

Case Study

Women's economic empowerment through Fairtrade: A review of the literature

Fairtrade Foundation | December 2018

Executive Summary

This literature review draws on a body of independent and internal research to explore some of the cross-cutting issues that prevent women's economic empowerment and the advancement of gender equality in the workplace. It identifies where Fairtrade is performing well, but also some of the areas where improvements could be made.¹ Below is a summary of the barriers to women's empowerment that are covered, as well as an outline of the case studies that are discussed in further detail in the main body of the review.

1. INSUFFICIENT WAGES

Research has found that gender pay discrimination continues in agricultural hired labour sectors. Women are also more likely to be hired as temporary instead of permanent workers and roles can often be "gendered" – where women are only allowed to carry out what are considered appropriately 'female' jobs (often paid less than 'male' jobs).

Example Fairtrade contribution:

- **The Fairtrade Cents Pilot** (1st Nov 2017 – 1st Jan 2020) – aims to raise the income of workers on poinsettia farms in Uganda, by paying all farm workers a living wage. Although the project is not explicitly 'gender-focused', over 70% of farm workers are women.

2. JOB INSECURITY

Typically, more women than men in hired labour settings are employed as temporary workers without proper contracts. This disempowers women economically, reducing their negotiating capacities and influence on institutional decision-making. It can also increase their vulnerability to rights abuses such as sexual harassment.

¹ References to the Fairtrade Standards primarily refer to the Hired Labour Standards due to the context of this work, so it should be noted that there are other Standards within Small Producer Organisations relating to gender that may not be referred to in this review.

Example Fairtrade contributions:

- A number of studies from the academic literature have commented upon Fairtrade's impact in this area e.g. Sally Smith (2010) notes how Fairtrade has had a positive impact in terms of formalising employment on banana plantations, with workers previously hired on a 'permanent casual' basis now given indefinite contracts.

3. LIMITED ACCESS TO ASSETS AND PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES

Despite the fact that women's role in agriculture has significantly increased over time, they have limited access to productive resources and assets such as land, inputs, information, credit and technical assistance – resulting in the 'gender gap' in agriculture.

Example Fairtrade contribution:

- **Fairtrade Standards** - two Fairtrade Standards (2.2.5 & 2.2.6) specifically encourage capacity building amongst women and equity in the workplace.
- **Growing Women in Coffee project** - encourages transfer of coffee bush ownership from men to women, who were able to earn their own independent income from coffee for the first time. 300 women farmers received training and adopted GAPS practices leading to an increased coffee yield of 1.5kg of cherry per bush in 2013 to 5kg of cherry per bush in 2018.
- **Fairtrade Premium** projects at Bananeras de Urabá Plantation, Colombia – providing training for women and supporting them to pursue additional income generating opportunities.

4. A LACK OF FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN WORKER ORGANISATIONS

Women are often excluded from (or marginalised within) worker organisations, rarely being found in leadership or management positions. This therefore reinforces existing gender inequalities.

Example Fairtrade contribution:

- **Fairtrade Standards** - Section 2.2.6 of the HLS (Hired Labour Standard) states 'empowerment of women' to cover adequate training, capacity building, guidance, encouragement and assistance to women as necessary by Year 3.
- **Fairtrade Premium** spend at PROCECCOP coffee cooperative, Nicaragua – their gender policy dedicates a percentage of the Fairtrade Premium towards rolling out their gender program, training for field staff on working with women farmers and maintaining a 40% quota for women in leadership positions.

- **Women's School of Leadership, Cote d'Ivoire** - as of March 2018, the programme had supported 22 participants to enhance women's economic empowerment and leadership in Fairtrade SPOs.
- Although not a direct initiative or impact of Fairtrade, Women only Producer Organisations (POs) and Gender Committees (GCs) also crop up in the literature as important mechanisms for allowing women's voices to be heard and to better serve their interests.

5. GENDERED OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY CONCERNS

Fairtrade regulations identify key hazards relating to occupational health and safety and encourage 'best practices', but still work largely within accepted industry parameters. Some forms of Fairtrade production (especially chemical intensive flower production) remain hazardous if health and safety is not robustly enforced. Women workers are considered particularly vulnerable, especially those that are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Example Fairtrade contribution:

- **Fairtrade standards – Raynolds (2012, 2014)** work on Fairtrade Standards on Ecuadorian flower farms is particularly positive – explains how standards go substantially beyond (and are far more rigorous) than Ecuador's environmental laws and industry norms in a number of areas. Fairtrade regulations include minimum requirements relating to medical exams and conditions, safety training, workplace dangers, tools and uniforms and protection from pesticide contamination.
- Earlier research carried out by **Dolan et al (2003)** is not as positive – they highlight how on a number of occasions standards and regulations relating to occupational health and safety are breached – there is a particular contradiction between safety and profitability.

6. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Fairtrade Standards stress that members of Fairtrade organisations must not engage in, support, or tolerate behaviour that is sexually intimidating, abusive or exploitative. Despite this, Fairtrade-certified farms sometimes do not show better performance than non-certified plantations in terms of sexual harassment, suggesting that additional action is required.

Example Fairtrade contribution:

- **Fairtrade standards** - In Section 3.1.2 of the HLS, Fairtrade (2017) introduced training against sexual harassment, which has been applicable from 1st January 2018 onwards, requiring companies to establish and implement a policy that clearly prohibits sexual harassment and use it to train both workers and management.
- **Women Working Worldwide (2014) report (WWW is an ETI NGO member)** - summarises research carried out across 20 Kenyan horticultural farms and identifies

Fairtrade certified farms in Kenya as having particularly successful procedures in place for addressing sexual harassment. The report identified additional needs for improvement in the farms surveyed. Following this report Fairtrade Africa implemented action with Kenyan flower farm staff and workers to improve performance in this area.

7. ENTRENCHED IDEAS AROUND WHAT CONSTITUTES WOMEN'S WORK

Historical patterns have long defined women's access to property rights and their role in decision making with regards to community affairs. These rigid gender roles and relations also determine the types of jobs that women can perform.

Example Fairtrade action:

- **Women's capacity building at Fairtrade Australia New Zealand (ANZ)** - carried out a one-week workshop focusing on coffee quality training, of which a number of women attended. One woman explains how it helped her become a role model in her community and to challenge a long-accepted gender norm regarding 'appropriate' jobs for women.

8. WOMEN'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR UNPAID CARE WORK

Women are more likely in many contexts to be expected to carry out unpaid care work in the home and wider community, leading to a 'double burden' of work. Fairtrade requirements can sometimes unintentionally increase the overall workload of both male and female smallholders, highlighting the need for such dynamics to be thought through on a case by case basis. For example, in banana smallholder organisations, restrictions on pesticide use can lead to an increased need for weeding. Arguably, this in turn has a disproportionate impact on women because of unrecognised unpaid care work responsibilities.

Example Fairtrade contribution:

- **Fairtrade Standards** - Standard 2.2.9 of the HLS to be implemented by year 6 of certification – 'Your company must provide support for crèche facilities for your workers' children either inside or outside your premises'.
- **Growing Women in Coffee, Kenya** – the introduction of bio-digesters at household level played an important role in reducing the burden of care for women through reducing time spent on collecting firewood and cooking and increase uptake of cooking duties by male household members. This enabled women to engage in other incomes generating activities.
- **Nevado Roses, Ecuador case study by Corrie Ellis (2013)** - discusses a number of benefits to women of working in the Fairtrade flower industry, but also emphasises the

issue of unpaid care work and the fact that women are overwhelmed by having to carry out productive and reproductive work simultaneously.

KEY CROSS-CUTTING LEARNING FROM THE LITERATURE

- Fairtrade makes a more significant contribution to women's empowerment when there are targeted initiatives in place and where leaders of Fairtrade-certified producer organisations support and promote gender equality (many producer and worker organisations studied were still to develop explicit gender equity programmes or strategies)
 - A 'context-driven, bottom-up approach is required, with regional networks of Fairtrade producers taking the lead on developing action plans which respond to localized gender contexts, rather than prescribing a universal course of action from the centre' (Smith, 2015).
 - Existing gender norms in the communities in which Fairtrade operates are an important determinant of the impact of any initiative designed to tackle gender equity
 - Gender issues are addressed within the Fairtrade Standards mainly in terms of non-discrimination rather than pro-active promotion of benefits for women. Fairtrade is aware of the need to more actively encourage pro-active strategies within its Standards framework (as well as in complementary programming). The review of the Small Producer (SPO) standard currently in progress is actively considering options for this.
 - Women are not a homogeneous category - any targeted initiatives must account for an intersectional consideration of inequalities (e.g. race, caste and class) which can influence how interventions affect the level of economic empowerment women experience.
 - Although there is evidence of Fairtrade Standards having improved the voice and role of women within POs and hired labour situations, sometimes these improvements may be formalistic in nature and therefore struggle to impact on underlying gender norms and power relationships.
 - There is no single way to address gender inequality in all sectors.
 - Targeted initiatives to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in Fairtrade should address women's practical as well as strategic needs.
 - It is important to also address the needs of male workers to help to ensure that men are encouraged to change their understanding of women's roles in order to bring about positive change towards gender equality.
 - There is a limited amount of research available on hired labour settings compared with small producers
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LITERATURE REVIEW

Research questions:

1. What are the main issues that prevent women's economic empowerment and the advancement of gender equality in the workplace?
2. How is Fairtrade attempting to address these issues and how successful have the initiatives been?

Empowerment can be defined as the process of enhancing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (Fairtrade Theory of Change, 2015). Central to this process are actions which both build individual and collective assets and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organisational context which governs the use of these assets. Women, as well as men, must be allowed to set their own agendas, gain skills and increase their self-reliance. In this way, women's empowerment implies an expansion in women's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them (Kabeer, 2008). However, it is important to view empowerment as an ongoing process as well as an outcome.

Prioritising women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and sustainable economic growth. Yet, despite the fact that women make enormous contributions in their roles as farmers and workers producing for Fairtrade markets, they still remain disproportionately affected by poverty, discrimination and exploitation. In response to these challenges, Fairtrade's 'Gender Strategy' sets a clear direction and approach for Fairtrade's future global work on gender. It highlights the need for interventions aiming to promote women's economic empowerment to go beyond merely increasing the economic opportunities available to women.

This is due to a number of different issues that are known to cause discrimination against women in the workplace and subsequently act as barriers to their empowerment and the wider goal of gender equality within the Fairtrade system. They can be split into the following categories:

1. Insufficient wages
2. Job insecurity
3. Limited access to assets and productive resources
4. A lack of female representation in producer and worker organisations
5. Gendered occupational health & safety concerns
6. Sexual harassment
7. Entrenched ideas around what constitutes 'women's work'
8. Women's responsibility for unpaid care work

1. Insufficient wages

Oya et al (2017) summarise research that has found that a gender pay gap continues in Fairtrade certification contexts. Women have been found to earn less than men, particularly if employed on temporary contracts (Smith, 2010; Walsh 2004), and to be more likely to be hired as temporary instead of permanent workers (Melkaraaen, 2009; Smith et al, 2004). Research has also drawn attention to gendered patterns in terms of job allocation, with different pay scales for 'male' and 'female' jobs (Smith et al, 2004; Stathers and Gathuthi, 2013). Furthermore, female workers are often excluded from taking out loans and receiving bonus payments, e.g. the case of certified tea plantations in Kenya (Stathers & Gathuthi, 2013).

Loconto (2015) explains how certified tea plantations in Tanzania have sought to mechanize agriculture in order to create skilled jobs at higher wages, yet the requirements for technical skills discriminated against women who have less access to education. Smith (2010), carrying out research in the banana sector, also uncovers how gendered assumptions about women's skills seem to have been 'internalized' by men and women, despite Fairtrade certification (Smith, 2010, p. 136).

Examples of Fairtrade best practices that address this issue

Dijn et al (2016), looking at the banana industry, report that Fairtrade female wage workers are not necessarily disadvantaged in terms of the economic benefits that can be derived from Fairtrade. In the Dominican Republic female wage workers on Fairtrade banana plantations receive higher average wages and in-kind benefits and own more assets compared to non-certified estates. However, in Colombia female wage workers do report lower levels of in-kind benefits and feel less secure in their jobs compared to males.

The Fairtrade Cents Pilot

This initiative aims to raise the income of workers on poinsettia farms in Uganda, by paying all farm workers a living wage. Although the project is not explicitly 'gender-focused', over 70% of farm workers are women. The scheme works by charging importers a fixed Fairtrade Cents Bonus (of 4.5 euro cents per cutting), on top of the regular Fairtrade Premium (0.5 cents for poinsettias from Uganda). The bonus of 4.5 cents then goes into a Fairtrade Cents Bonus Fund and the revenue is paid out to the workers directly and raises their income. The Fairtrade Premium is spent in the usual way, financing community projects decided on by workers committees in accordance with the Fairtrade Standards. A living wage will allow women workers to cover the essential needs of their family, plus a little extra for them to fall back on in times of hardship. The pilot was launched on 1st November 2017 and will continue until 1st January 2020.

2. Job insecurity

Job insecurity disempowers women economically, reducing their negotiating capacities and influence on institutional decision-making. It can also increase their vulnerability to sexual harassment (Crawford et al, 2018). The same report suggests that more could be done to alleviate job insecurity in general (and in particular for women) as part of the Fairtrade Standards for flowers, tea and bananas, but highlights positively the prohibition on terminations of contract during pregnancy and maternity leave. This review did not identify any specific Fairtrade programmes or interventions that directly address the issue of women's job insecurity. However, a number of studies from the academic literature have commented upon Fairtrade's impact in this area through its core sourcing model.

Examples of Fairtrade best practices to address this issue

Sally Smith (2010) highlights how Fairtrade has had a positive impact in terms of formalising employment on banana plantations, with workers previously hired on a 'permanent casual' basis now given indefinite contracts (p.10). In a review of the literature on the gendered dimensions of Fairtrade, Smith (2013) also points out how research on Fairtrade fruit, wine and tea (Smith, 2010; Charman, 2010; Pound & Phiri, 2009) has shown that Fairtrade Standards and auditing processes have led to the development of employment policies and implementation mechanisms that promote women workers' rights, including freedom from sexual harassment, the right to time off for breast-feeding and entitlement to maternity benefits.

However, it is clear that more could be done to address gender-related job insecurity specifically. Fairtrade is already aware of this problem, stating in the Gender Strategy (2016-2020) that on export crop plantations, women are often present in large numbers, but in lower paid, less regular and less secure work due to pervasive discrimination in recruitment, training and employment policies.

3. Limited access to assets and productive resources

Despite the fact that women's role in agriculture has significantly increased over time, women have limited access to productive resources and assets such as land, inputs, information, credit and technical assistance – resulting in a 'gender gap' in agriculture (FAO, 2011). In particular, gender discrimination in access to information has resulted in women having less knowledge about key production and certification concepts. A number of studies have observed a gender imbalance in knowledge around sustainability standards among certified producers (Blowfield & Dolan, 2010; Hoskyns, 2006; KIT et al., 2012).

Examples of Fairtrade best practices to address this issue

Fairtrade Standards (HLS)

There are a number of Fairtrade Standards that encourage capacity building amongst women. Standard 2.2.5 states that 'your company must give special attention to the empowerment of women by means of adequate training, capacity building, guidance, encouragement and assistance as necessary'. And Standard 2.2.6, first introduced in 2014, states 'your company

must undertake activities to achieve equity in the workplace'. This includes specifically addressing the employment and promotion of suitably qualified people from disadvantaged and minority groups'. In terms of more programmatic work, Fairtrade has a number of initiatives in place to promote women's access to assets and productive resources.

Growing Women in Coffee

The Growing Women in Coffee initiative was a 3-year project (March 2015 – February 2018) pioneered in Kenya by Fairtrade Africa in partnership with the Fairtrade Foundation (UK) and Solidaridad. The project supported smallholder male coffee farmers to empower women by transferring at least 50 coffee bushes to their daughters and wives, allowing for asset ownership (without necessarily transferring land). Women were therefore able to earn their own independent income from coffee for the first time, after years of contributing up to 70% of the labour needed to grow and harvest the beans.

The initiative focused on two different cooperatives – the Kabnge'tuny and Kapkiyai Women in Coffee Associations. Women were registered as members of their respective cooperative societies, allowing them to open bank accounts and receive payments directly for coffee sold. As a result of this, women have generated income and improved their social standing through the sale of 'women-branded' coffee. More than 200 women coffee farmers identified a positive change in their own perception of themselves after selling their women-branded coffee into Fairtrade markets.

Women were also offered training opportunities in Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) around increasing the yield and quality of their coffee and other food crops to generate more income. Additional training was also offered with the aim of enhancing women's entrepreneurship skills and informing them about other income generating activities (IGAs) e.g. diversification into the production of horticultural crops such as passion fruits. As Esther Koskei, the female Chair of Kabng'etuny Women in Coffee Association explains – "...right now, we are united, stronger, and we keep on supporting each other...our households have also grown since we are able to contribute financially."

A consultation was also carried out with women to find out what additional support they would like. Women identified a need to reduce the use of wood for household jobs like cooking and cleaning as they were spending up to 20 hours a week collecting wood and lighting fires for their stoves. As a result of this, biogas units were provided, and 300 women now have them installed and are saving up to 4 hours per day that used to be taken up by collecting firewood and cooking. They can devote this time to other economic activities.

There have been requests for help from neighbouring counties Bungoma and Bomet that also grow coffee to promote this asset transfer model towards ensuring more women participate in and benefit from the entire coffee value chain. It is hoped that the Growing Women in Coffee project will receive more funding in order to scale up the initiative next year.

Fairtrade Premium projects at Bananeras de Urabá Plantation

Another dimension of Fairtrade's impact that can be used to promote women's access to assets and productive resources is the Fairtrade Premium. In collaboration with SENA (National Learning Service), Bananeras de Urabá Plantation in Colombia is providing training for women

on how to bake bread and cakes, as well as selling fried ‘empanadas’ so they can generate supplementary income. On top of this, their ‘Somos Familia’ Programme aims at improving the quality of life of some of the poorest families, focusing predominantly on women. It includes support for at least 1 year in the form of talks, training and recreational activities.

Despite the efforts of Fairtrade in the above areas, a significant challenge to women gaining access to assets and productive resources that is often mentioned in the literature is women’s lack of access to land rights. Research into the impacts of Fairtrade has not found evidence of Fairtrade improving women’s access to land (an exception would be the Women in Coffee case study). A 2012 meta-review of studies of the social impacts of Fairtrade found that land tenure is crucial for gaining access to its benefits, in terms of both income and decision-making power within cooperatives and families, and a lack of tenure therefore excludes many women (Hanson et al., 2012, p. 174). Bacon’s (2010) research also supports the view that women’s economic empowerment through Fairtrade is constrained by their lack of land titles.

Gender bias in land ownership rights is also a significant factor in women’s exclusion from membership in producers’ organisations and leadership roles, even among Fairtrade cooperatives (Fairtrade Foundation, 2015). In Kenyan tea production for example, constraints on women’s access to land (despite legal rights) hinder their ability to receive payment for tea sales and from participating in cooperative decision-making bodies (Blowfield & Dolan, 2010).

4. Lack of female representation

As Fairtrade’s ‘Gender Strategy’ (2016-2020) and a wide body of academic research acknowledges, women are often excluded from (or marginalized within) worker organisations, rarely being found in leadership or management positions (Blowfield & Dolan, 2010; Le Mare, 2008; Nelson & Pound, 2009; Smith, 2010; Smith, 2015). This reinforces existing gender inequalities. Prevailing gender norms, which are often deeply entrenched in society (e.g. gender bias in land ownership) and in the individual consciousness of both men and women, are one of the main reasons for this lack of female representation. Research has also found that poor education and a lack of skills and knowledge are also keeping women from participating and particularly from accessing leadership positions (Sutton, 2014; Terstappen, 2010; Pongratz-Chander, 2007; Dijn et al, 2016).

Among most Fairtrade producer and worker organisations there is also a lack of explicit gender policies and implementation strategies (Hanson et al, 2012; Smith, 2015) which means that the structural barriers to women’s membership and participation remain unchallenged. Oya et al (2017) refer to a significant body of research that identifies how women are often underrepresented in decision-making in relation to the use of the Fairtrade Premium. This often results in projects being designed that are more beneficial to men than to women (Stenn, 2015; Ellery, 2010; Fairtrade, 2015; Said-Allsopp and Tallontire, 2014; Stathers and Gathuthi, 2013).

Sally Smith (2015) discusses representation in terms of women’s contribution to Fairtrade production. She explains how women often perform more labour-intensive tasks (e.g. weeding, harvesting and post-harvest processing) which, although they are critical to the quality of the final product, do not often get sufficiently recognised or rewarded. In contrast, men take goods

to market and therefore have more power over the earnings and the distribution of other benefits. In this kind of situation, Fairtrade could potentially reinforce pre-existing gender inequalities, rather than challenge them (p.410).

Examples of Fairtrade best practices to address this issue

Fairtrade Standards

Section 2.2.6 of the Hired Labour Standards states ‘empowerment of women’ to cover adequate training, capacity building, guidance, encouragement and assistance to women as necessary by Year 3. Fairtrade tries to address the issue of representation in the community by stipulating that the elections of the Fairtrade Premium Committee and the trade union/worker representatives should have ‘fair gender representation’ in the former and democratic elections in the latter. However, some women feel that the discussions are just for ‘audit purposes’ (Melese, 2014, p.21), discouraging them from voicing their concerns. Women’s lack of time to juggle representational tasks and day-to-day work has been addressed by Fairtrade in Section 1.2.3 where the company ‘allocates time during regular working hours...for the successful implementation of Fairtrade matters’. The most recent Fairtrade SPO Standard review has highlighted the need for more proactive approaches to gender equality at organisation level.

The Fairtrade Premium

PRODECOOP coffee cooperative, Nicaragua

PRODECOOP is a particularly pro-active cooperative in terms of the promotion of women’s empowerment. Their gender policy identifies a range of practical and strategic actions that can contribute to the advancement of gender equality. Some of these include gender sensitization in communities, health and education services and preventative action against gender-based violence, on top of income generating activities and access to credit for women (Jones, Smith & Wills, 2011).

Their gender policy dedicates a percentage of the Fairtrade Premium towards rolling out their gender program, training for field staff on working with women farmers and maintaining a 40% quota for women in leadership positions. The cooperative also encourages an equal distribution of work and resources between men and women and raises awareness throughout the community around women’s rights. One of their main objectives as a cooperative is ‘to contribute to improvements in gender equality and equity and the socio-economic position of women’. The following quote from a member of PRODECOOP sums up the effect of such initiatives on women’s empowerment:

“To be able to recognise that I am an important woman, with rights and that I can decide for myself in my life. Now I control the work in my home and it’s me who decides whether to get involved in the projects that the cooperative offers. Also, now that I’m organized I feel safer and more confident, I have been able to see the place that [the cooperative] gives to women” (cited by Jones, Smith & Wills, 2011, p.32).

However, PRODECOOP is an exceptionally strong performer, as in terms of Fairtrade Premium across all SPOs and hired labour organisations, a very low percentage of Premium is invested

on average in projects and programmes focusing *exclusively* on women's needs (Fairtrade International, 2015). There is definitely room for improvement in this area, using PRODECOOP as a best practice example.

The Women's School of Leadership in Cote d'Ivoire

The Women's School of Leadership was launched 1 year ago in Cote d'Ivoire, delivered in partnership with The Co-op Group, Compass Group UK & Ireland and Fairtrade Africa. As of March 2018, the programme had supported 22 participants to enhance women's economic empowerment and leadership in Fairtrade SPOs. The programme enables women, as well as men, to gain skills and abilities to improve their livelihoods through training in topics such as women's rights, leadership, economy and Fairtrade's gender strategy (Compass UK, 2018).

Women only Producer Organisations (POs)

The Koperasi Kopi Wanita Gayo (KKWG) coffee cooperative is the first all-women coffee cooperative in South East Asia. It was established in 2014 and achieved Fairtrade certification a year later. Women report that being part of this cooperative has 'changed their lives'. Some were previously members of other cooperatives which were dominated by male members. The cultural context of the Islamic community meant that women rarely voiced what they thought at work, feeling reluctant to disagree with their husbands and other men in their households also present at meetings.

Yet Rizkani Ahmad, now the chair of Koperasi Kopi Wanita Gayo (KKWG) cooperative, felt the need to organize women so that their voices would be heard, and their concerns freely expressed. Before becoming members of the cooperative, women knew very little about coffee roasting or how to improve cultivation (only their husbands received this training despite the fact that women worked with them in the coffee gardens). Now the women are developing new skills and have decided to spend their first Fairtrade Premium on cupping training and learning how to increase soil fertility.

In 2015 the cooperative sold 13 MT of coffee on the Fairtrade market, allowing women to make their own financial and business decisions. The field staff say they are pleased with these figures, believing they compare well with other new cooperatives of a similar size. Members say it is thanks to Fairtrade certification that sales are rising and, with strong branding as a women's cooperative and good connections in the industry, this trend will hopefully continue. As Yuyun Sri Wahyuni, a female cooperative member explains - "I want to prove that we can achieve business success with our will and determination," says. "I want our cooperative to become internationally recognized and perform even better than our husbands' cooperatives".

In a comprehensive review of the Fairtrade literature, Oya et al (2017) highlight how women-only producer organisations (POs) can provide a more protected environment that enhances female participation, as women feel that their interests are better served, in comparison with male-dominated POs (Terstappen, 2010; Bergeron, 2010; Sen, 2009). Research has also identified women-only producer organisations (POs) as a successful way of facilitating female participation in decision-making around the use of the Fairtrade Premium. All female POs can also serve product and price differentiation, by creating 'female-produced' brands that can command a higher price in the certified market (Hanson et al, 2012; TWIN, 2013). A number of other studies have also found that women-only POs can increase female participation in

decision making, shape Fairtrade Premium and other investments to women's needs and also help women's contribution to commodity production to be recognised (Ellery, 2010; Pollack, 2006; Sen, 2009; CESU, 2012; TWIN, 2013; Stenn, 2015).

Gender Committees (GCs)

A recent report by the ODI (2017) explains how Gender Committees established in some flower and tea plantations in Kenya are a particularly powerful means of ensuring women's voice in decision-making over use of the Fairtrade Premium (ODI, 2017, p.39). The Gender Committees were empowered by the companies to deal with cases of sexual harassment that occurred. The 'Wamama Gender' or 'Gender Mamas', were members of these Gender Committees and highly respected by other farm workers. The farms' own 'Welfare Committees', on the other hand, were not effective in voicing women's interests (ODI, 2017, p.39).

Only 4 out of 13 farms covered by the two studies found that women felt that projects funded by the Joint Body (Premium Committee since 2014) specifically met women's needs, such as crèche or childcare facilities. Whereas the Gender Committees were important channels for women workers' voices to be heard in Joint Body decision-making processes. Without specific, all-women Gender Committees to bolster the voices of women, Fairtrade Joint Bodies (Premium Committees) are likely to reflect existing social gender norms' (ODI, 2017, p.39). A comprehensive Ceval report (2012) also highlights how the formation of Gender Committees have brought about positive changes for women, especially in the banana and coffee cases, and describes them as 'important institutions to secure women's rights' (p.71)

Said-Allsopp & Tallontire's (2014) research echoes these findings, pointing out how women need a 'neutral space over which they have ownership independent of men and the management' (p.7). However, it has been difficult to ensure sufficient female participation on the Joint Bodies, as women have been reluctant to stand for election due to cultural norms (as well as a lack of information and education). The authors argue that gender committees are an incredibly important tool in the fight against sexual harassment of women workers, acting as a vehicle for disseminating education and training, as well as sensitizing workers' (p.9).

Farm Managers explained how they had established gender committees to be a voice for women workers and help them to fight against 'women's problems'. Women expressed confidence in the Gender Committees as a forum where they could defend their rights and those of their fellow female workers without being under the control of men. At meetings, Gender Committee members are taught about issues including problem solving, conflict resolution, starting a business, budgeting, and health. After meetings, they talk to their co-workers and teach them what they have learned, thereby sharing knowledge with each other (Said-Allsopp & Tallontire, 2014, p.12). As the authors explain, 'given low levels of educational attainment, training plays a crucial role in fostering empowerment'. It helps workers gain greater levels of self-confidence and knowledge about their rights, as well as practical skills, all of which are crucial in facilitating empowerment (p.13).

A number of Fairtrade producer organisations (POs) have taken active steps to increase the participation of women. Panda flowers, a Fairtrade certified farm on the shore of Lake Naivasha in Kenya, has created a gender committee. In the words of Rosemary Achieng, a supervisor on the farm - "the gender committee is so important because it ensures everyone is

treated equally...that is especially important for the women workers, as they are often not aware of their rights. I organized trainings to equip them with the relevant knowledge. Now they are much stronger than before". She goes on explain that "Fairtrade has changed a lot...women and men now have the same rights. There are regular working hours, fixed leave days, and significantly improved safety regulations".

There are still a number of challenges that Fairtrade faces in terms of increasing women's representation in producer and worker organisations. Blowfield & Dolan (2010) find that time constraints due to their heavy labour burden in the fields and in the home constrain women from participating in meetings and committees in a Kenyan Fairtrade tea cooperative (p. 156). Furthermore, cultural factors (like the assumption that women are poorly-suited for decision-making roles), are a significant barrier to their fuller participation in Fairtrade cooperatives (Fairtrade Foundation, 2015).

In Costa Rica, Luetchford (2008) suggests that men in a Fairtrade coffee cooperative supported a greater role for women for the sole reason of pleasing an NGO and Nelson & Pound (2009) warn that higher numbers of women involved in producer group decision making does not necessarily mean full, meaningful participation (cited by Sexsmith, 2017, p.30). Smith (2013) also reminds us that increases in women's participation and changes in gender relations, however positive, are often the result of 'outside intervention' by auditors, importers, and NGOs and therefore might not reflect lasting structural change in gender relations.

5. Gendered occupational health & safety concerns

Like most labour standard systems, Fairtrade regulations focus largely on occupational health and safety. While these rules identify key hazards and encourage best practices, they still work largely within accepted industry parameters and some forms of Fairtrade production, for instance chemical intensive flower production, remain hazardous if health and safety is not robustly enforced (Raynolds, 2014). Women workers are considered more vulnerable to these risks than men, especially those that are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Examples of Fairtrade best practices to address this issue

Fairtrade Standards

The Fairtrade Standards (HLS) prohibit the use of pregnancy testing, the firing of pregnant workers and sexual harassment. Pregnant women are also prohibited from carrying out dangerous work. According to managers and workers, these practices remain widespread, especially in the flower industry.

Research appears to suggest significant positive movement over time. Dolan et al's (2003) research highlights some specific issues raised by women workers on flower plantations in Kenya. In the focus group discussions (FGDs) that they carried out, women raised concerns related to pregnancy, exposure to chemicals and long periods of bending and standing. 50% of respondents indicated that the provision of protective equipment is inadequate for their needs. Not all workers receive protective equipment and even if they do, it is not replaced very often.

Furthermore, Dolan et al (2003) explain how graders on the farms raised the issue of working with either worn or inadequate gloves to protect their hands from thorns. In response, several employers argued that it is difficult to convince workers to abide by health and safety regulations, especially the wearing of protective clothing. For example, spray men complain that clothing is too hot or uncomfortable and flower graders elect not to wear gloves as they cannot work as quickly with them on.

Dolan et al (2003) also explain how although workers said that notices regarding re-entry periods were posted, they were not strictly followed and spraying, and harvesting were reported to occur at the same time. Furthermore, sprayers complained that their suits are usually worn out, exposing them to chemicals. They also claimed that although they undergo cholinesterase testing regularly, none of them are transferred to other sections despite the results of the tests. On top of this, workers reported that the mandatory job rotation for the sprayers is not adhered to, resulting in long periods of them being exposed to chemicals. These issues were often more of an issue for less educated workers, who found it difficult to read detailed spraying instructions. This study also voiced concerns by participants on the possible impacts on health from pesticide use.

More recent research on occupational health and safety paints a more positive picture, suggesting significant improvement over time. Raynolds' (2012) work looks specifically at Fairtrade standards on Ecuadorian flower farms. She explains how the standards go substantially beyond and are far more rigorous than Ecuador's environmental laws and industry norms in a number of areas. She explains how Fairtrade regulations include minimum requirements relating to medical exams and conditions, safety training, workplace dangers, tools and uniforms and protection from pesticide contamination. They also address workplace concerns and specific hazards associated with intensive agrochemical use.

Raynolds (2012) explains how workers handling agrochemicals are required to be tested every 3 months for contamination and must receive tools and uniforms. Those involved in pesticide spraying must also be given protective gear. FLO also requires extensive worker training. In one year, workers received 26 hours of health & safety instruction, 6 hours of environmental training and 9 hours of medical education about pesticides and other hazards. Women workers also received training on pregnancy risks. Employees handling agrochemicals had 10 more training hours on application procedures, precautions, and greenhouse re-entry rules. Worker representatives on all the studied farms identified FLO-mandated trainings as a key factor distinguishing Fairtrade certified companies from other floral enterprises (Raynolds, 2012). Klier & Posinger (2012) were similarly positive in their review of Fairtrade certified farms in Kenya, concluding that conditions were significantly better than on non-Fairtrade farms, particularly in the area of workers' health and safety.

Rijn et al (2016), looking specifically at the banana industry, report that on Fairtrade plantations in Ghana, women feel more listened to by their supervisors and have experienced more improvement in the use of health and safety measures. At the same time however, these women are less aware of grievance policies.

6. Sexual harassment

Gender related Fairtrade Standards stress that members of Fairtrade organisations must not engage in, support, or tolerate behaviour that is sexually intimidating, abusive or exploitative. Despite this, research has found incidences of Fairtrade certified plantations which do not show better performance than non-certified plantations in terms of sexual harassment. (CESU, 2012, p.28; Cramer et al, 2014). The literature highlights the significant challenge that Fairtrade faces in offsetting the social context, researchers note that harassment is sometimes described as “almost normal” and not something to be reported. As Dr Tsitsi Choruma, Fairtrade’s Gender Advisor has pointed out – ‘there is a lack of awareness on the definition of sexual harassment and this low awareness levels have left workers predisposed to harassment’.

Rijn et al (2016), with reference to the Fairtrade banana industry, report that the percentage of workers that are aware of a policy against sexual harassment varies a lot across the three countries under study. While in Ghana it is quite high at 93%, in Colombia it is 71% and in the Dominican Republic it is just 31% (although the high turnover rate and number of migrant workers might explain this difference in the latter case). 3% of Fairtrade certified workers in the Dominican Republic, 13% in Colombia and 29% of workers in Ghana² claimed to have heard of cases of physical or sexual abuse, which indicates that this is a high risk issue.

Examples of Fairtrade best practices to address this issue

Fairtrade Standards

In Section 3.1.2 of the HLS, Fairtrade (2017) introduced training against sexual harassment, which has been applicable from 1 January 2018 onwards, requiring companies to establish and implement a policy that clearly prohibits sexual harassment and use it to train both workers and management.

A recent report by Women Working Worldwide (2014) which summarises research carried out across 20 Kenyan horticultural farms, identified two Fairtrade certified farms in Kenya as having particularly successful procedures in place for addressing sexual harassment. These farms met and exceeded the legal requirements set forth in the 2007 Employment Act. Their company policies include a comprehensive definition of the behaviour that constitutes sexual harassment, treat it as gross misconduct, set out the procedures to bring a case to the attention of the employers and lay out in detail how incidents of sexual harassment should be investigated and resolved.

In terms of policy dissemination, the farms also use ‘multiple channels’ to inform staff about sexual harassment and the sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. These include: training on and distribution of a copy of the company’s sexual harassment policy and a specific clause on SH which is included in the employment contract, reminding staff that sexual harassment constitutes gross misconduct and can lead to dismissal’ (WWW, 2014, p.7). These are all examples of best practices for addressing the issue of sexual harassment that could be

² It is likely that the significantly higher Ghana figure is linked to two recent cases of alleged abuse by foremen at one of the plantations studied. The researchers report that the alleged perpetrators had their employment terminated.

implemented on a wider scale in the horticulture industry as well as other Fairtrade commodities.

However, the WWW (2014) study found that there is still scope for improvement. The sexual harassment policy on one of the farms was formulated without consulting workers representatives. Furthermore, with relation to the effectiveness of measures employed to deal with allegations of sexual harassment, those responsible for receiving and investigating allegations were found not to be very well informed or resourced (p.8). Following this report Fairtrade Africa implemented action with Kenyan flower farm staff and workers to improve performance in this area.

7. Entrenched ideas around what constitutes women's work

Although they vary across different parts of the world, historical patterns have long defined women's access to property rights and their role in decision making with regards to community affairs. These rigid gender roles and relations also determine the types of work that women can perform. While men and women might both cultivate crops and share the burden of the harvest, some jobs are considered a male-only domain. Oya et al (2017) point out how although women often contribute a significant amount of work to certified production, their input is less visible and less valued than men's. The authors attribute this to a gendered division of labour which results in men getting more involved in off-farm certification-related activities like meetings, technical training, planning and loans while women are responsible for less visible tasks like plant care and post-harvest processing.

Rijn et al (2016) highlight how on Fairtrade banana plantations, there are still very few women in supervisory roles. One of the wage workers suggested that this might be because 'women might not be able to control wage workers on the field'. However, another female worker pointed out that leadership positions were offered to women, but they declined them. Illiteracy and poor levels of education, rather than gender, were thought to be reasons why women were not often found in leadership roles. This highlights the importance of capacity building and educating women if entrenched ideas around what constitutes women's work are to be challenged.

Examples of Fairtrade best practices to address this issue

Capacity building by Fairtrade Australia New Zealand (ANZ)

Following a Fairtrade ANZ workshop focusing on coffee quality training, participant Ronah Peve (who works as an extension officer with the Fairtrade certified Highland Organic Agriculture Cooperative in Papua New Guinea) explains how it helped her become a role model in her community and to challenge a long-accepted gender norm. She explains how "in Papua New Guinea, coffee is something that men talk about, and my job as an extension officer is a man's job. But I have been trying my best and now women in the village come to me for advice about caring for their coffee trees. They see it is not only a man's job."

8. Unpaid care work ('overburdening women')

Fairtrade certification, particularly when combined with organic, can increase the workload of both male and female producers, albeit in different ways (Jaffee, 2014; Lyon et al, 2010; Sen, 2009; Stenn, 2015; Smith, 2015). For example, restrictions on pesticide use lead to more time required for weeding. Women are more likely to be more negatively affected due to their already heavy workload, as they are still expected to carry out unpaid care work in the home and wider community (Bacon, 2005 Lyon et al, 2010; Moberg, 2008), leading to a 'double burden of work' (Hanson et al, 2012). Some research also suggests that this higher burden is not recompensed for by a distribution of the benefits of Fairtrade in women's favour (Lyon et al, 2010 & Sen, 2014 cited by Oya et al, 2017).

Sexsmith (2017) provides a summary of the Fairtrade research that touches upon the issue of women's domestic labour. She refers to Luetchford's (2008) study on Fairtrade coffee in Costa Rica, which explains how producing for Fairtrade markets increases women's labour burden as they are commonly responsible for quality-enhancing tasks such as washing, drying and selection. However, they are managed by men who refer to them merely as 'helpers'. Similarly, Kasente (2012) notes how in a Fairtrade- and organic-certified coffee-producing household in Uganda, women were frustrated about an increase in their workload in order to meet standards' requirements. This prohibited them from participating in commercialization activities. A woman participating in the research explained how women and children perform this unpaid labour for their husbands 'for fear of domestic violence' (Kasente, 2012, p. 118).

Examples of Fairtrade best practices to address this issue

Fairtrade Standards

Standard 2.2.9 is to be implemented by year 6 of certification – *'Your company must provide support for crèche facilities for your workers' children either inside or outside your premises'*. Women's lack of time to juggle representational tasks and day-to-day work linked to Fairtrade requirements has also been addressed by Fairtrade International in Section 1.2.3 where the company "allocates time during regular working hours ... for the successful implementation of Fairtrade matters".

Fairtrade Premium

The Premium received by Fairtrade producers has provided a significant source of development funding, which has in some cases been dedicated to projects that ease the difficulties and time required for care work. The Fairtrade Foundation's (2015) 'Equal Harvest' report notes that both those projects targeted at meeting women's needs (e.g. acquiring corn processing equipment for a community), and those that help them more indirectly (e.g. a village electrification project that made maize processing facilities easier to access), lessen the time burden of their care work and make it possible for women to become more active in income-generating and producer cooperative activities. Smith (2015) also cites the example of an Indian tea plantation (discussed by Ceval, 2012) where the Fairtrade Premium has funded gas cylinders and pressure cookers for workers' homes which has resulted in men spending less time collecting firewood and women less time cooking.

Growing Women in Coffee Project

As part of this initiative (discussed in detail above), a consultation was carried out with women to find out what additional support they would like. Women identified a need to reduce the use of wood for household jobs like cooking and cleaning as they were spending up to 20 hours a week collecting wood and lighting fires for their stoves (both examples of unpaid labour). As a result of this, biogas units were provided, and 300 women now have them installed and are saving at least 4 hours per day that used to be taken up by collecting firewood and cooking. They can devote this time to other economic activities. This has also helped to reduce deforestation in the area and health complications e.g. respiratory, lower back and eye diseases caused by excessive amounts of smoke in homes.

Nevado Roses, Ecuador

Research carried out by Ellis (2013) into Nevado Roses discusses a number of benefits to women of working in the Fairtrade flower industry, but also emphasises the issue of unpaid care work and the fact that women are overwhelmed by having to carry out productive and reproductive work simultaneously.

Working at Nevado Roses facilitates women's ability to support themselves and their children, something that they are very proud of. Their jobs provide a steady income with which women can improve their homes, ensure their children are properly nourished, and invest in the future by sending their children to school. Nevado Roses offers daycare for female workers' children, low interest loans, and scholarships focused on improving the quality of life of employees. Women workers appreciated these benefits and described their work as "lovely" and "much better" than other jobs they had had, but their constant labor to manage challenges arising from balancing their roles at work and at home hints at opportunities for improving the structure of life and labor in this context, and in others (p.108).

As Ellis (2013) explains, 'Nevado Roses, and Fairtrade are making important steps to promote women's ability to enjoy employment but fall short of truly centring women's needs'. Therefore, while it is 'important to learn from their successes it is also critical to remain aware of their failures and limits, and how they can best be corrected...Nevado is just one case of how paradigms promoting social sustainability such as Fairtrade or development projects must centre women, not just add them into pre-established masculine moulds of life and labour' (p.128).

Research has shown that extra work for Fairtrade markets can often be an added 'burden' for women. For example, in a Ugandan cooperative, women resorted to selling unprocessed coffee without their husbands' permission to obtain money for domestic needs, when faced with additional duties in coffee production that detracted from other income-generating activities (Kasente, 2012). This 'earned them the undignified description of being thieves of their own produce' (Kasente, 2012, pp. 119). Furthermore, Fairtrade standards prohibitions on child employment can sometimes have the unintended consequence of exacerbating women's care work duties, when alternative childcare arrangements aren't available.

Conclusions and future learning, priorities for further research

As well as identifying areas of good impact, there are many areas where researchers have identified challenges for Fairtrade. Helpfully, the evidence base also shows clear areas where intervention is likely to deliver positive change. This section looks at future priorities.

There are a number of examples in this review of where Fairtrade is actively promoting women's economic empowerment and addressing some of the barriers that women face. Fairtrade is tackling the issue of insufficient household income through the economic impact of Fairtrade Premium initiatives, improved prices, and increasingly demanding standards, where sales levels are reasonable or high. There are also a number of initiatives in place, 'Growing Women in Coffee' being a prime example, to enhance women's representation in producer and worker organisations and increase their access to assets and productive resources. However, Fairtrade could be taking a more proactive approach, and do so more systematically, to address job insecurity amongst female workers, reaching a living wage and providing more support to women who are struggling to cope with their responsibility for unpaid care work alongside paid employment.

Fairtrade views a Living Wage as a benchmark for a decent standard of living and a key tool to ensuring personal autonomy for men and women. Based on the Fairtrade Workers' Rights Strategy, Fairtrade is currently developing Living Wage benchmarks for the regions where they operate. Fairtrade's ambition is to promote multi-stakeholder dialogue regarding the difference between wage benchmarks and current wages, to drive wage levels upward in places where minimum wages are below what workers require for a decent standard of living.

A recent ODI report (2017) highlights how 'gender issues are addressed within the Fairtrade Standards mainly in terms of non-discrimination rather than pro-active promotion of benefits for women' (p.39). This is perhaps unsurprising given the fact that Fairtrade's adoption at a strategic level of a systematic and integrated approach to promoting gender equality, including the empowerment of women and girls was not fully in place until 2016. The Gender Strategy (2016-2020) sets a clear direction and approach for Fairtrade's future work on gender, including more programmatic work specifically targeted at women. As Smith (2015) summarises, a 'context-driven, bottom-up approach is required, with regional networks of Fairtrade producers taking the lead on developing action plans which respond to localized gender contexts, rather than prescribing a universal course of action from the centre' (p.417). The most current Fairtrade SPO (small producer) Standard review is also considering options to promote more proactive approaches to gender equality at organisation level within the outworking of Fairtrade standards.

Fairtrade's Scope & Benefits of Fairtrade report (2015) points out how a lot of the research shows that Fairtrade contributes to increased gender equality when there are targeted initiatives in place aimed at doing so, and where leaders of Fairtrade organisations support and promote gender equality (p.29). Although Fairtrade already has a number of new initiatives in place to promote women's empowerment in the workplace, there is still a lot more work to be done.

Smith (2015) also highlights the importance of Fairtrade initiatives aiming to promote women's empowerment addressing women's strategic needs (challenging the structural basis of women's subordinate position in society) as well as practical needs (the immediate, concrete needs of individual women) (p.407).

Women are often still absent from decision-making around the use of the Fairtrade Premium – leading to projects that benefit men more than women. Research has uncovered that this is often due to traditional gender patterns that restrict female participation in the committees responsible for making these decisions (e.g. Stenn, 2015; Ellery, 2010; Fairtrade, 2015; Said-Allsopp & Tallontire, 2014; Stathers & Gathuthi, 2013).

Weak female participation in decision-making processes can also be attributed to women's lack of specific knowledge and skills (Terstappen, 2010) and their low self-confidence, which often discourages women from speaking out about their experiences or attending trainings and meetings (TWIN, 2013; Stenn, 2015). Many producer and worker organisations still lack explicit gender equity programmes or strategies (Hanson et al, 2012). This is problematic as improving women's economic empowerment in the context of working conditions requires extensive, carefully planned and context-specific interventions (LSE report, p.4).

Women are not a homogeneous category, meaning that any targeted initiatives must account for an intersectional consideration of inequalities (e.g. race, caste and class) which can influence how interventions affect the level of economic empowerment women experience (Hunt & Binat Sarwar, 2017). Sally Smith (2015) also picks up on this, explaining how it is not possible to generalize about 'women in fair trade'. There will be marked differences in their experiences based not just on geographical location but also on women's unique circumstances (age, marital status, education, wealth etc.).

'Decent work' is difficult to evaluate, particularly in terms of issues related to wage labourers hired by small producers on a permanent or part-time basis. As the ODI (2017) report explains, the definition of a small producer limits the category to those that depend primarily on family labour. However, a number of studies have questioned whether, in practice, this has led to large numbers of 'invisible' workers on smaller Fairtrade certified farms, whose working conditions are therefore not subject to the application and verification of 'hired labour situation' standards (p.30). Women are likely to make up a large proportion of these 'invisible' workers. Oya et al (2017) also pick up on this point in their systematic review and explain how a lot of research advocates for greater attention to be paid to the issue of employees of certified smallholder farmers not being directly targeted by labour standards. (Oya et al, 2017; Cramer et al, 2014; Shreck, 2000; Trauger, 2014; Heller, 2010). The review of the Small Producer Organisation standards that is taking place at the time of writing is looking at how Fairtrade certification can better address this issue.

The ODI report (2017) also notes that although there is evidence of Fairtrade Standards having improved the voice and role of women within POs and hired labour situations, sometimes these improvements 'may be formalistic in nature' and that 'such requirements may struggle to impact on actual gender norms and power relationships'. It is also often the case that existing gender norms in the different communities/cultures in which Fairtrade operates are particularly strong which will limit any impact on women's empowerment and gender equality

that Fairtrade can have (p.39). The fact that women are often not landowners (for example, because land title is held in the male householder's name only) is deeply problematic as research has identified land tenure as being crucial in gaining access to the benefits of Fairtrade, both in terms of income and decision-making power within cooperatives and families.

Whilst a huge number of internal and external reports and academic investigations have been carried out into Fairtrade's impacts on smallholder farmers, a limited amount of research has been done on hired labour settings. Nelson & Pound's (2009) study – 'The Last Ten Years: A Comprehensive Review of the Literature on the Impact of Fairtrade' - reviews over 80 studies and reports about Fairtrade, from which they documented evidence of impact in 23 reports. However, they highlight that Fairtrade impacts in hired labour settings constitute a significant 'gap in the evidence'. Since 2009, some further work on hired labour settings has been carried out but there is still a limited evidence base. This was pointed out by an ODI (2017) report from last year which notes that 'impacts of certification on employment conditions specifically in hired labour situations are under-researched' (p.33). There is a clear need for further research in this area, especially from a gender perspective.

Sally Smith (2010) gives a number of recommendations in order to strengthen gender perspectives in Fairtrade: develop gender-specific criteria in Fairtrade Producer Standards for SPOs and Hired Labour (going beyond non-discrimination clauses to promote gender equity more directly); provide training and educational materials on gender to all FLO staff, especially inspectors and Liaison Officers, as well as SPOs and worker organisations; require small producer and worker organisations to undertake a full gender analysis, including assessing the role of women in small scale farming and on plantations, and the development of strategies to strengthen their position (with support from FLO & partners where necessary); and include a breakdown of members by gender in SPO inspection reports, as well as for hired labour (p.149).

However, as a Ceval report (2012) points out - 'there is no single best way to improve gender equality in all sectors' (p.34). It also notes how important it is for any initiative promoting women's empowerment to not only address women's needs, but also those of male workers and farmers. This would help to ensure that men are encouraged to change their understanding of women's roles in order to bring about positive change towards gender equality.

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a comparative analysis

