

Namaste Fair Trade Policy

Summary

We are a small company with a strong ethical policy that is based upon the belief that the best way to reduce poverty in the developing world is through trade. We are not perfect but we are honest and our aim is to improve our own goals, aspirations and achievements as we develop in tandem with our producer partners. Namaste is recognised by BAFTS, the British Association for Fair Trade Shops and Suppliers as a Fair Trade importer.

Mutually beneficial long term trade

We look to buy from small scale producers who use largely natural materials and traditional techniques to produce interesting and inherently beautiful articles. We believe that the best way to help disadvantaged producers is to work with them in partnership through mutually beneficial and long term trade. We have helped over 100 producers to grow and develop with us since we started trading almost 20 years ago.

Fair Trade Organisations

Some of our suppliers are members of the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) and some are members of their appropriate National Fair Trade Organization. Our largest suppliers in India, Vietnam, Nepal and Kenya are recognized by the WFTO or their national counterparts as Fair Trade producers. We encourage and if appropriate; help our suppliers to seek formal fair trade recognition. In Thailand and Indonesia we deal with many very small scale artisan producers who do not wish to or do not have the ability to become recognized Fair Trade producers. We believe very strongly that these are the sort of very small scale producers who really do need our help and indeed, it is what Fair Trade should be about and we are proud to help them with or without them having formal fair trade recognition.



All Namaste products are fairly traded

Why do we think it is Fair Trade?

The WFTO has 10 principles that Fair Trade organisations must follow. We follow these principles and regularly review our procedures and achievements according to these principles:-

1. Namaste seeks to work with disadvantaged and marginalized producers and to develop business with them to help them become financially stronger and more independent. We try to buy craft products that reflect the culture and tradition and that utilize the skills of the supplier. We also buy from some larger producers if we are happy that they are also adhering to the principles of Fair Trade. Many larger suppliers are able to provide better job security, facilities and benefits for their workers and many are able to support community or charitable projects.
2. We are accountable to BAFTS and provide transparent information about our producers and trading practices to BAFTS as part of our ongoing membership renewal. We make Fair Trade Point of Sale information available for our customers.
3. We always follow Fair Trading practices. This involves paying an advance when asked for or required to allow the producer to buy raw materials and start making the order without getting into financial difficulty. We never ask for or take credit terms from any of our suppliers. When the goods are shipped, they have been paid for in full. We never make exceptions to these rules and never have. If suppliers need money early for particular reasons we will always try and help them.
4. We discuss pricing with our suppliers in an open and honest way. We seek to pay a price that fairly reflects the value of the product, that allows it to sell successfully and that allows the workers to earn fair wages. We do our best to ensure that wages paid are at or above local expectations and in accordance with national laws.
5. We do our utmost to ensure that no children or forced labour is involved in the production of Namaste products. We ensure that no children under the age of 16 are involved in factory based production for Namaste. Many items are produced by home workers, which provides useful additional income whilst allowing them to look after their homes and families.
6. Namaste suppliers commit to non-discrimination, gender equality and freedom of association.
7. Wherever possible we visit suppliers ourselves to make sure that producers have good working conditions. We also have agents who make visits and act on our behalf. All suppliers must first complete a long and detailed questionnaire relating to their Fair Trade policies.
8. We look for long term relationships with our suppliers and provide them with designs and ideas to benefit their business and keep the orders flowing. By providing repeat orders, advance payments and by making a commitment never to cancel or unduly delay orders helps our suppliers to grow and develop capacity.
9. Namaste promotes Fair Trade through our activities and literature.
10. We are using more and more recycled or environmentally friendly materials in our products which now make up a very large percentage of our product range. Our suppliers are encouraged to respect their environment and to have written and audited environmental policies.



namaste

global inspirations... traded fairly



India

We buy from many different suppliers in India that reflect the incredible diversity and complexity of this fascinating country. Our largest supplier in India suggested the idea of Namaste to its founders in the first place and then has grown with us for almost 20 years. They are now a member of the Fair Trade Forum India, the national body of the WFTO. They export to us most of our handmade paper and non-kilim textile goods which are made by various artisan groups who specialise in different products in Rajasthan. We have various other suppliers in Jaipur and the surrounding area and they all work along similar lines.

Kilim rugs come from two main regions and production is clustered in weaving communities around Varanasi and Jaipur. We are in the process of getting our rugs labelled with "GoodWeave" labels, a charity which works to end child labour in rug making communities while educating and helping producers to implement better policies. They are also involved in developmental work.

Jodhpur is an incredible fortress city out in the deserts of Rajasthan. It is the main home of the Indian furniture industry and the home of our furniture maker. It is also where we get most of our hand painted items, wooden and metal artefacts.

Our clothing suppliers are based in the Jaipur region and take inspiration from the traditional patterns and designs that make Indian fabrics famous worldwide.

Moradabad is the great centre of Indian metalwork and Saharanpur is rightly famous for its tradition of highly skilled

woodcarving. We buy from various family businesses in both areas.

In addition to these main centres, we buy leather gifts from Kolkata, incense from the famous fragrance makers of Mysore, doormats made from coconut fibres from Kerala and soapstone from Agra. Closer to Delhi we buy from several modern craft, textile, gift and jewellery producers with state of the art facilities. Our handmade ceramics come from a famous production area in Uttar Pradesh.

We are pleased to be able to support various family and cooperative owned

businesses in Kashmir, an area that desperately needs our help due to its troubled history.

India is a wondrous and captivating place, beguiling and frustrating at times and certainly challenging! It is where we started the business and the fact that the man who suggested the very idea of Namaste is still our largest supplier and has recently become Fair Trade registered says a lot about our values and long term ethos. "Mother India" still gives us a lot of stress but great products, great times and a lot of laughs along the way.



Nepal

If we had to declare a favourite place to visit for buying then our friends in Kathmandu would probably be the clear winners. Both of our current suppliers are members of the Fair Trade Group Nepal. One is our clothing and accessories supplier who we helped to set up in business at the end of the last century and the other is our felt and paper supplier. We hope to increase our business with Kathmandu to help them in their own efforts to rebuild and develop after the devastating earthquake.

All Namaste products are fairly traded



Indonesia

We have been buying Fair Trade products from Indonesia for the past 12 years or so. In the past we have always bought from very small family based producers and we still work with many of our original suppliers. We always pay an advance to allow the purchase of raw materials and then pay our supplier in full on delivery of the goods to our freight agent. Because we buy direct from the makers with no middlemen or marketing houses involved, we rarely have to discuss pricing. If we do then we discuss it as a partnership to make sure we get the goods for a price that will ensure they sell quickly. This is Fair Trade at its most basic and most effective. These suppliers are woodcarvers, metalworkers and craft artisans. They don't have marketing offices, most don't even have offices! They are not members of the WFTO or any other Fair Trade body but they are honourable and lovely people to work

with and they need our business to provide them with an income. Because we deal direct with the makers, this is business at its most transparent and accountable.

Since the sad closure of Windhorse Trading, Namaste has also taken on their main supplier in Bali. This very large and well organised producer supports many of the small independent artisan family businesses that we buy from directly by subcontracting work to them, but also has a large and dedicated workforce of their own that is directly employed in manufacture. They are deeply committed to the principles of Fair Trade and are also involved in various community and charitable projects.



Vietnam

Our largest supplier in Vietnam are a not for profit member of the WFTO and their mission is to help marginalised and disadvantaged ethnic groups and villages to make products that will support their communities and allow their much loved traditional way of life to survive and flourish. We also buy from four other private businesses that have a deep commitment to ethical policies and environmental protection. One of them is also a member of the WFTO. Namaste is proud to help to support traditional crafts in village communities. In the words of one of these suppliers "Our traditional villages can only survive and develop sustainably if they are able to sell their traditional craft products and earn money for their families. If they can't then they will have to move to the city and find work." All of our Vietnamese suppliers aim to create sustainable development for poorer rural communities by helping village weavers to achieve a consistent income while protecting and nurturing the local environment and specialising in recycled and environmentally friendly products.



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Thailand

We have various suppliers in the north of Thailand that vary from tiny scale artisan producers to large scale and well organized factories. We have visited them all several times and are happy that while there is a huge difference between them in terms of scale, they share the same objectives of making sustainable products in a way that protects both the environment and benefits their employees by providing long term and reliable well paid employment with excellent working conditions.

Our small scale suppliers are a good model of fair trade in action and again, they simply do not have the wherewithal, desire nor need to become fair trade recognized. They make things that we want to buy by using traditional handicraft skills. We deal with them direct with no middlemen involved and we make sure they get a fair price, prompt payments and regular orders.



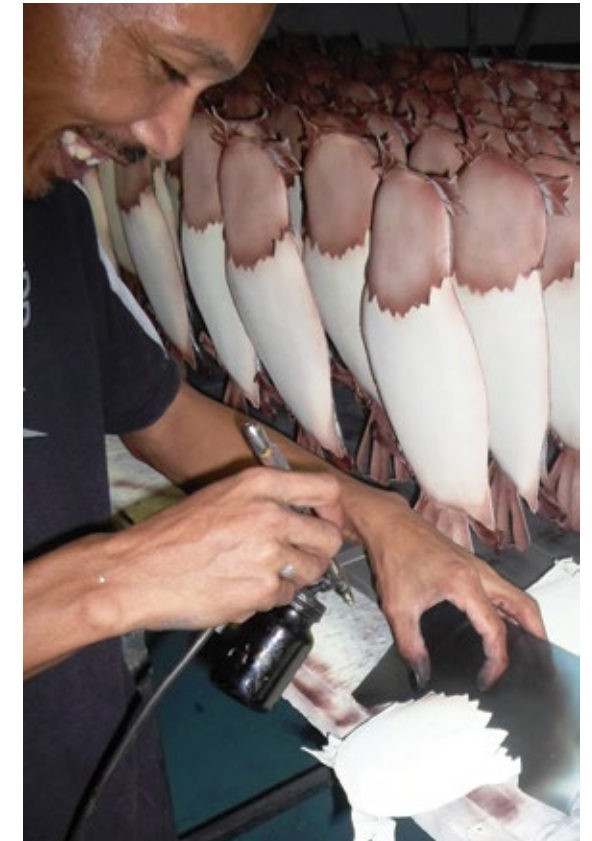
Kenya

We have one supplier in Kenya. They make hand carved soapstone for us and are members of KEFAT, the Kenyan Federation for Alternative Trade, the national body of the WFTO. The area where the products are made is very poor and based on subsistence agriculture. Soapstone production provides the artisans with much needed supplementary income.



The Philippines

Our supplier is a large and well organized handicraft business that specializes in making ingenious items from Capiz shells. Capiz shells are shells of the "windowpane oyster" and are naturally abundant in the shallow waters near the coast. The shells are sustainable and certified by the government. Our supplier has several 'livelihood' schemes in operation that enable marginalized workers to earn a living or supplement their income from agriculture.



www.namaste-uk.com

Child Rescue Nepal



Namaste has been supporting the Esther Benjamins Trust now for more than 10 years. The trust has just changed its name to Child Rescue Nepal. We have sponsored two children for the last 10 years. We regularly donate and raise money for the trust and we work with them to spread awareness of the excellent work they do and how others can help. It is an inspirational story and a really worthwhile cause to support.

If you would like to help in any way, no matter how small then please contact the trust directly or e-mail sam@namaste-uk.com. There is much more information on their website www.ebtrust.org.uk but here in the words of the trust is a brief summary.

Child rescue Nepal works for Nepal's most vulnerable children. We rescue and reunite children with their families. Child Rescue Nepal dreams of making Nepal safe for all children so we engage in anti-trafficking especially in education and the prosecution of traffickers.

Over the last 15 years these children have included some rescued from jail while held there with their parents, abandoned or street children but the largest single group are children who have been trafficked. Over 600 were rescued the greatest number, about 500, having been sold into India to work in Circuses. Most were reunited immediately with their families and some were held in a safe house or refuge and are now in children's homes. Today some this core group of circus children and their own children are still being reunited with their families or kin.



Our achievements:

In the last 15 years we have raised over £5 million for Nepal's children and we hope you will be inspired to join us.

This is some of what we have achieved:

Reunited 550 children with their families

Prosecuted 24 traffickers helping to jail 14

Cared for over 200 children in safe houses or a refuge

32 at risk children remain in small children's homes

Improved the education for 30,000 children in over 50 schools in a trafficking prone district- Makwanpur

Please help in any way you can.

Over the last 12 months with the help of our customer's generous donations, Namaste has raised an incredible £4125!

To see how well we are doing with our fundraising efforts and to make a donation visit:
www.justgiving.com/Namaste-Uk/

The trust desperately needs more funds, in particular to help with education rebuilding projects since the devastating earthquake. Any fund raising efforts or donations of any size would be hugely appreciated.

The money we have raised so far has funded an Education Officer called Dhruva Adhikari. He has one of the most interesting jobs in Child Rescue Nepal and is responsible for the education work in over 30 very rural schools many over a day's walk from the road and which can only be reached fording rivers. In addition to an anti-trafficking programme in class rooms he works managing school reconstructions and improvements. For example, from his work now most schools have basic furniture so children no longer sit on the floor and many have toilets. His prior experience as a teacher and the vice principle of a school means that he is well suited to the role.