



**16TH INTERNATIONAL
FAIR TRADE TOWNS
CONFERENCE**

22. – 24. SEPTEMBER 2023

LOCAL ACTION, GLOBAL IMPACT

GLARUS NORD | SWITZERLAND

16th International Fair Trade Towns Conference in Switzerland a great success

During three intense, inspiring and empowering days at the 16th International Fair Trade Towns Conference, more than 150 participants from over 25 countries on site in Glarus Nord and online exchanged ideas and discussed best practices and innovations. The conference brought together the international Fair Trade Town community and showed what can be achieved when we come together as a global movement.

At the off-site kick-off on Friday in Vaduz the panelists discussed the potential and challenges of localizing Fair Trade in the Global South as well as in the Global North.

With his opening speech Fabian Waldmeier, CEO of Fairtrade Max Havelaar Switzerland, already set the tone for the conference, stressing the importance of not putting the responsibility for a sustainable transformation solely on the producers in the Global South.

Powerful impact statements and revolutionary new business models were shared in the panel on "Fair Trade Impact & Innovation" by producer representatives from the Global South from Nepal, India and Ghana. Eva Agana of Talmondfoods presented innovative products made from tropical almonds for the local Ghanaian market. She stressed the importance of exploring the potential of Fair Trade products targeted not only to markets in the Global North, but also towards consumers in the Global South and changing the common narrative around trade.

During the "Fair Public Procurement Powerhouse", Marc Steiner and Desiree Klingler presented the concepts of "moral suasion" and "increasing salience with nudges", hereby providing concrete tools for fair and sustainable procurement.

On Saturday morning, Tadeusz Makulski and Jatta Makkula of the International Steering Committee gave an update on the newest developments internationally in the campaign. Fair Trade Town representatives from Germany, the United Kingdom and Flanders shared impressive numbers and achievements: Over half of all Germans live in a Fair Trade Town and in Flanders 200 out of 300 municipalities are Fair Trade Towns. In an engaging panel discussion on stakeholder activation that followed, Fair Trade Town representatives from three different continents discussed successful strategies in activating local partners and how different actors can contribute to the campaign. Delegations from Belgium and the Netherlands had a particularly great presence at the conference who shared best practices from their Fair Trade Town campaigns with the international community.

The voice of the youth was brought to the spotlight at the panel discussion "Youth Driving Fair Trade" by young activists Mayqueen Serwaa Frimpong of fairafric, Young Fair Trade Advocate Simon Guerin, and Jennifer Baldissera of the Fair Trade Town Amriswil,

moderated by Dominique Felber and Sterre van Egmond of Swiss Fair Trade. The youth panelists gave insights into the successes and challenges in their advocacy work and shared their experiences on successful youth engagement. One of the core challenges highlighted was the issue of “youth washing” followed by a call for not only providing spaces for the youth to be heard, but also including their standpoints in decision-making and implementing them in concrete ways.

Marking the grand finale of the conference, the location of the next Fair Trade Towns Conference in 2024 was revealed: The 17th International Fair Trade Towns Conference will take place in Drakenstein, South Africa! Thembisile Mnisi, representing the municipality of Drakenstein, shared her excitement on this milestone of the first ever Fair Trade Towns Conference taking place on the African continent. She noted how this conference will not only be hosted by Drakenstein in South Africa alone, but belongs to the entire African continent, bringing the Fair Trade and Fair Trade Town movement in Africa and the Middle East together.

We thank all our international participants for the inspiring exchange and an amazing conference! A big thank you also to all of our partners and sponsors who made this event possible!

Gemeinde Glarus Nord, Glarus Nord Tourismus, Fairtrade Max Havelaar Schweiz, WeltPartner, Fairpicture, claro fair trade, Delinat, Original Food, gebana, World Fair Trade Organization, Fair Trade Advocacy Office



Fair wishes,

Team Swiss Fair Trade & Fair Trade Town Glarus Nord