

# Trade Matters

January 2024

বানাগাঁও দিঘীর পাড়

ক  
পান করা  
ডালী, ঠাকুরগাঁও  
দুপুর ০১ টা পর্যন্ত  
মি অফিসার  
৪৪৮ ৭০০৬১



Transform  
Trade

So everybody benefits.

# Welcome to Trade Matters



Dear friends,

Happy New Year! I hope that you and your loved ones enjoyed a peaceful break over the festive season.

As we look forward to the year ahead, there is much to be excited about – and in this edition of Trade Matters, you’ll see some of the highlights ahead. From the launch of our new tea, to 2024 Big Brew packs, new actions for our Homeworkers campaign, and the ongoing fundraising to support our life-changing work across the world, there so are many ways to get involved and help transform trade for the better.

2024 looks to be a pivotal year when it comes to trade. As the UK is likely to have a general election, new opportunities will open to campaign for positive change to the unfair laws and regulations which enable businesses and trade systems to exploit people. We’ll continue to stand with people who are disadvantaged by the system, fighting for their voices to be heard by those in power.

A new year brings a fresh start and new beginnings – not just for us, but for the thousands of people we work alongside. Let’s stand together and ensure that this year is a year when together, we make progress towards a just and fair future.

With very best wishes,

*Alice*

Alice Oyaro, Deputy CEO, Transform Trade



## Contents

- 4** Your kindness was unmatched
- 5** Protecting crops and fighting climate change
- 6** Join us for Big Brew 2024!
- 8** Life-changing community-shops
- 10** Not all teas are created equal
- 12** The Traidcraft project builds up speed
- 14** Remembering Eileen
- 15** The problem with seeds
- 16** Looking for the perfect gift?

Transform Trade  
4th Floor, 7-15 Pink Lane  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 5DW

E hello@transform-trade.org  
T +44 (0) 191 497 6445  
W transform-trade.org

Front cover: Sriti Rani, community store manager, Bangladesh  
Photos: Transform Trade/ Rifat Tareq



Photo: Transform Trade/Kamalam

# Your kindness was unmatched

## Fighting for fashion's unseen workers

**Christmas traditionally is a time of giving and we wanted to thank all who chose to support us over the festive season. We're so grateful for your generosity and for your commitment to transforming trade.**

Your donations this year will allow us to keep working with, and learning from, those experiencing injustice and exploitation in trade, so that together, we can build a brighter and fairer future for all.

This winter, as part of our Christmas appeal, we also asked for your support in demanding UK brands to do more to support homeworkers.

Homeworkers are the fashion industry's hidden workforce. Working from their homes or nearby informal workshops they receive work from subcontractors. Because they are not employed by factories, homeworkers are often not considered formal workers and can struggle to get minimum wage, pensions, sick pay, or maternity leave.

It doesn't have to be this way. If clothing companies act to recognise these unseen workers, their pay and working conditions could improve.

We're challenging UK fashion brands to do better – to recognise homeworking in their supply chains, and create formal, public policies around it, which enable homeworkers to be seen, and get a fair deal.

Right now, we are seeing three main scenarios from brands -

- 1** Brands who don't have policies recognising and allowing homeworking. This doesn't stop it happening – it just means factories keep it hidden, leaving homeworkers facing poor pay and unfair treatment.
- 2** Brands whose policies need improving. Sometimes policies are contradictory and both allow and ban

homeworking, other times they make it really hard for factories to declare their use of homeworkers, which means homeworking is kept hidden.

- 3** Finally, there are brands who allow homeworking, but we want them to take it further and publicly demonstrate how they support homeworkers in their supply chains. This way we know that their policies are being put into practice and they are actively trying to improve working conditions for homeworkers.

Homeworking is complicated and brands are all at different stages but with your support we are making change.



# Protecting crops and fighting climate change

**In 2021 you gave generously to the Regenerators appeal which has allowed us to support small-scale farmers in Tanzania.**

Small-scale farmers produce the majority of the world's food needs, but they are increasingly vulnerable to climate change. Farming communities in Tanzania are on the frontline of this crisis.

Increasingly erratic weather patterns, longer drought seasons, and shorter and more intense rains mean that smallholder farmers are facing huge challenges.

Farmers we work with in are learning to adapt to climate change using regenerative farming techniques - last year more than 1,400 farmers received training. Small-scale farmers, the majority of whom are women, learnt sustainable techniques and shared knowledge of those practices in their local communities, as well as developing business skills to increase their access to markets to sell their produce.

## Kazi Yetu

Kazi Yetu are a tea producer in Tanzania focused on providing high quality tea from a transparent supply chain – they are working with 12,000 small-scale tea growers. You might remember Kazi Yetu from our Producer Appeal last Spring – thank you so much for supporting their work. Transform Trade are collaborating with Kazi Yetu to support tea growers with production and marketing, working hand in hand with growers' associations.



Photo: Transform Trade/Michael Goima

# Join us for **Big Brew** 2024



Big Brew has always been about the power of a community coming together. When you invite your friends and family to chat, laugh and enjoy some delicious tea and cake, you are helping power the fight for justice, standing alongside farmers and workers around the world demanding a fairer deal.

We'd love for you to join in - we are encouraging everyone to host Big Brews between **Friday 23rd February and Friday 8th March 2024** - or as near to that as you can get - so don't miss the chance to book your venue!

These are the two weeks leading up to International Women's Day - this year, Big Brew is inspired by groups of women running community-owned



Get everything you need to run a brilliant Big Brew, including games and decorations, by ordering our free resource pack at [transform-trade.org/big-brew](https://transform-trade.org/big-brew) (and find our digital resources too).

shops in Bangladesh. If these dates don't work for your community, you are free to host at any time of year.

In 2023, Transform Trade launched a project that was long in the making - the creation of community-owned shops in rural Bangladesh, all run and owned by women. These shops provide access to household necessities much closer to home, and are increasing women's independence, enabling them to earn money and develop business skills. We want to help build 100 of these transformative shops - your Big Brew could help us build the next one.



**Our Big Brew pack 2024!**

See over for what your Big Brew could do!

# Life-changing community shops



Photos: Transform Trade/ Rifat Tareq

**“It gives us immense happiness to see more women being interested to start their businesses after getting inspiration from us.”**

Rani Das

These community-owned shops are more than just businesses. They are a place for women to come together and for families to invest in a new and more equal future, proving that when women are able to work outside the home, the whole community benefits.

It takes 30 families to run these shops, and every family member buys in with their own money, time and hard work – we help with the set-up costs, and they ensure these shops are successful and continue to operate for years to come.

Rani Das says:  
“One big benefit is that women of our community can now buy female



*hygiene products themselves from our shop. They can also buy birth control and other products which are available in our shop. Before this shop, women had to depend on the male members of their family for buying this kind of products. We also sell saline and basic medicines. People of the village now can find medicines at their doorstep.”*

**“I cannot deny the fact that Sadaipati [the shop] brought lots of change in our financial and societal lives. Now we can call ourselves proud shop owners. This is not a small feat in a low-income area like ours. These 30 women have a running business under their names, and they feel extremely proud of their accomplishment.”** Rani Das

# Not all teas are created equal...

## As a Transform Trade supporter, you probably know a thing or two about tea.

And the first thing you'll know is – choosing an ethical tea is complicated! From Fairtrade, to organic, Rainforest Alliance, and other certification marks, to blends and single origins, tea estates vs smallholders, compostable tea bags, and then on to packaging – plastic content, bleach, inks, and recyclable boxes – making a cup of tea can be an ethical minefield. So, with this in mind, we've produced a basic guide to the main questions around ethical tea:

## Problems exist both in Smallholder and Tea Estates tea production

From a trade justice perspective, the labour rights of those who tend and harvest the tea leaves is the big question. Big tea brands dominate the tea industry, buying from tea estates where conditions are notoriously poor, workers and their families' housing situation ties them to working on the estates, and exploitation is hidden from sight behind the gates around these vast plantations (many of these plantations are legacies of British colonial land grabs). There have been many cases of alleged serious human rights abuses on tea estates in India and East Africa.



A farmer supplying tea to Kazi Yetu, photographed on an organic estate in the Usambara Mountains, Tanzania.  
Photo: Kazi Yetu.

Smallholder tea growers face challenges too, having to get their freshly picked tea to factories to process within 4 hours before the leaves start to become worthless, and often having little power to negotiate on prices. However, as part of effective collectives, they can earn a fair price for their tea from the factories and often supplement their income with other crops.

## Supply Chain Transparency

You might remember Transform Trade's campaign 'Who picked my tea?'. It's an important question – has the tea brand named the factories that they are buying from? This transparency enables civil society groups to engage with factories and estates to ensure that the working conditions meet the tea brand's supply chain codes of conduct.

## Soils, environment, and use of pesticides

Organic certification is a great way to avoid pesticides being used in the production of tea.

## Fairtrade Certification

Much Fairtrade tea comes from tea estates. With Fairtrade a premium is paid and put into initiatives the estates run which benefit the community. However, conditions can still be very difficult for workers. When Fairtrade tea is purchased from smallholders, the farmers themselves have a say over how the monies are spent.

## Packaging – what to look for

Firstly, the teabags themselves – how are they disposed of? You can get around this by buying loose leaf tea, but companies making teabags

should reveal whether bags are bio-degradable. Packaging wise – is the cardboard made from recycled materials and is it recyclable? Do they use foil, and can this be recycled by your local council – many can't be? Are the printing inks on the packaging vegetable or chemical?

There's no perfectly ethical tea on the market right now, but many companies and brands, including Traidcraft (under the care of Transform Trade) are working hard towards creating a product which is as good as can be. Above all, we need the sector as a whole to embrace transparency and a commitment to fair conditions. Without big picture change to accompany individual buying decisions, the majority of people working to pick your tea won't see a fair deal. Turn the page for an update on Traidcraft Tea!

# You love our cards!

A huge thanks to everyone who got behind our first ever charity Christmas card range - we were bowled over by the strength of your support, with 100% of all proceeds going to our work fighting for justice in trade.

Thanks goes to everyone who sent cards or bought in huge numbers for stalls and shops up and down the country. We are very excited to bring you this year's range – so watch this space for an even bigger and better selection later on in 2024!

## Cards throughout the year

We are also thrilled to launch our greetings card selection this spring. Here is a sneak preview of some of the lovely designs, and we'll let you know as soon as we have more details, but we hope there is something for everyone – from individual shoppers to Fairtraders and shops.

If you have any feedback on Christmas cards or thoughts on our new greetings card range, please get in touch with Fundraising Lead, Sarah McQuaid on [sarah.mcquaid@transform-trade.org](mailto:sarah.mcquaid@transform-trade.org)



# The Traidcraft project builds up speed



As you may know, Transform Trade is now the custodian of the Traidcraft brand - and is restoring its legacy by building a small, high impact product range.

Alongside this, we are working to use the Traidcraft mark as seal of approval, signifying adherence to fair trade principles which lie outside the scope of the Fairtrade mark.

Here's how we're getting on...

## The Traidcraft mark

Famously an early pioneer of fair trade, Traidcraft continued that pioneering spirit for decades bringing fair trade principles to new supply chains the Fairtrade mark can't reach. Now under Transform Trade's care, we're delighted to say that this work will continue.

The mark will signify that workers and producers are treated and paid fairly for products.

## The power of a premium

In 2009, Jumbo Charcoal in Namibia worked alongside Traidcraft, Co-op and Rectella International to launch the world's first fair trade charcoal. Since then, over £700,000 in fair trade premiums has been raised.



Kundumo Kanyetu, tending to the vegetable garden at the packing plant.

The community decide how that money is spent through an autonomous elected committee and over time this has made a huge difference to the lives of workers, burners and their communities. Here are a few examples of what that fair trade premium means for charcoal producers in Namibia...

Fair trade charcoal will be available to purchase in Co-op stores from March onwards. Read more about the impact on Co-op's website here - at [coop.co.uk/our-suppliers/fairtrade/fairtrade-charcoal/](https://www.coop.co.uk/our-suppliers/fairtrade/fairtrade-charcoal/)



Classrooms for local children



Meriam Mbimbi at the water pump funded by the fair trade premium



Solar panels to provide power and lighting for charcoal workers

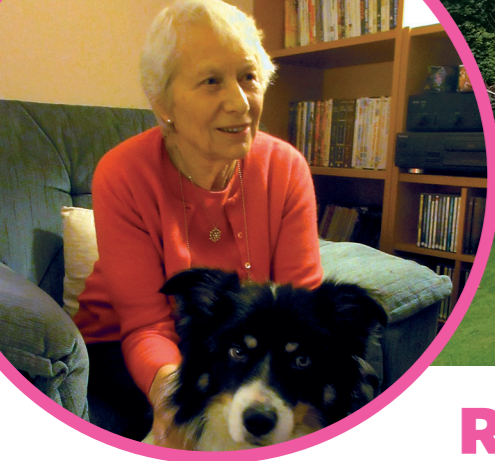
We're excited this work can continue the legacy and impact of Traidcraft in a practical, powerful way.

## Fancy a cuppa?

Ask us a few months ago and we'd have told you that we were far away from seeing a return of Traidcraft tea - but we're delighted to say that things have changed!

In the week this magazine goes to print we're sorting the final details of brand new Traidcraft tea 100% sourced from Kenyan smallholder tea growers. Alongside that, this tea comes with a brilliant story of the sort of difference Transform Trade can make in these supply chains. We'll be sharing this inspirational story over the coming months.

There's a bit of lead time to get the tea ready for sale but watch out in Spring for more updates. Visit [transform-trade.org/join](https://www.transform-trade.org/join) to sign up to receive emails from us if you haven't already!



## Remembering Eileen

**Eileen Scholes was a Fairtrader and lifelong supporter of trade justice. Her son, Tim Scholes remembers her.**

My Mother, Eileen Scholes, was born in 1935 and was brought up around Ashton-under-Lyne, now in Greater Manchester. She qualified as a nurse at Leeds General Infirmary and met my father, Michael, whilst working near Stockport.

They both became passionate about Fair Trade and Traidcraft in particular, and ran their first Traidcraft stall at Amersham Free Church from the late 80s. My brother John,

sister Elizabeth and I remember spending our Sunday mornings moving heavy boxes of Fair Trade products around the church, as I'm sure do many children of Traidcraft reps!

After they retired to Kirkby Lonsdale they moved the stall from the Methodist Church to their front room, to try to attract a larger cross-section of the local population. Their regular, Fair Trade coffee mornings, became a staple part of the local scene, and they sold considerable amounts of Fair Trade products from the associated stalls.

Mum was an active person all her life, walking her dogs and riding her bikes. She was always up for an adventure. She

ascended her first rock climb to celebrate her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday and descended Gaping Gill for her 70<sup>th</sup>. She also became an active rag rug maker, introducing many people to the art through a series of courses she ran, which obviously included Fair Trade coffee and baking. Her many rugs can be found around the country, in particularly on the floors of her eight grandchildren.

After the death of her husband, Michael, she moved to Ripon, where she became one of

the most loyal customers of the Traidcraft stall at Holy Trinity Church. Her commitment to Fair Trade meant she bought far more products than she really needed and we are still enjoying her last few bottles of Zaytoun Palestinian olive oil.

We remember her with great love and affection.

Eileen kindly chose to remember Transform Trade with a gift in her will, ensuring that her passion for trade justice will continue to make a difference for generations to come.

If you'd like to discuss how leaving a gift in your will could make a similar difference, please give Sarah a ring on **0191 497 6445** or send her an email: **sarah.mcquaid@transform-trade.org**

## The problem with seeds

**It goes without saying that seeds are the life blood of our food system – but farmers' rights to exchange, sell and use the seeds they want to are not guaranteed.**

Smallholder farmers in the Global South know their seeds – they are their livelihood. They know the best varieties that work in their soil and when to bank and save seeds for a later date. This is the kind of farming that builds climate resilience and biodiversity – vital in a time when harvests are threatened by extreme weather.

The right for these farmers to choose their own seeds is under threat. New laws, heavily lobbied for by big business, are being introduced across many countries to limit what smallholders can do with their seeds – in alignment with seed patent laws.

These laws have taken effect in Kenya – meaning local farmers can no longer share, exchange or sell their own seeds. As a result, many farmers are left with no choice but to buy often costly certified commodity seeds from certified companies. Just four corporate giants (Bayer, Corteva, BASF and ChemChina/Syngenta) own 60% of the global seed market.

In effect, this replaces local knowledge and biodiversity with commoditised, mass market seeds that are often designed to be used with harmful, and expensive, fertilisers and pesticides.

Transform Trade works with village groups in Jharkhand, India to create community seed banks, which operate like a library – seeds can be borrowed and returned, and diverse varieties preserved for future generations.

Community based seed sharing instead of corporate control is often better for the environment, safeguards local knowledge and prevents local farmers from paying overinflated prices just to sow their crops.

But the UK Government is pressuring countries in the Global South to introduce more restrictive seed laws by putting these requirements in its free trade deals. Currently the UK has 21 trade agreements that promote these laws. It is vital that farmers' rights to seeds are protected and that restrictive seed laws are left out of these deals.

Keep an eye out in 2024 for ways in which you can take action and tell the UK Government to keep seeds in the hands of those that know their land the best.



# Looking for the perfect gift?

PLANET-  
CONSCIOUS  
GIFT

With Christmas behind us, it can be easy to forget the new year is full of opportunities to celebrate those you love and show gratitude for everything they do for you – and a thoughtful gift can do just that.

Each charity gift card has space for you to write your own personalised message and with a range of designs, you can send a Gifts for Life card whatever your budget.

100% of the cost of these cards goes

directly to Transform Trade, supporting our work in Fashion, Tea, and Farming across the world.

You can buy our physical gift cards at **Ethical Superstore**, and our full range of e-cards at **[store-transform-trade.org](https://store-transform-trade.org)**



This gift fights for a fairer tea industry, alongside the small-scale farmers demanding fair prices for their leaves and standing up for improved working conditions.



This gift supports the farmers, workers and social entrepreneurs who are transforming trade, to create a world where everyone earns a fair income for their hard work.



This gift fights to transform the fashion industry; against the unfair practices which disadvantage and harm workers in pursuit of unlimited profits.



This gift helps women working hard to earn a fair wage, supporting their families and communities.