

Mankato First Fair Trade Town in Minnesota
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FAIR TRADE TEA & FASHION FOCUS



3:30-5:00 - April 24, 2016

Messiah Lutheran Church, North Mankato

Corner of Lee Boulevard and Lor Ray Drive

Tickets in advance - \$15.00 (\$5.00 for under 10s) from MAFTTI-related churches or from Paul Renshaw (renshaw@hickorytech.net).

MAFTTI's second **Fair Trade Tea** is coming up – and not to be missed. The first one, in April 2013, left

people saying “We must do this again!” Now it’s happening - and with an added dimension.

April 24 is also FASHION REVOLUTION DAY – the third anniversary of the Rana Plaza tragedy in Dhaka, Bangladesh. That unhappy event makes the strongest case possible for the principles of Fair Trade to be well entrenched in the international garment industry – but that day is far off.

[Fashion Revolution Day](#) is one, unprecedented, response from within the fashion world. Check out what’s happening in the USA.

During the week April 18-24 - BE CURIOUS - FIND OUT - DO SOMETHING - SHOW YOUR LABEL (and post a picture on your Facebook page and MAFTTI’s.)

Our **Fair Trade Tea** will feature an exhibit about Fair Trade wearing apparel, and the showing of the trailer of [“The True Cost”](#), a film about ‘fast fashion’ that falls into the ‘must see’ category.

BANANAS – GOING BEYOND THE PEEL

For two years, April 2012-2014, it was possible to buy Fair Trade bananas in Mankato. Cub West had responded positively to a request from MAFTTI. In October 2012 MAFTTI hosted two Fair Trade banana farmers from Colombia for a weekend visit. Here they are - Felipe Zapata (l) and Jorge Restrepo (r) - in the KMSU studio after broadcasting their story to MSU students and whoever else was listening.



By mid-2014 Fair Trade bananas ceased to be available at Cub West – for reasons of supply and consistency of quality. The retail price was usually quite a bit higher than even organic bananas. The more you know about banana production, the easier it is to understand the circumstances. However, this particular reality does not sit easily with another one – the habit of many supermarkets in pricing ‘regular’ bananas as loss-leaders to attract customers into their stores on a regular basis.

Fair Trade bananas from Equal Exchange continue to be available at the St.Peter Food Co-op. Kudos to all MAFTTI’s friends there!

Equal Exchange has recently produced a first-rate web documentary that examines all the issues involved in trying to develop supply chains of Fair Trade bananas. It’s called “Beyond the Peel”. This is the story of how small farmers in Ecuador, a major banana exporter, are striving to change the way American consumers view and eat bananas.

GO [“BEYOND THE SEAL”](#) NOW!



THE SURVEY SAID

On April 5, MAFTTI met to consider the findings of the October Survey. This was something like a work session rather than an event with speaker or film and ethnic food. MAFTTI's lack of numbers was, however, mitigated by the presence of ten MSU students whom Sociology professor Paul Prew (also MAFTTI Treasurer) brought to the meeting to see "social science in action". Indeed, the discussion was much enriched by the vitality of representatives of a generation whom MAFTTI has not found easy to engage.



It was, thus, not surprising that issues of communication came up. In his initial presentation of the results, MAFTTI Chair Paul Renshaw showed that nearly 60% of the 66 respondents (75% of them over 50) indicated that they never look at MAFTTI's Facebook page. That does not mean that it is being ignored, just used more by people on the periphery, perhaps not involved with a church, who did not respond to the survey and may not have been asked to as they are not receiving the MAFTTI Newsletter.

All the same, it is very clear that there is work to be done on communications both electronic and in more conventional forms. Whereas the Survey results counseled MAFTTI against expanding into other social media than Facebook, offers were made of help with Instagram. Watch this space!

Three themes were the focus of brainstorming in groups:

Diversifying community support for Fair Trade

*How can MAFTTI draw people in from other circles, especially those with younger demographics?
Are there success stories from other non-profits that MAFTTI can learn from?*

Increasing active volunteer involvement

Over 40% of the Survey's respondents hope that MAFTTI can "do more" yet 92% of the respondents say that they want to keep their involvement with MAFTTI at the same level as in the past? What now should MAFTTI's priorities be? How can they be met?

Defining the direction of Fair Trade advocacy

The growth of a 'Fair Trade Town' depends on effective local advocacy about the purchasing and use of Fair Trade products and giving attention to trade-related issues with local political representatives. Where should MAFTTI's emphasis lie over the next three years?

A lot of interesting ideas were generated. The MAFTTI Steering Committee will meet on April 13 and start to think about them in the awareness that the continuing impact of MAFTTI depends on enabling a younger, less church-focused Fair Trade constituency to develop in the area.

More information about the findings of the Survey can be found [here](#).

FAIR TRADE – SCOPE AND BENEFITS



The Survey threw up many interesting and thought-provoking responses. One question asked for the rank ordering of six statements about the principal benefits of Fair Trade to producers, with the following result:

1. The Fair Trade system encourages women's participation in leadership as well as production.
2. The Fair Trade system requires that attention is paid to the protection of the environment.
3. A Fair Trade minimum price provides income stability when world commodity prices plunge.
4. The Fair Trade system is based on the establishment of long-term relationships between producers and importers/processors.
5. A 'Social Premium' is paid to Fair Trade producers for community development purposes.
6. The use of the premium payment requires democratic decision-making.

The limited number of males who responded to the questionnaire puts gender analysis on shaky ground. The fact that "women's participation in leadership" came out top may not, however, be wholly unrelated to the substantial female majority who completed the Survey. The small male group put the Social Premium as the principal benefit, but that did not alter the final position of the Social Premium in the rank-ordered list.

For a full understanding of Fair Trade it is important to recognize that the [Social Premium](#) payment is a distinctive and vital element in Fair Trade certification and is a concept that does not feature in other certification schemes. The Premium for coffee is 20c/lb coffee; for tea 23c/lb., to give just two examples. It is paid over to the producing Fair Trade co-op (or the Fair Trade Premium Committee of a larger production unit where labor is hired) for decisions on its use to be made locally by the producers on a democratic basis.

Fair Trade International has recently published its latest report on the [Scope and Benefits of Fair Trade](#). The Social Premium is dealt with on pp. 61-71, with some comments on the use of the premium on pp. 69-71. [1 Euro = \$1.14]

[Here](#) are some other stories about the use of Social Premium funds in Kenya. The source is British but the

pictures are really good!

CATCHING UP WITH MAFTTI

DATES for your calendar:



Sunday April 10: Mankato Area International Festival, MSU Centennial Student Union, 11:00a.m.-4:00p.m.



Saturday May 14: World Fair Trade Day – MAFTTI displays in coffee shops, books at Barnes & Noble and coffee sampling at Hilltop Hy-Vee and Cub East.



Saturdays at the Mankato Farmers' Market. Starting on May 21, MAFTTI hopes to have Fair Trade literature on display, 8:00a.m.-12 noon, six times during the season - May 21, June 11, June 25, July 16, July 30 and August 15. Expressions of interest with helping via the MAFTTI [website](#), please!

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maftti@gmail.com

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