

Report No. 2 – February 2019

Business Models that Empower Women

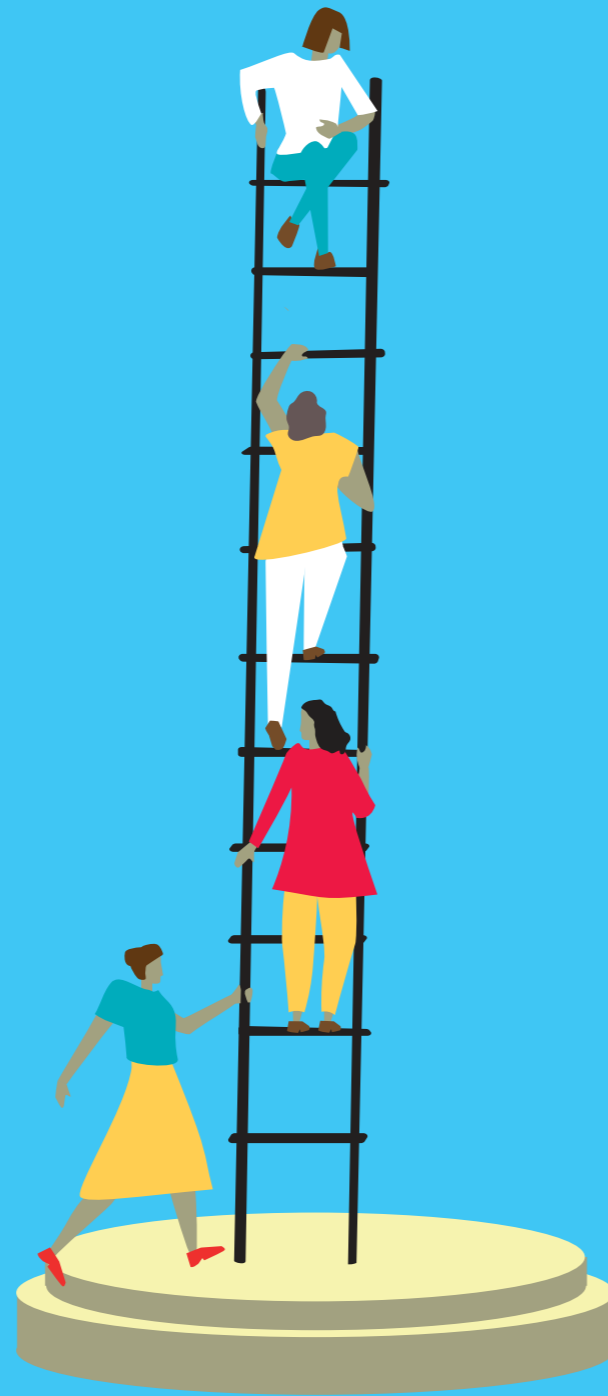
Insights and Inspiration from Fair Trade Enterprises



Fair Trade enterprises are reaching a higher level of women's leadership than conventional businesses. Women in Fair Trade enterprises are four times more likely to achieve senior management positions than women working in conventional businesses.



CONVENTIONAL
BUSINESSES



FAIR TRADE
ENTERPRISES

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Summary

If you are a woman working for a Fair Trade enterprise¹ you are four times as likely to achieve a senior management position, become CEO or join the Board than you would be working for a conventional business. Much more than this, if you are a woman working or producing for a Fair Trade enterprise, you will be recognised, you will be counted, your rights will be respected, you will be visible and your voice will be heard. Fair Trade enterprises have gender equality and women's economic empowerment at the heart of what they do, believing that we will never achieve sustainable development if women's full potential is not realised.

Members of the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) are verified Fair Trade enterprises. They may take many forms but they all work to a business model that puts the needs of people and planet first. They are social enterprises, cooperatives, family-businesses and social businesses that prioritise the goals of Fair Trade as their core mission. The WFTO verifies such enterprises and is the membership organisation that they belong to.

For this study we have looked particularly at the situation in eight Fair Trade Organisations (FTOs) – two community development organisations, one cooperative union, one non-governmental organisation, two factories and two networks – in eight countries: Belgium, Chile, Ecuador, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya and Nepal. What these FTOs all have in common, as members of the World Fair Trade Organisation, is the belief that Fair Trade is an instrument for change and they all have a trading function. They believe that by practicing Fair Trade they are able to empower economically marginalised people, especially women, and give them the opportunities they deserve as equal members of the human race. The WFTO Guarantee System Standard helps them to do this. It is not just another certification system; it is a guide to continuous improvement of Fair Trade practice backed up by policies approved by the membership at Annual General Meetings over the years. As we have seen in our first report on gender equity and women's rights in the workplace, inequality across the world is growing with women suffering from exploitation, violence and abuse in the workplace as well as outside, working long hours for low pay, unaware of their rights, discriminated against at every turn. Fair Trade shows that business without exploitation of the workforce is possible, that providing training to women, making them aware of their rights in law and giving them leadership opportunities at every level, can improve business performance. Reviving traditional skills and finding markets for the products, fosters positive recognition of women's roles within their communities and enhances their status and self-esteem.

What's a Fair Trade enterprise?

A Fair Trade enterprise has Fair Trade as its identity. This means a full commitment to the 10 principles of Fair Trade as their core mission. WFTO members have been assessed by their peers and have been independently audited to confirm this. As WFTO members, they are also called Fair Trade Organizations. The Fair Trade Standard looks at every aspect of a business and confirms whether it is truly a Fair Trade enterprise. The WFTO verifies that the entire business and its systems for managing their supply chains have embraced Fair Trade. As a result, these enterprises are able to focus on empowering producers, workers and their broader communities. This report also shows they are more effective in empowering women.

¹ 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.

Best practices from Fair Trade enterprises

Whatever their circumstances, which may be very different indeed, Fair Trade enterprises agree that best practice in Fair Trade with regard to gender equity combines six core components:

1.

Education, awareness-raising and skills training for women, and for women and men together.²

3.

Giving women the chance to participate in decision-making in their organisations and communities.

5.

Promoting Fair Trade in whatever way they can.

2.

Providing women (as well as men) with leadership opportunities at every level in the FTO whether this is in a factory situation or in a less formal, rural, village setting as members and leaders of women's groups.

4.

Providing equal pay for equal work; providing fair pay in all situations.

6.

Challenging entrenched stereo-types and traditional social norms.

²Here we should mention the excellent GALS (Gender Action Learning System) developed by Oxfam Novib which uses drawing to enable men and women to consider, together and separately, what work they do every day, who earns money for what activity and how it is used. This can be very effective in changing entrenched mind-sets.



Fairchances Lancement Inde Bangladesh

Challenges

All Fair Trade enterprises are challenged to live up to the ten principles of Fair Trade and the requirements of the Guarantee System Standard, continuously to improve their performance and prove that they really do what they say they do. This is hard. There are many cynics out in the wider world ready to criticise Fair Trade as being unrealistically aspirational, anti "genuine", profit-driven business and conventional market forces, and ready to publicise what they see as the slightest infringement of the Standard's compliance criteria.

FTOs need to meet these challenges head on. We live in a far from perfect world with women suffering most from discrimination of all kinds. The key challenge is to work with consumers everywhere to understand more about the working and living conditions of the women and men who grow and make the products we all buy. That way 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.



Oasis worker building a bamboo frame

In WFTO’s Gender Policy approved in 2016 we use definitions of gender equality and gender equity developed by Oxfam Australia for their 2011 Gender Mainstreaming Policy:

Gender Equity

The process of being fair to women and men regardless of sex or gender identity which may require different gender specific interventions; equity leads to equality.

Gender Equality

The equal enjoyment by women and men of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards and the same level of dignity and respect. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that their rights and opportunities are not governed or limited by whether they were born female or male.

What is the movement promoting Fair Trade enterprises doing to achieve gender equity and equality?

Both the main Fair Trade umbrella bodies, the World Fair Trade Organization and Fairtrade International, are working hard to achieve gender equity in Fair Trade. In 2016 WFTO launched its new Gender Policy. This obliges FTOs to take concrete steps to ensure that there is gender equality in their organisations and offers guidelines on how to do this. You cannot trade your way to sustainable development unless women as well as men are empowered.

Targeting women’s empowerment through Fair Trade enterprises

With this policy WFTO is trying to improve the situation of women in all WFTO members (i.e. Fair Trade enterprises), within their trading relationships and advocacy efforts. The six objectives of the policy seek to deal with this by involving both women and men in the implementation of Principle

6, acknowledging that women have been denied opportunities of all kinds in the past, taking steps to hear women’s voices and have them take part in decision making and leadership in our organisations and beyond. We also want to put a stop to acts of violence and abuse against women and girls, recognise women’s work in the supply chain and involve women in designing the changes that the policy document recommends.

WFTO has a Guarantee System. This requires members of the WFTO to have to assess themselves every two years against compliance criteria based on the 10 Fair Trade Principles. Their Self-Assessment Reports are then reviewed by WFTO and evaluated by a Peer Visitor and external auditor. The independent audit of WFTO members is a key component of the verification system. The relevant Principle in relation to Gender is Principle 6 Commitment to Non-Discrimination, Gender Equity

and Freedom of Association. It says that “FTOs must have a clear policy and plan to promote gender equality that ensures that women as well as men have the ability to gain access to the resources that they need to be productive and also the ability to influence the wider policy, regulatory and institutional environment that shapes their livelihoods and lives. Organisational constitutions and by-laws allow for and enable women to become active members of the organisation in their own right, and to take up leadership positions in the governance structure. Where women are employed within the organisation, even where it is an informal employment situation, they receive equal pay for equal work. The organisation recognises women’s full employment rights and is committed to ensuring that women receive their full statutory employment benefits. The organisation

takes into account the special health and safety needs of pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers”. The compliance criteria then measure to what extent the member meets the requirements of the Standard.

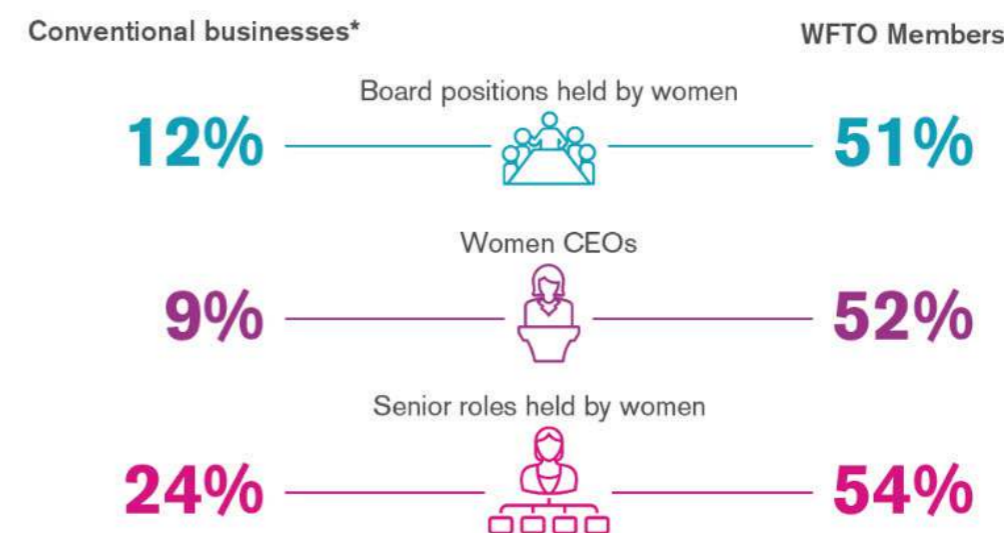
Fairtrade International’s Gender Programme promotes gender equality and enabling women and men to access the benefits of Fairtrade equally. They recognize that gender inequality remains a huge barrier to human development across the world. They are working to tackle unequal power relationships between women and men by challenging accepted social norms and structures and they, too, have specific requirements in their Standards designed to prevent gender inequality.

None of this is easy.

Fair Trade champions gender equality and women’s empowerment

At the heart of Fair Trade is the commitment to gender equality and non-discrimination. As we have seen, Fair Trade Principle 6 requires Fair Trade enterprises to ensure this along their supply chains, to have a policy in place to promote equality between men and women and to provide equal pay for equal work.

Our current study on gender equality in Fair Trade provides a glimpse of women’s leadership in Fair Trade enterprises. Fair Trade is leading the way to gender equality and women’s empowerment through encouraging women to take up decision-making and leadership positions in their organisations. WFTO members are showing a vision of a future where women’s leadership is a reality.



*From a comparison with ‘Women in Business 2017’ report by Grant Thornton.



Asha Handicrafts

Why gender equality now?

Sustainable development requires gender equality. We know that empowering women is critical to addressing global challenges like poverty and hunger. When women take their rightful place alongside men as equals – across society, the economy and the workplace – our world becomes a better place.

The challenge is urgent and there is no reason to delay action. We need the business world to embrace women's leadership and focus on empowering women workers and producers. Fair Trade enterprises across the world are showing this is possible.

Why is all this so important? It is in Board rooms that the most important decisions governing business are made and this is a place where women's voices need to be heard. The Board room is where power lies. All too often, however,

gender stereotypes are applied to senior management roles. Women “take care” while men “take charge”³. Willington Wamayeye, then General Manager of the Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative, Mount Elgon, Uganda, said⁴ of the appointment of women to the Board for the first time:

“To begin with they were silent. Then they took off like aeroplanes. And when they went home afterwards they told everyone what had been discussed and decided.”

Women should have seats in the boardrooms of the world because we make up 50% of the population and we have something to say. Diversity of views in the boardroom can only be good and lead to better decision-making.

Let's talk about supply chains

The expression “supply chain” describes all the links needed to get a product from the farmer or worker to the consumer. There are many links in a conventional supply chain and each link has a financial cost. Economic convention has it that whoever can sell at the lowest price will sell the most. The way to do this is to pay the workers as little as possible and find ways for the workers to produce more in a shorter time (perhaps by investing in new technology which reduces the number of workers needed and so even less has to be paid out in wages.) Farmers and other workers are so far from the consumer that they have to sell their products at a very low price, often not covering their production costs, and this keeps them poor.

Fair Trade Organisations turn this economic model on its head, aiming to reduce the distance between farmer, worker and the market by knowing who their suppliers are and buying as directly as possible, thereby reducing the number of links (and costs) in the supply chain. This enables them to pay a Fair Price for the products and remain competitive in the market place. Fairtrade International sets minimum prices for certain commodity products (such as coffee, tea and cocoa) which ensure that farmers cover their production costs and have enough left over to enable their families to have a decent standard of living. The WFTO requires that at least minimum wages must be paid to workers and other producers and that all FTOs are making visible efforts to pay the Living Wage for their locality.

A gender workshop

A gender workshop called: “Transforming lives – the impact of the WFTO and its Gender Policy” was held at the WFTO Global Conference held in New Delhi, India, in November 2017.

Rayhan Kabir of Hathay Bunano Bangladesh gave a summary of the impact in his organisation evidenced by having equal numbers of women and men on the Board and in the Management Team. The enterprise ensures that women's rights are respected in the workplace with a Workers' Association to engage in collective bargaining. Owing to supervisors being women and women workers being encouraged to take up leadership positions, productivity is high. All this results in greater efficiency and a general feeling of well-being.

The contribution of **Oxfam Magasins du Monde**, Belgium, showed that the WFTO Gender Policy has acted as a driver for advocacy campaigns. Their

message was that by defending decent working conditions, Fair Trade helps women's empowerment which they defined as “To have” (the economic element of empowerment, improvement of material living conditions and well-being and one of the ways to attain an ability to make choices); “To know” (practical knowledge and skills); “To want” (internal power – psychological strength, self-confidence and self-esteem – and the ability and will to make choices about the future); and “To be able to” (take decisions and reposition themselves in power relationships).

Actions taken with partners in India and Bangladesh included role-play, songs, group activities, street plays, Fair Trade and gender awareness workshops, body painting and demonstrations. In Belgium workshops on gender inequality were held with adult volunteers, workers, illiterate and unemployed women and men and migrant women.

³ Catalyst (Workplaces that work for women) 2005 study examining stereotypes that create formidable barriers to women's advancement in the workplace.

⁴ In conversation with Carol Wills



Delhi Workshop on Gender Policy

The main challenge to emerge was that labour rights for women in Europe are threatened and this means bigger risks for women's labour rights in the South. What is needed is more collaboration to build more North-South, South-South and North-North solidarity.

Sujata Goswami of Sasha, Kolkata, India spoke of how the policy helps an FTO, already very strong on women's empowerment, to improve even further. It gives direction for the organisation's practice, but also holds the organisation accountable. It comes from the understanding that inequality between men and women is deep rooted and is manifested in discrimination against women in different forms. What is needed is conscious and continuous efforts to achieve a balanced environment both at organizational level and also in work with the partners at field level. Framing and adopting a gender policy is a commitment towards those efforts and leads to gender sensitivity among all.

Essential factors of success are commitment among the leadership of an organization, having a "pioneer" for the gender policy with sufficient status, influence, expertise, sense of humour & strategic insight, working to realistic attainable goals and making success visible by reporting progress on the basis of results and figures.

Pieter Swart of Turqle Trading, South Africa, spoke of the particular challenge of same sex gender discrimination in his country which has

formidable gender equality legislation and regulations in place but where it is extremely difficult to change traditional attitudes and behaviour.

Legislation and regulations require public and private bodies to develop and implement plans and measures to promote the economic empowerment of women; promote women's access to economic and educational opportunities and productive resources; increase access to financing, procurement, land rights and skills development, especially the entrepreneurial skills and capacity of women; and facilitate employment opportunities and access to the markets for women.

Great efforts are being made to facilitate sustainable livelihoods and decent work for women in rural areas, largely but not solely within agriculture; mainstream gender in land reform programmes to ensure more land is in the hands of women together with the skills and financial resources necessary for productive land use; and ensure equal representation and meaningful participation of women in traditional councils.

This is all well and good but there is resistance in the work place to the practical application of the legislation with women finding the promotion of other women, particularly those younger or lower in the social hierarchy, hard to accept and which may result in the exclusion of such women from their communities.

The Case Studies

Six Fair Trade Organisations (Creative Handicrafts, India; Fundacion Chankuap, Ecuador; Fundacion Chol Chol, Chile; Machakos Cooperative Union, Kenya; Oxfam Magasins du Monde, Belgium, and Sabahar, Ethiopia) and two Fair Trade Networks (Fair Trade Group Nepal and Forum Fair Trade Indonesia) prepared case studies for this research. Three WFTO Regions provided their findings on the situation in Fair Trade Organisations

and their best practice and challenges with regard to gender. How do FTOs contribute to sustainable development? There are many quotes from women workers' personal stories (which are available in full as a separate document). The summaries provided here give only a flavour of the wealth of information included in the case studies which are available from WFTO as appendices to the main reports on gender equity in the work place.

Asia

Research across 18 countries⁵ in East, South East and South Asia indicated that "Fair Trade provides a platform – for organisations and individuals – for the deliberate, strategic and sustainable development of women, and makes efforts to change perceptions of gender among women and men. Gender equality is good for women producers, women-led small businesses and the overall development of a just society. It strives to empower women by addressing the gaps that neo-liberal state legislation and the profit-driven private sector fail to prioritise". A country's capacity for economic growth is impeded where there is too little investment in women in the work force. Fair Trade addresses this "by ensuring that women of all levels are actively and meaningfully participating in the

economy whether that be in the low-income countries of South Asia or the high income countries of East Asia."

"The ten principles of Fair Trade help women at all stages of the supply chain".⁶ The principles, reflected in the Standard with which all WFTO Guaranteed Members have to comply through a process of continuous improvement, ensure that women farmers, workers and producers have the same opportunities to participate in the workforce as men.

Our three case studies from Asia (Creative Handicrafts in India, Fair Trade Group Nepal and Forum Fair Trade Indonesia) expand on this.

Best practice in Fair Trade across Asia may be summarised as:

- Empowering women through full cycle support in Fair Trade production
- Strengthening gender from within the Fair Trade Movement
- Recognising and preserving women's traditional knowledge
- Empowering men to promote gender equity
- Empowering most marginalised women, including rural women
- Breaking down stereo-types through participation in the social economy sector
- Empowering women in the family and in the community

⁵ Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam

⁶ All quotes in the section above are from the WFTO Asia Gender Research Report.

Case Studies

Creative Handicrafts

The whole purpose of Creative Handicrafts is women's empowerment. Established in 1984, Creative Handicrafts has become an enterprise that produces high quality garments which are exported to Fair Trade and conventional buyers all over the world. 270 women are employed on a full-time basis. Turnover in 2016/17 was approximately US\$ 1.7 million. Half the people on the Board of Trustees are women workers, the rest are external experts. The ratio of women to men on the Board is 9:1. "It is the experience of CH that women play an important role on the Board of Trustees, it helps in making decisions in tune to the needs of women... It is also a source of inspiration." 90% of the staff at CH are women and 95% of managerial level positions are held by women. Female designers, merchandisers and social workers are hired... Women that show skill and excellence are promoted to higher ranks such as production managers store in-charges, pattern makers, training centre teachers etc. This upward mobility is a very positive and encouraging aspect of being associated with CH."

There are twelve notable Fair Trade practices in Creative Handicrafts. When the current Government of India ended the state medical insurance policy for artisans, CH set up its own. Arogyanidhi (Mutual Health Fund) in which all women workers and their families may enrol to insure the families

against medical emergencies. Many children in India are unable to complete their schooling owing to absolute poverty in their families CH covers the educational expenses of two children of each woman worker with preference being given to girl children. The Factory Act 1948 of the Government of India makes it mandatory for every company to have a creche but most do not comply. Creative Handicrafts has a creche close to the cooperative groups of women and the training centre. It caters for children from 6 months to 16 years. Children are taken to, and collected from, school, helped with homework and provided with nutritious food. Mothers are encouraged to breastfeed their small babies at regular intervals. CH provides three months of paid maternity leave to new mothers. Domestic violence continues to be widespread in India with a high percentage of men and women surveyed by the government saying that it is acceptable for a man to beat his wife CH carries out extensive training on the topics of gender and sex, gender stereotypes, women's equality, the importance of the girl child, legal awareness of laws protecting the rights of women etc. The training builds the understanding of the women workers and gives them a strong sense of identity and pride. CH social workers will also intervene in cases of violence and bring it to an end, setting itself a target of zero rate of violence among women workers.

Rinku Mishra, a CH worker, says:

"I saw here that women were working at all levels supervisors, designers, production managers. I wondered how it is that I was always told that a woman could amount to nothing. I quickly became a good tailor. Now I am able to earn for myself, my daughter and I can even help support my parents. The talk of sending me to my husband and in laws has stopped. I am never going back there. My confidence as a woman is increasing. Here we have regular training on issues of gender equality and gender base violence. For the first time in my life I felt that I was in a place where I was understood."

Best Practice

Skills training

Creative Handicrafts recruits unskilled, disadvantaged women from the slums of Mumbai. They receive 4 months of training at the training centre before being promoted to one of the cooperative groups as a member and employee.

Job security

Women workers at CH are employed throughout the year and have job security unlike most workers in the global garment industry which is notorious for seasonal contracting, constant firing and hiring, forced unpaid leave during lean periods and enforced overtime when there are orders. There is little regulation on the part of the state.

Savings and Credit groups

Poor people, especially, women find it very difficult to obtain a loan from a bank owing to lack of collateral and savings. They often turn to money lenders who charge very high rates of interest (60–120% per annum is common) CH has organised Saving and Credit Groups for its workers, each with 10 members. Every woman saves a fixed amount each month and may take out a loan up to three times the amount she has saved.

Welfare Funds

India's Employee's Provident Fund (EPF) is a retirement benefit scheme open to salaried employees. Recently introduced modifications to the scheme mean that most garment workers are no longer eligible. Creative Handicrafts has a welfare fund for each woman worker 10% of each woman's salary is deducted and saved and an additional 10% is contributed by the organisation. The total amount saved is given to the woman when she retires or moves on.

Fair Wages and Profit Sharing

Research carried out in 2017 by the International Labour Organisation found that over half the garment sector in India pays less than the



Photo of Rinku Mishra by Jennie Abraham-Joy

minimum wage. Women working for Creative Handicrafts work on piece rate, earning a monthly salary based on the number of garments each woman has made. The stitching price for one garment is 3–4 times higher than that usually paid in the industry⁷. At the end of the year the profit made by each cooperative group of women is shared among the women and may amount to 2–4 times what a woman would normally earn each month.⁸

Safety

The 2013 Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act is rarely complied with in India. CH has an internal complaints committee which is an anti-sexual harassment committee.

The key challenges for an organisation like Creative Handicrafts, doing so much more than a normal garment factory in India to empower and protect its women workers, is to manage orders from buyers so that the women earn a living wage all the year round to ensure a sustainable livelihood.

⁷ WTO calculates that in the global supply chain, labour accounts for 15–3% of the market price of a T-shirt or skirt whereas at CH labour accounts for 30% of FOB value of a garment.

⁸ In a normal garment company, this would be pocketed by the owner.

Case Studies

Fair Trade Group Nepal

Fair Trade Group Nepal is a consortium of 24 Fair Trade Organisations, registered as a not for profit NGO in 1996 after meeting informally for several years. Its vision is to improve the quality of life of low income groups of people through Fair Trade. Its mission is to promote Fair Trade and provide support to its members and to other like-minded organisations, contributing towards sustainable livelihoods at the grass-roots and local levels through Fair Trade focused enterprise. Altogether more than 50,000 women and men producers of crafts and food products are linked to members of FTG Nepal. These members provide a range of business support services to their producers including operating funds, small capital investment, design inputs, training and access to local and international markets. A number of social services are also provided including education for the children of producers, treatment and rehabilitation for those suffering from leprosy and orphanages to provide safe havens for street children and orphans.

Nirmala K. C. has worked at the Association of Craft Producers for 25 years. She says: “The best thing about working for ACP is the everyday learning – and I love making the goods. The life of women in Nepal outside ACP is not good. Many women are unemployed and are looking for

jobs to pay their household expenses. Here in ACP women are respected; it’s not the same outside.”

Sapana Gotame has been working for 15 years as a carpet weaver and trainer with Kumbeshwar Technical School. She says:

“Kumbeshwar supported me at a very difficult point in my life. I had come with my husband from the village to Kathmandu and was working in a cosmetics shop. One week before I gave birth, my husband left me. A friend brought me to Kumbeshwar and they supported me. They gave me carpet weaving training and I have been carpet weaving ever since. They found me accommodation and treated me well. I am happy working here. There is a lot of discrimination against women in Nepal both in the family and outside. Lack of education is a problem.”

Best Practice

Fair Trade Group Nepal is a pioneering Fair Trade movement led by women from the start, determined to challenge inequality in the country. Fair Trade Organisations in Nepal have been focusing on women’s education, awareness-raising and skills training and, above all, economic empowerment. The solidarity of members of the Fair Trade Group is notable, despite competing in the same market. Members work together to advocate for Fair Trade. More than 80% of Fair Trade producers in Nepal are women. Economically marginalised women are targeted for support as well as women with disabilities, especially needy women and single mothers.

Case Studies

Forum Fair Trade Indonesia



Rohaini

The **Lombok Pottery Centre** brings together three village based women’s cooperatives with 230 members who are the owners of the Centre which is registered as a limited company. The AGM is the biggest event of the year when the shareholders consider and approve the business performance of the company and elect the Board of Directors and Supervisory Board.

Rohaini says:

“As a woman, I consider myself lucky, because it is rare that the women at my village have a job and can get an income to help the family. Not only I have an income, but I am also part of the owner of the organization along with 230 of my friends as the owner of LPC. I feel I’m rich. I know how the regulations work and where the organization is going. The changes that I see now especially for women in where I live compare to before, is that now women can go anywhere they want to go. Also we can now decide what we want to do with the money we earn as long as we can explain to our husbands and as long as we can manage the income well.”

Forum Fair Trade Indonesia is an umbrella body and network of 10 Fair Trade Organisations working with more than 5,000 producers of Fair Trade products on the islands of Java, Bali, Lombok and Sulawesi. Its mission is “to increase the income level of rural communities in Indonesia through the adoption of a value-added Fair Trade system of production that will lead to greater market access”. The Forum works to educate producers on Fair Trade practices and on how to develop business plans; it promotes Fair Trade products to the growing domestic market in Indonesia and to foreign consumers; it campaigns to influence policy makers to support Fair Trade and to raise awareness among the public that there is a fairer alternative to the existing economic system.

Three member of the Forum took part in the study: the Lombok Pottery Centre, Pekerti (the Indonesian People’s Handicraft Foundation) and Apikri Cooperative.

Best Practice

Best practice: “LPC focuses on women in everything we do. We promote female power and strive to be able to run the organization. In the organization structure almost all the important positions are held by women. Almost all artisans hired by LPC are women.”

Case Studies**Pekerti**

Photo of Sogiah at Pekerti

Pekerti was established in 1975, in the early days of alternative trade. Working to provide support to more than 50 producer groups, its vision is to establish a prosperous, democratic, just and equal society through capacity building and empowerment based on Fair Trade principles; to develop the professionalism of artisans and its own staff; and to create a fair business and economic environment through education, networking and advocacy.

Sudarwati (the leader of a group of natural fibre weavers) says:

“In the beginning I tried to produce new product, because I have a principle that if we don’t try, then we never know if we are capable or not.”

Best Practice

Pekerti promotes gender equality and women’s empowerment through providing equal opportunities for men and women in recruitment, in leadership, in participation in decision making and in expressing opinions, in training and personal development and in provision of maternity, breastfeeding and menstruation leave for women. Producers are provided with equal opportunities as long as they are a marginalised community group willing to accept assistance and participate in training and meetings and are open to learning about Fair Trade.

Case Studies**The Apikri Cooperative**

The Apikri Cooperative, bringing together more than 200 micro and small enterprises in Central Java, works to strengthen fairness in trading through empowering communities, improving business capacity and facilitating market access. Apikri has a special focus on export marketing while encouraging its members to be active in the local market and promote Fair Trade values there. **Siwi Musriyati** (Picuk) says:

“For me Apikri have given me many changes in my life, from the financial side to the social side but also feeling of being confident for myself and my family.”



Photo of Siwi Musriyati by Retno Hapsari

Best Practice

Making sure that all Apikri staff and all producers understand the Fair Trade Principles including, of course, Principle 6 relating to gender equity; giving the same development opportunities to men and women; and providing equal pay for equal work.



Elisa Avendaño

Latin America

Research findings from 11 countries⁹ in Latin America show that Fair Trade Organisations following the principles of Fair Trade have a significant impact on the lives of women and their families. Above all women are recognised as valuable human beings with rights.

Best Practice in Fair Trade across Latin America

- Recognition spaces for women's knowledge, based on respect and freedom, where they can show and practice their knowledge on equal terms with men and with the same visibility in the community.
- Training programmes aimed at helping women to internalise the values they have and the importance of the work they do both domestically and in production.
- Skills training for women to allow them to add value to the work they do.
- Promotion strategies to enable women to occupy leadership positions in their organisations.
- Collaborative work contexts to strengthen interpersonal relationships between women.
- Participation in advocacy forums to defend women's rights and gender equity.
- Coordination of internal policies and strategies to guarantee non-discrimination of every kind.
- Promotion of leadership skills in women to contribute to their empowerment.

⁹ Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

Case Studies

Chankuap Foundation

The Chankuap Foundation in Ecuador started its work in 1996 to provide community development support to the Achuar and Shuar indigenous groups and to the settler Mestizos. This includes income generation, sustainable management of forest resources and the processing and marketing of cosmetics, essential oils, herbs and spices, handicrafts and natural organic, agricultural products. Traditionally women have done the subsistence farming to provide food for their families while men went hunting in the jungle. Nowadays men are involved in the cultivation of cash crops such as turmeric, lemon verbena, chili pepper and cocoa. The Chankuap Foundation invites men to participate in activities that were previously carried out only by women and also to share some activities in the home and the raising of children. All training is provided for women and men together. This gender approach has to be done with the greatest sensitivity so that family relationships are not weakened and that conflicts are not created within the family or the community.

Maria Guadalupe Antun Naichap:

"I have been working as an artisan for about fifteen years. I am also the Leader of a Women's Group and a Family Group in my neighbourhood. I am 45 years old. My husband works in the fields. He shares the expenses of the house and helps me with my work in the vegetable garden. The money I earn from sale of crafts and agricultural products is mostly spent on children's education and medical expenses if any of us are ill. Training is important for both men and women. The training that the Foundation has given us has helped us a lot and above all to understand the cost issue. I ask the Foundation to continue training us in design and colour combination. I have also received training on intra-family abuse, violence, how to care for and monitor my children at school, health checks for children, how to manage the bonus money, how to handle it well and for the benefit of my children."



Photo of Maria Sando and her family by Luis Lema

Maria Sando:

"Both men and women have the right to do the same training activities. What I say to women is: continue working as you always have done with or without the support of your husbands, because women always go ahead."

Best Practice

Opening Micro-Credit lines for women for productive activities such as raising chickens. Providing training opportunities for women and men together. Inviting men to participate in activities previously carried out only by women. Encouraging women to participate in decision-making in their families and communities and to form Women's Groups and Family Groups for learning and solidarity. Making bonus payments to artisans. Raising awareness among Fair Trade consumers of the value and social, cultural and environmental context of every product.

Case Studies

Fundacion Chol Chol

Founded in 1971, Fundacion Chol Chol, Chile is a non-profit human development organisation working with the indigenous Mapuche people, especially women. Their aim is education, equality, training and cultural rescue. It is active in eleven of the most remote and isolated parts of La Araucania Region in Southern Chile where male chauvinism is a deep-rooted practice and violence against women is common resulting in women's low self-esteem, depression and vulnerability. These days many of the men migrate to work in the mines, leaving women and children without means of support.

Fundacion Chol Chol has revived the old weaving traditions and other artisanal skills to empower women and provide them with independent incomes so that families are provided for and children stay at school. It seeks to improve quality of life through provision of the most optimal working conditions:

Sandra San Martin (Pottery Teacher): “And we started to learn the Fair Trade modality. To sell your product at a price that pays what we contribute in an hour, time and material and also in the value that has been added, which are the contents of the work we do.”

Arturo Cerda Montt, Fundacion Chol-Chol Manager:

“Historically we have been Fair Trade and, therefore, having the logo for us has been like a ratification of what we do, what we have always done and what we have always thought about.”

Best Practice

Implementing a new model of empowerment of rural women complemented by four axes of human development: Technical-productive empowerment, recovery and cultural strengthening, Fair Trade and emotional empowerment. Confronting the low self-esteem and lack of tools and opportunities of rural women. Addressing the topic of gender as a topic for rural women to contribute to the motivation of new women through the economic, social and emotional impact demonstrated in their family and community circles.

Marta Huitrainan Aillapan: “Oh, if I think about it and look back on everything I have done and how I started, I am very happy, I have learned many things. To value my work, my technique and the way to sell it. Not only the Foundation helped me to learn techniques of the loom, the dyeing but also opened the doors to a world I did not know, where there were people who valued my products not only because they were beautiful, but also because of the hard work, it is sacrifice of having to weave after doing all the housework. It's not that I only dedicate myself to weaving, I have to take care of the husband, the children, the house, the plantations, everything and apart from that, meet my clients. Someday, the fair price will be paid for the handicrafts in general, not just the textile. Thanks to the Foundation, I learned many techniques and I am sure that they will achieve, in some way, motivate people to value and understand, in some way, that they are delivering a unique piece, a bit of one. As they say “trade will, one day, be fair, while we wait for people to understand the word and our sacrifice”.

Challenges

Train, technically and productively, with respect to traditional and contemporary Mapuche textile; Recover and strengthen the cultural knowledge of the women involved and their relationship with the loom; Socialise and promote the principles of Fair Trade; Address and influence the emotional development of the women involved through specialised workshops.



Global Mamas, Dorcas Baiden

Africa & Middle East

Fair Trade Organisations across Africa that took part in the survey have shared many examples of best practice. 60% of the members surveyed had a written Gender Policy statement to guide them and more and more women are taking up leadership positions. One outstanding example is Womencraft in Tanzania which has introduced

a counselling programme in which husbands and wives, and sometimes a group of men and women sit together with a trained counsellor to talk about specific gender issues and roles, including joint management of the household budget. This has achieved significant impact.

The Africa & Middle East Region makes 4 recommendations to WFTO

- Implement the Gender Policy widely through prioritising support to members to develop simple, relevant Gender Policies and tailor made action plans to help advance gender equality and women's empowerment and share relevant information.
- Make Gender a Priority by making gender equality and women's empowerment a key priority area for possible project intervention and consider engaging a gender specialist to help position appropriate issues of gender within WFTO.
- Celebrate International Women's Day. Recognise special achievements on gender issues.
- Build Training Materials: Develop more training materials, building on what has already been done on gender and women's empowerment, and encourage their widespread use.

Case Studies

Sabahar

Sabahar, Ethiopia, a woman owned business, was founded in 2004 to celebrate Ethiopia's rich weaving traditional through the creation of respectful and ethical work opportunities for marginalised people. 43 women and 32 men are employed making natural fibre cotton and silk textile products such as scarves and shawls, beach and hand towels, table linen, cushions, throws and bags. Most workers have had a limited education with about half not completing primary school. Many of the women workers have experienced great hardship living and working on the streets, doing temporary work as daily labourers on construction sites or working as house helps in unsafe situations. They came to Sabahar with low self-esteem and little hope for the future. One of the most effective ways Sabahar influences gender issues is by example, supporting capable women as role models. Sabahar has a management team of seven of whom four are women. The entire finance department is comprised of women. There are four Section Heads, two women and two men, and two Supervisors, one woman and one man. Departments staffed by women have a woman department supervisor. Respect for women and women's empowerment is a key value of the company along with sustainability, innovation and caring for each other. For the last four years, Sabahar has been implementing a Japanese management philosophy "Kaizan" (meaning continuous improvement). Each department forms a group which meets weekly to discuss issues of all kinds that impact their work. The groups are empowered to



Photo of Dinkenesh by Sophie Mosco

solve problems in a democratic way. Smaller Kaizan groups enable women who lack confidence to speak and to share their opinions and ideas.

Dinkenesh:

"When I started working at Sabahar I did not feel confident to ask questions. It was the first time I had ever worked in a formal company. By working at Sabahar I have my freedom. I know what is expected from me and I know what to expect from the company. I have really found myself here. I have learned what I can do, it gives me strength. I also now understand that if I learn more, I can go far."

Best Practice

Challenging gender bias so that attitudes of women and men change; Exposure – bringing experts, designers and whole sale buyers from abroad to Ethiopia and taking staff to other countries to learn new techniques; Long term contracts to ensure secure, regular income for vulnerable workers. Having permanent work is a huge psychological as well as financial benefit for women. Treating everyone with kindness and respect. Workers know that they are safe at Sabahar and that they and their opinions are valued. Women in supervisory and management roles is essential for empowerment in business. Affirmative action in hiring and breaking down gender stereotypes within the workplace.

Case Studies

Machakos Cooperative Union

Machakos Cooperative Union, Kenya writes: "Gender Equity and Women Empowerment concerns women gaining power and control over their own lives. In its activities, Machakos Cooperative Union, with its 40,000 + members organized in 81 primary societies, has been promoting gender equity and women empowerment. This has been achieved by ensuring increased women participation in production, processing, marketing, leadership positions and promotion of gender balance in its work place and member cooperative societies. It also understands women's employment rights and is committed to ensuring that women receive their full statutory employment benefits together with special health and safety needs for pregnant women and breast-feeding mothers in the work place."

"MCU has increasingly embraced a gender perspective in its programmes, operations and activities. There is consensus that women's empowerment and the recognition of women's rights as human rights are essential for sustainable development and can be empowering for everyone. MCU believes that empowering women and young people in its membership both at the affiliate societies level and union level will encourage women to seek leadership positions which will create an all-inclusive leadership in the cooperative societies. It's for this purpose that MCU is working towards enhancing equal opportunities for women and young people in the affiliates to ensure at least 50 percent of the total membership in its affiliates are women and young people". Currently about 12,000 cooperative members are women (30%) and 5 of the 15 member Cooperative Union Board are women (33%). The problem, as in many other parts of Africa, is land ownership. Culture and tradition continue to support male inheritance of family land and as a result few women have land registered in their names which is a requirement for Cooperative membership. This is slowly beginning to change.

Agnes Musilili has her own coffee farm producing over 2,500 kg of coffee every season. She is the Treasurer of the Musilili Cooperative Farmers Society and a Board Member of Machakos Cooperative Union.



Machakos basket weaver

"The men here cannot hinder me from speaking. I have been able to campaign for the current position as Treasurer without fear for I know my rights."

Eunice Kiilu is a member of the Mungala Coffee Farmer Cooperative. She was able to become a member when her husband gave her some coffee bushes. Most women do not own property, cannot sell coffee and do not control the income generated. Eunice says: "Most women envy I get paid (for) my coffee through the cooperative. I can now go to the shop to buy maize and attend meetings and trainings."

Key challenges

Cultural beliefs, inadequate sensitisation with regard to women's empowerment, gender-awareness and gender analysis, growing women's membership of the cooperatives, implementing MCU policies at the primary society level – especially on gender-mainstreaming, affirmative action and social funds for women.

Best Practice

Best Practice at MCU: Women's Access to Credit through the formation of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) which offer credit at affordable and flexible interest rates. Training and capacity building tailored to the needs of women to remove obstacles to their full involvement and participation in the cooperatives. Lobbying and Advocacy to influence legislation on gender and educate legislators, organisations and members of the public about gender issues and the importance of aligning public policy and action. Building Partnerships on Gender Mainstreaming to implement gender equity and women's empowerment activities. Establishment of Income Generating Projects for Women and Youth through supporting women to establish small businesses. Coffee production, processing and marketing through setting up a coffee processing plant for milling coffee from primary societies and then linking the primary societies to markets. Also making charcoal briquettes from clean coffee waste.

In addition, MCU promotes Gender Equality and equality of opportunity for members, equality of opportunity in recruitment for MCU staff positions, observance of the Kenyan Constitution's one third rule to ensure women's representation on primary society committees and the Union Board, strict rules about sexual harassment and exploitation which is strictly forbidden, provision of a safe working environment, active pursuit of prevention of HIV/AIDS from a gender-sensitive perspective.

Case Studies

Europe – Oxfam Magasins du Monde

Oxfam Magasins du Monde operates over 100 shops across Belgium. They are a member of the International Oxfam family, a campaigning and advocacy citizen's movement, working to make the whole system of international trade (production, distribution, consumption) fair for everyone and fighting inequality and injustice everywhere. This enterprise demonstrates that another path is possible through the sale of Fair Trade products and second-hand clothes. They have about 4,500 volunteers who engage with school children, students, and adults through provision of training and awareness-raising activities to create citizens who understand the huge issues of the day.

Oxfam Magasins du Monde has always given priority to gender equality in its practice of Fair Trade. This may be seen in its choice of partners, by its awareness of women's participation in its partners' projects and its understanding of the consequences of activities that support the rights of women.

Key challenge

Integrating a gender perspective in the planning, development and evaluation of activities of the organisation in a systematic and cross-cutting way.



Oxfam Magasins du Monde

Best Practice

The "Fairchances" campaign carried out simultaneously, North and South, with three Southern partners, Sasha and Tara in India and Corr the Jute Works in Bangladesh.



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