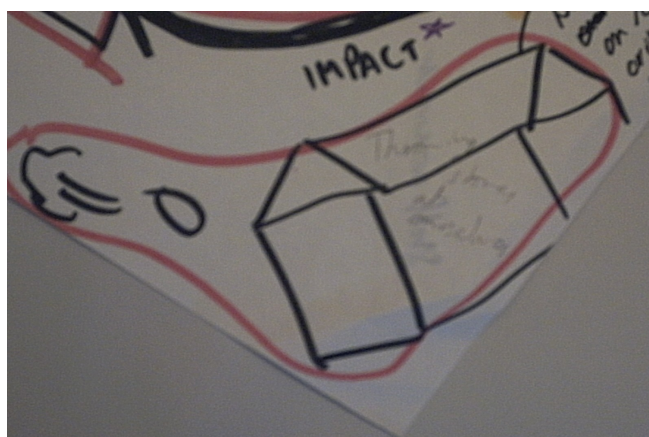
Recommendations: links with commercial partners

Create links to commercial partners by involving campaigners in areas of the

Foundation's work that they have hitherto not been involved in. Examples we heard included campaigners sitting on the FLO⁵ certifying committee and being involved in commercial decision making, helping to bring products to market. The Foundation should explore the possibility of these links, and look for other similar opportunities.

Another finding is that campaigners see themselves as just that - campaigners. They feel part of, or want to feel part of, a *campaigning* movement. This leads to tension with the Foundation, which can at times seem to be primarily a certifying institution.

This tension is heightened when the Foundation is certifying products from large trans-national corporations such as Cadbury or Starbucks. The issue arose in both the staff and campaigner focus group. How can campaigners both support the work of the Foundation in promoting Fairtrade, whilst also being able to criticise some of the Foundation's commercial partners? The staff focus group created an image of the Foundation as a greenhouse. How does the Foundation and its campaigners fill the role of both greenhouse and those outside of the greenhouse throwing stones? No definite solutions were offered, but it's clear that it's an important question for the Foundation to answer, and to answer with the involvement of its campaigners.



from the staff focus group movement discussion

Recommendations: Tension between campaigning and commercial partnerships

The Foundation should consciously explore this tension in order to find a creative solution. It is a live issue for campaigners and addressing it will help focus them and leave them feeling listened to.

The Foundation could ask itself if commercial partners would engage with them knowing full well that the Foundation might simultaneously dialogue with them and mobilise campaigners against them. This is a model that has been used by other campaigning NGOs. The most obvious example would be Greenpeace. For many years now they have used both nonviolent direct action and boardroom meetings to win their campaigns. With consumer pressure to go Fairtrade being so high, companies may well be willing to tolerate being the target of a campaign in order to secure the market advantage Fairtrade status brings.

5 FLO is the Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International, the umbrella body to which the Fairtrade Foundation belongs.

The Foundation could usefully explore a model in which the certifying arm and the campaigning arm are linked but separate. Examples of a similar structure are the FLO where the certifying and support functions are separate, or Traidcraft and the Traidcraft Exchange where the commercial and the educational functions are separated clearly. It would be worthwhile opening a dialogue with other certifying bodies such as the Soil Association to learn from their experience of campaigning and certifying.

A new initiative – the Fairtrade Company – could be introduced. Companies who have already achieved the Fairtrade Mark on one or more products could be invited, or pressured to go further and work towards Fairtrade Company status. This distinction would separate companies whose rationale is to trade fairly from purely commercial companies, provide campaigners with a new challenge, but most of all have a positive effect in changing trade for producers. The Fairtrade Company could be modelled on the Fairtrade Town with goals that might include criteria such as:

- the percentage of all company products carrying the Mark.
- Fairtrade products used internally at meetings /AGMs /in staff canteens and so on.

Recommendations: Regional links

The Foundation should recruit a regional support network, made up of regionally based staff or teams of regionally based volunteers. Their remit would be to improve understanding of the wider movement amongst Towns in their region and to build links on a regional level, between Town groups, between Towns and schools / universities, and between Fairtrade campaigners and related campaigners – for example climate change campaigners.

For more on regional support roles please see the section below.

Other recommendations focus on the flow of information from the Foundation, as the following quote illustrates:

“It's very difficult to make contact as the Foundation does not give us contact details for other towns in the area! The Foundation needs to encourage networking much more and enable it to happen.” Paper survey

The Foundation should identify what information can be shared in the light of the Data Protection Act. Steps that it could take include:

- asking each Town's permission to share contact details with other Towns.
- helping Towns to use networking technology such as regional email lists or regional web forums.

Regional support roles

Regional support roles were mentioned in all of the stages of the consultation and under all three headings – structure, democracy and movement. Most respondents to our paper survey were interested in the idea of developing relationships with neighbouring Fairtrade Towns and some had already started this process. There were some differences of view on the geographical area that these networks might cover. Some respondents were already working towards developing regional networks e.g. Fairtrade Northwest, others were

developing county-wide networks e.g. Hampshire and Kent or metropolitan area networks such as Greater Manchester and London. There were also suggestions to create a Fairtrade province in Northern Ireland, to link rural areas with nearby large towns and to link with Fairtrade towns in other countries.

The benefits of regional support

The benefits of forging closer regional links, for the Towns, can be very practical, such as those mentioned below:

“To have slightly more support in more practical aspects ie (fund)raising tins for campaigning, communication strategies with the local area, assisting with facilitating behaviour change in consumers.” Paper survey

“Would be good if we could have slightly higher levels of support on a regional basis ie networking/helping to co-ordinate directories/websites/communication etc.” Paper survey

Other practical benefits that emerged included:

- co-ordinating in the campaign for Fairtrade boroughs or counties
- sharing new ideas for events and activities
- sharing best practice in recruiting new people, especially from harder to reach groups such as young people and BME groups
- joint promotion of events and joint advertising
- buying products co-operatively

Regional support also fulfills an emotional need: mutual support and feeling part of a bigger movement - sharing experiences, difficulties, and successes.

There are also significant benefits to the Foundation:

- more motivated campaigners
- better informed campaigners
- campaigners able to scale up their events and impact through wider co-operation
- having an ear to the ground in the regional support staff / volunteers – a feedback mechanism
- regional staff being able to access regional funding that London-based staff cannot access

Whilst some Towns have already initiated regional projects, and in some cases fundraised for staff to work across a region, this is not widespread. The idea of the Foundation funding regional support workers needs to be seriously considered.

The issues

There are several issues that the Foundation would need to address:

Should the regional support post be voluntary or paid?

Some NGOs have very successfully mobilised *contracted volunteers* – that is volunteers with

a firm job description, management and support structure who commit to minimum amounts of work per week. With adequate training such volunteers can be as effective as part-time staff, or even more so as they understand the needs of the volunteer community from which they're drawn. However the Foundation would need to be careful to provide enough support to keep them motivated. This would require paid staff time, at least in the early stages. Some NGOs have minimised the staff input by building systems in which the volunteers train the next generation of volunteers. The Amnesty International trainers' network is run this way.

Recruiting volunteers from the Towns movement has pros and cons. On the pros side, these are people with real live experience of the joys and frustrations of Town campaigning that they can bring to the role, making them powerful capacity builders. The cons are that recruiting volunteers for regional work may take some of the leading lights away from local work. Alternatively regional volunteers may remain entwined in their local work, making them less available to other groups in the region.

What can the Foundation reasonably expect from regional support workers?

A common error that organisations make is having unrealistic expectations of how much can be achieved in a particular time period, especially if the model adopted is that of part-time or voluntary workers. The amount of support regional staff can give to any one Town within their region is affected by a number of factors such as:

- overall region size
- the number of towns within a given region
- travel time: i.e the quality of the transport networks in a region and how central the staff member is to that region

For this reason recruiting a team of regional volunteers is preferable, whether working under a paid staff member or not. A team allows for greater capacity, for the likelihood that one volunteer is reasonably near every group in the region, as well as for mutual support and skillsharing.

Capacity building is not a quick-fix task. It takes time to change the culture of campaign groups to make them more accessible and inviting to new people. It takes time to increase the level of skill within a campaigner network.

Support for support workers

If regional support workers are to be effective they themselves need clear support by managers that understand the difficulties of their role. They also need training specific to their role to allow them to facilitate, communicate and deliver training to a high standard. Delivering a high standard of support is essential if Town groups are to be excited and motivated enough to give up valuable time to receive the support. If the quality of that support isn't up to scratch, Towns will just bypass it and revert to calling the London office.

Do the capacity building role and a possible representative role work together or need to be separate?

The democracy discussion may lead to a model of regional representation. It's common for NGOs to bundle the capacity building and representative roles into one. This is understandable, as recruiting enough volunteers to play both roles can be a problem.

Capacity builders will certainly interact with many Town groups and get a strong sense of the energy, excitement and woes of the Towns. This makes them an ideal informal feedback mechanism (but beware of them being seen as 'spies' for the Foundation!). However it's not reasonable to expect all those that might wish to take on a representative function to be willing or able to become capacity builders.

Also many NGOs' democratic constitutions limit the number of regional representative roles (1 per region is the common). If the capacity building and representative role are one and the same this sets an artificial, and unhelpful, limit on the number of capacity builders.

What do we mean by a region?

It's essential to be sensitive when defining regions. Ideally this should be done in consultation with Towns. Often head offices use pragmatic tools to define regions – such as transport hubs and routes, or local authority boundaries. These do not always chime with the self-identity of those in the regions.

Recommendations

There is a lot the Foundation could learn from other organisational models of regional support. Our primary recommendation would therefore be to contact capacity builders in other NGOs for advice. A useful source of advice might be the 'NGO Capacity Building Forum', an informal meeting of capacity builders from leading environmental and development NGOs⁶.

Whatever model the Foundation adopts should have face-to-face contact as it's primary support mechanism. The value of direct, personal and face-to-face contact cannot be underestimated. Clearly it needs to be supplemented with phone, email and web-based support mechanisms, but these are no substitute for the high quality human interaction face-to-face contact offers. This is an argument for regional support teams so that there are more faces to be face-to-face with.

Offer clear role descriptions to the regional support workers. Consult the Towns about what they would like the roles to entail.

Ensure that adequate and ongoing training is offered to ensure individuals are capable and confident in fulfilling those roles.

Ensure that the roles of regional support workers are well communicated to those in the region at regular intervals and through a variety of media.

Ensure that regional support workers are clearly accountable and that Towns know how to feedback both to those fulfilling the roles and to their managers.

If the regional support worker roles are fulfilled by volunteers, recognise their efforts and ensure they feel a 'part of the team'. Techniques that might be useful include:

- a volunteer.name@fairtrade.org.uk email address.
- regular contact with staff through one-to-one check-ins, regional team meetings, dedicated training days and so on.
- early access to campaign plans and campaign materials.
- prompt payment of any expenses.
- offering to write references.

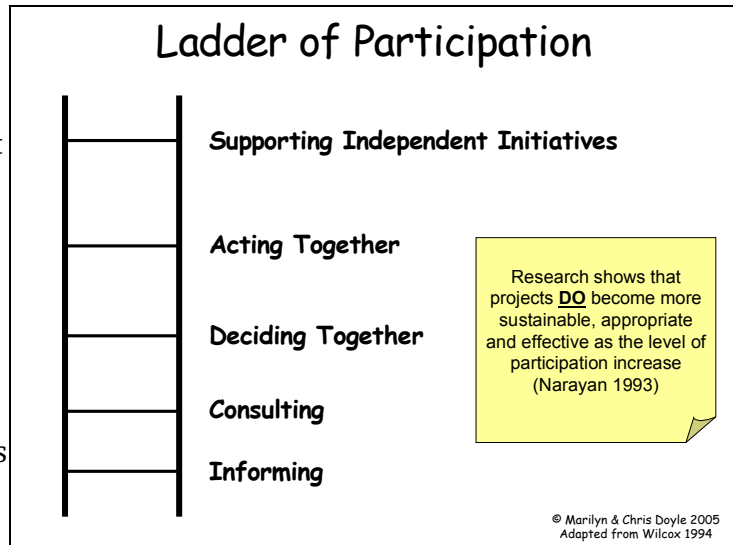
⁶ Capacity_Building_NGO_Forum-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

- **making them aware of job opportunities within the Foundation.**

Appendix 1 – Democracy and the Ladder of Participation

The Ladder of Participation is a useful tool in discussing democracy in any community of people. All the levels of the Ladder are important and are appropriate at different times. The levels also build on each other. It is always important to clarify the level of participation that is intended or achievable. In most cases NGOs dialogue with their campaigner networks at Level 2 – *Consultation*. We would advocate that the Foundation should always aspire to this as a *minimum* level of dialogue. Anything less is really just the provision of information, and in democratic terms is tokenism (although it may be necessary to go through an information provision phase in order to then engage more deeply with a consultation or decision making exercise).

Not being clear about the level of participation can lead to a clash of expectations, and disillusionment with the process. It is one of the commonest causes of “consultation fatigue”. For example, when people believe they are part of the decision making process (Level 3 – *Deciding Together*) and later find out that their opinions were only being sought to enable others to decide. For this reason you should always make clear to your stakeholders just what you are consulting on, and what you will do with their opinions.



Rungs on the ladder

Level 1: Informing - Telling campaigners about the project – what is planned for them and what the benefits will be.

This is often done through meetings, newsletters, information pamphlets, websites, etc.

Clear communication is a minimum requirement, but participation is passive and campaigners usually have little ownership of the planned activities.

Level 2: Consulting - Offering a number of options and listening to the feedback.

This is most commonly done through questionnaires, focus groups or interviews. This is a first step in actively involving people and benefiting from their knowledge of the issue.

However, the people doing the consulting still retain the power and control, make the final decisions and carry out the actions.

Level 3: Deciding together - Encouraging

campaigners to provide their own ideas and join in deciding the best way forward.

This is done through project committees or through initiatives using participatory activities to encourage joint analysis, planning and decision-making.

A range of stakeholders has the opportunity to take ownership of the decision-making process, but they are not necessarily involved in carrying out the decisions.

Level 4: Acting together - Stakeholders plan and decide together what is best and then form a partnership to carry out the decisions.

Campaigners are involved at all stages of the process and there is an equal sharing of power.

Level 5: Supporting independent initiatives - Helping people do what they want to do, perhaps within a framework of grants, advice, and support. Power and control rests with the campaigners.

Effective decision making / consultation

We commonly hear NGO staff say that they cannot give the decision making power to their grassroots, because the grassroots are not well enough informed, or do not know the issues or the context well enough. In our many years of experience of working in the grassroots we have to say that we remain unconvinced.

With the right framework in place there is no question in our mind that high quality decision making can be achieved in partnership between the Foundation and the Town movement. The key points to consider are:

- create a *culture* of dialogue and democracy – make it second nature and then provide the structures to support it, but don't be ruled by the structures. The spirit of democracy is what enthuses people and helps them feel involved
- keep it genuine – be open and honest about where power lies. Don't dress consultation up as decision making, and information provision as consultation. In the long-term that leads to disempowerment and disaffection
- be clear on the limitations. All sorts of factors limit the depth and quality of democracy. For many organisations time is a key one. The shorter the timescale the less truly democratic a process can be. For example, individuals need time to become informed about an issue. Town groups need enough time to meet together and discuss the issue, something they are likely to do monthly at best. Then there needs to be feedback, development of ideas and so on. Six to eight weeks is probably the absolute minimum time requirement of a reasonably large scale consultation or decision making exercise
- transparency has been hinted at already. Be clear on what decisions are being made, by whom, when, and taking whose voices into account. Also be clear on the weight of individual stakeholders voices
- weight your stakeholders. It can be tough to decide whose voices are the most important. Each stakeholder usually believes they should have the loudest say. It's worth formally ranking stakeholder voices to avoid creating false expectations later. There's no reason why this can't be democratically decided
- be aware of limits on volunteer time. Democracy can take time. Town groups are dedicated campaigners. There's a limit to the time they can spare if they are going to be effective at their chosen activity – campaigning. This means that the Foundation will need to limit the number of big decisions to a handful each year. There are ways of maximising campaigner input by using different media for different decisions. For example a short web survey for a relatively minor decision may only take 10 minutes to complete, but a series of meetings leading to an AGM style vote can reduce time available for campaigning for a period of weeks or months. You can also use different samples of campaigners for different decisions instead of consulting everyone on everything. It's possible to use a database to choose appropriate samples, especially if campaigners have been asked to specify what issues are most of interest to them
- use technology but be aware of its limits. Internet and phone technology allows us to communicate, dialogue and make decisions, but some face-to-face contact is essential for building a sense of the collective in decision making and for big or

difficult decisions

- beware of informal or hand-picked democracy. Don't allow informal contact to replace formal democracy. In any movement there are those in the grassroots who have more contact with the staff, and vice versa. Avoid giving informal power to people simply because of the fact that they're well connected. Good democracy will seek out the *hard to reach* and make the process as accessible as possible. Hard to reach groups are sometimes those who are geographically remote from the main office (traditionally those in the South West, Scotland, parts of Wales and the North of England). They may struggle to attend democratic assemblies, for example, or may have less contact with staff responsible for the democratic life of an organisation. But hard to reach can also refer to a demographic (those who don't use the internet, for example, or BME communities). It can also mean those with less mainstream opinions. Some NGOs like to play safe and subtly exclude 'troublemakers' from the democratic process. We've always found this ironic as we are all troublemakers or we wouldn't be agitating for change! The best democracy embraces diversity

Tools for decision making, consultation and feedback: pros and cons

The following is an edited extract from *the Activist Dialogue Handbook*, first written by Seeds for Change for Friends of the Earth in 2008.

For many decisions you will need to use several tools in parallel. If you want to reach a wide sample of people, using just one technique is unlikely to work. Not everyone will fill in an online survey, so you may also need to make it available by phone and on paper, for example.

Stars indicate the level of facilitation skill required to use each technique. In our opinion, the more stars a technique has, the higher the level of skill needed to facilitate it.

The tools and techniques referred to here are by no means the only techniques available to you, but the ones most relevant to a Fairtrade Foundation context.

Surveys

Surveys are ideal for gathering quantitative information (e.g. what percentage of campaigners hold which views, or what percentage support which option). They can also be used for eliciting more qualitative data (i.e. answering open questions). It's good practice to allow consultees to answer any survey anonymously. This ensures that there's no pressure to censor potentially unpalatable views for fear of causing offence.

Web survey **

What: A questionnaire completed on the internet (for example using a website such as <http://www.surveymonkey.com/>).

When to use: Web surveys are ideal for reaching a large proportion of campaigners in a resource efficient way.

Facilitation: The main issues are around wording the questions impartially and logically. Good questions are clear, and are not leading. If you offer a range of options ensure they are appropriate for the question asked. Avoid the following:

Q: Which option do you prefer

A: Yes / No / Don't know

You then need to interpret the data impartially and avoid reading into it what you want to hear.

Tips:

- Internet access is widespread but not universal, so this approach will exclude some. Combine with the same survey available in at least one alternative format (by phone or on paper).
- Web surveys are difficult for groups to fill in collectively (there's only so many folk that can fit round a laptop, and most groups won't have web access at their meeting venues), so it's more likely to elicit individual responses.
- Surveys need careful thought in regard to length of the survey. How long will people realistically be willing to spend answering it? Try to keep surveys short and to the point. If they need to be longer, make it clear roughly how long it will take... "this survey has 15 multiple choice questions. It should take you about 20 minutes to complete".
- Web surveys are good for a higher speed of consultation and use less resources. Most survey websites will produce some level of analysis of the data for you.
- Surveys need to be short, in clear English (or Welsh) and free of jargon. Campaigners are often put off by 'corporate' language and over-long documents.
- Refer to any background information, and explain how campaigners can access it. But write your survey on the assumption that the person answering it hasn't read the background documentation. See *Written documents* for more information.
- Make the deadline for answers clear. It's worth having it both at the start and the end of your survey.

Written survey **

What: A questionnaire circulated on paper (or downloadable from the internet).

When to use: See *Web survey*, above.

Facilitation: See *Web survey*, above.

Tips:

- Paper based surveys are a far more practical way of encouraging groups to discuss questions and answer them as a group.
- Make it clear whether you want individual opinion or the collective opinion of a local group.
- Surveys need to be short, in clear English (or Welsh) and free of jargon. Campaigners are often put off by 'corporate' language.
- Groups have very limited time together to discuss. Shorter surveys are more likely to be completed.
- Refer to any background information, and explain how campaigners can access it. But write your survey on the assumption that the person answering it hasn't read the

background documentation. See *Written documents* for more information.

- Many groups don't like wasted paper, so think about how many copies you send to each group.
- Make the deadline for answers clear. It's worth having it at the start and then repeating it at the end of your survey.

Phone surveys ***

What: A questionnaire answered over the phone.

When to use: See *Web survey*, above.

Facilitation: As with other surveys, there are issues around choosing appropriate, non-leading questions. Phone surveys are more complicated in that you are interacting with the person as they fill in the survey. In fact, you're filling it in for them. This puts more pressure on you to be actively listening to the answers and representing them fairly. This can be hard to do when you have strong opinions on an issue. It can also be hard to maintain focus over long periods of time on the phone, so plan breaks into your phone schedule.

Tips:

- Phone surveys require a higher level of facilitation skills. Think about getting support or training if you aren't confident in facilitating.
- Start by thanking the campaigners for their time and give them a realistic idea of how long the survey will take. Don't say 5 minutes if you know it takes 15.
- It's vital that every campaigner is asked the same questions and given the same range of possible answers. Work from a script, but try and inject some life into it.
- Even if you arrange phone surveys in advance (preferable to cold calling) a percentage of campaigners will forget, not get home from work as early as they had planned, have poor mobile reception when you call them, and so on. Be patient - they are volunteers with hectic lives. Build a 'drop out' rate into your survey. If you want to hear from a sample of 100 people, plan to phone 10-20% more.
- Phone surveys have obvious advantages in terms of speed of consultation and almost universal access to the technology.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify answers. You can't see the campaigners body language to see if they are joking, annoyed etc.

Email survey **

What: A questionnaire circulated by email.

When to use: See *Web survey*, above.

Facilitation: See *Web survey*, above.

Tips:

- Email is seen as a quick method of communication and users are more likely to be impatient with long questionnaires.
- It's easy to assume that everyone has regular email access, or checks mail regularly, or will prioritise your mail. That's not necessarily the case. You still need to allow

significant time for people to respond (or email a larger sample of people than you need to ensure enough replies in your short timeframe)

- Internet access is widespread but not universal, so this approach will exclude some. Combine with the same survey available in at least one alternative format (by phone or on paper)
- Email surveys are probably better for eliciting personal rather than group responses.
- Make it clear if you want the person you email to forward the mail to others in their group or if you are emailing others yourself. People may not be impressed if they receive the same email several times.
- Surveys need to be short, in clear English (or Welsh) and free of jargon. Campaigners are put off by 'corporate' language and over long documents.
- Refer to any background information, and explain how campaigners can access it – a hyperlink from the email is ideal. But write your survey on the assumption that the person answering it hasn't read the background documentation. See *Written documents* for more information.
- If you attach the survey to the email, make this clear in the text and use a universal document format. If you put the survey in the body of the email, avoid fancy formatting – not everyone's webmail or email client will be able to cope with the format. But try to make the format as clear as possible e.g. number each question clearly.
- Make the deadline for answers clear. It's worth having it both at the start and the end of your survey.

Other web techniques

Internet dialogue / prioritisation sites **

What: A website that allows greater interaction than a web survey⁷. Typically these sites allow you to post up options and invite campaigners to rank them, comment on the options, and in some cases propose new options. These sites display the current prioritisation being given to options as campaigners 'vote'.

When to use: An ideal tool for involving large numbers of campaigners in prioritising and shaping an existing series of options. This makes it a useful technique for a second round of consultation (when the first has been about hearing what the possible options might be). Alternatively it can be useful when you have done some of the thinking already and want to consult only at later stages of a process.

Facilitation: See *Web survey*, above. Most of the issues here are to do with setting the options or questions out clearly and interpreting the responses. You may also have to moderate the comments left on the site, which requires you to do so impartially and/or to a pre-agreed set of criteria for what is an acceptable comment.

Tips:

- Obviously all issues to do with internet access apply (see *Web survey* above).
- These sites provide a good tool for shaping ideas and expressing priorities before

⁷ an example is <http://www.dialogr.com>.

reaching final decisions, especially where widespread face-to-face meetings are not viable.

- The initial question or options requires careful thought, neutral and clear wording to keep discussion focused.
- Some people may find the range of options on the site limiting, and may resist the process because of this. If there are limits or specific reasons for the choice of options, make them clear (e.g. “these options arose out of a previous round of consultation”). Have you got a genuinely good reason for not allowing new options to be posted up by campaigners?

Online 'chat' discussions *** / forums **

What: A conversation held in a chatroom, at a prearranged time that has been advertised to campaigners, or an ongoing web forum initiated to facilitate discussion on a subject.

When to use: An informal tool for gathering feelings, views or suggestions. Online forums or chat have no statistical relevance, but can provide a 'feel' for campaigner opinion, and can give campaigners a chance to interact with staff, ask questions and seek clarification.

Facilitation: With ongoing forums, most of the issues are to do with setting the initial options or questions out clearly and interpreting the responses. You may also have to moderate the forum and keep it focused. Do so impartially and/or to a pre-agreed set of criteria for what is acceptable behaviour.

Online chat requires a higher level of facilitation. If you are both interacting with campaigners and facilitating the session, you need to be very aware of the impartiality issue and ensure you don't lead the discussion inappropriately. Remember that campaigners trust staff and value their opinion highly, which gives you the potential to influence them significantly. This is not compatible with the role of the facilitator.

Tips:

- Do you need another person to facilitate (moderate) the chat?
- Allow for interaction which helps develop better formed answers to the dialogue question.
- Can be used to give all (online) stakeholders access to expertise e.g: a question and answer session with relevant staff members.
- Good for creating horizontal communication between local groups.
- Can create a hierarchy of the technologically literate, or even just those with the fastest typing speed, so not a total substitute for other means.
- May only appeal (or appeal more) to a certain demographic of Fairtrade Foundation staff and Fairtrade Town campaigners – the more web literate who spend more time in front of their computers.
- Not an ideal tool to be used on it's own – only really appropriate when used alongside other techniques.
- Use a survey or internet prioritisation site for a more statistically sound result.

Face-to-face techniques

Face-to-face contact allows you to explore concepts more deeply, to listen more deeply, to question campaigners more deeply, and to elicit qualitative responses in a way that surveys cannot do so well.

Face-to-face sessions are also good for informing campaigners in advance of a stage of consultation, or feeding back the results of a stage of consultation. They allow campaigners to ask you questions.

Be aware that in any face-to-face situation, groups may use the time to air what's at the forefront of their minds. That may not be what you had planned to talk with them about.

In consultations, face-to-face sessions are often referred to as *Focus groups*. In general terms a focus group will be made up of a manageable number of people (6-12 is ideal). Focus groups are usually made up of people from similar demographics, in order to hear their particular points of view. In Fairtrade Foundation terms this might mean talking to Fairtrade Town steering group co-ordinators in one focus group whilst speaking to 'ordinary' group members in another. Focus groups can be more structured sessions where you ask particular questions and elicit answers. Alternatively they can be more conversational where you introduce a topic and let the group talk amongst itself whilst you act as a 'fly on the wall', listening and observing with occasional prompts or new questions.

Facilitated face-to-face discussion at national level ****

What: In most cases this will be a workshop discussion at a Supporter Conference.

When to use: Ideal for reaching representatives of a large number of different local groups at once, to introduce them to an issue, feedback on a consultation or gather their opinions.

Facilitation: Face-to-face sessions require the most skill to facilitate. All four of the key facilitation skills – listening and interpreting responses, impartiality, summarising, and asking questions - are required for good facilitation. You should consider your role. If you feel you will be inputting large amounts of the content of the discussion, then it's probably not appropriate for you also to facilitate, as your involvement in the content will stop you focusing fully on the process.

Tips:

- Facilitators must understand their role and remain impartial for dialogue to be credible.
- Be aware that some groups don't attend national events. If you want to hear the voices of hard to reach groups, a session at a national event won't deliver the results you are looking for.
- Good visual aids and interactive meeting techniques, such as small group work, may enhance the quality of the interaction.
- If your session is consultation or decision making rather than information or feedback, record your findings for future reference and transparency. This can be on flipchart paper, or typed up onto a laptop as the session progresses, or through an audio recording of the session. It's good practice to make session notes, minutes or transcripts available to those who took part to ensure that they are happy that you recorded the views or decisions of the session accurately.

- Leave a few minutes at the end to evaluate the session so that you can improve the consultation next time around.

Facilitated face-to-face discussion at regional level ****

What: In most cases this will be a discussion at a regional gathering. This technique would become more available to the Foundation if regional staff / volunteers are recruited.

When to use: Ideal for reaching representatives of a large number of different Town groups at once, to introduce them to an issue, feedback on a consultation or gather their opinions. Especially relevant when dealing with regional issues.

Facilitation: See *Facilitated face-to-face discussion at national level*, above.

Tips:

- Remember that consultation at existing regional events can threaten the Towns' own networking time and needs to be used sensitively – do you need to consult everyone, or just a sample? Work with other NGOs has shown that regional gatherings need to have time ring-fenced for the regions or they can become vehicles for the head office to communicate its issues and needs to the groups with little or no time remaining for genuine regional networking or for staff to listen to regional concerns.
- Groups can get decision making / consultation fatigue if these events are over-used for these purposes.
- Staff facilitators also need to understand their role and remain impartial, especially when facilitating a topic that's their area of work. Consider co-facilitation – one facilitator to concentrate on process, the other to input necessary facts/information (but not opinion!).
- Some groups may choose not to attend regional events and may not have their voice heard if this is the only or main opportunity for dialogue, so use alongside other techniques like email or phone surveys.
- Record your findings transparently – see *Facilitated face-to-face discussion at national level*, above

Facilitated face-to-face discussion at local level ****

What: Sitting in with a Town group at their regular meeting (or a specially arranged meeting) and running a focus group.

When to use: Ideal for reaching a higher percentage of each Town's membership, including those that don't attend regional or national events. Consulting every Town in this way is almost certainly not practical, but it is effective when taking a small sample of opinion.

Facilitation: See *Facilitated face-to-face discussion at national level*, above

Tips:

- Towns feel valued by the presence of a staff member at their meeting.
- A facilitated meeting allows for more depth and focus and helps the group deal with more controversial topics more constructively than they might if there were no facilitator present.
- Facilitators must understand their role and remain impartial for dialogue to be

credible. Remember that the group are likely to want to hear your opinion, and will have lots of questions to ask. Consider co-facilitation – one facilitator to concentrate on process, the other to input necessary facts/info (but not opinion!).

- Record your findings transparently – see *Facilitated face-to-face discussion at national level*, above
- Be clear on the aim of the discussion. Remember, Towns don't get that much access to staff, so they may have several things they want to tell you, some of which may not be relevant to the decision at hand. Build in time for this.

Unfacilitated face-to-face discussion at local level **

What: Asking Town groups to have a discussion at their regular meeting (or a specially arranged meeting) and feedback the result.

When to use: Ideal for reaching a higher percentage of each Town's membership, including those that don't attend regional or national events, when you want qualitative replies (for quantitative replies, use a survey). This option doesn't have the staff resource implication of a facilitated version and may be more appropriate when staff time is in short supply (though it is as resource intensive for groups). Results are likely to be less clear, so less effective when precision is an issue.

Facilitation: The issues here are, as with surveys, more about the clear working of the task that you set Towns, and your impartial interpretation of the responses.

Tips:

- Relies on Towns having adequate information and understanding of issues. Discussion may be dominated by a few 'experts' if there is no adequate facilitator.
- Relies on Towns having good internal dynamics. Discussion may be dominated by the most assertive if there is no adequate facilitator.
- You cannot assume that all of the discussions are of comparable quality across the Town movement.
- Towns may struggle to make time for dialogue – can it be kept to just 10-15 minutes?
- Advance notice will be appreciated.
- How do you get the feedback? Do you need to combine with another technique, such as a web or paper-based survey?
- Provide guidance on what feedback you're looking for. You might also include a pro forma to ensure feedback from all Towns is comparable.

Video conference ****

What: Video conferencing is real time discussion over the internet. It varies from phone conferencing in that you can see other participants, increasing the connection, and allowing you to read facial expression and body language.

When to use: Video conferencing is a technique that allows you to involve more hard to reach campaigners in dialogue. It can also cut down on consultation travel time (and carbon!). It lends itself to more qualitative dialogue, allowing people to seek deeper

understanding and express deeper opinion. Good for consulting a sample of campaigners on either a one to one basis (interviews) or in a small focus group setting.

Facilitation: Video conferencing involves all of the challenges posed by face-to-face meetings, plus a few more posed by the technology. It may be more difficult to see the subtle clues that people give to show that they are about to speak, leading to an increase in interrupting. Consider using facilitation tools like go-rounds (also called round robins). It's also more difficult to sustain focus when using remote techniques, so try to keep sessions shorter than a face-to-face meeting.

Tips:

- Currently only viable with a small sample of people who have web cams, access to the internet, and understand how to use the technology.
- Would improve the quality of remote dialogue, currently done via phone.
- Record your findings transparently – see *Facilitated face-to-face discussion at national level*, above.

Campaigner Advisory Groups ****

What: Committees of campaigners selected or elected to advise the Foundation. Different committees may have different remits (for example one might advise on commercial relations, another on Fairtrade Fortnight). Advisory groups would probably meet 2-6 times a year.

When to use: Advisory groups are a good starting point for narrowing down options for wider consultation. They are a good space to bounce ideas around and formulate more details. However there's a risk that they are treated as a one-stop consultation technique which would disenfranchise the wider Town population. Because they tend to meet regularly they can be used to develop ongoing processes and campaigns.

Facilitation: All the skills needed to facilitate any other face-to-face meeting are needed in this context. If you've consciously drawn together a group of people with diverse perspectives you will need to be able to find common ground, summarise effectively, and ensure all sides feel valued and listened to.

Tips:

- Remember that the advisory group is not necessarily a substitute for wider consultation and decision making. In other NGOs advisory group members are often hand-picked, so cannot necessarily be seen to hold representative views.
- In many cases the advisory group are specialists, attracted to the group because of a particular interest in the subject. Use their expertise, but don't assume that others in the local groups are incapable of participating in a detailed consultation on the topic. With good facilitation you can widen the consultation to those without expert knowledge, and even raise their level of knowledge in the process.
- Use your advisory group to help you design effective wider consultation / decision making processes.
- Advisory groups may appreciate being offered concrete proposals to respond to rather than being asked to start a discussion from a blank page.

Other techniques

Phone Interviews *** /conferences ****

What: Phone interviews are a more in-depth interaction than a phone survey. They are often one to one, but it is possible to do phone focus groups with a small number of participants. Phone focus groups can be organised through a number of internet conference call facilities.

When to use: In most cases they will be used with a sample of campaigners to get more qualitative responses to a consultation. Like video conferencing the phone allows you to involve more hard to reach campaigners in dialogue and can also cut down on consultation travel time. Phone interviews can be used alongside other techniques to make a dialogue more accessible and to get the depth when you're using a survey to get the breadth.

Facilitation: Phone conferencing involves all of the challenges posed by face-to-face meetings, plus a few more posed by the technology. You aren't able to see the subtle clues that people give to show that they are about to speak, leading to an increase in interrupting. Consider using facilitation tools like go-rounds. It's also more difficult to sustain focus when using remote techniques, so try to keep sessions shorter than a face-to-face meeting.

Phone interviews are easier but still require good listening and questioning skills. You may not stick to a script as closely as with a survey, and will need to know when (and how) it's appropriate to follow up on a response and dig deeper.

Tips:

- Have a clear and realistic agenda for phone conferencing to help keep the conference short.
- Establish time constraints at the start – how long can everyone be available?
- Ensure everyone gets an equal opportunity to contribute – challenge dominating voices.
- Take breaks and call back if people are tiring and the conference is not finished
- Record your findings transparently – see *Facilitated face-to-face discussion at national level*, above.
- Pause regularly and ensure everyone's following the discussion.
- For phone interviews go off script if need be, but stay on the topic.

Written documents *

What: Any background information used to inform discussion or feedback the outcomes of a decision making process – circulated on paper or downloadable from the internet.

When to use: Written information should accompany almost every other technique. It's very unlikely that the process will require no introduction or no feedback. Even if you plan to do this in a face-to-face session, some participants will still appreciate having it in writing as well.

Facilitation: The main issues with written information are to do with clarity and accessibility, and the impartial tone of the document(s). Written information should

communicate a balanced view and do so in clear and simple language. Write it from the perspective of the reader not from your own view. It's easy to forget that because we understand an issue, or a set of jargon, that others might not.

Tips:

- Have written information prepared at the start of the consultation so that everyone has some time to familiarise themselves with it in advance.
- Documents need to be short, in clear English (or Welsh) and free of jargon. When you do use jargon, or an acronym, always explain it the first time you use it.
- Groups are often put off by 'corporate' language and thick documents. Write in a style appropriate for the reader, not for yourself.
- Towns will have very limited time together to discuss documents. If there are some elements of a document that are 'essential' and others that are only 'desirable', structure your document to make this clear.
- If your main documents are quite long, have summary documents available for those with less time to give, or have a short 'executive summary' at the start of the document.
- Make the document more accessible by using colour, diagrams and other visuals as well as clear and short case studies and concrete examples. Think about large print versions – how will you make them available?

Vox Pops **

What: There are a number of techniques that allow you to get a snapshot of opinion in a relatively quick and easy fashion. These include:

- Post-it walls - asking people to write comments on specific issues on post-it notes and stick them up.
- 'Graffiti walls' – stick up large sheets of paper/white boards and leave pens lying around. Encourage people to write their thoughts on particular issue.
- Video/sound booths – create a booth in a quiet area and stick in a simple to operate audio or video recorder.
- A dedicated 'tell us what you think' phone line with an answer machine.
- 2 minute surveys carried out around the main programme of another event.
- An internet poll.

When to use: Use to take the temperature of campaigner opinion at regional or national events, or in between events via an answer machine or web poll. The results can be used to identify issues or questions for later rounds of consultation, or to give an indication of which of a range of options campaigners prefer.

Facilitation: Probably the most simple of all techniques in that you'll only need to write up one clear issue and interpret the results impartially. Of course over the course of an event like the Supporter Conference you could put up different issues at different times.

Tips:

- Put your graffiti wall or video booth somewhere where people will gather, but not

where it'll create a hazard! Be innovative – use toilet walls for graffiti walls, or other similar places where almost everyone will see it.

- Don't forget to be clear what the subject is.
- Don't be surprised if the post-its, graffiti, or recording go off topic. People will use it as a chance to express whatever concerns or excitement are at the forefront of their mind.
- Are there any limits? Will you remove comments that might cause offence?
- Check regularly to ensure that there's a plentiful supply of pens, post-its, discs for the video /audio recorder etc.

Appendix 2 - Participants in this consultation

Participating Fairtrade Towns

The Foundation surveyed 46 Town contacts by phone. These included:

Aberdeen	Faringdon	Perth and Kinross
Arnside	Frome	Plymouth
Balfron	Harpenden	Shrivenham
Basildon	Kendal	Shropshire
Beccles	Keswick	Southwell
Billericay	Liverpool	Stevenage
Bolton	Ludlow	St Helens
Charnwood	Macclesfield	St Neots
Chelmsford	Monmouth	Swanage
Derby	Morpeth	Torbay
Dundee	North Bedfordshire	Ware
Durham	Oadby	Warrington

Participating individual campaigners

Joe Human, Keswick / Cumbria	Stella Carmichael, Newcastle
Rick Norman, Canterbury	Barbara Judd, Bradford
Sian Pettman, Canterbury	Kate Meakin, Fair Trade Wales
Sue Kay, Plymouth	Jan Tucker, Cardiff
Becca Rowland, Woking	Martin Meteyard, Scottish Fair Trade

Participating staff

Barbara Crowther, Director of Communications and Policy	Faaiza Bashir, Campaigns Assistant (Faiths)
Toby Quantrill, Head of Policy	Hannah Reed, Campaign Manager (Towns)
Veronica Pasteur, Head of Campaigns	Bruce Crowther, Campaign Coordinator (Towns)
Sarah Jewell, Campaign Manager	Rachel Hearson, Business Development Manager (Commercial Relations)
Jo Brightwell, Campaign Manager (Schools)	Emma Sundt, Business Development Manager (Commercial Relations)
Adam Gardner, Campaign Intern (Colleges and Universities)	

Appendix 3 – Graffiti walls, surveys and transcripts

In this section of the report we have reproduced the results of the consultation, from which we've reached the conclusions and recommendations dealt with in the main body of the document.

Phone Survey

The phone survey was conducted by Foundation volunteers, we have read through the resulting notes and have drawn our own conclusions.

The questions

Town contacts were asked:

1. So , how's everything going with the campaign? What are you up to?
2. Is there anything you're finding difficult? / What are the biggest challenges?
3. Are you in touch with any other Fairtrade Town groups?
If yes, have you done anything together or are you planning to?
If no, are there any activities, events or projects when you think it would be useful to work with other Fairtrade Town groups?
4. What have you got planned? What's the group most interested in at the moment?
5. Are there any opportunities, ideas or new areas your group is interested in exploring?
6. What's the one thing the Fairtrade Foundation could do differently (or do more) to support your group?

7. Any training you think would be useful?
8. Any materials you'd like to see?
9. Is there any information you feel is missing? (Please be specific!)
10. What support would be useful at a regional level, in addition to what's offered nationally from the Fairtrade Foundation?

The answers

We've themed the issues and summarised the results below:

Regionalisation

- facilitating regional support – even several of those Towns with regional links want more regional contact
- minimum of sharing regional contact details, but significant desire for regional gatherings, regional newsletters (or a national newsletter with news from the regions, regional workers based at Fairtrade Foundation)
- London focus – many groups, especially Scots, ask for events not to be held in London, but moved where travel is more viable

Campaigning

- support wanted in how to engage business in Fairtrade, especially, but not exclusively, guest houses
- more information on the national curriculum to facilitate schools work
- links with other campaigns, especially, but not exclusively climate change
 - ① how to work on Fairtrade whilst avoiding conflict with other campaigns such as the local food agenda
- engaging the Muslim community

Group process

- engaging new people in the group
- engaging people in steering group

Maintaining the impetus of the campaign

- finance – help with funding, the offer of financial assistance
- managing relationships with councils (city and unitary) – Fairtrade less of priority in councils at the moment. Often supported in principle but not in practice. Council staff now have less time to engage with Fairtrade Towns
- understanding the long-term strategy. Where next for Fairtrade?
- fresh ideas for events for established groups
- refresher training on the basics
 - ① better understanding of how things work, e.g. certification

Miscellaneous

- ordering materials – system still unreliable (though some improvement?)
- communication of national events – need more notice (e.g. November for following Fairtrade Fortnight)
- internet use amongst older supporters – a minority aren't (or choose not to be) fluent with internet but all materials are online

Supporter Conference – Paper survey

At the 2009 Supporter Conference Seeds for Change surveyed 54 individuals from a variety of Towns (125 paper surveys were distributed) . These surveys were anonymous, so it's not possible to provide a list of Town groups who contributed.

The questions

The survey asked individuals:

Imagine your Fairtrade Town in five years time and then please answer the following questions with this vision in mind.

1. What would your Fairtrade Town campaign look like?
2. What kind / how much contact would your Fairtrade Town have with other Fairtrade Towns in your region?
3. What kind / how much contact would your Fairtrade Town have with Fairtrade partners e.g. producer partners, commercial partners, NGO's (e.g. Oxfam)
4. Would issues such as local food or climate change be part of your campaign? If so how and to what extent?
5. How much say would you have in the future direction of the Fairtrade Towns Movement?
a lot more? a little more? about the same as now?
6. What level of involvement would work best for you? (circle those that work best)
 - *attend a quarterly meeting in London*
 - *attend a quarterly meeting in your region*
 - *take part in a phone conference every 3 months*
 - *attend a 1 day annual planning forum in London*
 - *attend a 1 day annual planning forum in your region*
 - *other? Please say what it would be.*

7. Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

The answers

When asked what would your Fairtrade Town campaign look like in five years time, respondents said:

The campaign group

- vibrant
- active
- proactive
- focused
- bigger
- colourful
- probably a bit tired and seeking new directions
- still going
- be driven by young people
- younger
- more people coming forward to take over from an ageing group, preferably young folk
- all ages involved
- wide range of people involved
- representatives from all ages and faiths, community groups and businesses
- a variety of local people including political figures, business owners, school pupils
- established network of schools, churches, non-faith organisations supporting each other
- all churches involved
- linked with Fairtrade universities and schools
- better links with business
- a subcommittee of the Council
- steering group with local business and council representation
- a membership organisation with formal links to a national campaign with real democratic influence on its future direction

The groups' activities

- much the same
- linked in with other campaigns
- liaising more with other justice groups e.g. climate change, Amnesty
- linked to Transition Towns and other ethical movements
- public events with lots of publicity
- poster campaigns, signs so there is no excuse for not knowing about it
- a lot of advertising
- bigger marketing/public information campaign
- great publicity to raise the profile of Fairtrade
- educating people on principles
- more consistently visible than now
- more visual
- what is our role now that local and national awareness (of Fairtrade) have grown?

- making links with others in county and wider
- annual music event to raise awareness
- big events with fashion and music
- campaigning with sections of the community never reached before e.g. Asian community, business
- helping schools, individuals, business buy/use more Fairtrade products
- working through community groups
- more involvement with Trade Unions, community groups
- schools, churches, clubs, businesses run their own Fairtrade campaigns
- involvement of more organisations NHS, libraries, sports centres
- targeted at retailers, businesses and food service organisations as well as

consumers

- the Council, schools, businesses more involved
- develop better relationships with retailers
- encourage people to shop Fairtrade
- working with wide range of retail outlets e.g. chemists, ironmongers, high street clothes shops, health and wholefood shops
- Fairtrade schools, hospitals, universities
- campaigns to keep Fairtrade status going
- lots of outreach to other towns not yet Fairtrade towns
- using web, email, local radio slot and local newspaper
- take on the issue of climate change

The outcomes

- Fairtrade will be a fundamental part of our identity as consumers, Fairtrade towns will play a central role in co-ordinating and shaping that identity and creating demand
- increased visibility of Fairtrade status around the town
- wider knowledge of Fairtrade status amongst local people through media
- Fairtrade would be part of the fabric of the town with increased involvement by retailer, farmers and local government
- Fairtrade deeply embedded in the culture so that most people would expect Fairtrade in shops and restaurants
- part of everyday life
- 10 times the present impact
- 'Think global Act local' will be integral

- Fairtrade towns the norm
- brand recognition in the town
- local mainstream awareness of Fairtrade
- wider audience, including those that don't support Fairtrade
- all using at least five Fairtrade products
- Fairtrade at the forefront of traders and customers thoughts
- every shop selling Fairtrade products
- small shops stocking a wide range of Fairtrade products
- untenable to serve non-Fairtrade tea and coffee
- more Fairtrade outlets
- businesses and industries using as much Fairtrade as possible

- Fairtrade in all public service organisations
- Fairtrade an integrated part of council's strategy
- full buy in from local councils
- support from the Borough which would have also gained Fairtrade status
- cooperation between local businesses
- dedicated cabinet member for ethical procurement and practice
- sliding scale of shop rents according to ethical sales/policy of vendor
- projects for 18-25s promoting Fairtrade in the community
- more local Fairtrade not big brands
- road sign saying Fairtrade town
- Broader than just FT product consumption about lifestyle change and sustainability

Contact with other Fairtrade Towns in the region

Most respondents were interested in the idea of developing relationships with neighbouring Fairtrade Towns and some had already started this process. There were some differences of view on the geographical area that these networks might cover. Some respondents were already working towards developing regional networks e.g. Fairtrade Northwest, others were developing county-wide networks e.g. Hampshire and Kent or metropolitan area networks such as Greater Manchester and London. Some wanted to limit their links to their neighbouring towns/boroughs. There were also suggestions to create a Fairtrade province in Northern Ireland, to link rural areas with nearby large towns and to link with Fairtrade Towns in other countries.

“Form an area/county network as Cumbria have where we meet together to share ideas, plans and be re-motivated”

“Hopefully more, via the Kent Fairtrade steering group. The county level seems the obvious next step once local towns/districts achieve local Fairtrade status”

"In London it would be good to know what other boroughs are doing, but each borough is so big there is plenty to do anyway”

One respondent from a rural area said that regional meetings had not worked, despite many attempts, perhaps because there needs to be less emphasis on belonging to a particular region but instead working with those nearest to your Town

Some respondents wanted there to be a lot more contact, with one suggestion of bimonthly meetings, others wanted to have occasional meetings or annual meetings. (n.b. responses to a later question in the survey suggest that quarterly regional meetings would be acceptable to about half of respondents).

“As much as possible so that we support each other - in Powys we are all small towns spread over a wide area. We need therefore to work together to create a strong representative group”

Others were more cautious, for example,

“Certainly some contact i.e. supporting events run by other towns - maybe joining forces from time to time but not to get too tied up with meetings that become an

end in themselves - producing little of value”

“They should be related, talk and unite on events but focus should remain within the town”

Only a few respondents felt that it wasn't necessary or useful to link up with other Fairtrade Towns or thought that the extent of any contact would be 'very little'.

Respondents had many ideas of what kind of information/activities it would be useful to share within a network of Fairtrade Towns: share ideas, share experiences, difficulties, successes, plans, advice, best practice, mutual support, supporting each other and each others events, and share resources, be re-motivated, joint promotion of events, joint advertising, joint campaigning, share connections, share information on products, buy products co-operatively. There were suggestions that this sharing could happen at networking sessions, swap shops, county forums, annual regional meetings, and regional AGMs.

Some were concerned to maintain their autonomy within their own Towns, for example one respondent said,

“Should have formalised communication networks, reflecting the economic and social links between neighbouring towns etc. But retain independence in terms of decision-making etc.”

One respondent felt that this networking process was not being well facilitated by the Foundation,

“Its very difficult to make contact as the Foundation does not give us contact details for other towns in the area! The Foundation needs to encourage networking much more and enable it to happen”

Developing relationships with Fairtrade partners

When asked how much contact they want with Fairtrade partners e.g. producers, commercial partners and NGO's, almost all respondents wanted more direct contact with a variety of Fairtrade partners.

“We'd hope to have visits facilitated by the Fairtrade Foundation as now, but also to develop links with partners and NGOs and business in our own area”

“We would like to involve all of these more as our campaign progresses - promoting shared activity, sponsorship and joint awareness raising”

Many respondents wanted much more contact - comments included 'a lot', 'lots', 'as much as possible' and 'much more involvement and cross networking'.

Some respondents were concerned that they would not be able to increase their contact with partners as they were from rural areas or small market towns, though some thought it might be possible to do so on a regional level. One said,

“Not really sure on this one - do this via our Cumbria network, rather than as an individual group”

Producer partners

Most respondents wanted to have more direct contact with producers, this included visits from producers, speaker tours, roadshows and events mediated by the Fairtrade Foundation e.g. during Fairtrade Fortnight. Though many were content for this to be one event a year.

The reasons given by respondents for wanting more contact with producer partners were:

“We should have direct links with Fairtrade partners so that we are informed of the many Fairtrade issues”

“Partnerships with Fairtrade producers would be especially important - building a two way relationship between producers and consumers. Inspirational personal stories of why Fairtrade matters.”

“Direct contact with producers would help Fairtrade Towns understand the realities of life and benefits of Fairtrade.”

“We need to be as effective as we can at showing how it makes a difference to peoples lives”

“Living in a farming community it would be good to make more links with producer partners”

Some respondents also wanted to develop deeper ongoing relationships with producer partners, ideas included: developing ongoing relationships with producer partners through regular updates and emails, young people visiting producers and on their return sharing their experience and family swaps between a UK family and a producer family. In particular, a number of respondents mentioned the idea of twinning Fairtrade Towns with Fairtrade producers.

Commercial partners

Many respondents wanted to develop more contact with commercial partners, though some especially in rural areas expressed concern that this would be difficult as they had very few retailers in their area. The main commercial partner mentioned was the Co-op, with a few mentioning other supermarkets and other local independent stores.

Reasons for developing these relationships were '*sponsorship and support in kind*', '*blooming of business ethical policies*', '*sponsorship in terms of products for display and tasting*' and '*commercial partners etc will be vital to keep the campaign going*'

NGO partners

Some respondents also wanted to develop stronger links with NGO partners, though a number said they already had good links. Several respondents expressed interest in developing stronger relationships with Oxfam and Oxfam shops. Some mentioned that having people from NGO partners and commercial partners on their steering groups was a good way to increase contact:

“We will carry on working with other groups - many of whom are members of our steering groups so that we all benefit. Many of us have no supermarkets in the town

and would love to have more contact with overseas producers, the co-op etc.”

Broadening the Fairtrade campaign to include other issues

Respondents were asked whether issues such as local food or climate change should be part of their Fairtrade campaign, 72% of respondents thought that local food should be part of their campaign and 69% thought that climate change should be.

“Local food and climate change are important issues and Fairtrade needs to respond and engage with these issues”

“They have to be! We need to make the links clear to people.”

Many of those who favoured campaigning on local food, particularly those living in rural areas, said that it was essential to do so.

“Totally, I live in a rural area, so local food, fair deal for farmers all part of it!”

“As part of a rural farming community and market town it is essential that local farmers and producers relate to the Fairtrade campaign as fair trade is important locally and internationally”

For some local food issues were already part of their campaign and they saw this as complimentary and likely to increase:

“We need to emphasise that fairness to local producers and Fairtrade internationally complement each other rather than compete”

“We already combine Fairtrade and local producers in our directory. Fairtrade and local complement each other.”

“Other groups involved in this already intertwine with us & local food is certainly part of our campaign now. This can only become more important over the coming years”

Many of those who favoured campaigning on climate change thought it was important to show the links between climate change and Fairtrade:

“As worry and fear about climate change increases the Fairtrade Town campaign must become vocal and visible about the role Fairtrade plays in alleviating climate change. Need to be more aware of climate justice.”

“The time is now to press sustainability and the role of Fairtrade in the context of climate change”

“Education about the link between poverty and climate change is clearly a focus we need to promote”

“Fairtrade is a good simple way to show how everyday choices can tackle climate change”

But some professed difficulties with how to do it, One said,

“Climate change should probably be part of our campaign too - not sure how yet!”

A number of people mentioned other areas/issues that they thought should be part of the Fairtrade campaign: trade justice, a fair deal for UK farmers and 'fair' shares (of resources), a sustainable food supply, food security, eco-friendly aspect of Fairtrade and water issues. A broad approach was favoured by some who mentioned bringing Fairtrade together with sustainability and development issues, for example one respondent said,

“These campaigns are also very important and all three need to be brought together in an overarching development/sustainability programme.”

A small number of people (6%) thought that the Fairtrade message would become lost if these other issues became part of the Fairtrade campaign, one said,

“although important - these should be campaigned on separately otherwise you run the risk of losing the Fairtrade issue.”

A number of people said that working with other campaign groups and networks was a way to incorporate these issues into their Fairtrade campaigning, e.g. the Transition Towns movement, Farmers Markets, links with local farmers, local Council sustainability and climate change teams, local WDM and Oxfam groups and local environmental groups.

Involvement in the future direction of the Fairtrade Towns movement

When asked how much say they would like to have in the future direction of the Fairtrade Towns Movement, more than half (56%) said they would like to have more say than they have now. Most (41%) want a little more say, and 15% of respondents would like to have a lot more say.

When asked how they would like to be more involved with the Fairtrade Towns movement, a large majority 92% of all respondents said that an annual planning meeting would work best for them. Of these, just over half (52%) favoured attending an annual planning meeting in their region. For some of those (48%) who favoured London, this was also their region. Some people thought that planning was best done at a regional level, one respondent said,

“A regional meeting would be preferred in order to reduce carbon footprint and also to plan in a regional context.”

Some liked the idea of meeting up once a year with other campaigners from all over the country, one said,

“Although getting together in the region is good its very helpful to meet people from further afield.”

When asked about meeting more frequently, half of all respondents said that attending quarterly meetings would work best for them. Of these, most (82%) favoured attending these more frequent meetings in their region. As one respondent who favoured regional meetings said,

“Its hard to find any more time for meetings so the more local the better”

Taking part in a quarterly phone conference was the least popular option with only 7% of all respondents favouring this method of communication.

When asked what other ways they might like to be involved, a small number of people suggested computer-based ways of being involved such as social networking, discussion forums, a yahoo group, and an email list. One person suggested a phone contact list.

In summary, over half of supporters would like to have more say in the future direction of the Fairtrade Towns movement. The majority of supporters favour being involved through face to face meetings, with very few interested in phone or internet-based methods. The majority of supporters would attend an annual planning meeting, but just over half would prefer this meeting to take place in their region. Half of all supporters would be willing to meet more frequently (quarterly), but the majority of these would want these meetings to be in their region.

When asked *'Is there anything else you would like to tell us?'* the following issues were raised:

- it is difficult to find time to reapply for Fairtrade status, we do need ideas from the Fairtrade Foundation
- like to organise training for supermarket shop floor staff, need help from the Foundation to get supermarkets to take part
- give us more ways of easily talking with each other
- the emphasis has gone from 'what is Fairtrade' to 'why Fairtrade' in the public's eye. Going from here to 'I only buy Fairtrade' and 'It makes me sick to think of buying non Fairtrade' are the future challenges
- we don't get enough communication, its not enough to put it on your website, we're too busy to look, you need to email us the things that are important to us
- events like Cadburys Dairy Milk going Fairtrade has a huge impact on Fairtrade outlets quotas, how will we continue to lobby them when they will all be selling Fairtrade?
- October is the latest we need to know what lies ahead for Fairtrade Fortnight
- to then plan our activities/see how they fit in with other local plans
- Need information about what works with Councils nationally, what works/what are the stumbling blocks and how are they overcome
- Is there any way of influencing councils from a different direction than us locals can do? Our council sees so many problems and doesn't listen to us
- perhaps Fairtrade should make more political claims
- keep up the good work the new email newsletter is a good idea
- thank you for letting us have our say
- more promotion needed
- I'm looking forward to Fairtrade fortnight
- Fairtrade/ethical issues promoted as part of staff induction
- needs to be a real incentive for local business to get involved - maybe environmental management systems e.g. ISO 14001 could have an ethical dimension?

- In schools need an identified staff member to lead on Fairtrade, often messages to schools, if not directed to an individual, get lost
- good to have slightly higher levels of support on a regional basis ie networking/helping to co-ordinate directories/websites/communication
- groups have to keep 'alive' to grow, especially when trying to recruit and encourage involvement of younger people
- greater leadership from the Foundation to encourage Fairtrade town group members to keep up to date with Fairtrade Town activities both here and around the world
- Campaigners will move on unless the Fairtrade Foundation stops taking them for granted and opens itself up to democratic control by local campaigners. We need to feel part of an evolving Movement that responds to us rather than the footsoldiers of a one dimensional success story.

Supporter Conference - Zone session

7 campaigners participated in the 'zone' session at the Supporter conference. We asked them to talk to each other and share their answers to questions in 3 areas:

1. How much say would you like to have in the future direction of the Fairtrade movement? What kind of decisions do you want to have a say in?
2. Where do you see the Fairtrade movement going in the UK?
3. Anything else that you would like the Fairtrade Foundation to hear?

Their thoughts were:

How much say would you like to have in the future direction of the Fairtrade movement? What kind of decisions do you want to have a say in?

- We should be consulted about materials and campaign ideas
- Decisions I want to have input into? Changing the label! Future campaigns?
- I think campaigners should have a say in setting the direction of the Foundation
- I feel we are quite disenfranchised and would like to be much more involved in what is happening and what our opinions are
- [have our] Say only when we have an issue. None at present
- I would like to have a say on the general policy decisions of Fairtrade UK (new products, diff certification, etc). It should be kept to 2-3 discussions/year, so only the major ones
- More local networking within our areas – informed on what is going on
- Input into development of new products and help in how to counter difficult questions

Where do you see the Fairtrade movement going in the UK?

- I'd like to see it become a broad movement for trade justice (or at least a key player in such a movement)

- increasing, but may be problems given the global crisis, which may lead to a downturn initially
- More awareness of UK farmers' issues
- I would like more information on labels, a move towards manufactured products, asking retailers to provide Fairtrade information (some of the staff don't even know what it is!). Information should accompany expansion of FT to bigger retailers. I would like more effort to be put into uniformising Fairtrade labels across different NGOs
- Needs to combine with the climate change campaign clearly and get them working together, with how the Fairtrade campaign fits in clearly identified
- Need to push more large companies to go Fairtrade – and then raise the issue of changing the way world trade works
- I started getting a church to use Fairtrade coffee. Then Fairtrade town was the driving force. Now Fairtrade sales have grown dramatically. What is the new motivation?

Anything else that you would like the Fairtrade Foundation to hear?

- Catering Fairtrade is a problem as the price is so high
- Please could we have the materials fro Fairtrade Fortnight MUCH SOONER
- Keep on increasing the profile of Fairtrade
- Fairtrade UK could engage with small Fairtrade groups in other developed countries where Fairtrade is virtually unknown (e.g. Eastern Europe) to expand its consumer basis and raise international awareness of the movement
- Can small towns etc be encouraged as much as big groups

Campaigner meeting – Sunday 11th October

The campaigners were initially asked to share ideas for the future of the Fairtrade Towns Movement. Their ideas were:

Democracy

- Fairtrade Foundation become a co-op like Cooperative Wholesale Society
- Clear campaigner dimension to all Fairtrade Foundation reports
- Campaigners having a formal input into the strategy
- Clarify roles between the Foundation and the movement and within the Foundation – but emphasise the shared aims

- Greater transparency within the Foundation
- Campaigners take total control of the movement

- Give people a role in the big commercial switches to Fairtrade
- Use the influence of the movement

Structure

Goals and renewal

- New inspiring targets for Towns
- Gold, silver, bronze awards

- Reformulate the 5 goals and make them more ambitious
- Include schools etc in the process

Steering groups

- Recognition of the fragility of Fairtrade steering groups
- Recruitment for steering groups
- Targeted support to keep steering groups going – people, money, links
- Get Friends of the Earth / Oxfam

etc involved in steering groups to keep them going

- Create a resource on the lifecycle of a Fairtrade Town to show the natural highs and lows we go through
- More slick and efficient renewal process

Movement

- Get beyond the ambiguity of the Foundation and the movement
- Better relationship between Fairtrade Foundation and the

people in the movement

- Sense of identity – what is the movement?

Producer links

- Stronger links with producers through technology
- Twinning Towns with producers
- Campaigners working closely with producers
- Earlier info on producer visits
- More producer visits - £12 million's worth!

- Work experience holidays to producers – e.g. olive picking
- Producer ownership of business
- Work with the diaspora from producer countries
- Deeper models for trading – more direct trade
- Opportunities for new FT businesses – strengthen the ATOs

Links to other campaigns

- Supportive links with farmers in the UK – Fairtrade *and* local
- Embed FT within climate change

campaign

- New alliances with other networks, e.g. climate change

Links to business

- Links with businesses groups such as chambers of commerce
- Understanding the challenges for business

- Produce a national / regional purchasing guide
- Get access / links to salespeople

Links between Fairtrade Towns

- Sharing good practice, for example events

- Fund regional staff
- Links with Fairtrade Towns abroad

Other links

- Get the next generation involved – link schools and towns
- Fairtrade hospitals
- Use our MEPs and bring about change in Europe
- International supporter conference of 1000 people
- More involvement with BME

groups

- Links with Transition Towns
- Clearer relationships with initiatives that fall outside of the FLO framework
- Students as a resource – get them to carry their campaigning on into later life but understand their limit

The message

- Emphasise links to trade justice
- Promoting Fairtrade as a form of ethical investment
- Future marketing to shatter the 'white middle class' myth

- Articulate success *and* the scale of what still needs to be done
- New ways to sell the message – inject passion in to the message
- Mainstream the movement

Miscellaneous

- Like the lottery – Fairtrade available in every convenience store

- Learn from countries where there are both Fairtrade producers and consumers

- Give us better notice about Fairtrade Fortnight plans
- National campaign to recruit volunteers – in the Daily Mail and

BME media

- Capacity building in the movement – e.g. media training

Opportunities

- Sport – make direct links to supporters
- 2012 Olympics – don't let the opportunity pass
- 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow
- World Cup?

The format of the Sunday meeting was largely small working group based, which made recording the whole session impracticable. This is a partial transcript of the main feedback session:

1st working group – Movement

Being involved in the Fairtrade movement can transform those involved not just producers but transform us here in how we think about the world... the movement must continue to involve and evolve and draw in new people.

There's a moment of awareness that clicks in your mind, why you want to be a part of this journey... it brings a sense of identity.

2nd working group - Structure

The key thing that was coming up was linking, lots of different ways of linking. So linking between campaigns and issues, linking locally. So actually bringing together parts of the community who may get this or who may not get this, but actually making us feel much more of a coordinated activity; that people are in this together. Linking internationally between different Fairtrade towns in different countries showing best practice and expertise and also actually with producer organisations. Then there was linking regionally with other Towns in your area and trying to define governmental structures in your area that you could use to influence as well.

Talking about the structure of Fairtrade Towns, the key thing that was coming out very strongly was that the renewal process we have at the moment is hindering towns. It's demoralising, it's stressing.. as opposed to being something that helps maintain direction, maintain focus and is actually quite motivating... The key thing we felt with the structure was that we need new goals and new targets to actually maintain momentum.

The campaign structure should of course enhance and foster that [the lifecycle of groups] as opposed to stifle it and giving quite narrow measurements of what the campaign is achieving

Some groups don't like to be told what to do. They are campaigning to end world poverty and they'll do it in the way they see fit. Other groups actually find it quite hard if they're given a blank slate because that can actually be demoralising and demotivating... So there

was recognition that we need to have some sort of structure and off the shelf actions for some groups... but the overall bones, the skeleton of the movement needs to be very, very flexible.

The whole process of renewal needs to be positive and exciting. People felt that putting in the initial application was exciting – hey we've done something, hey we've achieved – but renewal was the exact opposite. It's – Good Lord, all that paperwork to do. Could the renewal be much more of an interactive dynamic planning exercise?

- Get something back from renewal: an award/ visit from Fairtrade Foundation staff / pot of money
- Qualitative evaluation/ opportunity for forward planning:
- Engaging new audiences
- Is it a live group?
- Making change
- Growing the market

3rd working group – Democracy

The question we asked was 'democracy for what?'. The thing we came back to many, many times was democracy in order to give us, the whole movement, a voice, a serious voice that is listened to within the decision making process, within report writing.... I do think that we might investigate democracy for inclusiveness so that we really do feel a great sense of being part of the movement which is the Fairtrade Foundation. I would also say that it's a greater sense of ownership. It's about voice, input, representation as well. What sort of structure do you build in order that that voice can be heard? It isn't just a conference where people talk. There have to be structures set up.

The problem with the Foundation right now is that it has grown incredibly fast but the structures as far as we are concerned have actually got fossilised. So there needs to be a serious overhaul so that this voice, our input, our representation as a movement are heard. Implicit in that is clarity about roles. What roles does the Foundation play? What roles do we as campaigners play?

Unless our needs, and we are just 11 of maybe hundreds of people that have been doing it for years, are recognised and dealt with then people will be lost...and people are already going to other campaigns and getting more deeply involved in other trade justice issues or climate change or whatever it might be.

Maybe the movement ought to become a separate NGO so that the Foundation is the institution and the movement is the NGO. Implicit in this is the need for clarity and the need for greater transparency. It's not just that we don't have enough of a voice, it's that we don't have enough of an understanding of what's going on. It's the need for the Foundation to give voice to us.

Staff meeting – Monday 12th October

This is a partial transcript of the main feedback session. In some places it's incomplete which reflects the limits of the recording equipment when faced with background noise:

Structure group:

We felt we should revamp the goals and the renewal processes to make them more of an interactive relationship, make the ongoing (inaudible) of the campaign more flexible and creative.

Tailoring the goals so that they are appropriate to the Town...we really think that we should be pursuing the 'how do we get the resource in place?'. So there was lots about building regional networks: what degree of resource does that require? If we want to do this relationship building, what degree of resource does that require to make it happen? And how do we get that resource together and ensure it's trained and focused and knows what it's doing, to do things the right way and with the right credibility.

Getting rid of goals, we felt, was throwing the baby out with the bath water. Goals do provide some incentive. They also provide credibility and consistency which is what the campaigners were asking for [in Sunday's meeting].

We liked the idea that there were other types of community that could be encompassed so it doesn't have to be formal Towns, but we were scared by the thought of 'Fairtrade anything' and self-designation and all the ways that that could be abused so that the whole campaign could lose focus and lose identity and lose credibility and that businesses could start saying that we're a Fairtrade company.

Feeding in individual campaigns and letting people know when there's something we want them to do... we had a discussion about that, about how far you can do that and that provides focus and direction and ideas, and how far you don't do too much of it because you want some locally based creativity to bubble up. So it could be good but it could also constrain if we turn those campaigning groups into campaigning fodder... get the balance right.

National league tables...we quite like the idea of empowering campaigners to either batter or praise their local council and that would be the way that that was done, so that the league table is something that's voted by the community rather than something that's assessed by the Fairtrade campaign... it's another kind of dimension we could give.

We liked the idea of mobilising campaigners at a certain point without breaching confidentiality because then we could lose trust, we could lose the deal because every time we start talking to anyone campaigners start popping up left, right and centre.

We liked the idea of Fairtrade 'Campaign ev' and 'Campaign cert'⁸, and then you have one team that's responsible for structural feedback, campaigning blah blah blah. You have another team that's creating campaigns, looking for the trade justice focus, so then you haven't got one resource blaming the other resource.. that might be worth exploring.

Movement group

The key objective being changing trade for producers... there's a balance between mainstreaming Fairtrade with big companies and so on but also using our voice to

⁸ This refers to the model of FLO which has a certifying arm 'FLO cert' and a support and development arm 'FLO ev'

challenge the status quo... throwing stones at ourselves, being able to be self-critical. An idea about creating the Fairtrade company standard which would give a clearer distinction in the market, and also would create a further bar that companies would have to reach once they've got the mark, then they have to work with campaigners to become a Fairtrade company... might allow campaigners to take control on policy and criticise some of the companies.

Taking people on a journey from being into Fairtrade to being advocates for trade justice. There were lots of question marks around that, something that has been a challenge: linking Fairtrade directly with trade justice, and also do people actually want to get involved in that more than the simple action of buying Fairtrade that makes them feel good? Are they actually interested on going on that journey?

The link between campaigners and producers being the two key stakeholders, and the other various stakeholders, business, NGOs becoming the tools that we use...

The producers and the campaigners, how do we actually do that? As much as you can have producer events and short films, that doesn't actually make people feel that connected, as we discovered at the weekend from the feedback we've had. So how we actually do that needs a lot more exploring... this was the central point of our discussion. Pretty much everything we discussed was about how we build that understanding. Stronger articulation of the movement from the Foundation.. how do we use more information, more marketing, capacity that we've got to articulate those kind of links?

Democracy group

We also picked up very strongly those links between producers and campaigners. Big discussion about links between actual groups with producers. Also linking it into product and bringing product to market [e.g Zaytoun]... get campaigner represented in commercial decision making

...Taking the Traidcraft model to create alternative markets...

Campaigners feeding into decision making... especially for campaigns. We talked about having a national poll for them to feed in, having a cascade system, and maybe feedback forms. How do we actually empower stakeholders, how do we involve other stakeholders, staff and everything.... involving the right people, involving the right way?

Appendix 4 - Acronyms used in the report

ATOs – alternative trading organisations

BME – black and minority ethnic groups

FLO – Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International

NGOs – non governmental organisations

Appendix 5 – About the authors

This report was written by Matthew Herbert and Kathryn Tulip of Seeds for Change. Seeds for Change is a collective of facilitators who bring their experience of grassroots campaigning over a large number of years and a wide range of campaigns to supporting campaign networks and campaigning organisations.

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