



# Collaborative Learning Series

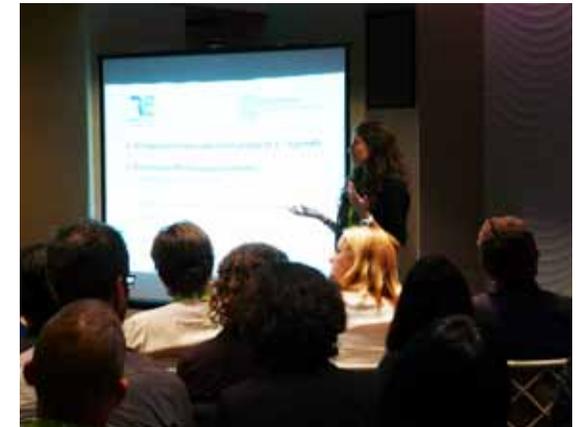
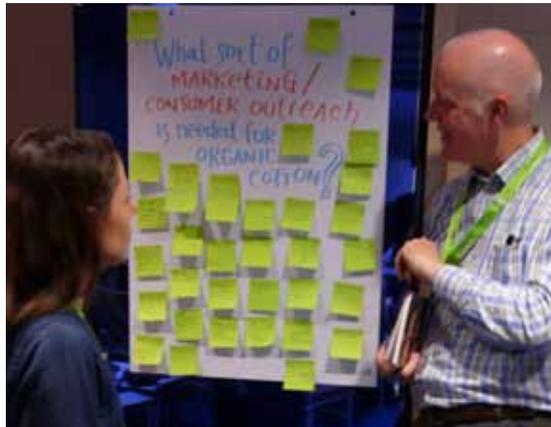
*Rethinking and Reshaping Sustainable Sourcing*

## Topic Six: Consumer Engagement

The sixth Collaborative Learning Series event took place live at the Organic Cotton Roundtable meeting in Istanbul on the day before the start of the Textile Exchange Conference. The meeting was chaired by Nicole Bassett from prAna.

### Background

The first Organic Cotton Roundtable took place in Hong Kong 2012, focusing on Business Models and Seed as two priority areas. In the meeting Consumer Engagement was identified as a third priority area for action. This past year, in an initiative led by prAna, Textile Exchange produced a consumer video "[I choose Organic](#)". The video was sponsored by C&A, Breganwood Organics, Eileen Fisher, Patagonia, Portico Home / Under the Canopy, prAna, Indigenous Designs, Nordstrom, and Quiksilver.



## Feedback from Panel Discussion

The Consumer Engagement session heard from four leading brands about their approach to communicating about organic cotton. Also on the panel was the Soil Association UK, who recently launched an organic cotton consumer campaign.

### Vijayalakshmi Nachia, [Ethicus](#), India:

Shared her experiences of engaging with consumers in the local Indian market and gave an overview of a successful campaign providing customers with cotton seed to give them the opportunity to experience, at a small scale, a farmer's work.

### Phil Chamberlain, [C&A](#), Europe/Global

Provided an overview of the development of organic within C&A and the experience that whilst "customers may not be asking for organic products they are certainly buying them", and how this is reflected in the positive return on investment secured on organic products priced at the same level as conventional products.

### Kristie Cameron and Anne Gilligan, Eileen Fisher US/Global

Talked about the "[& campaign](#)" and consumer responses to often complex messages and utilizing different channels to achieve a balance between simple messaging backed up with detailed information.

### Stefan Dierks, [Tchibo](#) Germany/Europe

Provided an overview of the first ever organic cotton 'world' featured at Tchibo and how the story of the farmer, the company and the consumer was brought together, the challenges of reducing the complexity of the issues whilst sending the right message as well as the good outcomes of the campaign.

### Sarah Compton, Soil Association

Provided an update on the Cottoned-On consumer awareness campaign a year on from the launch and the impact it has had. The campaign has generated a significant amount of publicity and the number of signatories is steadily increasing. In September 2013 an [infographic](#) was launched to communicate the key messages of the campaign.



## Key note - Harriet Lamb, Fairtrade International

Following the panel discussion Harriet Lamb, from [Fairtrade International](#), shared the experiences of Fairtrade in reaching consumers and urged the group to find fun and innovative ways to get the message across.



# ORGANIC COTTON ROUND TABLE



## Feedback from break out session

Participants worked in groups to answer three key questions.

1. What sort of marketing / consumer outreach is needed for organic cotton?
2. How could we work together to improve consumer awareness about organic cotton?
3. How could TE help?

A snapshot of some of the answers is provided below. The information gathered in the session will be used to inform the next steps in TE's work on consumer engagement for organic cotton.

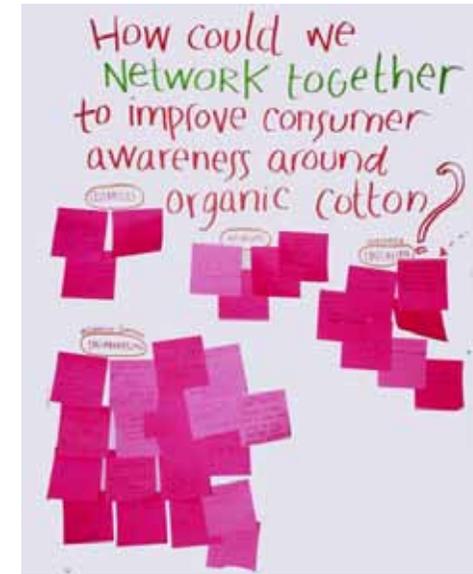


Responses to the question 'What sort of marketing / consumer outreach is needed for organic cotton?' fell into four major clusters:

- Education: Catchy, global, viral campaigns. Collaboration across brands, Organic Cotton 101, social media, videos etc
- Facts: Credibility, performance benefits, impact statistics
- Emotions - People - Stories: Tell a story, make it personal, make it positive, link to the grower, participatory
- Labels - branding - standards: Company certification, universal label for organic cotton, simple consistent branding, universal symbol / icon.

## Responses to the question 'How could we work together to improve consumer awareness around organic cotton?' fell into four major clusters:

- Collaboration around messaging, consistent labelling, shared goals and messages.
- Education, NGOs educating rather than brands, focus on young people.
- Initiatives: such as 'world organic day', 'organic fortnight', 'black Friday' sale on organic, Got Milk style campaign.
- Last but not least, the role of celebrities / role models / spokes people as catalysts for awareness raising.



## Responses to the question 'How could TE help?' included the following clusters:

- Marketing & consumers: Providing tools for marketing organic, films, website, social media
- Platforms: Identify and communicate benefits, consumer platform / portal, collaboration form for consistent messages etc.
- Advocacy and lobbying.
- Partnerships: form partnerships with key organisations, e.g. Fairtrade and GOTS as well as partnerships along the supply chain.
- Certification and Labelling: "Good Company" certification, common logo, verified information for marketing claims.



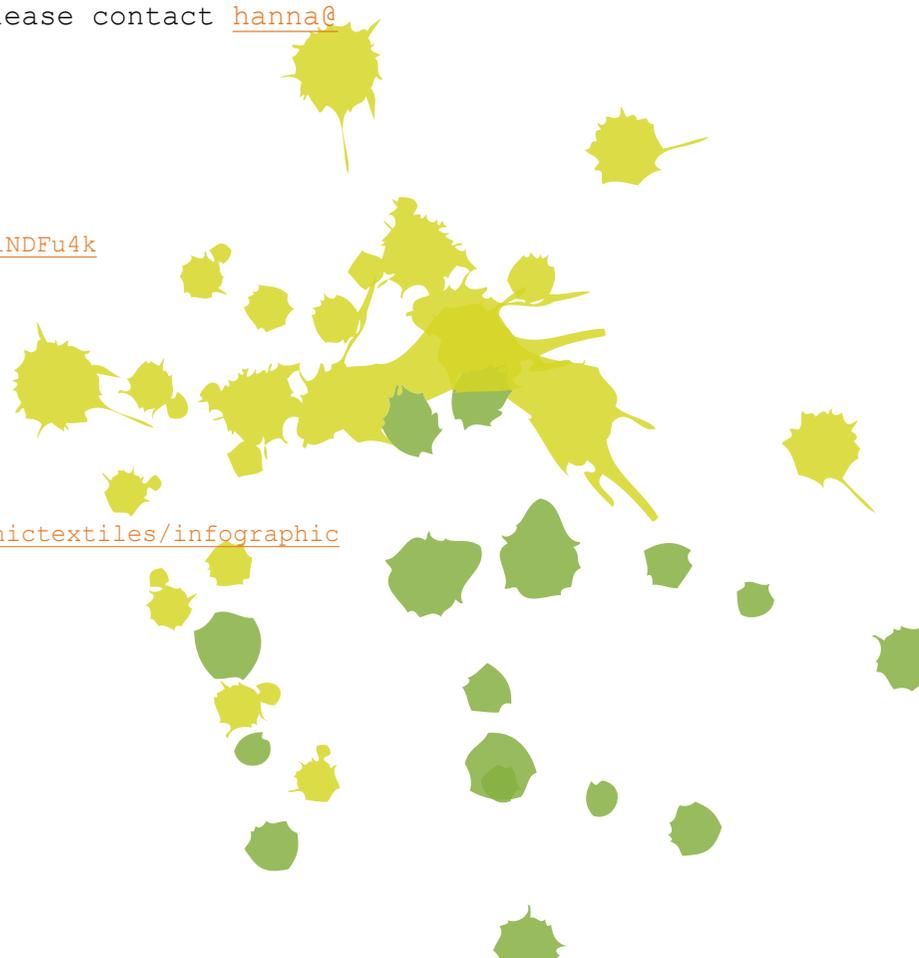


## Next steps

As illustrated by the snapshots above, the group called for common messaging and more collaboration to meet the high priority of engaging consumers. Consumer engagement is now firmly on Textile Exchange's agenda and will be further developed further in the Organic Cotton Accelerator.

A short report will be created based on the feedback provided in the Open Forum. Potentially, a Consumer Engagement Working Group could be created and coordinated by Textile Exchange. If you are interested in getting involved and supporting this work, please contact [hanna@textileexchange.org](mailto:hanna@textileexchange.org)

## Links to websites

- TE and partners video "I Choose Organic" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6irlNDFu4k>
  - C&A - We Love Bio <http://www.welovebio.com/en>
  - Eileen Fisher - Ampersand <http://eileenfisherampersand.com>
  - Ethicus <http://www.appachicotton.com>
  - praNa <http://www.prana.com>
  - Soil Association & GOTS - Have You Cottoned On <http://www.cottonedon.org>
  - Organic cotton Infographic <https://www.soilassociation.org/whatisorganic/organictextiles/infographic>
  - Tchibo <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSRsZZLGngQ&feature=youtu.be>
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## Creating a Learning Community at Textile Exchange

Textile Exchange aims to create an inclusive learning community; drawing on the expertise and experiences within this community to share and promote a collaborative learning environment. Our hope is that there will be learning to be gained from within and also from outside our immediate networks. Collaborative Learning breaks down the barrier that can exist between teacher (or expert) and pupil (or learner) to result in a truly two way exchange of information.

In this Series, each of the 6 topics includes:

- A thought starter blog and links to further reading
- A webinar introduced by our topic leaders where the contributions by learning participants will be a vital part of the exchange
- We hope that our Collaborative Learning Series will be an incubator for ideas, and can naturally lead into pre-competitive collaboration where the whole industry benefits. At the same time individuals within participating companies can improve their skills and knowledge, feeding this back into their workplace.

<http://farmhub.textileexchange.org/learning-zone/collaborative-learning-series>

