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Flowers

Impact of Fairtrade on Flower Workers and Market Access by Flower Farms in East Africa.



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPC	Fairtrade Premium Committee
IGA	Income Generation Activity
KII	Key Informant Interview
KSh	Kenyan shilling
n	Sample
PO	Producer Organisation
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
USh	Uganda shilling

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DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Fairtrade International, Fairtrade Africa or any other stakeholder consulted. All content is also the sole responsibility of the researchers, including any possible errors or omissions.

Executive Summary

Objective and setup of the study

This is a report of an evaluative study on the impact of Fairtrade on flower workers and access to markets by flower farms in East Africa. The study focused on flower origins and regions: namely Naivasha (Kenya), Batu/Ziway (Ethiopia), and Entebbe area (Uganda). The guiding objectives were to generate data/knowledge on the benefits of Fairtrade for flower workers and producers and to indicate where Fairtrade needs to improve to increase impact and ultimately support increased market opportunities for Fairtrade flower producers. The study targeted both Fairtrade certified and non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations (POs) to allow for comparison and gain insights into the counterfactual situation. Field-level consultations began in June and continued in September 2022. Data analysis was on the one hand quantitative, where frequencies and trends were generated. On the other hand, for certain themes and sub-themes qualitative data were also generated, and this data was used to complement the quantitative findings. Of the total workers targeted, 82 percent were from Fairtrade certified farms.

Key insights on worker demographics and education

More than half (60 percent) of the workers interviewed on Fairtrade certified farms were young people¹ which indicates that they are key contributors to flower production in Fairtrade certified producer organisations in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda. However, in Kenya, research findings show that Fairtrade certified producers retained more workers aged over 35 years (56.9 percent in Kenya, 23.4 percent in Uganda and 11 percent in Ethiopia). This suggests that retention rates of workers are higher in Kenya compared to other countries, and they were also higher on Fairtrade certified farms than on non-Fairtrade certified farms. This is corroborated by the finding that more than half the workers had worked in Fairtrade certified producer organisations for more than five years (66.5 percent in Kenya, 42 percent in Ethiopia and 41.2 percent in Uganda). Workers who had been employed in the POs for less than a year were excluded from the study on the basis that they had not had much interaction with Fairtrade, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

More workers had completed college/polytechnic or university levels of education in Fairtrade certified producer organisations. It was noted that workers in Fairtrade certified producer organisations benefitted from educational support which had supported them in their further education. Comparatively, across all POs, there were proportionately more female workers than male workers with lower levels of formal education. Findings show that comparatively more female than male workers were single, separated, divorced, and widowed compared to male workers. This makes them a more vulnerable worker group.

Workers' place of origins

75 percent of all flower workers were not originally from the area in which they worked, which indicates that migratory workers are involved in flower production. 63 percent of the workers had permanently settled in the areas where they work. This indicates that, overall, flower production continues to strongly influence labour migration. As will be discussed later in this report, study findings also show that workers' settlement patterns had a bearing on the choice of investments they made when it came to deciding how to use their Fairtrade Premiums, with migratory workers tending to prefer projects that had a direct and immediate benefit to them or their households. This has had an effect on the impact of Fairtrade Premiums.

¹ A young person in this report means anyone aged 18-35 years of age.

Fairtrade awareness among workers and between farms

94 percent of the workers in Fairtrade certified producer organisations had heard of the term Fairtrade. There is potential for improvement in Ethiopia where it was only 75 percent. Most workers accurately described Fairtrade terminology such as fair trading practices that benefit workers and producers, a system of certification, a source of Premium money, and a market for flowers. 82 percent of the workers on Fairtrade certified farms had heard of the Fairtrade Premium. The study findings also suggest that, while there was possibly close collaboration and interaction between the Fairtrade certified POs, this may not be taking place among the non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations. From the findings, workers in Fairtrade certified producer organisations knew much more about the other Fairtrade certified farms than workers in non-Fairtrade certified POs knew about other non-Fairtrade certified farms. Furthermore, discussions with workers, managers and stakeholders in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda indicated that Fairtrade certified producer organisations were sought after for employment opportunities by workers, including those working with non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations. This was because job seekers perceived Fairtrade certified POs as offering better opportunities, especially due to the Fairtrade Premiums.

Overall, workers stated the following core benefits of Fairtrade compared to non-Fairtrade producer organisations: Fairtrade certified producer organisations paid better and provided better working conditions (32 percent); no discrimination based on gender or ethnicity (19.8 percent); fairness in recruitment and promotion practices (18.2 percent). Union representatives in target countries also noted that, overall, wages were higher in Fairtrade certified POs.

Worker empowerment

On worker empowerment, 94 percent of the workers across all targeted Fairtrade certified producer organisations either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that workers are not discriminated against during recruitment and promotion practices based on gender, ethnicity, age, etc. This was empowering to both male and female workers. As a result, findings from all Fairtrade certified producer organisations show that women are competing for the same positions as men, which had led to a tremendous rise in the number of female workers in leadership positions. In all Fairtrade certified POs visited, women occupied, on average, more than 50 percent of leadership positions (in middle-level management and in workers' committee leadership) and on the various workers' committees. Slightly more workers in Fairtrade certified producer organisations ($n=229$, 16.9 percent, compared to non-Fairtrade certified POs ($n=41$, 14.9 percent) held the view that more female workers had risen to leadership positions.

Furthermore, freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining was widely reported in all Fairtrade certified producer organisations as a strong indicator of workers' empowerment. This was not widely mentioned in non-Fairtrade certified POs. Overall, a majority of workers ($n=383$, 89.5 percent) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "workers on this farm are free to join the workers' union." Management representatives observed that the activity level of unions can differ across farms and countries. This was affirmed in follow-up discussions with union representatives. In Kenya, for example, only 22 percent of workers, eligible to join unions were actually in unions. Furthermore, in both Kenya and Uganda, shop stewards and other union representatives outside the farms described the tendency of management to indirectly discourage workers from joining the unions, through improved benefits or by empowering other workers committees. One key informant, a trade union representative in Kenya, for example, noted:

"We have some employers who are anti-union. They make sure they pay workers just slightly higher than the union-negotiated rate to discourage workers from joining the union. These are some of the

challenges unions face.” Key informant with trade union representative in Kenya.

Further discussions with workers and other stakeholders indicated that the effectiveness of the unions and workers' committees in some of the POs was questioned, with workers in five POs alleging that some committee officials seemed to serve the interests of management more than those of workers. This was echoed by union representatives in Kenya and Uganda who observed that, management representatives in some producer organisations, tend to influence the choice of workers who participate in union related activities without necessarily consulting the unions. Workers in some producer organisations further observed that other workers' committees were more effective in addressing the needs of workers compared to unions. Therefore, workers saw no need to join the unions. This was reported in six producer organisations in Kenya and Uganda.

Interventions by Fairtrade appear to progressively raise the bar in the industry. Fairtrade has played a significant role in training workers on rights and gender issues, including but not limited to women's rights, entrepreneurship, and leadership skills. This was expressed by worker representatives and management who said it gave workers a voice and the confidence to pursue their rights and goals. And it improved how they relate to management, colleagues, workers, and other people in the communities in which they live.

Workers further observed that the training on gender and sexual harassment had broadened their knowledge and they were better able to identify risk factors and avoid potential sexual harassment. This has been complimented by support and the adoption of gender and sexual harassment policies by POs. Male workers similarly reported that they were more knowledgeable about many issues they previously took for granted. While appreciating that gender balance was being emphasised across Fairtrade certified producer organisations, gender-focused programmes were noted to largely focus attention on female workers, yet male workers were also reported to face gender-related vulnerabilities, including but not limited to domestic abuse. Workers, therefore, emphasised the importance of adequately involving male workers in the empowerment interventions.

The Fairtrade Premium appears to both enable empowerment and reduce financial pressure on workers by supporting the education and training of workers and their families and by providing access to capital which enables workers to set up small businesses to generate additional earnings. As a result of the improved access to education, workers' children have both attended and completed their studies. Some have been employed as managers in flower farms and in other professions, such as the health sector and accounting. Tracer studies on such beneficiaries could help to document the impact of the Premiums. Workers in Fairtrade certified POs in Kenya shared two key indicators for female empowerment, which was first, that women work in all departments, including traditionally male-dominated departments (e.g. electrical, carpentry and maintenance). This suggests more equal access to opportunities. Additionally, equal pay was mentioned in all Fairtrade certified producer organisations. To illustrate how women were having an impact in the community, one key informant noted:

“These women working on the flower farms around this area have been the face of change in this community. Many of them are the reason this area is growing because they have small businesses that they run which have increased the economic activity in this area. They have indeed challenged our men and shown them they can do much more.” Community leader in Ethiopia.

Working conditions

From interviews with workers and management, decent working conditions entailed among other things, providing contracts for workers, high health and safety standards, freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, reasonable wages, timely payments, benefits to workers (including gender-specific benefits such as maternity and paternity leave), grievance handling mechanisms, non-discrimination of workers, fair recruitment and promotion practices, open communication channels. This notwithstanding, incidences of favouritism were reported by workers where some might be favoured on the basis of relationships with managers or their ethnicity. Although findings showed this was not widespread, it is nevertheless an issue that cannot be ignored.

By aligning the floor wage with the World Bank's global poverty line of US\$ 1.90 a day as the minimum upon which base wages must be set, an increase in salaries was seen on flower farms, ensuring that workers had more disposable income. This was more pronounced in Uganda and Ethiopia where payments to workers almost doubled following the implementation of the new Fairtrade Flower Standard. However, the gains, especially in Ethiopia, hardly benefitted workers due to surging inflation rates in Ethiopia and Europe. Stakeholders held the view that wages across the industry had improved following the changes adopted by the Fairtrade certified POs. Overall, 69 percent of the workers on Fairtrade certified farms indicated that their farm being Fairtrade certified had led to higher wages on their farms when compared to wages in non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations that they knew. This was affirmed by union representatives in Uganda and Ethiopia.

In all group discussions with workers in Fairtrade certified POs, it was noted that workers benefitted from short training and skills development opportunities funded through the Fairtrade Premium. Following these trainings workers, accessed new job opportunities and others established small businesses which they operated in the evenings after work or through relatives. On average, workers reported that this helped them to earn up to US\$ 5 extra per day.

Shop stewards and trade union representatives in producer organisations in Kenya and Uganda lauded Fairtrade for building the capacity of shop stewards and other union representatives to constructively engage in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) negotiations and processes. The workers also reported improvements in relations between workers and management and reduced incidences of worker unrest in most Fairtrade certified POs. This resulted in improved efficiency and better use of time. This was affirmed by union representatives in Ethiopia and Uganda. However, they also called on management to allow the unions to fully run union activities, including deciding which union officials from the farms should attend different meetings. A union representative in Kenya noted:

“Previously we used to have a lot of tension between the workers, especially the shop stewards and the management on most farms. If you check around, this is no longer common across Fairtrade certified farms. Fairtrade has trained us on many things including negotiation skills, our rights as workers, and labour laws among other things. They have also created forums that have improved our relations with management. We sometimes went for team building with management representatives. This has made us gain confidence even when we are engaging with the management on workers issues.” FGD with worker representatives in Kenya.

The findings indicate that Fairtrade has contributed to more disposable incomes for workers. For example, when workers' children are supported with education bursaries, workers are left with more disposable income which they can channel into investments or other household needs. Community members interviewed across the three countries also observed that where Fairtrade Premiums finance community services, such as water and

health, community members save time and money previously spent on fetching water and travelling and paying for medical care.

“The borehole in the community has contributed to the availability and accessibility of clean, safe water and has greatly reduced the round time. It is also cheaper for the community as the borehole is solar-powered. The community’s health has greatly improved as the water they were consuming before had a lot of fluoride. The community around here now rears livestock because water is available, which previously was not the case.” Community member in Kenya.

Across all producer organisations, including the non-Fairtrade certified ones, most workers report receiving various benefits, including the provision of meals as an in-kind benefit, transport or transport allowances. Other benefits included favourable working hours in line with the relevant International Labour Organization Convention², leave days (such as maternity leave), minimum of one day of sick leave in a week. 90 percent of the workers across all Fairtrade certified POs affirmed that conditions had improved since the farms partnered with Fairtrade and 75 percent reported that working conditions on their farms were better than in non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations they knew. This was especially with respect to the welfare of workers and access to personal protective equipment (PPE).

According to study participants, the most-mentioned changes that Fairtrade had contributed to with regard to working conditions were: improved salaries (16 percent), better occupational safety and health conditions (15 percent), improved workers’ welfare through the Fairtrade Premiums (13 percent), improved relations with the employer and management (13 percent), and opportunities for workers to empower themselves through capacity building in, among others, gender equality and skills training (10 percent). Benefits from Fairtrade and the general improvement in working conditions were a strong attraction, which led to more people wanting to be employed in Fairtrade certified POs.

“We are not close to these other farms to know much, but we have friends who inform us. So, it is believed that benefits obtained here are not provided in these other farms, like transport, housing, and medical care. So, they don’t wish to work elsewhere except here. Many have left those other farms and they are waiting here in the community to gain employment on this farm.” Worker representative in Uganda.

COVID-19 effect

To mitigate the effect of COVID-19, Fairtrade allowed flexibility on the use of Fairtrade Premiums to enable workers to make rapid and exceptional decisions on Premium use without convening a General Assembly of workers, as long as the Fairtrade Premium Committee (FPC) and the company were in agreement. This included a decision to distribute up to 100 percent of Premiums in cash or in-kind up to 31 December 2020. This, and additional exceptional Fairtrade funds, allowed workers to implement several interventions including purchasing food baskets for workers, distributing sanitisers, facemasks, and providing community hand-washing stations. Discussions with management and union representatives in Kenya, however, indicated that producers signed a short-term addendum to the national CBA, which stipulated measures that farms could take to cushion workers. Key among the measures was for workers with pending leave days to proceed on leave, while others with no pending leave were asked to take unpaid leave, which is otherwise not allowed.

² <https://www.ilo.org/global/standards/subjects-covered-by-international-labour-standards/working-time/lang-en/index.htm>

In Uganda, union representatives indicated that the requirement for workers to sleep over on the farms during the lockdown had adverse effects on them, especially mothers who were forced to make alternative arrangements for their young children. Farms were also not adequately prepared for the sudden change in accommodation arrangements for workers. Workers who could not be accommodated in this arrangement were asked to take unpaid leave, following agreements between the POs and the unions. During the sector dialogues, the union had asked the employers to reduce salaries and prevent the possibility of layoffs. In Ethiopia, workers were asked to take paid leave with the government providing funds to subsidise the producer organisations on workers' pay, allowing POs more time to pay the statutory deductions, and waiving some taxes for producer organisations. Overall, the union representatives reported that they were aware of and involved in the decisions made to mitigate the effects of COVID-19.

Environment

Workers reported positive interventions by producers on environmental conservation activities such as tree planting, compliance with the Hazardous Materials Lists, and wastewater management among others. Stakeholders and PO representatives interviewed however observed that the Fairtrade Standards were weak on environmental standards and needed to address in more detail issues such as water management, waste management, and sustainable pest management and control. They further called on Fairtrade to provide technical support to producer organisations on wetlands management interventions and training on composting.

Fairtrade Premiums

According to workers, the Fairtrade Premium stands out as a key highlight in all Fairtrade certified POs, especially in Kenya. This was mainly because of its impact on workers. For example, 88 percent of the workers reported that they have individually benefitted, or that a household member had benefitted from the Fairtrade Premium. They reported that the most popular Premium projects were education bursaries (22.3 percent), followed by home improvement items (16.4 percent) and community projects (16.3 percent). According to management, education bursaries have played a major role in the retention of workers as well as the high demand for jobs in Fairtrade certified producer organisations. This was also affirmed by union representatives in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. Notwithstanding, our findings indicate gaps in workers' understanding of Fairtrade Premium amounts and uses.

Through their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) budgets, non-Fairtrade certified POs were supporting interventions, most of which were similar to those being implemented through Fairtrade Premiums. These include projects aimed at improving working conditions and the welfare of workers. The notable difference was that most Fairtrade Premium-funded projects focused more on benefits to workers, while the CSR projects on non-Fairtrade certified farms focused more on community projects. In light of the finding that non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations managed to implement projects similar to those currently being supported by Fairtrade Premiums, Fairtrade and workers should – through their Fairtrade Premium Committees – have a closer look at what could/should be financed by the farm's CSR budgets and what could be additional projects financed by the Fairtrade Premium.

Fairtrade impact on farm management

According to farm managers, market access is central to any decision by a producer to pursue Fairtrade certification. They further observed that marketing avenues, such as the online Fairtrade International Premium Platform, helped POs to get access to markets. The managers indicated that while Fairtrade certification was expensive to maintain, it brought additional benefits to farm owners and workers, such as the Fairtrade Premium or training opportunities – which made them retain it. On whether workers in any way influence the farm owners to retain their Fairtrade certification, a majority of management representatives (83

percent) said they did. 88 percent also indicated that the partnership between Fairtrade and the Fairtrade certified farms had changed the relationship between management and workers. The sourcing plans signed with traders, which guarantee a level of demand for flowers over a defined period with pre-agreed prices and Premiums were, for example, mentioned as a benefit. These were also noted to have played a strong role in sustaining the Fairtrade certified producers through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Farm managers in Fairtrade certified producer organisations also called for Fairtrade Africa to be better resourced and provide more support to producers on compliance. For example, Fairtrade Africa was asked to engage sector-specific experts on technical, commercial, agronomy, and advocacy fronts to deal with the key issues affecting the industry. The main gaps were in the provision of support for sustainable farming practices, which the Fairtrade Standards strongly encourage, but Fairtrade Africa lacked the expertise to guide their implementation. Furthermore, management representatives called for more contextual interpretations of the Standards with one respondent, for example, indicating how they were cited for non-conformity on the toilet-to-worker ratio, yet the producer had complied with the national legislation. In their view, they should have been subjected to a negotiated compliance approach as long as the inherent risk remained low. Union representatives noted the need for FLOCERT auditors to seek inputs during audits from other union officials, who are not based on the farm, in order to get a more balanced perspective of the issue's workers face.

Overall, all three traders interviewed rated Fairtrade certification positively. They observed that, while other certification systems are largely business-to-business, Fairtrade was the only one that can be presented to consumers, which gives it a distinct marketing advantage over the others. They further noted that, in their opinion, Fairtrade was hardly using its marketing potential. The traders argued that little was being done to show the positive impact of Fairtrade to flower consumers and said that flower traders and consumers would appreciate more impact stories on how the Fairtrade Premiums are used. The traders argued that Fairtrade must make people understand the benefits of the Fairtrade Premiums to workers and their communities.

Based on the study findings several areas where Fairtrade could improve to maintain its leadership in the market have been discussed. The discussions formed the basis for the recommendations put forward in this report.

Recommendations

1. There is a need for wider dissemination of accurate information about the source and usage of the Fairtrade Premium among all workers in light of the inaccuracies noted in describing what the Fairtrade Premium actually is. Furthermore, this information will be more useful to workers if shared in a language all or most understand and using materials and platforms accessible to them.
2. Fairtrade and the Fairtrade Premium Committees should rethink their Premium usage models to avoid taking over or duplicating what POs would ordinarily deliver through their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes. This is based on the finding that non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations are implementing the same projects as FPCs through their CSR programmes.
3. Fairtrade and the Fairtrade Premium Committees need to develop sustainability plans should Premiums reduce or come to an end.
4. Fairtrade has to continue its work to improve wages among flower workers and bring them up to the level of Living Wages in order to ensure that they are able to have a decent standard of living.
5. Worker representatives in unions, other workers' committees and management representatives need to be trained and empowered for worker representation to be

strengthened and to avoid undue influence and interference by management or other parties in trade union activities.

6. To improve triangulation of information collected during audits and to more effectively protect trade union rights, FLOCERT should consider extending the scope of its consultations to union representatives outside the farms. Producer organisations are likely to plan for the audits in advance while shop stewards are likely to measure what they can share with auditors depending on their relationship with farm management.
7. Given the interest within the flower industry around environmental management, POs should be encouraged to further develop their environmental management plans. Where several farms rely on the same water source and individually impact the environment, resulting in possible pollution and depletion of water beds, a strategic environmental impact assessment and management plan that looks at the cumulative impact of all the producers should be initiated by Fairtrade.
8. Given the involvement of young people, women, migrants, and single or divorced persons in flower production, Fairtrade should undertake a targeted assessment of the realities, issues and risks faced by these workers.
9. Based on the study findings, it is also suggested that Fairtrade include part-time workers in such assessment. This would enable a more contextual and in-depth basis for interpreting Fairtrade's impact on worker empowerment, labour conditions, and health and safety.
10. Studies to document most significant live-changing stories of individuals that have benefited from Fairtrade premiums should be commissioned for more detailed and impactful communication of the impact of Fairtrade premium.
11. To build consensus and develop innovations to increase sales volumes for flowers and plants, Fairtrade could establish forums that generate more interest and discussions with the actors at market level. Among the Fairtrade certified products, flowers are a low-volume product. Collaborating forums for key players in the European markets could unlock more volumes. The main message would revolve around the impact of Fairtrade.
12. Stronger linkages between flower buyers and producers that promote discussions and conversations need to be encouraged. These would enable producers to better understand the needs and interests of buyers, but also enable buyers to appreciate the investments that producers make in worker and community welfare. Linking buyers with POs in discussion and conversation platforms would strengthen interactions.
13. Fairtrade Africa should engage knowledgeable and experienced technical, commercial and advocacy specialists from within the sector on at least a part-time basis to support compliance with the Fairtrade Standards and more meaningful engagement with other supply chain actors. Deficiencies were reported, for example, in producer support for sustainable farming practices.
14. With workers seemingly investing more in their own businesses, it would be prudent to build their capacity in business management skills to ensure that the ventures they begin are managed effectively and sustained without compromising their primary jobs in the flower farms.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Fairtrade's goal is to enable farmers and workers to take more control over their lives and decide how to invest in their futures. It does so by making trade fair and by connecting farmers and workers to consumers of their produce. Fairtrade achieves this through three sets of interventions: **i) the Fairtrade Standards** include economic, environmental and social criteria that must be met by producers and traders to acquire or retain Fairtrade certification³; **ii) Fairtrade producer-level interventions** include capacity building and projects, and producer level investments related to Fairtrade sourcing programmes; **iii) advocacy and campaigns** aimed at promoting the Fairtrade model, raising awareness around human rights and promoting fairer trade practices among consumers, governments and within the industry. Therefore, a product with the FAIRTRADE Mark means producers and businesses have met independently certified international standards. Consequently, by choosing Fairtrade, people can contribute to change through their everyday actions⁴.

Reports by Fairtrade Africa⁵ indicate that Africa is the world's biggest producer of Fairtrade flowers. Between 2019-2020, the region produced 4,972,325,518 stems and provided direct employment to 70,788 workers⁶. In 2020, flower farms in Africa received €7,251,879 in Fairtrade Premium funds, effectively contributing to its mission to support producers in developing countries achieve sustainable and equitable trade relationships⁷. Furthermore, Fairtrade contributes to enable dignity, confidence, control, and choice and, to a greater extent, enhancing the influence and status of workers who can actively impact decisions through a strong role played by the workers' unions on their respective farms and in the flower sector generally.

1.2 Study objectives

To better understand the changes and improvements brought about by the adoption of Fairtrade Standards and the journey with Fairtrade in the flower industry, Fairtrade International commissioned external consultants to undertake a study on the impact of Fairtrade on workers in flower production and market access by flower farms in East Africa. Two objectives guided the study. These are: **i) To generate data/knowledge on the benefits of Fairtrade for flower workers and producers**, and **ii) To indicate where Fairtrade needs to improve to increase impact and ultimately support increased market opportunities for Fairtrade flower producers..** The geographical focus covered the flower origins and regions of Naivasha (Kenya), Batu / Ziway (Ethiopia) and Entebbe area (Uganda). The study included both Fairtrade certified and non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations (POs) to allow for comparison and gain insights into the counterfactual situation.

1.3 Study approach and methods

A total of 13 POs in the flowers and plants category were sampled for this study, of which ten were Fairtrade certified and three were non-Fairtrade certified. From this sample, 11 producer organisations were available to participate in the study; nine of them were Fairtrade certified and two were non-Fairtrade certified. In terms of the geographical distribution of the

³ <https://www.fairtrade.net/standard/about>

⁴ Fairtrade International (2021): Fairtrade Impact Study on Flowers and Access to Markets by Flower Farms, Terms of Reference (TOR)

⁵ Based in Nairobi, Kenya, Fairtrade Africa's Eastern and Central Africa regional network represents producers from Burundi, DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The region further represents a total of 180 producers drawn from Small Producer Organisation and Hired Labour setups in all seven countries. Flower producer organisations account for the largest number of members in the region, currently constituting 60 member organisations from Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda.

⁶ Fairtrade Africa (2022): Flowers Booklet

⁷ De Gelder, Eefje (2022): "Perspective: Fairtrade" – Food Studies: Matter, Meaning, Movement

nine Fairtrade certified POs, five were in Kenya, two were in Ethiopia and two were in Uganda. As for the two non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations, one was in Kenya and the other in Ethiopia. A mixed methods approach to data collection was employed. A quantitative data collection method was used to implement a survey with general workers in sampled POs. A total of 524 workers were interviewed. Of these, 428 were drawn from Fairtrade certified producer organisations and 96 from non-Fairtrade certified POs. Workers were randomly picked from all departments in each producer organisation using the workers' register as the sampling frame. Management staff, who do not qualify to benefit from Fairtrade Premiums, were excluded from the sample and so were all workers who had not worked for at least one year on a farm. While these workers could have informed the study, the assumption made here was that in less than one year, workers were unlikely to have adequately experienced benefits from Fairtrade and the PO, especially as this was a year influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Qualitative data collection methods were used to interview 132 workers representatives in 11 focus group discussions (FGDs)⁸ in all sampled producer organisations, and another eight FGDs with 56 community members representing Fairtrade Premium-funded community-level projects. Furthermore, 28 key informant interviews (KIIs) were carried out with different stakeholders: producers, Fairtrade staff, union representatives, civil society organisations, , community leaders, and flower traders. The research team made further individual observations on each target farm, which were consolidated and used to complete other findings. An estimated 30 documents were reviewed as part of the qualitative approaches. The document review commenced soon after the inception meeting and continued throughout the study period, which was from 1 March 2022 to 31 November 2022. Producer organisation-level data collection and consultations with stakeholders began on the 22 June and continued until September 2022.

Gender considerations were applied in the study design and implementation stages to understand how this issue impacts on male and female workers. The analysis of our findings was thematic and guided by the study objectives as detailed in the study framework. The study was specifically anchored by key themes on which Fairtrade focuses its flowers and plants communication Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Customer (B2C), and which are the core of Fairtrade interventions. These are:

- i. Empowered workers: in general, and specifically on gender with a focus on female empowerment
- ii. Decent working conditions and specifically health and safety in the workplace and workers' rights
- iii. Premium project impact, including on education of workers and their children and workers' welfare, including during the COVID-19 pandemic
- iv. Environment: water, soil pollution, greenhouse gases, biodiversity
- v. Impact of Fairtrade on farm management/relations with workers, and flower sales, including during the COVID-19 pandemic
- vi. Fairtrade Africa support to the flower farms

Alongside this study, the study team also documented short impact videos and social media stories across the sampled Fairtrade certified farms. These are available from Fairtrade.

1.3.1 Study limitations

While the study progressed according to plan, some delays were experienced, provoked by, for example, the elections in Kenya. All participation was based on informed consent, which resulted in only two counterfactual cases (one each in Kenya and Ethiopia). Other targeted

⁸ Worker representatives were drawn from the Fairtrade Premium Committee (for Fairtrade certified farms), health and safety committee, gender committee and the workers' trade union.

non-Fairtrade certified POs were not willing to participate citing lack of direct benefit from the study. Therefore, while our sample fell short by one non-Fairtrade certified producer organisation it was still a viable sample for an indicative counterfactual analysis. Consensus on data collection dates with respective POs resulted in delayed data collection in certain cases.

Workers who had not worked in the target producer organisations for at least one year were excluded from the study. This was based on the assumption that they had not adequately interacted with Fairtrade, especially because the study was undertaken soon after the COVID-19 pandemic which slowed operations in flower farms. This is a key limitation of the study, in particular as it relates to general worker conditions and impacts, including perceived worker empowerment and equity issues, in that the views of newly-recruited workers, were not included in the analysis.

In about half of the Fairtrade certified POs and one non-Fairtrade certified producer organisation, senior management representatives were not available for interviews, which limited high-level input from these POs.

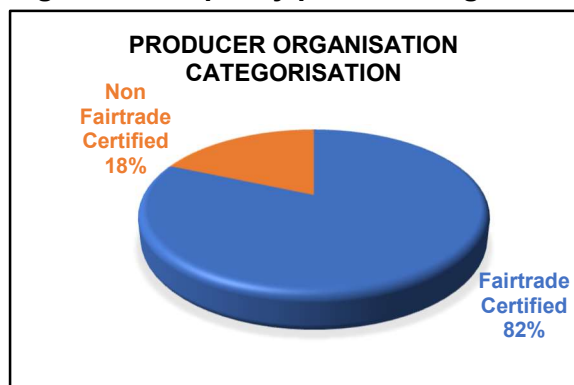
Finally, one co-author previously worked for Fairtrade as the Global Product Manager (South) up until 2017. Given this role and any other that he may have undertaken for Fairtrade, the potential for bias in analysis could not have been ruled out. As a result, he did not participate in any interviews, except those with market-level stakeholders, alongside the lead consultant who is the main author. His role in the analysis and reporting was limited to only technical interpretations and clarifications sought by the main author.

2. Study findings

This section presents the study findings organised according to the study objectives. The section begins with a basic description of worker demographics. The understanding of Fairtrade by workers is then explored and thereafter findings on the main objectives of the study are discussed.

2.1 Demographic profile of workers

Figure 1: Sample by producer organisation certification status



By design, we targeted more workers on Fairtrade certified farms. Sampled workers in both Fairtrade certified and non-Fairtrade certified POs were drawn from all departments. Of the total 524 workers interviewed, 428 ($n=243$, 56.8 percent female, and $n=185$, 43.2 percent male) were from Fairtrade certified producer organisations and 96 ($n=65$, 67.7 percent female and $n=31$, 32.3 percent male) were from non-Fairtrade certified POs. More than half the workers randomly sampled and interviewed on Fairtrade certified farms were

young people ($n=257$, 60.6 percent). Another one-third ($n=143$, 33.7 percent) were aged between 36-49 years, while fewer than six percent were aged above 50 years. Findings were different in non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations where more than three-quarters ($n=77$, 80.2 percent) were young people while another one-sixth ($n=17$, 17.7 percent) were aged 36-49 years. This suggests that just about two percent of workers were aged over 50 years. Overall, these findings indicate that POs, including those that are Fairtrade certified, depend on young people in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Uganda.

Table 1: Age of workers on Fairtrade certified farms

Age	Ethiopia	Kenya	Uganda	Total
18-28 years	65	41	34	140
	65.0%	17.2%	40.0%	33.0%
29-35 years	24	62	31	117
	24.0%	25.9%	36.5%	27.6%
36-42 years	6	74	12	92
	6.0%	31.0%	14.1%	21.7%
43-49 years	4	41	6	51
	4.0%	17.2%	7.1%	12.0%
50-60 years	1	20	2	23
	1.0%	8.4%	2.4%	5.4%
61 years and above	0	1	0	1
	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.2%
Total	100	239	85	424
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

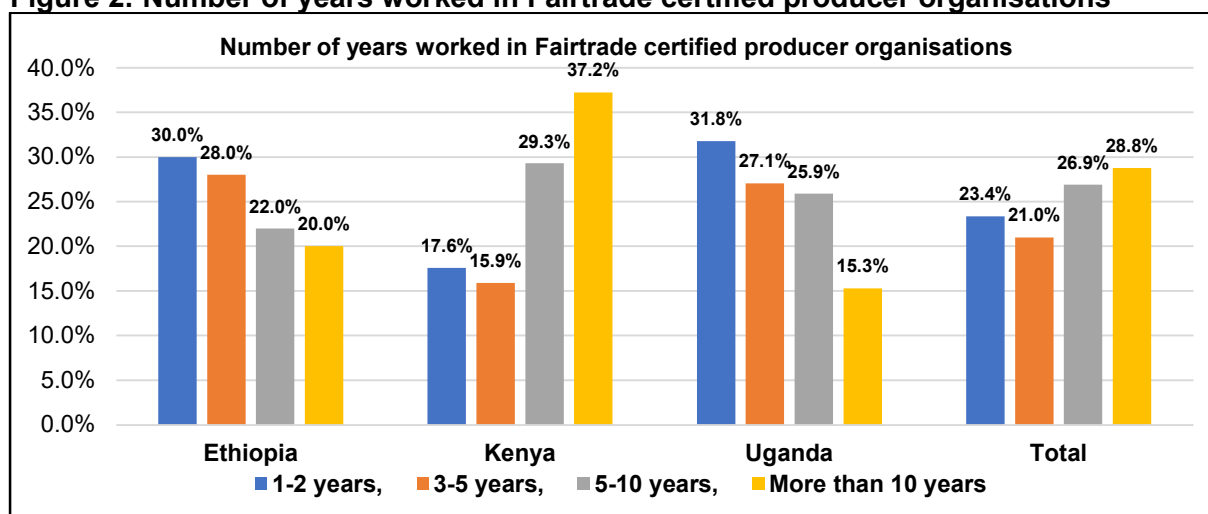
Findings furthermore suggest that Fairtrade certified POs retain more older workers compared to non-Fairtrade certified POs. This could point to more retention of workers in these producer organisations compared to non-Fairtrade certified ones. The findings show that more than two-thirds of workers in all non-Fairtrade certified POs were aged 35 years and under.

Table 2: Age of workers on non-Fairtrade certified farms

Age	Ethiopia	Kenya	Total
18-28 years	36 72.0%	18 39.1%	54 56.3%
29-35 years	7 14.0%	16 34.8%	23 23.9%
36-42 years	4 8.0%	9 19.6%	13 13.5%
43-49 years	1 2.0%	3 6.5%	4 4.2%
50-60 years	2 4.0%	0 0.0%	2 2.1%
Total	50 100.0%	46 100.0%	96 100.0%

According to producer representatives and based on discussions with workers, the higher retention rates in Fairtrade certified producer organisations could, among other things, be a result of the benefits derived from Fairtrade. This was affirmed by the finding that across the Fairtrade certified farms, more than half the workers ($n=236$, 55.7 percent), had worked in the POs for more than five years as seen in Figure 2 below. On the contrary, less than one-third of the workers interviewed ($n=26$, 27.1 percent) from non-Fairtrade certified farms had worked for more than five years on those farms. Notably, Kenya, with more Fairtrade certified producer organisations and more years of Fairtrade certification, had more workers who had worked for more than five years ($n=159$, 66.5 percent), while more than one-third ($n=89$, 37.24 percent) had worked for more than ten years. This explains why there were fewer workers aged under 35 years in Kenya as seen earlier.

Figure 2: Number of years worked in Fairtrade certified producer organisations

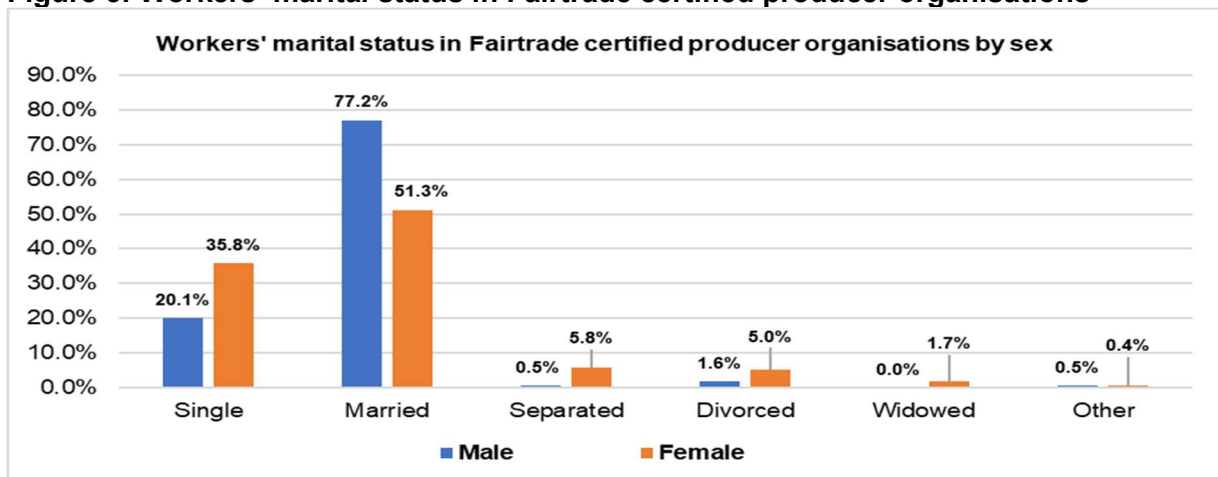


Workers are generally formally educated with a majority in both Fairtrade certified POs ($n=306$, 71.7 percent) and non-Fairtrade certified POs ($n=68$, 70.8 percent) having completed upper primary or secondary education. More workers from non-Fairtrade certified farms had no education or had only completed lower primary level education ($n=18$, 18.6 percent) compared to those from Fairtrade certified farms ($n=51$, 11.8 percent). On the other hand, more workers in Fairtrade certified POs had completed college/polytechnic or university levels of education ($n=71$, 16.5 percent) compared to those in non-Fairtrade certified POs ($n=10$, 10.4 percent). It was reported in the interviews that workers in Fairtrade certified POs benefitted from educational support that had enabled them to further their education. Comparatively, across all POs, there were more female workers with lower levels of formal education compared to male workers, while comparatively more male workers had

completed secondary and college/tertiary levels of education. The 2019 Kenya Analytical Report on Education and Training, developed from the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census⁹, shows that slightly more females (51.6 percent) had only completed primary level education compared to males (49.7 percent). On the other hand, more male workers (5 percent) than female workers (3.6 percent) had completed a university or vocational training education level.

More than half the workers ($n=267$, 62.5 percent) in Fairtrade certified POs were married and about one-third ($n=125$, 29.2 percent) were single. Comparatively more male workers ($n=142$, 77.4 percent) than female workers ($n=123$, 61.5 percent) were married as seen in Figure 3 below.

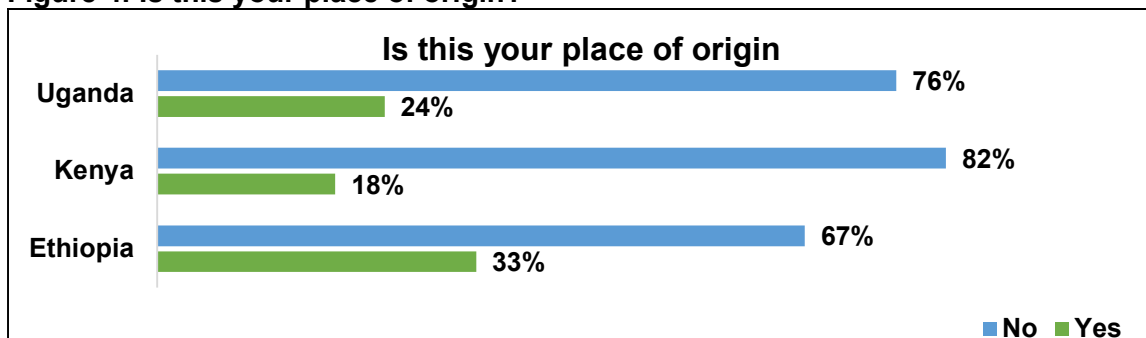
Figure 3: Workers' marital status in Fairtrade certified producer organisations



It is also seen from the findings that comparatively more female than male workers were single, separated, divorced and widowed compared to male workers. This suggests that female workers bear a heavier burden as single parents and mirrors findings in non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations where two-thirds ($n=64$, 66.7 percent) of female workers were married while one-fifth ($n=19$, 19.8 percent) were single.

Approximately three-quarters of workers ($n=329$, 74.6 percent) were not originally from the area where they worked. As seen in Figure 4 below, this was consistently the case in the three countries. In addition, more than six in ten ($n= 328$, 62.6 percent) had permanently settled in the areas in which they worked. Workers' migratory trends and settlement patterns were also noted as having a bearing on the choice of Fairtrade Premium fund investments¹⁰.

Figure 4: Is this your place of origin?



⁹ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2022): 2019 Analytical Report on Education and Training, Volume XVII

¹⁰ Fairtrade Africa and Oserian Company Joint Body (2015): Needs assessment on utilization of Fairtrade Premiums

More than half the workers in non-Fairtrade certified POs ($n=62$, 64.6 percent) were also not originally from the areas in which they worked. This was not surprising given that the establishment of flower farms tended to attract migrant workers from different parts of the countries. The findings, therefore, suggest that producers mostly employ migrant workers and indicate that proportionately more workers in Fairtrade certified producer organisations had migrated to the areas.

In Ethiopia, six in ten ($n=30$, 60 percent) of workers in non-Fairtrade certified POs hailed from the area in which they worked, while a majority ($n=42$, 91.3 percent) in Kenya were not originally from the area in which they worked. Overall, close to three-quarters ($n=69$, 71.9 percent) of workers in non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations had permanently settled in the areas in which they worked, suggesting a relatively similar trend to what is seen in Fairtrade certified POs. Overall, this finding suggests that flower production continues to strongly influence labour migration.

2.2 Understanding of Fairtrade and the Fairtrade Premium

Understanding how Fairtrade operates is essential to understanding the benefits it can offer. The study, therefore, first sought workers' understanding of the terms Fairtrade and Fairtrade Premium. A majority of those in Fairtrade certified POs ($n=399$, 94.1 percent) had heard of the term Fairtrade. All workers in Kenya and Uganda reported they had heard of the term compared to 75 percent in Ethiopia. (It was noted that there were newly-recruited workers in Ethiopia who may not have had a chance to be trained or interact with Fairtrade following the COVID-19 outbreak.) Furthermore, most workers accurately described what Fairtrade was, using terms such as fair trading practices that benefit workers and producers, a system of certification, a source of Premium money, and a market for flowers.

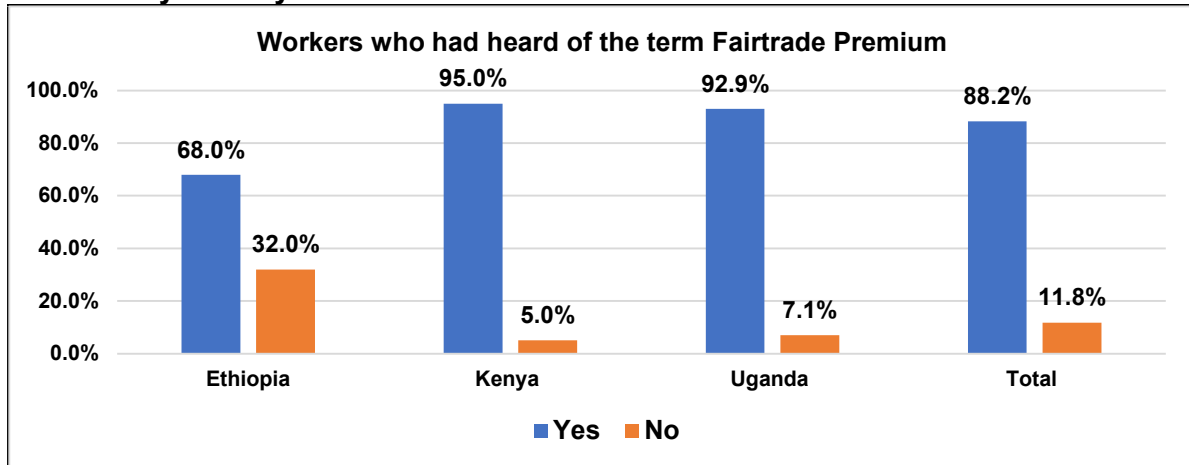
A majority of workers in the non-Fairtrade certified PO in Kenya ($n=43$, 93.5 percent) had heard of the term Fairtrade, but only few had in the non-Fairtrade certified PO in Ethiopia ($n=2$, 4 percent). This wide difference between Kenya and Ethiopia could be attributed to the number of years that certified farms in the respective countries have been in the Fairtrade system. The first Fairtrade certification in Kenya was in 2004 compared to 2011 in Ethiopia. As a result, more flower farm workers in Kenya have probably interacted with Fairtrade and benefitted more from Fairtrade Premiums compared to those in Ethiopia. The impact of the Premiums could have been known by workers in non-Fairtrade certified farms. Besides, most Fairtrade certified farms in Ethiopia were located around Lake Ziway. It is likely that workers outside this region may not know much about Fairtrade.

More workers in the non-Fairtrade certified PO in Kenya ($n=41$, 89.1 percent) than those in Ethiopia ($n=1$, 2 percent) were also aware of other Fairtrade certified producer organisations operating in the areas in which they worked. This could be attributed to the fact that there are more Fairtrade certified POs in Kenya, including some closer to the target non-Fairtrade certified producer organisation compared to Ethiopia. Discussions with workers further indicated that workers in non-Fairtrade certified POs consistently sought information from them on the availability of opportunities. Many perceived Fairtrade certified producers as offering better opportunities, especially due to the Fairtrade Premium.

Similarly, more than three-quarters of workers in Fairtrade certified POs ($n=374$, 82.2 percent) had heard of the term Fairtrade Premium. Knowledge about the Fairtrade Premium was highest in Kenya and Uganda as seen in Figure 5. This could be attributed to the years Fairtrade has been active in each country. The disruptions caused by COVID-19 affected the delivery of training, including training about the Fairtrade Premium across all POs. Notwithstanding, more than half ($n=246$, 58.0 percent) were able to accurately describe the Fairtrade Premium as "additional money paid by flower buyers for the benefit of flower workers." Others erroneously described the Fairtrade Premium as "profits shared by farm

owners with workers for flowers sold,” and “additional salary paid by employers to workers,” while others did not know. The findings highlight the need for wider dissemination of accurate information about the source and usage of Fairtrade Premiums across all workers. Less than one-quarter of workers in non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations ($n=22$, 22.9 percent) had heard of the term Fairtrade Premium.

Figure 5: Workers in Fairtrade certified POs who had heard of the term Fairtrade Premium by country



More workers in Fairtrade certified POs knew of other Fairtrade certified POs ($n=299$, 69.9 percent) around the areas in which they worked, than they knew of non-Fairtrade certified POs ($n=148$, 34.6 percent). Notably, no worker in the non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations reported that they were aware of other non-Fairtrade certified POs around the areas in which they worked. This suggests that while there was possible close collaboration and interaction between the Fairtrade certified POs, this may not be taking place among the non-Fairtrade certified POs. Furthermore, discussions with workers, managers and stakeholders in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda indicated that employment opportunities with Fairtrade certified POs were largely sought after by workers, including those working in non-Fairtrade certified producers. Some, including in Ethiopia, were reported to be replicating projects similar to those funded by Fairtrade Premiums.

Even though workers, including all those who were interviewed in Kenya, were unaware of other non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations, when asked about the differences between Fairtrade and non-Fairtrade certified POs around the areas, they noted that workers in Fairtrade certified producer organisations earned better wages and had better working conditions ($n=206$, 32 percent). Furthermore, they observed that management does not discriminate against any individual based on gender or ethnicity ($n=127$, 19.8 percent) and that there is fairness in recruitment and promotion practices in most Fairtrade certified producer organisations compared to non-Fairtrade certified POs ($n=117$, 18.2 percent). Interestingly, workers in non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations were of a similar view about the differences between Fairtrade and non-Fairtrade certified POs with more than one-third ($n=28$, 35.9 percent) reporting that they believed workers in Fairtrade certified POs had better earnings and working conditions.

Findings from workers in focus group discussions indicated that discrimination and harassment had drastically reduced following their producer organisation’s partnership with Fairtrade, resulting in improved fairness in recruitment and promotion practices which was now largely pegged on merit. This was, for example, reported in six Fairtrade certified POs, but also by some workers in the two target non-Fairtrade certified POs. Discussions with management representatives in all Fairtrade certified producer organisations affirmed this finding, noting that, to a large extent, practices in Fairtrade certified POs tended to influence

those in non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations. In describing what they understood by empowerment, one worker had this to say:

“You find that there are opportunities given to those who qualify whether male or female. They say that there is no discrimination and so you will find that there is some kind of balance when offering job opportunities. For instance, for adverts within, you may find that ladies as well as men are considered for various positions. If a lady goes through, it is fine and also if a man is the best, then it is also fine. Even when it comes to leadership, it is the same thing. That is why you find that we have a gender committee that handles issues of both females and male.” FGD with workers in a Fairtrade certified producer organisation in Uganda.

Management representatives observed that the interventions by Fairtrade had progressively raised the bar in the industry. Most notable was the gender awareness and increased role played by women in the POs' operations, including in positions of leadership. One participant, for example, observed that:

“While one can say that there might be an overall improvement across flower farms in this region, Fairtrade certified producer organisations are way ahead in terms of working conditions. Fairtrade Standards and interventions by Fairtrade Africa have immensely influenced the management decisions.” KII, management representative.

Despite the findings on the noted differences between Fairtrade certified and non-Fairtrade certified producers, the study findings discussed below observed that some of the non-Fairtrade certified producers were learning from interventions undertaken on Fairtrade certified farms and were increasingly committing more resources to improving the working conditions of workers on their farms. Details of how this was happening are discussed in later sections.

2.3 Impact of Fairtrade on workers and market access by flower farms

In this section, we present findings on the impact of Fairtrade from the perspective of workers, management representatives, community members, and flower sector stakeholders along the flower supply chain. Findings are organised along key thematic areas upon which Fairtrade focuses its flowers & plants' communication Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business-to-Customer (B2C). We also explore findings from non-Fairtrade certified farms to understand the difference between them and their Fairtrade certified counterparts.

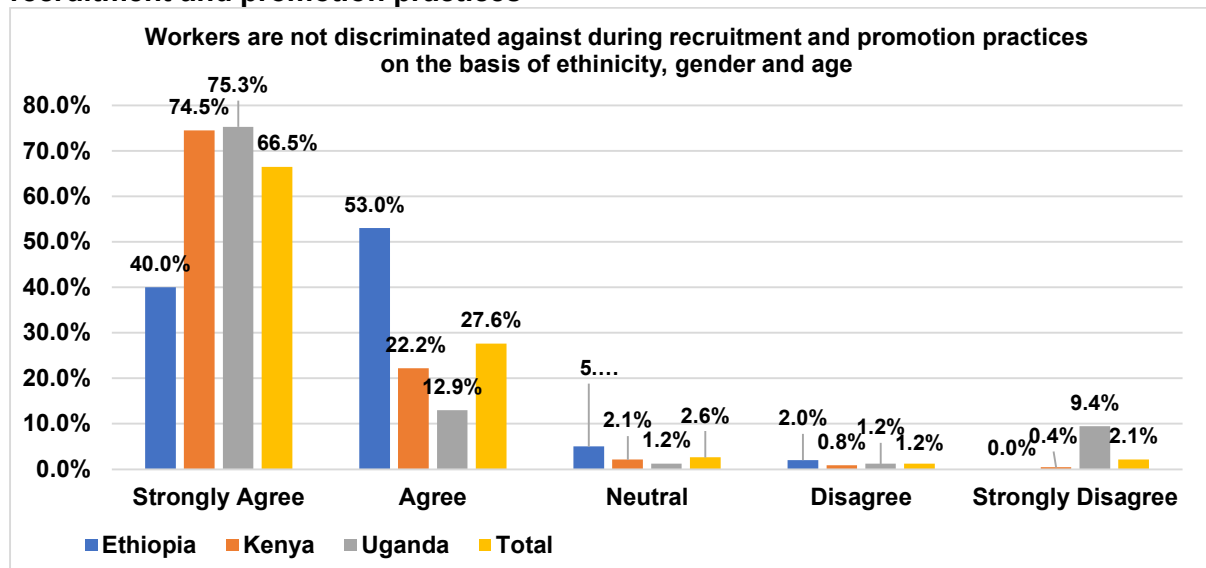
2.3.1 Worker empowerment

The study first sought to understand what respondents conceptualised as worker empowerment. To workers interviewed in focus group discussions empowerment meant that workers knew and enjoyed their rights without intimidation, that there was gender equality, and that male and female workers had equal access to opportunities. Findings from all Fairtrade certified POs show that women were competing for the same positions as male workers. This was reported to have led to an increase in the number of female workers in leadership positions.

Leadership

The survey with workers shows that a majority of them ($n=399$, 94.1 percent) across all target Fairtrade certified producer organisations either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that workers are not discriminated against during recruitment and promotion practices based on gender, ethnicity and age as seen below in Figure 6. This was mirrored across all Fairtrade certified POs in all three countries.

Figure 6: Perspective of workers in Fairtrade certified POs on discrimination during recruitment and promotion practices



Close to ten percent of workers in Uganda strongly disagreed with the above statement suggesting there were issues related to recruitment and promotion practices in some POs which would need to be addressed. While the data does not point to any specific reasons why this would be the case, discussions with management and union representatives indicated that tribalism and favouritism are issues of concern in recruitment at national level. This may lead workers to interpret their experiences and perceive what they see on the farms differently based on their interests. In addition, trade union representatives in both Kenya and Uganda reported that there were activities that were predominantly carried out by male workers, such as spraying. Spraying tasks have some incentives, such as fewer working hours. Assignment of these roles may, to many people, seem discriminatory to female workers. Overall, a majority of workers and union representatives indicated that Fairtrade certified producer organisations had generally streamlined their recruitment procedures to ensure fairness.

However, findings also show that the female workers in leadership positions were fewer overall in non-Fairtrade certified POs compared to the Fairtrade certified POs. In all Fairtrade certified POs visited, women occupied, on average, more than 50 percent of leadership positions in management and on the various workers' committees. When asked what, in their view, showed that female workers had been empowered, one-seventh ($n=41$, 14.9%) of workers at non-Fairtrade certified POs mentioned that women had risen to leadership positions. The same was mentioned by a slightly higher percentage of workers in Fairtrade certified POs ($n=229$, 16.9%). From the group discussions, all workers recognised the role of workers' committees in championing the interests of workers to management. Committees were generally viewed as governance structures that provide workers with a forum to engage and organise their thoughts. Furthermore, freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining was widely reported in all Fairtrade certified POs as a strong indicator of workers' empowerment. This was not widely mentioned in the non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations. Through trade unions, workers can express their issues better and with one voice, which enhances their bargaining position.

Freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining

Overall, a majority of workers ($n=383$, 89.5 percent) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "workers on this farm were free to join the workers' union." This was mirrored

across all Fairtrade certified POs visited. However, worker representatives in focus group discussions as well as key informant interviewees observed that union activity levels differed across producer organisations. Interpreting the study findings, it appears that the COVID-19 pandemic limited union activities and this could have impacted how workers reported on issues relating to the trade unions. The findings were similar in the non-Fairtrade certified POs, suggesting that there were no fundamental differences between Fairtrade and non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations with respect to the activity of unions. However, union officials in Fairtrade certified POs benefitted from different training conducted by Fairtrade, which union officials in non-Fairtrade certified farms did not benefit from. The finding, therefore, suggests the need to enhance and reactivate the capacity of workers' unions in producer organisations.

Voice and confidence

Training on workers' rights and gender equality gave workers a voice and the confidence to pursue their rights and goals. Workers' representatives and management widely reported that Fairtrade had played a significant role in training workers on gender issues, including, but not limited to, women's rights, entrepreneurship and leadership skills. A worker participating in an FGD in a Fairtrade certified PO said:

"We are who we are because of Fairtrade. Their training made us realise that we can be who we want to be and do anything we want to do. I came to this farm as a casual worker, working in the production of flowers at the warehouse. From Fairtrade training I learned my rights and improved my self-esteem, and from the training on leadership, I pursued promotions whenever there was a vacancy. Who would have known that I would be a quality assurance supervisor today?" FGD participant in Kenya.

Empowerment training on gender

Study findings indicate that both male and female workers have been empowered. This was particularly the case in Fairtrade certified producer organisations where worker representatives in focus group discussions and interviews with management lauded Fairtrade for its contribution to gender equality and workers' training. They observed that workers have been trained on their rights, which has made them more confident of themselves and improved how they relate to management and their co-workers. Workers further observed that the training on gender and sexual harassment had broadened their knowledge and they were able to identify and avoid sexual harassment better as a result. Male workers similarly reported that they were more knowledgeable about many issues, which they had previously taken for granted. These included physical interactions and the language they used with their female colleagues. Both male and female workers observed that the knowledge gained did not only impact their interactions with colleagues but also those with other people in their communities. This notwithstanding, published reports indicate that sexual harassment, poor working conditions, and discrimination were rampant in the flower industry¹¹.

While appreciating that gender balance was being highlighted across Fairtrade certified POs, both the management and worker representatives emphasized the importance of ensuring that male workers also actively participate in gender empowerment programmes. Overall, gender-focused programmes were noted to largely focus attention on female workers, yet male workers were also reported as having faced gender-related vulnerabilities. This was more the case given the stigma attached to men reporting gender and sexual abuse. Interviews with stakeholders indicated that there have been isolated reports of sexual harassment of male workers in producer organisations in the region, many of which go unreported.

¹¹ <https://www.ethicaltrade.org/blog/dark-side-flower-sector-growing-exploitation-women-kenya>

Empowerment through education support and training

In addition, the Fairtrade Premium had empowered workers and their families hugely by supporting them with education and training opportunities. As a result, workers' children have excelled in their studies. In one PO in Kenya, the research team met a general worker whose daughter benefitted from the Fairtrade Premium bursary programme and worked as a medical officer in a leading private hospital in Nairobi. A general worker on a farm in Naivasha had this to say:

John was raised by a single mother, a general worker in one of the farms in Naivasha. His mother could barely feed John and his two siblings let alone send them to school. Courtesy of his mother, John is a beneficiary of the bursary programme funded through Fairtrade Premiums, which saw him through his undergraduate studies. John secured a stable job on a flower farm and supported his mother to pay for his sister's education through high school.

"I dropped out of school in Class 7 but I am delighted to see my three sons advancing their studies to higher levels. This expresses my contentment with Fairtrade. My first child is currently a second-year student at Kisii University while the other two are doing well in secondary school. I am under no pressure as this has been made possible by bursaries funded by Fairtrade Premiums. Fairtrade has brought joy to my family and

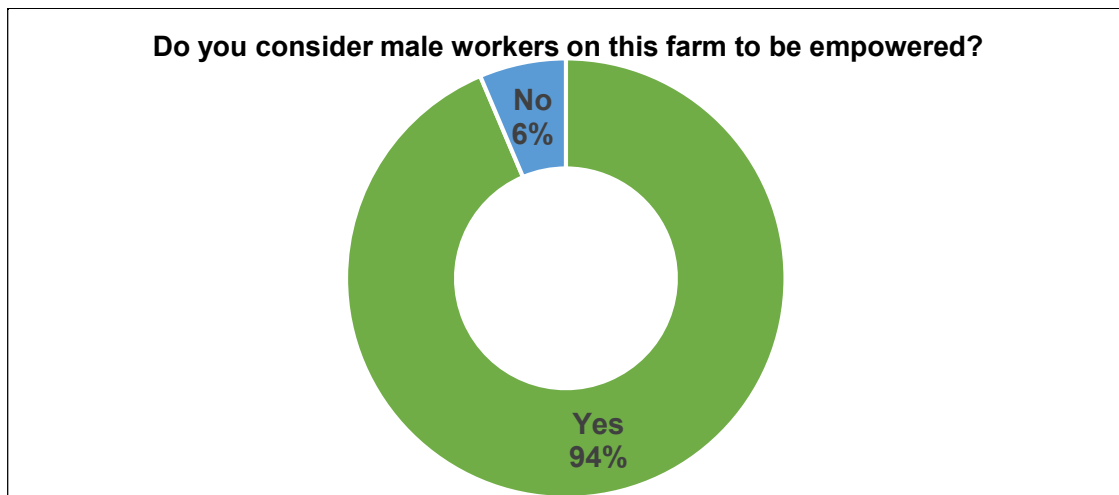
we are optimistic about the future."

Individual workers have been supported to train in vocational skills, including driving, tailoring, hairdressing, and computer skills among others. In some of the Fairtrade certified producer organisations we visited, for example, general workers who had acquired driving skills with support from Fairtrade Premiums had been employed as drivers, essentially earning more and working on tasks they enjoyed. Study findings further show that workers were able to set up small businesses, such as hair salons, tailoring shops, computer services centres, and small food outlets which they run together with their relatives or when not at work. Earnings from these small businesses supplement the wages from flower farms, which results in improved family welfare. These findings suggest that, overall, Fairtrade Premiums contribute to reducing financial pressure on workers by providing support with education bursaries for their workers and their children and access to capital, which enables workers to set up small businesses that generate additional earnings.

Are male workers empowered?

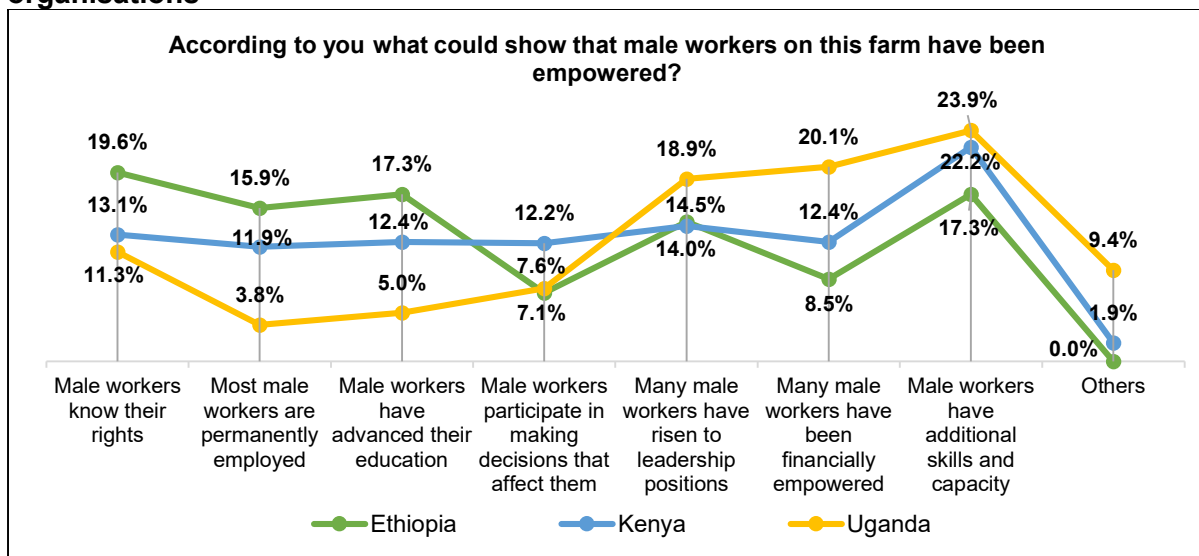
Workers gave several responses as to when they considered one to be empowered including: when workers understand their rights and responsibilities ($n=130$, 30.7 percent), when they receive skills training ($n=72$, 17.2 percent), when workers receive financial support and wage increments ($n=103$, 24.3 percent), and when workers are educated ($n=39$, 9.2 percent). From the findings, a majority of workers in Fairtrade certified POs ($n=397$, 93.6 percent) considered male workers on their farms to be empowered as shown in Figure 7 below. This was slightly more than the number holding a similar view in non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations ($n=85$, 88.5 percent).

Figure 7: Workers' views on male empowerment in Fairtrade certified POs



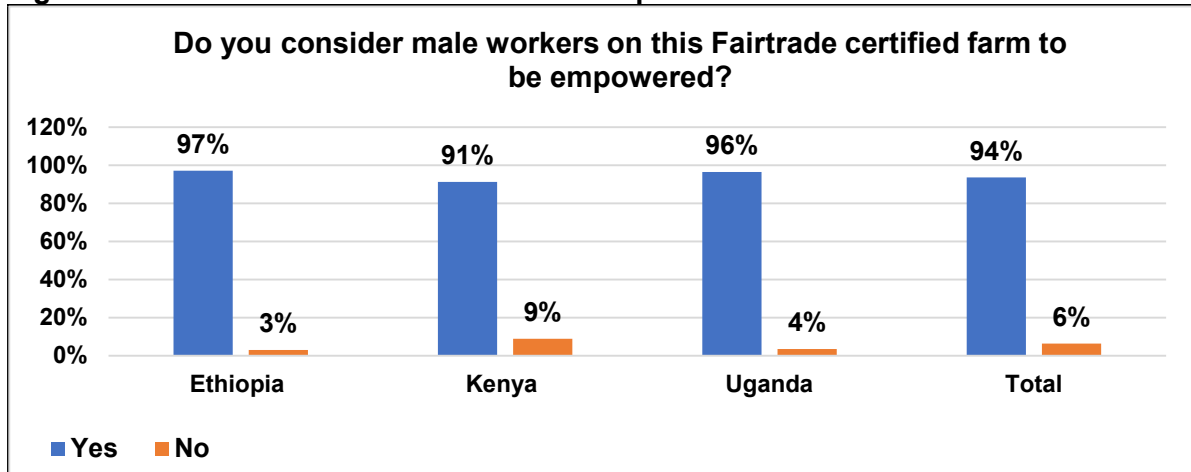
Several indicators supported this finding on male empowerment in Fairtrade certified producer organisations. In Kenya and Uganda, workers linked additional skills and technical capacity of male workers to empowerment ($n=243$, 20.6 percent). In Ethiopia, empowerment was reflected more so in knowledge of rights, permanent employment, and advanced education. Promotion to leadership positions and financial empowerment were signs of empowerment according to some workers in Uganda.

Figure 8: Indicators for male empowerment in Fairtrade certified producer organisations



Workers in focus group discussions further noted that male empowerment in the Fairtrade certified producer organisations was not as pronounced as that of female workers. They noted that most of the capacity-building programmes and other interventions aimed at worker empowerment tended to focus more on female workers. This finding was consistently reported across all the countries as seen in Figure 9 below. However, about a quarter of workers in the non-Fairtrade certified PO in Kenya held a contrary view.

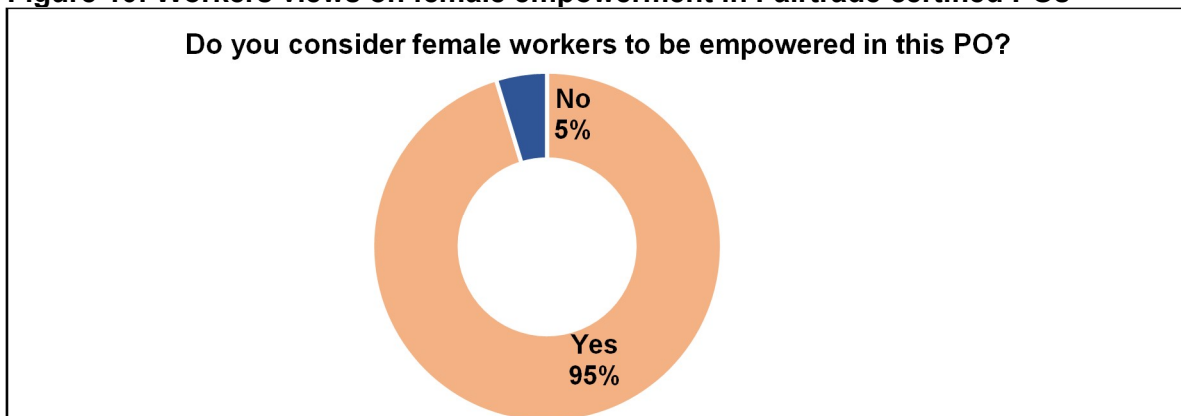
Figure 9: Workers views on male workers empowerment in Fairtrade certified POs



Are female workers empowered?

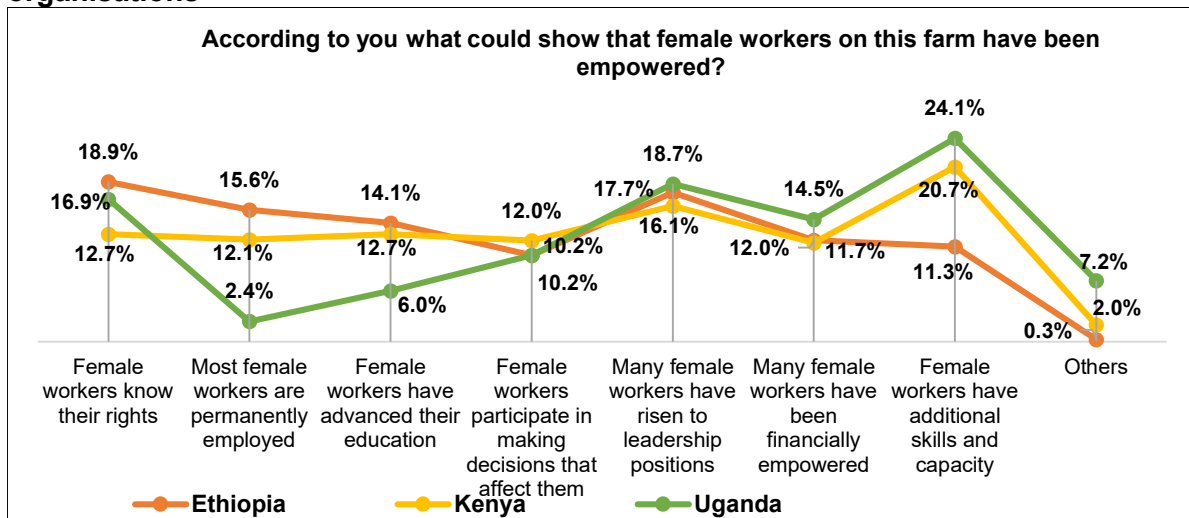
Slightly more workers ($n=404$, 95.3 percent) held a similar view on the empowerment of female workers in Fairtrade certified producer organisations as seen in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10: Workers views on female empowerment in Fairtrade certified POs



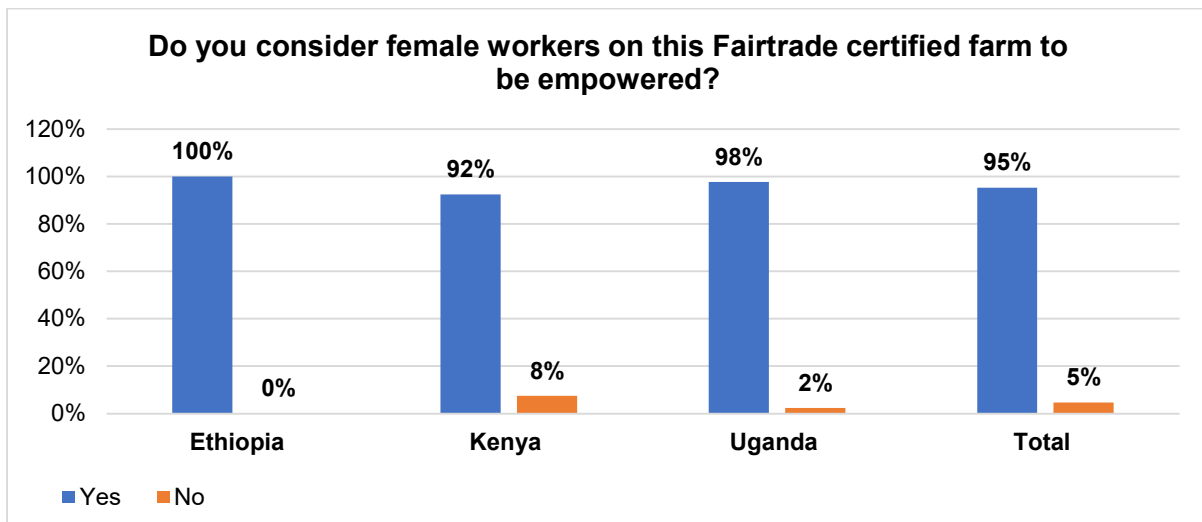
Key indicators were mentioned regarding female workers' empowerment. In Ethiopia, knowledge of rights, permanent employment, and occupation of leadership positions were among the most mentioned indicators of female empowerment. In Kenya and Uganda, additional skills and technical capacity acquisition as well as access to leadership positions were key considerations. This is seen in Figure11 below.

Figure 11: Indicators for women’s empowerment in Fairtrade certified producer organisations



Findings from the Fairtrade certified POs in the three countries show minimal variances in the views of interviewed workers across most farms on women’s empowerment. See Figure 12 below.

Figure 12: Workers views on female empowerment in Fairtrade certified POs



While a majority of workers in Kenya reported that female workers on the farms they worked were empowered, about eight percent in Kenya were of a contrary view. Data from key informants and discussions with worker representatives in some Fairtrade certified POs indicated that, in some cases, even when women held many leadership positions on the farms, the main decisions were eventually made by men. This suggests that the women were yet to fully take control of decisions they made from their leadership positions.

All workers in the non-Fairtrade certified producer organisation in Ethiopia considered female workers to be empowered compared to about three-quarters ($n=36$, 78.3 percent) reporting the same in the non-Fairtrade certified PO in Kenya. Discussions with workers in the non-Fairtrade producer organisation in Kenya showed that their understanding of empowerment included women not undertaking tasks culturally considered difficult for them. For example, some of the key indicators they mentioned on why women were empowered included

women not being allowed to work in the cold rooms, women not being allowed to do maintenance of greenhouses, and women being given 'appropriate jobs' which 'do not endanger' their lives. This suggests that the allocation of roles in the non-Fairtrade certified PO was still unequal and that what was seen as 'appropriate jobs' for female workers was still culturally and somewhat unfairly defined for them. This was also reported in Uganda¹².

By contrast, workers in Fairtrade certified producer organisations in Kenya shared their views on the indicators for female empowerment, which included that women work in all departments, including the male-dominated departments, such as electrical and carpentry, and that female workers were equally considered during recruitment and promotion practices without discrimination based on sex. This perspective cut across all the certified producers and it suggests more equal access to opportunities. Notwithstanding, incidences of favouritism were reported by workers where some workers might be favoured on the basis of relationships with managers or their ethnicity. Although our findings showed that this was not widespread, it is nevertheless an issue that cannot be ignored.

Management representatives in Fairtrade certified POs indicated that there was equal pay for male and female workers as mentioned in all Fairtrade producer organisations. Female workers were in leadership positions, in management and on specific workers' committees, which championed the rights of women and men. This was reported in all Fairtrade certified POs across the three countries. Discussions with community members in focus group discussions and community leaders showed zero resistance or negative attitudes towards women taking leadership positions and having more control over their lives. One community leader noted:

"These women working on the flower farms around this area have been the face of change in this community. Many of them are the reason this area is growing because they have small businesses that they run, which have increased the economic activity in this area. They have indeed challenged our men and shown them they can do much more." KII with a community leader in Ethiopia.

Fairtrade producer organisation representatives noted the importance of training that workers undergo on issues of leadership, gender, and anti-sexual harassment among others as empowering and enabling them to not only understand, but also to claim and protect their rights. According to them, this has been enhanced by their active engagement through worker committees that have been empowered to address thematic issues across farms. However, flower value chain stakeholders, who are privy to the structures on flower farms, noted that while the worker committees had been strengthened to support worker representation and governance, they also ran the risk of being on management's side and failing to effectively perform their roles. Therefore, there needs to be clear delineation of roles. Focus group discussions with workers in non-Fairtrade POs affirmed that worker committees that championed workers' interests did exist.

Freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining was widely reported in all Fairtrade certified producer organisations as a strong indicator of worker empowerment. This was not widely mentioned in the non-Fairtrade certified POs. Overall, a majority of workers ($n=383$, 89.5 percent) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that 'workers on this farm were free to join the workers union'. It was noted in follow-up discussions with management that the activity level in the unions differed across farms and countries. For example, trade unionism and the related structures were generally noted to be more developed in Kenya compared to Uganda and Ethiopia

¹² <https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/clipping-thorny-rose-bushes-stories-of-women-working-on-flower-farms-in-uganda/>

Further discussions with workers and stakeholders¹³ indicated that the effectiveness of the unions and worker committees in some of the producer organisations was questioned. One focus group participant observed:

“We have severally engaged the union representatives on the need for timely replacement of Personal Protective Equipment, but they do not seem to take it seriously in their discussions with management.” Focus group discussion participant in Uganda.

Findings from focus group discussions with workers in five POs both Fairtrade certified and non-certified, alleged that some committee officials served the interests of management rather than those of the workers. On the other hand, worker representatives in trade unions alleged that some producer organisations tended to support the worker committees, making them more vibrant and attractive to workers. As a result, only a few workers sought to join the union, but were unable to marshal reasonable numbers for the establishment of one.

While study findings show notable efforts to create conditions where workers can empower themselves, especially through the trainings on gender rights and entrepreneurship among others, as well as through the benefits derived from Fairtrade, these gains could be eroded if workers fail to effectively exercise their right to associate and to collective bargaining. For example, union representatives, who observe worker committees in POs, mentioned that worker committees were more effective in addressing the needs of workers compared to unions in some POs, and as a result, workers see no need to join the unions. They argued that this could be a deliberate strategy to discourage the growth of unions. This calls for more scrutiny and sustained efforts to promote trade unionism. Additionally, more support in training and capacity building of the representative structures to strengthen their governance and avoid any potential interference from the management will be necessary. This is more so since the trade unions need an active and supportive member base to give them a strong mandate in the collective bargaining process.

2.3.2 Decent working conditions

The study respondents gave different descriptions of what they considered to be decent working conditions. According to management, decent working conditions encompassed the following, among other things: contracts for workers, high health and safety standards, freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, reasonable wages, timely payments, benefits to workers (including gender-specific benefits such as maternity leave), grievance handling mechanisms, non-discrimination of workers, fair recruitment and promotion practices, open communication channels. Notably, freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining along with decent working conditions are key principles that underpin Fairtrade’s Hired Labour Standard¹⁴.

Findings suggest there have been commendable efforts in pursuit of providing decent working conditions for flower workers. Fairtrade revised its Standard for flowers and plants in 2017. It now requires employers to apply the World Bank’s global poverty line of US\$1.90 a day as the minimum upon which base wages must be set. By January 2023, Fairtrade certified farms will have to comply with the new poverty line of US\$2.15 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) per person per day as defined by the World Bank. All of the Fairtrade certified POs we visited had complied with the Standard, with many of them paying amounts that

¹³ Traders, civil Society organisations, union representatives and FT staff

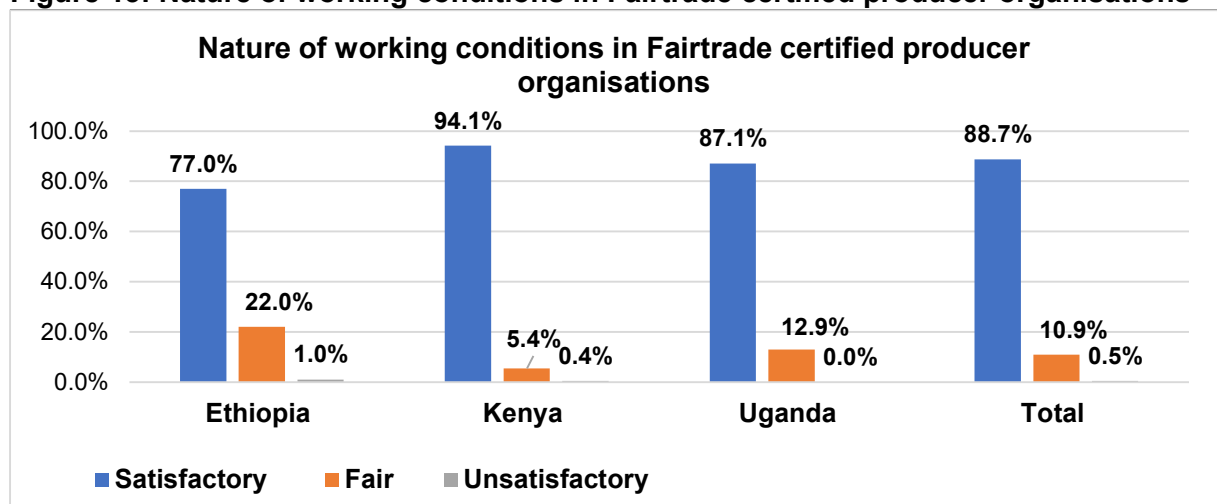
¹⁴ <https://www.fairtrade.net/standard/hl>

were way above the US\$1.90 PPP per person each day. This led to an increase in salaries on flower farms, ensuring that workers had more disposable income. The situation was even better in Uganda and Ethiopia where payments to workers almost doubled following the implementation of the new Standard. Study respondents were also of the view that overall wages across the industry had improved following the changes adopted by the Fairtrade certified producer organisations.

Across all POs, including the non-Fairtrade certified ones, workers enjoyed various benefits, including the provision of healthy and balanced meals on the farm as an in-kind benefit, transport provision or transport allowances, favourable working hours in line with the relevant International Labour Organization Convention, leave days such as maternity leave, minimum of one day of sick leave in a week among others. One Fairtrade certified producer organisation in Ethiopia had championed the allocation of four months of maternity leave (as opposed to the normal three months), paternity leave (which is not available in most POs), and a two-hour nursing break each day for lactating mothers for up to one year. This sets a new benchmark in the industry.

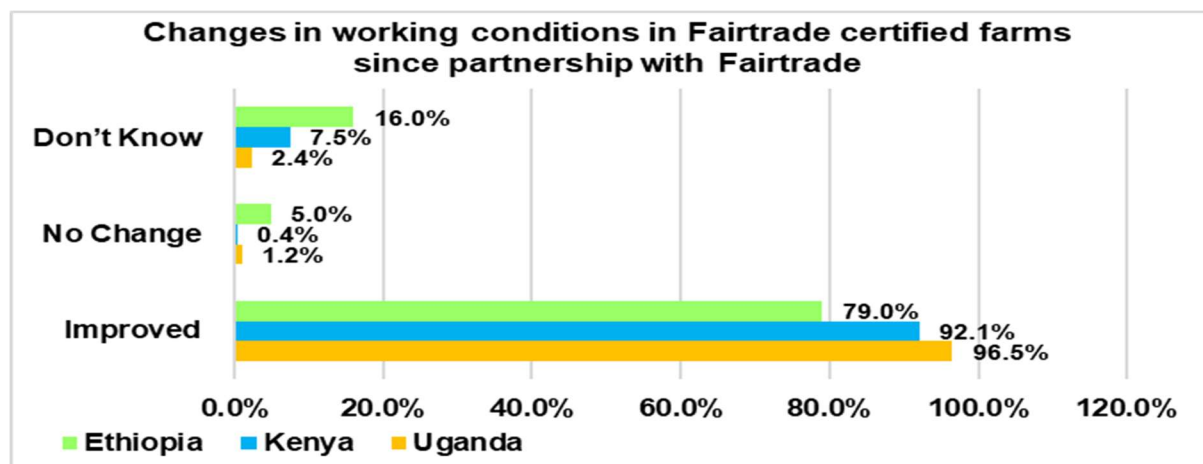
Workers in Fairtrade certified producer organisations held varied views on what decent working conditions entailed. Some of the commonly mentioned indicators included proper occupational health and safety standards ($n=343$, 24.3 percent), adequate salaries and wages ($n=242$, 17.8 percent), freedom from discrimination ($n=118$, 13.3 percent), respect for labour laws ($n=161$, 11.4 percent) and overtime compensation ($n=156$, 11.0 percent). These findings suggest that the most mentioned indicators were similar to the issues that Fairtrade and the Fairtrade Standards address and emphasise. The findings were mirrored in non-Fairtrade certified POs. Asked how they would describe the working conditions on their farms, a majority ($n=376$, 88.9 percent) said satisfactory while another ten percent ($n=46$, 10.9 percent) said fair. This is shown in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13: Nature of working conditions in Fairtrade certified producer organisations



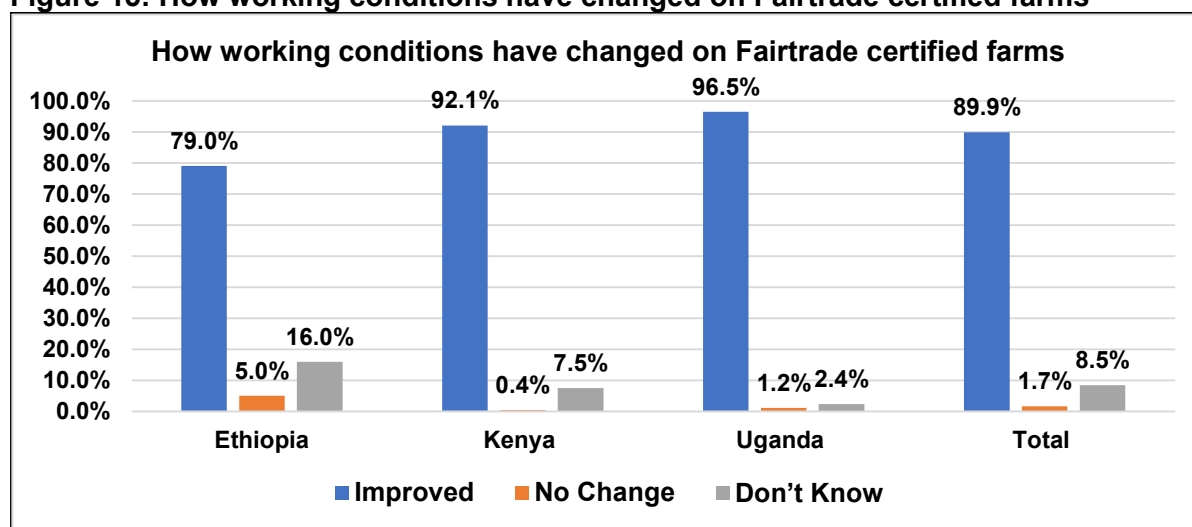
This finding was mirrored across all farms, including the non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations. Additionally, focus group discussions with workers affirmed that there was provision and timely replacement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), provision of clean water, meals, appropriate sanitation facilities, bonuses, and changing rooms for both male and female workers. Discussions with management indicated that POs had significantly improved workers' welfare. This was reported in all Fairtrade certified producer organisations. Discussions with workers in non-Fairtrade certified organisations indicated that workers faced challenges in accessing adequate PPE. Our researcher also observed that the use of PPE was seldom emphasised in the non-Fairtrade certified POs where workers were seen working without gloves, or helmets and, in some cases, without overalls.

Figure 14: Changes in working conditions in Fairtrade certified producer organisations



Overall, a majority of workers across all Fairtrade certified POs ($n=381$, 89.8 percent) affirmed that conditions had improved since the farms partnered with Fairtrade. This is shown in Figure 15 below. No worker in any Fairtrade certified producer organisations indicated that conditions had worsened.

Figure 15: How working conditions have changed on Fairtrade certified farms



When asked about the most significant changes that Fairtrade had contributed to with regard to working conditions, several issues were mentioned, including improved salaries ($n=233$, 16 percent), better occupational health and safety conditions ($n=217$, 15 percent), improved worker welfare through the Fairtrade Premium ($n=193$, 13 percent), improved relations with the employer and management ($n=195$, 13.1 percent), and empowerment of workers through capacity building in areas such as gender ($n=153$, 10.3 percent). Other issues mentioned were freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining through unions and improved knowledge of workers' rights.

There were, however, some variations in findings across producer organisations. Some workers in focus group discussions did not know of any linkage between Fairtrade and improvements in workers' salaries. Others noted the contribution of Fairtrade towards building the capacity of workers' unions, which had enabled the unions to adequately engage with employers on the terms of employment. To them, the unions had represented

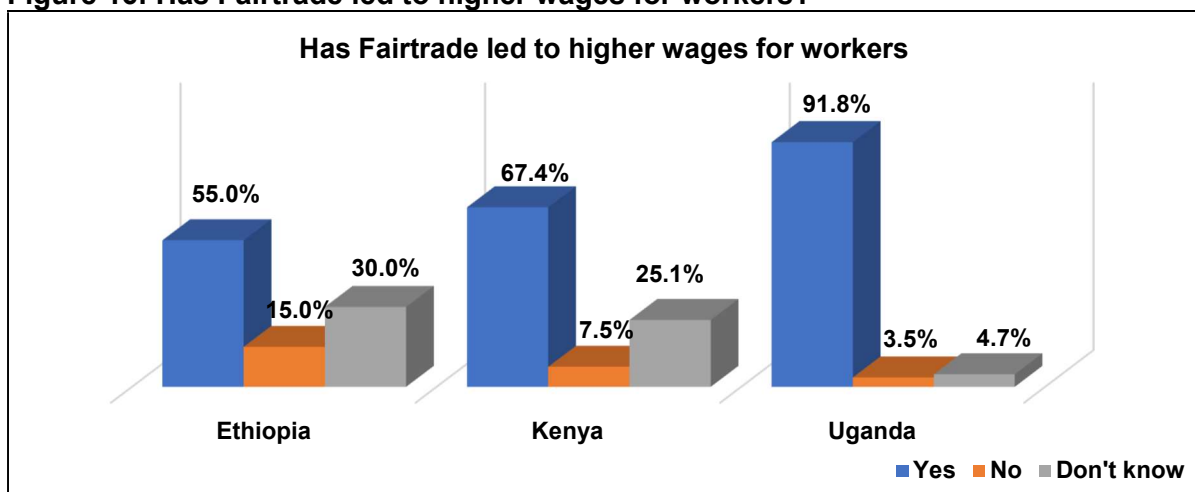
workers effectively in negotiating better salaries. Unions were also reported to have played a role in representing workers before management whenever workers were unfairly victimised. The direct linkage between the union representatives at PO level (shop stewards) and the union representatives at head office level gives the farm-level union representatives legitimacy and a voice. In addition, this enables farm-level worker representatives to benchmark working conditions, wages, and worker benefits with the wider industry, thus ensuring that the interests of workers are adequately addressed.

Management representatives in all producer organisations held the view that, in general, fewer performance complaints were reported. This was partly attributed to workers' improved confidence in themselves and their ability. This, in turn, was partly a result of sensitising them on their rights, developing leadership skills, and – to a large extent – stronger relations with the management. Workers were keen to deliver on expectations of them, as none – especially those with growing children – were eager to leave their workplaces. Benefits from Fairtrade and the general improvement in working conditions were a strong attraction, which led to high demand for jobs from prospective workers, including workers from non-Fairtrade certified POs. One management representative from a Fairtrade certified producer organisation noted:

“We have a large pool of workers who, by all means, are not in a hurry to leave. Those who tend to leave are mainly the young workers who are yet to settle and who go to seek greener pastures in the Gulf. Every morning we have tens or hundreds of people at the gate looking for work. Unfortunately, there is only so much we can do.” KII with management representative of a Fairtrade certified producer organisation in Uganda.

Based on their knowledge, more than two-thirds of the workers ($n=294$, 69.3 percent) indicated that Fairtrade had led to higher wages on their farms when compared to wages in non-Fairtrade certified POs that they knew of, while less than one-quarter ($n=94$, 22.2 percent) did not know. This is shown in Figure 16 below.

Figure 16: Has Fairtrade led to higher wages for workers?

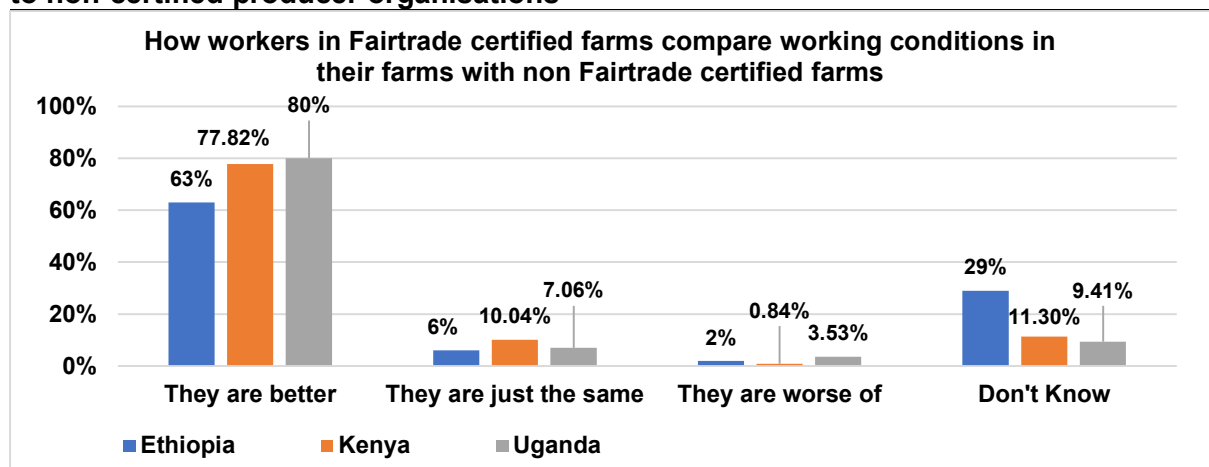


Across the three countries, findings show more workers in Ethiopia and Uganda reporting that Fairtrade had led to higher wages, mostly through floor wage regulations. It should be noted that the floor wage was set at the same level as the current CBA in Kenya and therefore did not lead to a wage increase there. Ethiopia, however, does not have a CBA or a national minimum wage while Uganda's national minimum wage is way too low. However, wages of flower workers in East Africa are still far below the existing Living Wage

benchmarks for the respective countries and need to be improved further. Indirectly, worker representatives in Kenya and Uganda lauded Fairtrade for building the capacity of worker representatives in the unions to constructively engage in the CBA negotiations and process. They noted that this had led to progressive improvements in working conditions. Capacity building of workers and worker representatives seems to have created a sense of confidence in workers' engagement with the CBA process. This could also explain the reported improvement in relations between workers and management and the reduced incidences of worker unrest in most Fairtrade certified producer organisations, which resulted in improved efficiency and better use of time.

Asked how workers in non-Fairtrade certified POs compare working conditions with Fairtrade certified producer organisations they knew, a few ($n=13$, 13.5 percent) reported that working conditions in the non-Fairtrade certified farms were better, others ($n=23$, 23.9 percent) said conditions were just the same while more than half ($n=52$, 54.2 percent) did not know. By contrast, three-quarters of workers in Fairtrade certified POs ($n=317$, 74.8 percent) reported that working conditions on their farms were better than those on non-Fairtrade certified farms. Others ($n=36$, 8.5 percent) said they were just about the same while about one-seventh ($n=64$, 15.1 percent) were not aware. Only a small number ($n=7$, 1.7 percent) said the conditions were worse in Fairtrade certified producer organisations. Notably, when workers in non-Fairtrade certified POs were asked in focus group discussions what they would want to see improved, more than half said they wanted their farm to join Fairtrade so that they could enjoy the benefits they hear about from their friends who work in certified POs.

Figure 17: Working conditions in Fairtrade certified producer organisations compared to non-certified producer organisations



Findings from workers in focus group discussions indicated that discrimination and harassment had drastically reduced following their producer organisation's partnership with Fairtrade, resulting in improved fairness in recruitment and promotion practices which were now largely based on merit. This was, for example, reported in six Fairtrade certified POs, but also by some workers in the two target non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations. Discussions with management representatives in all Fairtrade certified POs affirmed this finding, noting that, to a large extent, practices in Fairtrade certified producer organisations tended to influence those in non-Fairtrade certified POs. In describing what they understood by empowerment, one worker had this to say:

“You find that there are opportunities given to those who qualify whether male or female. They say that there is no discrimination and so you will find that there is some kind of balance when offering job opportunities. For instance,

for adverts within, you may find that ladies as well as men are considered for various positions. If a lady goes through, it is fine and also if a man is the best, then it is also fine. Even when it comes to leadership, it is the same thing. That is why you find that we have a gender committee that handles issues of both females and male.” FDG with workers in a Fairtrade certified producer organisation in Uganda.

Regarding monthly salaries, about three-quarters of workers ($n=323$, 76.6 percent) were in the basic payment bracket of US\$51¹⁵ to US\$150/month or US\$1.70-US\$5/day before any allowances. The World Bank threshold of US\$1.90 PPP/person/day (now adjusted to US\$2.15 PPP/person/day as of September 2022) would translate to about US\$57/month. It is noted that Fairtrade has already adapted the floor wage to the new PPP/person/day as well as a new calculation that considers inflation¹⁶. Before this takes effect, one would estimate the monthly pay in US dollars with caution due to the weakening of local currencies against the dollar. The minimum wage in Kenya as of 1 July 2022 was Ksh8,109.9/month, which was equivalent to US\$66.46/month.

Close to half of the workers ($n=192$, 44.9 percent) reported that their pay allowed them to meet most of their needs, while more than one-third ($n=169$, 39.5 percent) said the pay was not enough to meet most of their needs. The trend in this finding is also noted in the non-Fairtrade certified POs. As observed, the impact of the Fairtrade floor wage was not felt in Kenya due to higher industry wages realised due to the existence of the CBA negotiated wages. While the impact of the floor wage would have been more impactful in Ethiopia, which has no minimum wage, and in Uganda, where the minimum wage is relatively low, the gains were quickly eroded by surging inflation, especially in Ethiopia.

The impact of inflation on the workers' salaries in the wake of instability in Ethiopia and Europe cannot be ignored. Data from Ethiopia¹⁷, for example, shows that inflation there hit a high of 37.7 percent on a monthly base in May 2022. In Kenya¹⁸, inflation hit 9.6 percent in October 2022 and 10.7 percent in Uganda¹⁹ in October 2022.

¹⁵ US\$1 = KSh122, USh3,744 and Ethiopian Birr 53.45 on 1 December 2022

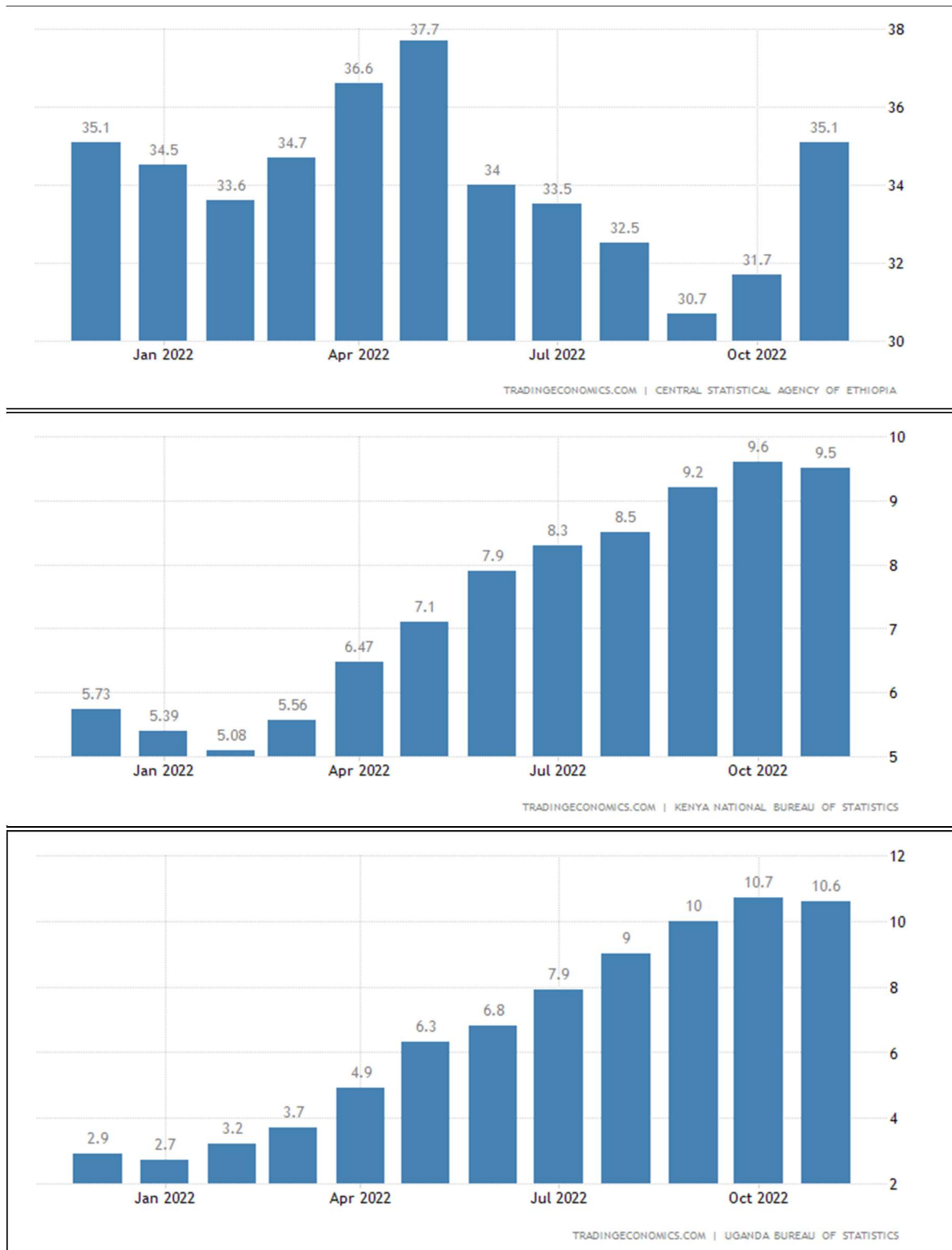
¹⁶ [Floor-wages-in-Flowers.pdf \(fairtrade.net\)](#)

¹⁷ <https://tradingeconomics.com/ethiopia/inflation-cpi>

¹⁸ <https://tradingeconomics.com/kenya/inflation-cpi>

¹⁹ <https://tradingeconomics.com/uganda/inflation-cpi>

Figure 18: Reported inflation trends in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda



Data shows that relatively low inflation rates at the beginning of the year were on significant rise in Kenya and Uganda. The real impact of high inflation rates is reduced purchasing power. In Ethiopia, for example, salary increases to the minimum wage level would mean little with such a big reduction in peoples' purchasing power. Salary increases would, therefore, make much more sense to workers if they considered inflation.

Findings from the survey with workers indicated that there were proportionately more workers in Fairtrade certified producer organisations (*n=155, 36.4 percent*) earning approximately US\$101-150/month compared to non-Fairtrade certified POs earning the same amounts (*n=19, 19.8 percent*). Similarly, there were proportionately more workers in non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations (*n=70, 72.9 percent*) earning US\$100 and below each month compared to workers in Fairtrade certified POs (*n=176, 48.6 percent*). Others (*n=62, 14.9 percent*) in Fairtrade certified producer organisations earned more than US\$151 each month compared to about a handful (*n=7, 7.3 percent*) in non-Fairtrade certified POs who earned more than US\$151. This suggests that wages in Fairtrade certified producer organisations are comparatively higher than those in non-Fairtrade certified POs.

Despite the diverse interventions to improve working conditions on Fairtrade certified farms, more needs to be done to consolidate and enhance the gains already made. Discussions with union officials, for example, noted that wages in the flower sector remained comparatively lower than wages in other supply chains, such as coffee and sisal, and are still far below the living wage benchmarks. The availability of high quality Personal Protective Equipment and timely replacement of the same also remained an issue of concern. Additionally, only 22 percent of potential or eligible workers were members of the union meaning over three-quarter of workers were still not in one. According to union representatives, this could compromise effective protection of their rights.

2.3.3 Fairtrade response to COVID-19 pandemic

To mitigate the effect of COVID-19, Fairtrade allowed flexibility on the use of the Fairtrade Premium to allow workers to make rapid exceptional decisions on Premium use without convening a General Assembly of workers as long as the Fairtrade Premium Committee and the company were in agreement. This included a decision to distribute up to 100 percent of Premiums in cash or in kind up to 31 December 2020. This allowed workers to implement several interventions, including purchasing food baskets for workers, distributing sanitisers and facemasks, and setting up community handwashing stations.

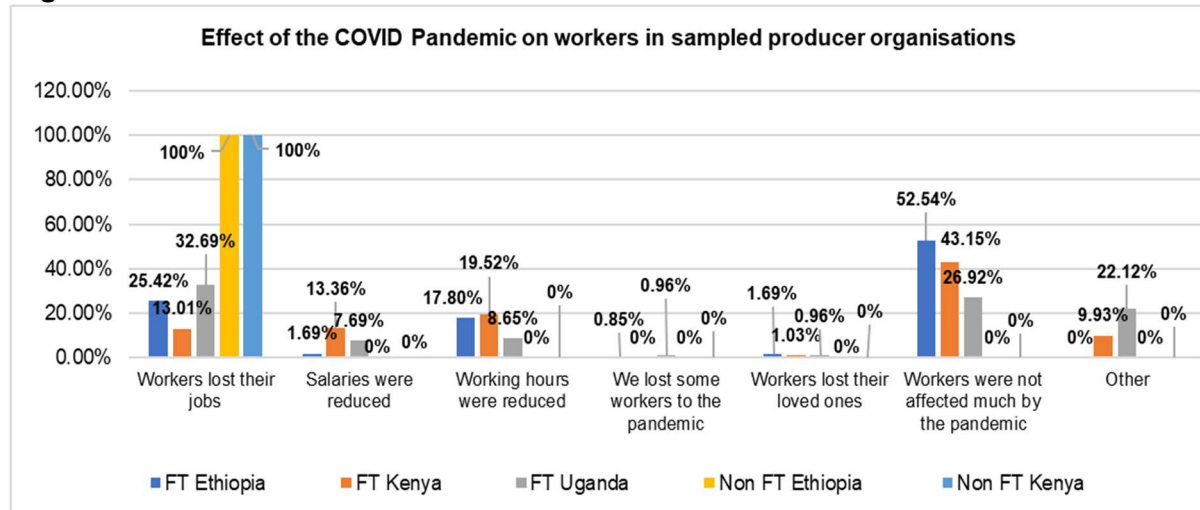
Across all three countries, producer organisations made various efforts to hang on amid flower losses and uncertainties. Findings from the workers' survey show close to half of the workers in Fairtrade certified POs (*n=219, 42.7 percent*) reported that workers were not affected much by the pandemic. This was mirrored in Ethiopia and Kenya. However, in Uganda about one-third of workers (*n=34, 32.7 percent*) reported that some workers lost their jobs, a view that was also shared by about a quarter (*n=30, 25.4 percent*) of workers in Ethiopia. In comparison, all workers in non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations reported the loss of jobs for some of their workers as the main effect of the pandemic.

With close to half of workers reporting minimal effects from the pandemic, this suggests that most Fairtrade certified POs with support from management put measures in place to minimise disruption to workers' lives. Such measures were reported to include food donations, the provision of masks, sanitizers handwashing stations, sensitisation sessions on the pandemic, and support towards vaccination whereby external medical providers would, in collaboration with the producer organisations, undertake mass vaccinations in the producer clinics or nearby facilities. This allowed more workers to access the vaccines.

The Fairtrade Producer Relief Fund and producer resilience funds that POs received, as well as the Fairtrade Premiums, were channelled towards COVID-19 mitigation. These findings mirror those of a study on how Fairtrade builds producer resilience with COVID-19 as a case study, which established that 48 percent of producers stated that they experienced moderate

to no impact from COVID-19²⁰. The difference between 48 percent in that study and 42.7 percent in this study could be a result of increased normalisation at the producer level in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. A closer look at this finding for Fairtrade and non-Fairtrade certified POs in each of the three countries is seen in Figure 19 below.

Figure 19: Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on workers in sampled producer organisations



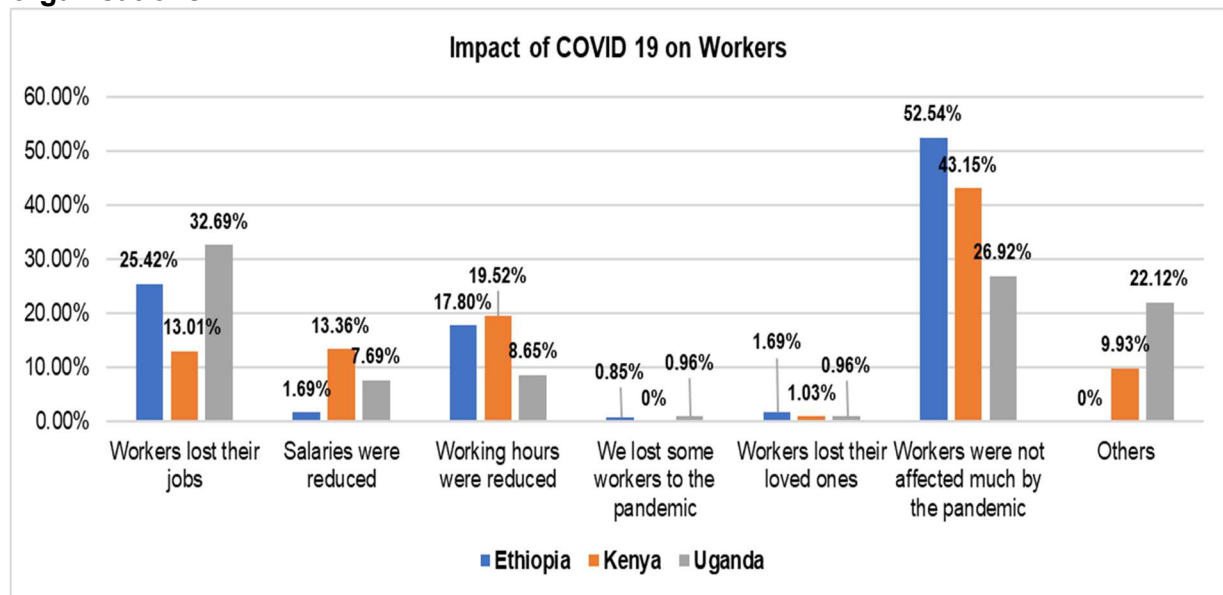
Despite all those efforts, not all negative impacts could be avoided. Workers in Fairtrade certified producer organisations reported that about 19.8 percent ($n=102$) of workers did unfortunately lose their jobs. Another group ($n=88$, 17.2 percent) had their working hours reduced while less than one in ten ($n=49$, 9.3 percent) had their salaries reduced.

This was confirmed by union representatives in Uganda where approximately 45 people were reportedly laid off. In this country, layoffs affected two POs, one of which was struggling before the pandemic. In Ethiopia, workers did not lose any earnings, even after taking leave, thanks to a government subsidy to the industry. No formal layoffs were reported in Kenya where management representatives and union representatives indicated that producers signed a short-term addendum of the relevant Collective Bargaining Agreements, which stipulated measures that farms could take to cushion workers. Key among the provisions was for workers to proceed on leave for those who had leave days. Following the amendment to the CBA, others were asked to take unpaid leave, which is otherwise not allowed. About 1.2 percent of workers lost loved ones. A more detailed look at the findings across the sampled producers is seen in Table 5 below.

Management representatives across Fairtrade certified and non-Fairtrade certified farms reported that no workers lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic, nor did any worker suffer a salary reduction. On some Fairtrade certified farms, those that had attained the age of retirement proceeded to take retirement and were paid their dues. Management view was this: the fact that some workers retired and that some of those who went on unpaid leave may have looked for other opportunities and, therefore, did not return to work could have led workers to assume that they were sacked, which was not the case.

²⁰<https://files.fairtrade.net/publications/Executive-Summary-Fairtrade-certification-and-producer-resilience-study-Oct-2022.pdf>

Figure 20: Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on workers in Fairtrade certified organisations



Management representatives noted that COVID-19 occasioned disruption that affected Fairtrade certified and non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations in June, July and August 2020, and farms began resuming operations by September 2020. To mitigate against the disruption caused by the pandemic, and following social dialogues with unions and workers representatives, POs adopted different approaches based on their contexts and in line with their national labour law guidelines. Mitigation measures, as noted above, slightly differed across countries. Workers in Ethiopia benefitted from tax waivers, delayed remittance of statutory deductions and a government subsidy to the industry, which enabled employers to continue paying salaries.

In Uganda, the union engaged in social dialogues with employers given that the CBA had not been finalised. From the dialogues, agreements were reached for workers to proceed on any pending leave and for others to take unpaid leave. In order to retain as many workers as possible, a reduction in wages was also agreed on one farm. This lasted for the period the country experienced the lockdown and three months after the lockdown. Normal wages were reinstated in October 2020. In Kenya, an addendum to the CBA was signed stipulating short-term measures, including pending and unpaid leave and rotational working arrangements. It was notable across all countries that no formal layoffs were reported except the 45 cases in Uganda, some of which were in a non-Fairtrade certified producer organisation. Across all countries, Fairtrade supported the provision of face masks, sanitiser and handwashing stations to workers and community members. Training about COVID-19 and mobilisation of workers and health workers for immunisation campaigns by Fairtrade Premium Committees and other worker representatives were also reported.

The rotational working arrangement in Kenya and the unpaid leave meant workers earned less than they used to, which led some to believe that their salaries had been reduced even without changing their hourly rate because the monthly salaries went down. This meant that they had less to spend on their needs and those of their children, a situation that was further complicated by rising inflation.

The decision to ease the Standard requirements was noted by workers and the management to have been timely. They observed that while they did not lose their jobs, their lives were disrupted in the sense that those without alternative sources of income were unable to work. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that children were sent home from school, so workers had more mouths to feed at the time. Community members were aware of a Fairtrade certified PO in Naivasha who organised the vaccination of staff in addition to providing them with food for about six months into the pandemic.

From the findings, producer organisations in consultation with social partners did what was practically possible given the circumstances they faced. From the descriptions, some mitigation measures had adverse effects on workers while others did well to cushion workers against loss of jobs and income. Stakeholders observed that useful lessons were learned, which will help make everyone respond better to any similar situations in the future. One union representative noted:

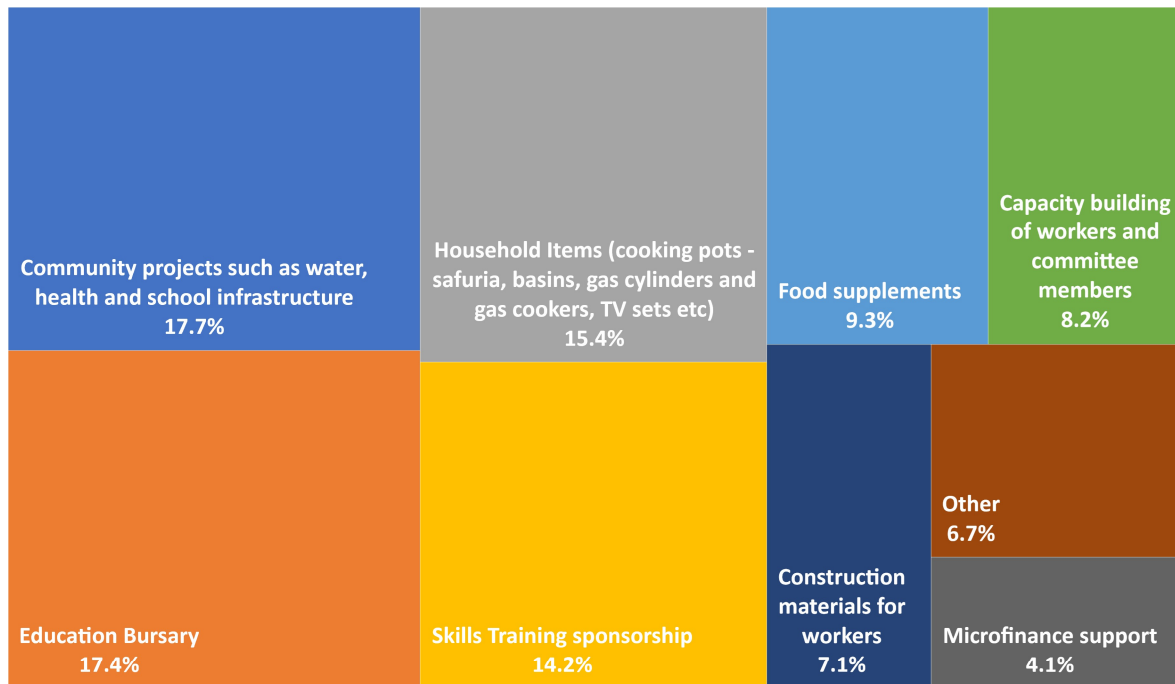
“Everyone was swimming underwater, not knowing for how long. I believe we all did what we could to the best of our ability. Some decisions may not have been the best for both workers and for employers.” Key informant interview with union representative in Kenya

2.3.4 Benefits from Fairtrade Premiums

The Fairtrade Premium stands out as a key highlight in all Fairtrade certified producer organisations, especially in Kenya. This was mainly because of its impact on workers. While a majority of general workers ($n=304$, 71.0 percent) were not aware of the average amounts in annual Premiums paid to their farms, worker representatives and management representatives were.

Notwithstanding, workers were generally aware of where the Premium money earned by their farms was invested as shown in Figure 21 below. Findings show that workers' perspectives on how Premiums were used strongly mirrored the actual trends reported by Fairtrade Premium Committees and available in the official Fairtrade records. These are discussed below.

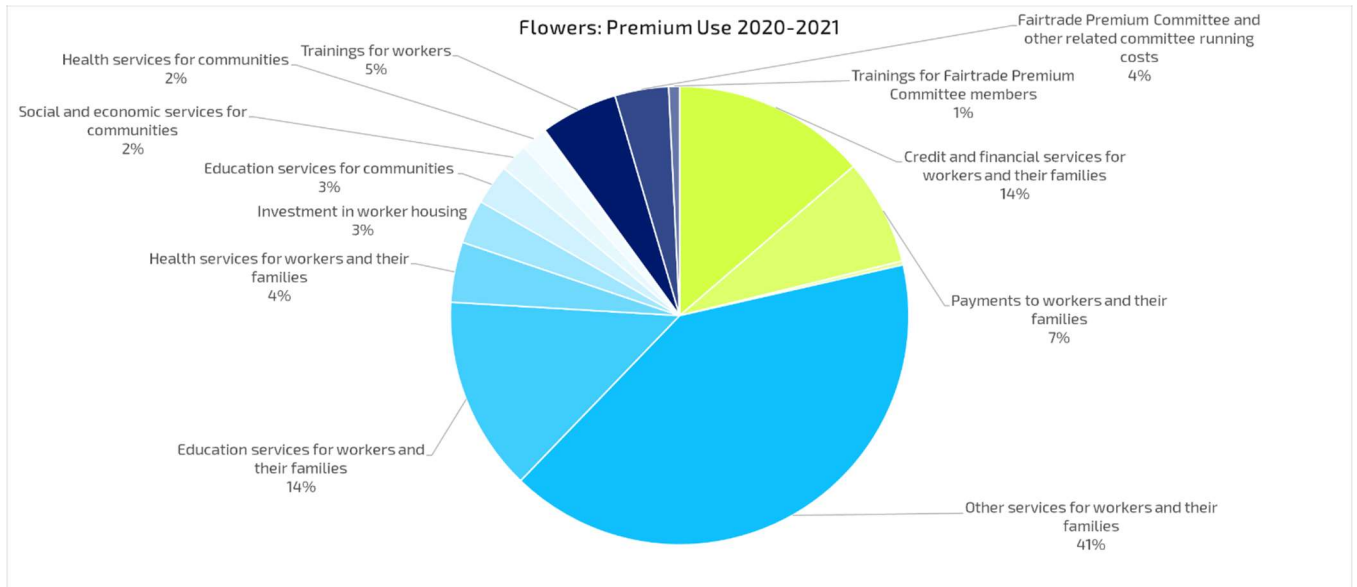
Figure 21: Type of project supported by Fairtrade Premiums



As seen in Figure 21, workers reported that most amounts went into community projects, such as the building of schools, school laboratories, school feeding programmes, payment of teachers, bridges, housing, water projects, health facilities, roads, support for social activities (such as football teams), education of staff and dependents, household items, skills training, food supplements, capacity building of workers and committee members, and microfinance. Additionally, spending went into day-care centres for workers’ children, FPC Income Generation Activities (IGAs), such as buses that they hired out; salons, tents and chairs that they rented for community events; convenience shops for workers, where they could also access subsidized food and household commodities; public address systems, and flour mills. Other funds went into waste management and tree planting.

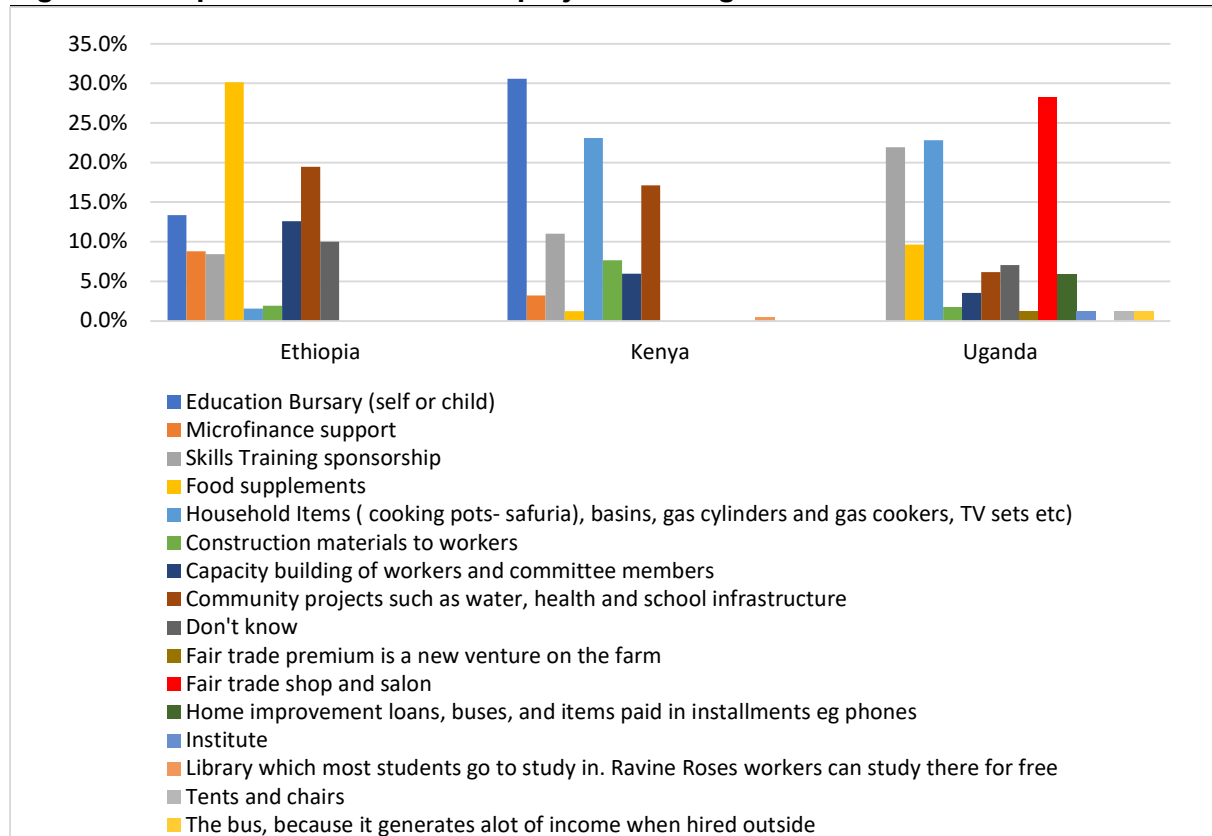
This was compared with the official data from Fairtrade’s CODImpact database on how Premiums are used. The 2020-2021 data shows that close to half of all Premiums (41 percent) went into other services to workers and their families, 14 percent went into education services for workers and their families, and the same percentage went to credit and financial services for workers and their families. Findings show that workers’ perspectives compared positively with the official data in certain categories, such as education services for workers and their families, and other services for workers and their families, including skills training, food supplements, and investments in housing among others. Figure 22 below further illustrates how Fairtrade Premiums are used based on official Fairtrade data.

Figure 22: Fairtrade Premium use 2020-2021



Findings show that workers' preferences varied from what, in their view, Premiums were spent on. Figure 23 below shows what workers reported were most popular among them. In Ethiopia, food supplements and community projects were most mentioned. In Kenya, it was education bursaries followed by household items, while in Uganda it was a Fairtrade subsidy shop, household items and income-generating activities for the premium committee were mentioned. Overall education bursaries ($n=235$, 22.8 percent) topped the list followed by household items ($n=181$, 17.6 percent), and community projects at ($n=170$, 16.5 percent).

Figure 23: Popular Premium-funded projects among workers



The different views on the use of Fairtrade Premiums suggested that the actual spending does not perfectly match what workers valued most.. This is despite participatory processes within the certified POs aimed at providing workers with a voice on how the Premiums should be used. The research team observed the media through which information on the use of Premiums is shared within the POs may not necessarily reach some workers who have low levels of formal education or who have been out of school for decades, in a manner that they would easily understand. Workers in FGDs reported that language used was a barrier, while meetings where Premium use was explained were few and often brief. It was also noted earlier that workers were not aware of the exact amounts their farms received in Premiums. All this suggests gaps in information sharing and the necessity of providing workers with information about the amounts and usage of Fairtrade Premiums in a language they understand and using materials and platforms that are relevant to workers' situations.

A majority of workers ($n=377$, 88.1 percent) had individually benefitted or a household member had benefitted from Fairtrade Premiums. A few workers ($n=47$, 10.9 percent) said they or a member of their household had not benefitted. For those who had benefitted, one-quarter ($n=205$, 26.2 percent) had received household items, ($n=134$, 17.1 percent) had received bursaries, ($n=102$, 13 percent) had received food supplements while ($n=91$, 11.6 percent) had directly benefitted from community targeted projects. Other benefits mentioned were construction materials, skills training, capacity building of workers, and microfinance support. Acquisition of new household items was the most important change seen by more than a quarter of workers ($n=115$, 26.9 percent), followed by an opportunity to further education for themselves or a child ($n=94$, 22 percent). An estimated one in ten ($n=44$, 10.2 percent) said they had had an opportunity to further their education. More than one-third of

workers ($n=160$, 37.4 percent) had received a cash bonus, the majority of them in producer organisations in Ethiopia and Uganda. In this next section, we summarise the impact of Fairtrade Premiums as reported by workers and key informants who we interviewed as well as from existing reports.

i. *Support for education services*

Construction of schools and school facilities, such as classrooms, laboratories and washrooms; payment of teachers, and provision of learning materials (such as books), uniforms and writing materials all improve access and quality of education. Furthermore, the construction of sanitary facilities in schools ensures safety and improved hygiene. Fairtrade Premiums have been used in constructed schools from the beginning of the project, as reported by POs in Kenya and Ethiopia, and improved school infrastructure, including classrooms, in all three countries. In one producer organisation in Kenya, for example, most pupils graduating from primary schools did not progress to high school. Workers observed that there were no day high schools around the farm and that a majority of them, as well as the local community, could not afford the high cost of boarding schools.

Using the Fairtrade Premiums, a new school was constructed. The new school improved access to high school and currently has an enrolment of over 1,000 pupils, all drawn from workers' households and the local community. According to workers, teachers, and stakeholders interviewed, this school pulled children from possible drug abuse and child labour, which they reported to have been rampant in the area before. A woman, whose father still works on the farm, and who attended the Fairtrade-funded secondary school, worked as a medical practitioner in a leading private hospital in the city of Nairobi. Both the father and the farm management acknowledged that the girl would have easily dropped out from school after primary level, ended up as a casual labourer, and possibly fallen victim to early marriage. Hers is a story that mirrors those of hundreds of other girls and boys who have benefitted from similar education bursaries. A tracer study that documents the experiences of Fairtrade Premium beneficiaries for education would support the documentation of long-term impacts. In a similar example in Ethiopia, a school constructed and still supported by Fairtrade remains the largest in Batu (Ziway), and a top performer in delivering quality education to the workers' children and those from the local community. Another PO in the area also supports a school feeding programme that ensures higher retention of children in school. Support for school infrastructure was also reported by three producer organisations in Kenya.

Besides infrastructure and material support for schools, financial support in the form of bursaries for workers and their immediate dependents remains popular across POs. From the survey with workers, an education bursary for workers and their children was mentioned by 17 percent ($n=134$) of workers as a benefit they had received. In addition, Fairtrade data²¹ shows that 20 percent of all Premiums are spent on education services for workers and families. Bursaries allow uninterrupted learning, and bring peace of mind to workers, who are also able to use some money for the welfare of their other children. Focus group discussions with workers indicated that they have been able to educate their children in schools they would ordinarily be able to afford courtesy of the bursary programmes funded by the Premiums.

Virtually all flower producers have positive and inspiring stories of people who have benefitted from the education bursaries funded by flower Premiums which have contributed to their job advancement. At least two alumni have been featured on the Fairtrade Africa

²¹ <https://www.fairtrade.net/impact/top-7-products-dashboard>

website²². Discussions with management and local leaders affirm that these bursaries have shaped the future of young people who would otherwise have had limited chances of success. They observed that with the rising cost of living, many workers couldn't afford the cost of tuition in good secondary schools or colleges for their children. According to the workers, there was a very high likelihood that many of their children would have ended up as school dropouts. They observed that they had seen the same happen to other children in their neighbourhood, but the Fairtrade Premiums came to their rescue. According to management, education bursaries have played a major role in the retention of workers as well as the high demand for jobs in Fairtrade certified producer organisations.

One challenge noted by workers and management representatives was the sustainability of the education support in the absence of the Fairtrade Premiums. Overall, sales dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic and producers and workers anticipated a drop in Premiums. This also implied that, without Fairtrade sales, education support for their workers and their children would be in jeopardy. This means there is a need for FPC's to pursue more sustainable approaches to financing education services, especially direct bursaries.

ii. *Community infrastructure*

Fairtrade Premiums have supported the construction of community infrastructure such as footbridges and access roads. This was reported in Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia. Roads and bridges not only make the movement of people and goods easier and faster but also made it safer for people – especially children – when they cross rivers, and greatly shorten the distances they previously had to cover to get to school or the market. This was also reported to have made it easier for the local community to transport goods to and from the markets.

iii. *Health services*

Fairtrade Premiums have been invested in diverse health projects aimed at enhancing the health care of workers and community members. Key investments include a jointly constructed maternity wing in Nairobi Women's Hospital - Naivasha branch, where different POs pooled resources to expand the maternity wing²³. The Sher hospital, also funded by Fairtrade Premiums and other stakeholders continues to offer top-of-the-range health services to workers and the local community in Batu (Ziway)²⁴ as does Wagagai Clinic²⁵ in Uganda and Aquila clinic in Kenya²⁶, all of which are supported by the Fairtrade Premiums. Producer organisations offer free medical care for workers and heavily subsidised health services for the local community. Through Fairtrade Premiums, POs in Kenya and Uganda support a range of services, including HIV-AIDS awareness raising, cervical and other cancer awareness and screening, diabetes diagnosis and awareness, immunisation outreach, and Hepatitis B screening. Critical cases are then referred to larger health facilities on a need basis. Support for health services has not only improved the health of workers. Workers' representatives we spoke to mentioned that overall, the health of mothers and their children had improved, while they did not have the data, they believed that child mortality rates could have reduced in their areas. This impression was also shared by community leaders interviewed. Better health services reduce absenteeism among workers and saves time for those who need health care. Without the clinics, they would have to travel and wait long hours for services in alternative health facilities.

²²<https://fairtradeafrica.net/?s=alumni>

²³ <http://www.florinews.com/index.php/past-featured-articles/40-past-featured-articles/83-naivasha-women-hospital-a-beneficiary-of-fairtrade>

²⁴ <https://sherethiopia.com/social-responsibility/sher-hospital/>

²⁵ <https://www.wagagai.com/blog/project/health-center/>

²⁶ <https://healthdigest.co.ke/listings/aquilla-farm-medical-clinic/>

iv. *Purchase of household items*

In-kind projects are prominent in most producer organisations. Fairtrade Premiums are used to purchase household or home improvement items for workers, such as construction materials, utensils, gas cookers, gas cylinders, electronics, water dispensers, bed duvets, and water tanks among others. Workers choose these commodities. While these items appear trivial, discussions with workers affirmed the extent to which they have contributed to building their self-esteem. Home ownership and the type of house is a big achievement for workers, especially female workers given that this has in most cultures been seen as patriarchal role. The ability to serve drinking water from a water dispenser was also reported by workers to be an achievement, given that not many of them would ordinarily afford a dispenser. Indeed, more than two-thirds ($n=302$, 70.6 percent) of workers confirmed that they retained the in-kind items that they received. The in-kind items have, for example, enabled many workers to replace the use of firewood and charcoal with energy-saving solutions and gas cookers. Workers received water tanks that enable them to harvest water for domestic use. Focus group discussions with workers affirmed that many of them had managed to complete or improve their houses through in-kind support, which enabled them to acquire construction materials and home improvement items. It brought them comfort to see their children living under decent roofs. Some POs in Kenya had opted to establish a revolving fund for similar home improvement interventions, which overall would result in a higher chance of sustainability and reduced dependency on annual Premium earnings.

v. *Skills training for workers*

Workers have a chance to gain additional skills with support from Fairtrade Premiums which finance vocational and 'soft skills' development. Across the producer organisations, workers receive support and training in computer skills, communication skills, hairdressing, tailoring and dressmaking, catering, and driving among others. Workers are also able to undertake other certificate courses in, for example, project management and human resources management. The survey with workers indicated that one-seventh ($n=220$, 14.2 percent) of workers had received skills training sponsorship from Fairtrade Premiums. As a result of this training, workers have changed their career paths from general workers to managerial and other higher-skilled jobs. Interviews with management in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia indicated that tens of workers on each farm had been promoted based on additional skills gained while still working on the farms.

One producer in Ethiopia for example had promoted about 15 workers from general workers to drivers and other professional duties such as accountants following skills gained with financial support from Fairtrade Premiums²⁷. One notable case is that of Addis Petros, formerly a harvester at Sher Ethiopia until 2019 when she benefited from the Women School of Leadership supported training on leadership and financial literacy that propelled her to an accountant's job with the local municipality and the running of poultry business²⁸. From all focus group discussions with workers, it was apparent that many of them had established small businesses around the community which they sustained with the support of their household members. They attend to those business in the evenings when they leave work.

vi. *Food security supplements*

To ensure food security, Fairtrade Premiums across POs including in Kenya Uganda, and Ethiopia, provided subsidised or highly discounted food items through the community shops, or canteens, where workers pick food items and pay in instalments or at the end of the month. This ensures the round-the-clock availability of basic food for workers and their families. According to workers in group discussions, before the rolling out of the community shops by Fairtrade joint bodies, workers had difficulties managing a balanced diet three

²⁷ <https://fairtradeafrica.net/from-general-workers-to-skilled-professionals/>

²⁸ <https://fairtradeafrica.net/trained-to-lead-leadership-course-empowered-me-to-uplift-myself-other-women/>

times a day. In some extreme cases, especially in large households with only one breadwinner, children would report to school hungry and would only get to take porridge they got at around 10 o'clock in the morning. They further noted that children would fall ill often as a result of poor diets.

Management representatives and workers interviewed observed that the situation worsened with increases in food prices and the overall cost of living, largely as a result of the global inflation crisis. The management representatives also noted that feeding a large household was costly and many workers run out of food supplies before their next payday. The community shops offer a reprieve for workers, who not only access food items on credit but at favourable prices, compared to open market prices because Fairtrade joint bodies can buy at wholesale and at negotiated prices. They then sell at lower prices given that they were not making profit margins from workers, but to sustain workers' access to basic food items.

vii. Training of committee members

Fairtrade Premiums further support the training of Fairtrade Premium Committee members on Premium management, project management, finance management, and leadership among others, all to enhance their managerial skills and enable them better manage and oversee how Premiums are used. In addition, workers' representatives in focus group discussions reported that Fairtrade-supported training of other workers' committees. Gender committees, for example, were regularly trained and sensitized on gender equality, Workers' representatives in the unions further reported receiving training on topics including freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, negotiation skills, and other relevant topics while the health and safety committees also benefited from regular training on the occupational health and safety of workers within the farms. Individual committee members further reported that they benefitted from training relevant to the role they played in the committees, where for example treasurers have received training in financial management.

All 132 worker representatives interviewed confirmed having received targeted training from Fairtrade at one point or the other. They noted that the training had improved their ability to discharge their roles in the respective committees. Training on gender equality and sexual harassment had for example enabled the gender committees to better train other workers on forms of sexual harassment, how to identify them and where to report them. They also sensitised workers on the gender and sexual harassment policy²⁹, which has been widely adopted on Fairtrade certified farms³⁰. As a result, workers were more cautious of how they behaved towards each other, which they observed had contributed to a reduction in the number of sexual harassment cases across the sampled farms.

Committee members interviewed however noted that general workers did not have as much information as the committee given that they experience challenges reaching out to all workers with the training. They held the view that printing simplified messages or sharing them through mobile phones and in a language workers understand would reach more of them faster.

viii. Microfinance

Micro-lending was also a common product financed by the Fairtrade Premiums. This took the form of home improvement loans, education loans, emergency loans, cash loans, and Savings and Credit and Cooperative Organisation (SACCO) loans, which were often pegged at an agreed ceiling based on the borrowing capability of workers. Access to such finances

²⁹ <https://kw.awcfs.org/article/it-is-thumbs-up-for-womenwork-campaign-as-flower-farms-put-in-place-gender-sensitive-policies-and-practices>

³⁰ See also HIVOS, (2020): Footprints of Change

allowed workers to support other children through school, particularly in the purchase of learning materials to top up where bursaries fell short and to meet other emerging needs in the household. The loans are repaid in instalments and at no interest. More than half of the visited POs were running a micro-lending product funded by Fairtrade Premiums. In one producer organisation in Ethiopia, workers can access loans from the bank guaranteed by the producer. This was empowering in a context where formal financial institutions could not easily lend to the workers.

ix. Day care facilities

This was widely noted to have been one of the most progressive and transformative Fairtrade Premium-funded projects in all Fairtrade certified POs. It requires the producer organisation to provide a crèche or baby care centre where workers can leave their young breastfeeding children when they get back to work from their maternity leave. In these facilities, children are cared for by staff employed by the PO. This project has a major impact on female workers. Firstly, women do not have to worry about where to leave their children when they go to work. This saves most parents the cost of employing a nanny. Lactating mothers have time off to go and breastfeed their children during working hours. Workers served that this not only gives mothers peace of mind but it also improves the health of children as their mothers have better control over what they eat. Female workers reported that it is now possible for children whose mothers can manage it, to be on six months of continuous breastfeeding. As a result of the peace of mind, managers in POs reported that they no longer experienced shortfalls in targets among lactating mothers who previously had to rush home or spend the day worried about their children.

x. Fairtrade Premium Committee IGAs

To build sustainability and generate additional resources that can complement the Fairtrade Premiums, Fairtrade Premium Committees were investing in income generation activities. These include buses that are leased to management for the transportation of workers, or that are available for hire by the community. In one producer organisation, a bus bought using Fairtrade Premiums had been hired by the government for six months at a rate of about US\$1,670/month. Other income generation activities were hair salons, public address systems and tents and chairs for hire, shops for basic commodities, flour mills, rental buildings, restaurants, plates and mugs for hire. These income generation activities were supplementing the Fairtrade Premiums and served to also equip the Fairtrade Premium Committees with skills and experience they could use in the future to run similar businesses on behalf of workers

xi. Housing projects

Besides loans for housing improvements mentioned earlier, Fairtrade Premium funds were also used to buy land and support homeownership for workers. This was, for example, reported in Kenya and the idea would save workers the money they pay in rent and ensure that they and their families could settle permanently. On the other hand, in Ethiopia, a producer was in the process of constructing houses for homeless community members in Batu (Ziway). Sixteen families were destined to benefit from this community project.

Study findings show that a majority of workers had benefitted from Premiums across all countries. In Kenya, for example, the most mentioned benefit was education bursaries, while food supplements topped the list in Ethiopia and Fairtrade shops and salons where workers bought consumables and services on credit was widely mentioned in Uganda. Based on our analysis, the Premium spending was largely reflective of workers' most felt needs. Discussions with management and worker representatives, however, cautioned on the need to ensure spending in more sustainable ventures. One manager in Kenya, for example, noted:

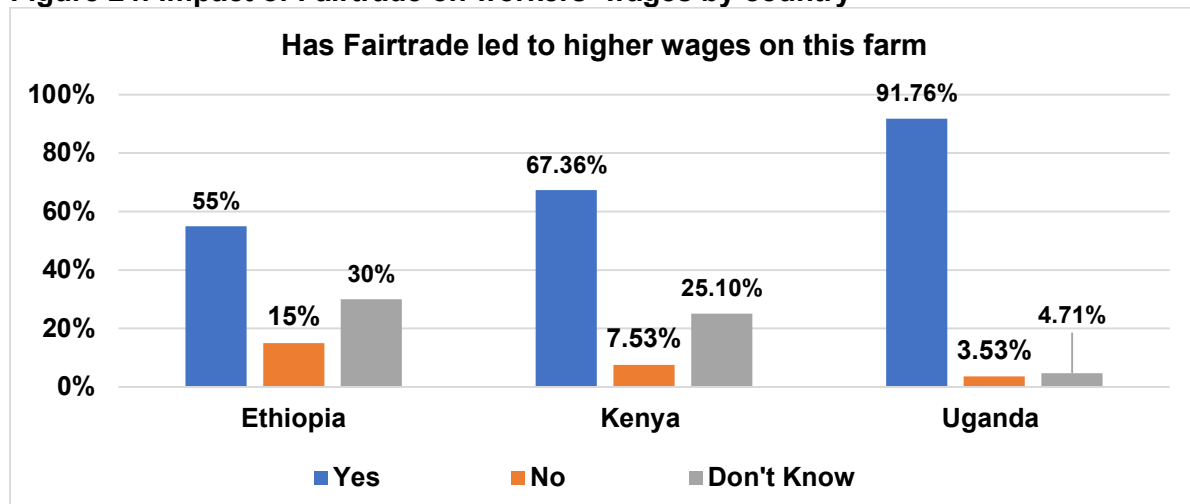
“This pandemic and the war in Europe have shown us that we should not continue doing business as usual. Circumstances can change and workers can find themselves without the Premiums. The farm management can also decide they no longer need the Fairtrade certification. It’s about time workers looked ahead. Bursaries are good. But there is a need to look into other investments as well that can sustain them if things were to change.” KII with management representative in Kenya.

These sentiments point to the need for Fairtrade Premium Committees, supported by Fairtrade, to think deeper about Premium sustainability strategies. Based on the findings, a sustainability assessment of the Premium projects implemented by Fairtrade certified organisations within the context of the Premium’s objectives would need to be studied. This study has also found that projects similar to Premium-funded projects are being carried out by non-Fairtrade certified POs using their Corporate Social Responsibility budgets, suggesting that Fairtrade Premiums could achieve much more, over and above what producer organisations can do as part of their CSR.

2.3.5: Impact of Fairtrade on workers’ incomes

Study findings show that, overall, Fairtrade has positively impacted wages across the three countries. Most workers in each country indicated that Fairtrade had led to higher wages for workers. In Uganda, no fewer than 91.78 percent ($n=78$) reported this.

Figure 24: Impact of Fairtrade on workers’ wages by country



When workers were asked about the most important change they had noted following support from Fairtrade, one-fifth ($n=85$, 20.05 percent) said that they or a household member had begun an income generation activity from the Fairtrade Premium microfinance support, which earns them more income, or they had gained additional skills which they use or can use to earn additional income.

These sentiments were further echoed and expounded on in the focus group discussions with workers. In all group discussions with workers in Fairtrade certified POs, it was noted that workers benefitted from short training and skills development opportunities funded through the Fairtrade Premiums. The courses include computer skills, catering, plumbing, tailoring, driving, and hairdressing. As a result, workers have established small businesses which earn them additional incomes. These include catering services, poultry farming, food outlets, cereal shops, tailoring services, and public transport services using motorbikes among other things. On average, workers in focus groups noted that these businesses generated average turnovers of US\$2-5 each day they operated. Workers in a focus group

discussion, for example, noted:

“I offer catering services on my off days and get an extra income.” Focus group discussion participant in Kenya.

In addition, workers and their families also get education bursaries and funding including low interest loans to pursue professional courses in accounting, procurement, project management, and other topics. These have enabled the beneficiaries to access job opportunities and promotions at work. One management representative in Uganda observed that:

“Additionally, some workers have received promotions within the farm because of the skills gained.” Management representative in Uganda.

Workers noted that the bursaries they and their children receive, and skills support for workers enabled them, their spouses and their other household members to establish income-generating opportunities, which relieved the overall financial burden for workers households.

“Access to education for our kids ... they are now earning an income and they are in a position to sustain themselves while still supporting us, the parents.” Focus group discussion with a worker in Kenya.

A more direct effect on incomes was the Fairtrade requirement for producers to comply with the CBAs and the floor wage. Workers in Kenya affirmed that payment of their salaries was more consistent as a result and that they were able to access loans more easily. Union representatives, however, noted that despite the effects of the floor wages, the flower industry still registered lower wage rates for workers compared to other industries. In Uganda and Ethiopia, salary increments were reported following the implementation of the floor wage. Furthermore, consistent payments backed up by a recommendation from the employer had enabled workers in Ethiopia to access loans from formal financial institutions. On one farm in Uganda, workers received a thirteenth salary, equivalent to one month's salary, every January. This was an additional amount on top of the normal Premiums, and it serves to enable workers financially. Using the thirteenth salary workers invest and pay for their children's education when bursaries are unable to cover all children or all the tuition.

Indirectly, Fairtrade has in one way or another led to cost and time savings for workers. When workers' children are supported with bursaries, workers are left with more disposable income which they can channel into investments. Furthermore, when Fairtrade Premiums finance community services, such as water and health, workers and their families save time previously spent on fetching water and traveling for medical care. A worker in Uganda, for example, noted:

“The water project has greatly reduced the time wasted looking for water and now people can use the time to do other income generation activities.” Focus group discussion with workers in Uganda.

Management representatives we spoke to also confirmed these findings noting that the skills gained had enabled many workers to earn extra incomes. One manager in Ethiopia observed that:

“Through Fairtrade, workers have gained additional skills such as tailoring, hairdressing, and driving which they use to earn an extra income. As a result, most workers' living conditions have improved as their income has been supplemented.” Interview with a manager in Ethiopia.

It was also observed that, through Fairtrade, workers have also been able to generate more income for the FPCs by investing Fairtrade Premiums in IGAs, such as letting out public address systems, chairs, and tents to community members holding social functions and hiring out of buses. These were noted to be income-generating ventures which have an element of sustainability. This notwithstanding, the amounts in net additional incomes for workers were noted to be low and unlikely to have any notable impact in the short term. Their impact was, therefore, largely based on the perspectives of stakeholders. With workers seemingly investing more in businesses, it would be prudent to build their capacity in business management skills to ensure that the ventures they begin are managed effectively and sustained without compromising their primary jobs on the flower farms.

The findings indicate that Fairtrade has contributed to wage increases in the flower industry, especially in Uganda and Ethiopia. However, union officials noted that wage rates in the sector were still low and needed to be improved. In the meantime, workers on Fairtrade certified farms benefitted from bursaries, training, and subsidised consumable goods, which empowered them to save and invest in small businesses that earned them additional incomes. Given this trend, entrepreneurship training would need to be enhanced to ensure workers invest in viable ventures and manage them professionally.

2.3.6 Interventions in non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations

While the work done by Fairtrade Premiums was commendable, study findings show that non-Fairtrade certified POs were actively supporting interventions similar to those in Fairtrade certified POs for improving the working conditions and welfare of workers. Discussions with management representatives in Ethiopia, for example, indicated that a non-Fairtrade producer had, over the years, been supporting farm-level and community-level projects for the benefit of workers and community members through their Corporate Social Responsibility programme. This was also the case in the non-Fairtrade certified producer in Kenya. CSR activities reports for 2019, 2020 and 2021 from Ethiopia, for example, confirm that, over the years, the producer had supported the following projects:

Table 3: Corporate Social Responsibility supported projects by a non-Fairtrade certified farm

Community level projects	Farm and worker-level projects
<i>Construction and operationalisation of a childcare facility</i>	<i>Sporting facility for staff</i>
<i>Development of water infrastructure and supply of water to surrounding farmers</i>	<i>Canteen for provision of meals to staff</i>
<i>Construction of local schools; classroom, office, and desk repairs</i>	<i>Construction of a day care centre</i>
<i>Reforestation programmes for environmentally - dilapidated areas</i>	<i>Support with learning materials for workers' children</i>
<i>Construction of watering points for livestock</i>	<i>Food donations to workers</i>
<i>Construction of an Orphans and Vulnerable Children Centre</i>	<i>Construction of wetland for treatment of farm wastewater</i>
<i>Irrigation water supply for the local community</i>	
<i>Construction of a kindergarten for the local community</i>	
<i>Construction of a bridge</i>	
<i>Sanitary facilities for community members</i>	
<i>Provision of handwashing stations in the community to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic</i>	

Most of these projects were similar to the Fairtrade Premium-funded projects. A notable difference, however, was the emphasis on community-level projects as opposed to the individual workers-focused projects common in Fairtrade certified producer organisations. The CSR activities focused more on community welfare, from which workers would benefit.

Education support for workers' children was noted but not for workers themselves. It was also not clear the extent to which workers benefitted from capacity building on issues such as their rights and gender equality that would empower them to take more control over their own lives and their surroundings. Findings from the non-Fairtrade farm in Kenya, for example, show that through the CSR programme the farm was paying salaries for teachers in addition to supporting the feeding programme in two pre-primary schools.

On the basis of the information we collected from non-Fairtrade certified PO there are lessons that Fairtrade can draw on and potential for Fairtrade Premium committees to achieve much more given the additional resources available from the Premiums. Consultations with management representatives in Fairtrade certified POs indicated that producers had budgets for CSR initiatives. These were however not prominently visible. It would therefore not be prudent for Fairtrade Premiums to finance what could be financed through the CSR budgets.

2.3.7 Benefits to POs and motivation to retain Fairtrade certification

Findings from farm managers established that market access was central to any decision by a producer to pursue Fairtrade certification. To management representatives interviewed, access to Fairtrade markets and marketing avenues, such as the online Fairtrade Premium Platform, were notable benefits. This was reported by all management representatives interviewed. Granted, some producers were not fully satisfied with the quantities they sold as Fairtrade, but all acknowledged that Fairtrade was instrumental for producer access to markets. Fairtrade sales for most producers averaged a quarter or less of their total sales. It was lower for those producing plants. According to producer representatives, while the certification was expensive to maintain, it had additional benefits to producers and mostly the workers. For this reason, it was desirable to retain the certification. The training for producers and the workers was valuable and often came at minimal or no additional cost to producers. The benefits to workers generated from the Premiums were, to many producers, a justification for retaining the certification.

On whether Fairtrade had met producers' expectations, producers had different perspectives. While acknowledging that Fairtrade had opened up new markets for flowers and plants, Fairtrade sales were overall reported to be low. All producers noted that Fairtrade was a highly rated label in the sector. Specifically, they echoed its strong emphasis on socio-economic issues which, they observed, other certification schemes were not as thorough and strong on. One manager, for example, noted:

“Fairtrade is a benchmark upon which we gauge ourselves. Though expensive and time-consuming to comply with, it gives us a very good standing in the market. Its strong focus on the welfare of workers makes it stand out among other standards.”

Another producer representative acknowledged producers' access to Fairtrade markets and noted that:

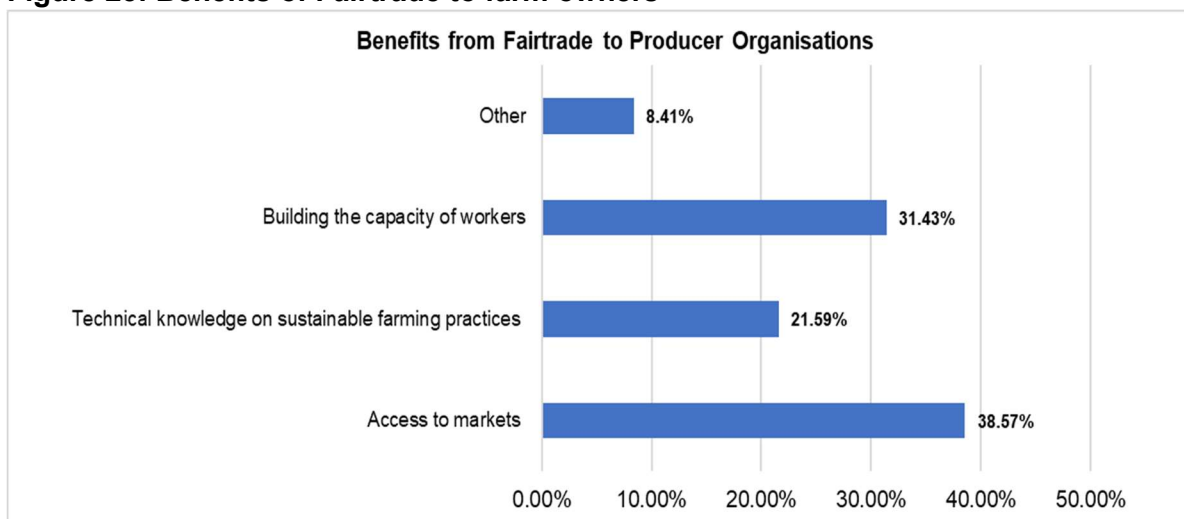
“I cannot compare the Fairtrade certification scheme and other schemes since Fairtrade comes with additional benefits to the company and provides exclusive market access which is good for the company.”

Besides the conventional sales, producers acknowledged the benefit of the Fairtrade sourcing plans signed with traders which guarantee the supply of flowers within defined periods at pre-agreed prices and Premiums. These help cushion producers during off-peak seasons. This notwithstanding, producers were still keen to see growth in Fairtrade sales. Technical support on sustainable farming practices and training on the Standard

requirements, such as gender equality and sexual harassment, were other benefits that producers could not ignore. Discussions with producer representatives indicated that interventions by Fairtrade, including through the Premium projects, had greatly supplemented what the producers provided and improved workers' welfare. Therefore, the benefit to workers made the Fairtrade certification worthwhile among producers. In addition, while certification widened the market opportunities for Fairtrade certified producers, non-Fairtrade certified producers had comparatively fewer market opportunities. Market access was strongly tied to certification schemes, which were also specific to market segments.

Workers had their take on the benefits farm owners enjoyed from the partnership with Fairtrade. More than one-third ($n=243$, 38.6 percent) said access to markets, another third ($n=198$, 31.4 percent) said building capacity of workers, and one-fifth ($n=136$, 21.6 percent) said technical knowledge on sustainable farming practices.

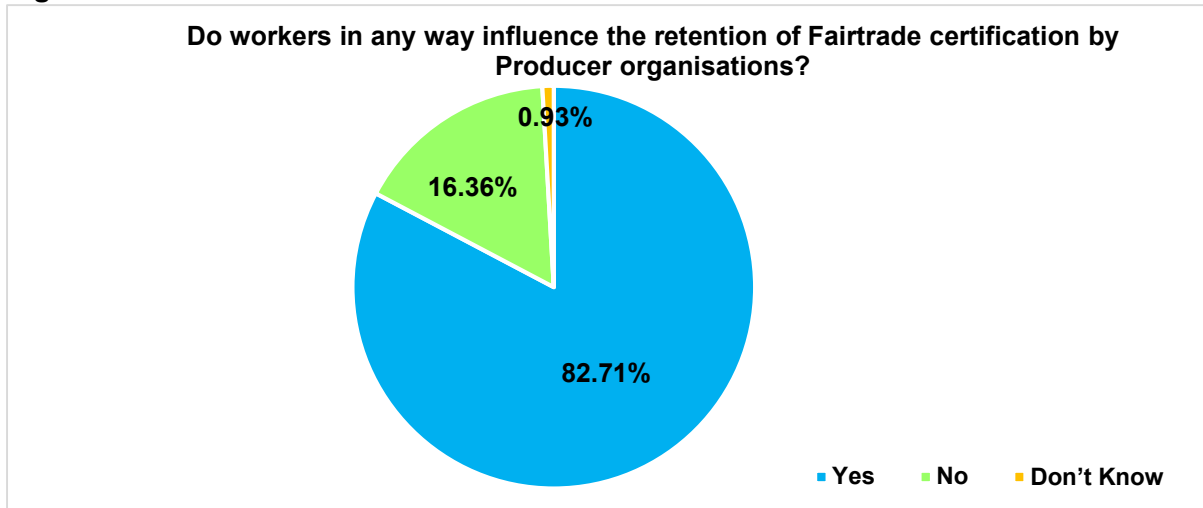
Figure 25: Benefits of Fairtrade to farm owners



On whether the partnership between Fairtrade and the farms had in any way changed relations between management and workers, a majority ($n=375$, 87.6 percent) said it had while about one in ten ($n=47$, 11 percent) were of the view that it hadn't. Group discussions with workers and key informant interviews with management all reported improved relations between workers and management following Fairtrade's partnership with the PO. This was reportedly manifested by, among other things, improved working conditions, freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, regular meetings between management and workers, open discussion, and respect for workers' rights.

On whether workers in any way influence the producer organisation to retain its Fairtrade certification, a majority ($n=354$, 82.7 percent) said they do, one-sixth ($n=70$, 16.4 percent) said they didn't while less than one percent didn't know. This is shown in Figure 26 below.

Figure 26: Do workers influence retention of Fairtrade certification?



Producer organisations also made their observations on the Fairtrade Standards as well as their engagement with Fairtrade Africa. On the Standards, about half of the POs were of the view that reviews should include wider consultations with producers, including the technical staff who are responsible for implementing the Standards. Furthermore, producers had an issue with how the Fairtrade audits are carried out, noting that auditors adopted more of a straight-jacket approach to the interpretation of issues, some of which could be contextualised better. For example, one producer recalled how they were cited for non-conformity on the toilet-to-worker ratio, yet the producer complied with the national legislation. In their view, they should have been subjected to a negotiated compliance approach as long as the inherent risk remained low.

Producers also called for Fairtrade Africa to be better resourced so it could provide more support to producers on compliance. While noting significant progress in staff deployment, Fairtrade Africa was asked to engage sector-specific experts on technical, commercial, agronomy, and advocacy fronts to deal with the key issues affecting the industry. Management representatives interviewed observed the main gaps to be in the provision of support for sustainable farming practices, which Fairtrade Standards strongly encourage, but Fairtrade Africa lacked the expertise to guide their implementation. Support for other thematic areas, such as market development, gender and inclusion, freedom of association, and workers' welfare were prominent across all POs. Deficiencies in expertise could be achieved through hiring part-time technical staff where full-time staff cannot be engaged due to lack of resources or other constraints. One manager in Ethiopia, for example, observed that:

“Fairtrade has very good intentions with the Standards. However, sometimes we do not have ready solutions to some of the requirements we have to adhere to. In the same way they support workers on the social issues such as gender, it would be good if they can also walk with us on the technical issues that we are required to comply with. For example, they should have a technical person in agronomy who can support farms to comply and improve on technical issues in production.” KII with management in Ethiopia.

Overall, the findings show that market access was a key driver as to why producer organisations pursued Fairtrade certification. Discussions with the management representatives indicated that market growth for Fairtrade flowers has been slow, despite the presence of Fairtrade's online producer platforms and sourcing plans between POs and buyers. Managers called for more support from Fairtrade on technical and production

issues that impact on the farm's compliance. Overall, managers, clearly understood the objectives of periodic audits, but called on auditors to better contextualise the Standards to avoid incidences where they have to deal with inconsistencies between the Standards and local laws.

2.3.8 Market-level stakeholders' perspectives on Fairtrade certification

This study sampled five market stakeholders³¹(traders) in Europe, 3 of whom had been interviewed during the research phase of this report. From traders, the study sought to understand their supply chains, their views on Fairtrade certification, and their proposals for improvement.

All traders sourced their flowers from East Africa, mostly from Kenya and Ethiopia. Some have sourcing agreements with farms that date many years back. Overall, traders view Fairtrade certification as the best that there is. While other certification schemes are largely business-to-business, Fairtrade is the only one that can be presented to consumers, which gives it a distinct advantage over the others. Traders noted key achievements, including empowerment of workers and the community through projects that address their socio-economic needs at work, at home and in their communities, as well as demonstrable respect and reliability in supply chains, Fairtrade has similarly tried to enlarge market access through direct linkages with producers.

One trader noted that Fairtrade sales were facing immense pressure in the consumer market with fears that prices could drop due to low demand. The situation is exacerbated by uncertainties around the globe and discussions around water in Kenya. Another trader argued that Fairtrade makes the greatest impact but wanted to see that impact shared to a greater extent with traders and consumers. He stated that Fairtrade doesn't do enough marketing of the Fairtrade label. Traders also argued that little was being done to show the impact of Fairtrade. Furthermore, market-level stakeholders observed that traders and consumers would appreciate more impact stories on how the Fairtrade Premiums are used. The traders noted that Fairtrade must make consumers understand the benefits of Fairtrade for workers and communities.

These views mirror those of yet another trader who observed that, while Fairtrade sales were low, the impact of the Fairtrade Premium was massive. They further noted that Fairtrade was not doing enough to share their stories, noting that category managers in big supermarkets must be made to understand the impact of Fairtrade so that they can decide to buy.

"People just need to understand the impact...(and)... where the Premiums are going. The market wants. (Fairtrade). Category managers need to make that decision to buy and sell more Fairtrade flowers, based on the impact stories."

KII with a flower trader.

With the effects of Covid-19 not fully clear, there was a perception among some stakeholders that Fairtrade may need to formulate practical incentives backed up by key performance indicators to encourage category managers to buy more Fairtrade flowers as a way of tapping into the existing potential for growth of Fairtrade sales volumes. This could also be achieved if key suppliers, such as Kenya, create conversation platforms with retailer Chief Executive Officers in Europe or key buyers who can pave the way for volume commitments by retailers and business community. A trader, for example, described how even after a major supermarket committed £250,000 sterling to gender-focused projects in

³¹ Our market level samples comprised APH Sweden, Omniflora, JZ Flowers, Agrotropic and Bloom.

East Africa, there was nothing to show for it across their stores. Yet, smaller outlets were able to strongly communicate their stories in their stores and they sold more Fairtrade flowers.

Related to publicity, the traders interviewed in Europe observed the need to do more lobbying and influence the agenda within the Europe based market-level players. They also noted the need to understand the market players' investment priorities in order to better focus the lobby and flower promotional activities. Furthermore, noting that flowers are still not a major category in retail compared to bananas, coffee, cocoa, etc., they lacked a strong flower focused collaboration between and among the main stakeholders in the market in Europe. This also meant that, at the market level, there was no consensus on issues and solutions related to flowers, which limited the impact of Fairtrade flowers promotional efforts. It was, therefore, critical to find ways to bring people together to collaborate. Forums, such as the British Flower Coalition, were mentioned as possible avenues for such collaboration. It was observed that Fairtrade did not require much more additional investment outside the Premiums already available in the supply chain. Traders further noted that Premium use emphasised areas where workers' needs were most felt. It is pragmatic and not much more was needed for it to create a strong impact.

The traders interviewed, especially those from Europe, insisted that agrochemicals were a significant topic, especially with respect to managing Maximum Residue Levels (MRL) and demonstrating reductions in the use of harsh chemicals. While they appreciate the current Hazardous Materials List³² (HML) published by Fairtrade, they were keen to have more consultations during subsequent revisions of the HML. They observed that initiatives, such as the Coop & Rewe (CORE) working group, came out of a consultative approach on reducing the use of harsh chemicals and chemicals in general in the flower sector. Essentially, traders foresaw a consultative approach that would also bring on board agrochemical manufacturers and suppliers. That would offer an opportunity to flower supply chain actors to interrogate them further and put pressure on them to innovate and develop more acceptable molecules.

Traders were of the view that the flexible use of the Fairtrade Premium was a potential risk to Fairtrade as this may not necessarily align with consumer perceptions, especially in key markets such as Germany and Switzerland where the volume of Fairtrade sales ranged between 36 percent and 50 percent respectively. There is, therefore, a need to always ensure that Premium use strongly resonates with the issues consumers are concerned about. Traders noted, for example, that the issues of concern, especially for the United Kingdom market, include questions around grievance mechanisms within the farms, gender and health and safety, the living wage, product traceability, and market stability. They were keen to see how these have been implemented and institutionalised on the farms through audits, reports, and discussions, as well as by active participation of the workers and their representations through workers' committees and trade union activities. They observed that the market is keen to ensure that all suppliers can guarantee that key United Nations and International Labour Organization Convention requirements are met through certification systems that ensure the elimination of forced labour, child labour, and discrimination against employees. Furthermore, employees must continue to enjoy a safe working environment, the right to union membership, and collective bargaining agreements. The terms of employment relating to salary, working hours and leave must be acceptable and in line with local legislation and international standards.

³² <https://www.fairtrade.net/standard/fairtrade-standards#hml>

2.3.9 Impact on the environment

Environmental conservation and management remain an issue of concern in the flower value chain. Different studies^{33,34}, show that producer organisations have made efforts to minimise the negative impact on the environment through, for example, prohibiting the use of harmful chemicals, and promoting ecological and sustainable pest management systems, and sustainable environmental management practices in general. We, therefore, sought to understand the stakeholders' perspectives on the impact of flower production on the environment.

According to about two-thirds of workers ($n=287$, 67 percent), flower production has a positive impact on the environment while almost one-third ($n=126$, 29.4 percent) said it had no major impact. A small number ($n=11$, 2.6 percent) were of the view that it has a negative impact. Similar sentiments were echoed by workers in non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations where two-thirds saw a positive impact while the other one-third saw no major impact. This was not surprising given that, at their level, workers' views were based on what they saw. The environmental interventions carried out by POs are what they see and relate with. These include tree planting, distribution of fruit trees by producers to workers to plant on their own land, increasing use of solar energy, adoption of integrated pest management practices, and sustainable water and waste management practices among other environmentally targeted interventions.

In focus group discussions, many workers mentioned that the Fairtrade Standards require POs not to use chemicals on the Hazardous Materials List, an issue they observed that farms were complying with. One worker representative in Uganda, for example, observed that:

“Fairtrade prohibits the use of banned chemicals, water pollution and careless disposal of materials that can damage the environment. This farm is very strict on this. Even those who are involved in spraying must wear very good protective clothes.” FGD with worker representative in Uganda.

The Fairtrade Premiums have supported interventions aimed at environmental restoration and management. These include projects such as tree planting, the provision of litter bins, and purchase of energy-saving cooking stoves.

Fairtrade, through the Fairtrade Premiums, and flower farms, through their Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, have stepped up tree planting in neighbouring schools and communities. In Ethiopia, for example, one producer was in the second phase of tree planting covering 30 hectares of land. Phase 1 targeted 13 hectares over five years. The PO also supplies seedlings to community members and their workers to plant in the community. In Uganda, another producer focused on a fruit tree campaign where, for the last 4-5 years, they gave community members over 4,000 fruit tree saplings annually. This had not only supported food security campaigns, but the trees have improved the general tree cover in the area around the farm. Other producer organisation maintained a wetland system and converts flower waste into organic mulch. All Fairtrade certified POs had adopted and advanced with the Integrated Pest Management System (IPM), though all were at different levels. The revised Fairtrade Flower Standard require all producers to develop their IPM plans, showing their planned progression towards the adoption and promotion of IPM. These plans will be reviewed annually. The Standards set key benchmarks for IPM plans and will certainly accelerate the adoption of IPM systems. One of the certified producer organisations sampled for this study had previously won the International Producer of the Year award.

³³ <https://ideas.ted.com/the-environmental-impact-of-cut-flowers-not-so-rosy/>

³⁴ <https://www.fairtrade.net/standard/fairtrade-standards#hml>

Workers in focus group discussions on half the farms we visited noted that, despite the efforts being made, challenges relating to water and soil pollution, soil erosion, chemical use, and emissions from the greenhouses where they grow their stock affected the ozone layer. Air transportation of flowers for thousands of miles and under refrigeration has also been blamed for serious carbon emissions³⁵. Key informants further noted that for each flower farm established, chances are that trees are being cut down and the ecosystem disrupted. The same may apply when farms expand their production acreage. Yet, persistent droughts continue to complicate conservation efforts across the three countries as planted trees either wither due to lack of water or are eaten by wild animals. Water use and management, including wastewater, stands out as an issue that requires close attention. Fairtrade has, in the meantime, already identified this as a gap. In the most recent Flower Standard revision in October 2022, Fairtrade has moved to address environmental management practices more comprehensively by requiring the development of management plans and subsequent annual revisions by producers.

Other reports have also demonstrated that, despite the efforts of Fairtrade and producers, major environmental challenges linked with flower production continue to be experienced. These include water pollution and deforestation³⁶ but also pesticide use and carbon emissions. Discussions with management pointed to the need for more stringent regulations on the use of clean energy in order to progress towards carbon neutrality at farm level. With this in mind, some producers have banned the use of charcoal burners in favour of cooking gas. With the new revised Flower Standard, Fairtrade stakeholders have accepted a new requirement for flower farms to report on their carbon footprint and provide environmental data. Through this, farms will be aware of their environmental impact and will have the opportunity to reduce it over time based on data. Most producers we spoke to noted that Fairtrade had enabled them to be more environmentally conscious through the Standards, which they have to comply with. A good example was in eradicating the use of harmful chemicals, some of which are still very effective in the management of pests, reforestation programmes, and the use of closed water systems.

Although not related to the Fairtrade Standards, producers had also adopted green energy mechanisms, such as the use of solar energy and the use of underground water to regulate temperatures in greenhouses. However, stakeholders and some of the PO representatives observed that the Fairtrade Standards were weak on the environment and needed to address issues such as water management, waste management, and sustainable pest management and control in more detail, and support producers on wetlands management and training on composting. The revised Flower Standard now requires wider consultations with communities on broader environmental management practices, including drought and flood management and risk mitigation.

The discourse around climate change, climate resilience, and carbon footprints is developing among the producers and many had adopted interventions, such as the use of solar energy. Management further noted that there were deliberate efforts to monitor energy consumption patterns, adopt renewable energy and monitor their carbon footprints. They also noted that capacity and knowledge were limited and that producers would benefit from more sensitisation on the subject.

³⁵ <https://ideas.ted.com/the-environmental-impact-of-cut-flowers-not-so-rosy/>

³⁶ Macharia, G. (2018): The Impact of Fairtrade Practices in Kenya: A Case Study of Vegpro (K) Ltd., Longonot Farm in Naivasha (Doctoral dissertation, United States International University-Africa).

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

The journey that Fairtrade certified producers have walked with Fairtrade over the period they have been Fairtrade certified under the flowers and plants category has largely been positive, particularly for workers. Key highlights for workers based on the study findings have been the support for the education of workers and their children, and other support services for workers, including home improvements, skills training, and microfinance among other benefits. In addition, workers have benefitted from training on issues that affect them, including leadership skills, gender awareness, and occupational health and safety health. Workers and members of the communities in which they live have also benefitted from various community-level projects, including schools, water, and road infrastructure development.

The question, however, is how sustainable these interventions without the flower Premiums are, an issue that the Fairtrade Premium Committees will need to confront and explore. In addition, findings from one of the non-Fairtrade certified producers show projects similar to the ones financed by Fairtrade Premiums have been achieved by the non-certified farms without the benefit of the Premiums. This calls for Fairtrade and the Fairtrade Premium Committees to rethink their model and find out what else can be done for more impact with the additional resources from Fairtrade Premiums.

In the wake of their partnership with Fairtrade, the study findings indicate that working conditions on Fairtrade certified farms have improved. In Uganda and Ethiopia, for example, salaries paid to workers have risen following the adoption of floor wages as required by the Fairtrade Standard, even though much of the gains had been eroded by inflation. The Standards also prescribe different measures aimed at improving the working conditions of workers.

Producers have also benefitted from the partnership with Fairtrade, albeit not as much as they would have wanted. To them, market access remains a key concern. This notwithstanding, producers have maintained that Fairtrade certification remains important to them as it remains a highly rated label that producers ride on. Traders were, however, of the view that much more can be done to take full advantage of the potential that Fairtrade certification offers.

Based on the study findings, several areas that Fairtrade could improve on to maintain its leadership in the market have been discussed. These discussions form the basis for the recommendations contained in this report.

Recommendations

1. There is a need for wider dissemination of accurate information about the source and usage of the Fairtrade Premium among all workers in light of the inaccuracies noted in describing what the Fairtrade Premium actually is. Furthermore, this information will be more useful to workers if shared in a language all or most understand and using materials and platforms accessible to them.
2. Fairtrade and the Fairtrade Premium Committees should rethink their Premium usage models to avoid taking over or duplicating what producer organisations would ordinarily deliver through their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes. This is based on the finding that non-Fairtrade certified producer organisations are implementing the same projects as FPCs through their CSR programmes.
3. Fairtrade and the Fairtrade Premium Committees need to develop sustainability plans should premiums reduce or come to an end.
4. Fairtrade has to continue its work to improve wages towards Living Wages and further flower worker's income improvements in order to ensure that they are able to earn enough for a decent living.

5. Worker representatives in unions, other workers' committees and management representatives need to be trained and empowered for worker representation to be strengthened and to avoid undue influence and interference by management or other parties in trade union activities.
6. To improve triangulation of information collected during audits and to more effectively protect trade union rights, FLOCERT should consider extending the scope of its consultations to union representatives outside the farms. Producer organisations are likely to plan for the audits in advance while shop stewards are likely to measure what they can share with auditors depending on their relationship with farm management.
7. Given the interest within the flower industry around environmental management, producer organisations should be encouraged to further develop their environmental management plans. Where several farms rely on the same water source and individually impact the environment, resulting in possible pollution and depletion of water beds, a strategic environmental impact assessment and management plan that looks at the cumulative impact of all the producers should be initiated by Fairtrade.
8. Given the involvement of young people, women, migrants, and single or divorced persons in flower production, Fairtrade should undertake a targeted assessment of the realities, issues and risks faced by these workers.
9. Based on the study findings, it is also suggested that Fairtrade include part-time workers in such assessment. This would enable a more contextual and in-depth basis for interpreting Fairtrade's impact on worker empowerment, labour conditions, and health and safety.
10. Studies to document most significant live-changing stories of individuals that have benefited from Fairtrade premiums should be commissioned for more detailed and impactful communication of the impact of Fairtrade premiums.
11. To build consensus and develop innovations to increase sales volumes for flowers and plants, Fairtrade could establish forums that generate more interest and discussions with the actors at market level. Among the Fairtrade certified products, flowers are a low-volume product. Collaborating forums for key players in the European markets could unlock more volumes. The main message would revolve around the impact of Fairtrade.
12. Stronger linkages between flower buyers and producers that promote discussions and conversations need to be encouraged. These would enable producers to better understand the needs and interests of buyers, but also enable buyers to appreciate the investments that producers make in worker and community welfare. Linking buyers with producer organisations in discussion and conversation platforms would strengthen interactions.
13. Fairtrade Africa should engage knowledgeable and experienced technical, commercial advocacy specialists from within the sector on at least a part-time basis to support compliance with the Fairtrade Standards and more meaningful engagement with other supply chain actors. Deficiencies were reported, for example, in producer support for sustainable farming practices.
14. With workers seemingly investing more in their own businesses, it would be prudent to build their capacity in business management skills to ensure that the ventures they begin are managed effectively and sustained without compromising their primary jobs in the flower farms.

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