



May Update

Transform
Trade

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Cover Image - Secretary SAWA Women Help Group Rahab Wambui,
at Nanyuki Market holding onions from her farm ready to sell.

Credit: Transform Trade/ Nashon Otieno



Opening day at a Women Owned Community Store in Bangladesh. Credit: Transform Trade



Project Updates

Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE)– changing lives in Bangladesh

Almost half of people in rural Bangladesh live in poverty, with women disproportionately affected. Many work in precarious informal employment and their incomes are less than half that of men. The impact of climate change is huge – with the majority of people depending on agriculture to survive, increasingly volatile weather patterns are making it harder to earn even a basic income.

Transform Trade is leading this project in partnership with two Bangladeshi organisations; Ulashi Sreejony Sangha and Bikash Bangladesh. 85% of the funding for this project has been granted by the European Commission.

The project started in February 2021 and is supporting 15,000 women working in farming supply chains in the northern and southern regions of Bangladesh. Transform Trade is supporting them to:

- **increase** their incomes by at least 26%
- **diversify** their income sources
- **establish** 500 Women-Led Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)
- **start** businesses and build their business skills
- **access** government services
- **fight** gender inequality

In the past year we’ve been working alongside 15,000 women through 500 well-established CSOs. 45% of the women we are working with now have both on-farm and off-farm income sources.

The CSOs have been holding monthly meetings where they discuss good agricultural practices, women’s rights, and other relevant topics. Over 200 local government officials and community leaders pledged to support the Women-Led CSOs in their areas after attending workshops held as part of the project. This two-way communication has bridged significant knowledge gaps; more women are now communicating with and accessing services from their local government. Many women are now accessing many government services and schemes such as widows’ allowance, maternity pay, old age allowance, disability allowance, and child marriage prevention services.

The CSOs have also set up nine ‘Women’s Community Stores’ with support from Transform Trade - physical shops which sell their own produce and consumer goods such as bakery items, cleaning products, and cosmetics. These stores will be sustainable social enterprises owned and managed by women; participating CSO members will split the profits from them.

Over the next year, we plan to set up more stores up to a total of 100 stores across Bangladesh.

We would like to thank The Society of the Sacred Heart and The Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust for generously supporting this project.

Partners:



Ulashi Sreejony Sangha



“I would like people to understand that climate change has impacted my family, as well the entire community in our village, in many ways - health wise, due to the eruption of water borne diseases, and economically as the main source of income in our village is from farming, and cashew trees (and other crops) are highly affected by flooding and drought.”

Mariam, 32, farmer & mother of two

Credit: Transform Trade /Michael Goima

The Regenerators

In coastal Tanzania people are impacted by rising sea-levels, erratic rainfall and deforestation. In 2021, Transform Trade ran the Regenerators Appeal – where donations were matched by the UK government. The project supports climate-impacted communities adapt to their changing environment, farm in new and climate resilient ways, and regenerate and protect the soil and the forests they rely on.

The project began in April 2022 and aims to increase the incomes of 2,200 climate vulnerable people, improve natural resource management and enhance agri-food systems.

In the past year Transform Trade have worked to form strong self-help groups in the affected areas and delivered training to 1465 farmers on group governance, leadership, regenerative production practices, climate resilience practices and support to access new markets. Farmers have benefitted from practical demonstrations

delivered by Transform Trade staff, technical consultants, local government, and local partner the Small Industry Development Organization (SIDO).

We've been able to provide market access by identifying buyers for honey, sunflower, fruit trees, poultry, and vegetables and organised a business forum between farmers and buyers to negotiate better business terms such as contracting, pricing, and seed supply.

Our local partner, The Tanzania Gender and Sustainable Energy Network (Tangsen), is also working with us to provide alternative clean energy sources for households involved in the project, and advocacy on broader climate change issues.

We want to thank the many trust funders who supported the appeal providing gifts which helped us leverage match from the UK government – particular thanks go to The Squires Foundation, The Jusaca Charitable Trust, The MacDaibhidh Charitable Trust, and The Society of the Sacred Heart.

The Pahariya Samridhhi Project

Transform Trade is supporting more than 3,000 households from vulnerable tribal communities in Eastern India as part of this three year project (Oct 2019 - Sept 2023). Historically, they have depended upon traditional knowledge of seed preservation and the farming of grains and pulses on hills slopes.

Their way of life faces huge challenges caused by deforestation, lack of management rights over land, mining, industrialisation, and the increasing impact of climate change.

Due to these challenges indigenous seeds are no longer always readily available to the vulnerable Pahariya women which leaves them 'scrambling' for seed sold by local traders at inflated prices, threatening food security and their livelihoods.

116 Mahila Sabhas, community based organisations run and led by 359,352 women from 3072 households, are setting up community seed banks to preserve indigenous seeds and prevent households from being forced into debt or food insecurity due to the high cost of traded seed. By working closely with these village groups, Transform Trade has supported the creation of five community seed banks,



Credit: Transform Trade/Ajaya Behera

serving 1514 households and which have an average of 300 kgs of seeds per bank. So far, a total of 1.5 tonnes of seeds have been distributed in the Jharkhand area.

The Pahariya project has also undertaken gender mainstreaming training sessions alongside the two partner NGOs, aimed at building a stronger civil society in the area.

The Mahila Sabhas members were supported with a revolving fund of £241.60 per community based organisation to enable the members to procure produce from farmers. At least 367 of the 500 households surveyed are now consuming a nutritious meal each day, which includes vegetables, a change attributed to the Health and Nutrition Awareness campaigns supported by Transform Trade.

Community partners: Badlao Foundation (<https://badlao.org/>) and SATHEE

Participatory grant-making pilot - supporting women-led businesses

The failure of five consecutive rainy seasons in Kenya has had a significant impact on agriculture, the country's main economic activity, leaving many people hungry and living in poverty.

To support some of the worst impacted farmers living in semi-arid areas in Kenya, Transform Trade embarked on a journey in 2021 to pilot participatory grant-making

with women farmers and entrepreneurs in semi-arid regions after the success of the earlier SAWA project.

Using participatory approaches we trust the farmer organisations in the community we work in to take the lead in determining the change they want to achieve as we provide support to their ideas and analysis. We provide grants to help vulnerable people build strong businesses and alongside, Transform Trade can provide various support as determined by groups themselves; such as access to markets, leadership and governance training, record keeping or technical inputs on farming.

A Support Group of people rooted in the local context provides a hub of local knowledge and makes decisions about how grants are dispersed. The Support Group ensures decision-making power is shifted from the UK to Kenya and to the people closest to the issue. Farmers with lived experience are represented, as well as local experts such as NGOs, government officials and business leaders who can provide support to the groups as they build out their business plans for future growth and sustainability.

As a result communities have strengthened existing enterprises resulting improved quality of life, increased income, and economic stability, benefiting all members of these organisations. The change in approach has had an impact on the way women participants think about themselves as having agency and power over their own futures.

By adopting a community-led approach that values their perspectives and expertise, we can foster trust and collaboration, leading to sustainable and meaningful change.

Thanks to our local partners Kenya Community Development Foundation and Kenya National Farmers Federation.



We sincerely thank The Ceniarth Foundation, The Society of the Sacred Heart, Wyatt-Spearman Charitable Trust, The Janelaw Trust, Keith Stephenson, The Dulverton Trust, The Peter Cowley Africa Trust, and Kilpatrick Fraser Charitable Trust for generously supporting this project.

Thanks to the funder Oak Foundation (<https://oakfnd.org/>) Be One Percent Foundation, The Rothley Trust.

Looking Ahead

The Producer Fund

In response to Traidcraft PLC's closure, Transform Trade launched the Producer Fund – a fund designed to support inspirational small and ethical business across the world, helping them thrive in a world where the odds are stacked against fair trade.

'I've seen the direct impact of the business on the women who run it and produce for it and it gives me so much passion to continue. I've seen women empowered. When Meru first started, in those days men took priority and women were left behind. Now our workers have their own bank accounts and their own money, they own land with their own title, and they've built better homes for their children.'

Meru Herbs CEO, Sally Sawaya



Credit: Transform Trade/Meru Herbs

The producers we'll support are innovators finding new ways to put the hallmarks of people centred trade into practice.

We will provide both grants and accompaniment support to assist grantees on business planning, project management, governance, market access and capacity building. Our first grantee is Meru Herbs – a Kenya-based women-led co-operative making sauces, pestos, and herbal teas with around 1,500 people relying on them for their livelihoods. Transform Trade has recently awarded them £11,000 from the Producer Fund to overhaul their solar power system, buy vital equipment like weighing scales and jars, and train farmers and workers on health and safety.

The first year of the Fund has been supported by philanthropists; Richard Cocks, Catriona Lawrie, Karen King, our UK-based ethical partners Shared Earth and The Ethical Shop and our amazing supporter base. We are looking for new partners to get involved in the long-term vision for the fund. If this is something you'd be interested in, please contact Amy for more information.

'SWABOL' – Shifting Power to Smallholder Associations in Bangladesh

Over the last 15 years we have worked extensively with our local partners across Bangladesh to support almost 50,000 rural smallholder farmers to get a fairer deal from trade. 'SWABOL' meaning 'Self Reliant' in Bangla, is the latest phase of this work, bringing together 46 Smallholder Associations for a stronger agricultural civil society in Bangladesh. This project will be 90% funded by the European Commission.

Historically, Transform Trade (then Traidcraft Exchange) established and supported these 46 smallholder associations as part of the following projects:

'SWABOL' means 'Self Reliant' in Bangla

- Sustainable Livelihood for Poor Producers (SLIPP)
- Alleviating Poverty in Northeast Bangladesh (APONE),
- Alternative Livelihood Options (ALO)
- Empowering Smallholders to Strengthen Local Democratic Governance (KHAMATAYAN).

These Smallholder Associations are now striving to unite and become formally registered, sustainable organisations so they can continue serving their members’ needs long into the future.

These 46 associations will be supported in four ways:

1. Smallholder Associations from across the country will come together to establish a national platform for the first time – so they can demand government level changes to policy. Each organisation will register as a legal entity, participate in higher-level training around governance, and access a grant of £5,000 to execute business plans. We will make sure they can continue leading development and fighting for farmers’ rights long into the future.
2. Smallholder Associations will secure their representation in local governance so they can make sure their needs are reflected when policies are created. They will be trained in advocacy, facilitate research on challenges faced by smallholder farmers, and create spaces for dialogue.
3. Smallholder Associations will establish new networks and work with them to build inclusion for marginalised groups. They will build alliances, facilitate research into barriers to inclusion, advocate with local government, and fight harmful norms in their communities. They will also develop an internal inclusion framework.

4. Smallholder Associations will help members to adapt to their changing climate. They will document and share local practices for climate adaptation and organise reforestation activities for their communities to get involved in, and will participate in policy dialogue around agricultural climate adaptation.

We are looking for funders to provide the match for this project. Please drop Corina a line if you’re interested in matching or would simply like to hear more.

Investing in Inclusive Enterprises - Tanzania

The Investing in Inclusive Enterprises project in Tanzania builds on our previous work through the CCP project, which ended in January 2023. Majority funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, the work focused on promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities in cocoa, coffee and palm oil value chains. During this project, 57 economic groups with 1,785 (727 Female, 858 Male) members were established. Members found ways to grow their existing incomes and start new businesses such as coffee and cocoa processing units, helping farmers retain more value from their product. All group members raised their incomes by at least 20% - with some increasing over 300%. This work prioritised the inclusion of people with disabilities in agricultural value chains and supported them to fight the stigma they face.

We continue to work with 30 of the 57 group supporting them to scale their businesses from the start-up phase



Credit: Transform Trade/Nashon Otieno

(the riskiest phase of a business life cycle), and require support to ensure their growth and sustainability.

Since 2021, Transform Trade has been piloting Participatory Grant-making in Kenya (please see page 4). This is a new approach using participatory principles, whereby the power in decision making is shifted to local people and ecosystems, rather than driven from the Global North. The Investing in Inclusive Enterprises project will use the learnings from the Kenya pilot working with people with disabilities in Tanzania to influence change by developing the solutions that best fit their needs. The 30 economic groups will receive funding and technical support to implement their business plans.

The groups, guided by facilitators, will identify their funding needs, refine their business plan and long-term vision for their groups. A support group of local representatives that includes Transform Trade, local NGO partners, economic group members and local government officers will review business plan proposals, refine approaches and processes, and decide on which group should get funded.

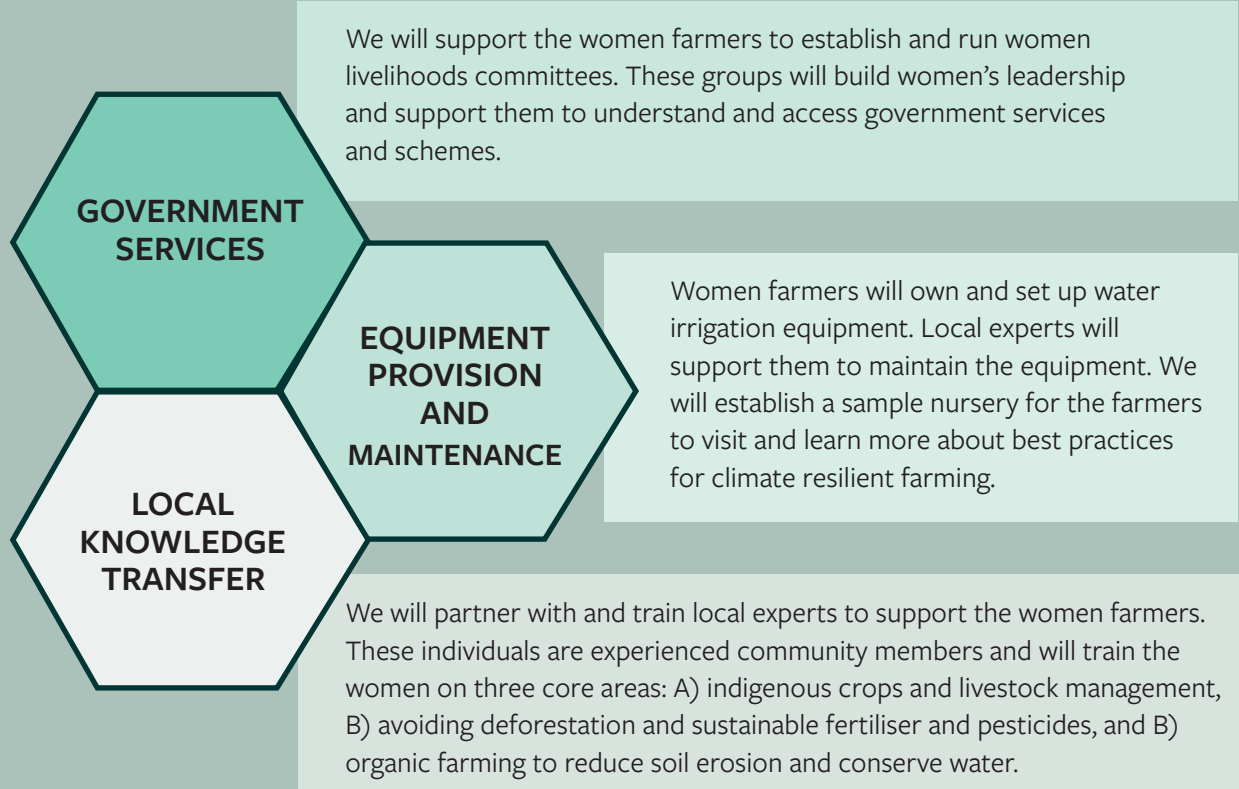
Special thanks to The Squires Foundation and The Society of Sacred Hearts for generously supporting this project. We are looking for more partners to support this project.

Sustainable livelihoods for female smallholder farmers in West Bengal, India

Over the last two years, Transform Trade has been successfully diversify their livelihoods, increase their incomes, roll out new techniques for higher yields, and access government poverty-relief schemes. The project

has been successful with this small group - and the women now see value in scaling up the project to reach more women in the area.

Project Components





“Drought is the criminal we want to fight.”

Prasari, our partner

Credit: Transform Trade/GMB Akash

The new phase will run for three-years (2023- 2025). Transform Trade will work in direct partnership with local partner Prasari and 3,000 of the most vulnerable women farmers from indigenous Santal tribal (India’s largest Ádivasi’ group) communities. Based on an average family size of 4.4, the project will indirectly improve the lives of 10,200 family members. The project will be based in Birbhum district of West Bengal state, India. Out of the 3,000 women farmers reached, 500 are from the original communities who participated in the first phase of this work.

We aim to work alongside them to end the cycle of poverty, build their climate resilience, and improve their families’ wellbeing .

Community partners: Prasari
(<http://www.prasari.org/>)

Funders: The Ford Foundation and Rapid Rural Community Response (RCRC) Network

We are currently fundraising for this project.

Meet the Partnerships and Investment Team



Amy Wilson

Amy is the Head of Partnerships and Investment (P&I) and has 15 years’ experience in resource mobilisation. Speak to me about business partnerships, philanthropy and making a difference.



Everlyne Ngare

Everlyne is Partnerships and Investment Lead (Africa) and has over 10 years’ experience in resource mobilisation and research. Speak to me about large programme grants, and how we can do development differently.



Hannah Kirubi

Hannah is the Partnerships & Investment Coordinator with over 3 years’ experience in resource mobilisation. Speak to me about gifts up to £50,000 and supporting social enterprises.



Corina Pickering

Corina is Partnerships and Investment Lead (UK) with 10 years’ experience in international programmes. Speak to me about large grants, and how partnerships can support local leadership.

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The Halcrow Foundation
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The P & FW Family Charitable Trust
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The Ashburn Charitable Trust
The Tisbury Telegraph Trust
Wyatt-Spearman Charitable Trust
The Souter Charitable Trust
World Day of Prayer
Be One Percent Foundation
The Society of the Sacred Heart
The Ceniarth Foundation
Arimathea Charitable Trust
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Persula Foundation
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The Fulmer Charitable Trust
The Guy Fawkes Charitable Trust
Waylan Trust
The Bryan Guinness Charitable Trust
Dorema Charitable Trust
FGT Trust

Gateway Development Trust Limited
Harapan Trust
Lancaster Craft Aid Trust
Love is Kindness Charitable Trust
Marsland Mcadoo Charitable Settlement
Ms C F Gibbs Trust
The CMW Charitable Trust
The Cumber Family Charitable Trust
The Dorfred Charitable Trust
The J P Jacobs Charitable Trust
The Jusaca Charitable Trust
The Lizandy Trust
The MacDaibhidh Charitable Trust
The Oakdale Trust
The S M B Trust
The Treeside Trust
Shared Earth
The Ethical Shop and New Internationalist
The Paget Charitable Trust
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