I am delighted to introduce Traidcraft Exchange’s Impact Report 2018-19, in which we share some of the many stories from our work this year. The impact we have is totally reliant on the support of our funders and partners and I’d like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support, and encourage you to read on to see the difference you are making.

‘When people are together, they can speak with one tongue.’

These words from Misheck Nkubi – a smallholder farmer from the slopes of Mount Kenya – sum up the powerful approach we at Traidcraft Exchange take to transforming trade. Misheck is one of 2,000 farmers – the majority of them women – with whom we are working in Meru County, Kenya. The project is being funded by the Department for International Development and builds on our previous work in the area. Misheck and Lucy his wife are pictured on the front cover (read their story on page 6).

This UK Aid Match funding was the result of our very successful ‘Hidden Entrepreneur’ appeal in spring 2018. The appeal focused on people who have the talent and determination to succeed, but lack the opportunities – a description that would fit Misheck very well. We were delighted that the appeal won ‘Fundraising Campaign of the Year’ at the Bond International Development Awards 2019.

Supporting producers

As well as successes, this year has brought challenges. Our partner business Traidcraft plc was forced to restructure and downsize to avoid having to cease trading altogether. As part of this process, they had to take the difficult decision to stop buying from many of the small businesses and cooperatives who had supplied them over past decades. Our many years’ experience of working with producer groups made us well-placed to support the most ‘at-risk’ producers. (Read more on page 7.)

Speaking out with the most vulnerable

At Traidcraft Exchange, we believe trade has the potential to bring opportunity and financial security to people living in poverty. But right now, this is simply not happening for millions of people in developing countries. We always take the side of the most vulnerable people in trade. They include:

- Women working on remote tea estates in north-east India, who pick the much-prized Assam tea, yet are paid poverty wages, forced to live in appalling conditions with no alternative livelihoods (page 8).
- Bonded labourers who work the farms of northern India and Bangladesh in order to pay back debts incurred, for example, when their crops fail (page 12).
- Women farmers in the post-conflict area of southern Senegal who rely on the nearby forests for fruit to supplement their income, but see this natural resource being destroyed around them (page 11).

In many different countries, and many different sectors, these people all have one thing in common: their voices are not heard. By bringing people together, we can help them to speak ‘with one tongue’, as Misheck puts it, and be heard by those in power.
Where we work

Kenya
Project participants: 1,823
People directly benefiting: 9,115

Senegal
Project participants: 2,104
People directly benefiting: 10,520

India
Project participants: 19,701
People directly benefiting: 98,505

Bangladesh
Project participants: 40,165
People directly benefiting: 171,275

Tanzania
Project participants: 629
People directly benefiting: 3,051

Supply chain services
People directly benefiting: 12,607 across Namibia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar.
This year, we have also worked with 31 businesses affected by the down-sizing of Traidcraft plc across Africa, Asia and Latin America (see page 7). Together, they employ 25,885 workers.

Policy & advocacy
We work to influence government and business to introduce fairer trade policies and business practices in the UK.

Campaigns
We raise awareness of injustices in trade and bring people together to help us call for change.

Programmes
We work directly with some of the world’s most vulnerable people so they can get a better deal from trade.
How have we transformed trade this year?

We highlight three different pieces of work which in different ways have contributed to transforming trade to help the most vulnerable people.

Transforming trade for women farmers

In Kenya we are working directly with smallholder farmers, particularly women. Despite fertile soil, and an expanding market for fresh vegetables among Kenya’s growing middle class, these women have not been able to make a decent living from farming.

By supporting the organisation of women farmers into economic groups and ‘Commercial Villages’ the groups will have better access to services and inputs and have greater voice and bargaining power. Training and coaching will be provided in areas such as quality production and storage, business and financial management and leadership skills. Linking the groups to buyers and financial services will enable the farmers to have better access to the market.

The work is in partnership with Farm Concern International and funded by the Department for International Development through its UK Aid Match programme.

Challenging unfair trade by retailers

European consumers are used to buying food grown on the other side of the world as part of their regular supermarket shop. But the power of those supermarkets means that many people who grow that food are exploited.

A new European law – the Unfair Trading Practices Directive – came into force this year, the culmination of many years’ campaigning and lobbying by Traidcraft Exchange and others.

The new directive means that suppliers (including farmers in developing countries) who sell to big EU food businesses will be able to complain to a regulator if they feel they are being subjected to illegal treatment, such as failure to pay on time or last minute order changes. The directive still needs to be implemented by national governments, but could bring real change to farmers and workers.

Supporting Traidcraft plc producers

When Traidcraft plc was forced to downsize in late 2018, Traidcraft Exchange was able to step in – thanks to the support of generous donors – and provide practical and financial help to more than 30 of the producer groups most at risk.

Black Mamba is a small food business based in Eswatini (Swaziland) making fair trade chili sauces and chutneys. Traidcraft Exchange provided seed capital to help them take advantage of new wholesale opportunities in the domestic and South African markets. We are also helping them connect with new importers in the UK and the US.

Saidpur Enterprises produces eco-friendly bags, baskets and crafts in Bangladesh. Traidcraft Exchange funded a marketing consultant to advise on creating a new range of products, and helped them showcase their products to new buyers at a trade fair in Germany. Managing Director Ghayas Uddin said: “We can see the outcomes directly – everyone who comes here has appreciated the designs and the set up. We’ve had a lot of interest, including a buyer from the UK.”

Ghayas Uddin at the Ambiente trade fair.
CASE STUDY
The ‘Who picked my tea?’ campaign

“‘It’s been more than 5 years since I complained about the house – it’s not repaired yet. During the rainy season, it becomes difficult for us and children to live in the house. Where do we go if it rains at night?’”
Anonymous woman tea worker, Assam.

Assam in India is famous for its distinctive tea—an essential ingredient in most breakfast blends. But in recent years it has also become infamous for the appalling working conditions on its tea estates.

Workers—most of whom are women—are paid less than the minimum wage. In theory, housing, sanitation, clinics and schools are provided by the estates, but in practice the provision is poor or non-existent. Estate managers effectively control all aspects of workers’ lives. Harassment of women is widely reported.

Traidcraft Exchange had been in discussion with UK tea brands for some time, and in May 2018 launched a public campaign calling on them to publish the names of the estates they buy from. Transparency about suppliers would shine a light on exploitation and be a first step towards improving conditions.

More than 15,000 people responded to our invitation to ask the brands ‘Who picked my tea?’.

In response, the brands agreed one by one to publish their list of estates. Less than a year from launch all six big UK brands (Yorkshire Tea, Twinings, Tetley, Clipper, PG Tips, and Typhoo) – plus two more not targeted by the campaign (Ringtons and Marks & Spencer) – had published.

Traidcraft Exchange has published all the information on our website www.traidcraft.org.uk/tea-answers and will be sharing this with community groups in Assam, along with information about the brands’ codes of conduct. Although not a panacea, the new information available as a result of the campaign gives the tea workers a new tool in their struggle for better pay and conditions.

How have we protected the environment through trade this year?

Many of the poor and vulnerable people with whom we work are experiencing the reality of environmental degradation and climate change at this very moment.

Organic cotton and eco-friendly textiles in India
In Odisha, in eastern India, Traidcraft Exchange worked with smallholder cotton farmers, most of whom were women. With our partner, Forum for Integrated Development, we helped farmers move to organic techniques and diversify their crops to improve soil fertility and increase food production. More than 3,500 families saw their productivity increase by at least 45% and their costs decrease by more than 25%.

In the desert state of Rajasthan, we have been working with the All India Artisans and Craftworkers Association to mitigate the environmental impact of artisanal dying in Jaipur, reducing the use of chemicals, treating effluents, recycling water and improving working conditions for the artisans, a majority of whom are women.

Sustainable forest fruit harvesting in Senegal
In the Casamance region of southern Senegal, Traidcraft Exchange is working with farmers who grow and collect fruit from the forest.

Farmers are encouraged to cultivate seedlings in their own nurseries to generate a source of new trees for the future.

Participants have also learned about the value of more sustainable fruit collection practices, like cutting only fruit from the trees, rather than whole branches. This knowledge is being shared with others in the area to discourage premature harvesting of fruit. This protects the forest and ensures more sustainable livelihoods for the future. This work was done in partnership with Baobab de Saveurs and Zena Exotic Fruits Ltd.
How have we empowered women in trade this year?

Women make up a significant proportion of the global workforce but are excluded from the benefits of trade in almost all countries and sectors where Traidcraft Exchange works. They are paid less than men and experience poor working conditions, while carrying the burden of unpaid domestic and care work. Many women have little control over the income they earn or the assets, including land, they use. That is why we seek to benefit women disproportionately through our work.

This year, for the first time, we published our strategy on empowering women in supply chains. As illustrated, we approach this challenge at different levels, from face-to-face work in the community to advocacy and public campaigning on international trade policies.

We have identified six areas necessary to bring about empowerment in trade and supply chains.

- **Recognition of women’s role in the supply chain.**
  Working with artisans in northern India, we found that the work commonly done by women, for example preloom activities, was often overlooked, while the men were recognised as the ‘skilled artisans’. We helped women get ‘artisans’ cards’, enabling them to access social security benefits and increasing their standing within the community.

- **Access to training and resources.**
  In Senegal, we have helped women come together in ‘economic interest groups’ to provide practical and business training. As a result, 85% of women surveyed this year say they feel better able to negotiate terms of trade. Group membership also gives women the opportunity to get financial support from the government and lower-cost loans.

- **Fair reward for their work.**
  In Bangladesh, we have helped women to negotiate better prices for their work extracting jute fibre from the stalks. After three years, every woman reported an increase in income from jute of more than 30%.

- **Control over household resources and decisions.**
  In Bangladesh, through our ‘family approach’ we improved women’s income and earning capacity, as well as giving training on changing gender roles. 98% of women reported perceiving an increase in their decision-making on the use of household income.

- **Voice to shape their workplace and community.**
  This year, we shared our findings from our work in Kenya, where women who pack vegetables for export had to do overtime at short notice because of last-minute order changes, making it impossible for them to find childcare. By giving these women a voice in meetings with the exporter and UK supermarket, we were able to help them successfully advocate for change.

- **Influence over wider trade policy and business practices.**
  This is the most difficult area to implement. Through our ‘Who picked my tea?’ campaign (page 8), campaigners in the UK called for business transparency in solidarity with workers—a majority of whom are women. Follow-up work will share the estate details published by the brands with the workers.
Looking ahead

We are developing the following areas of exciting and innovative work to support vulnerable workers, farmers and artisans around the world.

All these projects are seeking funding:

- In Tanzania, we are working with people with disabilities to improve their livelihoods through coffee, cocoa and small-scale palm oil production and processing. Disabled people face multiple forms of discrimination and are more likely to live in poverty.

- A new piece of work in India and Bangladesh will fight forced and bonded labour, and in particular support communities at risk of bonded labour by helping them develop more resilient and sustainable sources of income.

- We believe the UK government should require businesses to review the human rights risks of their activities. We will be launching a mandatory human rights due diligence campaign later in the year.

- Women working in their own homes in India, Pakistan and Nepal contribute to the production of clothing and footwear sold in Europe. Our new ‘Hidden Homeworkers’ project will support these vulnerable women and engage brands, unions and policymakers in raising awareness and improving conditions.

- As the UK looks to develop an independent trade policy, we will be advocating for the government to exclude the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) process from new trade and investment deals. ISDS enables foreign investors to sue national governments for lost profits.

- New work in Saidpur, Bangladesh aims to unlock the potential of the backyard garments sector by providing business development support. People working in this sector produce clothes from scrap fabric discarded by mainstream clothing factories.

- Our Catalyst Fund provides seed funding to scope and develop new and innovative projects, and to help us review and document our approaches. Several of the projects mentioned above and throughout this report have benefited from this, including: disability work in Tanzania, work with farmers in Kenya and forced labour and homeworkers in South Asia. Catalyst funds also helped us document our approach to women’s empowerment. Over the last two years the fund has helped us leverage £3.7m in new funding.

These projects all require match funding. For more information, please get in touch with our Programme Funding team at hello@traidcraft.org.
Financial summary

Income in 2018/19

- Institutional donors £1,304k
- Trusts and major donors £121k
- Voluntary £1,291k
- Gifts in wills £220k
- Supply chain services £233k
- Other £13k

Expenditure in 2018/19

- Influencing government policy & business practice £419k
- Working directly with people living in poverty £2,056k
- Support and running costs £321k
- Invested in fundraising £404k
- Gifts in wills £220k
- Supply chain services £233k
- Other £13k

These figures include income and expenditure of our subsidiary company in India.

We would like to thank all of our donors, supporters and partners who have helped us have an impact over 2018-19.

For every £1 we invest in engaging people with our cause and fundraising, we are able to raise £4.04.

We are committed to keeping our overhead costs as low as possible, to ensure that the vast majority of our income goes directly towards changing trade and improving the lives of vulnerable farmers, workers and artisans worldwide.

Thank you for supporting us.

With thanks

We are grateful to our partners and institutional donors, including: Comic Relief • Community Fund (formerly Big Lottery Fund) • Department for International Development) • European Union • TRAID

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Thank you for supporting us.

We are particularly grateful to the following trusts who donated over £10,000 to Traidcraft Exchange in 2018-2019:

- Squires Foundation
- Ceniarth Foundation
- Society of the Sacred Heart
- Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Settlement

We are also grateful to individual supporters and the families and friends of those who have generously remembered Traidcraft Exchange in their wills. This year we received £220,000 in legacy income.
Traidcraft Exchange is an international development charity which uses the power of trade to bring about lasting solutions to poverty. It runs development programmes in South Asia and Africa, works directly with businesses to improve their supply chains, and does advocacy and campaigning in the UK to promote justice and fairness in international trade. It works closely with specialist fair trade company Traidcraft plc.

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