

FAIRTRADE FLOWERS: FACTS, FIGURES AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Thank you for helping make Fairtrade flowers bloom in your community!

We've pulled together a few key facts and figures on Fairtrade flowers. Plus common questions around Fairtrade flowers you may come across when speaking with the public or to local florists.

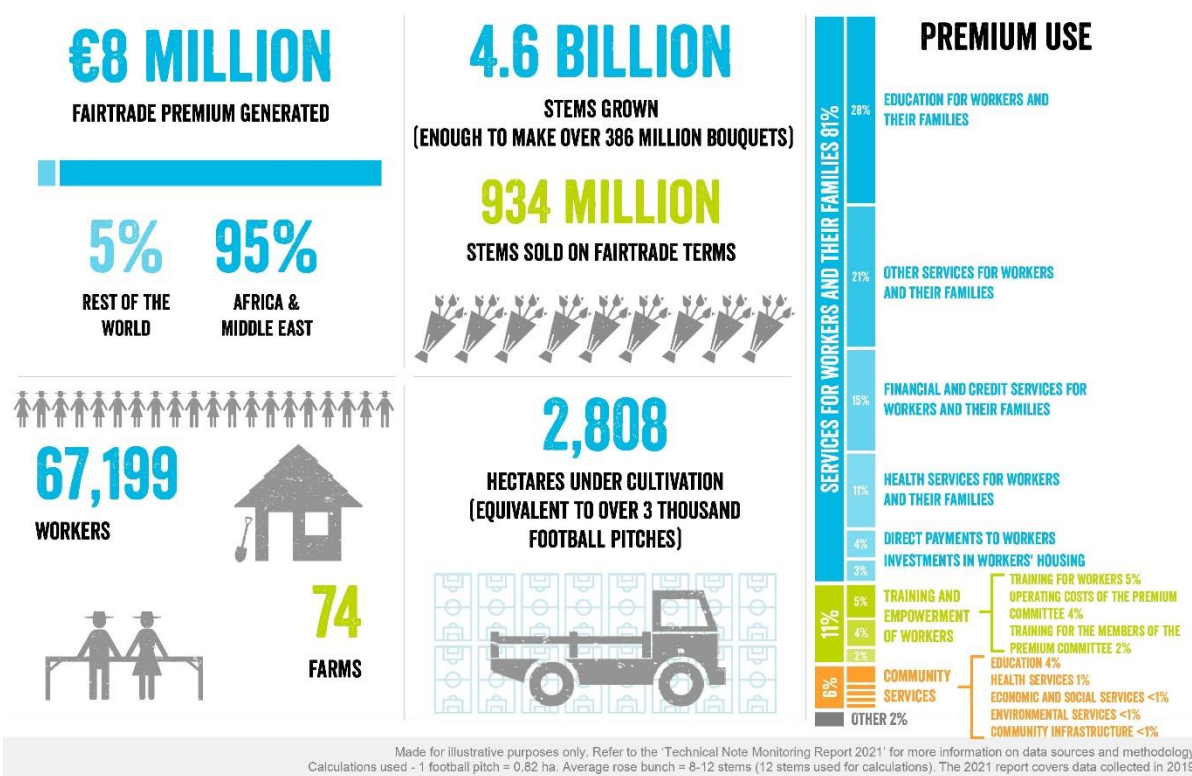
If you have further questions, please send these through to hello@fairtrade.org.uk and one of the team will get back to you as soon as possible.

FAIRTRADE FLOWERS AT GLANCE

- The flower and plant industry is an important source of hundreds of thousands of jobs in lower income countries, yet most flower workers work long hours under hazardous conditions, are poorly paid (with either no or a wholly inadequate minimum wages), and do not even receive their basic rights.
- Fairtrade certification means flower workers have improved working conditions, better pay, and protection of their basic rights, such as fixed contracts – a rarity on flower plantations – and a safe working environment, including the safe use of chemicals and a ban on dangerous pesticides.
- The Fairtrade Premium is enabling flowers workers to improve their lives and invest in social, education and infrastructure projects – such as scholarships, school buildings and healthcare facilities. At the height of the COVID - 19 pandemic, the Premium was a lifeline to workers to help them meet their essential needs.
- Fairtrade flowers grow in climates that allow naturally heated conditions This is why Fairtrade flowers have a lighter carbon footprint on average than those grown under artificial heat and light in Europe, even when factoring in transport. See the Environment and Climate section below for more details.

FAIRTRADE FLOWERS FACTS AND FIGURES

FAIRTRADE FLOWERS REPORT CHOOSE THE WORLD YOU WANT



- Fairtrade flowers were first launched in Switzerland in 2001. Since 2014, plants such as poinsettias are also available as Fairtrade. Cut roses are the most widely available Fairtrade flowers, but lilies, carnations, gypsophila and other cut flowers are also grown on Fairtrade certified farms. [Check here for a full list of available flowers](#), or email flowers@fairtrade.org.uk.
- At the end of 2019, 74 producer organizations in 6 countries (Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Ecuador, Sri Lanka and Uganda) held a product certification for Fairtrade flowers and plants – an increase of 3% on 2018. Flowers are only grown on plantations and are certified under the Hired Labour Standard.
- Fairtrade certified flower and plant producers sold close to 934 million stems on Fairtrade terms in 2019, an increase of 13% on 2018.

- Kenya is the top-selling origin for Fairtrade flowers, selling more than 510,000 stems on Fairtrade terms in 2019. Ethiopia is next, selling more than 336,000 stems as Fairtrade in 2019.
- There were 67,199 workers employed on Fairtrade certified flower and plant farms at the end of 2019. The vast majority (96%) are based in Eastern Africa: 41,742 in Kenya and 17,768 in Ethiopia. Almost half of the workers (46%) are women, an increase of 4 percent since 2017.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: FAIRTRADE FLOWERS

GENERAL

Q: WHY DOES FAIRTRADE CERTIFY FLOWERS? WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES THAT FACE WORKERS ON FLOWER FARMS IN LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES?

A: The flower and plant industry is a hugely important source of hundreds of thousands of jobs in lower-income countries, yet many flower workers are poorly paid and conditions are tough.

The vast majority of roses sold in consumer markets are imported – around 80% of all roses sold in Europe for example. The majority of these comes from East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda) and from Ecuador.

In these countries many workers do not even receive their basic rights – in Ethiopia for example, there is no legal minimum wage,. In Uganda the minimum wage set by the government is half of the poverty line set by the World Bank. Many workers are not able to join a union and have to work under hazardous working conditions – handling with pesticides without protective equipment, working long hours and not receiving sick pay or maternity leave.

Fairtrade works to create long-term sustainable change in highly challenging environments. While there are no overnight solutions to the problems flower workers face in developing countries, Fairtrade works to improve their working conditions, ensure better pay and equal rights and enable flower producers to invest in projects to improve their lives and communities. Everyone can therefore help change the lives of flower workers by choosing to buy a certified bunch of roses.

Q: HOW DO FAIRTRADE FLOWERS HELP FLOWER FARMERS AND WORKERS?

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Or email hello@fairtrade.org.uk

A: Fairtrade benefits the workers on flower farms in East Africa and Central America in a number of ways:

The Fairtrade Floor Wage: The Fairtrade floor wage requires companies to ensure that all wages on Fairtrade certified farms are at least above the global poverty line of \$1.90/day Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) set by the World Bank (WB). In countries where there is no minimum wage or the minimum wage is below this level, this has meant significant improvement in wages for thousands of Fairtrade flower farm workers.

A recent assessment of the impact of the Fairtrade Floor Wage found that wages have increased by over 120 percent in Uganda, 75 percent in Ethiopia, and almost 30 percent in Tanzania. In line with the Fairtrade Hired Labour Standard, companies employing workers on flower farms are committed to continually work to increase wages to reach a Living Wage level.

Fairtrade Premium: Flower workers received €8 million in Fairtrade Premium in 2019, which they democratically decide how to invest through the election of a Fairtrade Premium Committee. This committee then develops an annual plan after consulting with workers.

This plan is then shared and agreed with the workers in the annual General Assembly. In 2019, the vast majority of the Fairtrade Premium (81%) is spent on services to workers and their families. This includes education, such as scholarships, funding of school buildings and materials – 28% of the premium was spent on this in 2019. It also includes financial and credit services (18%) and healthcare services (11%). Another 11% was spent on training and empowerment of workers.

Workers' rights: Workers' rights are central to Fairtrade's Standards, and based on the conventions and recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The Fairtrade Standard for Hired Labour includes rules on health and safety while also establishing employment conditions for topics like wages, leave time, social security, and contracts. This means for example that workers at Fairtrade certified flower plantations have formal labour contracts as a norm, which is still a rarity on non-certified estates, and are free to join a union. The Standard also protects worker' health and safety, regulates pesticide use and bans the use of highly hazardous chemicals.

We also go beyond standards so that workers know their rights and can advocate for themselves. For instance, while Fairtrade Standards require employers to recognize the right of their employees to participate in a union, Fairtrade also organizes training activities to teach workers their rights and how to engage with management. In Ethiopia – where 85% of the workforce are either female, migrant, or under 25 – we launched the Dignity for All programme to empower workers on Fairtrade certified flower farms.

Through this 4-year programme), workers and plantation management are gaining skills to strengthen social dialogue and the remediation of human rights violations. Workers and their unions are being empowered to negotiate living wages and improved conditions, and advocate for workers' rights, such as the trade unions, health & safety committees, and gender committees. The programme is funded by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Aldi UK (who source their cut roses from one of participating farms), and the Swedish Postcode Lottery.

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

Q: WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS MUST FAIRTRADE CERTIFIED FLOWER FARMS MEET?

A: Flower plantations who wish to be Fairtrade certified must meet social, labour, environmental and trade requirements. Because pesticides are widely used in the flower industry, the Fairtrade Standards include a list of prohibited materials which is strictly enforced and is regularly updated.

Additionally, the flower standard has many elements to protect workers when spraying, such as the mandatory use of protective equipment, provided by the employer, and strict re-entry times after spraying.

Both the Fairtrade Hired Labour Standard and the additional Flower Standard are aimed at protecting biodiversity and include criteria regarding water use and the handling of waste water.

Q: WHY BUY ROSES FROM AFRICA OR LATIN AMERICA? ISN'T IT BETTER TO BUY LOCAL TO REDUCE THE CARBON FOOTPRINT?

A: The market demands roses and colourful flowers all year round, which means locally grown flowers simply aren't feasible for the mainstream market most of the year. In fact, around 80% of the roses sold in Europe are imported. For example, Valentine's Day in February is a peak in consumer demand, but in the winter the use of artificially heated greenhouses in European countries means they carry a very heavy carbon footprint. Thus buying Fairtrade flowers offers an opportunity for employment in low-income countries that rely on access to international markets.

In addition, our recently introduced Fairtrade sourcing model now allows for (and the Fairtrade Standards actively encourage) mixed bouquets, where locally grown flowers can be mixed in a bouquet with Fairtrade flowers

Q: HOW DOES THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF FAIRTRADE FLOWERS COMPARE TO EUROPEAN-GROWN FLOWERS?

A: Fairtrade flowers grow in naturally heated and lit greenhouses due to the abundant heat and sunlight in the source countries. This results in these flowers having a lighter carbon footprint on average than those grown under artificial heat and light in Europe for example, even when factoring in transport. The carbon footprint of Fairtrade roses from Kenya is 5.5 times lower than that of roses from the Netherlands, when considering seasonal variations in Netherlands and transport (Treeze 2018 Life Cycle Assessment, Cut Roses)

Q: WHAT PROTECTIONS ARE IN PLACE TO PREVENT UNNECESSARY WATER WASTE AND DAMAGE TO THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT FROM FAIRTRADE FLOWER FARMS?

A: Across all of our flower producer organizations in six countries, conserving the environment is one of our chief priorities. Fairtrade Standards require certified flower farms to optimize water use and employ sustainable techniques. Fairtrade flower farms must keep themselves informed about the status of water sources in the area and the appropriate conversations must happen with the authorities if the water sources are being depleted or under excessive use.

Surrounding communities must also be consulted about possible risks of water pollution because of the presence of the flower farm in the area, and flower farms must then work to mitigate these risks.

At Lake Naivasha in Kenya, where the majority of Fairtrade flowers are grown, Fairtrade certified flower farms put a strong focus on eco-friendly practices to ensure the environment isn't affected negatively. Using hydroponics and recycled water is now common practice on most farms.

Managers at the Bigot Flower Farm for example are becoming specialists in efficient water use, working towards collecting 60% of their water from rainfall, re-using water and using irrigation systems that reduce the amount of water needed. Flower farms around the lake jointly founded the Lake Naivasha Growers Group to promote the conservation of natural resources in and around the lake.

A 2019 assessment of the life cycle of cut roses provides valuable insights that can help Fairtrade growers improve their environmental practices even further, particularly in the areas of water management. We are taking these findings on board to explore new criteria for flowers around the use of closed-loop systems and water recycling.

Q: CAN WE JUSTIFY TRADING GOODS LIKE FLOWERS INTERNATIONALLY AT ALL, CONSIDERING THE SCALE OF THE CLIMATE CRISIS?

A: We completely agree the climate crisis requires bold and ambitious solutions. But with the wealthiest 10 per cent generating 50 per cent of emissions, and the climate crisis being the result of generations of exploitation of people and planet by the wealthiest countries, the solution cannot be to immediately destroy the livelihoods of people on extremely low-incomes.

We need a just transition to a low-carbon future all around the world. That's why our global Fairtrade community has been campaigning for a fair deal on climate from businesses and governments. The wealthy businesses and governments who caused the climate crisis need to invest in solutions that allow people to continue to earn enough to survive, have a decent standard of life and deliver a sustainable future for people and planet.

But we know this systemic change is not happening fast enough. So the fairer pay, extra power and increased protections flower farmers and workers get with Fairtrade are critical to communities who are living with the climate crisis every day.

Choosing Fairtrade means choosing to support a global movement committed to climate justice. And like all Fairtrade farmers, flower farmers work in line with our eco-friendly Fairtrade Standards,

which include protections on bio-diversity, carbon emission reduction plans and bans on deforestation.

To find out more about Fairtrade's campaigning work for a fair global deal that delivers climate justice, please visit www.fairtrade.org.uk/climate

Q: IS IT TRUE SOME FAIRTRADE FLOWER FARMS ARE CARBON NEUTRAL?

A: Yes, there's now four Fairtrade-certified carbon neutral flower farms. The most recent, Naivasha flower farm in Kenya, was awarded One Carbon World- Carbon Neutral International Standard status in 2021. One Carbon World is a carbon neutral not-for-profit organisation and a global resource partner of the Climate Neutral Now Initiative, launched by United Nations Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Installing a solar plant on the farm to utilise the power of renewable energy, planting trees increasing the efficiency of rainwater capture systems and special crops to rehabilitate the soil are just some of the ways Wildfire Flowers managed to reach Carbon Neutral status on this farm.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Q: HOW DO FAIRTRADE STANDARDS PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN ON FLOWER FARMS?

A: Fairtrade Standards are designed to prevent gender inequality, increase female participation and empower more women and girls to access the benefits of Fairtrade.

Requirements for Fairtrade certified flower farms include:

- No discrimination on the basis of gender or marital status
- Zero tolerance of behaviour that is sexually intimidating, abusive or exploitative
- No testing for pregnancy when recruiting workers
- Programmes to support disadvantaged groups, such as women
- Setting up gender committees, to promote equality, challenge negative behaviour and stereotypes about gender, and protect workers from discrimination. The standards also call for equal representation of men and women on all farm committees.
- Developing a gender policy, over time. In one Fairtrade farm, the union negotiated an additional month of maternity leave and two hours of breastfeeding for the first year of an infant's life.

Q: HOW DOES FAIRTRADE PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT ON FLOWER FARMS BEYOND THE STANDARDS?

A: Roughly 50% of all workers on flower farms are women, which is higher than many other sectors, and so there is a real opportunity to pave the way to better gender equality. Through training and workshops, Fairtrade increases women's awareness of their legal and labour rights, fair treatment, company benefits and policies, sexual harassment and other forms of violence, including grievance procedures and helps them assert those rights both in and out of the workplace, and enhances their self-determination.

Fairtrade Producer Networks have run training courses on Fairtrade farms to raise awareness about women's rights, what constitutes harassment and how to implement an effective gender policy. We have also launched the Women's School of Leadership on Fairtrade certified flower farms in Ethiopia.

Based on Fairtrade's successful Women's School of Leadership (WSOL) with cocoa farmers in West Africa, flower farm workers in Ethiopia are now able to access learning opportunities and gain practical advice on income diversification projects, for example how to set up a business and earn additional income. The four-year programme (started in 2019) will benefit more than 11,000 flower farm workers, thanks to funding from Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish Post Code Lottery and Aldi UK. Read more at <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/media-centre/blog/fairtrade-flowers-help-empower-women-in-ethiopia/>

To quote one woman at Bigot flower farm in Kenya: "when we joined Fairtrade, we received trainings and were made aware...there used to be a lot more sexual harassment and discrimination back then...but now, with Fairtrade, we have power and get work done. The gender committee has become somewhere for people to go."

COVID -19

Q: HOW HAS COVID-19 IMPACTED FLOWER FARMS AND THEIR WORKERS?

A The COVID-19 pandemic hit the flower industry hard. In Kenya, exports slumped to 20% in April 2020 and, while they are now at around 80%, the Kenya Flower Council estimates that it will take another year for the sector to recover fully. Other challenges remain, including extra health and safety operating costs, higher freight transport prices, labour shortages and increased plant diseases.

In Ecuador, the Central and Latin American Producer Network (CLAC) reports that up to 30,000 jobs have been lost – that's a quarter of the workforce. Although travel and meeting restrictions have now been lifted in Ecuador, recovery is likely to be slow. Women, who make up around half of the workforce on flower farms, are bearing the brunt of the crisis. Schools and childcare facilities were closed in Kenya for 9 months in 2020, forcing many women to take unpaid leave to look after their children.

Few, if any of them had savings to fall back on. Inflated food prices, coupled with the lack of school meals meant school closures impacted heavily on family incomes, the effects of which are taking time to recover from Read more in this blog <https://businessfightspoverty.org/covid-no-great-leveller-when-it-comes-to-women-workers-rights/>

Q: HOW IS FAIRTRADE SUPPORTING FLOWER WORKERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?

A: When COVID-19 hit, Fairtrade was quick to recognise that the pandemic would cause both short and long-term problems for producers and workers. The Fairtrade system allowed flower farms to respond better to the crisis than non-certified farms.

Greater flexibility on the use of the Fairtrade Premium – including allowing up to 100 percent to be distributed as cash – was announced in April and lasted until December 31st 2020. As of October 2020, more than €0.5 million Fairtrade Premium had been used to help a minimum of 17,000 flower workers with food packages, cash or vouchers for food as well as masks, disinfectant and soap.

Meanwhile, the Fairtrade Producer Relief Fund and Fairtrade Producer Resilience Fund, announced in May 2020, attracted more than €15 million to help with both the immediate impact of the pandemic and to invest in long-term resilience building for the future. Throughout 2020 covid relief funding for the flower sector totalled over €1 million

For more information on how these funds and supports helped communities during the Covid – 19 pandemic, please write these short articles:: <https://www.fairtrade.net/news/fairtrade-is-a-lifeline-for-kenyan-flower-workers>

<https://www.fairtrade.net/news/sewing-new-solutions-during-coronavirus>

<https://fairtradeafrica.net/long-live-fairtrade-premium-flower-producer-shares-on-wading-through-covid-19/>

As proud as we are of our impact, the impacts of the pandemic continues to pose challenges, even on Fairtrade flower farms. Moreover, Fairtrade certified flower and plant farms only make up a small proportion of the flower and plant sector in low-income countries. Building a fairer and more resilient flower industry will require collective action, including higher prices being paid to flower farms for their products, and action by governments and shoppers too.

STORIES FROM FAIRTRADE FLOWER FARM WORKERS

ADANECH DUGA



Adanech Duga, aged 29, is a worker at Sher flower farm Ziway branch. Adanech benefitted from the increased maternity leave that the trade union were able to negotiate for following trainings under the D4A project, when giving birth to her last child.

"...I only had 3 months of maternity leave when I had my 1st born. I wasn't feeling good. I didn't have enough time to spend with my son. I left him for work when he was just an infant. After our trade union managed to negotiate for 4 months of maternity leave, this trend changed. I had enough time with my son. I had time to breast feed him and nurture him as a mother...he was physically strong when I left him for work. Our union did not only negotiate for 4 months of maternity leave, they have also negotiated for 2 hours of breast-feeding time for lactating mothers for 1 year. It's a privilege. I am really glad to be a beneficiary of this...."

CAROLINE SHIKUKU



'We were not prepared for the pandemic and its effects... I was forced to cut on costs and prioritise spending on house rent and food: at some point it became a struggle to survive.'

Those are the words of Fairtrade flower worker Caroline Shikuku, from Tulaga Flowers, a flower farm in Kenya, as she reflects on how Covid-19 has disrupted her life, work and well-being. Caroline is one of the tens of thousands of Kenyan flower workers affected by the pandemic.

The outbreak has taken a heavy toll on the flower sector. Fairtrade Africa estimates over 90% of workers have been affected by the crisis, with issues including food insecurity, lack of personal protective equipment, poor access to hygiene facilities and job insecurity – all exacerbated by low or no wages and non-existent savings.

As the pandemic continues, the Fairtrade Foundation is running an ambitious new programme to protect Kenyan flower workers like Caroline from the worst effects of the crisis, and to promote a more sustainable, resilient sector.

ROSEMARY ACHIENG



As a widow and a mother of three, Rosemary Achieng is all too aware of the challenges women face in balancing the demands of work and family.

Rosemary is a supervisor at Panda Flowers, a Fairtrade certified farm in Kenya. “Fairtrade has changed things a lot,” says Rosemary, who is one of around 450 women in the 900-strong workforce at Panda Flowers. “Women and men now have the same rights. There are regular working hours, fixed leave days and significantly improved safety regulations.”

Working on a Fairtrade certified farm has given Rosemary a home of her own, and two of her sons are now studying at university thanks to bursaries paid for by the Fairtrade Premium.

Fairtrade Premium projects have also led to benefits for women in the wider community, such as a maternity clinic at Lake Naivasha financed in part by Fairtrade Premium money. Now the women have a safe place to give birth.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Visit [fairtrade.org.uk/flowers](https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/flowers) to find out more about where to buy Fairtrade flowers, and more of the benefits choosing Fairtrade has for flower workers.

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Visit www.fairtrade.org.uk for more information.
Or email hello@fairtrade.org.uk

And if you haven't already, please [order our free Fairtrade flowers postcards](#). You can take these to your local independent florist to encourage them to stock Fairtrade flowers.

You can order these by visiting Fairtrade.org.uk and clicking on the 'shop' button in the top right of the page.

Finally, the [Fairtrade International Monitoring and Impact Report](#) on Fairtrade flowers give a global perspective on the difference choosing Fairtrade blooms makes.