



## Buying locally beats transporting globally

Brexit Britain has turned the clock back 50 years to resume preferential trade links with Australia. The deal involves tariff reductions on commodities such as cars and wine, which are destined to travel 15,000 kilometres in opposite directions around our planet. Australia appears to gain more from the agreement, signed after Britain watered down its climate change requirements.

But regardless of the fine print vis-a-vis rectifying our climate woes, it is a step backwards related to *Sustainable Change*, when considering that Australia can acquire its vehicles within their Asian sphere, while at the other end European wines abound on Britain's doorstep. Transport by air or sea creates carbon emissions, which cause global heating. Moving to buy locally is a step in the right direction; this UK-Australia deal points the other way.

In terms of dealing positively to address the climate crisis this is not the best way to proceed, but mega trade deals are something largely beyond our control as residents in Kenya. What we can do however is well within our grasp every time we walk through a shop door, if we choose wherever possible to buy local rather than purchasing imported goods.

It's unfortunate that over recent decades Kenya's manufacturing industry related to everyday consumables – textiles and household goods for example – has diminished, but never-the-less we can play our part to support what remains. There are many items on the shelves where we can choose local over global. Quality is a consideration, but locally-made can often be as good, if not better than imported. It's a win-win situation: support local business whilst helping to tackle climate change. Some clear examples to make this happen:

- ✓ *ESTILO towels made in Kenya rate as high quality, colour-fast products, at prices comparable to goods from outside.*
- ✓ *The wooden Kenyan-made mortar and pestle is a better product and cheaper to buy than imported plastic brands.*
- ✓ *For those indispensable bowls, buckets and containers, our KENPOLY brand is good quality and hard to beat in terms of price.*
- ✓ *Kenya brooms and floor mops are strongly made and often less expensive than imported brands.*

I was caught out the other day when buying a hammer in a local store, realising too late that it came from China; the *jua-kali* version would have been stronger and cheaper. I had forgotten my motto: 'check the small print to work out where it comes from'. When doing this I am always amazed by the type of imported goods which dominate our supermarket shelves; ceramic mugs for instance seem to be mostly imported, yet they are simple to make and heavy to transport. Surely this is one product that could and should be sourced locally.

So when you buy your next set of bed covers or floor coverings, you are assisting local industry by selecting Kenya over the rest, but you are also protecting your children's future by helping to tackle the climate crisis.

[duncangregory@whittlingourniche](mailto:duncangregory@whittlingourniche)

