

Homeworkers Worldwide Biannual Report 2017-8



Homeworker in Tamil Nadu, with leather uppers.

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Homeworkers Worldwide Activity Summary 2017-8

2018 was a sad year for HWW as we lost our founder and former International Coordinator Jane Tate, who died in September. We greatly miss her experience, insight, energy and determination.



Yet HWW is nonetheless committed to furthering our work supporting women homeworkers in their struggle for rights. Our Coordinator Lucy Brill has been working together with consultant Peter Williams and other Trustees to successfully develop our work on leather footwear. We have been collaborating with our partners Cividep and two major shoe brands in Southern India on improving pay and conditions for homeworkers. At the end of 2018 we learned that we had been successful in securing funding for a new four-year collaboration with Traidcraft, working on homeworking in clothing and footwear supply chains in India, Pakistan and Nepal.

In 2019 we will be celebrating the 20th Anniversary of Homeworkers Worldwide, which will in many ways, also commemorate Jane's lifelong commitment to improving the working conditions of homeworkers and other informal women workers. If you would like to be involved in this event, please contact Lucy at lucy@homeworkersww.org.uk.

¹ Jane Tate. Photographer unknown – please contact us if you are/ know the photographer.

Networking

As a small NGO developing alliances and networking is essential to maximising our impact. We have continued to work closely with our Indian partners Cividep who have been working with us on leather footwear in Ambur, Tamil Nadu for several years now, and our recent visit to western Tamil Nadu enabled us to renew previous links with SAVE, READ and Care T.

We have been collaborating with our allies Dalit Solidarity Network on a joint ETI Innovation Fund project, and more broadly on our work in the ETI. We have continued our collaboration with ICN (India Committee of the Netherlands) concerning abuses in garment and textile mills in South India. We submitted a successful partnership bid with Traidcraft to the EC for work on supply chains in India, Pakistan and Nepal. We are also in close contact with our friends Labour Behind the Label, and attended their strategy day in the Spring 2018.

We have on-going links with Annie Delaney from RMIT University in Melbourne and with Jean Jenkins at Cardiff University and Nik Hammer at Leicester. HWW is also participating in the Steering Group of Cardiff University's Operationalising Labour Rights project. This exciting project is partnering with female trade union activists from the Garment Labour Union in Bangalore, to document their work to enable women workers to claim their rights, and is also developing innovative mobile phone apps to support the process.

Ethical Trading Initiative

HWW has continued to be an active member of the ETI, as one route to influencing retailers and brands in the UK. This has involved participating in the annual company reporting process for three ETI corporate members, and also the NGO caucus of the ETI. During 2018 ETI carried out a review of the involvement of NGO members in the organization, which will be finalized shortly. HWW is also liaising with Bananalink to call on the ETI to review its complaints process, drawing on both HWW and Bananalink's recent experience of using this to hold corporate members to account for breaches of the ETI base code.

HWW also participates in the Advisory group for the ETI's Tamil Nadu Multi-Stakeholder Programme, established to address issues of forced and bonded labour in the textile industry in South India. In 2017 HWW played an active role in the ETI's Gender Review, completing two consultancy projects working with ETI member companies to carry out a gendered analysis of their work on ethical trade and corporate social responsibility.

UK Textile and Garment Industry

In 2017 HWW completed a short scoping study on the textile and garment manufacturing sector in Greater Manchester, drawing on outreach work with local community and women's organisations. Although this work established links with workers in a clothing factory and an e-tailer's distribution centre, to date we have not been able to secure further funding to scale it up to our planned participatory action research project. Alongside this work we also participated in the ETI's Leicester working group, which unfortunately stalled in 2018.

South India Leather Footwear Project

We have continued our work partnering with Pentland Brands, and with Cividep India to map homeworkers' involvement in their value chain together and produce a clear model for the ethical employment of homeworkers in leather footwear supply chains in Tamil Nadu. Although the final

consultation stage was paused for some months due to pressures of seasonal production, we have received reports of significantly improved pay rates. We are looking forward to documenting the changes achieved to date, exploring possibilities for further improvements and hopefully using this as a model to roll out to other areas and other brands in 2019.

ETI Innovation Fund Project

HWW was successful in securing a grant from the ETI's Innovation Fund, established to support NGO and trade union members to work with corporates on key challenges within their supply chains. This project sought to roll out learning from our pilot with Pentland Brands, and enabled us to build a partnership with a second brand, Next plc, to carry out due diligence on their footwear supply chain in Tamil Nadu and explore ways to improve conditions both within their supplier's factories and for homeworkers. We worked with the two brands and their respective suppliers, and with our partners Cividep, and Dalit Solidarity Network. Key project achievements include mapping homeworkers in a second footwear supply chain, as well as an end of project workshop bringing together both brands and their respective suppliers to share learning and explore scope for future collaboration. We will be publishing final reports to capture key lessons learnt shortly.

Research and publications

Case Closed, Problems Persist: This report, published in June 2018, was written by Homeworkers Worldwide (HWW), the India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN) and the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO). The authors looked at how complaints were dealt with by ETI (drawing on HWW's lengthy and ultimately unsatisfactory complaint (2014-17) regarding reports of forced and bonded labour within the Tamil Nadu textile industry), and SAI (Social Accountability International), and whether their respective complaints processes meet the standards of the United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights. The report contributed to on-going debates about how multi-stakeholder initiatives and companies concerned to improve working conditions in global supply chains can respond more effectively to grievances raised by workers and organisations seeking to represent them.

HWW also contributed to other publications. The book *Homeworking Women: a Gender Justice Perspective* (Routledge) by Annie Delaney, Rosaria Burchielli, Shelley Marshall and Jane Tate was published in December 2018.

Funding

This year we received funding from the Ethical Trading Initiative's Innovation Fund (which ultimately came from the UK Government's Department for International Development), and from their BOAG fund (from large NGO members' contributions), as well as from Pentland Brands and several small individual donations.

In 2017 our funding came from the British Cotton Growing Association People's Collection Fund, and from Pentland Brands and the ETI, and several smaller donors.

Our thanks to all our funders, our staff and trustees.