



Women's Empowerment 101

Use this information to educate yourself and others about how Fair Trade empowers women.

Fast Facts

- **25 percent** of the global population are rural women.
- Rural women make up the majority of the agricultural labor force - especially in subsistence farming, small-scale farms, and cooperatives.
- According to the UN, rural women produce **60-80 percent** of the world's food, while also being responsible for most of the unpaid care work in rural areas
- While women do much of the work on small farms and plantations, they often still face unequal treatment, discrimination, and harassment.

Fair Trade and Women's Empowerment

- Fair Trade certified farms have empowered women through opportunities for education, leadership roles, and scholarships so that girls can imagine a future where they can be their own boss.
- Women hired on Fair Trade farms are guaranteed access to health care, certain job rights, and freedom from harassment so that women are able to play a strong role in their families and in their cooperatives.
- Fair Trade standards require fair and equal pay for women, access to education for women and girls, equal opportunities to take on leadership positions, freedom from sexual harassment, and access to health services and maternity leave.



Equal Pay for Women

- Fair Trade standards dictate that all workers receive equivalent wage for work of equivalent value.
- Murkahirwa Cecile, a coffee farmer in Rwanda, uses her increased income to fund her children's education.
- Allii, a tea garden worker describes the impact Fair Trade has made in her life: "Thanks to Fair Trade, I sent my son to college to study engineering after my husband passed away. I was struggling to meet expenses with a single income. Without the assistance, I couldn't have managed it. I am thankful to everybody behind this for helping people like us dream big."

Empowering Women to Become Leaders

- Many cooperatives have women's committees that meet regularly to advance gender equality and create programs to encourage female participation and leadership within the organization.
- Ecuadorian flower harvester Maria Quishpe spearheaded a community housing project during her three terms as president of the Fair Trade committee at Agrocoex.

Access to Education

- Cooprol Cooperative established regular meetings for its female members to educate them about coffee cultivation and other alternative sources of income for their families.
- Ecuadorian flower harvester Luz Sisa takes premium-funded computer courses through Agrocoex.
- Cocoa cooperative Coopérative Agricole Kavokiva de Daloa (CAKD) in the Ivory Coast operates a women's literacy program using Fair Trade premiums.
- Ecuadorian flower harvesters Maria Quishpe and Yolanda Changoluiza finished their High School equivalent degrees through Fair Trade scholarships for adult employees.



Freedom from Sexual Harassment

- Workers are not subject to discrimination in recruitment, promotion, access to training, remuneration, allocation of work, termination of employment, retirement or other activities.
- Workers are not subject to corporal punishment, mental or physical coercion, verbal abuse or any other form of harassment.

Women's Health Services & Maternity Leave

- Maternity leave is at least six calendar weeks post-partum on full pay for permanent full-time workers. Maternity leave is pro-rated for part-time and seasonal workers, and is not deducted from any sick leave.
- No female applicants or employees are required to take a pregnancy test or asked about their pregnancy status when applying for a job or while employed. No employees are forced to take birth control.
- Ecuadorian flower cooperative Grupo Floriscal used Fair Trade premiums to provide annual breast cancer screenings to over one hundred women, both workers as well as the daughters and spouses of male workers.