



Minutes Worldshops in Europe: what is the trend? Webinar of the Working Group on Worldshops and Retailers 20 October 2017, 2-4pm (gotomeeting)

EUROPE

Present: Gabriella D'Amico (Chair of Committee – Associazione Botteghe Del Mondo Italia), Daniella Honigmann (Ecumenical Academy Prague), Eve Broadis (Fair Trade Scotland), Maria Ferrer (Kidenda), Märta Jacobson (Swedish Organisation of FT Retailers), Monica Gómez (SETEM), Poul Roed Kristensen (FT Gruppen, Denmark), Stefan Nijesen (Eco-collection), Valentina Andaloni (PROYDE), Simona Basile (Oxfam Intermon), Eros Shreve (WFTO-Europe), Francesca Giubilo (WFTO-Europe).

AGENDA
1. Welcome and presentation of participants
2. Exchange experiences on worldshop trend
3. Topics for further discussion
4. Identification of synergies and next steps
5. AOB

1. Welcome and presentation of participants

The purpose of the webinar was to share information about, especially regarding problems faced by, worldshops across Europe and their connection with Civil Society Organisations (CSO) as well as Social and Solidarity Economy actors.

Participants represented worldshops and Fair Trade networks from Italy (D'Amico), Spain (Andaloni, Basile, Ferrer), the UK (Broadis, who represented the one independent member), the Czech Republic (Honigmann), Sweden (Jacobson), Denmark (Kristensen), and the Netherlands (Nijesen).

2. Exchange experiences on worldshop trend

Each participant shared their experiences, especially hardships, with worldshops in their particular country.

Italy:

- Some worldshops are doing better than previously, but some are doing worse. Those who are doing well have achieved this through improving their management and working on a new layout. Important issues are also advocacy activities and trainings for the volunteers.
- Good collaboration with SSE actors to strengthen the role of the territories, involving local authorities. Participation as Italian Worldshops Association in RIPESS Europe Annual General meeting in Athens in June 2017.
- Good advocacy activity at national and international level by coordinating committees and fights for the SDGs paired with FT at the EU level as well as working on a national FT law to the final approval

Czech Republic:

- In Prague there have been worldshops for 9 years now. Originally there were 5 across the country, but now only 2 are left as many are turning to online shops only.
- Their main challenges are:
 - Increase of e-shops
 - Supermarket competitions
 - Poor education in regards to FT
 - Poor image of overly artisanal shops – the worldshops are now attempting to modernise
 - Good collaboration with CSOs on Fair Trade.

The UK, specifically Scotland:

- Scotland is a Fair Trade nation, the other being Wales (also in the UK).
- Fairtrade International (FI) is very well known in the UK, however not WFTO. This occurred when the name changed from IFAT to WFTO
- The 2 WFTO members in Scotland are SFTF (Scottish Fair Trade Forum) as a Network member and member Fair Trade Scotland. The aim is to work together gain more recognition of the WFTO GS label and educate the membership of SFTF.
- Fairly traded goods are widely used for products which are non-certified/guaranteed FT. There is a large problem with non-monitored FT networks who have importers as part of their membership. Many consumers do not know what a traditional worldshop is because many shops claim to be fair trade but stock everything for ethical/local/fairly traded products.
- Large supermarkets now sell own brand FT products, creating much more confusion on consumers' side.
- There is a need to work on education and to implement the Retailers Standard, but without a National Network/Platform to monitor this it is going to be a difficult task.

Spain:

- There are currently 75 worldshops operating in Spain today
 - 10 years ago there were 48 Oxfam worldshops, today there are 33 which are struggling
- 80% of population doesn't know about FT
- High competition with supermarkets because of pricing
- Due to the difficulties to sell artisanal items, FT shops in Spain banded together in order to create enough orders to support suppliers.
- Overall lack of funding creating difficulty. Shops are not entirely sustainable.
- 90% of workers at POS are volunteers.
- Problem of diversification of products

Sweden:

- Overall the worldshops within the Swedish FT Network (52 total members) are not doing well
- Working on reorganising membership categories (currently primarily defined by % of FT products, which is difficult for shops to keep up with) to better serve members
- Customers want a wide range of ethical products, not only FT. Worldshops want to sell organic products to appease them and better compete with traditional stores esp. supermarkets
- FI is much more well-known than WFTO
- Lack of funds in FT market – FT Network doesn't even have a permanent employee, only voluntary board members which causes constraints
- Some members have started online versions of their shops, however it is too early to determine the outcome of this
- There was progress in becoming a FT nation, however with the upcoming election there is uncertainty on it.

Denmark:

- Please note: as there is no organized cooperation among Danish FT shops today, Kristensen does not claim to represent the country as a whole, rather the Fair Trade Gruppen specifically
- The biggest FT shop in Denmark is growing 10% annually, but otherwise half of the FT shops in the country have closed in the last 5 years since FT shop cooperation ended. There are now less than 10 left.
- Challenges:
 - no cooperation in Denmark between worldshops
 - consumers think that FT means lower quality products due to poor public knowledge, however this is false as FT shops have no problems finding high quality products from guaranteed WFTO members
 - There are many kinds of social shops competing

The Netherlands:

- Currently boasts 300 world stores, but many are closing. FT is united by two main organisations (one wants to stay traditional while the other wishes to modernise) which struggle and compete with one another.
- Worldshops are not united which makes supplying them difficult – have to approach each shop individually
- Unlike many other countries, FT awareness is there, the assortment just isn't attractive enough to consumers

Among all the countries, the main challenges Worldshops face are:

1. Competing with large supermarkets/chain retailers
2. Physical worldshops competing with online retailers
3. Poor education/knowledge/awareness of FT and in particular of WFTO
4. Outdated structures and no fundings (older owners & reliance on volunteers)
5. Outdated products

3. Topics for further discussion

Advocacy/Cooperation with CSO and SSE actors

- IT is working on national FT law and on FT towns campaign which will launch next month
- CZE runs educational programs, works on FT Towns, participates in SUSY EC project together with Social and Solidarity Economy actors
- UK has been working with FT towns for 2 years, works on FT definition
 - Challenge is that in the UK there are Fairtrade towns rather than Fair Trade towns (monopoly of FI in the campaign) - Sweden faces the same problem
- DK participates on Danish Association for Social Entrepreneurship which aids growth and cooperation between different actors.
- ES works within the Social and Solidarity Economy Network in order to gain a stronger voice for advocacy. Has 20 FT towns some of which include FT in the public purchases. The campaign is led by IDEAS

FT Nations

- SE was working on becoming a FT Nation however this has become uncertain due to the upcoming election
- Due to the size of FI in the country it has been difficult to make WFTO voice heard
- Scotland had a similar struggle in that it did not include WFTO in the discussions when becoming a FT nation, rather BAFTS who is a WFTO member network but does not monitor its members
- Wales did include WFTO in applying for Nation status, but due to the lack of WFTO membership in the UK, the fairly traded products from BAFTS Importers and FAIRTRADE Mark products from commercial licensees or supermarket own label abound.

4. Identification of synergies and next steps

Synergy between UK & Sweden due to the overwhelming presence on Fairtrade Intl. in their countries and lack of awareness of WFTO, including but not limited to Fairtrade Towns and Nations. Would be good to discuss ways of tackling this issue. One way is to encourage Fairtrade Town movement in UK and Sweden – backed by Fair Trade Towns International - to adopt a 6th Goal which includes adding WFTO products to the criteria of having 4 FAIRTRADE Mark products in a shop to include WFTO GS products.

There should be increased synergies and communication between everyone as the difficulties were common among countries, even between those who have high FT awareness and those who do not.

Next Steps:

1. Excel sheet to share positive and negative experiences among workshops organisations
 - a. Need to create more communication within existing WFTO-Europe network– will share webinar with members as well as google sheet to share experiences also with those who could not attend webinar

2. More engagement in advocacy activities
 - a. Worldshops should get more involved in WFTO-Europe campaigns (annual topic) and advocacy activities with FTAO
3. Open up to more modern/other products
4. Workshop in Delhi on the implementation of the Retailers Standard at Global level
5. Webinar on Retailer Standard after Delhi, including participation of Italy and Germany who are already applying the Standard.

5. AOB

None.

END.