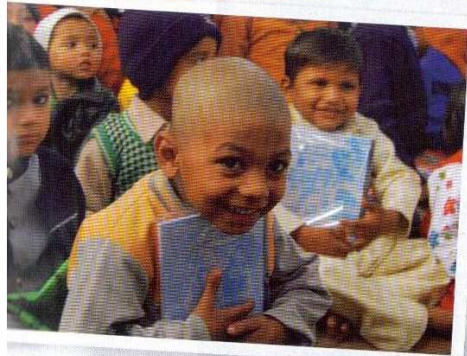


LESSONS IN A BETTER LIFE



FAIRTRADE IS GIVING THESE DELHI CHILDREN AN ALTERNATIVE FUTURE. SARAH DYER FOLLOWS FAIRTRADE RETAILER SHARED EARTH TO FIND OUT HOW

We were given a warm welcome this afternoon, as we arrived at the Indra Camp School, based in one of Delhi's biggest slums. Greeted with garlands made by the children, and treated to dancing, singing and a short play about their understanding of fairtrade, it was a heartening beginning to our trip.

Backed by fairtrade support cooperative Tara Projects, the school provides daily lessons in maths, english and several other subjects to give them a solid base from which many will be able to go on to college. The school offers

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both education and hope to the 500 families that have lived in this area for many years.

Last year the local government demolished the slum buildings in an attempt to control its development, but their rather brutal tactics failed - Indira's families were able to rebuild their homes in just over a month.

With this sort of spirit, it's no surprise that the local school is keen to educate the whole community in the self-empowering principles of fairtrade - principles that, in the long term, will give them the skills, knowledge and tools to sustain themselves without falling prey to unfair contractors and employers.

By setting these standards and communicating them to as many people as possible throughout India, the circle of unfair trade will eventually be broken down to the point where it can no longer effectively function. Many children and adults end up in the hands of unfair trade because they did not have the knowledge that there is a better way, and simply accepted the situation.

These are people like Anwar Hussain, now 24, who at the age of 12 began his working life, earning just £5 a month after his employer took a £4 deduction for food from his total salary.

"It happened because I had six sisters and six brothers and our family was in a state of economic helplessness," explains Hussain.

"It was a family decision for me to go and find work as my parents couldn't afford to feed us all. I was a burden." Needless to say,

however, Hussain couldn't afford to sustain himself, let alone send money back to help his family.

One of the problems with situations such as Anwar's is that he didn't realise that there was another way to live. After finding out about Tara, he realised he should have better working conditions and pay.

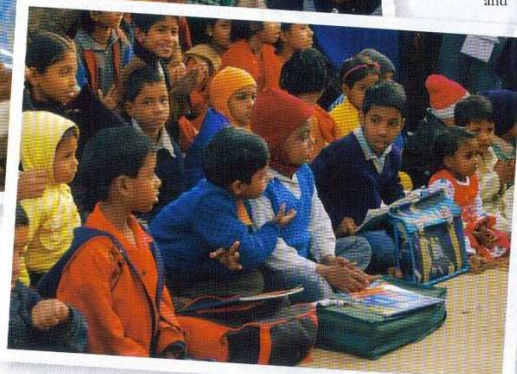
These sorts of changes were the ones that the Shared Earth team saw happening everywhere we turned at Indra School. What struck us most there was the attitude of the children and their mothers. All were hopeful of the future and so thankful for the opportunity to educate their children. The children seemed to really want to be there and enjoyed the opportunity to learn.

After the school visit, one mother named Jagwadi proudly led us through the tiny slum streets to her home which consisted of one small room where she slept with her two youngest daughters, aged 13 and 15, and her husband. Her oldest daughter, 17, was now at college studying to become a teacher. Her youngest daughters also hope to go on to college when they are old enough.

For Anwar Hussain, who now works eight hours a day with Tara Projects, earns decent money and is able to help his family, the principles of fairtrade have made both economic and personal sense. Now, he has plans to marry and have children.

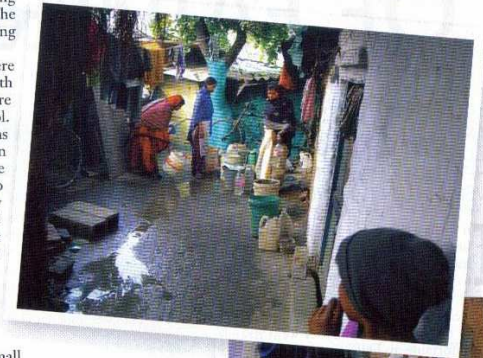
"I want two children only," he says. "I hope for them to be educated, and to save money in the bank."

For more on the Shared Earth trip to India, go to www.sharedearthnewsandmedia.co.uk



A SIGN MARKS THE ENTRANCE TO INDIRA CAMP SCHOOL AREA, IN ONE OF DELHI'S BIGGEST SLUMS. THE SCHOOL, ABOVE, IS KEEN TO INSTIL THE VALUES OF FAIRTRADE, EVEN IN ITS YOUNGEST PUPILS

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FAMILIES LIKE JAGWADI'S BELOW, AIM FOR A FUTURE OF EDUCATION AND FAIR EMPLOYMENT FOR THEIR CHILDREN. THEY TELL THE SHARED EARTH TEAM, BOTTOM, THEIR STORIES



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Photos: Shared Earth