

Report No. 1 – February 2019

# Gender Equity and Women's Rights in the work place

Women at the Heart of Sustainable Development



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**Gender equity and women's rights in the work place. Information and analysis of existing national rules and regulations that contribute to gender equity, leading to concrete recommendations on best practices regarding regulations that promote gender equity.**

# Project Design and Methodology

## Purpose and Design

The purpose of the “Trade Fair Live Fair” project is to foster more resilient livelihoods for the producers and workers behind many of the products that European citizens consume. We believe that the EU public are largely unaware of the working and living conditions of the women and men who grow and make the products they buy. If they were to become more aware of the imbalances of power in supply chains through hearing the stories of the producers they will never meet, we may be able to bring about the changes in personal, governmental and corporate behaviour that is necessary if we have any hope of achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

WFTO’s contribution to this project takes the form of two reports plus 56 personal stories from 53 women workers and 3 men in Fair Trade and a reading list based on the desk research undertaken. Both reports are about gender equity and women’s rights in the workplace. The first report focuses on the global situation following collection of information in Africa, Asia and Latin America and analysis of existing national rules and regulations that contribute to gender equity. It makes concrete recommendations to governments on best practice regarding regulations that promote gender equity and what really needs to happen for women to become equal with men.

The second report has a focus on the situation in Fair Trade Organisations and their best practices and challenges based on 6 case studies of Fair Trade Organisations in Belgium, Chile, Ecuador, Ethiopia, India and Kenya and the Indonesian and Nepalese Fair Trade Networks: Forum Fair Trade Indonesia and Fair Trade Group Nepal. The case study information is complemented by further information gathered at a regional level.

The reports have been designed to build a base of direct evidence and information to provide powerful, engaging and accessible messaging for use by the project partners in their awareness raising and mobilization campaigns targeting citizens, policy makers and companies.

## Methodology

A combination of desk and field-based research was used.

The WFTO Asia, Africa and Latin America regions were asked to organise virtual Round Table discussions and/or engage with their members through surveys in order to provide information on existing rules/regulations in their members’ countries that contribute to gender equity and to talk about best practices and challenges in their countries and organisations. Then make recommendations on best practice and regulations that would contribute most to gender equity.

Six Fair Trade Organisations in Belgium, Chile, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Kenya and India and two Fair Trade Networks in Indonesia and Nepal were invited to prepare case studies including women workers’ own stories and the recommendations they would make as FTOs if they could speak to their own governments.

The project was coordinated by WFTO Honorary Member, Carol Wills, who provided advice and support to the contributing regions, FTOs and networks and prepared the final reports. She assumes all responsibility for any errors.

CW, Oxford UK

# Summary

Fair Trade enterprises<sup>1</sup> show us a glimpse of an economic future where businesses focus on people and planet, not just profit. Their impact on women’s empowerment provides hope that a better world is possible where economies are populated by such businesses that can pursue a social mission while achieving commercial success. Though the lessons from Fair Trade enterprises (WFTO members) go beyond showing an alternative to today’s mainstream model of business. These enterprises can also inspire a change in governments and other institutions, so they, too, genuinely focus on promoting the interests of workers, producers and communities – and in particular, women. Doing so requires governments to embrace the goal of women’s empowerment and ensure markets contain more businesses like Fair Trade enterprises. They would do well to listen to recommendations from such businesses.

The case for women’s empowerment is clear. For development to be sustainable there must be gender equality. Most governments throughout the world recognise this in principle and, in the decades following the signing of the UN Charter in 1945 and then the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, have put many fine laws in place to promote equality and protect women. The reports from the WFTO Regions and Fair Trade Organisations list these laws. All agreed that the problem is not lack of legislation and regulation but the huge gap that exists between good laws and customary practice. Many governments fail to enforce their own laws. They appear to lack the political commitment and legislative intent to do so. Businesses in many countries know that they may ignore the laws safe in the knowledge that they will not be prosecuted. Many millions of dollars have been spent on world conferences on women, high level panels, preparation of detailed research documents,

the collection of statistics, the setting of goals and target for achievement. There has been some progress particularly with women’s and girls’ literacy levels, more girls staying in school for longer and women being represented in all professions including those formerly believed to be the territory of men such as engineering and science. But the sad fact is that the majority of women and girls, particularly in developing countries but also to some extent in developed economies, continue to be regarded by their families and wider society as less valuable and less important than men. They continue to be routinely abused and harassed, denied their rights (of which they may be completely ignorant), overburdened with domestic responsibilities, and not given access to educational and employment opportunities. If women do work outside the home it is usually in low status jobs managed by men who will often take opportunities to harass them. Business competitiveness so often depends on a docile, underpaid and unprotected female workforce that may easily be controlled. The power in supply chains lies with the corporations which issue the contracts. Contractors are ready to flout laws which they know will not be enforced in order to meet the heavy demands of business partners many thousands of miles away and to increase their own profits. Big corporations are alleged to attack, harass, intimidate and even kill activists who challenge them and get in their way<sup>2</sup>. The way that the supply chains of international trade work today is not sustainable; it is out of balance. Women and men workers in poorer countries must have better working conditions and protection.

The challenge to us all – governments, businesses, consumers, activists, men and women everywhere – is to change our behaviour and attitudes. How do we do that?

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the report, the term Fair Trade Organization and Fair Trade enterprise is used interchangeably. The report draws from the experience of enterprises that have put Fair Trade into the core of their mission.

<sup>2</sup> As reported in the Guardian Newspaper UK on 10 March 2018. The Business and Human Rights Resource Center recorded a 34% rise in such attacks over the last year.

# What can be done by governments and by us all?

At the core of all the many recommendations from the WFTO regions and individual Fair Trade Organisations lie six areas of action that, if taken seriously by governments and us all, could lead us towards a sustainable, gender equal future.

- **Change the way we bring up children and tackle the problem of stereotypes that have such a strong influence on children.** Girls and boys must grow up believing that they are equal. Boys should take on their share of house work. This should be normal. Teach boys to cook, collect water and look after animals, wash and iron clothes, wash up dishes. They should not eat before their sisters but at the same time. They should not be given more and better food than girls. Boy and girls should do homework together rather than the girls cleaning the house while the boys prepare for school. Girls should be encouraged to speak. If boys see their fathers beating their mothers, they are more likely to beat their wives later. If girls see their fathers beating their mothers, they are more likely to expect that to happen to them when they are married. We need to raise girls and boys both to respect each other and have aspirations and hopes for the future.

Governments should require their Education Ministries to reform school curricula and revise textbooks to ensure that women and men, girls and boys are portrayed with equal status. Here are some of the issues discovered by UNESCO in their 2016 Paper “Textbooks pave the way to Sustainable Development”<sup>3</sup>:

- Stories, images or examples either do not include women or depict them in submissive, traditional roles such as doing housework or serving men.

- Women are rarely shown working. If they are shown outside the home it is usually as a teacher or other service worker.
- Stories of influential women in history are often left out.
- Textbooks should be depicting women in leadership positions as role models for girls. They should refer to well-known women in every field: politics, science, academia, law, business, sport, the arts and economics. Girls should grow up dreaming about a better future, knowing that it is possible to become something more than a wife and a mother (important though those roles are).
- **Increase the number of women in parliaments, in local authorities and in community councils, on company boards,** in all places where decisions affecting women’s lives are made. Have the goal of 50% representation. Do this through quotas and affirmative action. Take determined steps to prepare women to stand for election in their communities, municipalities and parliaments. Appoint women to boards and leadership roles. Make them welcome. Women are more likely than men to demand that governments take steps to enforce their own laws and put the necessary funding in place to do so.
- **Confront patriarchal social norms and traditional customs which discriminate against women in many countries** and which often take precedence over the law. These often deny women their inheritance when husbands or fathers die and their rights to own property and remain single. Do not shy away from this. It is not good enough to say that this might disrupt families and result in more domestic violence

and abuse and therefore should be left alone. Deal with it sensitively through supporting training and awareness-raising for men and for men and women together. Governments and local authorities could work more closely with Non-Government Organisations and Fair Trade Organisations to carry this out and provide funding support. Such programmes have been shown to be transformational<sup>4</sup>. Provide rights training to women so that they come to know their rights in law and have the confidence to demand that their rights are respected at home and in the workplace.

- **Deal with the power imbalances in supply chains** which erode the rights of women and men workers to decent work and fair and equal pay. Strengthen legislative teeth through increasing the numbers of factory inspectors, pay them properly and train them better. Have inspectors and other government officials monitor closely all the links in agricultural supply chains and recognise the role of women in so much agricultural work. Fine (heavily) businesses that disregard the law and reward those that set good examples.
- **Provide a regulatory framework for the informal economy** in which up to 75%<sup>5</sup> of the world’s women work (outside agriculture) invisibly, without social protection and without

a voice. Extend social benefits to informal workers. Recognise that at the beginning of every supply chain, in manufacturing as well as in agriculture, there usually are vulnerable women who can be exploited to keep costs as low as possible. Work with NGOs and social enterprises to increase the visibility of such women.

- **Adopt Fair Trade values.** Make the ten principles of Fair Trade core principles for all businesses and government departments. Work to become recognised as a “Fair Trade Country”<sup>6</sup>. Demonstrate through publicity of all kinds that using Fair Trade as a benchmark can result in a happier, more productive workforce and correct imbalances in supply chains. While critics may say that this is ridiculous and that Fair Trade is at best a marginal activity of soft-hearted liberals, note that happier, more secure, fairly paid, empowered workers, both women and men, who are treated with dignity and respect, with equal opportunities for promotion and leadership, are going to be more productive, loyal, less likely to be absent and will contribute to the growth of their countries’ GDP. Fair Trade principles are a guide to responsible business practice for all. Put women at the heart of sustainable development, enable everyone to reach their full potential and see what a difference that makes!

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO discovered in 2016 that the % of textbooks across the world that mention women’s rights had increased to 37% and depictions of discrimination against women to 38%. There is still a long way to go.

<sup>4</sup> See Oxfam Novib Gender Action Learning System (GALS), implemented in 11 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, in which “men and women come to see themselves not as victims of forces beyond their control but as the joint authors of their own destinies.”

<sup>5</sup> WIEGO estimate

<sup>6</sup> As Oxfam Magasins du Monde is doing in Belgium



Association for Crafts Producers

## How far has the world got in achieving gender equity in the work place?

We live in a world of growing inequality with worsening predictions on how long it is going to take to close the gender gap. This is despite 185 countries having gender equality embedded in their constitutions and 187 countries having signed CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women)<sup>7</sup>, despite the 51 founding Members of the United Nations in 1945 approving the fine words of the UN Charter which speak of the “equal rights of men and women” putting achievement of women’s rights at the heart of their work. The world embarked on a very long journey which is nowhere near reaching its end in 2018.

It is going to take another hundred years to close the economic and political gender gap, another staggering 217 years before women earn as much as men and are equally represented in the workplace<sup>8</sup>. Women make up 23% of the world’s parliamentarians, 7% of Heads of State and 6% of Heads of Government<sup>9</sup>. Women only hold 12% of Board positions in businesses across the world, 9% of Chief Executive Officer positions and 24% of senior management roles<sup>10</sup>. Women who complete their education may now be found in all professions. However, the majority of working women all over the world are in low-level jobs in factories, as farm

labourers, in informal work as craft producers, street traders and waste pickers, in services such as education, health and social care, domestic and restaurant work, in jobs which pay low wages and are not considered to be high status. Many lack recognition by the authorities in their countries and so have no social protection. They are vulnerable to discrimination of all kinds, violence and abuse. Women are often unaware of their rights in law and while these rights do exist in most countries (e.g. unmarried and married daughters having the same inheritance rights as their brothers, widows having the right to inherit property and land from their deceased husbands), it is common for traditional custom and patriarchal practices to prevail. Many governments lack the political will and legislative teeth to enforce the policies they have adopted in favour of women’s rights. Gender stereo-typing continues to fill the content of school text books<sup>11</sup> and dominates advertising throughout the world<sup>12</sup>. In the film industry in 2015 only 17% of the top grossing films had female leads and male characters received twice the amount of screen time as women<sup>13</sup>. All this and so much more reinforces the view that, somehow, women are less important, less significant and of less value than men.

Following the adoption of the UN Charter in 1945, the UN worked on finding out about the status of women round the world and began to collect information on women’s existing legal and civil rights. Nothing much changed. Laws are all very well but how do you make sure that they are enforced? What needs to happen?

Four World Conferences on Women were held starting in 1975, International Women’s Year, in Mexico City and finishing 20 years later in 1995 in Beijing where a twelve point Platform for Action was unanimously adopted covering poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, the economy, decision-making and power, mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, the media, the environment and the girl child.

Progress was reviewed in 2000 at a special session of the UN General Assembly<sup>14</sup>. The review<sup>15</sup> found that while there had been “profound” changes in

the status and role of women and more women were working and participating in civil society than ever before, violence and poverty remained huge obstacles to gender equity. Women were not sharing decision-making at any level in any significant way. Representation of women remained low everywhere with very few women sitting on the Boards of business and other organisations.

The 8 UN Millennium Development Goals followed with targets for achievement by 2015. Two were particularly relevant for women and girls: Goal 2 – To achieve universal primary education and Goal 3 – To promote gender equality and empower women. In 2015 the UN reported that enrolment in primary education in developing countries had reached 91%<sup>16</sup>, the literacy rate globally had also reached 91%<sup>17</sup> with the gap between women and men narrowed but women throughout the world continued to experience “significant gaps in terms of poverty, labour market and wages, as well as participation in private and public decision-making”.

Chapter 4 of the UN “**World’s Women 2015**” added that accurate measurement of women’s work remained a challenge. Activities such as subsistence agriculture are often under-estimated or excluded and women’s labour force participation is lower than that of men at all stages of the life cycle. In the same year, 2015, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reported in their **Gender and Land Rights Database** that women are particularly disadvantaged. They form an average of 43% of the agricultural labour force in developing countries but their ownership of agricultural land remains significantly lower than that of men and this translates into lower productivity, higher food insecurity malnutrition and poverty. Women farmers lack equal rights to own land in more than 90 countries with a huge gap between law and custom in many such countries.

The UN’s 2015 report on “**The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action turns 20**” acknowledges that, despite all the high level conferences, action plans and apparent buy-in by governments, the world has not become a better place for women and girls and that achieving gender

<sup>7</sup> UN Women: Global Gender Equality Constitutional Database

<sup>8</sup> Global Gender Gap Report” World Economic Forum 2017

<sup>9</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union: Women in Politics 2018

<sup>10</sup> Estimated by UN Women and the Grant Thornton “Women in Business Report 2017” (published annually on International Women’s Day).

<sup>11</sup> UNESCO Policy Paper 28 December 2016: “Text books pave the way to sustainable development.”

<sup>12</sup> See UK Advertising Standards Authority July 2017 Paper: “Depictions, Perceptions and Harm”

<sup>13</sup> Geena Davis Institute 2015: “The Reel Truth: Women Aren’t Seen or Heard”

<sup>14</sup> Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century

<sup>15</sup> UN Five year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

<sup>16</sup> UN “We can end poverty” Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015

<sup>17</sup> With big variations between countries as well as between women and men in many countries

equity in the work-place remains a distant dream. Women continue to suffer from discrimination of all kinds. Their work remains unrecognised, under-valued and under-paid (and sometimes not paid at all). Gender-based discrimination, violence and stereotyping remains deeply embedded in human society everywhere and will take a huge effort of will and determined political leadership to change.

So what does the UN believe can be done? Economies need to be transformed by bringing economic and social policies together through the creation of a “virtuous cycle” of decent work for all. They highlight three priority areas: Decent work for women, gender-responsive social policies and rights-based macroeconomic policies prioritising investment in human beings and the fulfilment of social objectives. Finally they say that we all must share the responsibility and act collectively for women’s rights. “Societies and economies can only thrive if they make full use of women’s skills and capabilities.”

The Sustainable Development Goals followed. The Trade Fair, Live Fair project links specifically to SDG 5 “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” and SDG 12 “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”. Goal 5 is the gender specific “stand alone” goal:

*“Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefits societies and humanity at large.”*

A significant point is the recognition by the UN that the 16 other SDGs can only be successful if women and girls are completely integrated into each and every goal. There is an emphasis on listening:

*“SDGs can deliver transformative change for women and girls only if they have been consulted and their priorities and needs have been taken into account. Girls should be viewed as agents for change and not as beneficiaries.”*

The EU takes this very seriously indeed. In Sep-

tember 2015 the European Commission and the European External Action Service adopted a new framework for the EU’s activities on gender equality and women’s empowerment in the EU’s external relations<sup>19</sup>. The four pillars of this framework are: Fighting violence of any kind against women and girls; the economic and social empowerment of women and girls; strengthening the voice and participation of women and girls in decision-making at all levels; and shifting institutional culture.

### **A light at the end of a long, long tunnel<sup>20</sup>**

On 24 October 1975, three months after the close of the UN Women’s Conference in Mexico, 90% of the women of Iceland went on strike for a day. They refused to go to work, to cook, clean or look after their children. There was chaos. What Icelandic women were doing was calling on men to respect their work and demanding equal pay. In January 2018, Iceland became the first country in the world to make companies prove that they are not paying women less than men for the same work. They will be fined if they cannot. Companies and government agencies with more than 25 staff must obtain a government certification of their equal pay policies. It took 42 years!

So let’s do it! Let’s change the world as soon as we can. This is our chance. Global action is needed with new tools, new leadership and a new story. We must re-engage with consumers, inspire them and get them to rally behind our message:

### **Trade Fair, Live Fair.**

# Guidelines for Best Practices on gender equality

## Asia<sup>21</sup>

The methodology used for data collection in Asia consisted of (1) members survey (2) e-mail correspondence (3) consultation with the WFTO Asia Gender Working Group and (4) desk based research. 29 members responded to the survey which is roughly 20% of the 150+ members. Data was consolidated and analysed using multiple frameworks. While many of the issues identified were experienced across the Asia region as a whole, some patterns were identified according to the sub-regions: East Asia, South East Asia and South Asia.

The research found that in Asia, persistent and systematic exclusion for marginalised poor, rural and local populations and public distrust of the state are common themes across diverse cultures. Women in Asia are “on average 70% less likely than men to be in the labour force. This gap persists despite economic growth, decreasing fertility rates and increasing education”<sup>22</sup>. Women in Asia are disadvantaged by patriarchal policies and legislation which inhibit their progress in the labour force alongside their male counterparts.

While legal instruments and social policies promoting gender equity do exist in Asia, there are considerable gaps between policy and practice. These gaps are entrenched in social customs – traditional biases which promote men as heads of households and as workplace leaders, and women as providers of care and sexualised objects. This results from outdated policies; weak, vague or non-inclusive language formulations; conflicting, pluralised legal systems, including traditional, customary and religious laws; and/or pervasive social systems and stereo-types which undermine

gender equality. In many countries in Asia, the state lacks the political will to override these factors and take the necessary steps to ensure that its own policies are implemented at every level.

*“Part of the problem is that even educated women in India are not aware of their rights. Women who are not literate are not aware. Most women do not know where to go or who to tell in time of distress. Nobody cares. Very few people are aware of rules and regulations. Most institutions and businesses do not take the rules and regulations seriously. We have been trying to organise advocacy programmes in urban and rural areas with women’s organisations, Self Help Groups and women in village communities. Even so domestic family values and taboos stand in the way of implementing the law. Traditional customary practices prevail ”.*<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 2015

<sup>19</sup> New framework for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations (2016–2020).

<sup>20</sup> The Guardian Newspaper UK, 5 January 2018

<sup>21</sup> The full WFTO Asia report plus reports from WFTO Latin America and Africa & Middle East may be found as appendices to these summary reports

<sup>22</sup> Victor. P (2017) Southeast Asia women in the workforce.

<sup>23</sup> Manabendra Nath Mandal, Advocate and Executive Director of the Socio-Legal Aid Research and Training Centre, Kolkata, India, in conversation with Carol Wills 22.11.2017



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### Recommendations to Governments

Asia divides its many recommendations to governments into five sections:

- Social benefits, decision-making, strategic planning and birth registration
- Access to justice
- Access to credit
- Prevention of violence against women
- Women in the workplace

As the workplace is the focus of this report, those specific recommendations are given here:

- Regularly review wages in sectors where women are concentrated and adopt proactive and specific measures to eliminate occupational segregation and to narrow the gender pay gap;
- Take measures to ensure that labour laws are enforced effectively, and to increase the number of, and adequately equip, labour inspectors to enable them to monitor women's working conditions effectively, in particular in the garment industry and other low-paid sectors;
- Provide a regulatory framework for the informal economy and take measures to ensure that women in the informal economy are included in national labour law, and are entitled to the same benefits as those in the formal economy.
- Raise the retirement age so that it is equal with men's (if it is not already) in order to give women better employment opportunities;
- Adopt/strengthen legislation that defines and prohibits harassment in the workplace;
- Ensure equal opportunities for women and men in the formal labour market, including temporary, special, (equitable), measures aimed at eliminating occupation segregation – both across and within sectors.

### Case Studies

## Creative Handicrafts<sup>24</sup>

As in many other countries, there is a huge gap in India between some excellent laws and implementation of these laws on the ground to the benefit of women. Creative Handicrafts cites in particular The Factories Act 1948, The Minimum Wages Act also of 1948, The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, the National Skills Development Programme and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 and the Maternity Benefits Act.



Suman at Creative Handicrafts

### Recommendations to Government

- Put in place, and find ways to enforce, laws that mandate for a minimum percentage of women to be at management and Board levels in order positively to change the work culture and make it safer for women to work.
- Address the huge gap in implementation of the Factories Act amended Maternity Benefits Act and enforce the law that says that factories with more than 50 employees must have a creche.
- All factories should be find a way to ensure that all factories implement provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013, put a complaints system in place and conduct regular sensitization programmes with all employees.
- Upgrade the quality of government tailoring courses so that those who complete them are skilled enough to get employment in garment companies or receive further advice on setting up small businesses of their own.
- Implement the Minimum Wages Act strictly as there is documented evidence that minimum wages norms are being flouted especially for women who are paid less than men for the same type of work. Facilities such as Provident Fund need to be made mandatory.
- Provide maternity benefits though compulsory social insurance or public funds.

<sup>24</sup> All the full FTO case studies may be found as appendices to the 2 summary reports

Case Studies**Fair Trade Group, Nepal**

Not enough has been done in Nepal to improve the status of women in a country where a traditional belief in male superiority prevails. Laws are not gender friendly. In its various Five Year Plans the Government of Nepal has recognised the need to integrate women's development in its overall development strategies and provide women with the skills they need to be economically active. To attempt to eliminate gender discrimination, gender sensitization has been institutionalised

at the national level as the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and at the local level as Women's Development Offices. The new Constitution has many provisions for women including a quota for women's seats in parliament. Female literacy jumped from 35% to 57% in the decade to 2011<sup>25</sup> but there is still a big gap between men and women. Women's participation in the formal workforce has increased. However, even in educated families, traditional culture and values dominate.

**Recommendations to Government**

- At the national level political parties need to be aware of the role they must play in ensuring greater gender equality in education and employment. They have to be lobbied to identify issues, make commitments and take action.
- There should be greater collaboration between different sectors e.g. the Department of Labour, Ministry of Women and Children and Social Welfare, the Department of Education and Non-Governmental Organisations to mobilise the technical and financial resources needed to ensure gender equality.
- Stronger monitoring mechanisms need to be developed to identify gaps to ensure that all statutory provisions related to gender equality in the workforce are properly enforced.
- Government initiatives to ensure gender equity in education need to be deep-rooted in order to mediate the opposing forces between formal schooling and the socialisation process of girls and boys.
- Women's entrepreneurship should be encouraged and provisions should be made accessible.
- The Government should follow the principles of Fair Trade.
- Elect more women to parliament.

<sup>25</sup> 2011 figure cited in Nepal Case Study Report

Case Studies**Forum Fair Trade, Indonesia**

Rohaini

There are many existing rules and regulations in Indonesia that contribute to gender equality but they all need to be enforced and reinforced. These include the 1945 Constitution, Law No 20/2003 on the National Education System, the Presidential Instruction No 9/2000 on Gender Equality, Presidential Decree no 7/2005 on the Mid-Term of the National Development Plan 2004–2009, the Presidential Rule on the Development Work Plan of 2006. Indonesia also has a Women's National Commission and many rules and regulations on gender related matters e.g. the reduction of domestic violence and the reduction of maternal and infant mortality. But there is still much more to be done. Many women in Indonesia do not receive educational opportunities, do not work outside the house and do not participate in decision-making at the family or community levels.

**Recommendations to Government**

- Support advocacy programmes at the town and village level to create more understanding and awareness among men and women of the importance of gender equality and women's rights.
- Introduce quotas for women in parliament to increase the representation of women.
- Use the Fair Trade model in government action plans and make sure that all policies are based on Fair Trade Principles.
- Do more to protect the rights of Indonesian women who migrate to work in the Middle East, Hong Kong and other countries and are often physically and sexually abused.
- Improve educational support for girls so that many more continue their education beyond primary and middle school levels.
- Do more to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates in rural villages.





Yabal Handicrafts

## Latin America

The Latin America Regional Report lists in great detail the many laws that are in place in the eleven countries from which it collected data. It then goes on to say that while there are these many laws regarding women's rights, commitment to implementation takes a long time and in the meantime the problems get worse. Discrimination and violence against women are widespread in the region especially among women living in poverty, with low educational attainment, precarious access to public services, living in remote geographical areas and few opportunities for work. Cultural factors also prevent women from exercising their rights. The organisations that took part in the survey said time and time again that "it is mainly the patriarchal culture that still maintains unequal relations between men and women, reproducing chauvinist practices, justifying violence, limiting women's access to educational or employment opportunities on equal terms and excluding them from spaces of participation and recognition in both public and private life."

Many Latin American governments have modified their legislation to respond to principles of equality and non-discrimination but very little changes. Public officers lack appropriate training and procedures and frequently re-victimise the women they are supposed to protect.

Cultural factors across the region maintain unequal relations between men and women, justify the use of violence, limit women's access to education and employment on equal terms and exclude them from participating in decision-making.

There are huge political and economic gender gaps with women having low representation in politics and when they do manage to enter the labour market they face significant pay differences and are often informally employed.

There is a need in all countries in Latin America for cultural, social, economic and political transformation to reduce the gender gap.

## Recommendations to Government

- Strengthen Fair Trade Organisations in Latin America in a critical look at the situation of women's rights in their region and their participation in advocacy spaces.
- Continue, expand and strengthen the processes of training and empowerment of women in communities.
- Prioritise populations and communities that have greater difficulties in accessing training opportunities and transforming traditional practices of discrimination and violence against women in the implementation of projects and initiatives with a focus on gender and women's rights.
- Develop permanent training processes on issues of gender and women's rights in which men, boys, girls, elderly people and the community in general participate so that new actors are involved and reflection is broadened as an issue that concerns all of us in the search for more equitable relationships in everyday life.
- Raise strategies especially focused on adolescents and young women aimed at recognising themselves and their rights, reflecting on gender stereotypes and building their life projects based on autonomy and equity.
- Design jointly, between government entities and the community, clear and efficient attention methods to address cases of violence and discrimination and disseminate them widely.
- Promote training processes with public officers on the regulatory framework and focus on women's rights, aimed at improving the exercise of implementation of public policies.
- Promote citizen oversight processes that monitor the implementation of policies, programmes, projects and/or sanctioned laws on gender issues and women's rights so that the community knows how this process is progressing and demonstrate when they need to.
- Strengthen the participation of women in leadership spaces, decision-making and political representation.
- Promote programmes to guarantee higher levels of safety for women and girls.
- Design campaigns and educational materials that promote reflection on the gender stereotypes that motivate society and the messages of chauvinist communication that limit the exercise of women's rights in freedom and autonomy.
- Promote the recognition of women in care work, informal productive activities, the right to decent work, access to employment under the same conditions as men and equal wages.
- Promote strategies of collaborative work between community-based organisations and government entities, creation of women's networks and strengthening of alliances between organisations that promote joint actions and support initiatives of common interest.

Case Studies

## Fundacion Chankuap, Ecuador

Ecuador’s 2008 Constitution broadens the recognition of women’s rights; from the right for material equality and non-discrimination as essential rights for the achievement of the equality of historically discriminated groups, as well as the role of the state for the formulation and implementation of equal policies between women and men, the incorporation of a gender approach and the obligation of the public sector as guarantor of rights. National Councils for Equality, including a Gender Council, were created as a result plus a National Council of

Women in 2009, a Standing Committee on Gender Equality and many other policies and plans e.g. the National Plan for Good Living.

As in many countries, there is a large gap between good laws and intentions and improvements in women’s actual experience. Women continue to suffer from discrimination and abuse, lack of educational and employment opportunities and limited access to public services.

Maria Antun



### Recommendations to Government

At the country level, awareness needs to be raised in all public and private spheres of the role played by urban and rural women and their families in productive work.

Case Studies

## Fundacion Chol Chol, Chile

The current situation in Chile regarding equal rights and gender equity is not good. There continues to be marked economic, social and cultural inequality which translates into unequal levels of well-being among men and women. Policies that do focus on equity and great distribution of opportunities are not enough; large numbers of women, mostly from rural and indigenous communities, live in conditions of vulnerability, poverty and violence. While there has been a slight increase in the participation of women in the world of politics and work there is inequality in the conditions of, and access to, work representation and decision-making.

### Recommendations to Government

- The New Constitution, currently in preparation, must recognise women as having equal rights to men in civil, family, cultural and economic matter. Explicit recognition of the existence of indigenous people and the rights of indigenous women and their cultures must also be included.
- The government should give recognition and support to Non-Governmental Organisations working to improve gender equality among the most marginalised members of the population and thereby helping the country to prosper.



Fundacion Chol Chol, human chain



Sindyanna of Galilee

## Africa and Middle East

The Africa and Middle East WFTO Region carried out desktop research and conducted a survey across the region using a purposeful sampling method to ensure fair sub-regional representation. Feedback was received from 14 organisations in 10 countries<sup>25</sup> in four sub regions: West Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and the Middle East. While much work has been done within the African Union on gender equality and women's empowerment, including the launching of the Africa Women's Decade (2010–2020), and member countries have put some progressive legislation in place, women continue to face many challenges as they continue to do also in the Middle East.

Gender based violence continues to be widespread. Women headed households tend to live below the poverty line (significantly more so than those headed by men). Women tend to work in the informal economy. If they are in formal employment they are likely to be found in low status jobs earning much less than male colleagues. Patriarchal social norms prevail. In eSwatini, for example,

women are classified as minors which means that they cannot access money, look for employment or obtain a passport with the permission of a male relative. Throughout the continent, women have limited access to resources such as micro credit, land, technology and training.

There has been some progress. Rwanda has taken steps to mitigate the effects of gender based violence including gender sensitization aimed at changing the attitudes of men. Burkina Faso and Kenya have enacted laws requiring political parties to present ballots for both parliamentary and municipal elections with at least 30% women. South Africa and Kenya are attempting to eradicate school fees and provide a midday meal to encourage more families to keep girls in school. eSwatini is encouraging girls to learn about employment opportunities that have traditionally been a male preserve.

### Recommendations to Government

- **Gender roles and stereotypes:** Across all countries, particularly in rural areas, age-old cultural practices, customs and traditions, including religion, prevail and constitute a major hindrance to efforts towards greater gender equality and women's empowerment. Ask ministries of education to check text-books for gender stereotyping which makes rigid gender norms and inequalities acceptable to women and men from their schooldays onward.
- **Women's dual roles and time burden affect economic productivity:** Take steps to ensure that employment and national accounts data capture non-market activities where women predominate and produce disaggregated data on gender to enable them to capture the full contribution of women both to the household economy and to the labour market, recognising their dual roles and the impact this has on hours worked.
- **Enforcement of law, policies and regulations:** While all countries surveyed have the basic legal and policy framework in place to address gender equality and women's empowerment, the gap between policy and implementation is wide. Take steps to enforce laws and regulations and provide the necessary investment.
- **Denial of property rights in relation to land impacts on poverty:** If women are not sure about their rights to the land they farm, they will not make the necessary investments to increase its productivity and value. Make efforts to reassure women that their land rights will be protected, with the full force of law if necessary.
- **Harness the gender dividend:** To enjoy the full benefits of development, find creative and practical ways to harness the potential of the growing numbers of young, educated women in every country in Africa and the Middle East.
- **Targeted Policy:** Address the barriers faced by women in terms of land ownership, access to credit, investment and new technology so that they may contribute fully to the transformation agenda of the whole region.

Case Studies**Machakos Cooperative Union, Kenya**

The Constitution of Kenya 2010, Vision 2030 and current government policies are committed to gender equality and empowerment of women. Women are recognized as being the equals of men in law and entitled to enjoy equal opportunities in the political, social and economic spheres. A two thirds rule has been introduced to ensure that one gender does not dominate elected positions and to

increase the participation of women in decision-making. Funds have been set up to support women in setting up businesses. There is a conflict between constitutional and international provisions on gender equality versus customary practices that discriminate against women, in particular regarding land ownership and inheritance.



Machakos Coop Artisan

**Recommendations to Government**

- **Women's Access to Credit.** The Government should support initiatives to extend credit access and financial support for low-income earners through capacity building and making more funds available.
- **Training and Capacity Building.** The Government should support capacity building initiatives aimed at providing women and youth with access to relevant information and knowledge to impact attitudes, help them recognise opportunities and think creatively and enable them to build leadership skills and confidence.
- **Lobbying and Advocacy:** The Government should address issues raised by campaigners on women and youth empowerment, food insecurity, roads, joblessness and climate change.

Case Studies**Sabahar, Ethiopia**

The Government of Ethiopia has quite a robust legal framework to protect and empower women and strive for gender equality. The first giant step was the development of the National Policy on Ethiopian Women in 1993 resulting in the creation of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. The revised Ethiopian Constitution of 1995 clearly sets out the rights of women. This was bolstered by the Revised Family Code of 2000. Community based land registration, started in 2003, gave stronger land rights to women. In 2004 the Criminal Code was revised and rape, FGM, violence in

marriage and marriage by abduction of a minor all became criminal acts.

Despite the legal framework, and mechanisms adopted for implementation, gender inequality remains a major issue in Ethiopia. The country suffers from some of the lowest gender equality performance indicators in sub-Saharan Africa. Women in Ethiopia face gender discrimination daily and are subject to systematic violence and harassment.

**Recommendations to Government**

- Education is an overwhelmingly critical requirement for positive change in gender equity in any country. While school enrolment of girls has improved, many barriers still prevent girls and women from taking advantage of educational opportunities.  
  
The Government should take steps to address this.
- Many families continue to believe that the education of girls is not important as they will grow up "only" to be wives and mothers. The Ministry of Education should challenge the stereotypes through the curriculum and provision of suitable resources so that girls are empowered to be confident and pursue non-traditional careers.
- Many large companies are setting up factories in Ethiopia. The Government should introduce strict regulations to create a new reality for female factory workers and do large-scale manufacturing in an ethical way.
- Ethiopia is transitioning from a largely illiterate, agriculture-based economy to an increasingly educated, industrial led economy. The Government should put in place systems and structures to ensure women fully participate in, and benefit from, the change.

### Case Studies

## Europe – Oxfam Magasins du Monde, Belgium

There are two Belgian laws that have contributed specifically to strengthening gender equality in Belgium and in the work that Belgian organisations do in developing countries: The Gender Mainstreaming Law of 12.01.2007 and the law relating to Belgian Development Cooperation of 10.03.2013. The 2007 Law integrates a gender dimension into public policies at the federal level in Belgium and requires the implementation of strategic objectives related to gender in management plans, administration contracts and relevant strategic planning instruments. The 2013 Law provides a framework for “actions that contribute to sustainable economic growth in order to improve living conditions for the populations of developing countries and to their socio-economic and socio-cultural development in order to eradicate poverty, exclusion and inequality.” Article 6 of this Law formalises government support for fair and sustainable trade.



Oxfam Magasins du Monde

### Recommendations to Government

- Promote and support rigorous, high quality Fair Trade in the North and the South and short supply chains.
- Stand up for equitable pay for men and women and fight against the discrimination and inequality suffered by women from the start of their working lives: limited access to the labour market and to the professions, the “glass ceiling”, unequal sharing of domestic work and unpaid care work.
- Implement all the activities set out in the 31.05.2017 Resolution to “Make Belgium a Fair Trade Country.”

## Acknowledgements

**T**hank you to WFTO Africa, Asia and Latin America Regions, Creative Handicrafts India, Fair Trade Group Nepal, Forum Fair Trade Indonesia, Fundacion Chankuap Ecuador, Fundacion Chol Chol Chile, Machakos Cooperative Union Kenya, Magasins du Monde Oxfam Belgium and Sabahar Ethiopia for agreeing to take part in this project. In particular I would like to express enormous appreciation to Adriana Sosa, Bernard Outah, Chandra Kachhipati, Elizabeth Nzilani, Estelle Vanwambeke, Jennie Abraham-Joy, Retno Hapsari, Susana Ortiz Geoffroy, Shrizu Rajbhandari, Sophie Mosco, Tanya Lutvey and Zulma Britez for working to a very short time-frame to deliver the case studies, women’s stories and recommendations that provide the evidence summarised in these reports.

I would also like to thank Pieter Swart of Turqle Trading South Africa, Rayhan Kabir of Hathay Bunano Bangladesh, Sophie Tack of Magasins du Monde Oxfam Belgium and Sujata Goswami of Sarba Shanti Ayog India for participating in the gender workshop at the WFTO Global Conference held in Delhi India in November 2017 on “Transforming Lives: The impact of the WFTO and its gender policy” which has also provided evidence used in these reports.

Finally a huge thank you to all the 53 women and 3 men who have told their own stories which may be found in a special

appendix (or sometimes within the case studies also available as separate appendices): Chandrakala Sharma, Pooja Vaingankar, Pratibha Poojari, Rinku Mishra, Rosy Solanki and Suman Sarkar from Creative Handicrafts; Sapana Gotame, Yamuna Dangol, Usha Maharjan, Maiya Khadka, Priya Kumari Dangoura, Devaki Khadka, Kiran Maharjan and Nirmala K. C. from members of Fair Trade Group Nepal; Jiyun Jeon from Fair Trade Korea; Netty Fabriana, Rohaini, Sudarwati, Tumiyen, Sogiah, Siwi Musriyati (Picuk) and Siti Ngaisah from members of Forum Fair Trade Indonesia; Inez Nayap, Maria Antun, Maria Sando, Maria Yuma, Rosa Tapia, and Sekut Kiatua of Fundacion Chankuap; Isabel Currivil, Marta Huitrainan, Sandra San Martin Ceceres, Zenobia Currivil, Elisa Avendano and Nancy Epuluf Barra of Fundacion Chol Chol; Chonda Rani from Hathay Bunano Proshikan Society, Bangladesh; Jacintah Nduku, Joseph Mbinda, Eunice Kiilu, Martin Malila, Agnes Musilili, Ann Mueni-Kasinga, Michael Kilili Musau and Lydia Itumbi-Kambusa of Machakos Cooperative Union; Amina Bibi, Cecile, Dipali Pramanick, Hilda, Myrian and Shabana Begun from Oxfam Magasins du Monde; Jesmin Akter from Pollee Unnoyon Prokolpo, Bangladesh; and Dinkenash, Etamalu, Mulutsega, Wointoshet, Yeshi Shiferaw and Yeshiwa from Sabahar, Ethiopia.

*Carol Wills*

## List of Annexes

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- Personal stories of women working in Fair Trade
- Further Reading

### APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 – WFTO Asia Gender Research Report
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- Appendix 4 – Creative Handicrafts, India, Case Study

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