

A Brief History of Fair Trade in the UK and working with young people today



By Rachel and Gilly
ONE WORLD SHOP, Scotland, UK

1790's – Slave-free Sugar

For over 300 years, European countries forced Africans onto slave ships and transported them across the Atlantic Ocean to work in plantations in the Americas.

In **1791**, after the UK Parliament refused to abolish slavery, thousands of fliers were printed encouraging the boycott of slave sugar. Sales dropped by almost a half.

In an early example of **fair trade**, shops began selling **sugar grown in India, guaranteed to have been produced by 'free men'**.

1807: The slave trade was abolished in the UK

1800s – 1900 in UK

- **Considerable shifts around social justice within UK**
 - Shifts of power bases & individual empowerment
 - Religious shifts – missions (relief vs evangelism) / role of women / church & monarchy
- **Context of economic trade low's & highs**
 - Start of the fall of the British Empire
 - Mass rise in unemployment – rural displacement
 - Poor laws (1600 & 1830's)
 - Utilitarianism of labour – industrial revolution
- **About the individual**
 - Votes & voices for all, a new politics, gentry & gender
 - Class charters
 - Deserving & underserving poor

Fair Trade in UK 1948 -1979

1948: Oxfam opened its first Charity Shop in Oxford to raise funds for poverty-stricken countries, the shop is still open today

1964: Oxfam starts selling crafts and cards made in developing countries

1974: In response to the war in Bangladesh, Tearcraft began, importing jute handicrafts from destitute widows, to sell in Britain

1979: Traidcraft started, supporting handicraft production as a response to fighting poverty in Third World countries. It was known as an Alternative Trade Organisation (ATO)

UK Political landscape in 1980's-90s

Changing identities – social justice gets lost

- Anti-Thatcherism – demise of the Trade Unions and Britain's long standing labour movement
- Ending of 'old' politics about 'capital' labour / trade / class gives way to new agenda's ('me', culture, sexuality, the environment, radicalism)
- New justices & priorities: cheap knowledge - rise of the web / types of information /local global / supply chains / price points
- Modernity vs moral regulation – where does social justice and fair trade fit in?

1980 - 1999

1980s: Small independent shops, often linked with churches, began to sell Traidcraft products

1982: One World Shop was started

1989: IFAT (now WFTO) was formed

1992: Fairtrade Foundation began with the aim of developing a MARK for Fair Trade products to stand out in supermarkets

1994: First FT Marked product: Maya Gold choc

1995: BAFTS was set up. Fairtrade products are stocked in all UK supermarkets.

1998: FT sales reach £14 million, Divine chocolate was formed

2000 - Today

2000: The first Fairtrade bananas are introduced in over 1000 Co-op stores.

2001: The first 'Fairtrade Town' in the UK is established.

2005: FT Marked products range rise to 700 items

2008: Wales becomes the first Fair Trade Nation.

Sales of FT products in UK: £712 million

2013: Scotland achieves Fair Trade Nation status

2014: Sales of FT Products in UK: £1.67 billion

The One World Shop



Who are we?

A Social Enterprise with charitable status

8 paid staff, 20 volunteers

Volunteer Management Committee

Retail shop with extras

Wholesale service, FT tea and coffee delivery
service to local offices

Stalls for churches and community groups

Education programme in schools

Working with young people

Why is it important?

- Future activists, campaigners, buyers, politicians, change-makers

What are the challenges?

Student debt, unemployment, lack of engagement, austerity, not relevant to lifestyle

We work with young people – in churches



We teach Fair Trade in Schools



We provide paid placements for unemployed young people



We offer internships for University students



We do events with local black and ethnic minority communities



We engage young people in campaigns with our local politicians



But what's the future?

- Are our young adults switching off? Has FT lost its edge and become too mainstream?
- Climate change challenges
- Global/local issues - FT's carbon footprint
- How can Trade Justice and Fair Trade be relevant for the new generation?
- We're on an evolutionary process, where are we going next?!