



Story: Working for justice in a moving picture – the fair trade story

Let justice roll... down to growers, producers and artisans in the Global South so that they may receive a fair price for the goods they produce. Just as Amos railed against the weighted scales in the markets of his day, so God has raised up prophets in our generation to demand justice for his people in the global marketplace.

In 1979 Richard Adams founded Traidcraft, an organisation that prompted us to see producers more as partners and spoke out against the growing power of multinational corporations that look to their own profits rather than the welfare of their suppliers.

Fair trade was embraced by faith communities and those of no faith, and the movement grew with the founding of the Fairtrade Foundation. A shared passion for justice drew people into campaigning as well as shopping for fair trade.

For example, in the 'till receipt' campaign, Church representatives simply collected everyone's till receipts, which were then sent by the sack full to the big supermarkets. This showed the power of ordinary people's regular spending and persuaded the major supermarkets to get fair trade products onto their shelves.

The impact of the fair trade movement is seen in communities across the world. Where people achieve a just price for their products they are able to invest in better lives for themselves and their children. The blessings of fair trade partnerships became evident during the pandemic – in Bangladesh whole villages were supported with hand wash and masks bought with the premium earned by the local fair trade cooperative.

The fair trade movement is now expanding its vision of justice and it helps communities to tackle environmental issues and address climate change – bringing justice not only to people but to the created world. For example, in

India, Traidcraft Exchange supported the building of an effluent treatment plant, enabling textile workers to treat the water used to dye cloth; water which had previously been massively polluting the local water courses.

Sadly, the Traidcraft business became unviable and went into administration in January 2023. However, its legacy endures in the many businesses, large and small, that import goods on fair trade terms and who reach into all parts of the community.

For the Christian community, particularly, the demise of Traidcraft has been a great loss but the fight goes on. Tea, coffee and sugar carrying the fair trade mark are readily available for our personal use and for our church kitchens. We can also seek out fair trade products, particularly important in the fashion industry. Transform Trade (formerly Traidcraft Exchange) continues to challenge industry and government and needs our support to do so.

Never doubt that when we choose to buy a fair trade product as part of our weekly shopping, we create a drop that flows into the mighty stream of God's justice.