

Michael's story

Farm worker Michael Silwer harvests the South African grapes that become Fairtrade, sun-dried raisins used in Traidcraft Christmas cakes and in our Geobar range.



They are grown by small-scale farmers who live and work on islands in the remote Orange River area, near the Kalahari Desert.

But Traidcraft's relationship with the farmers, which began in 1996, is much more than buyer and grower. Our extra mile approach includes:

- sending an extra payment when a hailstorm wiped out 70% of their vines
- helping to develop their association into the Eksteenskuil Agricultural Co-operative (EAC)
- working with them to gain Fairtrade certification
- providing an ongoing support programme – this year it is training farmers in cash flow, planning and budgeting to strengthen their co-operative.

As well as this, the Fairtrade premium we pay has helped to provide many benefits including tractors, community water pumps, repairs to water canals and schoolbags for local children.

For farmer Pieter van Wyk the community water pump means easier access to water for his home. "We pump the water from the canal. Before I had to fill the bucket and carry it home."

For pupils at the local primary schools, fair trade means no more plastic carrier bags, as each child now has a schoolbag to carry books to and from school – especially important during the rainy season.

As members of EAC presented bags to the pupils, Don van Wyk, principal at George Island Primary School, explained the importance of this support. "It is like manna from heaven. I tell you the parents will be overwhelmed. Our people are so poor in this area, these things are luxuries in their eyes. People will be talking about this for weeks and months."



Related Links

- [The Geobar Website](#)

Have some Geolly good fun with Geobar and visit www.lovegeobar.com for great games, competitions and the latest news about the original fair trade cereal bar created by Traidcraft!

- [Want to visit this producer group?](#)

Take our Meet the People tour to South Africa and see the benefits of fair trade firsthand.