

Research Report

FairTrade municipality Zevenaar

An investigation on the perception of FairTrade amongst the inhabitants, businesses and organisations of Zevenaar



Van Hall Larenstein
International Development Management
Sustainable Value Chains
Applied Research

Linus Bohlsen, Florian van der Greef, Mirne Langendijk, Jennice Radant and Sjudi Visser
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Introduction

In this chapter, an introduction will be given to provide the reader with the goals and objectives of the research and the applying context.

Context

In 1967 the certification Fair Trade Original was established. The certification intends to contribute to a fair treatment and payment of farmers, producers and their communities.

The Fair Trade Town movement started in 2001 in Great Britain. The intention of the movement is to promote and support the availability, sale and use of products with the Fairtrade certification. Recently, an increasing number of cities and municipalities in the Netherlands have been able to obtain the certification.

In 2017, the municipality of Zevenaar, located in the Dutch province Gelderland, stated that it would like to affiliate on the movement of Fairtrade towns. During this process, a lack of information about the perception of the community on fair trade was identified. The municipality wanted to know to what extent the community will support the municipality to become fair trade. The municipality has approached a team of young professionals from Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences in Velp, to fill this knowledge gap. The team consists second year students from the study program 'International Development Management' with a specialization in 'Sustainable Value Chains'.

To narrow down the research problem, the 6W-formula has been used:

6W - Formula

1. What is the problem?

Lack of knowledge on the perception of Fairtrade of businesses in the municipality on Zevenaar.

2. Who is the problem owner?

Municipality

3. When did the problem arise?

Only recently, since Fairtrade has just become an important topic recently

4. Why is it a problem? (consequences)

Objective of becoming a Fairtrade town can only be reached through obtaining more information

5. Where does the problem occur?

In the town hall (local government)

6. What is the motive of the problem? (causes)

Zevenaar would like to become a Fairtrade town, because it agrees with its standards and ethics

Problem definition

The municipality of Zevenaar would like to gain more insights on the perception of local businesses, citizens and organisations as schools, hospital etc. on Fairtrade as this information will support the initiative of the council of Zevenaar to invest in ethical and sustainable sourcing. It is important to distinguish the perception of the different target groups and in several areas.

Therefore, the knowledge gap of becoming a Fairtrade town will be bridged by carrying out quantitative research. The municipality of Zevenaar can use the information as a measurement tool in order to check the possible feasibility of becoming a Fairtrade town.

Research objective

The research aims at gaining insights about local businesses in Zevenaar on their perception about familiarity, trustworthiness and effectiveness of Fairtrade and their willingness to partake/take action in different Fairtrade activities in Zevenaar, to bridge the gap of knowledge and to support the initiative of the council of Zevenaar by providing information to invest in strategies leading to the implementation of a Fairtrade Town in the municipality of Zevenaar.

Research and sub questions

How do organisations, businesses and citizens (referred to as target groups) in Zevenaar perceive the concept Fairtrade?

- To what extent are the target groups familiar with Fairtrade?
- To what extent are the target groups willing to participate in making Zevenaar a Fairtrade Town?
- To what extent do the target groups perceive Fairtrade as trustworthy?
- To what extent do the target groups perceive Fairtrade effective and impactful?

Literature review

A lot of research has already been done on Fairtrade and the Fairtrade-town movement. The most relevant findings have been collected and are presented to the reader in this chapter. This will help to obtain a solid understanding of the research topic and the conducted survey.

Definition and requirements of a Fair Trade Town

FairTrade Town is a title given to municipalities in which shops, restaurants, businesses, organisations, citizens and the local government work together on fairtrade. In order to be registered as a FairTrade Town in the Netherlands, the municipality at stake has to live up to certain campaign criteria, according to FairTrade Gemeente (2019).

The first requirement is the establishment of a local group that must be actively taking initiative in becoming registered as a FairTrade Town and will keep the title. This group must develop a plan of action and an up-to-date web page for the campaign. The local government is supposed to be part of or support the local group.

Secondly, the municipality must buy FairTrade products for its own use, try to incorporate Fair Trade principles in their (purchase) policy and handle accordingly. Thereby, the municipality should be able to show that they made an effort in using its networks to spread the word and raise awareness about fair trade. Also, the municipality must financially and practically contribute to the programme.

Thereby, the organisation FairTrade Gemeente has established a certain number of businesses and organisations that must use or sell FairTrade products within the municipality. Moreover, a strategy is to be developed to keep the campaign in the news on the long term. On top of that, an event must be organised to make sure that the public is involved in the process.

Lastly, the work group takes at least 6 initiatives in supporting businesses to operate with Corporate Social Responsibility. At least one of these initiatives should succeed and the work group should have an active role in the execution of the project.
(FairTrade Gemeente, 2013)

Dutch Fairtrade towns and their difficulties

Since the Fairtrade town movement has reached the Netherlands in 2009, many cities and towns have obtained the certification. There are currently 89 Fairtrade towns in the Netherlands and even two Fairtrade provinces. The movement of Fairtrade is slowly extending over the country, thus gaining more publicity. (Fairtrade Gemeente, 2017)

Extensive research has been done in the past on a Fairtrade town in the Netherlands. Nearby Zevenaar, the municipality of Renkum, has successfully gone through the process of obtaining the title. With a total population of 32.000 inhabitants, the municipality is rather small. The worldshops in the municipality of Renkum, in collaboration with local citizens, formed the incentives to start the process of becoming a Fairtrade town, therefore for fulfilling the first criteria. (Voermans, et al. 2012)

The group defined seven key questions to measure if the municipality of Renkum would be able to become a Fairtrade town, which have been essential during the certification process:

1. What is the current availability of Fairtrade products by local businesses and entrepreneurs in Renkum?
2. What are possible scenarios that could lead to obtaining the title of a Fairtrade municipality?
3. What communication strategies are most effective for the municipality of Renkum to gain the title?
4. What monitoring process is the most efficient for the municipality of Renkum to maintain the title in the future?
5. What are motives and experiences from local entrepreneurs and businesses to (not) implement Fairtrade products?
6. What entrepreneur strategies in the field of Fairtrade could be identified?
7. What is the correlation between Fairtrade town campaign and the mainstream Fairtrade supply?

Based on this, three elements were formulated to research on: politics, economics and social. Politics had an aim at researching new relations between producers and consumers. Secondly, the economic part aimed at the development of the quality of the products and the diversity of the supply. Lastly the social part researched aimed at the local groups to work together with its aims and focus on Fairtrade. (Voermans, et al. 2012)

Conclusions about Fairtrade campaign in the municipality Renkum

The strong representation of several Fairtrade stakeholder groups made it possible to locally communicate the message and knowledge about Fairtrade. Specific knowledge about Fairtrade gets enhanced by locals social organisations and worldshops. The municipality of Renkum achieved their criteria in the field of education, mainly due to the presence of a strong local support network. (Voermans, et al. 2012)

In the field of extending local supply of Fairtrade products, more success could be made. The entrepreneurs in the municipality of Renkum have delivered Fairtrade products already, however it has not been present in worldshops or business strategies yet. The extension of local demand has gained an momentum by creating new initiatives throughout working relations. New shops have been opened and bigger companies extended their Fairtrade vision. (Voermans, et al. 2012)

Within the municipality of Renkum there was insufficient knowledge about Corporate Social Responsibility. Therefore new initiatives have been formed to extend knowledge and experiences in this field, and an annual CSR price is given. (Voermans, et al. 2012)

Conclusions and recommendations for potential Fairtrade towns.

Something to note if companies and entrepreneurs are approached, is that a clear differentiation is made for the strategy. It is highly important that a uniform approach does not work, so a more personal approach is needed for companies to participate. The success of a Fairtrade town is partially dependent on new partnerships between local stakeholders and it is necessary to share knowledge. (Voermans, et al. 2012)

When starting the first development face of the Fairtrade town, a solid fundamental for Fairtrade was formed. Characteristic for this fundamental were the two worldshops and the several initiatives that the municipality of Renkum carried out, such as serving Fairtrade coffee. The workgroup for the municipality of Renkum created an extensive network at a local level related to Fairtrade. Something essential within this workforce, is the willingness to work together by sharing knowledge, experience, create initiatives and supporting each other. (Voermans, et al. 2012)

It is only possible to be a successful Fairtrade town if all stakeholder groups work together within the municipality of Renkum. This is something the municipality should put a lot of effort in and make sure partnerships are formed at new different levels. Lastly, CSR at a local level should be promoted as it can bring certain difficulties. (Voermans, et al. 2012)

Hospital Rijnstate Zevenaar

Rijnstate is a hospital with four different locations in the center of Gelderland. One of them is located in Zevenaar. In November 2016, the Rijnstate hospital has become the first „Fairtrade Hospital“ in the Netherlands. One year earlier, Rijnstate expressed the wish to become a Fair Trade hospital, and a working group set to work together with the municipality of Arnhem to achieve this goal.

In practice, this meant that at least the coffee and tea had to be replaced by Fair Trade alternatives. 2.9 million cups of coffee are poured in Rijnstate and around 900,000 bags of tea are served each year at the hospital, for patients, visitors and employees alike. Because of this enormous volume, serving Fair Trade coffee and tea is the major criteria the hospital has to focus on. In addition, Fair Trade products were introduced in the staff restaurant and the baby hats for newborns were ordered from the Pani foundation. The catering business with a shop located in the hospital also embraces the idea. The inclusion of an assortment of the World Shop is now being discussed (Van Velse, 2016).

The choice for Fair Trade products is in line with Rijnstate's policy to increasingly use sustainable solutions. For example in the field of energy saving, environment, waste flows, sustainable mobility, purchasing and the responsible use of raw materials and materials in construction and renovation projects. Rijnstate also commits itself to the obligation to organize a Fair Trade event at least once a year as a Fair Trade hospital. (nieuws.nl, 2016)

Fairtrade Schools

In terms of Fairtrade schools, Zevenaar is lacking behind. None of the 21 educational organizations within the municipality is registered as a Fairtrade School.

The Netherlands introduced its first Fairtrade School in 2009. The Julianaschool in Schagen was the first school to receive the Fairtrade School title. This quality mark is awarded to schools that use 'honest' products and explain this to pupils, teachers and parents. All primary and secondary schools can receive the Fair Trade School title if they meet three criteria. They must use Fairtrade products such as coffee, tea, spreads; must communicate about this on the website, in the school newspaper and, for example, through articles in the local newspaper, and are obliged to organize activities to promote Fairtrade (verus, 2009)

Increasing availability of Fair Trade products

Over the last decades, Fair Trade products have been on the rise in the Netherlands. While originally one would only encounter the Max Havelaar label in so-called 'wereldwinkels' dedicated at selling fairly-produced products to contribute to better working conditions in the Global South, nowadays the shelves of every supermarket are filled with certified coffee. From 2007 until 2017, the consumption of Fair trade products tripled in the Netherlands making it the most important seal, together with the organic certification, that responsible consumers look for (van der Ha 2017). Additionally, there are not only private purchases, but also many companies who increasingly buy their coffee and tea with the Max Havelaar label.

With constantly growing demand every year, one can expect that Fairtrade will become even more 'mainstream'. The supermarket chain PLUS has made a big step into this direction: It tries to offer as many certified home brand products as possible (van de Ha 2017). If this trend continues, some consumers will start consuming Fairtrade products unconsciously, simply because of their availability.

To summarize, it is observed that there's a growing availability and demand for Fairtrade products. One can expect to see this trend continuing in the future.

Rijnstate hospitals is the first fairtrade hospital in the Netherlands, November 2016. (see above)

The Worldshop Zevenaar is one of the known shops that sells Fairtrade products. They promote fair trade based on dialog, transparency and respect. The producers of the products that the WorldShop sells, gives the producers a chance to better their livelihoods. They focus on coffee farmers, wood carvers and ceramists.

When starting up a new brand of Fairtrade products, it is important to gain brand awareness. This can be done through investing in Google Shopping ads, in retailers (so there are more places that the brand can be found) or through social ads.

It is important that the interesting story behind each product can be seen, read somewhere. This makes it possible for consumers to understand why the price is as high as it is, but also so that they can be proud of something they wear.

When looking for new products that are ethically sourced, it can get very difficult. There are still just a few connections with the south that are completely transparent. Not of all the manufacturers and producers want it to be known what goes into the making of their product. Make sure that the products that are being bought have either a certification or that they are from producers whom are known to the shopkeeper and whom are trustworthy.

Consumption of Fairtrade products

In 2013, around 4,5 million households in the Netherlands (which accounted for 59% of the total households) bought at least once Fairtrade products. The frequency that households bought a Fairtrade product was 6,5 times per year. Most of the products were bought at supermarkets, which can be seen in the figure below. 93% of the entire Fairtrade revenue was made in supermarkets. (de Goede, 2014)

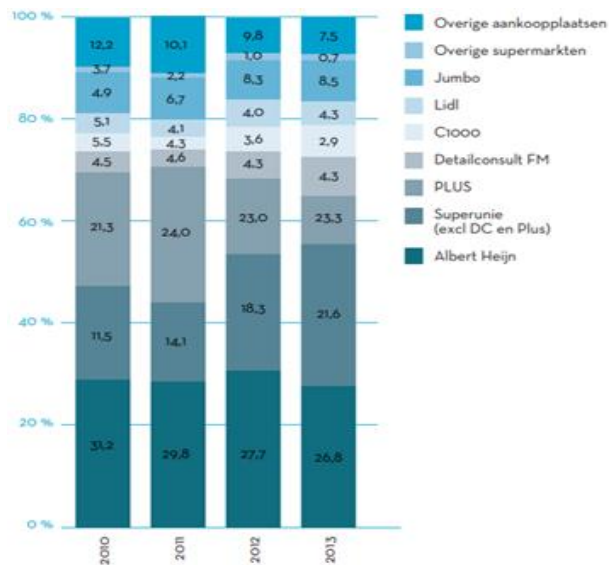


Figure 1: Market shares in 2010, 2011, 2012 & 2013 (based on spending, %)

Methodology

In this chapter, it is explained which strategies and methods were used in order to conduct the research. Furthermore, it is elaborated why these strategies and methods were chosen.

Research strategy

In order to work towards answering the research question, a survey will be carried out, which can be found in the annex. The reason for choosing a survey is because quantitative research is conducted; it has no relation with underlying reasons as the implementation in this case. This research attempts to generate statements and theories that tell something about the perception of Fairtrade in the municipality of Zevenaar. Quantitative research was chosen as it will provide the possibility to generalize the outcomes.

The population in question was the community of the city Zevenaar and villages around it. This will then be divided into 3 groups based on different occupation. The different groups will be Businesses (subcategory: big/small), Institutes (hospitals, physiotherapy, doctors, educations) and Citizens (farmers, suburban area, city centre).

Out of this operationalised population a sample will be drawn, since the entirety of the population would be too big to be examined. To determine the respondents, a randomly produced systematic sample will be used. Shops will be randomly picked, every 3rd one will be chosen. For the institutes, every address with the randomly chosen number 2, 6 & 8 at the end of the house number shall be picked. The population for citizens will be picked in the same way as the ones for institutions, only with the random generated number 1, 4 and 5.

The approach to counteract the disadvantages of survey research, including socially desirable answers, will be discussed in the research material. In case of non-response the reason for this will be asked. To prevent non-response, the interviewers will not give up immediately in case of refusal and think in advance about a short and powerful one introduction.

Research material

The use of closed questions in this study has the advantage that they are more reliable and that they also provide data that is objective, replicable, quantifiable and be generalizable. The use of closed questions has the preference over open questions, because of the wish to find out the reach of Fairtrade.

The analysis of the questionnaire will be done through the quantification of the answers given to the multiple choice questions, and then add the numbers together. This quantification takes into account the formulation of the question, be it positive or negative.

Conceptual framework

as visualised in figure 2, 'perception' has been conceptualised into the four pillars familiarity, willingness to partake, trust and effectiveness. Each pillar has its own indicators to be measured. For instance, familiarity is measured by the awareness of fairtrade, frequency of the use of fairtrade products and the involvement in fairtrade projects.

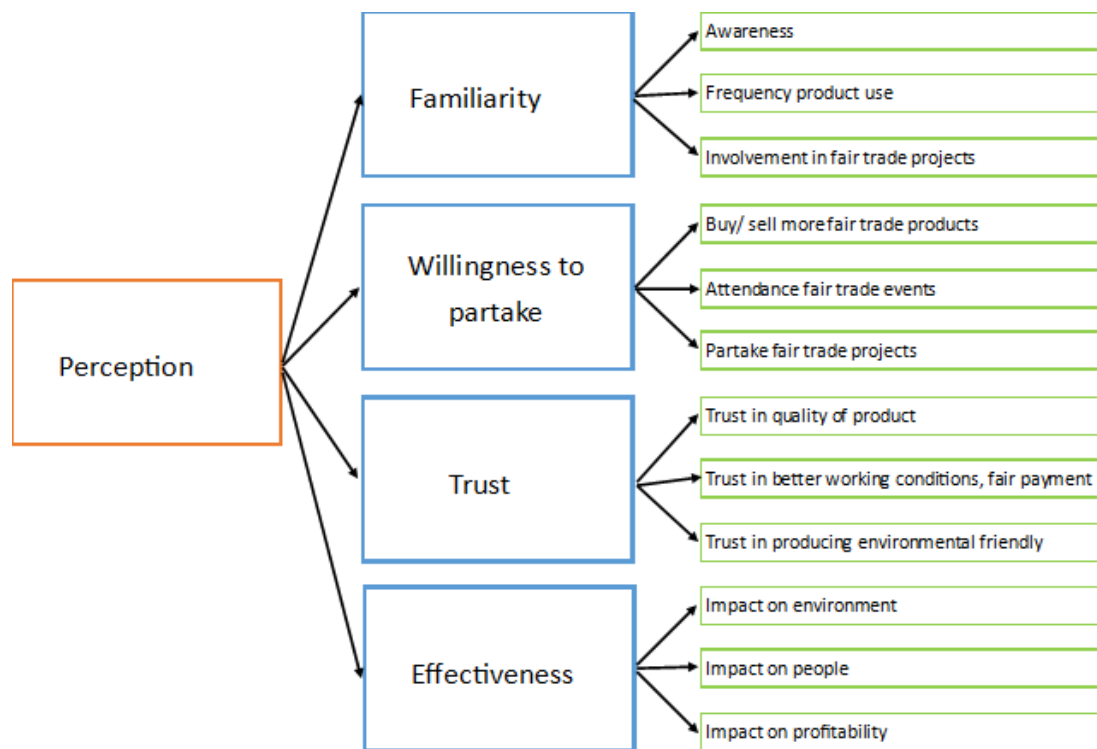


Figure 2: Conceptual framework of 'perception'

Findings

In this chapter, the findings of the survey are presented to the reader. From the raw data, the most important information was filtered out to provide a detailed and understandable overview of the obtained answers. Each graph has a short description which describes the presented information.

General findings

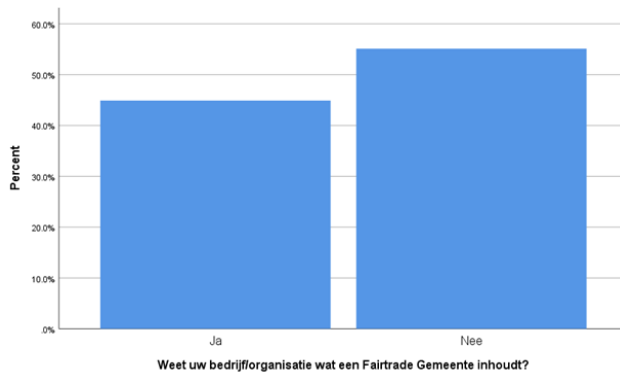


Figure 3: bar chart

This graph indicates that around 55% of the companies/organisations do not know what a fairtrade municipality is about.

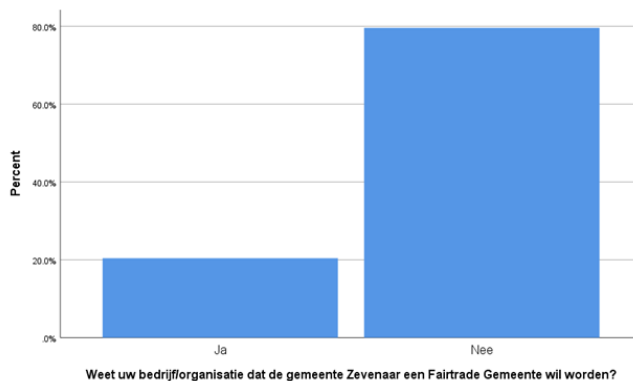


Figure 4: bar chart

This graph indicates that around 80% of the companies/organisations does not want the municipality of Zevenaar to become a Fairtrade municipality.

Familiarity findings

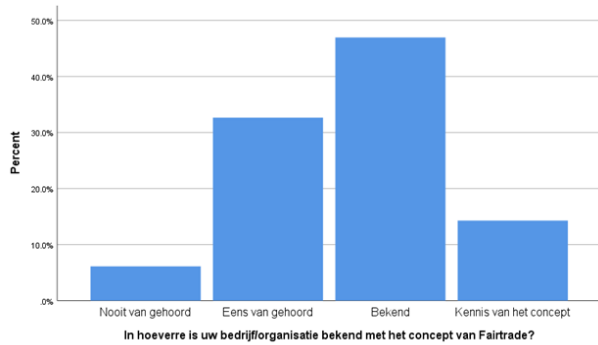


Figure 5: bar chart

This graph indicates how companies/organisations are familiar with the concept of Fairtrade. The majority knows about the concept or heard about it.

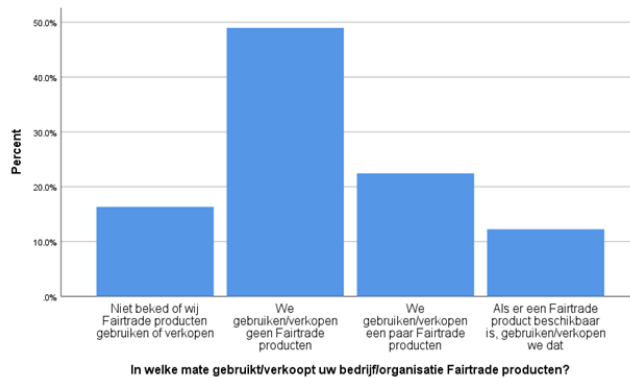


Figure 6: bar chart

This graph shows if companies/organisations use/sell Fairtrade products. Around 50% does not use/sell products and another 25% sell a few products.

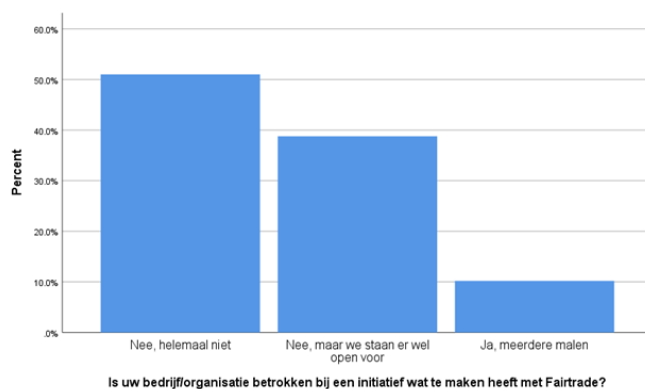


Figure 7: bar chart

This graph indicates if companies/organisations are participating with any Fairtrade initiatives. The majority is not involved at all, around 40% is open for participation.

Trust findings

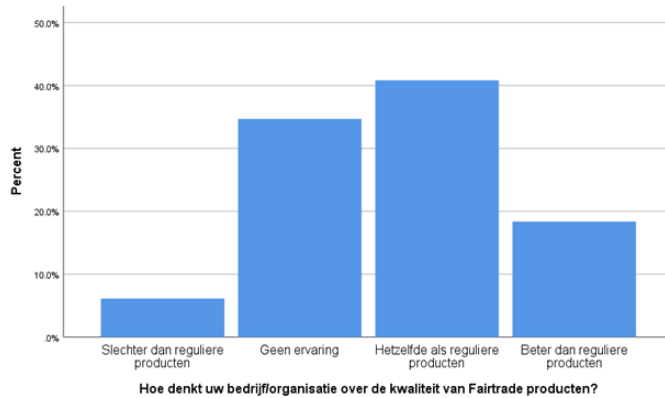


Figure 8: bar chart

This graph measures how companies/organisations think about the quality of Fairtrade products. The majority either has no experience or find that the quality is the same as regular products.

Effectiveness findings

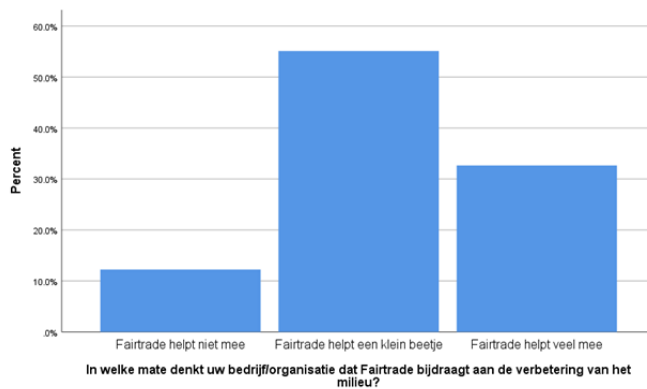


Figure 9: bar chart

This graph indicates if companies/organisations think that Fairtrade contributes to the improvement of the environment. The majority thinks that Fairtrade helps contributing to an improvement of the environment.

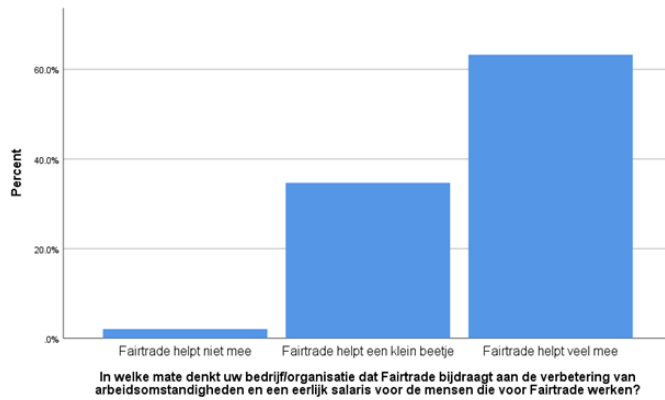


Figure 10: bar chart

This graph indicates if companies/organisations think that Fairtrade helps improving labour circumstances and give them a better salary. More than 60% agrees and another 35% thinks it helps improving it a little bit.

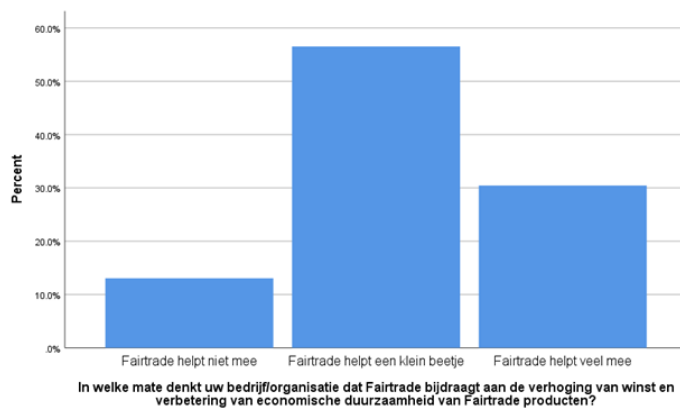


Figure 11: bar chart

This graph indicates if companies/organisations think that Fairtrade helps improving profit and improvement of economic sustainability of Fairtrade products. The majority thinks it helps a little bit and another 30% thinks it does help a lot.

Participation findings

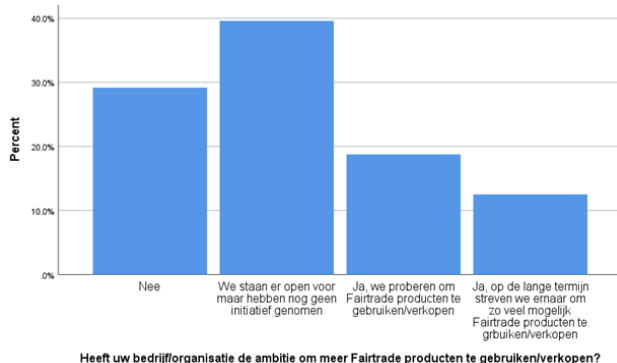


Figure 12: bar chart

This graph indicates the ambition companies/organisations have to use/sell more Fairtrade products. Around 40% does not use/sell it, but is open for it. Around 30% is not open for it, and the remaining 30% either tries to use/sell it or works on it in the long term.

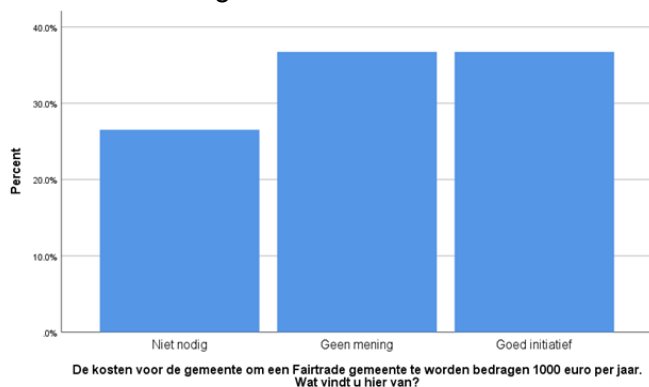


Figure 13: bar chart

This graph shows how companies/organisations think about an annual payment of 1000 euro that the municipality needs to do in order to become a Fairtrade municipality. 35% is in favour and 25% is against it.

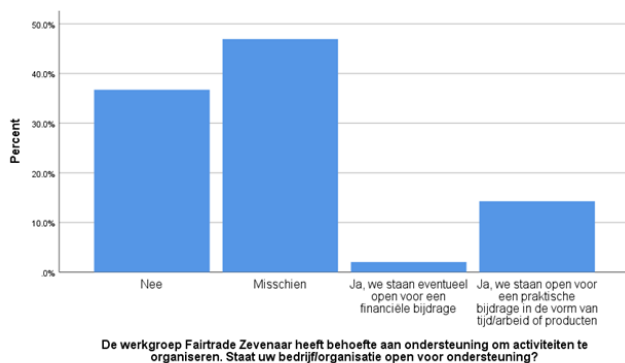


Figure 14: bar chart

This graph indicates if companies/organisations want to support activities that the municipality needs to carry out. The majority is against or might be open for this.

Correlations between dimensions

The following graph measured correlations between mean values of the dimensions. Since more than 30 companies/organisations have been questioned, Spearman's correlation has been used. Spearman's correlations leads to the following correlations, with an Alpha higher than 95%.

			Participation	Effectiveness	Trust	Familiarity
Spearman's rho	Participation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.357*	.148	.398**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.012	.309	.005
		N	49	49	49	49
	Effectiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.357*	1.000	.335*	.425**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.	.019	.002
		N	49	49	49	49
	Trust	Correlation Coefficient	.148	.335*	1.000	.505**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.309	.019	.	.000
		N	49	49	49	49
	Familiarity	Correlation Coefficient	.398**	.425**	.505**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.002	.000	.
		N	49	49	49	49

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

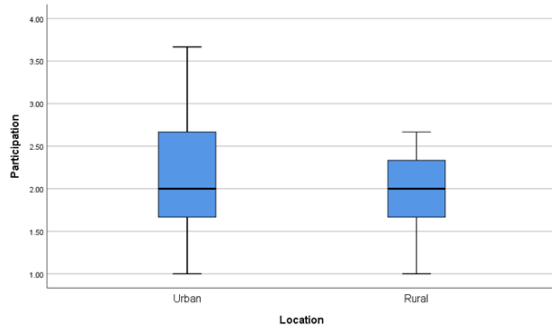
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 15: Correlations

- There is a **50,5%** correlation between businesses with high *trust* and *familiarity*, since Alpha = 0.000
- There is a **42,5%** correlation between businesses with high *effectiveness* and *familiarity*, since Alpha = 0.002
- There is a **39,8%** correlation between businesses with high *participation* and *familiarity*, since Alpha = 0.005
- There is a **35,7%** correlation between businesses with high *participation* and *effectiveness*, since Alpha = 0.012
- There is a **33,5%** correlation between businesses with high *effectiveness* and *trust*, since Alpha = 0.019

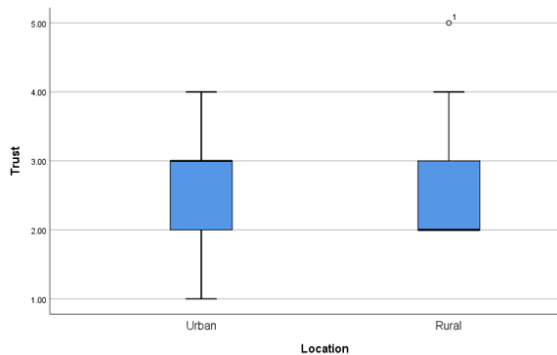
Findings related to location of companies/organisations

The following boxplots indicate potential differences between urban and rural companies/organisations and their way of answering questions. Urban refers to Zevenaar and rural to all the surrounding villages.



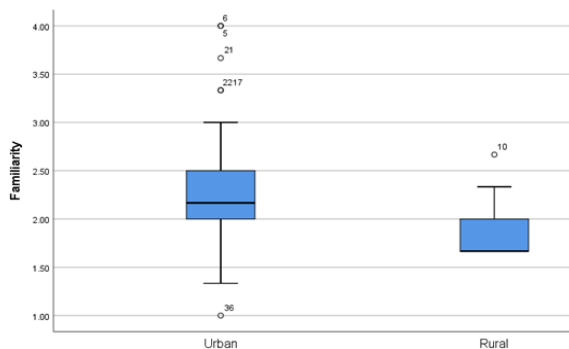
This boxplot shows that 50% of urban companies have a high trust in Fairtrade, whereas Rural companies only have 25%.

Figure 16: boxplot



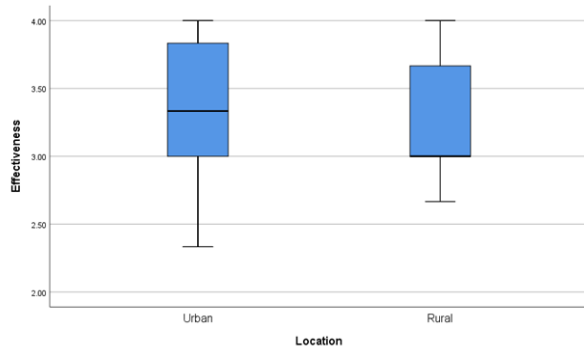
This boxplot shows that the rural companies are less familiar with Fairtrade than the urban companies.

Figure 17: boxplot



This boxplot shows that both urban and rural companies/organisations think that Fairtrade is effective.

Figure 18: boxplot



This boxplot show that urban companies/organisations are slightly more interested in participating than rural companies/organisations.

Figure 19: boxplot

Discussion of findings

In this chapter, the findings presented in the previous chapter are discussed, critically reflected on and compared to the expectations based on the literature review. Furthermore, the validity of the results is analysed and the limitations of the research are stated.

Familiarity

The first topic this chapter is discussing is the familiarity of Fairtrade within businesses and organisations in Zevenaar. Possible answers included: unfamiliar with the concept, heard of it, familiar with it, and knowing the principles.

As the findings indicate, almost 80% of the businesses and organisations have either heard of (roughly 32%) or are familiar with Fairtrade (about 46%). The high concentration of responses within the two bars in the middle of the scale might be due to the high presence of Fairtrade products in the everyday life of the employees, being it when buying groceries or seeing big fashion companies advertising their Fairtrade certified clothing. It is rather unlikely that their knowledge about Fairtrade is coming from within the business/organisation, unless it is a key component in their values. With only 6% of the respondents being totally unfamiliar with Fairtrade and 13% not only knowing what Fairtrade is but also knowing the concepts, those respondents only take up a very small percentage of the in total 49 respondents. The unfamiliarity might derive from very little knowledge about sustainability in general and also very little interest regarding this topic. The 13% on the other end of the scale indicate a strong knowledge as well as interest in Fairtrade. As the Fairtrade principles can only be found on their website or on other related platforms, it is likely that businesses and organisations ticking this box have been done additional research on this topic.

Overall, the results are in not surprising. Most people are surrounded by Fairtrade products on a daily basis and therefore have at least basic knowledge about it. Little extensive knowledge on the other hand wasn't unexpected either, as it is rather unlikely to have knowledge about specific certifications and their core values.

Willingness to participate

The next topic discusses the willingness to participate in Fairtrade related activities. The question posed to the organisations and businesses was: 'The working group Fairtrade Zevenaar needs support to organize activities. Is your company open to support the working group?'. Possible answers included: No; maybe; Yes, we may be open to a financial contribution; and yes we are open to a practical contribution in the form of time/labor or products.

The findings indicate a strong hesitation regarding the willingness to support the working group Fairtrade Zevenaar. More than a third of the respondents is not willing to support the working group in any form, whereas another 46% stated they might be willing to give support. This strong reluctance to support might come from the general distrust towards the municipality of Zevenaar. Several respondents mentioned this during the interviews resulting in the unwillingness to support any kind of Fairtrade related projects. This makes it very questionable

if they are really unwilling to support Fairtrade projects in general or if they just don't want to support/ work with the municipality of Zevenaar. Looking at the respondents who are willing to contribute, only 2% might be willing to provide financial support whereas 14% indicate their willingness to support the Fairtrade working group with either time, labour or products. There might be a link between the good relationship between businesses/organisations and the municipality, but this is pure speculation and no actual prove for this hypothesis. The least arguable reason is the one that the interviewed companies/organisations simply have a positive attitude towards Fairtrade and therefore want to support projects related to the topic. Another chart indicates the strong relationship between the businesses/organisations willingness to support the Fairtrade working group and the extent to which they use/sell Fairtrade products. Businesses/organisations that do not sell any Fairtrade products are more likely to be unwilling to support the working group Fairtrade Zevenaar, whereas the unwillingness to support the working group within the companies/organisations that are selling Fairtrade products is much less. The strong unwillingness of businesses and organisations to support the working group Fairtrade Zevenaar was unexpected and surprising. If there is an actual correlation between their unwillingness to support Fairtrade projects and the distrust towards the municipality of Zevenaar cannot be proven by data and is therefore not to be seen as a fact but more as a speculation.

Trust

Another topic being discussed in this report is the question of the extent to which businesses and organizations perceive Fairtrade as trustworthy. Businesses and organisations were being asked about their perception of the quality of Fairtrade products. Possible answers included: worse than conventional products; no opinion, because no use of Fairtrade products; same as conventional products; and better than conventional products.

The majority of the respondents either indicated they do not have an opinion, because they don't use Fairtrade products (34%) or they perceive the quality of Fairtrade products as the same as conventional products (41%). This makes sense, as Fairtrade's main focus does not lie on higher quality but mainly on fair payment. 5% of the respondents even indicated that Fairtrade products are worse than conventional products. Even though this is just a small percentage, one wonders why people think that way. Even though quality is not the main focus of Fairtrade, increasing farmers' income goes hand in hand with the improvement of productivity and quality of their crops. This fact is indicated in the last possible answer to choose, which represents the respondents who claim that Fairtrade products are better than conventional products. Even though it is not even half of the amount of the respondents compared to the ones who said they don't see a difference in quality between Fairtrade and conventional products, it still overweighs the amount of respondents saying Fairtrade products are worse than conventional products.

The outcome of this part of the survey was not unexpected and didn't reveal anything surprising regarding the trust of businesses and organisations towards Fairtrade products. Most of the respondents either don't see a difference in quality or simply do not have an opinion as they don't buy Fairtrade products.

Effectiveness

The final topic being discussed is the businesses and organisation's perception on the effectiveness and impact of Fairtrade products on different aspects. These aspects being: improvement of the environment/planet; improvements of working conditions and fair payment; and improvement of profitability and economic sustainability of Fairtrade products. Each aspect will be discussed individually.

The first question the businesses/organizations were being asked on the topic of effectiveness and impact was if Fairtrade contributes to the improvement of our environment/planet. Possible answers included: Fairtrade isn't contributing; Fairtrade is contributing a little bit; and Fairtrade is contributing strongly.

With roughly 55%, the majority of respondents thinks that Fairtrade contributes a little bit to the improvement of our environment/planet. Next coming up with 32% are the respondents thinking Fairtrade is strongly contributing. The smallest group, with only 12% thinks that Fairtrade isn't contributing at all to the improvement of our environment/planet. Overall, this is a very positive outcome as almost 90% of the respondents think that Fairtrade at least has somewhat of a positive impact.

The second question posed to the businesses and organizations was to what extent they think that Fairtrade is contributing to the improvement of working conditions and fair payment of the people working for Fairtrade. Possible answers included: Fairtrade isn't contributing; Fairtrade is contributing a little bit; and Fairtrade is contributing strongly.

With 60% of the respondents indicating that Fairtrade is strongly contributing to the improvement of working conditions and fair payment, one can see that the majority of businesses and organizations mainly link Fairtrade to working conditions and payment as the name 'Fairtrade' already indicates. Another 35% of the respondents think that Fairtrade contributes a little bit to the improvement of working conditions and fair payment and only 3% of the businesses/ organizations think Fairtrade doesn't contribute at all. The chart shows a very positive outcome, with more than 95% seeing a positive trend towards better working conditions and fair payment for the people working for Fairtrade.

The third question concerning the effectiveness and impact of Fairtrade was if Fairtrade contributes to improving the profitability and economic sustainability of Fairtrade products. For this question the same three possible answers - Fairtrade isn't contributing; Fairtrade is contributing a little bit; and Fairtrade is contributing strongly - were being posed.

The outcome of this question looks similar to the outcome of the question asked on the improvement of the environment/planet. With roughly 56% of the respondents, the majority thinks that Fairtrade is contributing a little bit to the improvement of profitability and economic sustainability of Fairtrade products, whereas 30% of businesses and organisations even think that Fairtrade strongly contributes to this aspect. On the other hand, about 14% indicated Fairtrade does not contribute at all to improved profitability and economic sustainability of Fairtrade products. Overall, the outcome was not unexpected and didn't reveal any surprising findings.

Validity and reliability of results

While conducting applied research, it is crucial to reflect on the used methodology to identify possible weaknesses which limit the validity and reliability of the results.

Although it was originally aimed at conducting at least 100 surveys with businesses and organization, only 49 were executed. Especially in the villages, data collection was more difficult than expected. Hence, the vast majority of respondents were found in the centre of Zevenaar. The smaller number of respondents as well as the geographical inequalities slightly limit the validity of the results.

Additionally, some enterprises refused to participate due to either a lack of time or a lack of interest. Because the data collection day was in the week before Christmas, many businesses were extremely occupied and could not create enough time to answer the questionnaire. Others simply expressed a disinterest in participating. It can be assumed that this disinterest derived from unconcern about Fairtrade and to actively participate in a Fairtrade town. This decreases the reliability of the results slightly.

Furthermore, the data collection team had to cope with a small time frame to obtain the data. Therefore, it was not possible to assess which employee would be most suitable to be interviewed.

Despite these difficulties, the data collection went relatively well. The respondents understood the purpose of the research and tried to answer the question the best way they could.

To conclude, small obstacles were faced which slightly limit the reliability of the results. For the most part however, the results can be regarded as reliable and valid.

Limitations

Limitations are important to mention as they can have an influence on the final results. In this subchapter, the limitations of this research study will be discussed.

In addition to the sample size which was already being discussed in the previous subchapter, the method of how the surveys were being conducted is important to mention. People in the streets of Zevenaar and in surrounding villages were randomly approached and even though the municipality informed them beforehand about our coming, most of the respondents did not know what they could expect. A proper introduction beforehand might have had an influence on the willingness to take part in the surveys.

Furthermore, the time of the day plays an important role in the willingness of the businesses and organisations to fill in the survey. The respondents were being approached early in the day from 10 o'clock in the morning until 2 in the afternoon, where a lot of people were busy with work and could not afford taking time off to answer the questions.

Lastly to mention as a limitation is the overall time frame in which the research had to be conducted. Within a period of eight weeks, the entire research from start to finish needed to be worked out and had to match the expectations of the Fairtrade working group as the research team worked closely together with the municipality of Zevenaar.

Even though the research faced several limitations, it only affected the overall outcome of the research to a small extent and does not have any remarkable impacts on the quality, validity or reliability of the research.

Conclusions

In this chapter, the findings of the research presented in the previous chapter are used in order to answer the research question and sub-question and to give a final conclusion to the reader.

To what extent are the target groups familiar with Fairtrade?

The conducted survey has shown that the vast majority of businesses has at least a basic level of familiarity. However, only a small percentage of businesses (less than 15%) indicated that it had in-depth knowledge of the concept of Fairtrade.

To what extent are the target groups willing to participate in making Zevenaar a Fairtrade Town?

The results showed that business do not have much interest in supporting the initiative of the municipality. Although not opposing the idea in general, there is a lack of willingness to participate. This might be due to fact that 80% of the respondents did not know that the municipality is intending to obtain the Fairtrade municipality certification. Additionally, more than half of the businesses did not exactly know what a Fairtrade town is and had never heard of the movement. This lack of knowledge can also contribute to the reluctant attitude to participate shown by many respondents.

To what extent do the target groups perceive Fairtrade as trustworthy?

Asked about the quality of Fairtrade products, the businesses indicated that they did not perceive a significant different between Fairtrade and other products. Furthermore, questions about the trustworthiness of Fairtrade were not included in the questionnaire, which makes it difficult to answer the sub-question.

To what extent do the target groups perceive Fairtrade effective and impactful?

The interviewed businesses and organizations in the municipality of Zevenaar have a very positive perception on the effectiveness and impact of Fairtrade. Especially regarding the improvement of working conditions and fair payment for the Fairtrade-certified producers, more than 60% of the respondents answered that in their opinion, Fairtrade is making a big positive impact. The vast majority also believed that Fairtrade contributes to the improvement of the environment/planet and the profitability and economic sustainability of Fairtrade products.

Research question: How do organisations, businesses and citizens (referred to as target groups) in Zevenaar perceive the concept Fairtrade?

With the help of the obtained data and the resulting analysis, it is tried to answer the research question. Generally, it can be said that the target group has a rather positive perception of Fairtrade, especially regarding its effectiveness. The majority of respondents consider that Fairtrade contributes, at least to a small extent, to better working conditions and environmental production in the producing countries as well as to more financial sustainability. The majority of interviewees also said to have at least a basic understanding of what Fairtrade is. On other hand, most businesses did not show much interest in participating or supporting the initiative of the municipality Zevenaar to become a Fairtrade town. Nonetheless, this is most likely not due to a negative perception of Fairtrade, but the lack of information what a Fairtrade town is and that the municipality is trying to become one.

Recommendation

After a detailed analysis of the results and the resulting conclusion, the following recommendations can be given to the municipality of Zevenaar, to enable them to get closer to obtaining the certification of a Fairtrade Town.

It has become clear that in the conclusion that most of the respondents of the survey that their knowledge about Fairtrade or what it means to be a Fairtrade Town, is just skimming the surface. It is therefore recommended that more in-depth knowledge will be distributed in the municipality of Zevenaar in order to increase the knowledge of the concept of Fairtrade and a Fairtrade Town with the inhabitants.

Furthermore, we recommended that the municipality will reach out to the few businesses that showed interest in participating and collaborate on a way to help get more businesses involved in the makings of the Fairtrade Town.

This would not only help with a better understanding of the concept of Fairtrade and a Fairtrade Town, but it could also lead to an increase in willingness to participate in the makings of a Fairtrade Town.

For future research we advise to focus on how to get businesses and organisations to participate in the makings of a FairTrade Town and we would advise that the outcomes of this research would be used to measure the changes after the future research is executed.

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Annex

Questionnaire for Businesses/Organisations

1. Does the company you work for know what a Fairtrade Town is?
2. Does your company know that the municipality of Zevenaar is trying to become a Fairtrade Town?

Familiarity

3. How familiar is your company with the concept Fairtrade?
 - ☐ Unfamiliar with the concept
 - ☐ It has heard of it
 - ☐ It is familiar with it
 - ☐ It knows the principles
4. To what extent does your company use/sell Fairtrade products?
 - ☐ We don't use Fairtrade products
 - ☐ We use some Fairtrade options
 - ☐ We use a lot of Fairtrade products
 - ☐ If a Fairtrade product is available, we use it
5. Which factors have an influence on your purchase decision of a Fairtrade product? (more than one answer possible)
 - ☐ Quality
 - ☐ Price
 - ☐ Fair working conditions
 - ☐ Environmental protection
 - ☐ Something else
6. Is the company you work for involved in an initiative related to Fairtrade?
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Yes, we fund one or more
 - ☐ Yes, we work on one or more
 - ☐ Yes, we initiate and execute one or more

Trust

7. What does your company think of the quality of Fairtrade products?
 - ☐ It's worse than conventional products
 - ☐ We can't say, because we have never used/ sold Fairtrade products
 - ☐ Same as conventional products
 - ☐ Better than conventional products

Effectiveness

8. Internationally speaking, to what extend does your company think that Fairtrade is contributing to the improvement of the environment/planet?

- ☐ Fairtrade is making the situation worse
- ☐ Fairtrade isn't contributing
- ☐ Fairtrade is contributing a little bit
- ☐ Fairtrade is contributing strongly

9. Internationally speaking, to what extend does your company think that Fairtrade is contributing to the improvement of working conditions and fair payment of the people working for Fairtrade?

- ☐ Fairtrade is making the situation worse
- ☐ Fairtrade isn't contributing
- ☐ Fairtrade is contributing a little bit
- ☐ Fairtrade is contributing strongly

10. Internationally speaking, to what extend does your company think that Fairtrade is contributing to improving the profitability and economic sustainability of Fairtrade products?

- ☐ Fairtrade is making the situation worse
- ☐ Fairtrade isn't contributing
- ☐ Fairtrade is contributing a little bit
- ☐ Fairtrade is contributing strongly

Willingness to participate

11. Does your company have the ambition to use/sell more Fairtrade products?

- ☐ No
- ☐ We are open to it, but have not taken initiative yet
- ☐ Yes, we try to use/sell more Fairtrade products
- ☐ Yes, in the long-term we try to use/sell as many Fairtrade products as possible

12. To increase the awareness for Fairtrade, the municipality Zevenaar and the workgroup 'Fairtrade' would like to obtain the certification 'Fairtrade municipality'. The costs to become a Fairtrade municipality are 1000€ per year. What do you think about this?

- ☐ Not necessary
- ☐ No opinion
- ☐ Good initiative

13. The municipality of Zevenaar needs support in order to organize activities. Would your company be willing to help?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ Yes, perhaps we would be willing to help with a financial contribution, for example ____€ per year
- ☐ Yes, we are willing to help with a practical contribution