



Our fair trade is an honest and  
**EQUAL EXCHANGE**

You enjoy the world's finest organic & natural products, the farmer gets a better life. Simple really...

## NEWSLETTER 15 WINTER/SPRING 2010

### OUR PARTNER TEA PROMOTERS INDIA

Andy and Senga recently returned from visiting tea partners in North India.

We hope the following article will inspire you to stock more lines and tell your customers about our products.

#### Our partner Tea Promoters India (TPI)

TPI is a small family company, whose innovative social and environmental vision was a pioneer for the early FLO tea standards in 1991, and who have remained our partners for more than 10 years. Their work is changing the face of Plantation tea growing in North India and providing an alternative model; where a wider 'political economy' philosophy offers livelihood security and market access for neighbouring small-holder tea growers too.

TPI follows a philosophy of guardianship. Being both custodians of the local environment and economic engine for the local community. To achieve these goals all gardens are organic or under conversion, Fairtrade certified and aim to produce the best quality teas.

Most nearby communities rely on subsistence agriculture, growing rice, vegetable and fruit for home consumption and local markets. Small farmer livelihood is at the mercy of climatic conditions and volatile markets and most cannot take advantage of tea growing as they have no factory.

This philosophy has developed small farmer green leaf purchasing around three gardens. Each year, the long plucking season now gives a secure and predictable income, along with essential farm training and quality instruction. And of course market access for many small scale farmers. **Fair trade customers** willingness to buy fine teas is essential for this to continue in communities such as Mineral Springs .

Deepen your understanding of our work by reading more at [facebook.com/EqualExchangeUK](https://www.facebook.com/EqualExchangeUK) or turn over the page to read an interview with founder of Mineral Springs Narbir Rai.



• Bimal Rai, garden worker

### ROOIBOS IS BACK IN STOCK BUT WHERE HAS IT BEEN?

You may have been aware that our small farmer Fairtrade & organic rooibos has been in short supply during 2009. The great news is that it's now back in stock and tasting as great as ever. But why the delay?

Equal Exchange is dedicated to working with small farming groups, who in many instances need support and guidance in building successful exporting businesses. Unfortunately in some cases we encounter problems which mean in extreme circumstances we can no longer supply products. 2009 was an *anus horribilis* for the farming community of Wupperthal (our main Rooibos partner).

Internal wrangling in Wupperthal finally resulted in the collapse of the co-operative. Unfortunately we were unable to secure release of our paid and contracted stock. Regrettably tensions between farmers could not be resolved quickly and our supply of packed rooibos was severely affected leading to more than 10 months' delay.

After over a year of helping our farmers through this difficult time we are delighted to say all of our small farmer rooibos is now back in stock and the co-operative is back up and running.

We could have walked away from the rooibos — it would have meant a few less grey hairs — but we didn't and we hope you can support the rooibos once more.

Thanks, from the team at Equal Exchange.



• Wupperthal rooibos tea workers

facebook

Find us at [facebook.com/EqualExchangeUK](https://www.facebook.com/EqualExchangeUK)

flickr

Catch us on [flickr.com/EqualExchangeUK](https://www.flickr.com/EqualExchangeUK)

Follow us on [twitter.com/EqualExchangeUK](https://www.twitter.com/EqualExchangeUK)

# AN INTERVIEW WITH NARBIR RAI THE FOUNDER OF MINERAL SPRINGS

Most Fairtrade certified tea originates on estates ignoring the wider community. Mineral Springs partnership with Tea Promoters India is quite different. We wanted to meet this community's inspiration for a more holistic model of development.

78 year old Narbir Rai arrived smartly dressed to our meeting to tell us his story and that of his community.

As the colonial era of India was winding to an end in the 1940s, Mineral Springs Tea Garden was owned by a British Tea Company. Narbir was born, raised, and worked on the garden as a child. In the 1950s, a sense of teenage adventure took hold and he packed his bags and waved goodbye to the gardens to join the British Gurkha Regiment. He travelled the world for many years and served in Malaysia, Borneo, and Hong Kong.

Yet when colonial rule ended in 1947, Mineral Springs was abandoned by the British owners. Each time Narbir returned on leave he watched the tea bushes grow taller and taller due to lack of maintenance, until one day they were trees. The people lived in despair, without enough food or clothing to sustain them. Each time, Narbir found himself trying to find someone to help revitalise the gardens.

It wasn't until after he left the army and with assistance from TPI, he managed to re-establish tea plucking in 1998.

Yet it was very difficult to find like-minded people who had the ambition to tackle the community's challenges.

Now, after much frustration, false starts and challenges, Narbir has retired and lives with his sister-in-law and her daughter in a house in Mineral Springs.

He has nine children who live in nearby towns and villages. Looking at Mineral Springs, he still has ambitious hopes for its success.

*"Because of climate change we have noticed a drop in rain levels, so we will need to invest in an irrigation system to maintain the quality of the tea",* he says.

We couldn't resist getting a photo of Narbir with a box of our Equal Exchange Darjeeling Teabags, the very product packed in Calcutta, containing his tea ([www.bit.ly/DarjeelingTea](http://www.bit.ly/DarjeelingTea)).

Narbir was very proud of the product, turning it over in his hands several times before requesting that we send him a few boxes to have at the office to show guests.



• Narbir Rai, with tea pack

## STILL NOT TRIED FAIRTRADE PEANUT BUTTER?

Do you want a peanut butter with nothing added except the Fairtrade premiums? Then it has to be Equal Exchange's world-first range of Fairtrade peanut butter. We don't add stabilizers or any other nasty ingredients to our butters, we simply roast, grind and put a lid on the jar.

With eight different Fairtrade Peanut Butters to try from our ever popular organic range, or our equally delicious conventional Fairtrade butters, you can taste the goodness all the way from Mozambique.

Available from your wholefood distributor.



Join us for breakfast at this year's NPE show

Giving you the opportunity to taste our products, pick up samples, ask questions and meet the team.



[WWW.EQUALEXCHANGE.CO.UK](http://WWW.EQUALEXCHANGE.CO.UK)

Equal Exchange Trading Ltd  
2 Commercial Street  
Edinburgh EH6 6JA

Call the office +44 (0)131 554 5912  
Send us a fax +44 (0)131 554 7312  
Email us [info@equalexchange.co.uk](mailto:info@equalexchange.co.uk)

