Editorial

Delineating the critical boundaries to and specific successes of Fair Trade to date
The articles published in Volume 4 Issue 2 of The Journal of Fair Trade exemplify many of the purposes of this journal to publish out-of-the-box thinking and research on a range of subjects important for rebooting Fair Trade, exploration of its meaning in practice, positing new frontlines and delineating the critical boundaries to and specific successes of Fair Trade to date.

Why do coffee farmers stay poor?: Breaking vicious circles with direct payments from profit sharing
Ruerd Ruben (2023)
Coffee is arguably the most ‘tried and tested’ of all fairly traded products: from the (often undrinkable) solidarity coffee offerings of the 1980s (tools for campaigns to end Apartheid or challenge the US Boycott of Nicaragua) to the initiatives of pioneers of the alternative trading movement like Cafedirect and the ‘mainstay’ of the certification movements starting in The Netherlands with Stichting Max Havelaar. Professor Ruerd Ruben raises the key question, ‘Why do coffee farmers stay poor?’ With so many interventions and major efforts having largely failed to lift coffee farmers out of poverty, the article identifies a new frontline and strategies for raising and strengthening coffee farmer livelihoods, such as cash transfers funded by tax revenues and profit redistribution.

Factors affecting consumers’ perception and willingness to pay for Fairtrade bananas during a cost-of-living crisis
Timo Jahae, Ourania Tremma and Luís Kluwe Aguiar (2023)
Fair Trade education and campaigns have, for many years, helped forge consumers’ identification of Fair Trade products with meaningful social, moral and ethical choices. Yet, this desire to choose ethically has been tried and tested in recent harsh economic conditions. Jahae, Tremma and Aguiar provide
us with a timely and intriguing insight into the strength of this idea in a ‘willingness to pay’ study on Fairtrade certified bananas during a cost-of-living crisis. They demonstrate that during a cost-of-living crisis, despite some consumers’ price sensitivity, and although there are limits, consumers are still willing to purchase and pay more for Fairtrade bananas.

How can you check your business is on the right track to social and environmental sustainability: A case study of Zest café
Kenneth Worden and Karis Lonie (2023)
Even as many larger companies have committed to Fair Trade and ESG pathways and approaches to trading, there are a multitude of business actors in our economic systems who, while socially and environmentally positive in their thinking and missions, have lacked the tools and means to pursue this agenda. Worden and Lonie spotted this gap for smaller social enterprises and set about to devise a useful and affordable ‘self-audit’ tool for business owners and entrepreneurs to test, and assure themselves, that their businesses are on track for sustainability. The authors then tested the tool in situ with a social enterprise in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Cultures of social markets
Simon Zadek (2024)
Also concerning social enterprises, the issue offers a thought-provoking global examination by Zadek of the diversity and wide range of socio-political profiles, models and experiences of social enterprises in countries outside the Anglo-Saxon economies and marketplaces: from China to Scandinavia, Taiwan and Germany. The piece offers vital reflections on the potentiality and risks of accepting a broader agenda for this wider range of social business actors in the world economy.

Fair Trade principles can transform the European Green Deal: Moving towards a Global Green Deal
Eric Ponthieu, Charlotte Vernier, Elena Lunder and Jorge Conesa (2023)
In an ‘of the times’ critique of the European Green Deal, authors Ponthieu, Vernier, Lunder and Conesa, argue that the comprehensive proposition lacks the key principles and values of the Fair Trade movement needed to ensure the
core ambition of the deal for a ‘just transition’ can be achieved and their inclusion would greatly improve its capacity to drive positive change within Europe as well as with international partners of the Global South. The article provides the building blocks for a campaign going beyond a Europe-centric deal and for a Global Green Deal.