

Open Access

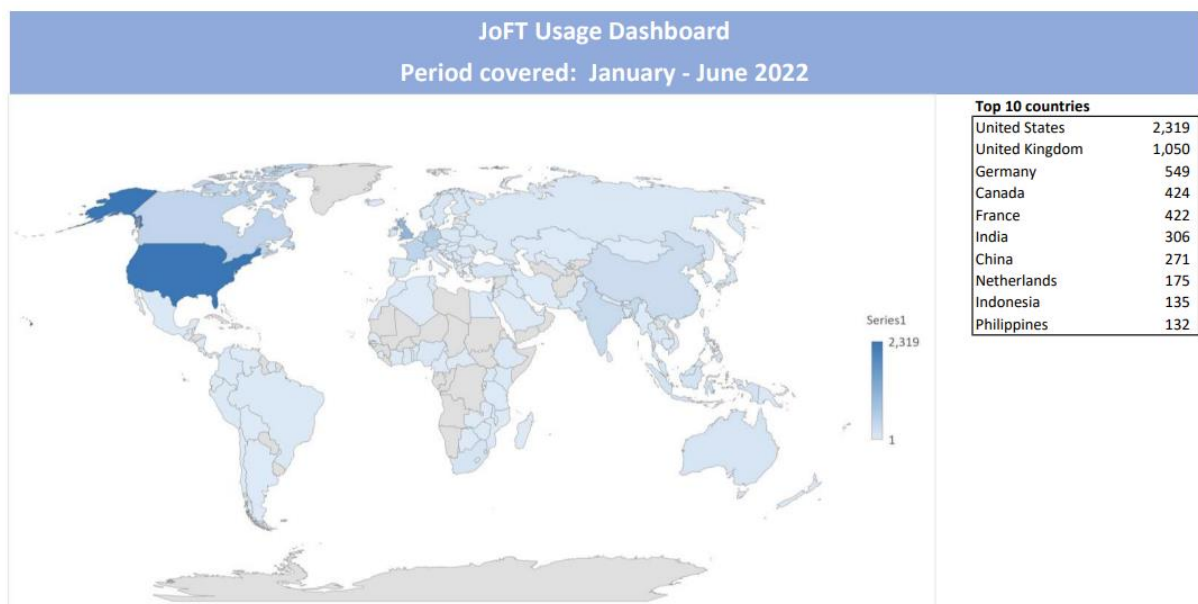
In 2021 Pluto Journals flipped its 21 peer-reviewed, radical journals into Open Access hosted on Science Open, the very first social science publisher to do this.



Open Access makes sense for the Journal of Fair Trade, because Open Access removes barriers to access and is the way for the Journal of Fair Trade to deliver on its Theory of Change:

“The greater the diversity and number of people who read and write for the Journal of Fair Trade, the better and more impactful the ideas developed and published will be, and the more influence on society and business the Journal of Fair Trade Society and our supporters can have.”

Open Access has been spectacular for the Journal of Fair Trade: from a few university libraries to many thousands of readers worldwide. It's exciting to watch this transformation on Science Open, with its deep information and data system showing who, how many, and from where, the Journal of Fair Trade is being accessed, and what is being read as visible in the Usage Dashboard below.



However, there are challenges too. With libraries no longer paying subscriptions it's vital for The Journal of Fair Trade – [and other Pluto Journals](#) - to reinvent the 'business model'. This is particularly the case for journals like ours which are not 'hosted' by a larger, funded institution.

So, we are on a mission now to explore all options!

Even before Open Access, The Journal of Fair Trade aimed to become a membership organisation. And the 100 or so early supporters who paid for access and as moral support need to be warmly thanked for their decision to become founding members! Currently the Journal of Fair Trade Society is a small, informal body with a handful of members, individuals and organisations, signed up.

[It's easy to join and there is no screening process.](#)

The Society doesn't yet have, but really needs good and effective ways to decide things, get advice and help – put simply more ‘boots on the ground’! We have had a preliminary Advisory Board of volunteers, and it is time to replace this with a group of volunteers to become the Journal of Fair Trade Society’s Founding Board.

The vision for the Society’s Founding Board and members is:

- To develop the Journal of Fair Trade Society as a membership organisation: bringing together people who think ideas matter, that thought and action in fair trade is important, and who care enough to help and want to redress wrongs in the world.
- To raise a core budget through membership dues and contributions/donations to stay viable
- To develop and draw up appropriate rights, rules and structures to exist formally and offer benefits to members
- To guide and secure the future of the Journal’s, promote the ideas it publishes and extend its influence.

We offer all of you a chance to volunteer to help us in a range of ways, with different time commitments and more detail on the tasks involved.



The Action List

Supporters, Fair Trade Practitioners and Advocates

4. Join us. Become a Member!

Please consider joining as a Journal of Fair Trade Society member to support and share your passion and knowledge! The Society owns and runs the Journal of Fair Trade. Only members can join the Founding Board. **Membership can be as an [individual](#), [Organisation/ Social Enterprises](#) or an [Ethical Business](#).**

Click here to become a member [joft.org.uk/membership/](https://www.joft.org.uk/membership/) to help shape the future of the Journal of Fair Trade Society. All members are eligible for Pluto Books 40% discount valid against any Pluto Book of choice. Upon subscribing as a member of the Journal of Fair Trade Society you will receive the discount code to the email you use for subscription. Here you can see examples of Fair Trade titles within the Pluto Books publication list <https://www.plutobooks.com/search/?keyword=fair+trade>.

5. Put the Journal on the Map!

Tell us which university/tertiary education/college libraries you know and who might be approached: suggest who to contact or, what information/materials you would need for you to make the case for them to:

- Join S2O (Subscribe to Open) and/or
- Ensure the Journal of Fair Trade is available and visible to lecturers and students

If you have ideas on this please write to Ellie (ellies@joft.org.uk) and Eve (evек@plutojournals.com)

3. Potential backers, Donors or Social impact investors

Tell us who we might approach as potential backers, donors or social impact investors and what/why they might be interested in supporting the Journal of Fair Trade, and/or the whole Pluto Journals family, in its ground-breaking and radical flip into full Open Access social science publishing.

If you have ideas on this please write to Sophi (sophi@plutojournals.com) Melanie (melanieoliviero@aol.com) and Pauline(paulinetiffen@joft.org.uk)

4. Building visibility and Allies

Please let us know if you are aware of specific ethical or socially aligned organisations that might be prepared support us and/or donate funds or services – particularly if they are social enterprises, clubs, societies, membership organisations themselves? If you have ideas write to Ellie (ellies@joft.org.uk) and Pauline (paulinetiffen@joft.org.uk).

5. Society Members - Setting up the Founding Board

Membership is required to join the Founding Board.

Please consider joining the Founding Board to work through the strategic issues for the Journal of Fair Trade Society's development and formation and improve the Journal's credibility and viability.

Please send your thoughts and expression of interest and time available to Pauline (paulinetiffen@joft.org.uk) and we can arrange for a 1:1 discussion.

6. Academics, Researchers and Educators

We want to expand and build the academic credibility of the Journal's content by having a strong qualified Editorial Board and Reviewer Pool.

1. If you are interested to **join the Editorial Board** please write to current Editorial Board Members Indro (indro@craftresourcecenter.com) with a cc to Pauline (paulinetiffen@joft.org.uk) by January 5th if you can, with your expression of interest, time availability/unavailability and preferred subjects/topics/types of articles.
2. Please help us to identify and sound out your **recommended academics for the Editorial Board**. If you are able to reach out to them on our behalf, please ask them to write to us with their interest and questions in the first instance to current member Indro Dasgupta (indro@craftresourcecenter.com) and Pauline (paulinetiffen@joft.org.uk)
3. We are looking for a **Volunteer Chair or Coordinator of the JoFT Editorial Board** to work with the Editor-in-Chief Pauline. If you have some time available each month, prior/similar experience of academic working group chairing, or a vision of building up the JOFT Editorial Board, please send your application, interests /time available and any questions you may have To Pauline (paulinetiffen@joft.org.uk).
 - **Become a reviewer:** join the Reviewer Pool, noting your area of interest/expertise, time constraints/blocked out times or other relevant information. See our current Reviewer Guidelines here <https://www.joft.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Guidelines-for->

[Reviewers.pdf](#). It's easy to register your interest as a reviewer here <https://joft.us18.list-manage.com/subscribe/post?u=b0aad48e5fd0afc383ca39f0c&id=1b14414b71>. If you have questions don't hesitate to contact Ellie (ellies@joft.org.uk) or Sally (sallyjennings@joft.org.uk).

4. **Help us to build our ranking/credibility:** It's essential that we build credibility and strong content. We want to attract a wide range of authors including practitioners, but we need help to identify well established academics to support this effort! If you can you suggest the names of senior academics to approach, how to engage them, and areas to explore with them please write a note to Pauline ((paulinetiffen@joft.org.uk) and Fair Trade International Symposium (FTIS) coordinators Matthew Anderson (matthew.anderson@port.ac.uk) or Anne Tallontire (a.m.tallontire@leeds.ac.uk)

The rest of this report covers the discussions and ideas generated at the inaugural meeting breakout discussions and conclusions/actions recommended by participants.



Inaugural Meeting of The Journal of Fair Trade Society
November 2022
REPORT AND ACTION PATHWAYS

Summary of the breakout session: What should we publish?

In this open discussion, where almost everyone contributed with attendees from all continents, we had two types of discussion:

1. **On subject matter** the topics and themes suggested included:
activism and its many forms, which is vital for transformative change, not just production and consumption;
missing or new and emerging debates like fair alternatives to large scale initiatives and regulations; and
fair trade in local business support and local wealth creation; **“domestic” fair trade protecting products and ideas** with IP/GIs;
Seeing trade as trade, but documenting it from different perspectives of actors along the supply chain could give insights into when/how things are done fairly, and the inevitable **tensions**;
intersectionality and **connections** that are part of fair trade done well, and historically have been part of the movement’s evolution e.g. anti-apartheid, independence struggles, autonomy (from corporations/government)
Showing businesses how to change what they do through **impact studies** and **case studies, examples and models**
Showcasing models and case studies of sustainable and equitable **partnerships** and **mentoring** across regions: e.g. Fair Trade Town movement, innovations and evolutions.

The Journal’s aim to be inclusive, championing different perspectives and voices, not being purist, and taking an ‘equal opportunity’ approach to different models was endorsed.

2. On credible content and impact:

The other and main part of the conversation was a strong endorsement of the Journal of Fair Trade being a scholarly journal not a magazine, advocacy or marketing.

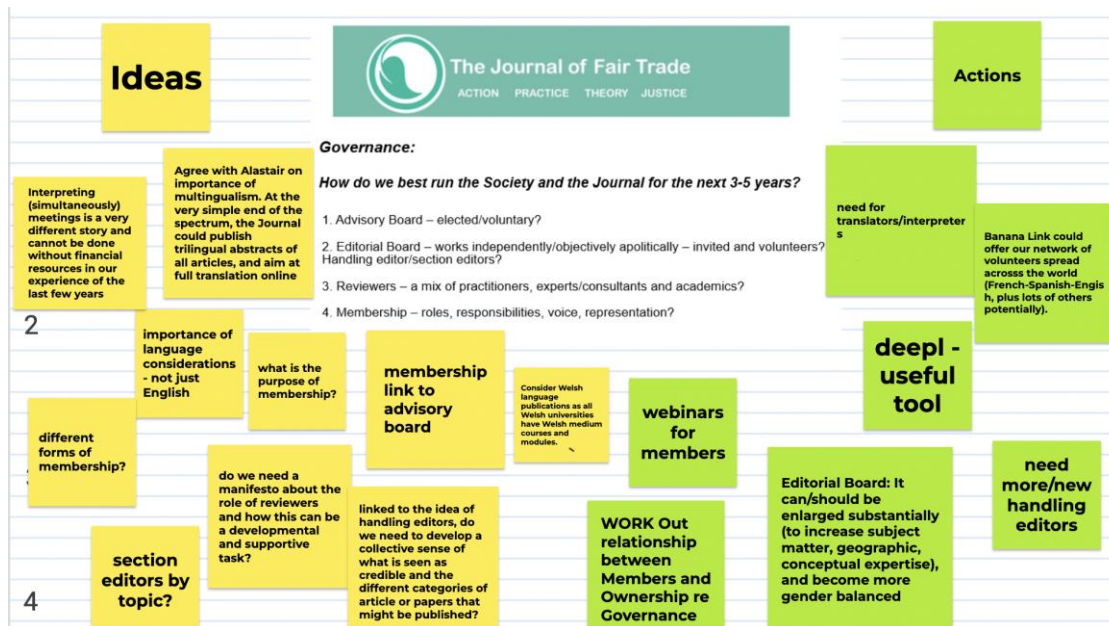
Participants shared views and were in broad agreement that:

- We can have a wide range of articles and voices including manifestos, opinions and perspectives, but these need to be labelled as such to distinguish them from scholarly work as so much of what is published on fair trade, standards, or certification is not systematic, and it is hard to separate what is real research and what is 'marketing'.
- The Journal should focus on multi-disciplinary, peer-reviewed work, methods and approaches that are robust, data-driven (whether quantitative or qualitative or other methodologies) if we want to be impactful, and for the articles to be taken seriously and read for a long time to come.
- Journal articles are credible sources of information for other writers and researchers who reach mainstream audiences, politicians and policy makers which expands the reach and impact.
- Further, the issue of intersectionality was raised: not seeing trade as trade alone, divorced from its roots in colonialism, unequal gender relations, and so on. It is important to promote collaboration across disciplines and authors who think this way. Fair trade can and should find connectivity with many other disciplines. Setting the fair trade movement within and alongside other movements was stressed.
- The Pluto Journals family with its wide-ranging subject matter was considered as an untapped strength for the Journal of Fair Trade.

Summary of the breakout session: How do we best run the Society and the Journal for the next 3-5 years?

This group, guided by Matthew Anderson and Melanie Olivero, looked at the context and organisational principles to consider including: publishing and making available work in different languages (French, Spanish, Welsh et al) and the English language domination in the Fair Trade field. The group discussed the inevitable reliance on volunteers because of cost of translations, and the 'best of the bunch' software options like DEEPL (<https://www.deepl.com/en/translator>).

Using a Jamboard, participants registered thoughts and ideas and there were further discussions.



The breakout group considered the purposes, definitions and roles of

1. **A Society Member:** Initially membership/members joined in the spirit of partnership/support. They helped spread activities and fostered collaboration, helped the Editorial Team with identifying Reviewers and were offered a discount (pre-Open Access). Looking ahead it can be very broadly defined: for mutual benefit from promotion/communications/networking and collaboration opportunities, and sense of solidarity. This led to an observation on whether there are any organizations that JOFT might NOT want to be accepted as members. So: given that under the proposed legal framework, members are to become the owners, if this is automatic on first membership due/first entry, and doesn't require any other bone fides e.g. after 2 years/other contributions etc. it is definitely a matter to be considered in more detail while remaining as accessible and inclusive as we can be!
2. **Editorial Board/Editors:** The definition being: a strong and diverse, global grouping of academics, with different disciplines and areas of expertise, working independently of the membership, working objectively and apolitically using a 'Handling Editor' system. The Meeting added clarity to the Editorial Board's role, stressing its importance in delivering the Journal's mission to be scholarly, credible and inclusive with a range of voices (see Summary of What to publish? Breakout group).
3. **Reviewers:** currently all reviewers are volunteers and a mix of practitioners/subject experts and academics. There is data on the number of reviews done/by whom, and areas we need help with/or more options to accommodate time constraints/availability. This group concluded that there is a need to recruit more volunteer reviewers
 - to spread the work more widely,
 - have a wider range of expertise and prevent bottlenecks
 - ensure academic/methodology reviewers always available and ready to support
 - Plus: Reviewers' specific areas need to be identified, and the reviewer roster organised to show topic, geography, methods expertise (and availability) to contribute to a strong review system.

- The current Reviewer Guideline document here <https://www.ioft.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Guidelines-for-Reviewers.pdf>
- It's easy to register your interest as a reviewer here <https://ioft.us18.list-manage.com/subscribe/post?u=b0aad48e5fd0afc383ca39f0c&id=1b14414b71>

Conclusions:

1. The Editorial Board needs to expand and achieve diversity/gender balance.
2. We should seek a volunteer 'Editorial Board Coordinator' to build relations, cohesion and effectiveness of this expanded group and to report to members/the Founding Board
3. We need to engage and build a larger pool of reviewers.
4. Reviewers need to be well oriented, and aligned with the Editorial Board requirements and objectives (credibility and diversity/inclusion per the Journal's vision/mission).
5. Currently, there are Guidelines for authors and for reviewers which are periodically updated, but further discussion on frameworks and options for achieving this would be beneficial.

From Advisory Board to Founding Board

Traditionally Journals have Advisory Boards and the Journal of Fair Trade has also had such a Board, selected from key universities and Fair Trade bodies to get the initiative up and running. But the Journal of Fair Trade Society wants to define and transition to a structure more suited to the vision and proposition of Members/Owners, intended to guard the passion/vision for a long time to come. Ideally, a small body of members – the Founding Board - would bring collective views together for formulating the categories of topics to publish and for the representation of a wide range of voices/experience/perspective in the Editorial Board and Reviewer Group.

The discussions pointed to the need for a different kind of body representing the movement as a whole, and with decision making powers (responsibilities) derived from being a member/owner. This breakout group noted that:

- Members/Owners, Advisors/Board Directors, Editors and Reviewers are all interconnected.
- We need to work out the relationship between Members and Ownership, and also Membership and Governance (being on the Board).

There is focussed and strategic work to be done on this. The key 'tasks' of a first Founding Board were identified by this and other breakout groups, and other participants in the wrap up session as follows:

- Define and deliver benefits of membership
- Set out the steps towards the Formation of a Society – purpose, rights and obligations etc
- Definition of inclusive/non-academic article types accepted (manifestos, opinion pieces, testimonies etc) together with the Editorial Board
- Search for creative and institutional options going forward e.g. hosting by different institutions outside UK/different continents.
- Develop outreach activities to attract authoritative authors, support the Journal's visibility, raise metrics and credibility generally and establish an impact rating (citations, influencing policy and practice)
- Bring collective views of members together for formulating categories of topics to publish and representation of a wide range of voices/experience/perspective in the Editorial Board and Reviewer Pool.

Action: Call for a Founding Board (volunteers) to work on these strategic issues for the Journal of Fair Trade Society.

Summary of the session: Making JoFT Work as an Open Access Publication

Challenges and Obstacles

The challenges of early set up are past, but others associated with achieving recognition, institutional success and a sustainable transition to Open Access exist.

1. Reputation and Ranking

Some scholars, in particular young scholars and those at business schools, may not want to publish in JoFT due to it being a new journal and its low ranking. So, this challenge means we need to focus on building the reputation of JoFT.

2. Sources of income and Financial Support

JoFT has lost its main income stream as a result of flipping to Open Access and so it needs to build up a core grouping of paid-up members, and seek other backers, donors and social impact investors.

How can JoFT/FTS improve and increase its academic profile?

The breakout group discussed a range of options for addressing these challenges including:

- Inviting more academics to join the editorial board.
- Asking for the Board's and Academic Members' orchid/links etc to add to The Journal of Fair Trade and Pluto Journals' websites
- Continuing to build a wide and inclusive audience and contributors, by involving practitioners, journalists, policy makers as well as academics.
- Actively identifying and recruiting authors to write articles – in particular more experienced scholars. This might include asking all our members and supporters to proactively suggest a list of potential senior academics to approach, how to engage them, and areas to explore.
- Ensuring that all the articles are peer reviewed and work to ensure that everyone knows that JoFT only publishes peer reviewed papers i.e. it is a scholarly journal not a magazine.

What are the Open Access Business Model Options and Suggestions?

To address the gap and shift in income sources from going Open Access there seem to be several routes, namely:

1. University Libraries

- There are an increasing number of libraries that support Subscribe to Open (S2O).
- Outreach and ways of reaching Librarians may hold the key to putting the Journal of Fair Trade (and all Pluto Journals Open Access journals) on S2O listings
- JoFT could identify and approach specific libraries recommended by members and supporters and share usage statistics and data/reach/global readership data (all of which have increased significantly since the journal became fully Open Access).
- As the range of contributors expands, Universities may also be encouraged to subscribe if the JoFT publishes work from authors affiliated with that target university, therefore, actively recruiting writers could improve JoFT's relevance to these universities.
- Academic librarians are very important and they respond to professors. If several academics from the same institution push for their library to support JoFT then JoFT will have more leverage.
- Getting their university or departmental library to join the JoFT or Subscribe to Open could be advocated for as one of the requirements of the Fair Trade Universities or Fair Trade Campuses programme; consultations and feedback from members and supporters could help to establish what kind of campaign, or materials are needed for this.
- Additional help in identifying who/which organisations and foundations are running University-based activism and support programmes would also help a push for support for

libraries to Subscribe to Open or join up to the JoFT Society e.g. Ashoka/FT University programme promoters.

2. Backers, Donors, Social Impact Investors

Flipping social science journals like The Journal of Fair Trade into Open Access is new territory and is a predictor of information sharing/access and the spread of radical ideas. To this end, guidance is needed on options such as:

- Housing the journal at a university as there are sometimes grant or other options available from established academic institutions for their academics to help to run a journal.
- It might be feasible to find special financial support to rotate the Journal of Fair Trade's institutional 'host' from sub-continent to sub-continent and promote different types of linkages, building the recognition and experience of upcoming or leading academics, or academic institutions in the Global South: South Africa to Mexico, India to Timor, Ghana to Argentina.
- Academics may be able to cover some of their teaching and making time available for other activities e.g. research or journal editorship. This would normally be based on grant income covering staff costs for teaching - but in this case it could be an agreement that supporting institutions made 5% of workload time available for editorial work to support the Journal of Fair Trade. This could be seen as a contribution in kind (rather than direct financial support for the journal).
- There are a number of Foundations and educational donors that might be prepared to support JoFT now it is fully Open Access. The group realised, we should ask our members and supporters specifically who we might approach/why they might be interested.
- There might other kinds of ethical socially-aligned organisations and companies prepared to support this initiative e.g. Wholefoods, Open Society, Comic Relief or The Co-op for its Open Access and inclusivity. This was considered an option because, such organisations and companies might be interested in demonstrating impact and movement building, particularly if they are clubs/societies or membership based themselves.

Action: We're asking you all as members and supporters who you can think of and recommend us to approach as backers, donors or social impact investors and also how to approach them.

End