

FAIRTRADE RESEARCH FOR LEARNING AGENDA

last updated August 2020

We believe that research is essential to understanding and increasing the benefits of Fairtrade for farmers and workers. Fairtrade regularly commissions studies and participates in research, and we also welcome the interest and initiative of other researchers to contribute to the body of knowledge on Fairtrade and related topics.

We have developed a research agenda of topics listed below in order of priority, for which we find there is insufficient existing research and would welcome external participation in addressing. The agenda takes into account priorities of different parts of the Fairtrade system, including strategic priorities and identified evidence gaps. We update this research for learning agenda annually. As of August 2020 when we published the most recent agenda, we are in the process of reviewing our Theory of Change as well as our global strategy. While new strategic priorities have been considered as far as was possible in the review of the agenda below, the next update in 2021 will aim at a full alignment with the new strategy as well as with the new Fairtrade Theory of Change.

If you are a researcher and plan to work independently on one of the topics below, we are interested to hear about this at impact@fairtrade.net. Additional documents including our research ethics policy and student research policy can be found on our website.

Topic	Research Questions
Intergenerational Sustainability	Do young people living in Fairtrade farmer communities see their future as continuing farming traditions? If young people are leaving farming, what impact is this transition having on the wellbeing of young people and/or agriculture sustainability? 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?
Living Incomes	How big (quantified) are the in-kind benefits of Fairtrade (and cash payments of Premium) which contribute to closing the Living Income gaps for Tier 1 products (coffee, cocoa, banana)? What are the extra costs (quantified) for retailers to arrive at a living wage for workers/farmers for Fairtrade banana, coffee and cocoa? How to come to Living Incomes for coffee producers? How does Fairtrade Premium paid for cocoa/ coffee impact farmer households?
Living Wages and Empowerment	What impact is Fairtrade having on empowerment of workers, both in the plantation and smallholder farm context? What are the mechanisms by which Fairtrade is, or is not, having this impact? What is the relationship between worker empowerment and the livelihoods of workers and their households? What is the role of different types of worker organizations & trade unions in fostering collective empowerment/better conditions? What are the concrete benefits of producers of being organized? What impact is Fairtrade having on the wages and benefits for workers on plantations, with a focus on moving towards Living Wages? What are the mechanisms by which Fairtrade is, or is not, having this impact? How does Fairtrade's work coordinate or complement other work on wages/benefits being done by unions or through national legislation?

Fairtrade Minimum Price	Has the Fairtrade Minimum Price functioned as a safety net for coffee farmers during periods of low market prices? What has been the precise impact of the Fairtrade Minimum Price during these periods on coffee farmers' income and expenses? How has this impacted livelihoods?
Deforestation	How to best address and stop deforestation in Fairtrade supply chains? What criteria shall Fairtrade meet to assure 'free of deforestation' for different products?
South-to-South Trade	How does regional and south-to-south trade influence impact Fairtrade and producers? Are special Standards or adaptations needed to the model; which ones?
Advocacy	What are the impacts of Fairtrade campaigning towards the general public as well as of its public policy advocacy on influencing government policies? To what extent is it driving broader change in how trade is structured/practiced and building networks for change beyond Fairtrade stakeholders? How should the future of Fairtrade campaigning and public policy advocacy be different?
Follow-up on baseline studies for coffee, cocoa, banana, cotton	Follow-up studies on 4 baseline studies conducted a few years ago for cotton, coffee, cocoa small producer organizations and hired labor banana set-ups; What are the impacts of Fairtrade certification on cotton producers in India and West-Africa? What are the impacts of Fairtrade certification on coffee producers compared to the baseline? What impact has Fairtrade had on certified cocoa producers in West-Africa in recent years? How has Fairtrade impacted banana workers in Latin America and West-Africa in recent years? What difference has Fairtrade made for cotton, cocoa and coffee farming families and banana workers in recent years?
General impact on other Fairtrade certified products	What is the benefit of Fairtrade to producers for products without a Fairtrade Minimum Price (i.e. a Fairtrade Premium only)? What impact is Fairtrade delivering to producers of products such as rice, wine, juice, nuts and herbs and spices? How can Fairtrade improve service for these products and its producers?
Collaboration for fairer trade	To what extent does Fairtrade contribute to fairness & sustainability in business practices? Are values & principles of Fair Trade increasingly mainstreamed in business practices & policy frameworks? Can a broad coalition of actors (including producers, workers & citizen- consumers) driving change in way trade is structured & practiced? Is t his already happening? What role does and can Fairtrade play in this? What is and can be the role of multi-stakeholder initiatives to make trade fairer? What role does and shall Fairtrade play?