

Case Study

Women's Employment and Economic Empowerment on Fairtrade Flower Farms in East Africa

Fairtrade Foundation | December 2018



Brief Note on Methodology

The case study relies both on secondary and primary data collection. A literature review was conducted, which drew particularly on research conducted by LSE in 2018¹. During October 2018, Fairtrade Foundation and Fairtrade Africa met with four flower farms in the Naivasha region of Kenya. Interviews were held with farm management, Fairtrade Premium Committees and Gender committees at each of the farms. In total, 42 women and 38 men were interviewed over a period of two days. The names of the farms and participants are anonymised in this report.

A. Overview of Fairtrade

1. Please give a brief overview of your company. Size, type, reach.

[Fairtrade Foundation](#) is a registered UK charity and a member of [Fairtrade International](#), which brings together 27 national Fairtrade organisations and three continental Producer Networks (in Africa, Latin America and Asia). Fairtrade comprises of a network of around 1,411 Fairtrade

¹ LSE Consultancy Report, *Empowering Women in the Cut Flower Industry*, for internal use, available on request

certified producer organisation across 73 countries representing around 1,66 million farmers and workers. Our vision is for a fairer world in which every producer is able to earn a decent and dignified livelihood through their work, and our mission is to connect disadvantaged producers and consumers, promote fairer trading conditions and empower producers to combat poverty, strengthen their position and take more control over their lives. Fairtrade Foundation works with over 400 companies who trade in Fairtrade products and with over 1.66 million Fairtrade certified producers in 73 countries.

The Fairtrade Foundation's key areas of work are:

- We partner with businesses to certify their supply chains according to Fairtrade's independent, producer/worker focused standards, and to enable increased investment in producer and worker led development plans. This includes licensing the use of the FAIRTRADE Mark on products.
- We grow demand for Fairtrade products by connecting producers and workers with retailers and branded businesses in the UK and helping to strengthen supply chain relationships that are fairer and more equitable.
- We work with commercial and donor partners to develop programmes and services that support producers and workers to achieve their development goals.
- We campaign to raise awareness of the need for Fairtrade amongst the public and with policy makers, supporting the grassroots Fairtrade movement to call for fairer trade.

2. Please give a brief overview of examples of good practice at different levels internally where company is addressing gender equality such as HR, policies, procurement, CSR, Board and buyers.

In addition to the work of Fairtrade International outlined in this case study, the Fairtrade Foundation has specific equality and diversity internal HR policies for all staff. This also includes a gender balanced recruitment panel for all board appointments. Currently the Board is 50% female, the Vice Chair is female and two of the four Board sub-committee chairs are women.

3. Are you signed up to any external initiatives and/or codes ETI, Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, UN WEPs or SDGs? If so when and why?

Fairtrade International are full members of [ISEAL](#) and NGO members of [ETI](#).

4. Is there a gender dimension in your company supplier agreements/codes? Please attach or give brief overview.

Fairtrade International has a global gender strategy, and many commitments related to gender equality and empowerment are embedded within Fairtrade Standards, which are outlined in this case study.

5. Do you think there are external drivers encouraging the company to be more gender focused? If yes briefly describe what you think these are.

As an INGO we continually strive to ensure our work is inclusive and empowering of all vulnerable and marginalised groups, as such we have a strong focus on promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment within Fairtrade supply chains through improving the standards and implementing specific interventions at farm-level. Gender issues are addressed within the Fairtrade Standards mainly in terms of non-discrimination rather than pro-active promotion of benefits for women. However, this has been raised in a recent standards review for SPOs and there are likely to be changes that promote a more proactive approach to gender equality.

B. Specific Gender Initiative Case Study

1. Name, workplace, industry and area/country that case study is based?

Women's Employment and Economic Empowerment on Fairtrade Flower Farms in East Africa, with a particular focus on farms in the Naivasha region of Kenya.

2. Please give a brief description of the initiative and its key goals^{2 3}

Fairtrade is an alternative approach to conventional trade and is based on a partnership between producers, businesses and consumers. When farmers can sell on Fairtrade terms, it provides them with a better deal and improved terms of trade, enabling them to improve their lives and plan for their future. Fairtrade's vision is a world in which all producers can enjoy secure and sustainable livelihoods, fulfil their potential and decide on their future. Our mission is to connect disadvantaged farmers and workers with consumers, promote fairer trading conditions and empower farmers and workers to combat poverty, strengthen their position and take more control over their lives.

Fairtrade sets social, economic and environmental standards for both companies and the farmers and workers. When a product carries the FAIRTRADE Mark, it means the producers and traders have met Fairtrade Standards. For farmers and workers, the standards include protection of workers' rights and the environment, for companies they include the payment of the Fairtrade Minimum Price for relevant commodities⁴ and an additional Fairtrade Premium that farmers receive for products sold on Fairtrade terms. This money goes into a communal fund for workers and farmers to invest in business or community projects of the community's choice.

² <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/What-is-Fairtrade/What-Fairtrade-does>

³ <https://www.fairtrade.net/about-fairtrade/what-is-fairtrade.html>

⁴ NB: Flowers, the commodity focused on in this case study, does not have a minimum price. The minimum price paid to Fairtrade producers is determined by [the Fairtrade Standards and Pricing Unit](#). It applies to most Fairtrade certified products. This price aims to ensure that producers can cover their average costs of sustainable production. It acts as a safety net for farmers at times when world markets fall below a sustainable level. When the market price is higher than the Fairtrade Minimum Price, the buyer must pay the higher price. Producers and traders can also negotiate higher prices on the basis of quality and other attributes.

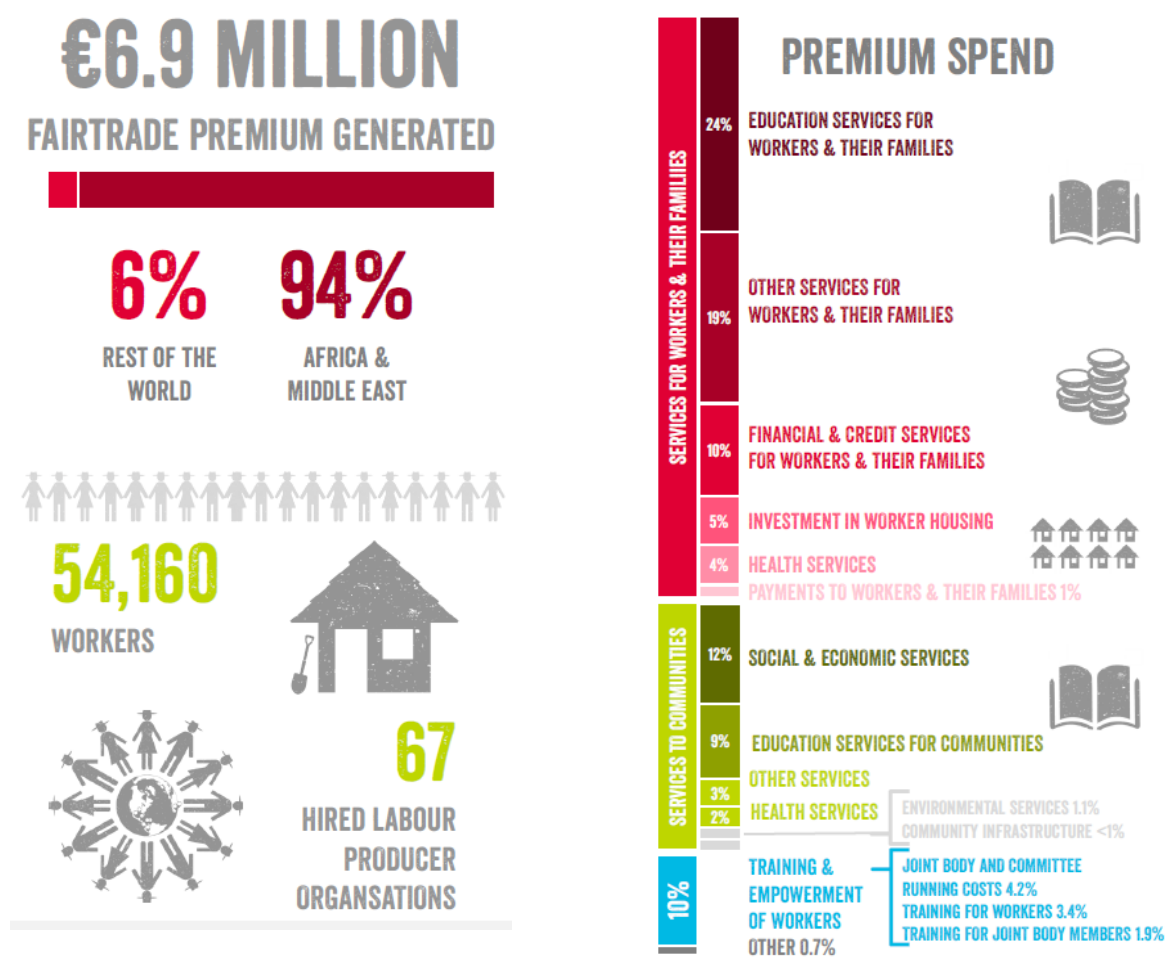
GENDER EQUITY ACROSS SUPPLY CHAINS

a comparative analysis



As part of Fairtrade's new global strategy, we are developing new models of engaging with partners to increase our impact in producer countries. As well as building on and improving Fairtrade's product certification model, we are committed to innovation: this includes developing sourcing strategies, programmes, services and partnerships to enable deeper and wider collaboration with the business and donor community, in pursuit of Fairtrade's aims.

In the flower sector, Fairtrade-certified flower farms are governed by both the general **Fairtrade Standard for Hired Labour** (Fairtrade International, 2014) and the sector-specific **Fairtrade Standard for Flowers and Plants** (Fairtrade International, 2017). The figures below provide a snapshot of Fairtrade's work in the flower sector.



Produced by Fairtrade for illustrative purposes only.

Calculations used – 1 football pitch = 0.82 ha. Average Rose Bouquet = 8 – 12 stems. 12 stems per bouquet used.

2018 release covers 2015-2016 data collected in 2017

3. What key issues in the workplace was the initiative designed to tackle? (Please indicate which human rights are at risk, please include reference to those in the ETI Base Code)^{5 6}

The flower sector has a high proportion (65-75%) of women in the workforce and faces certain gender related issues. In East Africa, women's empowerment is challenged by a wide variety of issues mainly: insufficient wages, long working hours, sexual harassment, job insecurity and the lack of provision of services.

Female workers are predominantly paid **insufficient wages** and are concentrated in lower paying jobs such as harvesting, sorting, grading, tending flowers and cleaning flower beds, while men tend to occupy the managerial and supervisory level. Since they are clustered at the lower ends of value chains, they tend to be exposed to poor working conditions and extremely long hours, added on to female responsibility for domestic labour and child care. Rather than becoming stable work, global outsourcing often means highly unstable and casual work that threatens the job security of women in the industry, and studies have noted female workers being dismissed upon becoming pregnant or seeking to take maternity leave.

Women in the sector also face a lack of **provision of services**, and can be given low allowances, unpaid leave, or even no access to maternity leave at all. Certain provisions under ILO conventions are still not effectively adhered to in the sector, such as pregnant women not being given time to rest and lighter duties or transferred to less risky workplaces. The time given for breastfeeding by farms is often very short, with women reporting being sent home without a day's pay if they returned late.

Women engaged in the workforce also face work-related **health and safety** challenges as a result of repetitive actions, such as arthritis from continually tending flowers, cutting themselves on work equipment, challenges with wearing protective equipment (too hot or limiting ability to work quickly) and exposure to chemicals. Women workers are considered more vulnerable to these risks than men, especially those that are pregnant or breastfeeding.

There is also a **lack of representation** for women in the flower sector, who face a lack of gender parity in power relations with employers. Whilst cultural norms can in any case often mean that women have less political power than men, many women working on farms are single mothers with much at stake if they assert their rights and lose their job as a result.

One of the biggest issues faced by women in the industry is widespread **sexual harassment**, which is a particularly pervasive issue as it is not always recognised when it occurs. Workers and managers may not realise that a right is being violated, as the nature of harassment is poorly understood. Studies have found that many women have never heard the term 'sexual harassment' before or felt that it only covered incidents of rape at the workplace. In addition

⁵ Mlynska, A., Wass, G., Amoging, F. 2015. Thorn among the roses: a cross country analysis of Human Rights issues in Flower Farms in East Africa. Available: <https://ipisresearch.be/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/160524-flowers.pdf>

⁶ Jacobs, S., Brahic, B., Olaiya, M. 2015. Sexual harassment in an east African Agribusiness Supply Chain. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*. Vol 26 (3): 393-410. Available: <https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/468/2/ELR26-3-Jacobs-SH-200615sendtolib.pdf>

to being hard to define or recognise, sexual harassment can also be a sensitive topic, about which workers can feel uncomfortable and ashamed discussing. This can result in a lack of official figures on the prevalence of the issue. Sexual harassment can be exacerbated by the fact that women often work in very isolated conditions, in huge greenhouses where workers are spaced far apart, and no one can hear or see what is happening. Additionally, some farms are located deep in rural areas and are difficult to access, especially where housing is not on site. As a result, the long distances they have to walk to work make them isolated and vulnerable to sexual predators.

Although laws are often enacted to criminalise or prevent sexual harassment, a lack of procedural infrastructure can prevent these measures from being implemented in practice. Police stations may not have a gender desk or female officers, and women reporting harassment may even be further harassed or humiliated by the police themselves. Often, both authorities and victims do not have knowledge of the relevant laws. Lack of representation can further amplify the prevalence of sexual harassment. Research findings highlight gaps in the union representative's knowledge of sexual harassment, with some representatives interviewed feeling that women's own behaviour, such as not dressing modestly, caused harassment. Apart from lack of expertise due to staff turnover, more persistent areas of concern emerged, particularly as not all union leaders saw sexual harassment actions as important.

4. What interventions/strategies does Fairtrade implement to address issues?

4.1 Fairtrade Standards:

Fairtrade had outlined various interventions and strategies to combat issues such as those outlined above, in their **Hired Labour Standard (HLS)**.

Wages

The HLS for flowers and plants, Section 3.2.1 stipulates that 'base wages paid to all workers do not fall below the global poverty line of \$1.90/day set by the World Bank' and that "no benefits have been worsened/reduced after the introduction of this requirement except when formally agreed with a trade union" (Fairtrade International 2017: 11). In Kenya, Fairtrade requires wages in certified companies to be KES 8,523/month (USD 84.63) (Fairtrade International, 2009). However, Anker and Anker (2016) calculate sufficient wages to be KES 13,943/month (USD 138.45) - a 60% wage difference between the stipulated amount and a living wage. Section 3.5.4 Wage Level Increase (Fairtrade International 2014: 28) stipulates that the company should ensure that "real wages are increased annually to continuously close the gap with living wage" where amounts are below the living wage benchmark.

Working Hours

Under the Fairtrade HLS Section 3.5 'Conditions of Employment', there are provisions put in place for working hours and overtime regulations. Section 3.5.9 stipulates that the company has to comply with "applicable national and local legislation and industry standards regarding working hours and overtime regulations" (Fairtrade 2017: 29).

Sexual Harassment

In Section 3.1.2, Fairtrade International (2017: 10) 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. Under the policy, Fairtrade has in place a 'Special Panel' which would be convened to adjudicate over the complaint regarding a Senior Manager or an employee of a higher rank (Fairtrade 2017: 7).

Job Security

An LSE study⁷ reported that job insecurity 'is less likely to be a barrier for women working in Fairtrade-certified farms due to the structure of the global value chain' and 'various studies, have shown that female workers in certified flower plantations have higher rates of permanent employment compared to those in non-certified plantations'. Nonetheless, there are still temporary workers working on Fairtrade-certified farms, the extent to which is monitored by FLOCert.⁸ This is typical of the flower industry, where there are peak periods and short-term orders placed by commercial partners. There are currently no provisions against alleviating job insecurity – only preventing terminations of contract during pregnancy and maternity leave (Fairtrade International, 2017: 10).

Worker Health and Safety

The Fairtrade Standards are strict on the health and safety of workers, particularly in the flower sector where hazardous chemical use is prevalent. As per the Hired Labour Standards, companies are required (among other things) to ensure that every year a representative group of workers in the cultivation, harvesting and finishing sections is medically examined by a doctor; provide medical examinations every 3 months to workers engaged in handling any potentially hazardous material at the employer's expense; train workers (at least annually) on health and safety; and provide all workers with appropriate protective equipment. The HLS are clear that 'Pesticide application in greenhouses is strictly forbidden as long as unprotected workers are inside. Spraying will not take place if unprotected workers in a neighbouring greenhouse or outside are or will be exposed to drifting pesticides.' (Fairtrade International, 2017: 15).

The Fairtrade Standards also prohibit the use of pregnancy testing, the firing of pregnant workers and sexual harassment. Pregnant women are also prohibited from carrying out dangerous work. In 2016, Fairtrade amended the Hazardous Materials List (previously Prohibited Materials List) to include materials that are identified as Highly Hazardous as defined in the Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management adopted by FAO and WHO in 2013, as well as active ingredients considered Highly Hazardous Pesticides by PAN. The revision renamed the Amber List to Yellow and introduced an Orange list that lists materials whose use must be reduced. The scope of the list was also widened, increasing from 182 pesticides on the list (124 red, 54 amber) to 356 (207 red, 39 orange, 110 yellow). Full compliance with the list became a requirement in 2018, having offered two years for farms to work towards this. To best support farms on this, Fairtrade Africa will be trained by professional pesticide consultants in 2019, after which they will train the farms on pesticides.

⁷ LSE Consultancy Report, *Empowering Women in the Cut Flower Industry*, for internal use, available on request

⁸ This information was obtained over email correspondence with Fairtrade Foundation in March 2018. However, the research team was not provided with the ratio of temporary to permanent workers.

Provision of Services

Women's role as primary care givers forms a significant barrier to women's economic empowerment as they have to juggle numerous responsibilities which can be alleviated in part by companies investing in childcare policies. This is addressed in the Fairtrade International HLS Section 2.2.10 (2017: 19) where companies are required to provide support for crèche facilities for workers' children either inside or outside their premises, albeit in Year Six. The provision of services also covers transport, where commuting long distances has been highlighted as a reason for an increased number of women quitting. This is also considered in Section 3.2.5 which asks that companies ensure their workers receive housing or have access to transportation free of charge where housing and infrastructure are not available in sufficient quantity and quality (Fairtrade International 2017: 12).

Representation and Gender Committees

Under Fairtrade International (2017:18) Section 2.2.6, the HLS states 'Empowerment of Women', to cover adequate training, capacity building, guidance, encouragement and assistance to women as necessary by Year 3. Fairtrade seeks to address the issue of representation in the community by stipulating that the elections of the Fairtrade Premium Committee (Section 2.1.10) and the trade union/worker representatives (Section 3.4.6) should have "fair gender representation" (2014: 12) in the former and democratic elections in the latter (pp:24-25).

The role of the gender committee has been a key mechanism via which to tackle gender issues at the Fairtrade farms. A gender committee or representative is required by the Fairtrade Hired Labour Standard, as is the need for a specific grievance policy on sexual harassment (3.5.27).⁹ The Fairtrade Standard also clearly stipulates that the meeting times for the committees must not inconvenience the representatives, so that they can be involved at no detriment to their working or leisure time.

4.2 Beyond Fairtrade Standards: Partnerships

Over and above the Standards, Fairtrade engages with private sector companies, donors, NGOs and other partners to deliver specific interventions on farms to promote women's empowerment in the flower sector. In 2015, [Fairtrade Africa](#) partnered with [Kenya Flower Council](#) (KFC), [Workers' Right Watch](#) (WRW), [Hivos](#) and [Women Working Worldwide](#) (WWW) on 'Women @ Work' campaign. This involved a pilot project with 8 flower farms (6 of which were Fairtrade certified) which led to the formation of an effective sexual harassment policy that could be scaled-up to the entire flower sector in Kenya. This model workplace sexual harassment policy was benchmarked against international and national laws policies.

Under the East Africa Flower Enhancement Programme (launched in 2017), FTA provided training to Fairtrade Gender Committees, on how to deal with cases of sexual harassment and how to run trainings on the farms with workers. Interviews on the farms revealed that gender committees felt the training had left them feeling empowered, and capable of tackling gender issues on the farms.

⁹ Fairtrade Standard for Hired Labour. Version 15.01.2014_v1.5 (p.33) Accessed 18 October 2018 via https://www.fairtrade.net/fileadmin/user_upload/content/2009/standards/documents/generic-standards/HL_EN.pdf

5. Were women involved in designing and developing the initiative? Brief description of how involved and were these women; workers, managers, supervisors, HR and/or CSR staff, etc?

Fairtrade standards are set in accordance with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice on Standard Setting. This process involves wide consultation with multiple stakeholders, including producer networks who represent workers in Fairtrade hired labour organisations. The Fairtrade International Standards Committee, a committee of seven members, three of whom are women, makes decisions about Fairtrade Standards.

6. Were you monitoring the wider impact of your initiative? Do you know the number of dependents (if possible)? How was monitoring done?

The Fairtrade International monitoring, evaluation and learning programme (MEL) is key to understanding the outcomes and impact of Fairtrade and improving our approach. The Fairtrade Theory of Change provides a framework for identifying appropriate indicators for monitoring wider scope and benefits, defines more clearly Fairtrade's intended change, and captures understanding of how Fairtrade inputs contribute to change.¹⁰

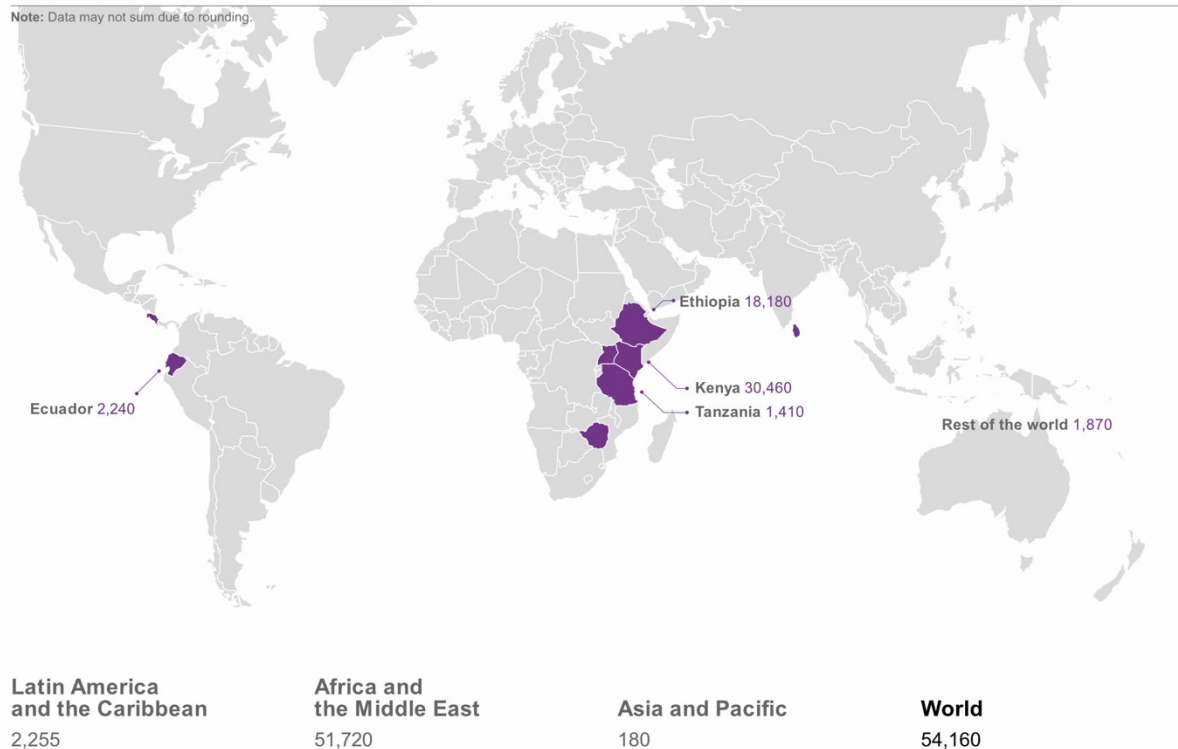
The Fairtrade MEL programme is based on regular monitoring of certified producer organizations around this Theory of Change. This information is collected via a third-party audit process against key indicators, in addition to other survey tools that are implemented by Fairtrade International.

¹⁰ https://www.fairtrade.net/fileadmin/user_upload/content/2009/resources/1612-Fairtrade_Theory_of_Change.pdf

FIGURE 6.7.4

FAIRTRADE FLOWERS: NUMBER OF WORKERS BY COUNTRY 2016

Note: Data may not sum due to rounding.



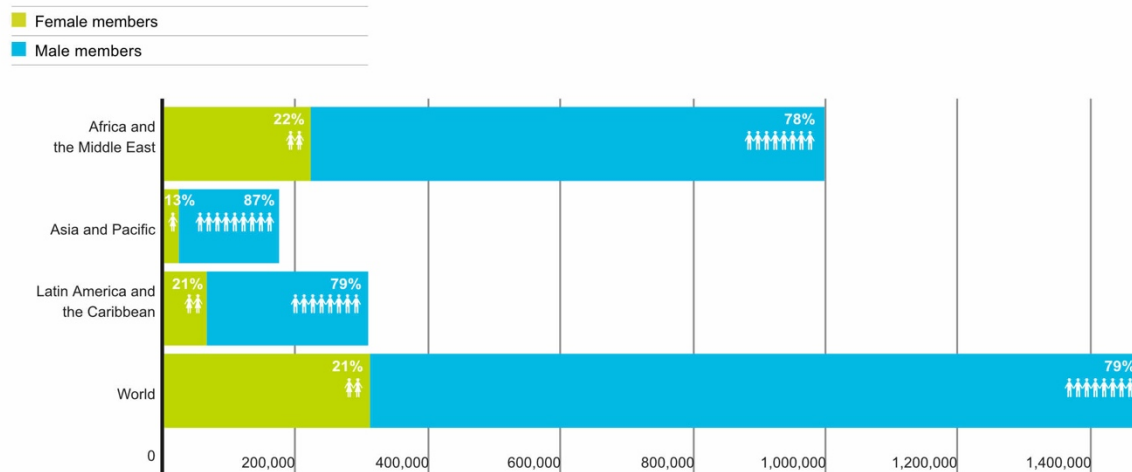
Monitoring data for Fairtrade flowers shows that there are 67 flower producer organisations representing 54,160 workers in 8 countries. During 2016, 829 million flower stems were sold in 15 countries, generating €6.8 million for workers on Fairtrade certified flower farms.

In Kenya, there are 39 hired labour organisations with Fairtrade flowers certification, with 30,460 workers. In 2016, Kenya was in the top four countries selling Fairtrade flowers, with over 438 million stems sold and receiving over €4.5 million in Premium.

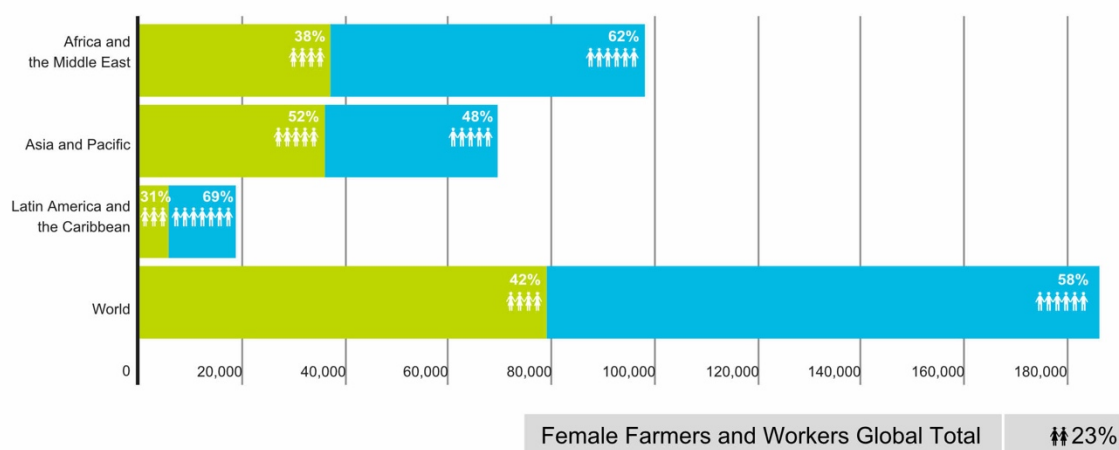
FIGURE 3.12

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN FAIRTRADE 2016

Number of female members compared with number of male members, Small Producer Organizations 2016



Number of female workers compared with number of male workers, Hired Labour Organizations 2016
































Note: Only producer organizations supplying data for both the total number of farmer members or workers and the total number of female farmer member or workers are included in this analysis.

Of Fairtrade's 1.6 million farmers and workers, women account for a total of 388,730. In Fairtrade certified hired labour organizations, 42 percent of all workers are women across all products. In flowers and plants specifically, it is 51%.

FIGURE 3.13

WOMEN AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL FAIRTRADE FARMERS AND WORKERS BY PRODUCT 2016

Farmer members of Small Producer Organizations Product	Percentage of farmers who are women	Workers in Fairtrade certified Hired Labour Organizations Product	Percentage of workers who are women
Oilseeds and oleaginous fruit	 47%	Sports balls	 53%
Dried fruit	 38%	Flowers and plants	 51%
Quinoa	 32%	Oilseeds and oleaginous fruit	 48%
Nuts	 30%	Tea	 43%
Tea	 26%	Vegetables	 43%
Wine grapes	 26%	Fresh fruit	 31%
Cocoa	 23%	Wine grapes	 30%
Cane sugar	 22%	Herbs, herbal teas and spices	 18%
Herbs, herbal teas and spices	 20%	Bananas	 13%
Fresh fruit	 20%	All products	 42%
Rice	 20%		
Vegetables	 19%		
Coffee	 19%		
Bananas	 18%		
Honey	 11%		
Gold	 6%		
Cotton	 6%		
Fruit juices	 5%		
All products	 21%		

Note: Only producer organizations supplying data on both the total number of farmer members or workers and the total number of female farmer members or workers are included in this analysis.

The top three countries with the highest share of women workers in the Fairtrade system are India (37 percent of all workers), Kenya (18 percent) and Ethiopia (14 percent). These data show that there is a real opportunity for Fairtrade to concentrate its support for gender equality by working with plantations.

In addition to this monitoring data, household and community level data collection for a sample of producers has been integrated into the regular monitoring system. This will provide information about how Fairtrade farmers and workers are doing at the household, organizational and community level, and enable better understanding of experience and perceptions, looking at dimensions such as gender equity, and more. To date, this has covered only small producer organisations, but from 2019, this will also cover workers on plantations producing tea, bananas, and flowers.

7. Have you evaluated the initiative? How was this done? If you have an impact assessment or report, please attach.

Fairtrade's 'Theory of Change' includes 'enhanced gender equity and inter-generational sustainability in rural communities' as one of its six targeted impact objectives. Fairtrade's monitoring and evaluation efforts have explored some aspects of impact (in particular, income or improved livelihoods of producers), including some aspects related to gender. Full

evaluations and other research published to date are available on the Fairtrade International website.¹¹

Please see the corresponding literature review, which outlines the independent research on gender that evaluates Fairtrade progress in this area, as well as information in the following question.

8. What has worked well? What impacts have the interventions/strategies had?

5.1 Fairtrade certification

The application of Fairtrade Standards has made important progress on increasing wages, reducing pesticide use and protecting workers' rights. A Ceval study in 2018 found that the Fairtrade requirements on freedom to association and right to union activities has seen improvements in wages for workers on Fairtrade farms.¹² The Fairtrade HLS (3.5.4) also states that where wages are lower than living wage benchmarks, the farm must increase real wages every year to close this gap, as negotiated with the unions and worker representatives. Furthermore, a study commissioned by Fairtrade in 2018 and undertaken by Treeze found that Fairtrade farms use less energy for agricultural production and consume less water than the national average. Biodiversity loss and insecticides/ fungicides use is also considerably lower at Fairtrade farms than conventional farms in Kenya.

During the field visits, all the farms spoke about a time prior to Fairtrade certification where workers had less rights, and supervisors could easily exploit women vulnerable without job security and a lack of awareness of their rights. With the introduction of Fairtrade and the requirements of both the standard and market, as well as the awareness-raising and implementation of rights through Fairtrade Africa trainings, the situation has altered in favour of worker protection and female empowerment. In-depth interviews revealed the following:

Role of Gender Committees

All farms stated that it was the Fairtrade Standards that either lead to the creation, or bolstered the activities, of a gender committee. In each of the farms, a representative was elected to the gender committee for an average of 15-25 workers. The gender committee is made up of both men and women, in order to ensure that issues are addressed by the entire community. Since the farms felt that gender challenges existed in the household and with the children, as well as in work, a gender balance was perceived as helping deal with this reality. Moreover, it was noted that changing gender inequalities is about shifting cultural beliefs, and thus men need to be as much as part of the conversation on female empowerment as women. All farms reported the effectiveness of this gender balance. It enables the workers to own the issues without

¹¹ <https://www.fairtrade.net/impact-research/evaluation-research.html>

¹² Ceval. 2018 'Follow up Study – Assessing the Impact of Fairtrade on Poverty Reduction through Rural Development' Accessed 14 November 2018 via https://www.fairtrade-deutschland.de/fileadmin/DE/01_was_ist_fairtrade/05_wirkung/studien/2018_ceval_studie-fairtrade-und-laendliche-entwicklung_komplett.pdf

having to refer them on (as all parties are represented within the team), in turn ensuring worker agency in combatting gender inequalities. The gender committee reports to HR, so the need for a supportive and capable HR manager was iterated across all the farms.

Moreover, Fairtrade Africa (FTA) has provided invaluable training to the gender committee. All the interviewees stated that this engagement had empowered the group to drive change at farm level. FTA have run trainings on what the gender policy is at the farm, and what constitutes harassment. As a result, one gender committee has in turn been able to run an awareness course with the entire farm on sexual harassment and identifying threats. On other farms, gender representatives were also conducting trainings in the areas where committee members were delegates. The gender committee credits Fairtrade as the driver behind their empowerment. To quote one representative of the committee:

'Before Fairtrade, the gender committee was just there, but it was not empowered. But when we joined Fairtrade, there was a great change. We received trainings and were made aware that the gender committee needs to be active for the market, and we are now greatly empowered. There used to be a lot more sexual harassment and discrimination back then, the committee used to have no authority. But now, with Fairtrade, we have power and get work done. We have become somewhere for people to go.'

Activities that have been reported as successful by the gender committees include:

- **Improved Worker/Management Relations:** Many female workers were finding it difficult to tell male supervisors that they were pregnant and needed to undertake alternative work. As a result, the gender committee became the portal via which newly expecting mothers could inform their workplace. In telling their gender representative, who handled the situation on their behalf, the workers felt comfortable. Moreover, the supervisors also provided positive feedback about the new approach. They reported that the way the situation was dealt with made them respect the gender committee, and this has improved working relations. More widely, gender representatives were available in each working area to deal with any issues women faced at work (such as nursing mothers).
- **Employee Non-Discrimination:** Gender committees asserted that they dealt with all cases the same, regardless of the status or profile of the accused/accuser. Supervisors were handled the same as workers. The only difference arose in the case of a very high-profile manager, where the HR team would need to be involved. It was reported that the need to involve HR was very rare. In cases of sexual harassment, the committee would ask for a statement from all parties separately and confidentially. These statements would then enable the committee to make an informed decision, at times informing HR where necessary for disciplinary action to be taken.
- There was a clear need for a passionate HR manager to make the gender committee effective. Without the support – and threat of discipline – of HR and management, the

committees felt they did not have the necessary back-up to enforce their decisions or have them adhered to.

- **Worker (and vulnerable groups) protection:** The strictly confidential way in which all the farms handled cases reassured workers to come forward with concerns. The committee issued warnings to anyone seen to violate the need for privacy, and if further action was required, would involve HR.
- One farm provided the gender committee with t-shirts, so they were easily identifiable at work when workers needed to talk to their representative.
- Regular trainings for the committees were reported to be critical at all the farms.
- Including the farm security team in the gender committee was found to be effective at one farm where housing was on-site. Security were able to deal with harassment, domestic issues and abuses (including children) outside of working hours with the same promise of confidentiality since they were formally part of the committee. Having a perspective on out-of-hours activities during gender committee meetings provided a full picture of the gender situation for workers, including household challenges. Under the same logic, another farm had appointed a special housing representative, to ensure a good environment at both home and work. Meetings were held with residents, to make clear that any form of violence or violation of rights of either themselves or their children at home could still be raised with the gender committee, and this was reported to be a channel utilised by workers facing troubles outside of work. In cases of domestic violence, both HR and the police would be informed so that the appropriate disciplinary action could be taken. A representative for children and education was also present in the gender committee of the same farm.
- This alludes to the broader need to represent all categories of the worker on the committee, including younger women and special interest groups. At one farm where workers with disabilities were present, a special representative was elected to voice the unique set of gender related issues faced by this group. The same committee had also chosen one representative to become a gender expert, undergoing additional training, so that more nuanced or complex issues could be handle with expertise. This was seen to be especially useful in conflict related issues.

The gender committee was playing the crucial role of changing attitudes, behaviours and roles regarding gender change in the community: the key to unlocking sustained and long-term change. All the farms reported a sharp decline in the number of sexual harassment cases. Handling gender issues, as done effectively by the gender committees, enable women to be more productive at work, in turn removing a barrier to their economic empowerment. If women feel unable to voice their issues or concerns, they are likely to be less productive. Impact was monitored through the number of cases reported to the gender committee. There was no further collection of data to substantiate this claim, beyond gender committee records.

Gender parity

A gender split in the Premium committee, required by the Fairtrade HLS (2.1.10) ensures that the Premium is being spent in the interests of both men and women. Whilst some of the farms had an equal gender split at management level, others felt they had further to go and were looking to introduce affirmative action in response. That said, given the history of gender discrimination and male dominated positions of power, the farms felt they had come a long way to tackling barriers to female promotion, and many of the supervisors were beginning to work their way up and into management. Split of gender at all levels of the farm is recorded and monitored by HR.

Worker Health and Safety

Health and Safety committees, required by the HLS (3.6.3), must have a fair representation of women on the committee to ensure their H&S concerns are reported and dealt with. As a result of these committee meetings, beyond the HLS demanding that pregnant and nursing women could not engage in any potentially hazardous work (3.6.21), women at one farm interviewed were not allowed to handle pesticides in any capacity.

All farms were working to improve health & safety on the farm and reduce pesticide use. One farm was collecting data on the health clinic, through the services of a mobile health care partner, which allowed them to direct interventions in health and safety effectively. They reported that cost on health-related issues had gone down by 48%. The same farm had split the Premium committee into sub-committees, of which there was one for health: they were responsible for a nutritional garden to feed workers, a welfare bus and the health centre.

Gender sensitive grievance policies: providing a foundation

It is important that there are effective policies implemented by HR, including grievance policies. This was recognised by farm management and gender committees. A sexual harassment policy is required (3.1.6) under the HLS. Coupled with empowered gender committees, this had resulted in reduced incidences of complaints. Fairtrade Africa have reviewed the gender dimensions of the grievance policy at one of the farms, whilst another farm had benefited from their attendance in the Hivos Phase I programme which provided clear benchmarks on what must be included in an effective policy (inputted into by FTA). Moreover, a nationwide policy on gender was released in Kenya, and adopted by a number of farms. This policy included a comprehensive description and definition of sexual harassment and covered a wide range of topics. This policy had been agreed by FTA, KFC and Workers' Right Watch prior to the publication. All the farms who had adopted this policy felt confident in its thoroughness and relevance to their operations. All the gender policies at the farms interviewed were explicit that women should be able to work free of harassment, providing a foundation against which to hold perpetrators to account.

One farm had a company manual which outlined that:

- Women who are breastfeeding leave 1 hour early
- 3 (+ 1) months maternity leave
- Special transport was arranged for lactating mothers, so that they can leave early
- Special seats for pregnant women
- Segregated changing rooms
- Zero tolerance on sexual harassment
- Detailed grievance procedure
- Free healthy meal every day for all
- A well-equipped clinic for all

Other farms had similar requirements although a free meal at work was not widespread.

Fairtrade Premium enabling women's empowerment

The Fairtrade Premium has contributed to social and economic development on the ground. It has been used to fund the education of the children of the workers at the farms, support medical facilities, provide much-needed access to credit, and has gone towards training and worker empowerment. It has also been used to specifically improve women's employment and economic empowerment on the farms in East Africa in the following ways:

Capacity building: Firstly, the use of the Premium for capacity building had clear benefits. Many of the women working on the flower farms had not received anything beyond a primary education, if that, and most were semi-illiterate. The Premium provided an opportunity to add skills whilst working, undertaking courses in subjects like driving, computers, catering, hairdressing or engineering. Once completed, these courses enable women to apply for promotions at work or new, better paid jobs. One farm reported that all the truck drivers had once been unskilled workers who had taken driving lessons with the Premium and now earned considerably more money. This expanded the scope of career opportunities for women. One interviewee described how she had joined as a general worker and was now a pack-house manager with a degree. Training programmes run in the canteen during lunch hours, via radio broadcasting, were found to have high take up and impact. Courses run in such a manner by one farm included family planning, nutrition and leadership for women.

Moreover, Home Improvement projects run at all the farms enable trained workers to follow up on their newly acquired skills. For example, a worker could undertake a hairdressing course with the Premium, and then take a loan from the Premium, at a much lower interest rate (5.6%) than that offered by Kenyan banks (13%), to buy the hairdressing equipment to earn additional income after work. The same example was given in tailoring. Undertaking capacity building

opened doors that would not otherwise be available, enabling women to advance their economic wellbeing.

Projects for maternal health: Some of the farms interviewed were part of a wider group in the Naivasha region who had pooled their Premium to collectively build the Naivasha's Women's Hospital, the second of its kind in Kenya. In 2015, the county government took over the running of the project, ensuring the longevity of the services provided to women in the area. All the women at the flower farms interviewed were proud of the hospital, and it was reported that there had been a significant decline in maternal deaths since its opening.

HIV/AIDs: Many of the farms were using the Premium to tackle issues around HIV and AIDs. On one farm, Premium was set aside to offer additional care and food for those affected: a budget the other farms aspired to having. All those who suffered from HIV/AIDs were protected by anonymity, but one farm had a special Peer Educators group funded by the Premium to raise awareness and work to bring stigma to an end. As a result of these efforts, those who were affected felt able to open up about their experiences.

Burden of care: Certain Premium activities alleviated the burden on women. One farm had partnered with gas suppliers, so that gas cookers could be refilled, and the cost paid back in three instalments. Another farm had built a community cooker, providing a place for women to cook at a very cheap rate. Almost all of the women on the farms were deemed responsible for providing food at home, and thus these interventions were specifically helpful for women. All the farms offered food stuffs at a subsidised rate and on credit, so that women could always have food for their families regardless of immediate finances. Bursaries and scholarships provided for workers' children with the Premium (and other educational activities, such as paying teacher salaries or donating resources to schools) further alleviated the burden on women to provide for their children. In some Kenyan cultures, it is the responsibility of women to care for the children.

The use of the Premium for a crèche and day care centre was considered a critical means of helping women in work. These facilities enabled women to come to work without anxiety around the safety of their children, in turn bolstering productivity at the work place and thus increasing the possibility of promotion. Women reported that before there was a crèche, the worry of their child's whereabouts prevented them from working at ease and thus at maximum productivity and noted that with the day care centre in place, their working records had improved. Although not directly monitored, this may explain in part the increase in the number of women in higher positions recorded across the farms.

Land: One farm was using the Premium to acquire land on behalf of the employees, who would then pay back the Premium committee over the course

of three years. Land rights are extremely difficult to secure in Kenya for women, and thus this initiative was beneficial for women's economic empowerment.¹³ So far, there were 244 beneficiaries of the scheme.

Exchange Programmes: Exchange programmes with other Fairtrade certified farms were extolled for their beneficial impact. Gender committees found it useful to understand what committees were implementing in other contexts and found there were important learnings that could be applied back at their origin farm. These exchange visits were funded by the Premium where additional costs were incurred.

5.2 Beyond Fairtrade Standards: Partnerships

The farms which have benefited from both the Hivos sexual harassment programme ('Women@Work Campaign) and the Swedish lottery funded FTA/Kenyan Flower Council programme reported the effects to have been very positive.¹⁴ The former project, funded by Hivos, was launched in 2015, in partnership with Women Working Worldwide (WWW), and piloted an approach to sexual harassment with 5 farms in Kenya. The project's main task was to build a model workplace sexual harassment policy, benchmarked against international and national laws policies and inputted to by farm management, trade unions, non-governmental organisation, certification bodies (including FTA) and workers. The project also worked to implement a definition and scope of sexual harassment, ensure sanctions for violation, and suggest measures and necessary structures required to enact the policy. Part of this included sensitising gender committees to monitor compliance with the policy. This project is now entering Phase II, which has a tighter focus on capacity building at the farm, sensitisation with communities, and lobbying the government for change.

Moreover, Fairtrade Africa and the Kenyan Flower Council ran sexual harassment trainings (2016-2018) as funded by the Swedish postcode lottery. All the farms were very positive about this exercise, and interviews confirmed that the trainings had led to notable declines in the number of sexual harassment cases reported. All the farms requested more training from FTA on the topics, beyond the annual training attended in full. These sessions run by FTA had made clear the difference between consent and harassment, and what constituted sexual violence. The farms felt they had made significant progress as a result, but there was more to do, and they requested FTA support on the matter.

¹³ Sophie Mbugua. February 23 2018. 'Despite New Laws, Women in Kenya Still Fight For Land Rights' Accessed 18 October 2018 via <https://www.newsdeeply.com/womensadvancement/articles/2018/02/23/despite-new-laws-women-in-kenya-still-fight-for-land-rights>

¹⁴ For Hivos, see: Hivos. 'Stop Sexual Harassment Project: A Model Sexual Harassment Policy for the Flower Sector in Eastern Africa' Accessed 18 October 2018 via https://hivos.org/assets/2018/06/stop_sexual_harassment_project_0.pdf; for FTA/KFC, see: Fairtrade Africa. 'Let us Talk about Sexual Harassment' Accessed 18 October 2018 via <https://www.fairtradeafrica.net/news/let-us-talk-about-sexual-harassment/>

9. What has not worked well or where can improvement be made?

With regards to the Fairtrade Standards, there are a number of areas where improvements can be made to ensure that they are better suited to address women's economic empowerment, particularly in the flower value chain. The issue of a living wage is of paramount importance to Fairtrade. It has been established that in some sectors the minimum wage is insufficient to cover the needs of a basic living standard, thus, Fairtrade has been investigating the implementation of a **living wage** by working together with stakeholders throughout the supply chain to set a living wage benchmark for sectors. In 2017, this benchmark was agreed and set at KSh17,276 (\$201) per month before taxes and KSh 18,542 (\$216) after tax for flower farms in Kenya.

Although Fairtrade clearly addressed the rate of overtime payments in section 3.5.12, the Standards do not mandate when it should be paid. As inconsistency in overtime wages is an issue facing women workers: this is an area that Fairtrade needs to focus on.

Beyond the Standards, the field visits revealed that women were still facing the following challenges:

Food: The burden of providing food for their children was still problematic for women, and the need for increased food security was reported on the farms. The importance of nutrition, and the feeling that this was currently lacking, was raised in all farms, especially around those suffering from HIV. If tested positive, a woman was often left by her husband with all the children (this was legitimate grounds for divorce) and sometimes the children tested positive too. In these cases, proper nutrition was paramount to staying healthy and fighting the disease, but this required money that was not yet available. Moreover, one farm found that without free lunches for children at the school located on the farm, many young women were lured into unwanted relationships with male workers in their need for food. The farm recognised the importance of providing lunches at school but did not have the resources to offer this.

Medical support: Another issue related to gender that the farms felt they had not adequately tackled was that relating to medical support for both genders, including screenings on prostate, cervical and breast cancers; family planning methods; and gynaecological services. As with food insecurity, a lack of resources was the barrier to implementation, which the farms felt they could tackle with more Fairtrade Premium.

Training: Moreover, there was an uneven split between men and women signing up to capacity building courses. One farm manager explained that they wanted to do more to encourage women to take up certification courses and improve female literacy rates. Furthermore, they wanted to reach additional children through more, and higher, bursaries for education, to lessen the burden on women's salaries to cover this cost, especially for single mothers.

Language barriers: One farm reported a challenge with languages. A mix of local languages spoken by the general workers prevented communication between management and workers, which meant their stories were reported through a third party. This could be an obstacle to them asserting their rights freely and independently.

Children and education: All the farms wished they were doing more training and sessions in the schools, as a formative environment for gender relations. Without more resources, this was not feasible.

Other Areas: Concerns around dress code was a live debate in all the interviews at farm, and an important factor in women's conditions of work. Some men were claiming that women were dressing in a manner that increased the risk of sexual harassment, asserting that certain modes of appearance provoked male action. This was being raised in the gender committee and was a sensitive topic reflective of a wider debate in Kenya. The gender committee felt that it was right to assert uniform was worn at work that was appropriate, and that this would remove this risk in the work place, but that it was difficult to stipulate what to wear on the journey to and from work, where abuse may take place. Other women felt that they had the right to wear any clothes they liked without fear of abuse, referencing the nationwide campaign of 'my dress my choice.'¹⁵ The sexual harassment trainings ran by FTA were geared towards underlining the definition of harassment as unwelcome attention, but such a definition had yet to feed into the debate around appropriate work wear. This highlights the need to treat sexual harassment challenges within their cultural context.

10. Summary of Impact – Agency, Dignity, Reward, Safety, Security

In terms of analysing how well Fairtrade's HLS address the barriers to WEE, Fairtrade is performing well in addressing '**Reward**' (insufficient wages – although more needs to be done to ensure progress towards a Living Wage), '**Dignity**' (provision of services) and '**Safety**' (sexual harassment), although since the HLS provisions dealing with sexual harassment were only implemented in January 2018, the full impact is unknown. Another area where Fairtrade is performing well is '**Agency**' (representation in the community, gender committees), however support to build the capacity of gender committees and farm managers in dealing with issues that arise is still needed. '**Security**' (job insecurity) has not been sufficiently addressed, as there are no provisions against alleviating job insecurity – only preventing terminations of contract during pregnancy and maternity leave. However, this is extremely difficult in the flowers industry where orders are hard to predict, and peak periods are the norm. Whilst Fairtrade cannot alleviate job insecurity itself, the standards recognise all workers as equal: regardless of length of employment.

¹⁵ Dana Regev. 17 November 2014. '#MyDressMyChoice: Kenyans hold rally to support woman beaten for wearing miniskirt' Accessed 18 October 2018 via <https://www.dw.com/en/mydressmychoice-kenyans-hold-rally-to-support-woman-beaten-for-wearing-miniskirt/a-18069645>

11. Has the learning been shared? Where and how has this been shared? With whom?

Fairtrade strives to be a learning organisation, using our Theory of Change as a guiding framework to evaluate and reflect on our work. External research and evaluation on the impact of Fairtrade, including the Standards, enable the global system to assess areas of improvement. This learning is consolidated and shared to inform periodic reviews to Fairtrade Standards, as well as targeted programmatic work across the Fairtrade system. This ensures that future development of Fairtrade interventions builds on our experience. Learning is also shared back with producers via the producer networks.

12. Have the interventions continued? If so, what has the continued impact been? Has the information and learning informed further work to ensure respect for women's rights in the workplace?

While flower plantations continue to be Fairtrade certified, Fairtrade Standards and Fairtrade Premium interventions will continue. This includes the on-going roles of the gender committees and engagement of Fairtrade Africa and other parts of the Fairtrade system. The on-going learning continues to inform the work of Fairtrade Africa and the global work in the Fairtrade system.

C. Next Steps/ Future Work

1. What additional support, if any, would you have liked to have had to help promote gender equality?

N/A

2. What additional strategies have been implemented, and by whom, to both promote respect for women's rights and to mitigate rights violations?

See answers to previous questions

3. As a result of the learning from this initiative what actions would you recommend that companies, unions, NGOs or other actors in the tea, banana and flower sectors take to ensure respect for women's rights in other workplaces?

Fairtrade makes the following recommendations based on the findings from the field, in order to practically address women's empowerment in hired labour supply chains:

- There needs to be a continued multi-stakeholder dialogue and effort to drive wage levels upward in places where wages are below what workers require for a decent standard of living

- **Gender committees are critical, and should be created, trained and empowered:**
 - There should be an equal gender split on the committee, to ensure a holistic approach with all parties represented, including those of special interest and vulnerable groups and out-of-work activities.
 - The gender committee should be easily identifiable (i.e. special uniform) and must be elected on a regular basis and represent a reasonable number of workers.
 - The capacity of the gender committee needs to be built through training on issues such as (conflict resolution, negotiation, grievance mechanisms, sexual harassment, labour law etc.) to ensure that they are able to effectively address farm issues.
 - Exchange programmes between gender committees at other farms is beneficial and should be encouraged, so that best practice and learnings can be shared and applied more broadly.
- The gender committee needs the help of a **supportive Human Resources department**, which in turn set and implement a clear grievance mechanism and gender policy. It may be necessary for a third party with expertise to advise on such a policy and mechanism, as well as to provide training on gender sensitisation.
- **Fairtrade Premium committees must include full representation of the farm**, to ensure the Premium serves the interests of women as well as men. Moreover, **the FPC must be empowered and trained** to effectively implement Premium projects for the benefit of all.
- For genuine change to be driven, it is **critical that the Premium committee is well resourced**. Ultimately, money is required to implement many practical activities that help empower women or alleviate realities associated with exacerbating gender inequalities (such as burden of care, including food, education, childcare and housing) or abuse (such as transport to work). Encouraging the pooling of resources amongst farms, as in the case of the Naivasha Women's Hospital, may maximise impact and widen the scope of beneficiaries in the long-term.
- Beyond material projects, **cultural shifts are necessary for gender relations to be equal**. Awareness training with men and women, on rights and harassment amongst other subjects, must be run. It should be calculated how best to organise these trainings to maximise attendance and impact, for example during lunch hours in the canteen.
- Although **activities and trainings** to benefit female empowerment may be scheduled or available, **it is often necessary to take a pro-active approach to women's engagement with such options**. **Affirmative action or promotions could be required** to encourage participation, and appropriate budget should be allocated for this when funding capacity-building projects. This is vital, as capacity building programmes are necessary to upskill women who are less likely to have received the same education as their male

counterparts, and thus are more likely to face barriers to career progression. Providing women with training opportunities empowers them to advance their career, earnings and ultimately, agency.

- Farms should consider adopting a **gender policy** with clear targets and milestones to reach gender empowerment and parity across all levels within the farm.
- **Medical assistance is required to battle gender-related ill health or other medical needs.** Funds are required for such assistance to be provided, but it may be possible to lobby the government to implement such facilities nearby. Where there is Fairtrade Premium, this can be allocated towards helping in this regard. Health is key to productivity, in turn a catalyst for promotion.
- **Any activities undertaken to practically address women's empowerment in hired labour supply chains must be understanding of the cultural realities and sensitivities that may especially affect women.** For example, understanding how HIV/AIDs may result in a woman becoming a single mother changes the approach to tackling the stigma, and what is required for support. This is also true for the gendered inequalities of land rights. Anticipating language barriers will also be key to effective implementation.
- **Training should be run in schools:** beginning sensitisation at a younger age would prevent future risk.
- **Resources must be allocated for actors like FTA,** who understand the setting and context of the farms and have good relationships with the workers, to run trainings.
- **Data collection should be ongoing,** as current monitoring of impact is largely informal and ad hoc. Data would guide future interventions and allow stakeholders to reflect on what has worked and what could be more effective.
- **A holistic approach is required,** working with men and women and not just women, to drive genuine change around gender relations.

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