

FAIR PURCHASING PRACTICES AND BARRIERS IN EU SME GARMENT SUPPLY CHAINS





PUBLISHERS

Fair Trade Advocacy Office
University of Portsmouth

LAYOUT

Both Nomads

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HOW TO CITE THIS REPORT?

Anderson M., Bradley T., Sahariah S. (2023). Fair Purchasing Practices and Barriers in EU SME Garment Supply Chains, University of Portsmouth, Portsmouth.

IMAGES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	—	Research Summary
02	—	Background
06	—	Research Methods
08	—	Community Narratives of Work in Garment Value Chains
11	—	Challenging Unfair Purchasing Practices
19	—	Putting Principles into Practice: Responsible Purchasing Practices
33	—	Key Findings and Recommendations
38	—	References
42	—	Appendix

RESEARCH SUMMARY

This study provides a review of unfair trading practices (UTPs) in textile supply chains and presents a case study analysis of emerging best practices in terms of companies that are implementing fair purchasing practices. The main focus of the study is on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and their role in creating an enabling environment for fair purchasing practices in garment supply chains.

The report is divided into three main sections. Firstly, we reflect on the experience of work in garment supply chains informed by a longitudinal study of community narratives of female workers based in Delhi and Bangalore, India. In the second part, we investigate the challenges of unfair purchasing practices and the experiences of SMEs operating in global value chains. In the third part, we focus on putting principles into practice and explore innovative examples of responsible purchasing practices.

Throughout the research, we find clear parallels in the experience and challenges of SMEs from different regions operating across the value chain. Almost always, SMEs working in the garment sector find that they are price takers not price makers.

Despite significant market challenges, SMEs (brands and suppliers) are innovating with purchasing practices that begin to shift power dynamics within fashion value chains. If supported, these organisations have the potential to be industry front-runners and demonstrate fair purchasing practices that can be replicated and scaled across the garment sector.

The case studies presented in this report provide insight into existing barriers as well as examples of best practices across a range of areas including: lead times, payment details, prices, discounts, technical specifications, volumes and stock management.

Our data points to the need, once again, to rethink the conceptual framing but also practical application of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and its connection to fair purchasing in order to move towards more sustainable and ethical garment value chains.

BACKGROUND

SMEs in Europe represent 99.8% of all enterprises, 2/3 of employment and close to 53% of the added value created in the European Union (SMEUnited, 2023). Textiles and clothing is a diverse and dynamic sector that plays an important role in European manufacturing, employing 1.7 million people and generating a turnover of EUR 166 billion (European Commission, 2022). We are interested in better understanding how individual brands (particularly SMEs) try to take responsibility within a challenging and evolving sector that is still responding to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 response was recognised by the garment industry as an important test of its commitment to responsible and sustainable business. International Apparel Federation (IAF) secretary general Matthijs Crietee stated: “In the past few years, we have seen strong and public commitments from leading brands and retailers for responsible purchasing practices in the supply chain in line with recommendations from OECD due diligence guidance. This climate is the most important and public test of those commitments” (IAF, 2020). The IAF advocated for an approach it characterised as ‘supply chain solidarity’.



Textiles and clothing is a diverse and dynamic sector that plays an important role in European manufacturing, employing 1.7 million people and generating a turnover of EUR 166 billion.

Although some fashion brands demonstrated leadership in recognising social responsibilities in their value chains, most adopted at least one of the following strategic responses:



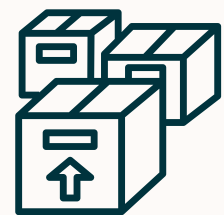
Reducing and cancelling orders (in process orders and garments that have already been made)



Requiring discounts from suppliers on agreed orders (40 - 70% price reductions)



Negotiating extended payment terms with suppliers (120 days or more)

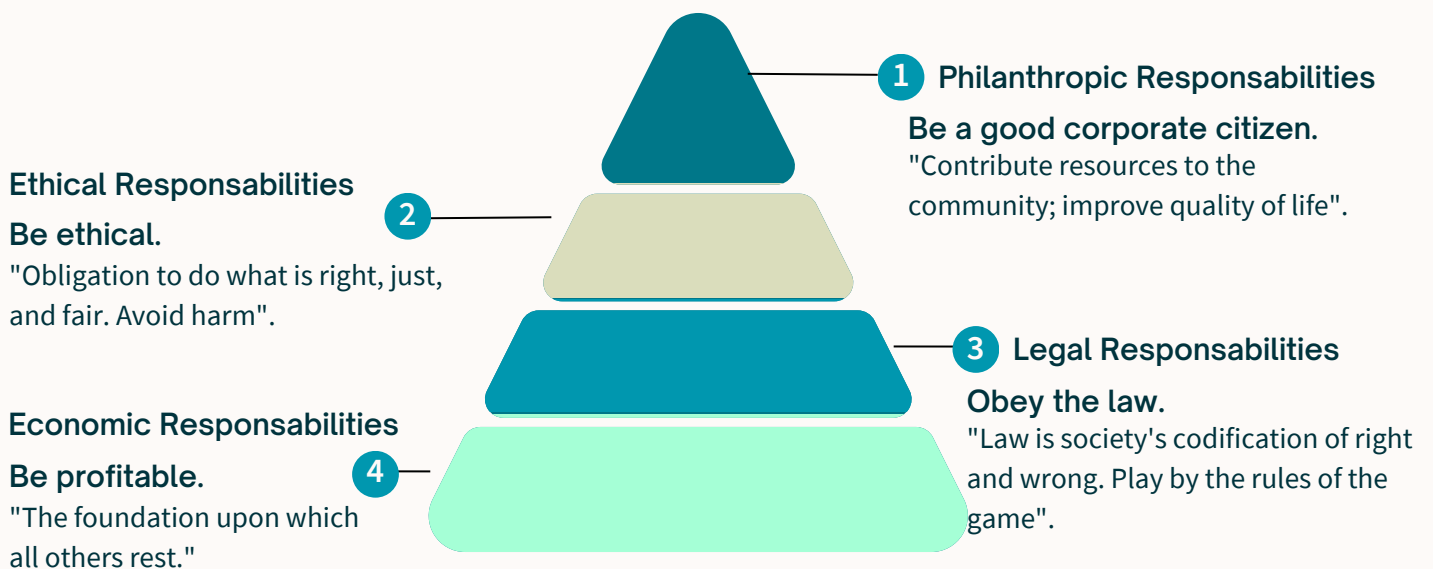


Redeploying basic inventory items to subsequent seasons (and consolidating future seasonal collections)

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised new challenges for the social responsibilities of business. Although some companies have extended their efforts to protect workers in their supply chains, corporate responses have remained sporadic and inconsistent (Tripathi, 2020). In global value chains attention has turned to the implications of the pandemic for human rights and vulnerabilities to modern slavery (Tripathi, 2020; Voss, 2020; Byrne et al., 2021). With many regions facing economic uncertainty, the deterioration of working conditions in sectors such as the fashion and textile industries suggest that vulnerabilities to modern slavery will continue (Voss, 2020, LeBaron et al., 2021). Banerjee (2021) has argued that modern slavery is ‘an enabling condition of global neoliberal capitalism’ and a ‘logical outcome of the way our political economic system is organized and its historical origins in the colonial enterprise’.

The distinctive characteristics of extreme forms of labour exploitation and modern slavery (in particular, illegality and opacity) present significant challenges for conventional supply chain CSR practices (Carroll, 1991; New, 2015). In response, Van Burren et al. (2021) call for holistic approaches that build on a ‘social connection and political responsibility model’. They identify Worker-Driven Social Responsibility as a promising approach to promote employee voice and support the decommodification of labour. However, there are still limited studies that reflect the day-to-day experiences of vulnerable workers or give voice to victims of modern slavery (Caruana et al., 2021). This reflects the difficulties of conducting empirical research on this topic.

Figure 1. The pyramid of corporate social responsibility



Source: Carroll, A.B. (1991). The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders. *Business Horizons*, 34(4), 39-48.

Matten & Moon’s (2020) recent reflections on ‘hybridization’ highlights the dynamic nature of CSR. Looking beyond Western institutions, they suggest that there are particular opportunities for exploring the process of ‘explicitization’ (policies, practices, and strategies of corporations) and ‘implicitization’ (norms and rules of business responsibility) in shaping CSR in emerging business systems. Lead firms are under increasing pressure to ensure products made through global production networks are produced sustainably (Alexander, 2020). However, from the perspective of workers and suppliers in the Global South, CSR may appear increasingly ‘transitory’ as MNCs participate in evolving multi-stakeholder initiatives (Alamgir & Banerjee, 2019; de Bakker et al., 2019), sign up to new certification schemes (Bennett, 2018; Dahlin et al., 2020) and align with the latest international agreements (Banerjee, 2018). This approach towards ‘transitory CSR’ not only reflects the changing context in global value chains, but is also a choice, and may be implemented as a defensive strategy (Stevenson & Cole, 2018; Janssen et al., 2015) that obscures partial commitments and limited progress on social responsibility.

The garment sector is characterised by extreme levels of power asymmetry that informs business practices and can restrict options open to SMEs (Islam et al., 2023). As shown by John Gaventa’s work (2019, 2021), power has multiple dimensions (levels, spaces and forms). ‘Levels of power’ recognises that in a globalised world, power is multi-layered and involves interrelated locations of local, national and global levels. ‘Spaces of power’ refers to the opportunities and barriers for stakeholder participation and action in arenas that may be considered closed, invited or claimed spaces. ‘Forms of power’ take into account the visible, hidden, and invisible forms of power. We use this dimension to analyse norms and beliefs that shape fair purchasing practices and may also present social and cultural barriers. Gaventa argues that it is through the interaction of these multiple dimensions that possibilities for really transformative change occur. The research conducted for this report highlights the importance of increasing the visibility of workers and civil society organisations who are able to represent the human impact of unfair practices. Arguably, and applying Gaventa’s critique, it is responsiveness to the workers on the factory floor that is lacking in the practices of the big brands and where SMEs can work differently. Widening the space grassroots organisations occupy in the supply chain and at multiple levels, could push a more dramatic transformation in fairer practices.



The research conducted for this report highlights the importance of increasing the visibility of workers and civil society organisations who are able to represent the human impact of unfair practices

RESEARCH METHODS

We adopted a comparative case study approach to capture a diversity of business activity and investigate how institutional and market factors influence purchasing practices and their framing of corporate responsibility. By drawing on a variety of different qualitative tools and approaches including a longitudinal lens, we have been able to generate a diverse data set, enabling triangulation that both cross-validates our findings and interrogates different dimensions of the study and across multiple spaces and levels.

For this study, cases were selected based on theoretical rather than random sampling (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). We selected five brands and four suppliers that self-identified as sustainable businesses and/or leaders in CSR (see Appendix 4). Beyond their own purchasing practices, these organisations also recognised their role in setting a good example for other companies. In order to enhance the transferability of key findings, cases were selected based on a range of criteria including: affiliations and certifications e.g. World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) membership, brands recognised as leaders by the Fair Wear Foundation, Common Objective award winners; size of company; business models and geographic location.

Our case study investigation was guided by the following research questions:

- 1. How do brands define fair purchasing practices, and how does this differ from the definition of their suppliers?**
- 2. How do fair purchasing practices link to issues of power, partnerships and working conditions?**
- 3. What are the main barriers to fair purchasing practices, and what opportunities are there to scale-up fair purchasing practices across the entire textile supply chain?**
- 4. What examples of fair purchasing practices currently exist, and how could they be extended?**

The first phase of data collection was based primarily on desk research. A review of the academic literature was supplemented with an analysis of relevant company reports, press releases and corporate social media accounts. This was combined with interviews of selected stakeholders that included representatives from case study brands and suppliers, NGOs and supply chain experts and also workers from a number of Indian based factories. The data was analysed using cross-case pattern search techniques with the aim of looking beyond initial impressions and seeing evidence through multiple lenses (Eisenhardt, 1989). The qualitative data collected from worker interviews was coded thematically and compared against a larger database built between 2019 and 2022.

Central to our understanding of the grassroots context of work in the garment sector was documenting the experiences of a cohort of 40, mainly female workers, in Delhi and Bangalore India. Researchers maintained contact with this group of workers named ‘community narrators’ from the outbreak of the Covid pandemic up to July 2022. The voices of workers were complemented by interviews with civil society and trade union organisations that represent workers in the garment sector. Through this approach, we were able to better understand the lived reality of work in global value chains and test claims of good practice at a community level. As such our analysis has developed a longitudinal and intersectional lens that enables a detailed investigation of the implementation (and limitations) of CSR approaches in the garment sector.



COMMUNITY NARRATIVES OF WORK IN GARMENT VALUE CHAINS

The Covid pandemic resulted in a sudden rolling back of workers' rights in the garment sector in both India and Bangladesh and recent data suggests things have not improved. As one Fair Wear stakeholder based in Delhi explained:



“The garment industry has suffered and workers have suffered, wages fell, very few factories paid even 50 percent of the wage. So, the chances of workers ending up in a slavery kind of condition was very high. They did not get the support from the factory management during lockdown and still now it is not there. The workers have suffered hugely, how much of this is seen or appreciated higher up the supply chain, I can't see this. Clearly frameworks and codes just stopped being adhered to as soon as the economic realities hit.”

Worker testimony also reveals examples of ‘work intensification’ (Mauno et al., 2022). With factories reopening post-Covid, workers report being required to work longer hours, with increased production quotas with no additional compensation. In the words of one worker based in Bangalore:

“All the promises of better conditions have now gone away. We have discussed our issues and given letters to the management and also spoken to the management along with the Union members about the conditions of the workers and about our low salaries. But they refuse to meet with us and this is despite the posters on the wall outlining fair working conditions, it is just for show.”

Furthermore, research shows that factory owners are able to hide the realities of poor conditions behind the existence of a few “model factories”. However, most garments may well be made from sub-standard factories that breach the codes of practice advocated by the buyer. In other words, whilst agreements to adhere to practices may be signed by suppliers the implementation may be patchy or only relate to one “show” factory. A civil society actor in India shared, “Whenever buyers come for the inspection workers are told to do their work silently and don't get the chance to meet the buyers. Buyers only meet the staff of the company.”

It was acknowledged by a number of workers that membership of a union gave them a sense of protection, to some degree at least: “We have got so many benefits by joining this membership they help us in speaking for our rights.” However, the wider political economic context also has an impact on a factory owner's willingness and ability to comply, as one CSO actor shared: “None of the companies have bad policies; overall, all companies provide decent work facilities. Owners don't want a bad name. It is the staff in positions of power who are notorious. They exploit it because there is not a shortage of people seeking jobs. Migrants come every day looking for job opportunities in big cities. They need jobs, hence the salary is static.”



Research shows that factory owners are able to hide the realities of poor conditions behind the existence of a few “model factories”.

A light touch approach at a senior management level clearly allows for abuses to seep in at the middle management tier. Supervisors shouting, sexual harassment of female employees and denial of toilet breaks were all common examples of abuse shared by participants. Many workers reported factories operating an unspoken policy of not employing unmarried women so as to remove the risk of sexual harassment. This suggests that, in some instances, suppliers may take the route of removing (or not employing to start with) the most vulnerable workers from their labour pool. This helps them appear as if they are maintaining compliance with best practice codes that carry zero tolerance towards sexual harassment. Once again, and applying Gaventa's arguments around how power operates and can be challenged in supply chains, we see the importance of bringing micro day-to-day insights into the picture. Factories are not homogeneous entities, and workers and managers at different levels will not necessarily work from the same ethical stance or be motivated by the same priorities.

One way of building ethical agility into supply chains is firstly to acknowledge that factories are heterogeneous in terms of the varying drivers shaping the work ethics of its management team. Building in monitoring systems that can draw out any concerning differences between layers and levels of operation is critical. Furthermore, attempts to implement fair practices need to operate through a more sensitised lens that acknowledges who the most vulnerable are at any given time and across contexts and sectors. Vulnerabilities, as Covid starkly revealed, are highly gendered and intersectional (young women were frequently most affected). Questions around how, and if, fair practices account for the realities of gender dynamics need to be more frequently asked. For example, one trade union stakeholder shared:

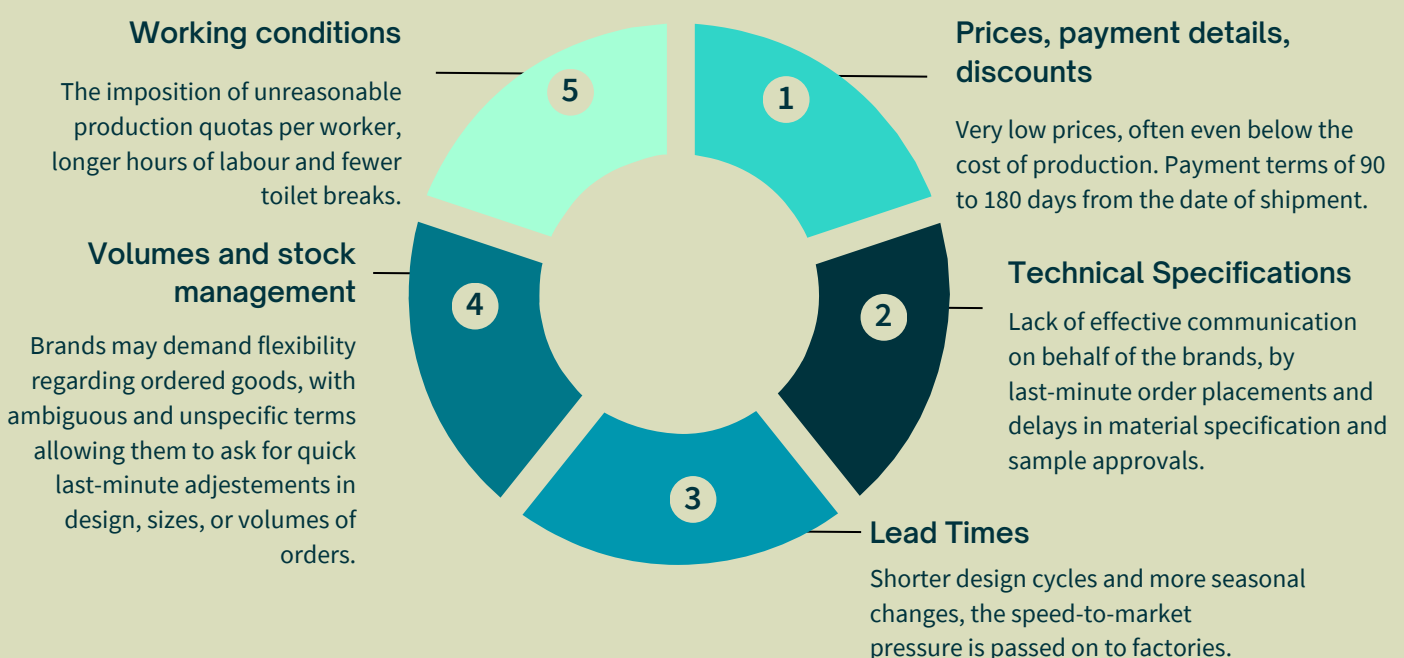
“Some of the major issues we have are around lack of crèche facilities, which is the major concern that many young mothers will struggle to go back to work. Lack of crèche facilities is a huge issue. You know, it is affecting a lot of workers. We are also struggling with child labour which has increased post Covid. Children have dropped out from school as they could not cope with digital education. In Tamil Nadu we hear about cases where young girls are asked to go to work in the factories because parents can't make enough money. So, girls are asked to go to factories and live in hostels often not even to send money home, but just to remove the burden of feeding them from their parents.”

The passage above clearly demonstrates that creche facilities are a primarily enabling factor when it comes to supporting and encouraging the young female labour force.

CHALLENGING UNFAIR PURCHASING PRACTICES

According to the Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices (2022) purchasing practices are “the actions taken by a buying company in order to purchase a product or service (in whole or in part) from a supplying business”. Purchasing practices encompass a wide of business functions and operations including: “design and product development, planning and forecasting, critical path management, contracts, technical specifications, order placement and lead times, cost and price negotiations, payment terms and also the underlying behaviours, values and principles of purchasers which impact supplying companies and ultimately workers’ lives” (CFRPP, 2022).

Figure 2. Unfair purchasing practices and impacts on suppliers



Source: Traidcraft Exchange, IndustriALL Europe, Fair Trade Advocacy Office (2021) Leveraging the Unfair Trading Practices Directive to benefit the Garment Sector.

1. PRICES, PAYMENT DETAILS, DISCOUNTS



Due to the high competition between small suppliers in the garment sector, brands are able to purchase orders for very low prices, even below the cost of production. These include costs required to meet code of conduct compliance, as well as necessary production costs like energy or transport prices.

In addition, some large brands and retailers are demanding unreasonable payment terms of between 90 to 180 days - shifting the economic risks to the suppliers. Brands may also leverage disproportionate power relations to make unilateral changes to previously negotiated clauses concerning payment, delivery, or contract termination ([Leveraging the Unfair Trading Practices Directive to benefit the Garment Sector, 2021](#))

Consistent with recent studies (Islam et al., 2023) suppliers report that profit maximisation is the main driver in price negotiations with large brands. Even when commercial partnerships are well-established, large brands may change their sourcing strategy at short notice in order to make small cost gains:

“We had a non-fair trade buyer based in the Netherlands, and they were buying huge amounts from us. This one organisation became almost fifty per cent of our sales for a good two, three, four years. They were huge. Overnight at the drop of a hat they shifted their production to Bangladesh. Why? Because maybe they were saving fifty cents here and there. Their pursuit of low cost, high profit options is relentless - and that's what drives them really.” (Interview with Craft Resource Centre).

In contrast, we find notable differences between the payment terms and practices of SME brands compared to buyers from large brands. For the most part, SMEs tend to pay their suppliers on time, often with part payment in advance. Case study respondents reflected both a sense of commercial obligation and a commitment to responsible business practices:

“For bigger brands, the practices are that a lot of the time they get to pay once they receive orders. But of course, because I'm a small business we don't work with these practices.”

(Interview with SICA UPCYCLING DESIGN)

The extent to which SMEs can, and do influence, the purchasing practices of larger brands is unclear. Certainly in this research suppliers acknowledge the power of big brands to switch suppliers if more favourable pricing exists elsewhere. However, suppliers seem more comfortable operating with SMEs and trust is higher in these relationships. Stronger alliances between suppliers and SMEs could wield influence over the unfair practices of big brands by highlighting that a better way of working is possible.



2. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS



Lack of effective communication by brands and last-minute changes to technical order specifications can lead to increased production costs, without any form of compensation for suppliers. Delays in material specification and sample approvals can also add hidden costs that are usually covered by suppliers ([Leveraging the Unfair Trading Practices Directive to benefit the Garment Sector, 2021](#)).

Small suppliers are increasingly providing brands with a range of technical services. However, these value-added services are not always reflected in the product costs. Changes to material specifications or product development activities are often overlooked by buyers and reflect hidden costs that are absorbed by small suppliers:

“If you have a product which uses a specific kind of raw material, and then the buyer says: ‘Okay, you know what, I don't like that raw material. Why don't we try to get something else? Let's try to change the product around. Change the specification’. So there is an intangible product development cost which often gets overlooked.” (Interview with Craft Resource Centre)

Reliable access to sustainable raw materials can be challenging for smaller brands. This can cause production delays or increase costs. In particular, supplies of recycled or circular material is becoming more competitive:

“Recycling has grown so much in Bangladesh that it's getting hard for us to access this kind of material in the market. It's very trendy and the big recyclers are buying it, and the prices are going high as well for this kind of material. The next step for us would be to get off-cuts from smaller producers instead of trying to be competitive with big industry.” (Interview with SICA UPCYCLING DESIGN)

The importance of trust in supply chain relationships is clear again in relation to material choice. If buyers were to operate in partnership with suppliers and with greater contextual insight into the availability and affordability of different materials, more equitable ways of working may shape the value chain. This may point to an increased role for CSOs in highlighting the contextual realities of suppliers as a means of holding brands to account for their business decisions.

3. LEAD TIMES



Lead time is usually understood as the time from the date an order is confirmed to the date the products are readied for shipment at the factory. When suppliers cannot meet strict deadlines, contractual conditions may allow brands to charge heavy penalties like massive discounts, demand air freight shipment, or even the sudden termination of supply relationships without any liability or compensation ([Leveraging the Unfair Trading Practices Directive to benefit the Garment Sector, 2021](#)).

The market power of large brands can lead to privileged access to production facilities. Factories will prioritise work for bigger brands in order to maintain commercial partnerships. For smaller brands, lead times can be impacted as their production runs are put on hold at short notice:

“We’ve had experiences in the past where production has been delayed because [large MNC] has pushed an order in the middle and everybody else then slides down the scale. And that's the way because the big fish come in and take the factory space.” (Interview with Monkind)

During the initial Covid lockdowns, some small brands took the opportunity to engage directly with consumers and promote the concept of slow fashion (IPF, 2021) However, post-Covid consumer expectations seem to be returning to a demand for faster fulfilment of orders and this can be a challenge for social enterprises with restricted production capacity:

“For the most part keeping people updated, was a really nice way to build our community and build a bit more empathy and weekly updates, and people got to buy into more of the storytelling, and find out about exactly who's making their garment and a little bit more of our story. But for the most part in lockdown people were way more patient and understanding. But it has been a challenge. We've seen more push back on made to order since the end of lockdown, because everything's accelerated again.” (Interview with Birdsong)

In the section above the value of increasing the visibility of worker experience was highlighted. Embedding a more human dimension to business practices may transform the supply chain from a series of financial transactions into an opportunity to tell a more personal story of how an item of clothing came to exist. Strategic incorporation of this human dimension may be attractive to an increasingly sensitive consumer, which in turn may act as leverage influencing brands to change their practices.

4. VOLUMES AND STOCK MANAGEMENT



Brands may demand flexibility regarding ordered goods, with ambiguous and unspecific terms allowing them to ask for quick last-minute adjustments in design, sizes, or volumes of orders, without any form of compensation. Poor forecasting of sales and sudden changes in order volumes may also lead to extra time pressure for the suppliers. Unreasonable demands of brands may lead to supplying factories turning to unauthorised sub-contractors, whose factory working conditions are not closely monitored ([Leveraging the Unfair Trading Practices Directive to benefit the Garment Sector, 2021](#)).

Order consistency and communication is an important consideration both for buyers and suppliers. However, supply chain relationships are often characterised by a lack of reciprocal respect. When buyers make last-minute changes to orders, or fail to accurately forecast sales, it is suppliers that are expected to respond:

“One thing which also has to come into the discussion is consistency of orders. A lot of buyers are getting into the habit of saying: okay, we'll place this one big order in a year, and then we will disappear, and then come back again next year.” (Interview with Craft Resource Centre)

For big brands, ethical collections are often positioned as a one-off or capsule collection. This can make it difficult for suppliers to plan long-term production capacity:

“I believe that currently, the business model that companies and brands working with Fair Trade use is that they only develop these capsules, or standalone collections with Fair Trade suppliers. And then it's very hard for them to continue this business model, because, of course, it was just this season we just released a few items this year which were Fair Trade.” (Interview with Impetus)

Consumer demand for ethical garments is growing but is still not driving widespread change in the system - hence the emergence of short term 'fair trade collections' rather than shifts in wider trading practices. Arguably the good examples of ethical practice highlighted in this research could, if made more visible, offer potential to bring greater influence both at consumer and brand levels. These case studies demonstrate opportunities to open more spaces in the system in which power to influence positive change becomes possible.



5. WORKING CONDITIONS



The imposition of unreasonable production quotas per worker, longer hours of labour and fewer toilet breaks may arise because of last-minute changes of order volumes and designs. Unpredictable working hours and excessive overtime increases the risk of violence and harassment and can have further adverse impacts on female workers ([Leveraging the Unfair Trading Practices Directive to benefit the Garment Sector, 2021](#)).

Working conditions are recognised as an increasingly important area for risk management. Supplier codes of conduct, common among big brands, are now being implemented across garment value chains in an attempt to address hidden supply chain risks and reduce the outsourcing of production to sub-contractors:

"We try to reduce or remove the risk of this unknown subcontractor or unknown worker who's somewhere where we can't see them or visit them or know what they're doing or how they're paid. We're trying to ask that through this code of conduct agreement applying the supplier code of conduct agreement we developed." (Interview with Monkkind).

Small brands often rely on direct contacts with suppliers in order to verify working conditions. However, limited resources and global supply chains can restrict the frequency of site visits:

"It's a difficult one, because we haven't really got the resources to fly out to India and check everything ourselves - which we would if we had more resources. We always need to have met someone who's worked directly with the makers and kind of triangulate if they're good to their workers or not." (Interview with Birdsong)

Here again, we see an opening for more involvement from CSOs and worker representatives to validate and check working conditions both directly and through site visits. Closing gaps and disconnects in the system is critical not least to ensure consistent implementation of fair practices. We also see a need to embed existing models of best practice and frameworks that give structure to what responsible practices should look like. The section below identifies current best practices and considers if, and how, they are currently implemented given the challenges already highlighted in this report.

PUTTING PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE: RESPONSIBLE PURCHASING PRACTICES

In the following section we draw on the Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices (CFRPP, 2022) and Sustainable Terms of Trade Initiative (STTI, 2021) as reference points for what good purchasing practices look like in the garment sector (see Appendix 1 for further details). While the CFRPP specifically focuses on purchasing practices, it also acknowledges the importance of freedom of association and collective bargaining, human rights due diligence, effective grievance mechanisms and remediation, as paramount in improving supply chain conditions (CFRPP, 2022). The CFRPP recognises that the journey towards implementation will look different for each brand and retailer depending on their starting point, their business model, size, sector, operational context, ownership, structure and supply chain composition (CFRPP, 2022).

The Sustainable Terms of Trade Initiative (STTI) is a manufacturer driven initiative, focused on creating fairer purchasing practices in the textile and garment industry. The STTI's recent white paper (2021) outlines purchasing practices that manufacturers wish to see in their business operations. Commercial compliance was defined as 'purchasing practices that do not cause obvious and avoidable harm to manufacturers' (STTI, 2021). While recognising the challenges of the current hyper competitive textile and garment industry, the STTI argue that many brands and retailers have equally realised that the industry needs a healthy buyer-supplier dynamic to achieve a healthy working environment (STTI, 2021).

The research presented in this report has consistently highlighted the gap between policy, practice and the norms of working conditions on the ground. The first issue might be which of these initiatives and standards are most appropriate for a given supply chain, but a second question emerges around how best to implement and ensure compliance.



While recognising the challenges of the current hyper competitive textile and garment industry, the STTI argue that many brands and retailers have equally realised that the industry needs a healthy buyer-supplier dynamic to achieve a healthy working environment (STTI, 2021).

1. INTEGRATION AND REPORTING



“The company has thorough understanding of existing suppliers and purchasing systems and (possible) negative impact on human rights; and uses this to decide on priorities that feed into an agreed improvement plan” ([Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices, 2022](#)).

Responsible purchasing practices are integrated into strategy and decision making processes; and establishing external reporting, internal KPIs/ accountability and training ([CFRPP, 2022](#)).

Responsible purchasing is closely connected with transparency and good data management. This involves brands working to increase supply chain visibility from fibre production through to final garment production:

“Despite being vertical, there are still some grey areas for us. . . It's just a lot of information to try to gather, and then try to build direct links from fibre producers to yarn producers and onwards. So I believe that transparency and flexibility will be some hot topics right now and in the near future.” (Interview with Impetus)

Some medium-sized brands are working with suppliers to integrate a holistic value chain approach to due diligence as part of their purchasing systems:

"Due diligence is an on-going process that should be carried out for every order, production location, material and process. We ask all our suppliers to notify us of any risks of adverse impacts relating to labour rights, animal welfare and environmental hazards during the manufacturing and transportation of our products." (Schijvens Supplier-Buyer Code of Conduct 2021)

Although certification is often linked with processes around external reporting, some smaller brands promote a more direct form of supply chain transparency:

“It all comes with transparency. The more transparency and also certification. We see a lot of brands going for certification, and in a certain way, they want to show that they are doing it the right way. It's also a way to differentiate from others. For us, the transparency is of the brand directly - I don't need someone to certify it, I can show you directly how I'm working.”
(Interview with Wayz)

For Fair Trade suppliers, the WFTO provides a Guarantee System. However, the reporting involved may require additional expertise and staff resources:

“Every two years we complete the self-assessment report which covers everything. The Internal Monitoring System (IMS) is part of that. It's a big document package, and this is sent out to all buyers. It's very gruelling and it needs an extra person. Now we have a person who's dedicated to this, they just keep doing little things every month. So by the time the audit comes around, we are quite up to date. So it doesn't seem like a lot of work.” (Interview with Craft Resource Centre)

“I would say, because of this constant scrutiny of the production of garments now, what happens is there are a lot of audits. There is a lot of scrutiny that is happening, even at the producer level. I would say we go through at least five audits each year.” (Interview with Creative Handicrafts)

What is also unclear is the extent to which consistency of implementation of working practices exists across and between different layers of management. This report has already highlighted that whilst senior factory management may observe and adhere to agreed standards this may not be the case for lower tiers. Clearly, what this research shows, is the need to look more closely at how effective and multi-layered verification of standards can be conducted. It also highlights that even with industry initiatives and compliance frameworks, unless a cultural shift towards embracing equitable relationships occurs it will remain challenging to see any real sustainable change. .



It all comes with transparency.

2. EQUAL PARTNERSHIP



“The purchasing company and their suppliers respect each other as equal business partners; engage in respectful sourcing dialogue; and pursue win-win situations, with a shared responsibility to improve working conditions” (Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices, 2022).

This includes building long-term, secure sourcing relationships; reducing the churn of suppliers; formulating agreements on mutual responsibilities for responsible purchasing (CFRPP, 2022).

Equal partnerships can be defined and implemented in a variety of ways. For some brands, equal partnerships may involve reshoring their supply chain and working with local suppliers to build lasting relationships:

“We started exactly with this mindset, which was to be transparent about all our processes, design and supply chain - to be responsible in terms of production. That means also working with European suppliers and the manufacturers. And mainly to be one hundred per cent local.” (Interview with Wayz)

Geographic proximity to suppliers is often identified as important for smaller brands. In addition, respectful sourcing dialogues are recognised as being based on good communication and frequent contact with suppliers:

“Frequent communication with our makers, and most of them are twenty minutes away on the bus, so it'll be weekly, if not nearly daily, phone calls, checking in, going to visit, sitting down, and manually going through orders if necessary. But again, that's part of our social impact.” (Interview with Birdsong)

As businesses grow, partnerships between brands and suppliers are more likely to involve a documented code of conduct. Some medium-sized brands actively recognise a shared responsibility to improve working conditions:

"Providing material and practical support to our suppliers in striving to meet their obligations under this code of conduct. . . Sharing the cost of implementing and monitoring improvements on working conditions." (Schijvens Supplier-Buyer Code of Conduct 2021)
Fair Trade purchasing relationships are based on commitment from both sides and are not solely judged on the volume of orders:

"This long-term relationship is a very very important element when you get into a fair purchasing relationship or a practice. This commitment from both sides, the buyer side, and from the producer side that we will work together. It may not be huge orders for every year, every month, and so on. But you know they won't disappear and when I say disappear, non-fair traders actually disappear - they ghost you." (Interview with Craft Resource Centre)
Retail brands working with Fair Trade suppliers are increasingly open to co-branding products. This opens up new opportunities for brand recognition and value creation by Fair Trade producer organisations:

"Nearly all our products are co-branded, we have only one buyer in the United States, which is completely branded as theirs without carrying our brand. . . In the past there used to be this fear that customers, or some retailers could approach us directly if our label or brand is carried. But now most of the buyers don't have that kind of fear. You know there's no point we'd also like to have consolidated orders, rather than several retailers approaching us."
(Interview with Creative Handicrafts)



Recent debates about fashion collaborations and potential for the misappropriation of traditional crafts (The Voice of Fashion, 2021) have highlighted how respectful sourcing practices also have a cultural dimension:

“We are really embracing the concept of cultural sustainability, and coming from the learning of indigenous practices, communities and craftsmanship. It's very clear to see how craftsmanship always has a connection between nature, people and practices. I think they're all very intertwined, the environment and the social are not separate.” (Interview with SICA UPCYCLING DESIGN)

The findings from this research point to the importance of investing in building trust and equality into supply chain relationships. Reciprocal learning in relation to what works to navigate the challenges of the marketplace also emerges as an important dimension of fair practices. It is in relation to the building of sustainable partnerships that SMEs clearly have much to offer the rest of the sector in terms of good practice. This is also evidenced in the section below and the examples of good collaborative planning.



3. COLLABORATIVE PRODUCTION PLANNING



“Critical path and production planning is done collaboratively between the purchasing company and suppliers. Any changes are mutually agreed and cannot be detrimental to the supplier”
(Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices, 2022).

This includes reducing samples; providing accurate tech packs; increasing forecasting accuracy; balancing orders; tracking reasons for delay in the critical path; and the purchaser taking responsibility for delays caused by missed deadlines on their part (CFRPP, 2022).

Buyers are not homogeneous and they will have different expectations about their level of involvement in the production processes:

“We have two kinds of buyers. The ones that just want plug and play, and the ones that are willing to pay the higher price to produce with us. They just deliver the parameters, and then we deal with everything from purchasing raw materials, developing samples, sending samples, and then producing the whole order here.” (Interview with Impetus)

Online analytics and dynamic website design can enable smaller brands to implement responsive production planning that is based on made to order. By tracking online sales, demand for products can be matched to current production capacity:

“We make to order, and if they are at capacity we'll just switch that item off for a little while, which enables us to be really flexible. But then sometimes it is about driving enough demand.” (Interview with Birdsong)

Crowdfunding campaigns can be a useful tool to help small brands increase forecasting accuracy. By encouraging consumers to pre-order, brands are able to reduce financial risk and minimise deadstock:

“The last production we did a crowdfunding campaign, which was very good. We could also see which products are selling better, which products people are ordering, and we can project for the future. We only put the samples on the campaign, so people received the orders after two or three months. But usually our lead times are six months from the beginning.” (Interview with SICA UPCYCLING DESIGN)

Some medium-sized brands have recognised how their practices can impact suppliers and they have committed to supporting more collaborative approaches to production planning:

"Communicating clearly, promptly and accurately on all issues concerning orders. . . Placing orders with lead times that do not trigger excessive working hours or subcontracting. Refraining from changing orders repeatedly and with short notice. If changes are unavoidable, amending target delivery times accordingly." (Schijvens Supplier-Buyer Code of Conduct 2021)
A practical example of collaborative production planning is Fair Trade buyers working with suppliers to agree a mutually acceptable order schedule. Agreeing to stagger big orders throughout the year can help suppliers manage capacity:

“Can one big order be broken up into two or three orders, you know, because that would ease some of the other pressures. . . We have been successful in discussing with some of our buyers, and they have actually started doing that. Place a big order, but we'll take it in staggered shipments. Not all at once.” (Interview with Craft Resource Centre)



There are also opportunities for collaborative product development. This might involve buyers and suppliers working together to adapt a product or the technical specifications in order to manage costs:

“So first of all, we go into the technical specification of the product, and oftentimes I will show them the breakdown. We have this complete transparency which is something missing from the non-fair trade sector. . . A great example recently was El Puente, the German organisation. They loved a series of winter scarves which we had in our catalogue, but they said that it's expensive. So what we did was the length of the scarf was 100cm by 180cm, so they told us: ‘look, we don't really need that big a scarf, can you make it a little shorter’. It can be done, if the design can be modified. So we made it 100cm by 140cm.” (Interview with Craft Resource Centre)



4. FAIR PAYMENT TERMS



“The purchasing company and suppliers agree on fair and transparent payment terms that include all relevant information regarding the payment procedure and do not place a disproportionate burden on one party. Contractual obligations are honoured at all times. Payments are made in full & on time” ([Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices, 2022](#)).

This includes ensuring payments are made on time; aiming to improve the timeline of payment; and mutually agreeing reasonable penalties, taking into account the cause of any delay in delivery ([CFRPP, 2022](#)).

Fair payment terms are crucial for suppliers in order to manage cash flow. Examples of best practice include medium-sized brands that have committed to make advance payments as part of supplier-buyer codes of conduct:

"30% of the order is paid in advance and the remaining 70% once goods are shipped."
(Schijvens Supplier-Buyer Code of Conduct 2021)

However, for smaller brands market dynamics mean that payment terms are often determined by suppliers:

“As I am the smaller one in my supply chain. I have very few benefits about payments, so I pay in advance. I pay thirty per cent in advance when I make an order. So when I get the products here, I pay the same day, so there's no cash advance or no payment period, thirty days or sixty days. No, I always pay immediately.” (Interview with Wayz)

Fair Trade principles require that an interest free pre-payment of at least 50% is made available on request from suppliers of Fair Trade handicraft products (WFTO, 2023). Recognising the financial disadvantages faced by producers and suppliers of Fair Trade products, pre-payment is a well-established practice that is accepted by most buyers:

“That's a game changer, you know some of our buyers the minute the ship has left with the products from India they send the payment across. Okay, here's the money, you know. Sometimes it happens that the product has reached Europe, and there were some product problems. Maybe ten per cent of the products were defective, so we have to give a credit note. The credit note is adjusted later against the subsequent orders, so nothing gets held up. So this is one of the biggest benefits of fair purchasing, in fact, that the money is flowing.”
(Interview with Craft Resource Centre)

“Most of the fair buyers continue to pay in advance, but it again depends on the liquidity of the customer side. There is cooperation from us and from the buyer.” (Interview with Creative Handicrafts)

Again, trust and respect are key principles that are more likely to exist in brands who sign up to ethical trading frameworks, but central is buyer understanding of the vulnerabilities and risks suppliers are expected to shoulder. These vulnerabilities need to be made more visible. One solution advocated in the case study examples, is a move to more sustainable models of costing.



5. SUSTAINABLE COSTING



“The costing procedures and levels of the purchasing company reflect and support wage increases and sustainable production. Prices cover all costs of production in line with responsible business conduct and allow for a reasonable and maintained supplier profit margin” ([Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices, 2022](#)).

This includes developing mechanisms to ensure costing allows for all labour costs and increases through national minimum wages and/or collective bargaining; and implementing a costing strategy that supports increased wages to reach a living wage ([CFRPP, 2022](#)).

Recent research shows that no major brand can prove all workers in their supply chain earn a living wage (Clean Clothes Campaign, 2023). In contrast, the business practices of social enterprises demonstrate how sustainable costing procedures can start with the makers:

“We'll ask for a sample, and then they'll decipher how long it takes them, and set a price based on that, and then we price the item around that cost effectively, and around the material costs to achieve the margin that we have to.” (Interview with Birdsong)

Recognising their position in the market, responsible medium-sized brands have made commitments not to use their negotiating power to demand a price that is below the cost of production:

"Never negotiating a price that is below the cost of production, as this will impact on the wages and working conditions of workers. . . Staying with our current supplier if a higher price will ensure decent wages and working conditions for workers, rather than moving our business elsewhere purely on the basis of price." (Schijvens Supplier-Buyer Code of Conduct 2021)

For smaller brands, product knowledge is an important tool in achieving transparent and sustainable costing. By understanding each process and product component, small brands are in a better position to negotiate with production partners:

“I know exactly the cost of each part of the product. So when I'm buying, I know that this costs this, because I know the price of the components, that allows me to understand the different parts of the shoe, and so I know. And then, when we discuss with the factory, I can discuss packaging, sewing, assemblage, shoe laces and everything.” (Interview with Wayz)

For Fair Trade partners, sustainable costing starts with the principle of fair payment (WFTO, 2023). A fair payment is one that has been mutually negotiated and agreed by all through ongoing dialogue and participation, which provides fair pay to the producers and can also be sustained by the market, taking into account the principle of equal pay for equal work by women and men:

“The costing is done by the producer, in conversation with whoever the head of department is for that particular garment unit. And then there has to be agreement - one order can go to three or four units, so all three will agree okay, this is an acceptable price. . . What happens, at least with most of our buyers, is that we go through the process with the buyer. Because, with us most of our buyers are Fair Trade, we also have others, but we are able to push our point. They see the breakdown of costs and buyers will make the changes because they don't want to drop a product because of the prices. Sometimes we also dialogue with buyers to find solutions on issues relating to price and delivery dates.” (Interview with Sasha)



KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The pandemic has been characterised as a ‘moment of acceleration’ and an opportunity to reset business practices and ‘build back better’ (and fairer). However, a longer historical perspective reminds us that these bursts of activity carry with them the baggage of what had come before (Dal Lago & O’Sullivan, 2017). And these progressive moments sometimes prove short-lived, and can be followed by ‘moments of deceleration’ and rebalancing (Anderson, 2019).

This study provides evidence and case study examples of current understanding of fair purchasing practices in textile supply chains. By adopting cross-case pattern search techniques we are able to analyse existing barriers and explore opportunities to scale-up fair purchasing practices across the entire textile supply chain.

Our data points to the need, once again, to rethink the conceptual framing but also practical application of CSR and its connection to fair purchasing in order to move towards more sustainable and ethical garment value chains.

We find clear parallels in the experience and challenges of SMEs from different regions operating across the value chain (see Appendix 3). Almost always, SMEs working in the garment sector find that they are price takers not price makers.

Despite the challenges listed above, we find examples of SMEs (brands and suppliers) innovating with purchasing practices that begin to shift power dynamics within fashion value chains. If supported, these organisations have the potential to be industry front-runners and demonstrate fair purchasing practices that can be replicated and scaled across the garment sector.

Below we outline a series of proposals designed to address power imbalances in garment value chains. Drawing on Gaventa’s (2021) powercube analysis, we see opportunities to identify ‘cracks in the system’ that can be used to reverse the accumulative effects of power over, and to strengthen the possibilities of power to.

1. PUBLIC POLICY SUPPORT

There are opportunities for more direct public policy support to help ‘level the playing field’ for SMEs and social enterprises. Big brands need to be held accountable for unfair purchasing practices in order to allow others to compete.

“Just any sort of government intervention that would hold other brands accountable. We've campaigned and advocated for a reduction on VAT for brands that pay living wages or are certified B Corps.” (Interview with Birdsong)

“If public procurement becomes fair trade it will be huge and not just in terms of product selling, but awareness.” (Interview with Craft Resource Centre)

Building on EU Directive 2019/633 on unfair practices in the agri-food sector, there is a clear need for EU action to combat unfair practices in other sectors (Leveraging the Unfair Trading Practices Directive to benefit the Garment Sector, 2021). The 2019 EU agri-food Directive contains provisions that ban certain UTPs imposed unilaterally by one trading partner on another, and specifically protects small and medium sized enterprises. It also protects suppliers based outside of the EU that sell products into the internal market. The Commission as well as the other EU institutions, should develop a regulatory approach tackling Unfair Trading Practices more broadly, starting with the garment sector.



2. BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS AND SUPPORT FOR SMES

Intermediaries, such as business networks and associations, have a crucial role to play in building alliances and coalitions that can connect positive dimensions of power across the forms, levels and spaces of power in order to make transformative change happen.

“You know we have been doing this for 32 years now, and without WFTO it would not be possible. Having a central organisation with very clear aims and goals, with a mission and vision. . . That's the focal point, there is no other, at least for us in the non-food sector, there is no other reference point or reference organisation.” (Interview with Craft Resource Centre)

"There is a shoe association in Portugal - but it's a lobby, it's politics. It doesn't help the small brands - they are only there to help the big brands. . . They could do a lot more in order to help small businesses to grow, and at the same time show that it's possible to start a business with other principles and with good practices." (Interview with WAYZ)

Associations representing the garment and apparel sector are frequently dominated by the interests of big business. As the EU introduces the Sustainable Product Initiative and its legislative measures, it is important that full consideration is given to SMEs. The ‘Think Small First’ principle recognises that SMEs are not simply reduced versions of big companies (SMEunited, 2021). SMEs have different structures, different personal relations, different financial strengths and different ways of operating.



3. SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSPARENCY

Transparency is fundamental in revealing and questioning forms of power (visible, hidden, and invisible) that shape norms about purchasing practices and definitions of fairness. Supply chain transparency can also highlight different levels of power. In a globalised world, power is multi-layered and involves interrelated locations of local, national and global levels.

Factory lists can be a useful tool to support transparency in supply chains, particularly when utilised by workers and unions. An example of this type of action was the Karnataka Garment Workers Union's (KOOGU KGWU) use of social media during the 2020 Covid lockdowns. Using the hashtag #DisposableGarmentWorkersofArvindLtd the KOOGU KGWU posted a Twitter thread highlighting European and US fashion brands sourcing from Arvind Limited with screenshots of the brands' CSR pages and factory lists.

However, the usefulness of publicly available data, such as factory lists, is often obstructed and limited by how the data is published and the format used. A more engaged and progressive approach to transparency would require an open dialogue with stakeholders to agree common data formats that are accessible and meaningful for wider communication and action.



4. WORKER-DRIVEN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has failed to address the ongoing human rights crisis in global supply chains in large part because it does not put workers at the centre of developing and enforcing solutions to the problem. In contrast, Worker-Driven Social Responsibility (WSR) is founded on the understanding that, “in order to achieve meaningful and lasting improvements, human rights protections in corporate supply chains must be worker-driven, enforcement-focused, and based on legally binding commitments that assign responsibility for improving working conditions to the global corporations at the top of those supply chains” (WSR Network, 2023).

Worker-Driven Social Responsibility presents new opportunities for participation in arenas that may be considered closed, invited or claimed spaces (Gaventa, 2021). Previous research on Fair Trade has shown the importance of boundaries for newly claimed or created spaces: “What is relevant to these dynamics is the capacity of campaigners to shape the boundaries of campaign spaces starting from the local level . . . decisions over boundaries - who is allowed to speak and participate in a determined space - are crucial to the democratic permeability of the space” (Discetti, et al., 2020).



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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices

Principle 1: Integration and Reporting

In order to implement changes to purchasing practices, the company has top leadership buy-in and commitment; has a thorough understanding of existing suppliers and purchasing systems and (possible) negative impact on human rights; and uses this to decide on priorities that feed into an agreed improvement plan. Responsible purchasing practices are integrated into the commercial and other relevant departments of a business.

This includes integrating purchasing practices into strategy and decision making processes; and establishing external reporting, internal KPIs/ accountability and training.



Principle 2: Equal Partnership

The purchasing company and their suppliers respect each other as equal business partners; engage in respectful sourcing dialogue; and pursue win-win situations, with a shared responsibility to improve working conditions.

This includes building long-term, secure sourcing relationships; reducing the churn of suppliers; formulating agreements on mutual responsibilities for responsible purchasing; only using force majeure clauses responsibly; improving communication; achieving partnership in problem solving and employing responsible exit strategies.



Principle 3: Collaborative Production Planning

Critical path¹¹ and production planning is done collaboratively between the purchasing company and suppliers. Any changes are mutually agreed and cannot be detrimental to the supplier.

This includes reducing samples; providing accurate tech packs; increasing forecasting accuracy; balancing orders; tracking reasons for delay in the critical path; and the purchaser taking responsibility for delays caused by missed deadlines on their part.



Principle 4: Fair Payment Terms

The purchasing company and suppliers agree on fair and transparent payment terms that include all relevant information regarding the payment procedure and do not place a disproportionate burden on one party. Contractual obligations are honoured at all times. Payments are made in full & on time.

This includes ensuring payments are made on time; aiming to improve the timeline of payment; and mutually agreeing reasonable penalties, taking into account the cause of any delay in delivery.



Principle 5: Sustainable Costing

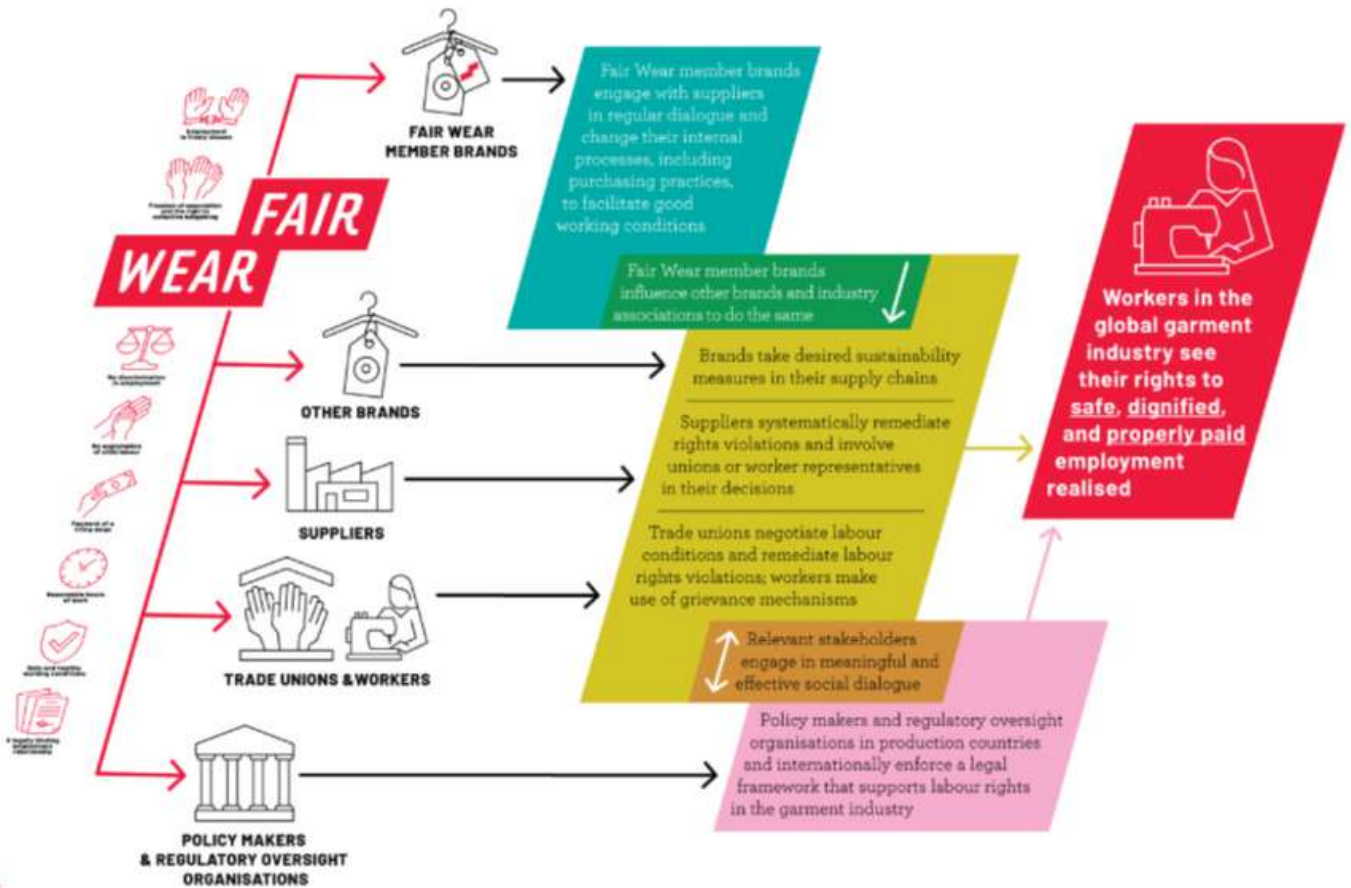
The costing procedures and levels of the purchasing company reflect and support wage increases and sustainable production. Prices cover all costs of production in line with responsible business conduct and allow for a reasonable and maintained supplier profit margin.

This includes developing mechanisms to ensure costing allows for all labour costs and increases when labour costs increase (through national minimum wages and/or collective bargaining); and implementing a costing strategy that supports increased wages to reach a living wage.



APPENDIX

Appendix 2: Fair Wear's Theory of Change



APPENDIX

Appendix 3: Current Barriers to Fair Purchasing Practices

A number of common challenges were identified by SME brands and suppliers relating to the structure of fashion value chains and power in the market. These structural issues present barriers to expanding fair purchasing practices and highlight the need to address power asymmetries.

1. Fast Fashion

Competition from fast fashion brands and their wider impact on value chain practices is a fundamental barrier to change.

“If you finish with fast fashion, then all of the textile industry and all of the supply chain will work in a way where price won’t dictate where we want to produce our articles, which suppliers we are going to use. Everything will be more balanced then. Unfortunately even for sustainable brands, what I see right now is that price is the only thing that they are going after.” (Interview with Impetus)

2. Limited Market for Ethical Consumption

The ethical consumption market has not grown sufficiently to replace mainstream consumer trends.

“The biggest barrier is not enough growth in ethical consumers. An ethical consumer, to me as a producer, is someone who is willing to pay the price, who recognizes the value of the product, and is also interested in the story.” (Interview with Craft Resource Centre)

“I think it's always a little bit of a tightrope trying to get a price, even with very well intended buyers that totally buy into the mission. But still with market challenges and because we don't tell our story. Even after 40 years I think we have limited our role and we minimise the impact which we, as a collective, can have as a new business model.” (Interview with Sasha)

3. Turnover of Buyers and Institutional Knowledge

Buyers are changing roles more frequently and the knowledge of suppliers and production context are not retained.

“We are seeing quite a bit of turnover in the buyer organisations, you know, people coming and going. Institutional knowledge is very important. When you are a buyer, and you're talking to a producer from the South. You have to know a little bit more than just the product. You have to know their story, you have to know which village they're working in. You have to know the constraints they are facing.” (Interview with Craft Resource Centre)

4. Shareholders and Ownership Models

Conventional models of business ownership continue to prioritise the short-term interests of shareholders above other stakeholders.

“It's very tough to remain sustainable and continue to practise values in your entire supply chain. We are able to do that, I think, primarily because we don't have an investor. We have collective ownership in the organisation, we do not need to service an investment or an investor, we do not need to show the bottom line to the investor that we are increasing our profit every year.” (Interview with Creative Handicrafts)

APPENDIX

Appendix 4: Case study interviews and focus groups

Company	Value Chain	Location	Institutional Factors	UTP Action Focus	CSR / Supply Chain Report	Interview Contacts
Sasha	Supplier	India	WFTO CO10 Award Winner	Decent Working Conditions, Ethical Sourcing & Supply Chain Management, Fair Trade	https://sashaworld.com/organization/fair-trade/	Roopa Mehta Chief Executive
Creative Handicraft	Supplier	India, France, EU	WFTO	Decent Working Conditions, Ethical Sourcing & Supply Chain Management, Fair Trade	https://creativehandicrafts.org/about-us/fair-trade/	Johny Joseph Director
Craft Resource Center	Supplier	India	WFTO	Decent Working Conditions, Ethical Sourcing & Supply Chain Management, Fair Trade	https://craftresourcecenter.com/services/	Indro Dasgupta Director
ACATEL	Supplier	Portugal	Small But Perfect	Traceability and Impact Measurement, Ethical Sourcing & Supply Chain Management	https://acatel.pt/innovation-sustainability/ https://acatel.pt/innovation-sustainability/fibret race/	Carlos Soares Sustainability and Textile Certification Manager
Fair Wear India	NGO	Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India	Regional Coordinator Gender at Fair Wear	Decent Working Conditions, Ethical Sourcing & Supply Chain Management	https://www.fairwear.org/about-us/our-standards/ https://www.fairwear.org/programmes/countries/india/	Mousumi Sarangi Country Manager India
Focus Group 1	Factory workers	Gurugram, Haryana, India		Working Conditions	Community for social change and development	Focus group facilitator Dr Sutirtha Sahariah
Focus Group 2	Factory workers	Gurugram, Haryana, India		Working Conditions	Community for social change and development	Focus group facilitator Dr Sutirtha Sahariah
Focus Group 3	Factory workers	Gurugram, Haryana, India		Working Conditions	Community for social change and development	Focus group facilitator Dr Sutirtha Sahariah


APPENDIX


Appendix 4: Case study interviews and focus groups

Company	Value Chain	Location	Institutional Factors	UTP Action Focus	CSR / Supply Chain Report	Interview Contacts
Birdsong	Brand	UK	Common Objective London living wage EU Ecolabel	Decent Working Conditions, Ethical Sourcing & Supply Chain Management, Fair Trade	https://birdsong.london/pages/sustainability	Sophie Slater Founder/ CEO
Schijvens	Brand Workwear	Netherlands UAE Bangladesh China India Morocco Pakistan Portugal Turkey	Fair Wear 'Leader'	Living Wage, Decent Working Conditions, Ethical Sourcing & Supply Chain Management, Circular Economy	https://api.fairwear.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/BPC-Schijvens-Confectiefabriek-Hilvarenbeek-B.V.-2021.pdf	Jaap Rijnsdorp CEO
Wayz Sneakers	Brand	Portugal	Common Objective Small But Perfect	Recycling & Waste, Local Production, Environmentally Friendly Materials, Energy Efficiency	www.wayzforlife.com	Pedro Macana Founder/ Director
Monkind	Brand	Germany Portugal	Common Objective UN Global Compact	Recycling & Waste, Organic Materials, Environmentally Friendly Materials, Animal Friendly, Energy Efficiency	https://monkind.com/pages/sustainability	Stewart Hill Founder/ Director
Sica	Brand	Germany Bangladesh	WFTO Small But Perfect	Recycling & Waste, Fair Trade, Decent Working Conditions, Ethical Sourcing & Supply Chain Management, Supporting Traditional Skills	https://sica-up.com/journal/	Simone Simonato Founder/ Director




QUESTIONS & INFORMATION

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