

the City of London jointly became the 300th areas in the UK to become Fairtrade Towns.

As with each of the other 'towns' on the list, they brought together businesses, community organisations, schools and faith groups to meet the criteria for fairtrade status, showing substantial commitment to the promotion and use of fairtrade products, both at local authority level and in shops, businesses and community centres.

The City of London is focusing on its position as a business hub, with many of the major workplaces in the Square Mile including The Gherkin, Barbican Centre, Lloyd's of London, and the Bank of England, all using fairtrade products in the workplace. Recently, KPMG hosted an event targeting FTSE 100 business leaders to encourage them to engage with fairtrade.

Alongside these two, a further 243 towns have registered to work towards achieving fairtrade status and there has been a big rise in the number of fairtrade campaigning networks in the UK in the last year. There are now 60 fairtrade universities reaching out to students and nearly 4,000 fairtrade churches.


The success of the towns network spread beyond the UK in 2007 too, with the start of similar initiatives in 14 countries including Norway, Ireland, Sweden, Canada, the USA and Australia.

The year ended with the first fairtrade cotton clothing stand at the Clothes Show Live, featuring brands like People Tree and Hug, as well as traditional retailers that have introduced fairtrade lines, like Top Shop and Monsoon.

Interest in fair trade shows no sign of slowing. 'Fair trade is here to stay,' says Jeremy Percy of Shared Earth. 'People have begun to realize that enormous poverty in a world of plenty is not right. It's picking up momentum all the time because people know it's a just movement and want to do something to help.'

However, organisations face a constant mission to remind people of the fact that it is out there and it does change lives. Most of all, supporting fair trade continues to send out a message that consumers are unhappy with getting luxuries at the cost of other people suffering, encouraging big companies to change their ways.

At a time when we are thinking more about shopping locally, we can feel pushed and pulled when it comes to fair trade. In terms of our

carbon footprint, it does indeed make sense to get as many of our goods from the UK as possible. But, unless you have decided to never have a cup of tea or a bar of chocolate ever again, you and many others will continue to face the fair trade choice for years to come. 

What's happening for Fairtrade Fortnight

25 February - 9 March 2008?

The slogan for the fortnight this year is 'Change Today - Choose Fairtrade', with the national launch being held on Sunday 24 February on London's South Bank. The event is open to the public and will be themed around a Victorian Fairtrade Fairground, with fairtrade toffee apples and giant spinning tea and coffee cups.

The organisation has also designed 'Stock It' postcards for the public to hand to local store managers asking them to stock more fairtrade products.

For postcards, more information and details of other events happening around the country during Fairtrade Fortnight, visit

www.fairtrade.org.uk/fortnight.htm or call 020 7405 5942.

Useful contacts:

The Fairtrade Foundation
www.fairtrade.org.uk 020 7405 5942

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