

## Fairtrade research for learning agenda – January 2024



The aim of the Fairtrade Research for Learning Agenda is to share topics and research questions of practical relevance for Fairtrade. You can find below the latest version of Fairtrade research priorities .

If you are a researcher and you are working on, plan to work or have interest on the topics below, we are interested to hear from you, please get in touch at [academicpartnerships@fairtrade.net](mailto:academicpartnerships@fairtrade.net) . If you are a student, kindly consult our [student research policy](#).




We look forward to collaborating with academics on research for enhancing benefits to Fairtrade producers and workers!

Research topics	Research questions of interest to Fairtrade
Climate change 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which tools and projects support Fairtrade producers best to mitigate and adapt to climate change?</li> <li>2. Which adaptation measures by producers are most effective to address challenges posed by climate change?</li> <li>3. What is the carbon footprint of Fairtrade supply chains?</li> <li>4. How can Fairtrade Farm-to-gate / Farm-to-fork emissions data be calculated?</li> <li>5. Is there a business case for climate finance towards SPOs; if so, under which conditions?</li> <li>6. How can Fairtrade best position itself to respond to climate change related market demands?</li> <li>7. How can Fairtrade best support producers vis-à-vis climate change related legislative requirements?</li> <li>8. How do negative impacts of climate change for producers and emissions caused by Fairtrade producers compare?</li> </ol>
Unfair trading practices 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the impact of (conventional) unfair trading practices (UTP) on producers (economic, social) and on value chains in general?</li> <li>2. Which UTP are most common across (conventional) value chains and voluntary sustainability schemes (VSS)?</li> <li>3. What can be done to avoid UTPs?</li> <li>4. What is the role legislation can play and how and what other means are effective, under which conditions?</li> <li>5. To what extent does Fairtrade contribute to fairness &amp; sustainability in business practices?</li> <li>6. Are values &amp; principles of Fair Trade increasingly mainstreamed in business practices &amp; policy frameworks?</li> <li>7. To what extent has Fairtrade certification enabled the adoption of fairer business practices within the different value chains?</li> <li>8. To what extent has certification achieved the internalization of Fair Trade principles and values in organizations?</li> </ol>
NEW – Effects of legislations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the financial implications of legislative requirements for Fairtrade producers and the Fairtrade system?</li> <li>2. How will costs of compliance to legislative requirements be distributed along the supply chain?</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. How can VSS remain relevant in the context of new legislations?</li> <li>4. What are the unintended consequences of new legislative requirements for Fairtrade producers?</li> </ol>
<p>Reaching Living Incomes</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How big (quantified) are the in-kind benefits of Fairtrade (and cash payments of Premium) which contribute to closing the Living Income gaps for coffee, cocoa and banana?</li> <li>2. What are the impacts of the Fairtrade Living Income and Livelihoods strategies?</li> <li>3. What are the extra costs (quantified) for retailers to arrive at a living wages for workers/farmers for Fairtrade banana, coffee and cocoa?</li> <li>4. How to come to Living Incomes (LI) for coffee producers?</li> <li>5. Do farmers want to earn a living income (given what this implies in terms of for example increasing yields, considering the existing farm sizes)?</li> <li>6. What are the ethical considerations when collecting living income data?</li> </ol>
<p>Digitization for traceability and transparency</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the current level of digitization amongst Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS)?</li> <li>2. Which options of assuring traceability and transparency work best for the benefit of producers?</li> <li>3. Which risks are to be considered? How can information be sharing work in all directions (upstream and downstream the supply chain)?</li> <li>4. Which tools allow in practice for the full integration of smallholder farmers living in rural areas?</li> <li>5. What transparency and traceability would enhance negotiation power for producers and under what conditions does this lead to fairer (higher) producer prices?</li> </ol>
<p>Impact minimum price and Premium on farmers</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does the Fairtrade model (FMP and Premium) impact individual producers?</li> <li>2. Are cooperatives paying fair prices to their members?</li> <li>3. What about cooperatives whose members are non-landowners?</li> <li>4. Are members being paid fairly for their assigned jobs and responsibilities?</li> <li>5. How is Fairtrade assuring the model reaches farm level?</li> <li>6. What is the impact of the Fairtrade Minimum price on the willingness to adopt farming innovations among smallholder farmers?</li> <li>7. Does the Fairtrade Minimum Price have an impact on producer's resilience? If so, how does its effectiveness compare to other resilience-building measures?</li> </ol>
<p>The next generation of farmers</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do young people living in Fairtrade farmer communities see their future in continuing farming traditions?</li> <li>2. If young people are leaving farming, what impact is this transition having on the wellbeing of young people and/or agriculture sustainability?</li> <li>3. Under which conditions do we see youth either moving away from or continue farming?</li> <li>4. To what extent is Fairtrade supporting opportunities for young people (through the Premium or otherwise), either to remain and farm, or to leave and pursue other ambitions?</li> </ol>
<p>NEW - Agroecology</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the impact of the new Fairtrade Agroecology Policy?</li> <li>2. Under which conditions do we see successful implementation of agroecological practices among Fairtrade producers?</li> <li>3. To what extent do agroecological practices affect the resilience of Fairtrade producers' livelihoods?</li> </ol>
<p>Deforestation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does Fairtrade production impact biodiversity and forest cover and how to minimize negative impacts and enhance positive impacts of Fairtrade?</li> <li>2. What are the best practices for reforestation and conservation of natural resources that organizations have carried out?</li> <li>3. What factors have influenced decisions to adopt reforestation?</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. What variables influence these decisions and what implications do they have for organizations?</li> </ol>
<p>Due diligence for (commercial) partners</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How are different voluntary sustainability schemes (VSS) and development NGOs today doing due diligence on their commercial- and other partners?</li> <li>2. What tools and frameworks do they use for that due diligence and which would suit Fairtrade best?</li> <li>3. How often is such due diligence repeated and what are the challenges to assuring a meaningful exercise?</li> </ol>
<p>Fairtrade's benefits to workers</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What impact is Fairtrade having on empowerment of workers, both in the plantation and smallholder farm context?</li> <li>2. What is the mechanisms by which Fairtrade is, or is not, having this impact?</li> <li>3. What is the relationship between worker empowerment and the livelihoods of workers and their households?</li> <li>4. What is the role of different types of worker organizations &amp; trade unions in fostering collective empowerment/better conditions?</li> <li>5. What are the concrete benefits of producers of being organized?</li> <li>6. What impact is Fairtrade having on the wages and benefits for workers on plantations, with a focus on moving towards Living Wages (LW)?</li> <li>7. What are the mechanisms by which Fairtrade is, or is not, having this impact?</li> <li>8. How does Fairtrade's work coordinate or complement other work on wages/benefits being done by unions or through national legislation?</li> <li>9. What impact can Fairtrade or trade unions have to negotiate a living wage when plantations are already bound by Collective Bargaining Agreements?</li> <li>10. What is the impact of new base wage and Fairtrade Premium on worker incomes and livelihoods after 3 - 5 years (e.g. in banana, flowers)?</li> </ol>
<p>Regional and south-to-south trade</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does regional and south-to-south trade influence Fairtrade and certified producers?</li> <li>2. Are special standards or adaptations needed to make the south-to-south model work and if so, which ones?</li> <li>3. To what extent is Fairtrade certification contributing to the opening of new business opportunities within and between different producer countries?</li> <li>4. What strategies are most effective to encourage greater insertion of organizations in national and regional markets?</li> </ol>
<p>Distribution of value along the supply chain</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How are costs and values distributed along Fairtrade banana supply chains (from production level to main consumer markets) versus non-Fairtrade supply chains?</li> <li>2. How have prices evolved over time, by banana origin? How has the distribution of value along the supply chain evolved over time?</li> <li>3. What can be done to achieve a fair distribution of value (and costs) along the supply chain?</li> </ol>
<p>Impacts of Fairtrade versus other voluntary and in-house sustainability schemes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does Fairtrade compare to other Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) and to in-house sustainability schemes (on specific themes)?</li> <li>2. What impacts can Fairtrade achieve in isolation on themes such as development of capacities for adaptation to climate change, economic development, empowerment and participation of women and vulnerable groups, development of organizational capacities, and social capital?</li> <li>3. How do standards criteria and the implementation of the compliance criteria compare? How do the outcomes and impacts compare? How does the added value for commercial partners compare?</li> </ol>



<p>Inclusion of vulnerable groups</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does Fairtrade enable vulnerable groups (temporary/casual workers, youth, women, at risk migrants) involved in the production of Fairtrade products to be heard and what is needed to enable their decision making and contributions to the Fairtrade system?</li> <li>2. What Strategies is Fairtrade applying to ensure inclusion of vulnerable persons (Persons with Disabilities, youth, women, migrant workers etc.) and what more can be done?</li> </ol>
<p>The exact functioning of the Minimum Price for farmers</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Has the Fairtrade Minimum Price functioned as a safety net for coffee farmers during periods of low market prices in different countries/geographies and for different coffee varieties and coffee qualities?</li> <li>2. What has been the precise impact of the Fairtrade Minimum Price during these periods on coffee farmers' incomes and expenses (in different countries, for different varieties and qualities)?</li> <li>3. How has this impacted coffee farmer livelihoods?</li> </ol>
<p>Gender</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is Fairtrade's impact on different groups of women (e.g. female producers, female household heads, female workers, etc.) in small producer organizations and hired labor organizations?</li> <li>2. What is the impact of Fairtrade certification on aspects related to gender equity and women's empowerment in smallholder and worker organizations?</li> <li>3. What role do female workers and members play in Fairtrade certified organizations, including the management of those organizations?</li> </ol>

\*The symbols refer to the [Fairtrade strategy](#) (2021-2025) pillars:  Farmers & workers empowerment  Growth & innovation



Advocacy & citizen engagement



Digitalization for fairer supply chains



Launchpad for the future