

## **“We’re part of something huge!”**

How Fairtrade Towns in Europe are a uniquely powerful movement for local change and global sustainable development.

An Evaluation of Impact of the European Fairtrade Towns Movement

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## **Introduction: 653 and counting.....**

The rapidly growing Fairtrade Towns phenomenon is many things in many places; its 400 people gathered on a wet Saturday night in Surrey to debate the economics of trade or 2000 people, gathered in a football stadium in Bolton to take part in a nationwide banana eating world record attempt! Its the busy mum, who found her outlet for 'doing something' to make a difference in the world within a hectic day to day life and the school children who enthusiastically welcomed a visitor from far across the seas to tell them all about his banana farming community. It is that same visitor, delighted at the enthusiastic response to his Fairtrade bananas, returning home to the Caribbean to tell his friends and neighbours all about it. It is a phenomenally powerful tool being used to generate boundless social capital, and massive appetite for action as well as significant change for Fairtrade Town citizens and developing world communities across the globe. It is 653 towns and counting, in 18 countries that have reached their goal of becoming a Fairtrade Town, with thousands more working towards it.

These words from people involved in Fairtrade Towns themselves give a rich snapshot of the power and unique nature of the movement:

*"It doesn't matter about knock backs at the local level because there is a bigger picture. We're part of something huge...If we could duplicate the impact we've had in the UK in the U.S; imagine the impact we could have. If we can duplicate this around the world...wow!"* (Bruce Crowther, Garstang, UK)

*"We did a debate on Fairtrade versus free trade and had economists on the panel. It filled up well before we did a flyer drop. We had 400 people on a damp Saturday night for a debate on the economics of trade!"* (Becca Rowland, Woking, UK)

*"It's quite satisfying to know we have a whole generation of kids growing up here who know about Fairtrade."* (Becca Rowland, Woking, UK)

*"The Fairtrade Towns campaign has been the most significant catalyst at bringing people into the development movement. It's easy to grasp and not too political. It gives them a way in to issues then they can move on to Trade Justice."* (Craig Owen, Gold Star Communities, Wales)

*"(Our biggest success has been) Fairtrade Provinces- it's very ambitious and great. It will support our (Towns) campaign very well. They've been running for one month and we've already see the difference. It's great to see a campaign grow through another campaign, not through finances or resources."* (Karlien Wouters, Flanders, Belgium)

*"There was little way, through another infrastructure, that those countries and minds could have come together...It developed thinking on the meaning of Fairtrade Towns and how people engage with international development... The conferences*

*equipped the movement (with) leadership and contact networks to 'raise the game' of community involvement."* (Craig Owen, Gold Star Communities, Wales)

*"Take your time. Look at what you've got. Localise what Fairtrade means...this is what we've done."* (Stella, Carmichael, Newcastle, U.K)

## **Research Methodology**

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This evaluation takes the form of a narrative report examining the impact of European Fairtrade Towns on key issues, including development awareness and the sales and availability of Fairtrade products. Information has been gathered through a selection of European national and regional case studies. The case studies were chosen to reflect a diversity of Fairtrade Town initiatives, (for example a very established campaign, a new campaign, one closely related to the national labeling initiative, one more independent of the labeling initiative and so on). Research took the form of in-depth, semi-structured interviews, (over the telephone or through Skype internet telephone connection), with nine representatives from national, regional and local Fairtrade towns initiatives. The respondents were as follows:

Representing national co-ordinating initiatives:

- Emma Rung, Sweden
- Melinda Choo, Netherlands
- Karlien Wouters, Flanders, Belgium

Representing local Fairtrade Town campaigns:

- Joe Human, Keswick and District Fair Trade Town Campaign and Cumbria Fair Trade Network, UK
- Stella Carmichael, Newcastle Fairtrade Partnership, Newcastle City Council, UK
- Becca Rowland, Woking Fairtrade Town Campaign, UK
- Lucy Whittle, Waterford Fairtrade Town campaign, Ireland
- Erica Blomme, Middelkerke Fairtrade Town campaign, Flanders, Belgium

Also interviewed were:

- Bruce Crowther: representing both the Garstang Fairtrade Town campaign and in his position as Fairtrade Towns Co-ordinator, Fairtrade Foundation, UK
- Craig Owen, Gold Star Communities, (an NGO focused on sustainable development through towns linking), Wales, UK

## **The Annual Conferences**

*"I went to Lyon. It was fascinating to meet people from different countries. The workshops were really valid. They got the right kind of people together to come up with some answers." (Stella Carmichael, Newcastle, UK)*

### **The Aims of the Conferences.**

The aims of the conferences as stated in the original proposal were:

- to learn from the experience and critical components of successful community Fairtrade campaigns in member states;
- to examine cultural, legal, administrative, and policy variations and identify and develop systems, procedures, and networks that will strengthen the effectiveness of horizontal as well as vertical links within and between local and regional communities, private and public organisations;
- to develop suitable strategies to enable the adoption of successful models to meet European Union and individual country requirements;
- to identify, lead and resource the necessary work packages to undertake the practical work necessary to deliver a compendium of these that will form the heart of an action oriented Best Practice Manual;
- to review and validate the practical application of these in 'live' demonstrator pilots at different levels : for example, initiating a Fairtrade Towns project for the first time; extending an existing project to include and integrate other local organisations and business sectors - schools, businesses, colleges, universities, catering - using procurement guidelines and practices to put Fairtrade at the heart of local life; and extending the Fairtrade Towns concept to regional and inter-regional levels (within member states, and between member states);
- to deliver the *Best Practice Manual* comprising action guidance, model promotional materials and designs, model procurement guidelines, with country specific requirements referenced, for use by Fairtrade National Initiatives, Local and Regional authorities, etc., and capable of being adapted and further developed and enhanced for use by organisations within a Fairtrade Town or similar campaign structure.

Clearly the conferences have succeeded in meeting their original aims extremely well and, overwhelmingly, when asked about the annual conferences, respondents felt they were incredibly valuable.

**Having the conferences early on in the European Fairtrade Towns initiative has formed an invaluable foundation for the movement going forwards, more rapidly that could have been achieved without the conferences.**

Respondents very often commented that one of the most valuable things about the conferences had been the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas and experiences face to face, in a way which was more effective than could be achieved through any other means of communicating:

*“You come back from the conference feeling that you can and you will do more and that there’s lots of people that you can contact...There’s nothing like being face to face and getting to know someone.”* (Lucy Whittle, Waterford, Ireland)

One commentator described how the conferences have allowed for discussion of effective Fairtrade Towns models, with the UK model and its five goals being broadly accepted as critical foundation. Several others echoed the sentiment that, in order to develop a strong Fairtrade Towns campaign you can add to the five core goals and adapt them, but not reduce them. They are seen as a foundation because they aspire to involvement of all sections of the community, (the importance of this is discussed further later in the report under the impact of Fairtrade Towns on development awareness and understanding). Discussions at the conferences have established key foundations such as this and escalated learning about best practice and common goals in a way that would have been achieved much more slowly without face to face collaboration. As one participant explained:

*“There was little way, through another infrastructure, that those countries and minds could have come together...It developed thinking on the meaning of Fairtrade Towns and how people engage with international development. Underlying the conference was the much broader issue of people to people action. It’s a big jump from a small local meeting on getting people to buy Fairtrade to developing a critical analysis of whether this is the most impactful thing to do compared, for example, to focusing on, big business or procurement. The conferences equipped the movement (with) leadership and contact networks to ‘raise the game’ of community involvement...The conferences could become a major force for change. They may be costly to run but they’re extremely good value.”*  
(Craig Owen of Gold Star Communities, Wales)

Further more, several people felt that informal and social gatherings that took place around the conferences were as valuable in many ways as the structured sessions:

*“You spend time together; in the hotel, having meals, chatting informally. You get to know the people from the other countries and what campaigns they’re involved in as well as exchanging ideas.”* (Lucy Whittle, Waterford, Ireland)

It seems that open, unhurried dialogue lead to fruitful discussions and new ideas and solidified working partnerships and networks that continued well after the conferences.

**Learning from the UK model was commonly sited as a highly valuable output of the conferences, especially earlier in the international movement. However, learning between all countries at the conferences has increased dramatically since the first one.**

As one participant explained:

*“The second conference was similar, (to the first), but by then a lot more was happening in Europe. By then rather than everyone looking to the UK they were working through how it works in their own country and sharing that more. I became aware of how different campaigns need to work in different countries.”*

Furthermore, several UK activists commented that even established UK campaigns began to learn valuable lessons from newer initiatives in other countries. Bruce Crowther described how the UK was, for example, inspired by the Belgian model of online applications and renewals presented at one of the conferences. Belgium had dealt with the challenge of staff capacity through initiating this online facility, and had also set targets for the number of Fairtrade Towns campaigns which were monitored and publicly available to online.

**Conference attendees took specific learning and ideas back from the conferences and applied them to their own localities. Learning from the conferences has also been amplified online, inspiring and informing many campaigns who did not send representatives.**

In the Netherlands, for example, Melinda Choo explained how she had applied several key learnings from the conferences to the emerging Dutch campaign, including encouraging steering groups to start with manageable targets, (such as getting a school on board with converting to Fairtrade products), developing national activities for activists to motivate them. She commented: *“We fun things we can get people to do at the local level”, such as the UK’s bananas eating world record activity.”*

Karlien Wouters from Belgium, (Flanders), explained how the Flanders Fairtrade Towns campaign have developed a model for Fairtrade Schools based on the UK and Ireland, and a supermarket strategy influenced by the Swedish approach. Erica Blomme, from the Middelkerke Fairtrade Town campaign, (Flanders), said she learned a lot about Gold Star Communities and is now exploring Fairtrade and sustainable development issues as part of the town’s strategy of linking and international projects with partners in the South.

Several other respondents shared examples of how they had learned from other campaigns and applied this in their own settings:

*“The Fairtrade conferences help people see the comparison of approaches and learn from each other. Flanders, Sweden, France and others; Wales have learned a lot from them.”* (Craig Owen, Gold Star Communities, Wales).

*“One really useful thing at Brussels was that a Dutch speaker talked about a court case won against Douwe Egberts, which set a precedent for other activity. I forwarded the case details to our local council and it was useful in our discussions about procurement. It showed them they could specify Fairtrade when they go out to tender.”* (Becca Rowland, Woking, UK)

*“There was a lovely little booklet from one country, (Cumbria, UK) and it gave descriptions of all the restaurants, all places of interest doing Fairtrade etc. So we thought we could apply for funding for it and get it in our tourist office. We’re going to try and do this for sure. Another country had fantastic activities for schools; a whole different model. We might try and get funding to do this.”* (Lucy Whittle, Waterford, Ireland)

As noted above, the conferences impacted well beyond campaigns that were able to send representatives. In Sweden, for example, Emma Rung noted how the conference information and outcomes were shared on the national initiative web pages and sent to the steering groups, generating keen discussion about key development areas.

The above discussion on the extent and nature of learning gained from the conferences in the views of the participants themselves clearly demonstrates that the stated aims of the conferences were well met:

- *learning from the experience and critical components of successful community Fairtrade campaigns in member states and;*
- *Delivering the Best Practice Manual, (in the form of the European Fairtrade Towns website)*

i.e. through the workshops and prolific formal and informal discussions, both at the conferences themselves and as follow-up between campaigns and across the movement afterwards.

- *to examine cultural, legal, administrative, and policy variations and identify and develop systems, procedures, and networks that will strengthen the effectiveness of horizontal as well as vertical links within and between local and regional communities, private and public organisations, and:*
- *to develop suitable strategies to enable the adoption of successful models to meet European Union and individual country requirements*

(i.e through the topic specific workshops exploring these issues, allowing countries and local campaigns to share examples of best practice in policy lobbying and networking. The conference attendees were also able to actually enhance and extend their own networks at the events to tackle specific challenges).

**The conferences made attendees feel part of a truly global movement and this was highly motivating.**

Time and time again, this was commented upon enthusiastically by participants. Here are just two examples:

*“It’s fruitful for us to meet together and get inspiration from each other. You realise; it’s not just me, it’s global and it’s growing. There are so many enthusiastic and fantastic people around the world working on this and that is really inspiring. To meet is the main purpose of the conferences.”* (Emma Rung, Sweden)

*“It was so great to meet all the other co-ordinators. It made me feel like part of a much bigger movement. I didn’t realize it was so huge and there is so much energy!”*  
(Melinda Choo, Netherlands).

### **Recommendations regarding the annual conferences:**

Given the overwhelmingly positive reaction to the conferences and their tangible benefits, it would be highly valuable to continue them. However, a number of recommendations emerged from discussions with participants:

**Recommendation I: The conferences may be most suitable in the future primarily as a means for new campaigns to learn from experienced ones, as longer running campaigns are networking well and establishing other means of communicating and learning from each other.**

Several people commented on how the conferences seem, on balance, most useful for campaigns starting out who have a lot to learn from others. For example, one person noted:

*“It’s nice to know what others are doing but scope for learning becomes diminished as times goes on and the campaign progresses.”*

The ways in which existing Fairtrade Towns campaigns are networking and learning from each other outside of the annual conferences with great effectiveness, are discussed later in the report under ‘Networking and Partnerships’.

This kind of shift of emphasis in the annual conferences going forward would, of course, necessitate that national Fairtrade Towns co-ordinators meet and collaborate by other means. This is well underway; for example, with the April ‘09 national co-ordinators meeting in Brussels.

**Recommendation II: Attempts to overcome specific practical challenges in order to maximize the opportunity of the conferences should continue as a priority.**

This matter will no doubt be considered in depth using participant evaluation forms and the feedback gathered at the conferences themselves. Respondents noted some specific challenges that they felt needed to be overcome, namely:

- Leadership, in terms of the questions of who is responsible for ensuring they go ahead. (This is discussed further below under the ‘Future of the Fairtrade Towns movement).
- Resources and funding, (particularly for volunteer activists to attend)
- Capacity within the co-ordinating organisations to deal with logistics and administration.
- Dialogue with co-ordinators on what they think the national campaigns need out of the conferences to help shape the agenda effectively.

## Awareness and Action on Fairtrade and Development

### The Overall Impact

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns are, undoubtedly having a very profound impact on awareness and understanding of Fairtrade locally, often increasing it well above the national average.**

Fairtrade Towns have an incredible and quite unique power. They bring the challenges facing developing world producers and the promise of positive action to make a difference into the immediate locale and everyday life of ordinary citizens. In the midst of a thriving Fairtrade Town campaign Fairtrade stops being 'out there' for people and becomes the cup of coffee they're offered in their local hairdresser, a new Fairtrade Mark sign in the store they visit several days a week or a chocolate sample they're offered in their local shopping centre. In other words, it becomes something they can hardly fail to notice and will almost certainly pause for thought about.

Of course, in different countries and regions, Fairtrade Towns campaigns are starting from a varying base of awareness and understanding. Karlien Wouters explained, for example:

*"People in Flanders are not so critical- it's easy to convince them of Fairtrade and the environment whereas in the French part it seems like harder work. Here, (in Flanders), people are quite accepting."*

Regardless of the base level though, there is clearly always an impact. Some campaigns have been able to produce solid evidence to illustrate the profound change in awareness and attitudes that Fairtrade Towns have precipitated. In Sweden for example, Emma Rung explained:

*"I'm really sure it's had a big impact. We did a survey in 2007 and we'll do another one in 2009. In 2007 we asked procurement officers across whole country and we wanted to see if there was a Fairtrade / Non-Fairtrade Town difference. We saw a huge difference! In normal cities Fairtrade awareness was at 73%. In FT towns it was at 95%. We asked the same people – the procurement officers- if they buy Fairtrade products. 22% in non-Fairtrade towns said yes. 73% of the procurement officers in Fairtrade Towns said yes. It's raising awareness both in public sector and among citizens. We want to survey citizens this year. This hasn't been done yet."*

(Emma Rung, Sweden.)

Similarly, Bruce Crowther described how, at the first annual Fairtrade Towns conference in the UK, he gave evidence of 71% recognition of the Fairtrade Mark in the Fairtrade Town of Garstang in 2001, (well above the UK national figure of 20% at most at that time). This figure motivated the Fairtrade Foundation to really capitalise on the opportunity of Fairtrade Towns. Fairtrade awareness among the local

population of Garstang is now at 91%, a remarkable achievement and one that may have been replicated in towns across Europe.

Other Fairtrade Towns are also tracking the impact over time; in Newcastle in the UK a residents' survey was conducted in 2007 and, currently, a PhD student, co-funded by Newcastle City Council, (under the Newcastle Fairtrade Partnership), and Northumbria University, is looking in-depth at the impact of the Newcastle Fairtrade City campaign on local citizens and the community.

While there is no doubt that the positive impact is enormous, it can only serve the Fairtrade Towns movement well to better understand it, in order to develop effective ways of reaching more people and broader audiences.

Fairtrade Towns campaigns have a unique and exceptionally strong power to spark action on development issues for several reasons:

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns make local activists feel like part of a connected global movement, and this is very empowering.**

*“Knowing they’re part of a bigger picture is really valuable, especially where activists face challenges, like a lack of council support. The international, (European), conference put Garstang on the international stage. Positive feedback from other campaigns is really helpful and gives a real energy boost. The networking is so valuable for this. It doesn’t matter about knock backs at the local level because there is a bigger picture. We’re part of something huge.”*  
(Bruce Crowther, Garstang, UK)

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns allow people to act on Fairtrade and global development concerns within their own sphere and time constraints and where they might otherwise feel too removed to make a difference.**

From talking with activist and national co-ordinators it is clear that many of them have got involved in Fairtrade Towns as a natural extension to previous activities around international development concerns. Several were previously Oxfam employees or campaigners for example. Others had, and still continued to, campaign for other development NGOs such as Make Poverty History, Jubilee Debt campaign, Traidcraft or Amnesty International. However, it was clear that Fairtrade Town campaigning stood out as something which people who didn't have prior involvement with such campaigns would be attracted to. Because of its highly localised nature, campaigning activity doesn't have to fit into any pre-determined structure. Those with ore time and inclination can do more, and others can get involved in what they are most motivated to do and apply their specific skills and assets. For example, when talking about her motivation for getting involved one activist said:

*"I met one other woman, also a mum working part time... We wanted to know how to do something about Trade Justice at local level. As a business person I have traveled the world and felt quite constrained at home. This, (Fairtrade Towns) was a way of doing something global at home...The steering group exchanges and co-ordinates ideas. We divide the labour between schools and press and so on so people are doing what they're interested in and they can run with it. Also there lots of people on fringes who come in to do specific things that they want to."*  
(Becca Rowland, Woking, UK)

Fairtrade is something that grabs people's interest and makes them feel empowered to do something about the world's problems immediately, in their locality and without doing anything extraordinary. Time and time again people described how Fairtrade resonated well with locals as something that anyone could relate to:

*"It's a simple issue to understand; a fair day's pay for fair days work. This resonates well locally; this is important to local campaigns and worked in North West England...People knew what they could do. They didn't have to march or protest. They could just shop."*  
(Bruce Crowther, Garstang, UK)

*"I'm interested in the details but the thing I love about Fairtrade is that people don't need to understand all the development issues. You see all the stuff going on in the TV and feel very helpless. But here is something that you can do that bypasses government and ineffective aid. In a sense we've deliberately dumbed it down."*  
(Becca Rowland, Woking, U.K)

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns have given rise to a host of other Fairtrade based campaigns, including Fairtrade churches, schools and universities, sparking local campaigning in a range of contexts.**

The extension of the Fairtrade Towns phenomenon into other organisation types has been widespread and had a great impact. Several respondents, including people from the UK, Ireland, Netherlands and Flanders cited schools as an area which have got increasingly involved in Fairtrade as a result of Fairtrade Towns activity; in Middelkerke, Flanders, for example, each school gets a Fairtrade breakfast and the end of the year and the Town Hall organises a 'kids day' with a Fairtrade products available.

This extension of the Fairtrade Towns phenomenon into other organisation types evidently presents capacity and resource issues for national co-ordinating bodies, but through effective collaboration and networking, solutions to this are being found. Emma Rung described the situation in Sweden, for example:

*“Many churches, universities and others are asking us to create a similar campaign to the UK. It’s great that they get inspired and want a tool but it’s challenging for us for resourcing it and having capacity. So we have started a cooperation with a umbrella body for churches so they run the Fairtrade Church campaign, with us on the steering group)...For universities, the University Challenge will happen in Fairtrade Focus week. They challenge each other in awareness, activities, consumption. They get a window of opportunity which is easier for us to manage.  
...Schools...we’re not so good yet at working with schools. We don’t have the material yet but we need to progress this. The interest is there. Schools want us to come and talk about it.”  
(Emma Rung, Sweden)*

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns are uniquely places to have an exceptionally strong positive impact on development awareness at the local level for several key reasons:**

Firstly, in a self-evident but important way; Fairtrade Towns ensure a local physical presence for the Fairtrade Mark in public places, sometimes unexpected and therefore noticeable, to a higher degree that would be seen elsewhere. This places Fairtrade higher up in the consciousness of local people, who will come across it even if they don’t purposefully attend a Fairtrade event or look for it in the shops. Just two examples of this were as follows:

- In Waterford, Ireland, the local authority has erected signs declaring Waterford is a Fairtrade City
- In Newcastle, UK, the Newcastle Fairtrade Partnership, supported by the City Council, has invested in Fairtrade City branding with, for example, a Newcastle Fairtrade Partnership logo and promotional leaflets in public spaces.

**Fairtrade Towns give local citizens the opportunity to tell and hear human stories face to face. This gives Fairtrade an immediacy which has a profound impact on people’s engagement.**

Several people commented on the importance of this. Even where local people don’t have the opportunity to meet Fairtrade producers, hearing about Fairtrade face to face from other local people, can have a more profound effect than hearing these stories from the press or TV for example. As two respondents put it:

*“We want to give more stories about the products and the producers. We want this information to be more easily available. Consumers like having these stories when they buy things and the steering groups need to be stronger in telling these stories.”  
(Karlien Wouters, Flanders, Belgium).*

*“Our ability to tell human stories as campaigners is vital. As soon as we lose that we have lost what we can do as campaigners.” (Joe Human, Keswick, UK)*

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns have been able to capitalize effectively on Fairtrade as a highly accessible development issue, and engage people who might otherwise be disinterested or skeptical. The fact that they are approached by local people plays a huge role in this and opens up a trust and willingness to listen.**

Several people made comments demonstrating this point clearly:

*“We’re not afraid to go out and say what’s next? Who should we go out and talk to? For example we decided ‘let’s go to the mosque’. You have to get out there and be brave....I’m also a Zatoun olive oil distributor. This synergy with Palestine has helped us build a connection with local mosque.”* (Becca Rowland, Woking, UK)

*“People in our group have fingers in a lot of pies; churches, Scouts, youth groups, the tourist industry etc. This helps because it’s often through personal contact rather than the campaigning message that wins people over in the end.”*  
(Joe Human, Keswick Fairtrade Town and Cumbria Fair Trade Network, UK)

*“Five years ago people would cross over the street to avoid a Fairtrade stall. But now they come over take a leaflet and say how they have heard about it at church. They trust Fairtrade and it has a good rap. A local presence associated with promoting it has maybe helped this; it’s their neighbours and their schools.”*  
(Becca Rowland, Woking, UK)

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns are engaging a broad spectrum of citizens with Fairtrade and development issues, with a reach that nationally targeted campaigns cannot attain. They can also learn a great deal from each other about how to target hard to reach audiences.**

*“(The demographic that Fairtrade is reaching) is definitely broadening. It’s still predominantly middle class but some of the most inspiring stories at the conferences are from deprived and marginalized communities or ‘hard to reach’ groups...like in Northern Ireland with Fairtrade being used as a catalyst to bring Protestants and Catholics together...The conferences have led to some animated discussions about socio-economics and learning how to bring people in.”*  
(Craig Owen, Wales)

The power of locally targeted campaigns is that they can develop activities to reach their own particularly ‘hard to reach’ audiences because they understand the local context and its particular facets. They have the potential to bring Fairtrade and other development issues to the broadest possible range of citizens. While well designed and managed nationally targeted awareness-raising campaigns can undoubtedly reach a high number and wide range of people, especially if undertaken through collaboration with a range of partners, local campaigning will always be even more effective at targeting local people. Several people explained the powerful impact this had had in their own communities:

*“Two years ago for Fairtrade Fortnight I felt we’d done a lot with churches, women, press, schools but we weren’t reaching Surrey businessmen types so we did a debate on Fairtrade versus Free trade and had economists on the panel. It filled up well before we did a flyer drop. We had 400 people on a damp Saturday night for a debate on the economics of trade!”*

(Becca Rowland, Woking, UK)

*“It helps awareness raising with the ‘unusual suspects’, like schools and businesses. NGOs and so on have (Fairtrade) top of mind, but not these types of places.”*

(Melinda Choo, Netherlands)

*“We have a new focus each year in terms of audience. We have to find their networks and learn about their world. Reaching young people, for example, has been hard. You have to think about child protection...at events and so on...you can’t approach them, (young people) directly...you need to use existing networks.”*

(Stella Carmichael, Newcastle, UK)

Further more, the Fairtrade Schools and Fairtrade Universities initiatives that, in the UK, have grown out of the Fairtrade Towns movement have engaged high numbers of children and young people in Fairtrade.

Among Fairtrade Towns, nationally an internationally, there is clearly great potential for sharing learning on how to approach the most diverse range of audiences possible. While the nuances of these audiences will vary across regions and borders, because Fairtrade Towns campaigns have such direct and individual contact with the public, they can tap deeply into ‘what makes people tick’. The Woking campaign plan, for example, plans to focus next on older youth and anticipates this will be challenging. ON the other hand, Sweden has already developed a ‘Fairtrade Ambassador’ programme, involving over 2000 people, often in the 15 – 25 age bracket. This is just one example of the clear opportunities for exchanging experiences and knowledge on how to engage particular audiences.

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns are exceptionally effective at achieving tangible change and turning increased awareness and understanding into action, new policies and new procurement and stocking practices. There are several key reasons for this:**

**A Fairtrade Town campaign brings together all sections of the community to tackle a development issue.**

People repeatedly commented how critical it is to an effective Fairtrade Towns campaigns that the goals of a campaign embed the criteria of broad community involvement. It is both a means and an end; the more businesses, schools, shops, churches, youth groups, faith groups and other groups come on board, the more others are encouraged to do so. As Emma Rung from Sweden explained:

*“Looking at the steering groups locally its interesting. They are often church, school, and Red Cross people as you would imagine, but there are also big retail bosses or others from business sector. When these actors cooperate together with church, local authority etc we get a great dynamic and a powerful change. The purpose when they meet is simply how can we raise awareness and get more sales of Fairtrade products? This is clear, simple, powerful. The toolbox of how people can make a change is a package of how they can work together and do it.”*

(Emma Rung, Sweden)

Bruce Crowther described how gathering representatives from various community interest groups in Garstang in one room for an informal meal was a major turning point in their local Fairtrade campaigning. After a hard slog to try and get local churches on board, only a few of whom switched to Fairtrade after being presented with a free catering pack of Fairtrade coffee, they finally decided, “out of frustration” to get people together and “persuade them to actually do something!” They invited representatives from schools, churches, the local council and businesses and asked them to sign a pledge to support Fairtrade as well as local produce by selling the products or using Fairtrade tea and coffee in their organisations. This pledge was a huge success with all the churches and schools and 95% of local businesses signing up:

*““We brought the whole community together and put them in a position where they had time to think about it. There was nothing for any decent person to do except sign the pledge - this wasn’t hard, it was simple! We just need to get them to understand the issues and get some time to spend with them to do this then ask them to take some simple positive action. This is essential to any campaigning. And the message needs to be strong.”*

(Bruce Crowther, Garstang, UK)

**Through building local networks and partnerships and holding local fundraising events Fairtrade Towns campaigns have been able to secure resources locally to expand their work and keep their Fairtrade awareness raising activities sustainable.**

In the U.K for example, the Keswick and District Fair Trade Campaign has recruited about 250 paying members who contribute to their funds. As Joe Human explained:

*“Many of these (members) are businesses. We expect any businesses who goes on our website or directory to be a member and we’re working systematically to get them on board...This has enabled us to raise money, and credibility...We have always made fundraising an important part of our work. We have one big fundraising event a year that brings in over £1000 and through the year we make money from donations, sales of tea and coffee and project specific grant funding, (for example for*

*some equipment and display boards). Many campaigners don't like to get their hands dirty with money bit unless you're sure of your resources you're stymied!"*

**Fairtrade Towns increase awareness and understanding of development issues beyond their own locale for example, through influencing neighbouring towns or through tourism.**

One Fairtrade Town campaign can quickly act as a catalyst for several more in the region. After the declaration of Garstang as the first Fairtrade Town in the UK, for example, eight more quickly followed. The rise and impact of regional Fairtrade Towns activity is discussed further in the section on 'Networking and Partnerships'.

Fairtrade Towns who have a high number of tourists have great potential to increase awareness of Fairtrade among visitors. As Joe Human commented, about Fairtrade Towns in Cumbria, a popular UK tourist destination:

*"In a world where people are increasingly aware of ethical shopping we hope we can make people increasingly aware of the ethical impact of their holiday. We know from guest houses that serve Fairtrade tea and coffee that people often comment on it in the visitors' book."*

**Visits from Fairtrade producers to Fairtrade active Towns have a profound impact on increasing the awareness and understanding of local people on Fairtrade and the challenges affecting developing world communities. This can move them to thinking and acting on what they have heard in an unprecedented way.**

Visits from Fairtrade producers have been especially powerful at highlighting the interdependence between the EU and developing world in way that captures people's attention in a uniquely powerful way. Joe Human from Keswick commented on how such visits are vital, "especially for people who haven't been convinced of merits for Fairtrade." He described the impact of a Sri Lankan tea producer, attending a Carlisle conference and talking to business people. Put simply he said: "When it works it is five star!"

Lucy Whittle from Waterford, Ireland, described how such visits have a great impact on both the hosts and the visitor

*"We work with Fairtrade Mark Ireland; they organise producer visits. Me or anyone else talking about Fairtrade is fine and grand but having someone come in from a co-op telling you about the value of Fairtrade and how they've lived through it it's so valuable. Schools are always interested in whether we're going to have producers. I know it's costly to bring people over but it's of immense value...(In one school)...when a producer visited and saw the whole school covered in Fairtrade banana posters he was so excited. The school children were so good with really interesting questions. They really think about Fairtrade. He was delighted."*

## **Fairtrade as a Gateway into Other Development Issues**

Fairtrade Towns campaigns act as a very important gateway into other development issues, for example, broader ethical trade issues and food sustainability and local sourcing.

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns often extend into other ethical trade issues and increase awareness, understanding and action on these.**

A natural extension of Fairtrade Towns campaigning into other areas of development awareness is to examine other trade justice issues and opportunities for ethical trade and positive consumer choices outside of Fairtrade Mark certified products. Respondents gave mixed views on this issue but what was clear was concept of Fairtrade Towns has been and will continue to be adapted to suit the national and local context. Far from making the European Fairtrade Towns movement fragmented, it is a strength if it can be well accommodated; ensuring that the issues of the injustices facing the developing world's producers and the action that citizens can take, through shopping, encouraging local businesses to change their practices and other forms of campaigning, will be most appropriate to the local context and therefore most effective at securing lasting social change and increased availability and sales of Fairtrade and ethical goods.

**Some national Fairtrade Towns programmes have agreed to remain firmly and almost exclusively connected to connected to the Fairtrade Mark, for example, in the UK**

For some campaigners this sentiment comes from a belief that there's a need to maintain this focus while there is still a large amount of potential to fulfill in relation to bringing Fairtrade Mark products increasingly into mainstream public consciousness. For example, when discussing the UK movement one person commented:

*"Fairtrade Town campaigning is quite specific to getting people to buy products. We would like to see it go further and onto trade justice issues but we have a way to go yet. We're still at point of 'let's increase sales'."*

**Other national Fairtrade Towns programmes, for example, the Netherlands and Flanders, have added explicit goals around broader issues of ethical trade and sustainable development. Other emerging initiatives may choose to follow either model as appropriate.**

Far from diluting the Fairtrade message or focus, this approach can actually strengthen the proposition and encourage engagement of different actors in the community. For example, Melinda Choo explained how, although the Dutch criteria were firmly based on the original UK model, they have added a new criteria, related to corporate social responsibility, with a view to bringing in ethically progressive companies. As she explained:

*“There is a sixth criteria about sustainable issues in companies...like green issues...and a long term strategy for CSR. Within a town the steering group can organise a CSR fair or a CSR platform locally...Companies are often doing a great job on things other than Fairtrade, such as local or green products. We want to embrace this and congratulate them and say; ‘now how about Fairtrade becoming part of your CSR strategy?’”.*

Similarly in Flanders, Karlien Wouters explained how incorporating wider food sustainability issues, such as consumption or local and organic produce and environmental concerns, has strengthened the Fairtrade message by linking it to concerns which already resonate with local people. This has been done with a view to pushing them past the point of awareness and into purchasing:

*“The campaign is like the UK but we have a 6th additional goal which is about local consumption and production of sustainable foods. We ask people in (Fairtrade) towns to promote this as well. It’s about organic food but also wider issues such as food kilometers and supporting local farmers. You could run a Fairtrade Town campaign in Flanders without these issues but the Belgian population are quite used to the Fairtrade concept and quite convinced. We’re over that so we now have to show than that Fairtrade is something that you can use in daily life. It’s not just about being convinced it’s about buying. So if they’re thinking about buying Fairtrade we can also get them to think about other things such as (local) milk. Also, the environment discussion is very hot in Belgium. So we can reach more people and open discussion up.”*  
 Karlien Wouters, Flanders, Belgium.

Karlien went on to explain how, in one province, activists had combined a regional produce campaign with their Fairtrade one. She believes local authorities will be supportive of this kind of idea and that the phenomenon could grow, with positive effects for both local produce and Fairtrade awareness and consumption.

**Even where the Fairtrade Mark is the primary focus of a national Fairtrade Towns initiative, some Fairtrade Towns campaigns have chosen to integrate broader ethical trade and trade justice issues into their activities and campaigning, making these issues accessible to the public.**

The Cumbria Fairtrade Network website, for example, includes a permanent section on Trade Justice which includes content such as an article on the WTO, an Oxfam report on Economic Partnership Agreements and information about what action citizens can take on these issues. By providing such content, the Cumbria campaign acts as a natural springboard and allows the public to extend their interest from Fairtrade into these associated development issues if they choose to. Linking them back to a local initiative and a positive action they can take locally, (by campaigning with other people in their community or buying Fairtrade products) makes such

global macro-economic issues significantly more accessible and relevant than if there were presented in an isolated context. As Joe Human explained:

*“We are a Fair Trade’ campaign, (two words). We wanted to signal that we’re about Fairtrade in the bigger context. We want people to buy and people to stock Fairtrade but we also campaign on bigger trade justice issues and have a small sub-group that works on this, (writing letters, lobbying and meeting our MPs etc.)...Wherever possible we try to link Fairtrade (one word) with trade justice and use our knowledge of grass roots communities involved in Fairtrade (in the South) with Trade Justice e.g. on cotton and bananas.”*

*“I have absolutely no doubt that, as far as Keswick is concerned, through our Fairtrade and Trade Justice work and linking of the two there has been a much greater degree of development awareness raising than there would have been if we’d just talked about Fairtrade. Whenever we, (the group), talk it’s never about Fairtrade alone. We always link the coffee issue to the coffee crisis and unpack the whole thing. I’ll do that even with school children and talk about what it must be like to be a farmer depending on these wildly fluctuating prices. These are not just cozy stories.”*

In Wales, Craig Owen described how the Fairtrade Towns movement has had a huge significance in raising public awareness of development issues and even building a base for the broader anti-poverty and trade justice movement in the country:

*“The Fairtrade Towns campaign has been one of the most significant catalysts for bringing people into the development movement. It’s easy to grasp and not too political. It gives them a way in to issues then they can move on to Trade Justice...These activists became the base of the Make Poverty History campaign in Wales. They formed constructive constituency-level pressure on the (Welsh) Assembly Government to get them to do something tangible. Out of this grew ‘Wales Fairtrade Nation’ campaign and the Welsh Government’s own ‘Wales for Africa’ international community development programme.”*

**Even where the focus of the national Fairtrade Towns programme does not include local sourcing, some campaigns have incorporated local produce into their messaging. In some cases, this has been essential to ensure that the community can be engaged with Fairtrade.**

Joe Human explained how it has been very important to incorporate concerns about local sourcing into the Fairtrade Towns campaign in Keswick, UK:

*“The county resolution, (on Fairtrade), is explicit in its support for local as well as Fairtrade. Where appropriate we will always say ‘buy local and shop local’. I’m acutely aware of hardship facing farmers in Cumbria. We’re a marginal farming area; with declining meat, milk and wool prices over the last ten years. It’s very important that we recognise that there are parallels...In some places Fairtrade would not have got anywhere without linking to the local, especially in areas when there is real hardship...What won people who were resistant initially is that the people involved in the campaign were respected for their integrity and are people from within the community. In some cases, the people driving the campaign are also often local farmers.”*

(Joe Human, Keswick, UK)

Bruce Crowther similarly commented on how, in a strong farming community, a commitment to local produce was included in the original Fairtrade Town pledge and was absolutely essential to ensure that some sections of the community came on board with the initiative.

**Fairtrade Towns have precipitated other significant initiatives to promote global sustainable development at the local level.**

One respondent described how, in the UK, Fairtrade towns has inspired and influenced other models centred on sustainable global development and community through local action; for example Gold Star communities and Walkers are Welcome Towns, (of which there are now nine in the UK), and Sanctuary Towns, (which started in Sheffield and take a pro-actively positive approach to welcoming refugees and immigrants).

In Keswick, the Fairtrade Town steering group kicked off a local Make Poverty History campaign, with the explicit intention of leaving the running of the campaign to others in the community who were interested. Joe Human said:

*“As a campaign, we deliberately, set up Make Poverty History. We said we wanted to kick it off but not run it. We called a meeting, kicked it off and said we were not going to do anything else except serve coffee. By the end of the evening there was a (Make Poverty History) committee with none of the Fairtrade Town people on it, except me as an adviser...The campaign ran- they did events etc. They decided to fold at end of the Make Poverty History year and those that wanted to continue joined the Trade Justice group and the Trade Justice group became much more active.”*

Becca Rowland in Woking, UK, described how she would like to see more linking between Fairtrade campaigning and environmental campaigning:

*“I’d like to see if there’s scope to do more with environmental organisations. Our debate this year was: was climate change more urgent than global poverty or civil liberties?’. Up to now environmental and poverty campaigns have been quite distinct*

*but the people involved, the local activists, overlap quite a lot. We don't always join the dots up in the way the future will demand that we do. Our debate was a signal that we get that there is more to do on this. The plight of the poor can't be eclipsed by climate change."*

As Fairtrade Towns campaigns extend into other activities, continued strong collaboration between activist networks and supporting NGOs will be crucial to ensuring effective and sustainably resourced initiatives as well as well-developed strategies at the local level to reach and engage the public with development issues rather than overwhelm them with a mixture of messages. Craig Owen discussed this in the context of Wales, noting that:

*"(In the future I'd like to see) close working between Wales Fairtrade Forum and Gold Star Communities...with joint information and resources and joined up discussion...Also we don't want to cannibalise each other's movements but to complement and grow the depth of impact that they can achieve in working together."*

### **Fairtrade Towns and Linking**

Fairtrade Towns campaigning is perhaps most powerful as a gateway into other development issues when it is combined with other relevant initiatives, such as effective, well-managed North-South towns linking. Connecting these types of activities can be mutually beneficial for both.

Some European Fairtrade Towns have formed links with town in the South. Keswick Fairtrade Town in the UK for example, has a strong link with a Fairtrade coffee farming community in Ethiopia. Joe Human described this powerful connection, and the incredible impact it has had on both communities:

*"Because of our interest in coffee we've developed a friendship link with a coffee farming community in Ethiopia....I have been, (to Ethiopia) three times in four years and will go again later this year. Two farmers from the village in Ethiopia have been to Keswick. We can use the experience of this community to illustrate the challenges that people have when selling into the free market and difference it, (Fairtrade), can make. We have stories to tell about people whom we know.*

*We decided from the start that we wanted a link specifically with a Fairtrade producer community...Tadesse Meskela from the Oromia Coffee Farmer Co-operative Union, (a large coffee farmers union in Ethiopia), came to Keswick to present our (Fairtrade Town) award and I asked if he was interested in finding a community that might want to link with us. By this time the campaign was well into coffee. Tadesse leapt at the idea; he thought it was great.*

*This link is about developing genuine friendship with a community with which we are linked through Fairtrade. We want to get a roaster in this country directly buying through Choche (village). Taylors of Harrogate are interested and pretty strongly*

*committed. It might take two to three years to be realised. When farmers came to Keswick we took them to Taylors of Harrogate. In the meantime Choche sells into general the European Fairtrade market.*

*(In talking about the campaign to get Starbucks to drop their aims to trademark certain varieties of Ethiopian premium coffee): At this time I was in Ethiopia, (October 2006), and explained to the farmers in Choche what Starbucks were doing. This was challenging; the farmers hadn't heard of Starbucks and didn't understand trade marking. The farmers listened very intently. At the end one of them simply said:*

*"This must not happen. They must be stopped"*

*I wrote this up and it went onto the Oxfam website. Through our connection we were able to bring back this message from the farmers of Choche. We made a lot of it in Keswick press. "*

This link between Keswick and Choche has evidently had an enormous impact on both communities involved. The visitors from Keswick were able to bring to Ethiopia news about an issue of crucial relevance to the farmers' livelihoods, as well as take their views on it back to the UK and broadcast them to the world. The towns are even collaborating to develop a new market for Fairtrade coffee! Joe's comments that in Keswick, thanks to this link with Choche, they have "stories to tell about people that we know" is emblematic of the power of the very real and personal connections that linking with a community in the South can bring about, connections which are bound to impact on not only those that actually have direct contact with the linked community but those who hear about the visits of their friends and neighbours when they return.

A similarly powerful impact has been seen in Garstang in the UK, who have a very well-developed link with New Koforidua, a Fairtrade cocoa farming community in Ghana, Bruce Crowther explained:

*"North-South links are what really open people's eyes and having both together, (A Fairtrade Town campaign and a linked town in the South) is what is most powerful."*

The mutual benefits for connecting up these two kinds of development awareness are clear. Bruce went on to explain that, in discussions during workshops at a UKOWLA, (a UK linking NGO), conference the resounding consensus was that Fairtrade Towns is a way of bringing schools and the wider community into linking and vice versa. Further more, he believes that connecting linking and Fairtrade provides increased opportunities to reach developing world diaspora and BME communities. He explained:

*"Fairtrade Towns campaigning is not hitting these communities, (diaspora and BME), strongly enough. But with linking they say; 'we never thought Fairtrade was about us, but we more than anybody should be supporting this'. Linking is the way into BME communities. The power of linking is making friendships and that opens eyes to what*

*poverty is about. You start buying Fairtrade products because you understand the issues, no matter where the link is."*

Bruce suggests that, the impact of a North-South link on a community in the North is not just that it forms a particular bond and empathy for the challenges facing the linked community, but a motivation to support developing world communities generally, because those challenges of securing a decent livelihood and living conditions, common across the developing world, are brought into sharp relief by one example of a community of 'real people'. As Bruce neatly puts it:

*"Fairtrade is what you can do. Linking is what makes you feel connected to people."*

The UN's Gold Star Communities programme, currently being piloted in Wales, is another example of how Fairtrade Towns could be inspired to extend their activity into other areas of sustainable development. To become a Gold Star Community towns are asked to gain a gold star in five areas; health, youth, the environment, harmony or livelihoods. Work around livelihoods is a natural home for Fairtrade related activity. Craig Owen of Gold Star Communities describes how the workshop on community linking at the first annual European conference was very popular and generated a lot of discussion. He thinks this was the case: "Partly because it answered the 'what next?' question" for activists whose Fairtrade Towns campaigns were well developed. At the most recent annual conference in Lyon there was an agreement to organise a meeting of interest on north-south community linking across Europe. This is planned for October 2009.

Several people, while supportive of North-South linking as a part or outcome Fairtrade Towns activity, expressed a concern that, if it goes ahead it has to be well-considered and supported. As one person put it:

*"It's really not easy. You can't just offer it to the steering group as an easy thing. What will it be about? Fairtrade? Local? I don't dare to touch it too much yet. If we started anything it would need to be explored very, very well before. We don't want it to combine a charity of just smiling to each other and exchanging Fairtrade products. To do it well we would need partners with the right experience."*

Craig Own echoed some of these sentiments in discussing the potential spread of linking under the Gold Star Communities programme across European Fairtrade Towns. He believes that, if this does develop then there needs to be a nexus at the European level for groups interested in both Fairtrade and inking, which can offer them advice and support.

## **Awareness and Action in Local and National Governments**

Fairtrade Towns campaigns have had a hugely positive impact on the Fairtrade awareness, understanding and action of local and national government. (The impact on local government procurement is discussed further below, under 'Product Sales and Availability'.)

**The Fairtrade Towns movement has, in some cases, led to significant step change in the ethical procurement policy of local authorities, creating lasting impact and opening up the way for further policy and procurement changes.**

Several people gave examples which illustrate this:

*"All local authorities now think it (Fairtrade) is normal and this as a result of the Fairtrade Towns campaign."* (Karlien Wouters, Flanders)

*"Discussion about ethical consideration in public procurement has really increased in recent years at the local and national level. The culture in Sweden is really legal, we stick to the law, so the discussion has been whether ethical considerations can be included given the system of law. So we have had to work with legal experts and now we are at the stage where we can say yes; this is accordance with the law. So now it's really taken off."* (Emma Rung, Sweden)

In the Netherlands, significant developments are underway as a result of the Fairtrade Town initiative, which could have a huge impact on the local authority procurement. Melinda Choo explained how, at the national level, some parties declared they wanted to adopt Fairtrade in public procurement. However, the CEO lobby has come out against this, bringing Fairtrade procurement at the local and national level under pressure. The national government has not reached a resolution yet but it is hoped one will emerge in the coming months. The fear among Fairtrade supporters is that if Fairtrade is not incorporated into public procurement policy then the national government and local authorities won't buy or promote Fairtrade products. Melinda Choo explained:

*"So now we have three Fairtrade Towns, (and more coming up), we're trying to tell the national government that at least a few local governments and the companies and consumers in those towns prefer to purchase Fairtrade products. We hope that this will convince them to choose Fairtrade."*

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns have often succeeded in gaining support for Fairtrade from previously disinterested or actively unsupportive local authorities and even leveraged financial support for development awareness raising.**

In Newcastle, UK, for example, Stella Carmichael works on the Fairtrade City initiative four days per week. She describes how the council has been "very supportive of this focus and has enabled us to have a much greater impact both locally and nationally which, in turn, has raised Newcastle City Council's profile."

Becca Rowland from Woking, UK, also exemplified:

*“The local council was not supportive initially because they thought it would cost money. I had lunch with council representatives and gave a presentation and this made a difference. I explained it was not about the money, it’s about campaigning. Actually once they came on board they put aside £5000 for our work.”*

**In some cases, Fairtrade Towns campaigns have actually helped local councils better engage with existing support for Fairtrade, putting them in touch with what’s going on in the ground and encouraging them to question assumptions.**

One UK respondent explained how, receptive local authorities often say that the local Fairtrade Town campaign has helped them to engage better with the community, shaking the dust off slow-moving local authority initiatives on ethical procurement and waking them up to the ground swell of support for Fairtrade already alive and kicking outside of the town hall. As one person put it:

*“Sometimes campaigners have to explain to councils that Fairtrade Towns is not just about the council but about all aspects of the community and that they have to engage with all aspects of it. The council sometimes thinks they are the community and they are there to run it or totally represent it, rather than to serve it!”*

Local authorities joining up with local campaigners is an extremely positive development not just for Fairtrade but for local social change broadly. The impact of working together and learning from each other can extend into many areas of local planning and civic life.

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns have succeeded in securing, not only resolutions and policies of support for Fairtrade by local councils but have actually penetrated the machinery of local authorities to work with and influence decision makers, for example, holding regular meetings with officers and involving them in Fairtrade Town steering committees.**

Several people related how it had been sometimes challenging but of vital importance to persist with the council and work out who to talk to in order to turn words into action and make things happen:

*“Getting the local council on board was a bit difficult. Council members passed a resolution supporting Fairtrade and agreed to serve Fairtrade tea and coffee at all council meetings and council offices. They say they’re taking it on but to actually endorse it and serve it all the time was a bit of a battle. We worked mostly with local councillors. Finding out who we should be dealing with was very difficult- you can be thrown about a bit. We dealt with some staff as well but some would say “we’ve not got the OK from the boss”. I felt that Fairtrade was no different from anything else that comes before the council.”*

(Lucy Whittle, Waterford, Ireland)

Despite these challenges the Waterford campaign was able to make significant progress with the council, for example, persuading them to put signs up in the city about Waterford's Fairtrade City status. In Middelkerke, Flanders, Erica Blomme related similar challenges:

*"(The Council) said they would use more Fairtrade products. The problem is Belgian law says the public sector has to commit to a procurement period so we had to wait for the contract to end. Even though they were pro (Fairtrade) by the time the contract was up for renewal they had forgotten about the resolution. You can add Fairtrade products as an addendum to an invoice."*

Joe Human described the County Council activity of the Cumbria Fair Trade Network campaign:

*"As soon as the (County Council) resolution was passed I arranged to speak with officials in the council. (The Deputy Leader of the Council), had done a lot of leg work to get cross-party support and the support of senior officers...She convened a meeting of senior officers, (e.g. Chief of Procurement, Chief of Communications). These meetings were difficult to maintain through council re-organisation, budget crisis etc but I still have meetings every few months with the Chiefs of Communications and Procurement. The head of procurement has been a key player-he has ensured that any premises used by the County Council for meetings. Wherever it is, (council buildings or off-site), they have to provide Fairtrade tea and coffee; this has been built into the procurement policy. We now have a middle ranking officer on our network steering committee, (Head of Communities).*

All of these experiences show how resolutions and policies have to be internalised and procurement norms changed over time so that action and the actual purchasing of Fairtrade goods isn't dependent upon personalities within the council or constant nudging by campaigners. Through persistence, attention to detail, and building relationships with different politicians and officers, Fairtrade Towns are succeeding in making this happen. This has a hugely positive effect not only on Fairtrade awareness and procurement in local authorities, but opens the way for other sustainability issues to take on more weight in influencing policy and purchasing too.

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns have succeeded in securing local and regional political support which builds up its own momentum and spreads. Local political leaders who have come on board for Fairtrade go on to influence others in their region to make a commitment and take action.**

For example, Joe Human described how this had happened in Cumbria, UK:

*"As campaigners we have found that we have been able to use the weight of the county to get people on board at the district level... We've been able to go to districts with the example of the way the county has embraced Fairtrade and show them it can be done...The Mayor of Carlisle decided she wanted to drive a campaign in*

*Carlisle, which was already a Fairtrade City but not very active. She held a Fairtrade and local (food) breakfast and invited the mayors of all the boroughs and towns of Cumbria. She talked about her role as champion of Fairtrade in Carlisle and how she hoped other parts in Cumbria would follow suit. And they did. For example, Copeland, which is relatively poor part of Cumbria – the Mayor of Copeland has taken on the baton of Fairtrade.”*

**The Fairtrade Towns movement has inspired serious interest in Fairtrade at national and international political level.**

Bruce Crowther noted how Gordon Brown, for example, expressed clear interest in Fairtrade Towns as soon as his leadership position was assured. Dedicating a chapter in his recent book entitled ‘Everyday Heroes’ to Bruce Crowther and his work on Fairtrade Towns, Brown clearly views the movement as significant and effective, creating real and powerful social change, locally, nationally and internationally.

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns have undertaken a high degree of activity to engage the media on Fairtrade and development issues, with enormous success and impact.**

Most respondents had received only positive responses from the local media and in some cases, media attention had far exceeded expectations! In Flanders, for example there were 250 press articles on Fairtrade last year, (2008). When Garstang in the UK declared itself the world’s first Fairtrade Town media contacts from as far and wide as Australia, the USA and Japan got in touch to know more about this otherwise little known English town and its Fairtrade mission.

Fairtrade Town activists have been extremely pro-active at being in touch with the media and securing this widespread coverage, ensuring that Fairtrade touches many, many people, for example:

*“The local papers write a lot about it. When you get a message in the local papers this is really important- everyone reads their local paper. So this gives us really good reach.” (Emma Rung, Sweden)*

*“The media were very good; excellent for supporting us. They are more than willing to come along to all our events, both radio and newspapers...Each year they know Fairtrade Fortnight is coming around and want to interview the producer and attend all of the events.. They go to schools etc to take pictures of the school children and the producer. They’re interested in having articles as well as photos.” (Lucy Whittle, Waterford, Ireland)*

*“I always think about how we can use events to get promotion, for example photos and local pres coverage. A lot of our early efforts were designed to get papers to pick it up.” (Becca Rowland, Woking, UK)*

*"In the Keswick press we try to get a release in, on our own activities or the bigger picture, at least once a fortnight. This has been really conscious and successful. You cannot miss Fairtrade in Keswick!"* (Joe Human, Keswick, UK)

In his capacity as national Fairtrade Towns Co-ordinator Bruce Crowther noted how the national UK media continues to maintain very high interest in Fairtrade, even in a mature Fairtrade market and a country where Fairtrade Towns have been running for several years.

### **Fairtrade Towns and the Media**

The Fairtrade Towns movement has had unprecedented success at motivating local media to cover global development issues in a way that might not otherwise have happened with significant positive impact on both development awareness and the attitudes of the media. Several people commented enthusiastically on this:

*"Fairtrade means global issues have been covered in a way they wouldn't otherwise in Keswick."* (Joe Human, Keswick, UK)

*"The Welsh media are quite parochial and not well developed in their ability to connect 'local to global' issues. Fairtrade is an easy way into international issues, which are often otherwise ignored or considered irrelevant...but they do understand 'Mavis from Cardigan has converted her school to Fairtrade equals happy, globally aware, ethical school kids!'"*

*(Craig Owen, Gold Star Communities, Wales)*

Fairtrade Town campaigns are a powerful media tool, quite simply because they can make global issues locally relevant. This has been key in places where the regional or local media are traditionally less inclined to cover topics related to sustainable development. In Newcastle, for example, Stella Carmichael explained how the local press has been traditionally more interested in environmental issues than the challenges facing producers in developing world. The Fairtrade city campaign has had to connect green issues with Fairtrade and incorporate aspects of broader sustainability into the campaign to gain press attention and they have done this effectively, getting the press on board with Fairtrade.

Fairtrade Town activists sometimes become known local spokespeople for global development issues. This increases the likelihood of local coverage of such issues because the media can get a locally trusted and locally relevant point of view. For example, Becca Rowland in Woking, UK explained:

*"I got a call the other week from another local radio station about the G20 march in London, asking if I would I do something about it on Sunday morning. I guess we must have penetrated local radio as linked to development issues. They could have gone to the environmental groups but they've connected Fairtrade with me."*

**Media content on local Fairtrade Towns campaigns is amplified online globally and inspires action across the world.**

In one example, Bruce Crowther recounted how, in 2006, the (aptly named!) town of Media, Pennsylvania, USA came across the Garstang Fairtrade Town website and decided start their own campaign using same goals. They acted purely on their own initiative and, upon reaching their goals, declared themselves the USA's first Fair Trade Town, kick-starting the US movement, (which has taken the broader approach of 'Fair Trade', two words). There are now eleven Fair Trade Towns in the US, including San Francisco, and more in the pipeline. This illustrates well how the media spotlight on one town can be amplified internationally and inspire others to start their own campaigns, as has undoubtedly happened between other towns across Europe.

The above discussion on the impact of Fairtrade Towns on 'Awareness and Action on Fairtrade and Development' clearly demonstrates how the European Fairtrade Towns project is successfully mobilising enormous public support in Europe for development, strategies and policies for poverty reduction and actions to benefit the poorer sections of populations in developing countries. The Fairtrade Towns initiatives effect on the huge number of people it is reaching is profound; supporting informed choice making about Fairtrade and ethical products, helping them to act with other members of own community to generate sense of ownership and empowerment over global challenge, and addressing and influencing tough issues which can lead to long-lasting change in key areas such as local authority procurement policies. Discussions with respondents indicate that the breadth and depth of this impact cannot be over-estimated and that there is still huge untapped potential in the European Fairtrade Towns movement; both to reach more towns and more people and to continue to have a deeper impact where it is already active.

## **Fairtrade Product Sales and Availability**

The impact of Fairtrade Towns campaigns on the sales and availability of Fairtrade products across Europe has, so far, been huge, with more and more outlets selling a wider and wider range of Fairtrade goods to consumers, as well as many local authorities, businesses, schools, universities and countless other organisations changing their procurement policies to replace conventional goods with Fairtrade ones. There can be no doubt at all that Fairtrade Towns campaigns have been the cause of much of the support for Fairtrade among citizens, which has prompted retailers and organisations to take it on where they have previously resisted.

Fairtrade Towns campaigns are also increasing engagement of all kinds of retailers, including large supermarkets, with Fairtrade, not only in terms of what they put on their shelves but getting them involved in the local campaign. In Newcastle for example, Stella Carmichael described how:

*“The Co-op supermarket are on our partnership...I encourage school etc to contact local supermarkets for samples, support, speakers and so on. Sainsbury’s and Morrisons are supportive.”*

Fairtrade Towns have had a positively reinforcing triple effect on availability and sales of Fairtrade products:

1. Persuading retailers, catering outlets, businesses and organisations to make Fairtrade products available to their staff, visitors and customers
2. Making information about where to buy Fairtrade products easily accessible to local people, through directories in print and online as well as publicizing their availability by providing outlets with stickers, posters and so on.
3. Convincing local people to take action by buying Fairtrade products locally, thus in turn convincing local stockists to keep offering them in the long term.

**As well as having a huge impact on increasing the availability and sales of Fairtrade products locally, many Fairtrade Towns campaigns have developed their own directories, making it very easy for people to know where to go locally to buy Fairtrade.**

Reviewing local Fairtrade directories, often published annually, over time, illustrates clearly the impact that Fairtrade Towns have had to increase availability of products locally. Not only this but directories have acted as a real incentive for businesses to come on board with Fairtrade and take advantage of the publicity and kudos with the public that the directory offers. In Newcastle for example, Stella Carmichael said:

*“In the third directory you can clearly see the increases in availability...more businesses are coming to us (to be in there). It’s now seen as good business sense.”*

The Keswick Fairtrade Town campaign, also offering a local Fairtrade directory, has made huge strides in increasing the availability of Fairtrade products in the thriving

local tourism industry, which the campaign focused on as their priority from the start. Achievements include the following:

- Since the beginning of the campaign in 2003 the number of accommodation providers serving Fairtrade tea and coffee has grown from 10 guest houses to 90 providers of different types, including youth hostels, many of whom are also serving other Fairtrade products such as wine and fruit juice.
- 50 cafes, pubs, restaurants now serve some FT tea and coffee and many pro-actively advertise it as available, increasing awareness among the public.
- 60 self-catering properties now provide Fairtrade tea and coffee on their 'hostess trays' for arriving guests.
- In total, there are over 200 accommodation and catering providers serving Fairtrade products and approximately 18 retail venues.
- Almost every church in and around Keswick is a Fairtrade church, (about 18 in total)

In another example, the Fairtrade town of Middelkerke, Flanders, has become one of the biggest purchasers of Oxfam Fairtrade products in the region, suggesting that the Fairtrade Town campaign there has had a very significant impact on product sales.

**The increase in procurement of Fairtrade goods by local authorities influenced by Fairtrade Towns campaigns has been extremely significant.**

This was commented on by several respondents, for example:

*"The impact on local government has been very significant. All 22 local authorities, (in Wales) have Fairtrade procurement guidelines as a result of the Fairtrade Nation campaign...the knock-on consumption impact is massive...councils, hospitals and schools...this is a lot of Fairtrade product volume, not to mention awareness."*  
(Craig Owen, Wales)

Emma Rung from Sweden explained how, in Karlstadt, the local Fairtrade City campaign resulted in Fairtrade coffee consumption increasing from 5% to 75% of all coffee consumption by the local authority.

These are just two examples of an effect which is, no doubt, being seen across Europe. The impact of Fairtrade Towns campaigns on awareness and action on Fairtrade and sustainable development by local authorities is discussed at length in the previous section.

**Fairtrade Towns have had mixed success with being able to measure or quantify the impact of their activities on retailing and catering outlets, sometimes facing challenges in getting data. However, several campaigns are making good progress on this issue, and there is a lot of opportunity for knowledge exchange and improving this situation in the future.**

While respondents were absolutely certain about the positive impact their campaigns were having on sales and availability of Fairtrade products they often

expressed the challenges involved in measuring and understanding this impact in detail. Comments such as this were typical:

*“How you the measure impact on retailers is really difficult. Collectively the impact is huge, for example the Virgin Rail switch to Fairtrade tea and coffee was certainly related to Fairtrade towns and the kind of collective campaigning and pressure that has been born out of Fairtrade towns.”* (Bruce Crowther, UK)

*“We would love to get supermarket data to see the impact. We know that at the end of the day we’ve been successful. We know there’s now been an impact. There hasn’t been a big advertising campaign (so we know the impact is about campaigning).”* (Becca Rowland, Woking, U.K)

Tackling this challenge would go a long way to giving activists extra energy and motivation. As Becca Rowland put it:

*“It’s really hard to know how many people are asking and what is having the effect...Look at Starbucks. They kept saying no (to Fairtrade) and all of a sudden they’re doing it. Is that down to campaigners or the fact that markets are moving? It’s hard as campaigners. You’d like to see direct impact but you can’t always see it.”*

Clearly local and national context has a significant role in determining whether campaigners can access the data they need. As Emma Rung explained how, in Sweden, on almost every steering group there are representatives from local stores who can sometimes introduce concerns or requests to the national headquarters. In this kind of scenario, both influencing retailer stocking policies and tracking information about availability and sales would be easier. Despite challenges, many Fairtrade Towns campaigns have conducted their own baseline and follow-up surveys to track the impact on availability and sales of Fairtrade products locally, (for example in Woking and Newcastle in the UK).

The importance of such surveying is clearly being learned across the European Fairtrade Towns movement. Sweden and Flanders, for example, are making great strides in collecting data and, in the Netherlands, Melinda Choo explained how they have actually adapted the Fairtrade Towns guidelines to strongly encourage ‘before and after’ tracking of change by campaigners, finding out if newly introduced Fairtrade products have come onto the shelf as a direct result of the Fairtrade Town campaign.

**Local successes can have national impact. Local Fairtrade Towns campaigns are making a vital contribution to building national supply chains for Fairtrade products.**

Where local campaigns have managed to convince local branch managers to trial Fairtrade products the effects have sometimes been far reaching. The case of the ‘Slug and Lettuce’ a UK chain of bars illustrates this, where one keen manager was convinced by local Fairtrade Towns campaigners to trial Fairtrade tea and coffee. It

was a great success and, seeing that it had worked so well, the Head Office eventually converted all their bars to Fairtrade hot drinks. This example illustrates how local Fairtrade Towns campaigns are making a vital contribution to building national supply chains for Fairtrade Product. As Bruce Crowther put it:

*“We need to get to a world where you can buy a Fairtrade banana in the local market or Fairtrade chocolate bar at any petrol station. Supply chains need to be built. We’ll get there and Fairtrade Towns will really help.”*

## **Networking and Partnerships**

The European Fairtrade Towns movement has initiated effective networking and partnerships in many forms with enormous positive impact on opportunities for development awareness and action. This impact has been felt across different types of networks, for example:

- **Within Fairtrade Towns**, between different interest groups and organisations in the community.
- **Town to town**, exchanging knowledge and experience, both within countries and across national borders
- **Regional** networks within countries
- **International** networks in several forms; pan-European, in regional groupings, bilateral partnerships and in the form of constant informal exchange between many countries
- **NGOs**: Collaboration between Fairtrade Towns campaign networks and NGO networks
- **Community interest groups within Fairtrade Towns**, (this has been discussed extensively under the section on the impact of Fairtrade Towns on development understanding and awareness above).

### **The impact of networking within Fairtrade Towns**

The impact of Fairtrade Towns is repeatedly shown in the less quantifiable but incredibly pivotal changes that take place within a Fairtrade Town community. Fora and networks for dialogue and change are built, events such as Fairtrade Fortnight becomes embedded in the local calendar, leverage for mutual benefit is created between all sections of the community and celebrations of success precipitate the expectation of greater things to come, spurring people on to the next initiative.

Joe Human explained how plans for the new Keswick Fair Trade Network website are geared around making the most of the mutually beneficial relationship between Keswick's Fairtrade activity and the thriving local tourism sector:

*"We're in process of redeveloping the website and...working with web design company in Keswick who really want to do the site for us. We're paying them but getting a very good deal because they have a very high regard for what we're doing. They bent over backwards to make sure we chose them over everyone else. The brief we have given them is to make the website work for Fairtrade and for Keswick. Given we have an unusually a high number of businesses engaged with Fairtrade in Keswick we now feel like we can make Fairtrade work for Keswick as well as the other way around. We want people to come to Keswick for a Fairtrade experience! So the website is to become a much more important tool than it has been for promoting Fairtrade and promoting Keswick. We'll probably have a declaration or statement of intent from each member business, guest house etc on the site."*

The Cumbria Fair Trade Network in the UK is a strong example of how Fairtrade Towns have developed as a powerful form of social capital, around which different interest groups have found common ground to invest energy and resources into a shared set of goals, (that is to increase awareness, understanding, availability and sales of Fairtrade products). These interest groups also identify the advantages and potential return on investment of this activity for their own organisations, and for the social and economic wealth of their community. In short, Fairtrade Towns campaigns work for everyone in a number of ways, and this is why they work so well.

### **Town to Town collaboration and Regional Networks**

**Within countries, regional networks of Fairtrade Towns have emerged organically out of the movement as well as begin encouraged by national labeling initiatives. This spontaneous regional grouping highlights the power of Fairtrade Towns to bring citizens together around common concerns and goals for development awareness and action.**

Several respondents gave examples of regional groupings and networks:

In Middelkerke, Flanders, Erica Blomme described how there were plans in the region to increase collaboration in the future on Fairtrade and other sustainability issues. They are already constantly exchanging ideas and an awareness raising coastal walk is planned between three Fairtrade Towns in the region for the near future. There is also a Flanders wide yearly meeting for Fairtrade Towns campaigns.

In Woking, UK, Becca Rowland described how:

*“Because we’ve been going for a while I’ve had a number of calls from people trying to set up Fairtrade towns who weren’t that far away. Sometimes lead people would come over to meet me for coffee. Also, at a debate we ran two years ago people came from other towns who wanted to start campaigns, from about a 40 mile radius. We decided then that it would be useful to meet and organised a South-East regional meeting. We’re thinking about doing another one later this year. Some counties would rather have county level event. We keep each other posted on events.”*

Joe Human described how the Cumbria Fairtrade Towns Network has accelerated the pace of Fairtrade activity in the region:

*“After we’d been going in Keswick for about six months we became aware of other campaigns in the region. We called a regional campaign meeting and invited county councilors, local authorities etc. It was billed as; ‘looking sideways, (to one another), and looking upwards, (to those who can support).’ We met again later that year and have been meeting twice a year ever since. It’s grown from 12 to 21 members. This agency has been the strongest force in fostering support for Fairtrade and Fairtrade Towns in Cumbria. We have 19 Fairtrade communities; more than any of a similar region in the UK. This is because of the learning, sharing and quizzing of each other*

*that we do...It is because we have this network we've been able to work with the county."*

\*A county is a level of regional authority in the UK, joining up several smaller local authorities.

In the North East of England a similarly strong regional network has developed, spear-headed by Newcastle Fairtrade partnership. Newcastle and other cities and towns in the region have collaborated, for example, on a regional Fairtrade producer tour as well as the IFAT, (International Federation of Alternative Traders) global banner tour of 2006. Newcastle, as an experienced Fairtrade city campaign, have supported a number of other places in getting their Fairtrade campaigns off the ground, including the universities of Newcastle and Northumbria.

Joe Human also related the Hadrian's Wall initiative, another emerging network that has come out of the Fairtrade Towns work in the Cumbria region and connects Cumbria with the neighbouring county of Northumberland. In this example and many others across Europe, pre-existing networks and natural groups had formed to build a Fairtrade initiative with a uniquely local context and resonance.

Just as individual Fairtrade Towns have done, regional networks have collaborated to produce material such as websites and printed directories, making information about Fairtrade and its impact available to the regional population through channels which they are likely to come across. Crucially, these materials include information about where to buy Fairtrade locally.

**Within countries, friendly 'competition' between areas has inspired people to start and accelerate Fairtrade Towns campaigns.**

*"Neighbour towns tend to trigger each other. We support public procurement and getting activists together to inspire each other. Also competition works; they each want to be the best!"*

(Emma Rung, Sweden)

*"Involving local authorities- it was hard at first to get them to think in a campaign way but then it became a competition between local authorities. If one town does it the one next door thinks 'we should do it'".*

(Karlien Wouters, Flanders, Belgium)

## **International Networks and Co-operation**

The European Fairtrade Towns movement is a truly international one with a very high level of international cooperation and exchange of knowledge embedded into its activities and ethos.

Nearly all respondents related some form of international collaboration as part of their Fairtrade Towns campaign activity. Karlien Wouters, for example, explained

how the Flemish Belgian campaign has learned and replicated ideas extensively from the UK movement and, more recently has been working closely with the Netherlands. The Flemish campaign supported the Dutch campaign to get started, supporting with issues such as the logo and website and they will attend a Dutch event for local steering groups in September 09. Emma Rung from Sweden also outlined how a reasonably common language (and good levels of English!) allowed Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland to regularly exchange knowledge and ideas through a monthly conference call. She has also visited Garstang in the UK, to learn from the experience of the first Fairtrade Town campaign, and has “occasional contact with many countries.”

As part of this international collaboration, countries with more experience of Fairtrade Towns are often supporting new entrants to the movement to develop their campaigns. Sweden, for example, is both supporting Estonia and Poland and continuing to learn extensively from the UK, as Emma Rung explained

*“Estonia are just starting their Fairtrade office and are really into Fairtrade procurement, so we have started a dialogue with the local authorities. They’re eager to listen and learn from us. Poland is also pretty new and they send us a lot of questions...We try to learn as much as we can from the UK as it has gone for longer. So we need to learn from success and mistakes. I ask a lot of questions”*

**Thanks to strong networking and the annual conferences, learning between European Fairtrade Towns has been effectively captured and shared so far, meaning that newer campaigns have been able to learn from both the successes and mistakes of previous ones.**

The impact of the annual European conferences on sharing learning across the movement has been discussed extensively in the section on the conferences above. Outside of the conferences Fairtrade Towns are forming many other ways to connect over common challenges and are sharing crucial specific knowledge with each other. Effective specialist knowledge, such as that built up by the Cumbria Fairtrade Network on the tourism sector, can be continually shared on fora such as the UK Fairtrade Towns Yahoo discussion group. As one person commented:

*“The Fairtrade Towns Yahoo group is really useful. As we’re quite established, (been going for 6 or 7 years), the Yahoo group is easy and allows you to keep an eye on what’s going on.”*

Others described how valuable the UK’s Fairtrade Towns Yahoo discussion group has been. Campaigners can ask a very particular question and the chances are that there will be someone out there who has experienced just the same challenge and learned how to approach it.

Several countries, including the UK and Sweden, have an annual national conference for Fairtrade Towns activists and numerous people described how there are regional meetings within their countries; for example, the South-East and North East regions

of England, regions within Sweden and so on. These are often self-organised by campaigners.

### **Fairtrade Towns and NGO Collaboration**

Fairtrade Towns have clearly made a very positive and significant contribution to collaboration between NGOs across Europe. Indeed, some Fairtrade Town initiatives have come about as the direct result of a formal collaboration between NGOs, who have combined resources to start the movement in their country.

In Netherlands and Flanders, Belgium, this has been the case. Melinda Choo explained how in the Netherlands the Dutch Association of World Shops, Max Havelaar Netherlands, ICCO and COS Netherlands, (two development NGOs), have come together to develop and run the Dutch Fairtrade Towns campaign. These organisations had a pre-existing working relationship and Fairtrade Towns came out of a working group on procurement. Similarly, Karlien Wouters, the Co-ordinator for the Flemish Belgium Fairtrade Town initiative, explained how her post is resourced by four NGOs; Max Havelaar Belgium, Oxfam and two local organisations. She went on to say how this collaboration has really boosted the potential of the initiative:

*“The fact that we work with 4 organisations, (has been really significant). Max Havelaar didn’t have enough volunteers working for them. We wouldn’t have reached many people beyond town councils and civil servants. The other three organisations have a lot of volunteers which gives us a big group of activists.”*

### **Some national campaigns show extremely strong and pro-active co-ordination of NGO activity, especially in efforts to influence local authority policy.**

In Sweden for example, Emma Rung described how Fairtrade, as part of a co-ordinated campaign on sustainability issues, provided a natural spring board for tangible action by local authorities:

*“We started with ‘Human rights for my tax money’ and ran this campaign with the clean clothes campaign and labour unions. Educated local activists lobbied local politicians to get this on agenda. It was bottom up. We launched Fairtrade towns as the answer to this campaign- the tool for local authorities to tackle the matter. This is how they could do it. To start to really run a campaign you have to get it on the political agenda. This was really positive for Fairtrade Towns because it’s natural tool-box for local authorities to adopt.”*

Emma went on to explain how they also worked closely with the interest group for local authorities, (an approximate English translation would be the Organisation for Local Authorities and Regions). She said this was important because:

*“They can encourage them to take the steps and work further. They’ve been a very good help on legal issues. We’re not working in a formal way but cooperating.”*

**Fairtrade Towns campaigns are also taking part in collaboration between NGOs at the national and regional level, boosting opportunities to incorporate the Fairtrade message into a broad range of local activities.**

For example, Joe Human described how the Fairtrade Towns campaign is part of an alliance of several NGOs and initiatives working together:

*“The Keswick Fair World Alliance covers Fairtrade, Trade Justice, Sustainable Keswick, Peace and Human Rights, Oxfam, Save the Children and churches. We have a network meeting once a year to update each other. This group promotes annual lectures at the literary festival, (Words by the Water), and another one on development later in the year.*

*The Fairtrade campaign has been pivotal in getting that alliance working and also allows us to get Fairtrade messaging out through other campaigns.”*

In Newcastle, UK, Stella Carmichael explained the Newcastle Fairtrade Partnership has started collaborating with trade unions around issues of Fairtrade and worker’s rights, reaching union members based locally and beyond:

*“Trade Unions around the world and workers rights...there’s definitely a massive link here. We’re working with PCS, (Public and Commercial Services Union), who have held a workshop. They’re keen to involved other unions at events, through webcams etc. (You need to)...take your time, look at what you’ve got and localize what Fairtrade means...They came to work with us. They have a massive site in Newcastle with thousands of union members.”*

**Collaborative and effective relationships and networks have developed between Fairtrade Towns campaigns and the national labeling initiatives, which have strengthened the work of both.**

Several people commented on how, as the UK Fairtrade Towns movement has grown and it’s members have gained experience and expertise, an increasingly strong trust and collaborative working relationship has developed between the Fairtrade Foundation and the movement. As Joe Human from Keswick, UK, explained:

*“There are now many very knowledgeable campaigners who can and should be trusted. And when we’re worried about something we will get on the phone and ring them up. For example, a local Cadbury’s representative recently contacted me wanting to do some joint promotion locally. I immediately thought this was something I shouldn’t take on without talking to the Foundation. So I emailed...he responded straight away...Likewise there will be moments when the Foundation checks things with us.”*

Of course, there are tensions inherent in mass campaigning and the inevitably differing views over how and how much this should be directed from the central organisation. In the case of Fairtrade Towns, these being resolved, opening up space for local campaigning on Fairtrade and development awareness raising to develop in a way that's appropriate locally but supported from the centre. Joe Human went on to explain:

*“When a mass movement like the Fairtrade movement takes place – there are parallels with Oxfam’s Hungry for Change in the 1980s and the Freedom from Hunger movement in 60s- there’s always a challenge to the institutions, (Fairtrade Foundation, Oxfam, War on Want), in that they have helped to galvanise a mass movement which they then don’t control. It’s a challenge to both sides because ultimately the Fairtrade Foundation has to protect the Mark, it has to make sure that people, as far as possible, are on message but on the other hand if they’re seen to be too controlling that can seriously affect the mood and effectiveness of the grass roots campaign. I don’t think this is an issue now but it was an issue in the early years....Trust was built in the end because of time and pragmatism. If we were all to follow that requirement, (i.e. having all materials showing the Fairtrade Mark checked), the Foundation and the movement would drown. There is a growing element of trust because they know those of us who’ve been around know what we’re doing and saying but also they have recognised that they just couldn’t cope if they tried to control everything Also, as the movement grows people at the centre have become more exposed to campaigners, through campaign days, people coming to the office and so on. They can see that we are as professional as they are.”*

Another respondent put simply the nature of the positive working relationship between their Fairtrade Town campaign and the national initiative.

*“The important thing is we know them and can pick up the phone at any time.”*

## **The Future of European Fairtrade Towns**

The European Fairtrade Towns movement has clearly galvanised an incredibly powerful movement for social change on a local and global scale. This movement has already had a huge impact on increasing the sales and availability of Fairtrade products and clearly has infinitely more capacity to continue to do this, directly benefiting more and more producers in developing countries and improving their livelihoods. Not only this, but Fairtrade Towns are massively increasing awareness, understanding and action on development issues and, crucially, bringing global issues firmly into the local context. They do this in a way that is uniquely effective and incredibly human, often prompting interest and action among the most unexposed or skeptical individuals and organisations. As well as these crucial intangible benefits, the practical long term legacy of European Fairtrade Towns so far is comprehensive indeed; with structures, networks, action guides and other materials in place, continuous learning going on at the annual conferences and following on from them. There has also been the development of several crucial websites; at the local, regional and national level as well as at the European Fairtrade Towns online platform, which is eagerly awaited by activists and national co-ordinators as an opportunity to even further enhance international networking and collaboration. As one respondent put it:

*“There are links in France and Spain to our activity but it’s difficult to know how to take it forward. So we’re looking forward to the website to overcome things like cost, traveling, logistics and so on.”*

(Stella Carmichael, Newcastle, UK)

The spirit of international collaboration and sharing is well embedded across the movement and will no doubt continue in this vein. The report will next consider some key development questions facing the European Fairtrade Towns movement that emerged out of this research, before concluding with a fuller discussion on the future of international co-operation and co-ordination within the movement. These development questions are discussed under the headings of:

- Fairtrade Towns in the South
- The ‘what next?’ question for Fairtrade Towns
- Securing Resources
- Further Understanding and Publicising the Impact of Fairtrade Towns

### **Fairtrade Towns in the South**

There is a growing interest coming out of the European Fairtrade Towns movement in the opportunities for Fairtrade Towns in the South, (it was on the agenda of the most recent annual European Fairtrade Towns conference for example). This interest includes intense discussion about what it ‘means’ to have a Fairtrade Town campaign the South. So far, the motivations of emerging Southern Fairtrade Town campaigns have been diverse. For example, in Ghana, the small town of New Koforidua, who

have a long-standing and deeply embedded twinning relationship with Garstang in the UK, is interested in developing a Fairtrade Town campaign and potentially even using this as the basis for a campaign to bring the Fairtrade Mark to Ghana. Elsewhere in Brazil, a Fairtrade Town campaign has been established by a community of coffee producers who would like to join up with Fairtrade Towns in the North to find markets for their coffee.

Several people were supportive but cautious about the idea of Fairtrade Towns in the South. It seems that as towns or cities in the South pursue the idea, European towns should support them to ensure they learn from the experience of current campaigns and also make sure that campaigns in the North can learn from them. As one person commented, when talking about a workshop on the subject at an annual conference, which representatives from Ecuador, Brazil, and Ghana attended:

*“We thought we knew how it would be possible but then got three completely different stories! I think we should support it. We shouldn’t really start these things by ourselves or look for it- it’s up to them to start it- but if they want to I would really like to support it. They were really convinced that it could work with their countries...The national coordinators decided not to focus on it. We should support the ones who are really interested...It’s too early for more than this*

There is, therefore, a need for continued collaboration with the emerging Fairtrade Towns campaigns in the South and continued discussion across the Fairtrade Towns movement globally about how this development could be fostered for the benefit of everyone involved and for sustainable development awareness and action everywhere.

### **The ‘What Next?’ question for Fairtrade Towns**

When asked if campaigns have faced challenges in maintaining momentum and interest in Fairtrade locally once Fairtrade status had been achieved, there were mixed responses. The ‘What Next?’ question is clearly sometimes challenging, but local campaigns are finding locally appropriate solutions that ensure continued interest and energy Fairtrade and development issues.

Some Fairtrade Towns, for example, have focused their efforts on concentrated periods of high activity to keep public awareness on the increase. In the UK, Fairtrade Fortnight has been key here.

Renewal of Fairtrade Town status is also being used effectively to keep up activity in some places. In Sweden, for example, Emma Rung explained how, “to keep the campaign alive and dynamic”, each year they ask Fairtrade Cities to renew status. Renewing cities in Sweden must show evidence that the number of outlets selling Fairtrade products has increased and consumption of Fairtrade products has increased. This has been key to building the momentum and impact of campaigns and Sweden has adopted approach where the initial standards relating to the local authority and community are not very tight but the demands to maintain status

high. A renewal approach has also been adopted in Flanders, with the paperwork required being kept to a minimum so that towns are not discouraged from remaining involved. In Flanders they have also taken the approach of piloting a Fairtrade Towns activity with a few towns one year then cascading it out to all towns the following year, giving campaigns a fresh focus annually, with the advantages of learning gained in the pilot areas. While the renewal approach clearly has advantages and in some places is working well, there are potential pitfalls. As one respondent commented:

*“Awarding permanent status is dangerous but keeping up statistics can be a chore and distract from campaigning, so we need a balance.”*

This comment, echoed by others seems to illustrate that while ideas, guidelines and direction on where to go and what to do after Fairtrade Town status has been achieved is welcomed by most activists, locally appropriate solutions should be encouraged and celebrated. Such solutions allow citizens to direct their energies and enthusiasm in a way that will yield local interest and results concerning Fairtrade and related development issues.

### **Securing Resources**

Several Fairtrade Towns campaign activists recounted how they had taken the initiative to secure resources for their ongoing work from various channels, such as the local council, membership fees, fundraising events and grant funding. In Cumbria, UK, for example, Joe Human described how the Cumbria Fairtrade Network has worked very hard for four years to obtain charity status, in order to expand their options for seeking funding and maximising resources. He thinks Cumbria may be the only Fairtrade campaign in the UK to have done this

No doubt much knowledge and experience gained by local campaigns who have been successful in securing funding and resources has already been shared within the movement, but the more of this sharing that can be done going forwards the better if the movement is to become as self-sustaining as possible.

### **Understanding and Publicising Impact**

While much progress on this has been made and future local and international collaboration will assure it continues, there is clearly an opportunity to develop stronger strategies and actions to a further understand the impact of Fairtrade Towns with a view to making them even more effective; both as a means of increasing awareness and action on sustainable development and of increasing sales and availability of Fairtrade products. Furthermore, the research undertaken here clearly illustrates the uniquely powerful nature of Fairtrade Towns campaigns as a means of securing local and global social change. Further learning about this would be incredibly valuable for informing other sustainable development awareness and action activities and movements.

**There is a need, firstly to explore further how local campaigns can canvass ‘before and after’ data on sales and availability of Fairtrade products and what support activists need from co-ordinating bodies to do this.**

Responses from many people indicated how they felt they needed to get to grips with this to increase the impact and refine the strategies of their local campaigning so they can, for example, have local case studies of how businesses have had success with taking on Fairtrade products to show others in trying to persuade them. Collecting such data and case studies at a national level it could also be of great benefit, (as several national initiatives are already starting to do). Hard evidence demonstrating what is an undoubted connection between active Fairtrade Towns campaigns and increased Fairtrade product sales locally would encourage more retailers and businesses to take action in two ways. It will encourage them to take on Fairtrade products, because they see clearly that local awareness raising activity will help ‘guarantee’ sales of these new stock items. It will also encourage newly stocking businesses to get involved in their local Fairtrade Towns campaigns, for example by joining a steering group, sponsoring local Fairtrade events or advertising in the Fairtrade directory, because they will better understand it’s value as part of their marketing activity, and not just as a community initiative.

Discussions with respondents also suggest that there is a need to:

- Continue to ensure as much specific feedback as possible to local and regional campaigns on the impact of Fairtrade Towns activity on commercial decision making. This positive feedback loop will go a long way to boost the ongoing energy and motivation of activists.
- Increase co-ordination of Fairtrade campaigns targeted at retailers and companies on a regional and national basis. As one UK activist explained:

*“We’ve targeted specific outlets rather than taken a scatter gun approach. Maybe at a national level this would be good; getting people to go on company websites to ask companies as a customers and say: ‘I really like it but why can’t you do Fairtrade?’ Maybe this would get more young people involved.”*

Such co-ordination could come both from activists themselves, using regional networks and partnerships, but it could also be strategically steered by the national labeling initiatives as part of their strategies of commercial engagement, where appropriate. No doubt this is already taking place but it will arguably take on increasing power and importance in the European Fairtrade Towns movement; both in mature markets such as the UK where the time has come for a very targeted approach to businesses to get the most challenging companies on board, and in younger markets, where focused activity to secure early wins with key commercial partners is crucial to building momentum.

## **Continued International Co-operation and Co-ordination**

The positive response to the annual European conferences and the desire to see them continue is explored in the early section of this report on the conferences. Continued development of additional for means for national co-ordinators to collaborate outside of the annual European conferences has been very welcomed. The upcoming national co-ordinators meeting in Brussels, (due to take place in April 2009) was viewed very positively by national co-ordinators who welcome opportunities to work on strategies together as the Fairtrade Towns movement continues to grow apace. For example, as one person explained:

*“We would love to have more European conferences but what seems to be missing is that we are not coordinated as much as we could be. We are 18 countries running the concept alone. We should network much better and really use each other’s experiences. We need to make a platform together to discuss what we want, for example; should we have the same criteria? Should we have the same communication manual? Should we have shared public procurement terms for the EU?... It’s growing so fast and so many communities are involved. In the beginning it was all about getting it going. Now we need to steer it.”*

Another person commented:

*“The problem I felt in Lyon was that we had a lot of different actors, (coordinators, volunteers, activists etc), so it was hard to offer good workshops to everyone. I felt some people didn’t find what they were looking for. We should focus the conferences on local steering groups and separate them out from coordinators. Coordinators should meet before or after the conference...As national coordinators we were thinking of meeting four times a year which might be ambitious but at least if we could meet once a year as well as at the conferences.”*

### ***The Question of Ownership***

As the Fairtrade Towns phenomenon spreads and more and more localities get involved in more and more countries, the question persists of who ‘owns’ or ‘runs’ this international movement. In discussing this with respondents concern with this issue did not seem to be born in any way out of a sense of propriety or control, but rather a sentiment that everyone who has been part of the European movement wants to see it continue to flourish and to deliver an even more incredible impact in the future. To do this, and to get the best out of the opportunity, several people felt there is a need for some structures to be out in place or refined. The main challenges to this are those of resources and that of reaching a consensus on the best way forwards. People made various practical suggestions as to the potential form and structures of the international European network going forwards, which could be explored, for example:

***Option 1: An independent organisation in the form of an umbrella, membership based body.***

One advocate of this approach expressed how they felt that the organisation needs to be independent so it's in a position to "be able to listen to people and ideas, not dismiss them, because you never know what'll happen." By placing the co-ordination of Fairtrade Towns internationally within the remit of any existing structure, they felt that this independence and receptiveness to innovation was not feasible.

Another respondent felt that such an independent body could undertake functions such as co-ordinating annual European conferences, potentially rotating the conference around participating countries and inviting and working with a broad range partners, (not just the labeling initiatives and other national co-ordinating bodies).

One respondent felt that such an independent body was needed, as there wasn't an appropriate 'natural home' for the co-ordination to be undertaken in. They thought FLO, (Fairtrade Labeling Organisation), for example, could not take on such a coordinating role as they haven't, historically, worked closely with the grassroots movement and don't see going this as their role.

***Option 2: A two-part structure***

One respondent suggested that it could work very well to have a two part structure; a Secretariat for Fairtrade Towns, for sharing best practice and so on, and a Steering Group with different members taking the lead on specialist areas, for example procurement or linking with towns in the South. They pointed out that ensuring such steering group member could maintain that area of expertise in their organisation and report on them would require appropriate resourcing it could not be just "lumped into their job description."

***Option 3: An international co-ordinator***

Another person suggested that an international co-ordinator would be very useful and increase the potential of the European movement. This post could sit within one of the structures outlines in option 1 or 2, or be hosted by one of the participating national initiatives, perhaps rotating through them on some basis. As one respondent suggested:

*"It's very important that we invest in the international co-ordination of campaign. We really have the potential to grow and become an international movement for Fairtrade. To make this happen we're working on it right now as national co-ordinators. One of the most important things is that we need an international coordinator who can take this up and work on the international network; promote events across countries, keep people exchanging...At the moment we don't have enough time and have to just let it go how it goes."*

**As noted earlier, respondents felt the European Fairtrade Towns website that is in development will make a very positive contribution to the opportunities to exchange ideas and collaborate as a European network:**

*“The website will be good for people who want to exchange all the time. Lots of local steering groups and volunteers already have a lot of work at the local level and exchange at the local level but the website will be helpful for very active volunteers and us coordinators. It’s a good way to have at least one structured way of exchanging.”*

*“The international website is great. We’ll have this platform to discuss and exchange daily, not just once a year.”, (Melinda Choo, Netherlands).*

**A note on awareness among respondents of EU funding:**

When respondents were asked if they knew that the European Fairtrade Towns project is had been supported with funding from the EU they all answered that they were aware of this.

## **Appendix**

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### **Fairtrade Towns in Europe Project Evaluation: Interview questions**

The following questions are for all interviewees, (National Co-ordinators, Regional Co-ordinators and conference attendees)

#### ***Introductory***

1. How did you get involved in Fairtrade Towns? Where did you first hear about it and why did you want to get involved?
2. Could you please give a brief summary of the Fairtrade Towns campaign so far in your country / region?
3. What have been the most significant steps or activities that have really pushed the campaign forwards?
4. Do you have any statistics or key examples that illustrate the achievements of your campaign? (for example, number of Fairtrade towns, number of shops with Fairtrade products available etc)\*

*\*This question can be answered by email before or after the phone interview if that is easier*

#### ***Annual conferences***

5. Which annual conferences were you involved in? (If you didn't attend did your colleagues or fellow campaigners attend and report back?)
6. What were the most useful activities at the conferences?
7. What do you think was the most important impact of those conferences on your Fairtrade Towns campaign?
8. Do you think the annual conferences helped get support and involvement from other organisations, i.e. (beyond the lead organisations)?
9. Do you think there should be more annual conferences in the future? What could be done to improve the effectiveness of them?

#### ***Fairtrade and development awareness***

10. What impact do you think the Fairtrade Towns campaign has had on awareness and understanding of Fairtrade in your country / region?

11. Do you think the Fairtrade Towns campaign has helped reach beyond the traditional Fairtrade supporter base, (which used to be women, aged 45 – 54, social class AB)?
12. Do you think the Fairtrade Towns campaign has helped people to find out about other issues affecting developing world communities?
13. What has been the impact of Fairtrade Towns on awareness and support in national and regional government?
14. How have the media responded to the Fairtrade Towns campaign? How have you got them involved and has it been challenging or easy?

### ***Sales impact***

15. What activities have you done in your campaign to get people to try and persuade shops to stock Fairtrade products?
16. Have you had direct contact or partnerships with shops and retailers as part of your campaign and how have they responded?
17. Do you think the Fairtrade Towns campaign has had an impact on product sales and availability? Do you think more outlets are making Fairtrade products available?

### ***Networking and partnerships***

18. Has the Fairtrade Towns campaign acted as a catalyst for other community Fairtrade campaigns, for example, Fairtrade Schools or Churches? Have you worked closely with these other local campaigns?
19. What is your relationship with the national Fairtrade labeling initiative? What impact has this had on your campaign?
20. How have you networked with other Fairtrade Towns campaigns? What has been the impact of this?
21. What other organisations or campaigns have you worked in partnership with?

22. What would you like to see happen in the future in terms of networking and partnership working? Are there any new partnerships that you would like to initiate?
23. Are you supporting any new or young Fairtrade Towns campaigns in other countries or regions? How have you been able to help them?

***External factors***

24. Do you think there are any factors in your country / region that have had an especially positive or negative impact on your Fairtrade Towns campaign?

***Campaign overview***

25. What has been the biggest success of the Fairtrade Towns campaign and how was it achieved?
26. What have been the biggest challenges and what do you need to overcome them?
27. Have any other development awareness raising campaigns and activities emerged out of the Fairtrade Towns campaign, for example, international linking activity?
28. What are the plans for the future of the campaign and for your work with partners? (Possible further questions: How are you approaching the question of what towns do after they have achieved Fairtrade Town status? How are you approaching sustainability of the campaign?)
29. Is there anything else you would like to add or ask?

*Possible additional questions for National Co-ordinators only*

1. ***Learning from the UK model:*** Are there any aspects of the UK Fairtrade Towns model that you have especially tried to replicate in your own campaign? Was this successful?
2. ***Campaign diversity:*** Has it been challenging working with different size and types of towns? How have you overcome this?

*Possible additional question for regional activists and conference attendees only*

1. **Campaign support:** Have you had enough support from the national coordinating body? What other organisations have been most supportive and how?
2. Did you know that the European Fairtrade Towns project is part funded by the EC, (European Community)?

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