

THE TOWN CRIER

SIXTH
EDITION



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Dear Fairtrade Town contact,

Fairtrade Fortnight is almost upon us and we can't wait to see how the UK sticks with Foncho to Make Bananas Fair.

The petition at the heart of the Fairtrade Fortnight Campaign can be found at stickwithfoncho.org.uk and you can order postcards or download petition sign up forms too.

We've also included a new Fairtrade Towns Action Guide with this edition. We hope that it will provide further food for thought, tips and ideas for how to take your Fairtrade campaign forward. Your feedback is very welcome, and we would be pleased to share ideas or experiences of sustaining and developing your Fairtrade Town campaign on our case study library at fairtrade.org.uk/towns.

Read on for other exciting updates about the Fairtrade Schools Award, new Fairtrade at work initiative and more.

Best wishes for a successful and enjoyable Fairtrade Fortnight

Adam, Anna, Lone and Johanna
(The Fairtrade Towns Team)

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PRODUCER FOCUS: BANANAS IN COLOMBIA

Foncho, the star of Fairtrade Fortnight, will be arriving in the UK from Colombia very shortly to lead our campaign to Make Bananas Fair. But what is the situation like for all banana farmers in Colombia and what impact has Fairtrade had to date?

Fairtrade bananas in Colombia

There are 35 Fairtrade certified banana Producer Organisations in Colombia, representing nearly 3,000 farmers and workers. A recent report commissioned by Max Havelaar Netherlands studied Fairtrade's impact on six smallholder co-operatives and three plantations – all Fairtrade certified – and found:

For smallholder farmers:

- Smallholder farmers reported that Fairtrade Minimum Price and Premium has increased household income – on average by 34 per cent
- They also reported that their co-operative takes them into account and collaborates with them in the following aspects: linking with markets (100 per cent); innovation and technology transfer (99 per cent); transparency and justice (87 per cent); access to assets for production (87 per cent); access to services (86 per cent), and sharing risk and benefits (83 per cent).
- 98 per cent of smallholders consider that their quality of life improved since joining Fairtrade

- Between 2010 and 2012 average banana yields have increased by 13 per cent on Fairtrade certified farms
- All Fairtrade co-operatives have signed contracts with buyers but this is not so for non-Fairtrade farmers.

However, co-operatives still have low bargaining power on pricing with the two Colombian banana exporters. Buyers decide the sales price of bananas which can often be equal to the Fairtrade Minimum Price (FMP), and no higher.

For workers on plantations:

Plantations conclude that Fairtrade has contributed to more sustainable banana production and workers interviewed reported the main benefits from Fairtrade as: more access to credit (88 per cent), home purchase and improvement (75 per cent), increased access to education (71 per cent), and more training (41 per cent).

Collective bargaining by trade unions in Colombia is very important for maintaining wages for workers on banana plantations. As a result Fairtrade only has a slight influence on worker wages and the Fairtrade Premium is a very important source of extra investment and credit for workers.

What does this mean for making bananas fair?

While there are demonstrable benefits for

Fairtrade certified banana producers, there remains much room for improvement with many more farmers and workers outside the reach of Fairtrade. Faced with rising costs of production and an 85 per cent increase in the cost of living in Colombia since 2000, banana producers are struggling more than ever to negotiate a price that covers their costs of production and provides a living wage. The FMP should be exactly that

– a safety net rather than the regular price. However the lack of value in the banana supply chain prevents the market price that producers receive from rising any higher.

Although Fairtrade producers are protected to a certain extent, the trend of increasing costs and low prices puts them under pressure too, and it is crucial that both co-operatives and plantations

are able to negotiate higher prices over and above the FMP that not only cover costs of production but pay a living wage to farmers and workers alike.

In Fairtrade Fortnight we have a huge opportunity to restore value and increase transparency in the banana supply chain: by signing and sharing the petition to make bananas fair.

Banana production in Colombia is split over two regions:

URABÁ

Dominated by hired labour, which accounts for 73 per cent of production on 350 plantations with an average size of 80 hectares.

First banana plantation established in Uraba in 1900.

MAGDALENA

Dominated by small and large farms, which account for 27 per cent of production on 1,000 large and small farms. The small farms have an average size of 3.2 hectares.



Statistics taken from:

Report undertaken by Coder: *Corporacion Para El Desarrollo Empresarial Rural*, commissioned by Max Havelaar Netherlands, 2013; Fairtrade International's 'Monitoring the scope and Benefits of Fairtrade', Fourth edition, 2012; www.bananalink.org.uk

Let us know if you have any trouble accessing these reports.

1918

First strike by banana workers in northern Colombia demanding better working conditions

1960-2006

Armed conflict in Colombia severely affected banana producers in Magdalena and Uraba

20,000

members of Sintrainagro, the Colombian national agricultural workers' union, work in the banana industry

€3.7 MILLION

total Fairtrade Premium payment to Colombian banana producers in 2011

6.2 MILLION

boxes of Colombian Fairtrade bananas exported in 2012 (around 6-7% of total Colombian banana exports)

CAMPAIGN UPDATE



The petition to Vince Cable MP, Secretary of State for Business, to make bananas fair at the heart of Fairtrade Fortnight this year is a continuation of our three-year Make Food Fair Campaign, which aims to redress the injustices of our broken food system.

You'll remember that last year the Make Food Fair campaign focused on the importance of smallholder farmers, with many thousands signing up to our five-point agenda launched in Fairtrade Fortnight and again in the summer telling

the European Union (EU) to 'Stop the Sugar Rush' and protect the livelihoods of over 400,000 sugar producers threatened by EU Common Agricultural Policy reforms.

We're hoping to revisit the issue of smallholder farming later this year but, starting this Fairtrade Fortnight, we will be focusing on the issue of unsustainable retail pricing.

The petition to Vince Cable MP is the first phase of the campaign to Make Bananas Fair, but it will most likely take further actions to achieve campaign success

and ensure that all banana farmers and workers are getting a fair deal. We'll need to stay agile as Fairtrade Fortnight plays out and see the impact the petition has had before deciding the next move in the battle to make bananas fair.

After Fairtrade Fortnight we'll let you know what the next move to make bananas fair will be. For now, please make sure you have everything you need to help us collect as many signatures as possible and ensure the government intervenes to make bananas fair.

Make sure you have:

- Petition forms to capture lots of signatures at fairtrade.org.uk/petitionform
- Packs of petition postcards and event packs at fairtrade.org.uk/shop
- MP briefing, to send to your MP asking them to write to Vince Cable MP in support of the petition at fairtrade.org.uk/petitioninfo

For everything else visit stickwithfoncho.org.uk



FOCUS ON: PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

Have public bodies in your area cottoned on to the power of public procurement of Fairtrade?

Over 500 councils across the UK have now passed motions supporting Fairtrade and taken steps to incorporate this commitment into their purchasing decisions. The efforts of Fairtrade Towns have undoubtedly helped to make Fairtrade tea and coffee mainstream options but we can go further to make other Fairtrade products the norm in all local authority contracts and other public bodies,

including the police, fire brigade, hospitals and NHS trusts.

With more Fairtrade products available from more suppliers at more competitive prices than ever, there are nearly always new products to investigate – for example sugar, fruit, schools catering, cotton items and new staff uniform contracts up for renewal.

We know how easy it is for priorities to change over time and how much pressure all public bodies are under to reduce budgets, so it's important to keep the conversation alive with local authorities and ensure their commitment to Fairtrade is a dynamic one that evolves over time.

We also know that procurement can be a

complex area and those responsible for procurement sometimes need advice on how and when to ask for Fairtrade products.

Visit fairtrade.org.uk/publicprocurement for a hub of resources and ideas for working with public bodies in your area to develop their practical commitment to producers in the developing world through their purchasing decisions.

Has your local authority already done a good job of procuring Fairtrade? Please tell us about it so we can share their case study and celebrate their achievements.

Are you facing barriers or are you in need of ideas for working with public bodies? Get in touch to discuss ideas and tactics using the contact details on page 8.



NEW FAIRTRADE SCHOOLS AWARD



Three months after the 1000th school was awarded Fairtrade Status, we're delighted to announce the launch of a brand new Fairtrade Schools website and new award scheme.

We've consulted lots of teachers, students, education centres and Fairtrade campaigners over a number of months to help us reflect on what the Fairtrade Schools Award was offering schools and how we could improve it while maintaining the emphasis on learning about Fairtrade and having fun.

Schools can now work through three stages: FairAware, FairActive and FairAchiever.

The first two steps are self-assessed. The first step is FairAware which is designed to increase students' knowledge about Fairtrade through learning and assemblies. Once students understand the issues around Fairtrade they will need to start taking actions including forming a Fairtrade group and creating an action plan.

Their school can then become a FairActive school. When the school has committed to trade justice/ Fairtrade, by adopting a Fairtrade school policy and taking on some of our Fairtrade challenges, it can apply for our FairAchiever Award. Like our previous award this will be assessed by one of our network of experienced and dedicated volunteer assessors. This expert network allows us to continue to offer the award free to schools.

We hope both students and teachers use our new schools' site, at fairtrade.org.uk/schools, as a comprehensive hub for teaching and learning resources about Fairtrade. At the centre is an interactive world map, which allows users to see where Fairtrade products come from and better understand the interconnection between producers and consumers.

One of the key changes is that schools will now complete learning audits with their students at the beginning of their

Fairtrade journey (as part of FairAware) and once they have reached FairAchiever status. We are keen to offer schools a way to measure and evaluate the impact that the award has had on students' knowledge about global development and ethical buying.

Another difference is that rather than list required tasks, we have developed a list of optional Fairtrade challenges for schools so that they have the flexibility to choose to complete those challenges that best suit them.

We are really excited to be able to bring in these changes in the run-up to Fairtrade Fortnight when we will be asking schools to join in our campaign to Stick with Foncho and switch to Fairtrade bananas in their school or local community.

Visit the new site and find out more at fairtrade.org.uk/schools

FAIRTRADE AT 20 – THE POWER OF YOU

THE POWER OF YOU



20 years ago a group of people had a brilliant idea, to challenge injustice by helping UK shoppers buy fair. All of you, every single individual, campaign group and organisation in the UK Fairtrade movement, are helping to change the way we shop, revealing the inequalities of global trade and showing that we all have the power to make trade fair.

We'll be talking more publicly about the celebration of our 20th anniversary in the autumn, look out for birthday party packs in late spring that will include all you need to join in the party later this year. Do you have a favourite image from your Fairtrade campaigning over the years? We're on the

hunt for pictures showing the evolution of Fairtrade since 1994 (the older the better!) so please email your favourite to us using the contact details on page 8.

Instead of holding a National Supporter Conference this year, we will be getting out and about to as many regional conferences as possible, including the the East Midlands, London, the north west, north east, Northern Ireland, the south west, the east of England and Scotland.

We'll be sending invites to everyone in those regions and hope to see many of you there. If you're not in one of these regions you are still welcome to come and we'll also be hosting regional events in the remaining areas in 2015.

FAIRTRADE WORKPLACES OF WORLD CHANGERS!

WORKPLACE WORLD CHANGERS



We're pleased to say that workplaces now have a new way to show their support for Fairtrade on the re-launched Fairtrade at work website at fairtrade.org.uk/work

Workplaces can celebrate their support for Fairtrade by confirming they offer Fairtrade coffee, tea and sugar to staff and visitors.

Registered workplaces will then receive a certificate to display and will also be able to access resources and materials to help them showcase their support. To find out more visit fairtrade.org.uk/work

Is there a business or other major employer in your area that you would like to switch to Fairtrade?

Would you like to re-engage businesses who have been supportive for some time?

Direct them to fairtrade.org.uk/work

2014: DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

• **24 February – 9 March:**
FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT
2014

• **26 April:**
East Midlands Regional
Campaigner Forum,
Leicester

• **28–30 March :**
International Fair Trade
Towns Conference,
Kumamoto, Japan

• **13 September:**
South West Regional
Campaigner Forum

• **September/October:**
Regional Campaigner
Forum events in the North
West, London, North,
East England, Northern
Ireland, exact dates to
be confirmed

CONTACT

Anna Misterska, Communities Campaigns Officer:
anna.misterska@fairtrade.org.uk 020 7440 8568

Adam Gardner, Communities Campaigns Manager:
adam.gardner@fairtrade.org.uk 020 7440 8552

Johanna Gustafsson and Lone Bilchert,
Fairtrade Towns Volunteers:
Volunteer.towns@fairtrade.org.uk 020 7405 5942

Fairtrade Town Discussion Group:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FairtradeTown>

Order resources:
<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/shop> 020 7440 7676

fairtrade.org.uk
mail@fairtrade.org.uk

Fairtrade Foundation, 3rd Floor, Ibex House,
42-47 Minories, London EC3N 1DY

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