

# "Why don't we make Imabari the third Fair Trade Town in Japan?" Campaign

Imabari Nishi High School  
Overseas Studies Club  
Maki Kato

Do you know about Fair Trade (known as FT)? FT is a system to support the sustainable development of agricultural producers in developing countries. We, the Overseas Studies Club, got to know about the actual situation of child labor when we learned about FT cocoa beans in our textbooks. We decided we wanted to see more smiling children in cocoa producing countries. So we have focused on FT chocolate and have launched campaigns to spread the idea across the country.

In 2014-2016, we had in-store sales campaigns in Imabari Aeon and Saisaikite-ya (with the Imabari International Fair), and successfully sold quite a lot of chocolate. Our contribution has appeared five times in local and digital newspapers, which was a good appeal to people in Imabari.

At the same time, we issue a "Imabari Fair Trade Map" for each fiscal year, introducing supermarkets, cafes, restaurants and towel manufacturers in the city which are dealing with FT products,. In particular, Aeon has played a major part in, not only selling FT goods, but also producing its own private brand FT food and drinks. Even in the towel industry, we are proud to know that several factories produce towels with FT cotton. With this map, we will inform people how widely FT is spreading in Imabari in real time.

However, while conducting these activities, we wondered whether we were really helping spread FT in Japan. And we concluded that FT in Japan has fallen into a vicious circle; few people know about FT which creates little demand for FT products. Therefore, manufacturing companies do not produce them. Since FT products are rarely distributed in local stores, people seldom see the goods. Thus, people remain ignorant of FT.

In fact, our survey, carried out during the 2016 Valentine's Day sales campaign, found that the local rate of FT name recognition was only 8.6%; 23 women among 269 between the ages of 20-60 years. Compared with a nearly 50% name recognition nationally, you will find few people in Imabari to be particularly aware of FT.

In addition, we examined the probability of coming across FT goods among the city's supermarkets, drug stores, and convenience stores; 0% at the convenience stores, 33.3% in the drugstores, 20% of supermarkets (excluding Aeon group) and Aeon supermarkets 100%. It is a shame that it is impossible to find any FT food in convenience stores, where students often visit.

Thus, we have decided to launch a campaign entitled "Why don't we make Imabari the third FT Town in Japan?" We have concluded that we should spend all our resources on this local campaign.

Fair Trade Town started in England in 2000 and about 2,000 towns have been registered; among which, Kumamoto, Japan's first FT town, and Nagoya, the second.

We believe Fair Trade represents the important idea of "Three Good Ways", a well-known principle promoted by Ohmi merchants in the Edo period. First, FT is good for producers. It helps improve the standard of living of the producer and education of their children. Second, it is good for buyers. We can choose FT goods because we know who grows them and how they are made. Third, it is good for society. Citizens of Imabari make global contributions by choosing to buy FT goods. It is important for Imabari children to broaden their horizons.

※ This manuscript with the underlying research was awarded the Excellence Award in the "International Public Policy Conference at Osaka University 2016".

※ "Imabari Fair Trade Map 2016" is available in Imabari West High School office

