

What is Just Change?

Just Change is an alternative trading system that links local communities in India and the UK, enabling them to control the terms on which they trade and the way profits are distributed. It challenges the injustice of the global market and creates a system where communities can participate in an economy based on human values and principles of justice and co-operation.

"Why is it that profits only go to those who have capital to invest? Just Change is a new form of producer/consumer - investor co-operative, ensuring that all the participants have a fair share."

Stan Thekaekara, Just Change

In India: four Just Change communities, from Kerala in the south to Orissa in the north, representing 40,000 families, are trading tea, rice, cloth, soap, spices and other goods through 18 community owned shops. Every month new shops are opening and a number of other community groups are waiting to join.

In the UK: Marsh Farm community organisation in Luton, Northern Tea Merchants in Yorkshire and JC volunteers are distributing tea to schools, parishes, tenants groups, local cafes and small alternative retailers. The aim is to provide local communities with affordable, fairly traded products and to generate jobs linked to the Just Change trading network.



How did it start?

Since 1986, ACCORD (a development organisation) has worked with the indigenous people (adivasis) of Gudalur in south India, helping them to establish a community organisation of around 3,000 families and to reclaim ancestral tribal lands, stolen from them years ago. To secure ownership, they planted tea, a permanent crop, and bought their own plantation. This provided a stable income and led to many other initiatives, including schools and a hospital. But the adivasis had no control over the global market and found themselves vulnerable to fluctuations in world prices. They needed a way to be more independent, so from 1991, they began to build links with other producer communities, agreeing between themselves the terms on which they would trade.

Just Change India was born!

International links

The adivasis also sold their tea through a German Fair Trade organisation. But on a visit to Germany in 1997, they were shocked to find that their friends had to pay more not less for Fair Trade tea. They asked 'how is this 'fair?'' and became determined to extend the benefits of Just Change to low income groups, their friends and supporters overseas. Just Change could offer a fair deal to local people while building a global community.

Since 2000, this idea has been taking root in the UK. The JCUK trading company has been formed and a growing network of local groups is keen to join Just Change as well as buy tea and other products! Adivasi tea from Gudalur is now distributed by Marsh Farm community organisation (for the south and midlands) and by Northern Tea Merchants.

Just Change UK is taking off!

How does it work?

In India, Just Change ensures that farmers are paid a fair price for their products at the outset. The cost of processing and transporting goods adds value, and this is reflected in the price paid by the consumer - a realistic price, not an artificial one. The surplus generated by this trade is then ploughed back into the Just Change network. Members decide how it should be distributed, ensuring that everyone benefits.

"Just Change ensures that everyone can make a living and no-one makes a killing"

Glenn Jenkins, Marsh Farm Community Organisation

Is it Fair Trade?

Just Change is like Fair Trade in that producers are guaranteed a better price for their product and therefore a fairer deal. But Just Change goes further by challenging the structures that shape the global market.

In the global economy, farmers and craftsmen have no power to determine the price of their products, and consumers have little say over what they pay for their tea, coffee, sugar and other commodities. International trade is controlled by large multi-national companies and geared to reward financial investors - the only stakeholders who seem to matter. Their interests are protected from fluctuations in world commodity prices. It is the farmers and also consumers who, through low wages and high prices, feel the squeeze.

Just Change treats producers and consumers as stakeholders in the market chain with a right to share in the value generated through this trading process. In this way it aims to tackle the underlying causes of poverty through a mutually beneficial, and just, trading system that connects and empowers communities around the world.



How can I get involved?

You can get involved as a trader, as a community group, church or school, or simply as a consumer. If you want to buy tea or help us develop the JC network and promote this alternative way of trading, please use the contacts below:

For the north of the UK:
Manchester@justchangeuk.org

For the south/midlands:
London@justchangeuk.org

Contact:
Phone:
Email:

Just Change UK

Directly Linking
Communities



Just Change is a global trading network that links communities in a mutually beneficial economic relationship.

For more information go to:
www.justchangeindia.com
www.justchangeuk.org