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This is a MAFTTI Newsletter with a difference. It is focused entirely on a significant international Fair Trade Towns conference that took place in the UK in early July, attended on behalf of MAFTTI by Paul Renshaw, Chair and Lead Organizer.

It is, of course, very difficult to make a conference real to anyone not present. This Newsletter is not, therefore, a report but a resource - connecting readers to those elements of the conference program that seemed most useful to bring to the attention of Minnesotans and others in the USA.

MAFTTI and the rest of the international Fair Trade Movement believe that the growth of a holistic, inter-connected understanding about Sustainability is vital and that the values and practice of Fair Trade have something to contribute.

We only have one world. **Sustainability** is a **VERY BIG ISSUE** and the conference theme, **FAIR TRADE FOR SUSTAINABILITY**, is too important to ignore. So – read on, please, but probably not at one sitting. Following the links too quickly may be exhausting. That’s not fair. If you want a quick overview, go to the end and read what Tadeusz Makulski has written as a key staff person of the World Fair Trade Organization and the organizers’ own summary [here](#).



FAIR TRADE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

9th International Fair Trade Towns Conference
Bristol, England, July 4-5, 2015.

This impressively organized annual gathering drew 240 Fair Trade enthusiasts from 20 countries, mainly in Europe but also from Colombia, Nicaragua, Lebanon, Korea, Japan, Ghana, Canada and the USA. The Swedish contingent announced their ambition for Sweden to become the first sovereign Fair Trade Nation.

(Wales claims to be the first Fair Trade Nation, but is not quite sovereign!)



Fair Trade for Sustainability

The notion of Sustainability initially gained popularity in ecological circles but is now commonly conceived as having three pillars – **economic, social and environmental**. Conference presentations illustrated the contribution that the Fair Trade movement can make to sustaining Sustainability!

The conference concluded with the signing of the "Bristol Resolution" by Bristol's elected Mayor, George Ferguson, and two Municipal Presidents from the Lebanon, Walid Mushantaf (Aabra – pictured left) and Georges Youssef (Menjez). The resolution reflects the issues explored at the conference – sustainable development, the importance of local solutions to global problems, fighting poverty through (fairer) trade, with respect for the environment, and was also signed by delegates to the conference.



Much more about the Bristol Resolution is [here](#).

Participants from the USA

Five crossed the Atlantic to attend the conference in Bristol, port city of nearly 500,000 in south-west England - Emily Zacharczyk, Mariana Sears, Ira Josephs (all from Media, PA, First Fair Trade Town in the USA), Courtney Lang (National Fair Trade Towns Organizer) and Paul Renshaw (Mankato, MN, First Fair Trade Town in Minnesota).



Bristol

The Bristol Fairtrade Network hosted the conference in a year of two celebrations:

Bristol's 10th Anniversary as a [Fair Trade City](#).

Bristol's status as [European Green Capital](#) for 2015.



Under the leadership of Jenny Foster (Fairtrade Coordinator for Bristol and the South-West), the conference had the support of the very active [Bristol Green Capital Partnership](#) as well as the City Council.

Mayor George Ferguson gave conference participants a [warm welcome](#).

Here is the [conference program](#).

THE FAIR TRADE FOR SUSTAINABILITY STORY

Fair Trade and Environmental Standards



Harriet Lamb is CEO of Fairtrade International and author of "[Fighting the Banana Wars](#)". She spoke on "Creating a Fair Environment for Farmers and Planet". Her presentation is [here](#) and video [here](#).

Fair Trade, Smallholders and Climate Change



The Spanish presentation by Fatima Ismael, Director of the Soppexcca Union of Cooperatives in Nicaragua is [here](#); video with English translation is [here](#).

THE GOLD STORY



Greg Valerio, founder of [Cred Jewellery](#) in the UK and author of [“Making Trouble”](#) spoke about his passion for breaking into the “aspirational market” through pioneering [Fair Trade relationships](#) with small-scale artisanal miners in Colombia, Uganda and elsewhere. During his presentation Greg described the use of liquid mercury in binding specks of gold in villages where there is no knowledge of the danger to human health. In 2011, [NBC’s Richard Engel](#) reported from Mali on just the kind of situation that Greg was talking about.

Fair Trade and the Sustainable Development Goals



In the year 2000 member states of the United Nations agreed on eight [Millennium Development Goals](#) as a framework for international development cooperation for 2000-2015. What next? Well, in late September, a proposed set of 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#) will be adopted at the UN for the period 2016-2030. These will have universal application and not be confined in their focus to the Global South.

[Here](#) is the position paper of the Fairtrade Foundation (UK) which Kevin McCullough and two colleagues introduced. It is inevitably UK/EU-centric but contains a good deal of useful material.

[Here](#) is a statement about Fair Trade and the SDGs delivered at the UN on July 13, 2015 by Hans Theyer, Executive Director of Fairtrade America, on behalf of the international Fairtrade system.

RESILIENCE, CONVERGENCE AND FAIR TRADE

The two presenters of this intriguing workshop were a contrasting pair. One was Kate Gaskell, Managing Director of [Liberation Nuts](#), the UK’s only farmer-owned nut company. (Liberation was spawned by Twin Trading and is thus a “Fair Trade sibling” of Divine chocolate.) The other was Ian Roderick, systems

thinker and Director of the Bristol-based [Schumacher Institute](#) the think-tank inspired by the ideas of E.F. Schumacher of "Small is Beautiful" fame.

It was interesting to find out that the Schumacher Institute sees a key role for Fair Trade because of its [green credentials](#).

Some preliminary notes on the topic of this workshop are [here](#).



FAIR TRADE IN SCHOOLS

A workshop resource produced by an Anglo-Canadian team is [here](#) and provides many widely-applicable ideas.



FAIR TRADE & BUSINESS

A very impressive dimension of Bristol's Fair Trade commitment is the development of **Fairtrade Business Awards**, an idea which is also being taken up in Germany.

Bristol's Fairtrade Awards date from 2012, the outcome of the Fairtrade Network's engagement with local Chambers of Commerce, Green Business and Tourist Office to encourage businesses to switch to using Fairtrade products as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility and environmental policies. Over time, short articles in company newsletters and small slots at AGMs helped to communicate the basics to a wide business audience.

In March 2015, as this [Guide](#) shows, there were 77 entries for seven awards. The Fairtrade cause in Bristol has hardly been harmed by having Aardman Animations (makers of Wallace & Gromit, Chicken Run and Shaun the Sheep) prominent in the local business scene. Ultimately what the Bristol experience shows is the value of making the most of the resources available in the area.

DIGITAL CAMPAIGNING

Fair Trade Campaigns own Courtney Lang, with a Swedish colleague, ran a workshop on the ins and outs, do's and don'ts of [digital campaigning](#). Nice pictures even if you are not au fait with all the platforms.



SUSTAINABLE FOOD

Tom Andrews (Soil Association, UK) led a workshop designed to explore two questions:

- How can Fair Trade best engage with place-based initiatives on sustainable food?
- How can Fair Trade work better with organic, local movements to promote sustainable food nationally and internationally?

Notes on this workshop are [here](#).

NEWS FROM ELSEWHERE

Emerging Markets

Fair Trade is no longer a question of “Northern consumers” and “Southern producers”. In this conference, a workshop on **Emerging Fair Trade Markets in the Global South** took place, as shown by these [notes](#). The topics included the growth of Fair Trade Towns as well as Fair Trade producer groups.

Writing to participants shortly after the conference, Marco Coscione, representative of CLAC (Latin American and Caribbean Small Fair Trade Producers) shared the web page and Facebook of the **“Latin American Universities for Fair Trade”** campaign, started in August 2014.

<http://www.clac-comerciojusto.org/ulcj/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ulcj.clac>

His message was that CLAC “would like to know if your city or province has already some twinning partnership in Latin America, because from this established relation we could start by communicating to those Latin American cities the principles of the fair trade movement, the goals of the campaign, and so see if these cities can be potentially interested in the campaign, in getting in touch with fair trade producers and build with them and local civil society organizations a local fair trade strategy to join the campaign. Or, if you have no direct relations with fair trade producers’ organizations and you are interested in, we can also imagine opening a new dialogue on that: between fair trade towns and fair trade producers. (Marco Coscione can be contacted at marco.c@claconline.com)

Fair Trade Capital - Rostock

Germany now has over 340 Fair Trade Towns, second in the international league only to the UK. Click [here](#) and [here](#) for news, especially of Fair Trade achievements in the Baltic coast city of Rostock.

World Fair Trade Organization

The WFTO President Rudi Dalvai addressed the conference and assured participants that the WFTO network of producers, marketers, exporters, importers, wholesalers and retailers 100% committed to

Fair Trade greatly values the growth of the Fair Trade Towns movement. His colleague Tadeusz Makulski gave his impressions of the conference [here](#).



International Fair Trade Towns Steering Committee

The idea of a Fair Trade Town began in north-west England at the turn of the Millennium. In the little town of Garstang, Bruce Crowther, a local vet and poverty campaigner, spearheaded the emergence of the world's first "Fair Trade Town". Now there are [1,703](#) in 26 countries, with new initiatives developing all the time. No wonder, then, that some thought is being given to the question of closer coordination of the global movement through the clarification of a shared vision and trying to unite the grassroots movement behind international advocacy campaigns.

One more step along that road will be for as many Fair Trade Towns (and campaigns) to try to use the [Bristol Resolution](#) in their local program – which takes us back to the beginning!

Here's a last word from [Jenny Foster](#), leader of the team that organized the conference, to whom great thanks are due for a quite exceptional experience.

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