

Rectella – Fairly Traded charcoal



Who is Rectella?

Rectella International Ltd supplies FSC and Fair Trade barbecue and charcoal ranges into retail. Their head office is based in Burnley Lancashire and employs approximately 70 people. They have worked with the Co-op for more than 25 years, of which 13 years they have supplied a Fairly Traded Charcoal range. Their charcoal factory in Namibia employs approximately 1000 people, made up of factory workers, farmers and charcoal burners.

Summary

Rectella have worked in partnership with Traidcraft and the Co-op since 2009 in bringing to market the world's first and only Fairtrade charcoal range. Since the project started, together with the licencing body [Traidcraft](#) and their supply chain factory [Jumbo Charcoal](#), they have generated over £550,000 in premiums through sales of charcoal lines, to fund projects benefitting charcoal producers and their communities.

The workers and burners at Jumbo decide themselves how they want to spend the funds, and this is managed by a democratically elected Fairtrade Premium Committee. The committee is made up of factory workers and charcoal burners at Jumbo's teams in Okahandja and Walvis Bay, Namibia. Their role is to work with burners and workers to develop a strategy and to identify, develop and implement projects.



Community improvements

Taking action

Projects completed so far

The community in Namibia, producing this Fairly Traded Charcoal, have benefited from Fair Trade premiums and projects since 2009. There are 1,000 people benefiting from these premium funds, in a wide range of ways, as decided by the Premium Committee of workers. These have included:

- Improved facilities for charcoal burners/producers including upgraded housing to provide more permanent accommodation, shower facilities, mosquito nets (to limit spread of disease), a solar lighting project to provide power and phone charging and wheelbarrows to assist in the movement of wood.
- Factory workers have been provided with vegetable gardens and a water tap so they have a central collection point of water for drinking and cooking.
- An adult literacy programme was started in 2019 for all factory workers.
- A shelter was built for the outside waiting area at the hospital.
- Part-funding for 100 bikes for factory workers, to enhance the safety and ease of their journey from the local township. Previously, the workforce would walk 5km to work along unlit and treacherous roads. The Premium Committee is now working on investing money in more bicycles, and also mending existing bicycles and giving cycling lessons to those who cannot ride.

In recent years, the main focus of premium spend in Namibia has been within education, concentrating on improving resources and infrastructure in local primary schools where workers' children attend. This has included addressing issues such as overcrowding, sanitation, technology, teaching and learning materials, such as:

- Providing stationary for workers' children, to assist workers to be able to afford for their children to return to school at the start of a school year.
- Providing bathroom facilities at the Okahandja Senior Secondary School, where previously there were no functioning toilets, urinals or washing basins to speak of and the lack of working sewage pipes were a hygiene risk.
- New tables and chairs for the learners at Walvis Bay Flamingo Primary School.

"The upgrade was a really good thing. The facilities were very bad before Fair Trade changed that, but now they are very nice."

- Jeanetta Namises

This case study has been developed with the support of Co-op as part of Co-op's 2021 'Treating People Fairly Awards', at which Rectella was shortlisted. The awards celebrate excellence in human rights practice, encourage suppliers to learn from each other and inspire new ways of mitigating future threats to worker welfare. Supplier entries were assessed by an independent, expert panel and awards were presented at a Co-op supplier event. Click [here](#) and [here](#) to learn more about human rights at Co-op. Click [here](#) to learn more about the Fairly Traded charcoal.

Gaps identified

Traidcraft and Rectella noticed that the Premium Committee weren't effectively evaluating the impact and success of the projects they had funded and the interventions lacked a strategic approach.

Building capacity for strategic planning

In 2021-2022, Traidcraft and Rectella have focused on education of the Premium Committee, so that they are capable of developing larger strategic projects that deliver measurable and significant impact for the workers, burners and their communities. The Fair Trade Premium Committee Strategic Plan (SP) has now been created, which is a five-year action plan to guide the sustainable growth and development of the Jumbo Charcoal Premium Committee, which represents Fair Trade beneficiaries. The strategic plan was developed to ensure the Premium Committee's long-term independence and to support the sustainable development and implementation of projects funded through the premium funds, generated from the sale of Fair Trade certified charcoal.

Moving forward

Looking ahead, the diagram below shows the areas of focus of the premium spend in the 5 year strategic plan. Specifically in 2022 and 2023, a key focus will be to address the shortfall in early childhood development centres in the community, by building new ones where they are lacking and improving facilities where they already exist.

"We are very thankful to Fair Trade for the new facilities. When I came to the school in 2019, my students had nowhere to go for their bathroom breaks. Everything was backed up and completely broken."

- Headmaster Nuugulu Teofilus



"By giving us these chairs and desks, you are ensuring that we provide quality education in a conducive environment."

- Principal Emsie Orus



What makes this a leadership approach?*

Proactivity

Rectella and Traidcraft together identified the need to proactively embark on training to support the Fair Trade Premium Committee's 5-year strategic plan, to ensure responsible use of the Fair Trade Premium in a number of key infrastructure projects. Rectella's Fair Trade Premium Committee are now focused on also evaluating impact and success of the projects.

Ownership

By establishing a strong system for consultation on Fair Trade Premium use through the development of a democratically elected Fair Trade Premium Committee, decisions about the focus for spend came from the workers themselves. This strategic approach has led to ownership of the Premium projects by factory workers and charcoal burners at Rectella.

Partnership

Partnership between Rectella and Traidcraft to develop a committee led to workers themselves collaborating to identify the needs of people involved in production. Now people work together to understand how Fair Trade projects can deliver the greatest benefit for workers and wider communities. Commitments and actions of the committee are agreed on and shared with all workers.

AREA OF FOCUS

The Premium Committee has six identified critical areas of focus that will create sustainable long-term impact in the Jumbo Charcoal Fair Trade community.



* Key behaviours that Co-op champion are proactivity, ownership and partnership. Click [here](#) to learn more about Co-op's supplier engagement programme. Co-op's 'Supplier's Guide to Ethical Trade' sets out the standards suppliers are expected to meet.