Welcome to the Spring 2013 edition of MCIC’s Fair Trade Manitoba e-newsletter. In these pages, we will provide you with the highlights in local and international fair trade news, while giving you ideas on how to engage your school, workplace or community group in fair trade issues.

MCIC is getting ready for Fair Trade Fortnight, and is asking some local businesses to generate some Fair Trade Karma (pg. 2) as well as planning some events in Winnipeg and online to celebrate the weeks (pg. 3). Partway through the fortnight is World Fair Trade Day which will be marked by events happening in the province (pg. 4). We hope these events prove to be as successful as the recent Manitoba’s first ever Carrotmob (pg. 5) and our annual One-Month Challenge (pg. 7) which were both massive successes. We are also looking forward to the summer and the Winnipeg Folk Festival, which has confirmed that it will be a Fair Trade event for the second time (pg.3). You will find information about all that and more in this edition of Fair Comment.

Fair Trade Manitoba - a program of the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC) - works with retailers, consumers, organizations and government to inform people about the benefits of fair trade and encourage its wider availability in the province. To find out more about Fair Trade Manitoba and fair trade issues in general, visit www.fairtrademanitoba.ca.

Contact us at (204) 987 6420 or fairtrade@mcic.ca.
Fair Trade Fortnight

Fair Trade Fortnight is May 1 – 15, 2013. This is when everyone gets together to do fun activities in support of Fair Trade, from big public events, to special promotions in stores, to quiet efforts at home.

This year, Fair Trade Canada is launching a Karma Campaign (the idea is to promote doing good things, including using fair trade). So Fair Trade Manitoba will be offering a “karmic” opportunity for six businesses that support fair trade and who carry Camino products. Do good things and fair trade happens!

These six businesses are

- Two Farm Kids, 565 34th Street, Brandon
- Food Fare, 905 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg
- The Fresh Carrot, 24 Centre Street, Gimli
- Mountain Equipment Cooperative, 303 Portage Ave, Winnipeg
- Ten Thousand Villages, 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg
- Vita Health, 3500 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg

The selected businesses across Manitoba will do something “good” during Fair Trade Fortnight and will then be rewarded with 4 cases of fair trade La Siembra/Camino chocolate for their customers.

On May 11, 2013, World Fair Trade Day, you are invited to celebrate Fair Trade and the good work those 6 businesses are doing with the karmic reward of chocolate! A chocolate demonstration will be held at each business with the generous donation of fair trade Camino chocolates (thank you to La Siembra Co-operative). A representative will offer free samples of Camino chocolate and will talk about fair trade, fortnight, karma, and answer any other questions. Just by coming by and supporting these businesses, you can be rewarded too!

What do we mean by “good”? One business has arranged an entire day of festivities for World Fair Trade Day, a second is hosting a fair trade speaker at an evening seminar, and a third will have staff volunteering at Siloam Mission. This is on top of many good acts that these businesses do all year round.

For more information about what these businesses will be doing to get their Fair Trade Karma, check www.fairtrademanitoba.ca

For more information on the Fair Trade Karma Campaign, visit Fair Trade Canada’s website at www.fairtrade.ca

See the next page for some events that Fair Trade Manitoba will be hosting in Manitoba to celebrate Fair Trade Fortnight 2013.
Fair Trade: Sports Balls webinar
Thursday May 9, 2013
12:00 - 1:30pm Central Standard Time
Location: Online

A new and exciting initiative of the Fair Trade movement in Canada is the procurement of FTC Sports Balls by schools, clubs, community centres and leagues. With the exponential growth of youth and adult soccer in our country and the continuing popularity of volleyball, basketball and football, we have a great opportunity to take the message and the products of fair trade to the sports community. Find out more about the issues behind the sports balls industry and the quality and availability of FTC sports balls from the experts - those who have taken the opportunity to distribute them in Canada! Two randomly selected participants will receive a Fair Trade sports ball.

Join us for a webinar on May 9 with Sean McHugh (Canadian Fair Trade Network), Michael Zelmer (Fair Trade Canada), James Milligan, (Social Conscience) and David Hall (Y Focus Sports Balls). To register email Sumeep Bath, Public Relations Coordinator at the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation at pr@mcic.ca. Please also send Sumeep questions for the presenters.

Lunch and Learn with Jennifer Williams
Wednesday May 15, 2013
12:00pm- 1:00pm
Location: MCIC, 302-280 Smith Street, Winnipeg

Join us at the MCIC office for a Lunch & Learn with Jennifer Williams, CEO of La Siembra Cooperative, makers of Cocoa Camino chocolate, sugar and other fine fair trade products. Jennifer will talk about her recent trip to Latin America where she met with partner producer groups, and how fair trade directly benefits producers in the developing world. A light lunch (and Cocoa Camino chocolate!) will be served!

Ten Thousand Villages Canada is currently accepting resumes for two positions within their Winnipeg stores.

· Store Manager for the Henderson Highway, Winnipeg location.
· Store Manager for the Plaza Drive, Winnipeg store location.

If you or someone you know would have the interest and skill set for either of these opportunities, a cover letter and resume may be submitted electronically to michele.burnett@villages.ca by May 3rd, 2013. The job description and posting may be viewed on the Ten Thousand Villages website www.tenthousandvillages.ca
May 11, 2013 is World Fair Trade Day.

World Fair Trade Day is the largest Fair Trade event of the year in North America, and events take place May 1-15, 2013. Around 100,000 people attend hundreds of celebrations to promote Fair Trade and campaign for trade justice together with farmers and artisans.

Click here for more information about World Fair Trade Day and to see all the events taking place in cities around North America, including some in Manitoba.

World Fair Trade Day celebrations at Ten Thousand Villages
Saturday May 11, 2013
10:00am - 5:30pm
Location: 134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg

Ten Thousand Villages’ celebrations for World Fair Trade Day will include: music presentation by K.I.D.S.(Kids Initiative for Development and Sustainability), a display of Bags 4 Darfur (individual who makes bags from recycled materials and sells them with proceeds going to Darfur), a display of Sam’s Place (who use Fair Trade ingredients in their baking and cooking), a demonstration of how to make your own hula hoop, a Henna artist, a workshop where you can make a Mother’s Day card with hand made fair trade paper. There will also be samples of fair trade coffee, tea, chocolate, dried fruit, olive oil/Za’ataar, as well as draws for Fair Trade products.
On March 9, 2013 from 11:00am – 4:00pm at Chocolatier Constance Popp’s at 1853 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Fair Trade Manitoba facilitated Manitoba’s first ever Carrotmob.

The event was a huge success with over 200 Manitobans carrotmobbing the store to encourage Constance Popp to increase visibility of Fair Trade products in her stores and to switch her in-store hot chocolate drink to 100% Fair Trade. In fact, Constance reported *six times the sales of a regular Saturday* on the day of the Carrotmob. Fair Trade Manitoba would like to thank all the volunteers and the 200+ Manitoba chocolate-lovers who helped to make the event such a massive success story.

*Carrotmobs are becoming popular worldwide. There have been over 200 Carrotmobs in over 20 countries and all of them are bringing pressing social issues to light. The Carrotmob is a combination of the basic premise of positive reinforcement (i.e. the carrot as opposed to the stick) with the creative energy of the mob genre. Simply put, it is karmic reward. It encourages a business that is already making good and ethical choices by giving it more business – a group shopping spree. That business, in return, will sign a pledge making a commitment to further ethical improvements to their store.*

Over 200 Manitobans carrotmobbed the store on March 9, 2013, with Constance Popp reporting six times the sales of a regular Saturday.

The Carrotmob lasted from 11:00am till 4:00pm and included music, entertainment, prizes and a speech from Ian Hudson, Economics professor at the University of Manitoba.

There was plenty for everyone to do at the Carrotmob, including facepainting for the kids.

MCIC staff members and volunteers asked drivers by to honk if they love Fair Trade.
Giving a loved one flowers on a variety of occasions – Mother’s Day, Valentine’s Day, during an illness or as a sign of congratulations – is a time-tested winner of an idea. I have to brag that I often buy my wife flowers on a whim, especially when the weather is cold and cloudy (hello this past winter/spring!) and she (we) needs something to brighten up the house and her (our) mood.

Shopping one day at Safeway, I grabbed a bouquet along with groceries and headed for the checkout. The lady at the till looked over my flowers and said “Is there an occasion?” My answer was: “No, I often do this.” She was misty-eyed the rest of the transaction, making me wonder if someone needed to buy her flowers (or if she had allergies!).

Unfortunately, while cut flowers are really a beautiful expression of love and respect, their production often results in environmental degradation, health issues for workers, poverty and even conflict in the communities that produce them in East Africa and Latin America. In this article, I’ll focus on Kenya.

So, taking Kenya as an example, flowers are produced, more for the European market, in what is a water-poor country. To hurry growth, flowers are force-fed water (laced with chemicals) and this has caused the emptying of key aquifers and even freshwater lakes, such as Naivasha. Add climate change and a quickly growing population to the equation, and one can see that the flower industry, while creating jobs, is contributing to major drought, hunger and poverty issues.

Traditionally Masai grazing land, the Lake Naivasha region was taken over by white farmers during colonial times. It now hosts massive stretches of white plastic greenhousing. Three years ago, a drought followed by flash-flooding washed effluent and flower chemicals into the lake killing a large percentage of the fish. This led to a boom-to-bust situation. Many outsiders had moved into the area to take farm jobs but this disaster cut employment numbers as well as available food. Thus what followed was civil conflict which the world media described as tribal but was really economic.

Long, hard working hours, the effects of chemical sprays, child labour and instances of harassment of women have added to concerns about flower production. These negative conditions worsen under pressure from peak seasons leading up to the special days in our Western culture where we tend to give flowers as gifts. On top of that, the fact that the profits gained by international florist companies don’t stay in developing countries to foster economic growth and offer sustainable livelihoods, and that companies often evade paying taxes, has given industry critics more transgressions to look into.

The flower industry is now realizing that if they want their companies to survive overseas, they must follow more organic and fair trade practices. Cutting water usage is one step, but beyond that, paying taxes is recognized as a way of improving local infrastructure. The building of a system of local governance is essential so that pastoralists, farmers, fishers, local business and horticultural firms can find a way to work together for the benefit of all.

One of the factors driving companies to take on new social and environmental practices is publicity, specifically of the bad variety. As buying flowers is a feel-good act, companies want to make sure that consumers feel good about their product. This has led to reduced use of pesticides in favour of biological controls such as ladybugs. Companies have moved to voluntary rather than mandatory overtime and more training, less abuse and more supervisory positions for women. Workers say that there is still much to be done on increased, livable wages and on acceptance of unions in the workplace.

Fair trade flowers are still a relatively new item on the Canadian market. It has been a decade since the first certified flowers sold in Great Britain. Now, they are readily available on the West Coast and in large cities in Eastern Canada. Provincial groups, such as Fair Trade Manitoba, working with florist shops, have brought in special orders from BC but no store sells them yet on a regular basis. But this will happen soon as the fair trade movement in general continues to grow.

The cut flower industry blossomed in the 1990s as part of an expanded global marketplace. It is now the second largest part of the Kenyan agricultural sector after tea, and Kenya is the fifth largest exporter of cut flowers in the world. Half of Kenya’s 37 million people live in poverty and estimates are that two million people are directly or indirectly dependent on the flower industry. If you do the math, an equitable, sustainable cut flower economy (fair trade, organic) will bring prosperity, health, education and peace to this usually volatile country.

By Zack Gross, Fair Trade Outreach Coordinator at the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation.

This article was first published in the Brandon Sun newspaper.
The Fair Trade One-Month Challenge 2013 was a massive success! Hundreds of individuals and groups throughout the province consumed only Fair Trade coffee, tea and chocolate for thirty days which started on Valentine’s Day.

MCIC kicked off the One-Month Challenge with an event at the MCIC office with Fair Trade baked treats. People who attended created their own personalized Valentine encouraging “World’s Finest” to have a heart and use Fair Trade cocoa in its products.

At the launch of OMC 2013, guests enjoyed Fair Trade baked treats...

...while Manitobans of all ages created their personalized Valentines to World’s Finest.

Shaw TV Winnipeg’s Kim Kaschor came to the MCIC office to learn more about the One-Month Challenge and the art of coffee cupping.

Click here to view that spot.

Tour of Constance Popp’s store

Some of the two hundred Manitobans who participated in Manitoba’s first Carrotmob at Chocolatier Constance Popp earlier this year were lucky winners of ‘Golden Tickets’. These 28 Golden Tickets allowed the bearers to go on a tour of the store on Saturday April 6, 2013. Constance handed out samples of her delicious chocolates and demonstrated how she makes her chocolates and caramel!

Fair Trade Manitoba is excited to announce that we now have 70g bags of Fair Trade black, green, chai, oolong and smoked loose tea for sale at $5 a bag. Contact MCIC at (204) 987-6420 or fairtrade@mcic.ca for more information.