

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WORK TOWARDS GENDER EQUITY IN GARMENT AND FOOTWEAR SECTORS

Improving Transparency and Piece Rates for Homeworkers stitching leather Footwear in South India

A. Company overview

1. Please give a brief overview of your company. Size, type, reach.

[Pentland Brands Limited](#) is the name behind some of the world's best sports, outdoor and lifestyle brands. It owns [Speedo](#), [Berghaus](#), [Canterbury of New Zealand](#), [Endura](#), [ellesse](#), [SeaVees](#), [Red or Dead](#) and [Mitre](#). It's the UK licensee for [Kickers](#) and has a joint venture partnership for [Lacoste](#) footwear. Its products are available in over 190 countries and are sold either directly by Group companies or are represented by licensees and distributors. For more information, go to pentlandbrands.com or follow @PentlandBrands on Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn or Facebook.



2. Please give a brief overview of examples of good practice at different levels internally where company is addressing gender equality such as HR, policies, procurement, CSR, Board and buyers.

We want to be a place where everyone is welcomed, supported and encouraged to grow and contribute. That's why we're creating an environment that celebrates diversity and inclusion (D&I) and building it into everything we do.

Not only is focusing on D&I the right thing to do, but we believe that embracing it increases our understanding of the world around us and allows us to drive performance, innovation and grow our business.

Our D&I strategy is an integral part of our overall business strategy and our global D&I programme, which evolves each year, articulating the big items we are going after across our four focus areas. This is supported by a communication plan rolled-out across our online and offline channels. We recognise that the diversity of gender and ethnicity within our leadership team isn't representative and we're making a commitment to improve this year on year. We've set targets to help us monitor improvements.

Pentland Brands' 2019 Gender Pay Gap report¹ recognises that there is a significant pay gap within the organisation - the mean gender pay gap shows women's hourly rate is 13.2% lower than men's and the mean bonus paid is 56.0% lower. The report identifies a key driver behind this as the less proportionate representation of women in senior leadership positions at the highest levels, and sets out a three-year plan to achieve 45% female directors, which would also have a knock-on effect on the pay and bonus differentials.

A recent restructuring (Sept 2020) confirms that the company has taken these commitments seriously, with the promotion of three female managers to the executive team, alongside the promotion of Chirag Patel to the position of CEO.²

3. Are you signed up to any external initiatives and/or codes ETI, Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, UN WEPs or SDGs? If so when and why?

Pentland Brands is a founding member of the UK's Ethical Trading Initiative, which in the early 2000s had a project focussing on homeworking,³ and of the ACT Foundation ('Action, Collaboration, Transformation'), a partnership between global brands and IndustriALL, the global trade union federation for apparel and footwear manufacturing established in 2016 to improve wages and access to collective bargaining within the industry.⁴ In 2011 the company signed the Indonesia Freedom of Association protocol, which again supports trade union rights for workers in Indonesian supplier factories. Pentland Brands are also members of the SAC (Sustainable Apparel Coalition).

We're a signatory of the UN Global Compact through our parent company, Pentland Group. We believe businesses should align their strategies with environmental and societal goals and we fully support the Global Compact's ten principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

We support the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which address the global challenges we face. We've selected the eight goals where we believe we can make the biggest difference (SDG3, SDG5, SDG6, SDG8, SDG9, SDG10, SDG12, SDG 13). These goals underpin our Positive Business strategy to ensure that we're focusing on the areas where we can make the most significant contribution to people and our planet.

4. Is there a gender dimension in your company supplier agreements/codes? Please attach or give brief overview.

Our Standards and Code of Conduct which all suppliers must adhere to, ensure they commit to ethical trade. Our Code of Employment Standards for Suppliers reflects the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) base code and International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions. This Code provides minimum standards that should be exceeded where possible.

In applying it, suppliers must comply with national and other applicable laws and, where the provisions of the law and this Code address the same subject, apply the provision that gives workers the greater protection. This includes clause 6 that no discrimination is practised: *"There is no discrimination in recruitment, wages, access to*

¹ <https://pentlandbrands.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pentland-Brands-Gender-Pay-Gap-Report-2019.pdf>

² <https://uk.fashionnetwork.com/news/Executive-reshuffle-at-pentland-brands-as-ceo-moves-to-parent-company-role,1241431.html>

³ <https://www.ethicaltrade.org/issues/homeworkers>

⁴ <https://actonlivingwages.com/fact-sheet/>

training, promotion, termination or retirement, based on race, caste, national origin, religion, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, union membership, political affiliation or on any other basis unrelated to the ability to do the job.'

We also require suppliers to sign up to our CR Charter which also reinforces this message: *"We are committed to promoting equal opportunities to all our employees, customers and partners. We expect our supply chain to treat all people equally, with respect and dignity. We do not discriminate, nor do we tolerate discrimination on the grounds of age, colour, disability, ethnicity, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, faith or on any other unjustifiable or illegal grounds"*

5. Do you think there are external drivers encouraging the company to be more gender focused? If yes briefly describe what you think these are.

In addition to the reasons mentioned already, the UN SDGs Goal 5 calls for us to act now for gender equality, especially as we enter the decade of action in the run up to 2030. We are also aware that for apparel supply chains, the majority of workers are often female. There is an underrepresentation of female supervisors and management in the apparel supply chain. Although this underrepresentation remains, there appears to be more initiatives being put in place to redress this imbalance particularly at supplier level.

B Specific gender initiative case studies

Case Study 1 (please cut and paste Section B questions for each additional case study)

1. Name, workplace, industry and area/country that case study is based.

This report describes a project working with homeworkers involved in the production of leather footwear the Ambur-Vaniyambadi-Ranipet area in Vellore District in Tamil Nadu, in the south of India. This region has traditionally been the home for many tanneries and has increasingly turned to production of complete shoes or the uppers of shoes for export. Part of the workforce assembling these shoes for export are women working at home, usually hand-stitching the uppers of leather shoes.



Figure 1: Ambur, leather manufacturing town in Tamil nadu

As they are women working from home, they are usually invisible and not recognised as part of the workforce. They generally work informally, with no recognition and none of the rights of contractually employed workers. Homeworkers are paid by the piece, often at very low rates which means their income falls far short even of legal minima. Yet in this part of Tamil Nadu there are many hundreds of women doing this work, all year round, for many years of their lives. These homeworkers are amongst the lowest paid women workers with the most precarious employment in the leather footwear value chain.

Our definition of homework is based upon the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention (1996, C177, Article 1) which promotes the equality of treatment between homeworkers and other wage earners, and which states: The term homework means work

carried out by a person, to be referred to as a homemaker, (1) in his or her home or in other premises of his or her choice, other than the workplace of the employer; (2) for remuneration; (3) which results in a product or service as specified by the employer, irrespective of who provides the equipment, materials or other inputs used, unless this person has the degree of autonomy and of economic independence necessary to be considered an independent worker* under national laws, regulations or court decisions;

2. When was the initiative introduced, does it have a time frame, what were the costs and scale?

In 2016, Pentland Brands, responding to [Stitching our Shoes](#) a research report produced by Homeworkers Worldwide and Cividep India, decided to take steps to address these issues. They partnered with HWW and Cividep, and crucially with one of their suppliers in the region that disclosed to Pentland that it did indeed use homeworkers in the manufacture of some of their shoes. There were four stages to the project, which ran between 2016 and July 2019, and the total budget was £23870.



Figure 2: Homeworker stitching leather upper for Pentland supplier

3. Please give a brief description of the initiative and its key goals.

Stage 1: Following the supply chain to find homeworkers (Nov 2016- March 2017)

Stage 2: Value chain mapping: identifying prices along the supply chain (Nov 2017- Feb 2018)

Stage 3: Agreeing and implementing changes (2018-9)

Stage 4: Documenting achievements and identifying learning (2019)

The first phase of the project was to understand the supply chain and the part played by homeworkers in the production process. In collaboration with HWW, Pentland Brands first strengthened its [Homeworker Policy](#), which acknowledges the position of homeworkers and commits to seeking to accept them as part of the workforce by acknowledging their rights and benefits. This helped to build trust with all stakeholders, particularly the supplier, and encouraged them to be transparent about the chain and employment relations and conditions in it. (This is in contrast to other companies which prohibit homework, which can lead to concealment, making issues harder to tackle, and damages the livelihoods of homeworkers).

The Pentland Brands Homeworker Policy extends and develops good practice for company homeworker policies, *inter alia* through clear commitments to engage where appropriate, with other brands and relevant non-governmental organisations in the sustainable improvement of labour conditions for homeworkers in our supply chains.

Once this was in place, the project started to trace the supply chain, seeking to understand the pattern of distribution of work and also the role of different actors in the chain and the value or price given to their work.

Fortunately, in this case, the supply chain was quite short; the brand deals directly with the supplier who has his own factories but subcontracts some hand-stitching work to agents or intermediaries who then in turn distribute the work to homeworkers. The local partner Cividep India, interviewed all stakeholders in the chain, including the homeworkers, and also completed a separate needs assessment with a sample of the homeworkers. The results of these studies were finalised, with a [summary](#) being made available on HWW's website.

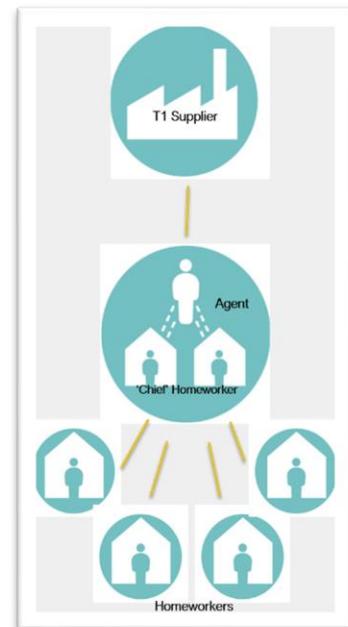
The second stage of the work was to complete a more comprehensive value chain mapping, tracing specific styles of shoe down the supply chain, in order to understand pay rates, hours worked and prices paid along the chain. This involved interviews with managers and staff at both the supplier and sub-contractor, and with almost 200 homeworkers and the 11 agents who were distributing work to them. According to the factory plant manager, approx 1000 pairs per day would be sent out for hand stitching during the peak of the season (three months in a year) and the number would vary between 300 and 500 pairs per day during the rest of the year.

Focusing on a specific Pentland order, we documented piece rates paid to homeworkers and the commission retained by agents, and identified the tasks carried out by agents (transporting materials and finished product, tracking orders, quality control), which are often overlooked. A time and motion study was carried out by Pentland Brands and the supplier, to calculate piece rates for the homeworkers, linking their pay to minimum wage rates.

In parallel, key Pentland Brands commercial staff were interviewed to get a snapshot of purchasing practices which might impact on supply chain working conditions. This confirmed that future orders were reasonably secure, as the particular shoe styles that the homeworkers were working on were a consistent feature in the core range, and documented the sophisticated order-planning system that the brand uses to match supplier capacity with the volume and timing of orders, reducing the risk of excessive workloads at peak times.

Data from both studies was then used to map prices paid along the value chain; this indicated that raising piece rates would have a small and easily manageable impact on product price.

In the third stage of the project, all stakeholders worked together to develop a model for the good employment of homeworkers, based on models created and tested during under the ETI Homeworker Project, in which HWW was actively involved, alongside TUC and ETI member companies (2002 – 2013). In-country staff from the brand worked with the supplier to implement parts of this model, starting by carrying out time and motion studies with homeworkers, to determine a fair piece rate for the different styles of shoe within the study.



A simple job card system was also developed, which the agents were then asked to use, to record the number of pairs of uppers allocated to each homeworker, the agreed piece rate and the subsequent wages paid. Both agent and homeworker were asked to sign the card each day, thus providing a paper trail for this work, which could both be seen by auditors and used by either party in the event of a query.

Date	Article	Pairs	Rate Rs. Pa.	Value Rs. Pa.
1				
2	A-11	10	10	100
3				
4	A-11	10	10	100
5	A-11	7	10	70
6				
7				
8	A-15	10	9	90
9	A-15	10	9	90
10				
11	A-15	5	9	45
12				
13	A-12	20	11.50	230
14				
15	A-11	14	10	140
16	A-15	7	9	63
17				
18	A-11	8	10	80
19	A-15	11	9	99
20	A-12	12	11.50	138

Date	Article	Pairs	Rate Rs. Pa.	Value Rs. Pa.
21	A-12	12	11.50	138
22	A-12	7	11.50	80.5
23	A-12	8	11.50	92
24				
25				
26	A-12	10	11.50	115
27	A-12	10	11.50	115
28	A-12	10	11.50	115
29	A-12	10	11.50	115
30	A-12	10	11.50	115
31				

Figure 3: Jobcard developed by Pentland supplier to record homeworkers' work and wages.

The final stage of the project involved a final round of interviews with the homeworkers and with other stakeholders, to document that these changes had indeed been implemented, and that the homeworkers' piece rates had increased by the corresponding amounts. This confirmed that the new systems introduced in late 2018 using the higher piece rates had been introduced, and that homeworkers had seen their piece rates rise by around 30%. The job card system was also ensuring that piece rates and agent's commission were standardized across all the homeworkers, and the researchers confirmed that the new system was providing a transparent system that both homeworkers and others could use to monitor work done and payments made.

4. What drivers, internal and external, encouraged you to introduce this initiative? Did the political and cultural landscapes influence your initiative?

This initiative was established in 2016 in response to the publication of a research report [Stitching our Shoes](#) produced by Homeworkers Worldwide and Cividep India as part of a wider consumer campaign to address labour rights issues within leather footwear manufacturing. Pentland Brands discussed this study with their leather footwear suppliers, and one disclosed that they did indeed involve homeworkers in parts of their supply chain. Pentland Brands then decided to take steps to address these issues; they partnered with HWW and Cividep, and crucially with the supplier concerned.

5. What key issues in the workplace was the initiative designed to tackle?

(Please indicate which human rights are at risk, include reference to those in the [ETI Base Code](#)).

NB. This section describes the challenges which homeworkers can face, although not all were present in this supply chain.

Homeworkers face many human rights risks; as women located in their homes, they are usually invisible and not recognised as part of the workforce or included in regular auditing or supply chain monitoring processes. The most common breaches of the ETI Base Code are Clauses 8 *Regular employment is provided* and 5. *Living wages are paid*.

Homeworkers generally work informally, with none of the rights and benefits of contractually employed workers, and often with no paperwork whatsoever to confirm

details of piece rates, deadlines or payment dates. Homeworkers' working conditions commonly breach other clauses of the ETI base code, especially:

2. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are respected
3. Working conditions are safe and hygienic
4. Child labour shall not be used
6. Working hours are not excessive
7. No discrimination is practised



*Figure 4: Homeworker showing homemade protection against needle injuries.**

Child labour was not found within the project, but other studies have shown it is closely linked to wages, as parents may need to enrol children in production if they cannot meet their family needs through their production alone.



Figure 5: work is distributed by intermediaries, usually men.*

Although men are sometimes involved in informal home-based workshops, most dependent homeworkers are women, who often turn to homeworking when their gendered caring roles make it difficult for them to work outside the home. Homeworkers' work is often distributed by intermediaries, who are usually men, and the insecurity and lack of transparency surrounding their work means that they are at risk of exploitation, harassment and abuse.

As a result, addressing the challenges facing homeworkers within supply chains is an important part of a Gender sensitive approach to human rights due diligence.

Many homeworkers rely on their work to provide a livelihood for their families – yet they are usually paid in cash, at very low rates, well below legal minima, let alone a living wage (clause 5). When their employer has no orders, they may go for days or even weeks without work – and hence an income– meaning that, when work *is* available, they have little choice but to accept it even if this means working very long hours. Low piece rates and irregular work creates a risk that some homeworkers may involve their children in their work, in order to earn a decent livelihood and to meet tight deadlines. Without a contract it is hard for homeworkers to organise to improve their situation or even make plans for the future. As informal workers, homeworkers cannot access workplace social security schemes and rarely have any occupational health and safety protection.

6. Were other organisations involved in this intervention (companies, buyers, NGOs and/or Unions) and what were their roles (eg. funder, implementing partner, advisory role)?

The project was developed by Homeworkers Worldwide, a UK based NGO, working closely with its local partner, Cividep India, and with the ethical trade team within Pentland Brands and the local supplier. Pentland Brands provided resource to pay for staff time of both HWW and Cividep India. The project also included time for HWW to complete a study of Pentland Brands' purchasing practices, through interviews with company buyers and other commercial staff, which noted the company's careful forward planning process and regular communication with its suppliers.

Recommendations were made for changes to commercial practices – by for example, including hand-stitching work within the company's open book costing spreadsheet, to ensure that the prices paid by the brand were high enough to cover piece rates that allowed the homeworkers to earn at least the minimum wage, and to facilitate future monitoring of piece rates received by homeworkers.

Research was also carried out into social protection systems which could potentially be accessed by homeworkers. This revealed existing (as yet not implemented) legislation – the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 – which could potentially be used in future as a vehicle for extending social protection to homeworkers.

HWW and Cividep India have sought to share learning from the project, aiming to roll out good employment practices more widely across the leather footwear sector. In December 2017 HWW participated in a seminar on *Addressing Homeworking within Footwear Manufacturing* organized by a researcher from RMIT University in Melbourne Australia, to reach out to other brands and suppliers also sourcing from the same region, seeking to extend the work to other supply chains. This brought together three international brands, nine Indian manufacturers, the NGOs Cividep India and Homeworkers Worldwide, together with six homeworkers from an embryonic homeworkers' association to discuss the learning from the first stage of the Pentland project.

Although the funding for this work did not continued beyond 2019, both Homeworkers Worldwide and Cividep have retained their commitment to homeworkers in this production hub, and we hope that in the near future, further work with other brands sourcing from the area may be initiated.

7. Were women involved in designing and developing the initiative? Brief description of how involved and were these women; workers, managers, supervisors, HR and/or CSR staff, etc?

The original project was the result of an extensive campaign by female activists and staff from Homeworkers Worldwide, working closely with their Indian partner Cividep India, who reached out to homeworkers in Ambur over several years and carried out the research that convinced Pentland Brands to act. Cividep employed a team of local female field staff, many of whom had direct experience of working within the leather industry.

HWW staff worked closely with Pentland Brands' (female) ethical trade manager to develop the first stage of the project, mapping the supply chain and completing the needs assessment with the homeworkers. This process included both individual and group discussions with the homeworkers involved in this supply chain, documenting their living and working conditions and identifying their concerns and priorities. The next stage of the

work sought to respond to these priorities, and homeworkers' views were again consulted in the final documenting of results stage.

A key gap in the project to date has been the active organisation of the homeworkers concerned, since the supplier and agents were reluctant to allow our partner NGO Cividep to remain in contact with the homeworkers they interviewed. For transparency tools to be effective and sustainable, some form of grievance mechanism must be provided alongside the documentation process, ideally complemented by an independent organisation that can support any homeworker that wishes to raise a concern.

Central to any new system of employing homeworkers will be their involvement in discussions of changes to be made, with the aim of developing a form of permanent representation for homeworkers and with it, a self-sustaining model of implementation and monitoring.

8. What were the number and description of women workers engaged (eg. fixed term contract, permanent, migrant)? Please identify the source of these figures.

Between 118 and 200 homeworkers were recorded in the different stages of the project, reflecting the considerable fluctuations in the volume of work distributed to homeworkers by the supplier.

It is important however to recognise that this is just one supply chain of a single brand; there are 26 leather footwear factories listed on the Open Apparel Registry (an open source database of apparel manufacturing factories) in Ambur alone⁵, supplying many different brands, and this is likely to be a substantial underestimate: many more factories manufacture shoes for brands that do not disclose their supply chains, and Ambur is just one town within the much larger region of eastern Tamil Nadu, where the South India leather footwear production hub is located.

HWW therefore estimates that there are likely to be thousands if not tens of thousands of homeworkers stitching leather uppers across this region.

9. Were you monitoring the wider impact of your initiative? Do you know the number of dependents (if possible)?

This was a small project and funding did not allow the wider impact to be measured, or the number of dependents of the homeworkers. From previous studies⁶ though we know that most women become homeworkers when their domestic commitments make it difficult for them to work outside the home. It is therefore highly likely that most of the homeworkers participating in this study were caring either for dependent children or for elderly relatives.

10. How was implementation monitored?

A sample of the homeworkers involved in this supply chain were consulted at several points during the project: 30 individual interviews were completed with



*Figure 6: Group meeting for homeworkers organised by Cividep**

⁵ See Search for suppliers in India downloaded from the Open Apparel Registry <https://openapparel.org/>, and then further searches carried out using the 'address field, to provide a very rough estimate of the numbers of the facilities.

⁶ <http://www.homeworkersww.org.uk/assets/uploads/files/stitchingourshoesweb.pdf>

homeworkers during the initial needs assessment, 35 homeworkers were interviewed in small groups during the value chain analysis, and finally 13 homeworkers were interviewed (some individuals, others in small groups) during the final stakeholder consultation.

11. Have you evaluated the initiative? How was this done? If you have an impact assessment or report, please attach.

Three internal reports were produced for Pentland Brands, documenting the work done and making recommendations for next steps. Two summary documents were then agreed for wider publication; these are attached.

12. Please describe what you feel has and has not worked?

Key achievements of this project include:

- Building trust between the brand, the supplier and the civil society partners, which included NGOs based in the UK and in India
- Mapping key stakeholders within a footwear supply chain involving homeworkers, and tracing the work done and prices paid to the various actors, including the agents and homeworkers.
- Needs assessment with the homeworkers, to understand their concerns and priorities
- Developing a model for the good employment of homeworkers for these chains
- Partial implementation of this model, with the introduction of a job card system to improve transparency of the work done and payments received by the homeworkers.
- Completion of time and motion studies involving a sample of the homeworkers, to determine fair piece rates for the different styles of shoe completed, linked to the relevant minimum wage rates for the sector and location
- Homeworkers in this supply chain saw their piece rates rise by one third on average, and all homeworkers now received the same rate for a given task.
- Useful learning was gained around engaging and building trust with suppliers and subcontractors.
- The pilot also demonstrates the viability of the approach taken by HWW and Civedep and sets precedents and good practice which can be used to influence and recruit other Brands in future.

Outstanding challenges:

- The leather footwear within this product range has declined often in recent times due to change in product offering. Although the system remains embedded in company practice, it is acknowledged that less homeworkers are employed due to reduction in product range.
- Our final consultation report identified some concerns regarding the sustainability of the newly introduced systems, including the low level of agents' commissions and the lack of a grievance mechanism for the homeworkers.
- Although increased, piece rates remained low, and many homeworkers felt the piece rates should be further increased and revised on an annual basis.
- Issues raised by homeworkers in earlier stages of the project, including irregularity of orders, occupational health issues, access to social security and health care, and company provision of quality thread and free needles remained unresolved.

- Without some form of organisation the homeworkers were still unable to participate actively in mechanisms for agreeing piece rates and other discussions about their pay and conditions.

13. Briefly explain how the initiative has improved:

Agency – trade union representation, individual/collective voice and role in decision making

Aspiration – opportunities for advancement, promotion and training

Dignity – treatment, behaviour, attitudes.

Reward – benefits e.g. wages, maternity, childcare, etc.

Safety – sexual harassment/violence, safety to and from work, at work.

Security – job and income security

This initiative introduced simple systems that improved transparency within homeworker supply chains, and led to a substantial increase in homeworkers' pay. Homeworkers were consulted at several points in the process, and asked to feedback their opinions and suggestions for how their working conditions could be improved. These interviews and group meetings were facilitated by experienced field staff from our local NGO partner, Cividep India, who made efforts to work in a participatory and inclusive way.

Cividep has been able to secure additional resource to continue their involvement with homeworkers working within the leather sector within this area. However confidentiality rules governing the supply mapping work coupled with logistical challenges have meant that the homeworkers within the supply chains included within this initiative have not been able to participate in these activities. It is not possible therefore to comment on the extent of any improvement in homeworkers' agency or dignity, although the very fact that they were consulted for the first time about their work is likely to have had some positive benefit.

14. Has the learning been shared? Where and how has this been shared? With whom?

Summary reports have been disseminated on the HWW website, and key learning from the project has been presented at various events and forums, including the ETI's Biennial conference in 2018.

15. Has the intervention continued? If so what has the continued impact been? Has the information and learning informed further work to ensure respect for women's rights in the workplace?

Pentland Brands remains committed to ensuring that where we have homeworking in our supply chain that our homeworking policy and learnings from the study are adhered to. We have since refocused our ethical trade project works into different areas of our supply chain where we have more volume and so more impact can be driven through our beyond audit ethical trade program. We remain passionate about sharing our learnings from the homeworking study and welcome speaking with other brands to help them with their homeworking initiatives and we share our homeworking policy so others may learn from it.

C. Future work

1. What additional support, if any, would you have liked to have had to help you promote gender equality?

As a small NGO with limited resources, HWW faces an on-going struggle to resource our on-going commitment to this work. Next steps identified in the final report from this project

included extending the project to include other retailers and suppliers, to increase leverage and make it more feasible for the gains made to be sustained and rolled out across the sector, and also moving on to address some of the other issues identified in the original supply chain mapping study.

Unfortunately though the realities of Pentland's commercial operations and changes within their supply chain meant that homeworking within leather footwear was no longer a focus area for their ethical trade team, and as a result the link with HWW has ended, although they remain committed to sharing the lessons learnt from the project with wider stakeholders. Pentland Brands will commit to taking part in future webinars or events in encouraging other brands to review homeworking in their supply chains and sharing best practice.

In 2019 HWW embarked on a new partnership with two larger NGOs, the Hidden Homeworkers project co-funded by the European Community and extending this work into new locations and supply chains in India, Pakistan and Nepal. Through this project we hope to scale up learning from our leather footwear pilots to the wider apparel and footwear manufacturing sectors in India, Pakistan and Nepal, but it is only now, 18 months into this project, that we have been able to negotiate dedicated funding to continue work in the leather footwear sector in this part of south India.

We know however that homeworking is not solely a phenomenon that occurs within South Asia; previous HWW projects have worked with homeworkers in Latin America, Eastern and Southern Europe and East Asia. Our more recent advocacy work with brands has yielded accounts of homeworkers in China, Vietnam, Bulgaria, Italy and the UK.

We are currently seeking both further resource and new civil society partners that will enable us to respond with agility to such reports, providing staff capacity and a small grants fund to enable us to commission initial outreach and supply chain studies in new locations. These studies will not only bring greater transparency and visibility of homeworkers in supply chains (evidence which is key for leveraging brand engagement) but will enable us to identify new local civil society partners in different countries with whom we can develop longer term collaborations to improve gendered working conditions and secure tangible benefits for homeworkers and other precarious women workers in these supply chains.

2. What additional strategies have been implemented, and by whom, to both promote respect for women's rights and to mitigate rights violations?

HWW is currently finalising a review of a number of different initiatives that have set out to address the rights violations that women homeworkers face; this includes recent projects led both by brands and by other NGOs, and will be published shortly. A key finding is the importance of a recognition of homeworkers by the lead brand and a commitment from them to extend their human rights due diligence to workers in informal subcontract chains, and to adopt policies which give suppliers and sub-contractors permission to disclose their use of homeworkers, so that positive action can be taken. HWW is using the case study as part of its ongoing efforts to influence other brands and multi-stakeholder initiatives to adopt a Homeworker Policy and address previously hidden homeworking in their product chains.

3. As a result of the learning from this initiative what actions would you recommend that companies, unions, NGOs or other actors in the sports and footwear sectors take to ensure respect for women's rights in other workplaces?

I will attach a recent flyer that HWW has produced, setting out the actions that we are calling for, to extend labour rights to all precarious women workers within global supply chains, including those at the end of such chains, who are often the homeworkers.

NB. Photos marked with * are generic images drawn from HWW and Cividep India's wider work on leather footwear in Tamil Nadu, and not from homeworkers or suppliers involved in this case study.