



CO-OP FAIRTRADE PROGRAMMES 2024



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Driven by our passionate members, Co-op have championed the Fairtrade movement for over 30 years, supporting trade justice through better prices, working conditions and terms of trade in addition to working with producers to strengthen their communities around the world through pioneering climate change resilience and international development programmes, as set out in our '[Future of Food](#)' sustainability commitments. At Co-op, we believe that the cornerstone of our Fairtrade legacy and difference is our commitment to producer engagement, demonstrated through the depth and authenticity of our relationships with our producers, some spanning decades.

In 2024, we remained committed to the Fairtrade movement and the producers we work with, delivering outcomes across four multi-year Co-op '[Future of Food](#)' sourcing projects, investing support for both improved livelihoods and resilience to climate change within Fairtrade producer communities. The following case studies present Co-op's Fairtrade programmes in 2024 and the impact of these projects within Fairtrade producer communities.

Cocoa: Since 2017, Co-op have partnered with Fairtrade Africa in Côte d'Ivoire (and later Ghana) to support the Women's School of Leadership; a pioneering programme where women within cocoa co-operatives attend training and coaching to tackle gender equality issues and embrace leadership roles within their communities to support better livelihoods. [Find out more about our support for the WSOL](#) or continue reading [here](#).

Tea, coffee, and flowers: Since 2021, Co-op partnered with Fairtrade Africa to support the Producer Network's climate strategy in the Fairtrade Alliance for Climate Smart Supply Chains in Africa programme (FACSCA), a farmer-centric approach that works alongside tea, coffee and flower producers in Kenya, Ethiopia and Rwanda to adapt to and mitigate against the detrimental impact of climate change on their livelihoods. Read more [here](#)

Bananas: Since 2019, Co-op have partnered with the Latin American and Caribbean Fair Trade Producer Network (CLAC), Fairtrade Foundation and Fyffes to support banana smallholder resilience and livelihoods in Colombia and Dominican Republic through improving soil health and productivity. Watch this [video](#) to hear from banana farmers about the Banana PIP programme or read more [here](#).

Flowers: Partnering with our supplier, Flamingo Horticulture to deliver the *Inua Dada* programme (*Inua Dada* translating to 'Uplift Women' in Swahili), a 2-year programme to improve female workers' earning potential through training and income diversification initiatives across flower communities in Kenya. Read more [here](#).



WOMEN'S SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP

COCOA | CÔTE D'IVOIRE & GHANA | WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Since 2017, Co-op have been proud to have supported Fairtrade Africa's Women's School of Leadership (WSOL) and are delighted to see the success of this programme in the 9th year of operation, supporting a vital part of the West African cocoa farming. In Côte d'Ivoire alone, women represent 68% of the active cocoa farming workforce and are essential to the sustainability of the entire cocoa industry. However, women can have limited access to decision-making forums and land rights, and additional household responsibilities can mean leadership roles are often out of reach. In order to strengthen '*women's participation and leadership in the management of their communities, organisations and households*', the WSOL is a training, mentoring and coaching programme which supports participants to acquire knowledge of gender issues in their communities, in addition to skills of leadership, negotiation, financial management and entrepreneurship. Women are now leaders in their producer organisations and communities with the confidence and skills to participate in membership and decision-making activities

In 2024, 133 students in the NORAD Cohort 2 of the Women's School of Leadership in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana completed the programme and successfully graduated. In Ghana, WSOL students used their graduation ceremony to present a petition to the Department of Cooperatives, requesting amendments to national laws which would make it mandatory for cooperatives to include women and youth at board level.

In 2025, the WSOL programme has relaunched with new student cohorts from cocoa producing communities across Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. In addition to continuing the core WSOL curriculum and income diversification activities, the Fairtrade Africa team will also expand its Training of Trainers (ToTs) model working alongside graduates to share their knowledge and amplify the benefits of WSOL across their wider communities.



"I understand better the interest for women to be involved in cooperatives. Only then can we make our voices heard and make our cooperatives stronger."

**Mariam Kanzie, SOCAREBIA
Co-operative**

Find out more about [our support for the WSOL](#)



FAIRTRADE ALLIANCE FOR CLIMATE SMART SUPPLY CHAINS IN AFRICA (FACSCA)

TEA, COFFEE, FLOWERS | KENYA, ETHIOPIA, RWANDA | CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Our three-year flagship FACSCA programme, which ended in 2024, was designed to support Fairtrade farmers and workers to become more resilient and adaptable to climate change. The programme was funded by Co-op, implemented by Fairtrade Africa and worked with 12 producer organisations across Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda. Through FACSCA, farmers and workers in Co-op's coffee, tea and flower supply chains have implemented climate mitigation and adaptation measures at farm level, while also increasing crop yields and crop quality. Investments in local youth enterprises meant participants could implement income diversification initiatives. Through a Training of Trainers model, and the establishment of two Fairtrade Centres of Excellence, local farming communities retain access to training and developmental resources, helping to drive continuous improvement in these supply chains.

The programme reached 19,430 farmers and workers and achieved the following results:

- Out of the 91.4% trained coffee farmers, 90.4% are implementing good agricultural practices, increasing their average annual production by 57%, whilst improving the quality of their coffee.
- Tea farmers have adopted more sustainable practices such as introducing drought and frost-tolerant tea varieties and effective soil management strategies.
- Through climate change sensitisation training, flower farm workers now have a good understanding and awareness of the causes and implications of climate change, with 100% of those interviewed now taking precautions to manage the impact of daily activities. Additionally, 93.8% were taking precautions to reduce deforestation.
- 12 youth groups received youth seed capital for climate change focused enterprises.
- 255,000 seedlings were distributed to farmers and 785 farmers participated in training on income diversification initiatives.

"Through FACSCA, we have been taught about how to plant indigenous trees, indigenous vegetables, use of organic fertilizers and how to place drainage in the farm. Now when I go to the farm, I get good yields and thus I have money for food, children's clothes and a few things in the house. There is a huge difference."

Emily Chepngenoh Rotich, Fintea Growers Co-operative Union Ltd.



Find out more about [our support for the FACSCA programme](#)



PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (PIP)

BANANAS | COLOMBIA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC | SMALLHOLDER RESILIENCE

As one of the most important food crops globally, the historical demand for bananas from international markets has led to agrochemicals being deployed on soils to increase banana yields. However, over time, these chemicals have significantly reduced soil fertility and presented difficulty for banana farmers attempting to achieve profitable and sustainable production. In addition, the existing threat of pests and diseases such as Tropical Race 4 (TR4) present a significant threat to yields and subsequent farmer and worker livelihoods.

In response, the Banana Productivity Improvement Programme (PIP) was developed by CLAC (the Latin American and Caribbean Fair Trade Producer Network) with proof-of-concept funding from Co-op, to support smallholder Fairtrade banana farmers in Colombia and the Dominican Republic to recuperate the health of depleted soils, deploy organic fertilisers (a derivative of banana harvest residue and low-cost organic materials), whilst also reducing the use of agrochemicals in-line with Fairtrade standards. This change in agricultural practice aims to not only increase the production potential of banana farms and the subsequent income of farmers and workers through improved soil biodiversity and resilience, but also aims to reduce the environmental impact of banana production on water usage and carbon emissions.

The Banana PIP concluded in 2024 and has successfully delivered productivity and environmental impacts for participating Fairtrade banana producers. In the final phase of the programme, 3 new Small Producer Organisations (SPOs) were integrated, resulting in an increase in both the areas covered and the number of producers involved.

Overall, the programme worked with 1,021 banana producers to bring benefits in SPOs in Colombia and the Dominican Republic.

- Since the beginning of the programme, producers in Colombia have significantly increased their productivity. Initially, yields ranged between 35 and 45 boxes per hectare (boxes/Ha), but in 2024, some producers increased their productivity to 80 boxes/Ha, with a small group achieving 100 boxes/Ha at certain times of the year.
- In 2024, pilot farms across SPO's in Colombia and Dominican Republic were selected to evaluate PIP improvements in productivity, resource management, and adoption of agroecological technologies. These farms will now serve as models for other producers. A process for measuring the water and carbon footprints on the pilot farms has also been established.
- In 2024, 138 producers received training on the knowledge and the use of both liquid and solid bio-fertilizers. With the application of bioproducts, a producer with one hectare of land saves around US\$ 1,300 per year, which is US\$ 108 per month. There are also savings in terms of labour costs, further improving the profitability of their farms.
- As a result of the PIP, productivity increased throughout 2023 and 2024 - in 2024, productivity rose by approximately 30%.



- **Climate Resilience Improvement:** Producers have enhanced their ability to adapt to the effect of climate change through training in agroecological techniques. Farms that implement practices such as ground cover, and efficient water management demonstrate greater resilience to less predictable weather and climate.

Following the success of the Banana PIP, we are using the learnings to invest in other commodity supply chains and other Fairtrade programmes, including a new Cocoa Productivity Improvement Programme and the Sustainable Banana Programme.



"The climate has definitely changed, today we can't predict the climate as we used to before, like our elders did. Today we have a lot of rain in certain parts of the year and severe drought in others...Thanks to being with Fairtrade, today we have the tools to fight the effects of climate change."

Albeiro Alfonso Cantillo, Fairtrade banana farmer, Manager & Member of COOBAFRIO Co-operative in Colombia

"Through the PIP program and the new organic fermented soil we are using, we have seen the soil's health improve, the production has increased. ... The project on increasing productivity came at a crucial time for us because the input prices have increased, so with the use of organically fermented soil, they [the Fairtrade PIP programme] have guaranteed the sustainability of the production and the health not only from the soil, but also of the producers and workers on the farm."

Ana Anjelica Lopez, Fairtrade banana farmer and Member of EMPREBANCOOP Co-operative, Colombia



Find out more about [our Fairtrade banana producers](#)



INUA DADA PROGRAMME

FLOWERS | KENYA | WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

In 2022, Co-op partnered with our Fairtrade flower supplier Flamingo Horticulture to address gender inequality in the Kenyan cut flower industry - reflective of a wider endemic issue of gender inequality experienced by women in East Africa. Although the cut-flower industry presents opportunities for women to work as farmers, producers and workers and in other roles, the invaluable skills and contributions of women are often underutilised and therefore women rarely fulfil higher skilled technical and managerial roles that are traditionally held by men. To promote and empower women within workplace and community, Inua Dada or 'Uplift Women' in Swahili was a 2-year programme, concluding in 2023, which aimed to economically empower, upskill, and improve the socio-economic and health status of female horticulture workers across Fairtrade flower farms operated by our supplier Flamingo Horticulture.

To achieve this, female flower workers attended training and educational opportunities through the Inua Dada programme to improve their economic health, improving their financial literacy and carrying out additional income generating activities such as textile making and poultry rearing. Furthermore, Inua Dada participants also received training ranging from welding and fabrication to motor vehicle mechanics, with some participants supported to achieve diplomas in agriculture to further their career opportunities. Crucially, a range of health interventions to promote women's wellness took place, including cancer screening, women's health talks and the provision of menstrual products, benefitting a total of 6,000 women. Additionally, through the Inua Dada programme, training and leadership hubs for female workers were established at farms where workers could build leadership and financial skills in addition to supplementary income projects.

Significantly, over the course of the programme and beyond, extensive 'Training of Trainers' occurred, equipping direct beneficiaries with the skills to share their newly acquired knowledge within their communities, extending the reach and impact of the programme to a further 2571 beneficiaries. To date, almost 9,000 women have benefited from the Inua Dada programme, with this number likely to increase through Training of Trainers. Co-op are proud to support Inua Dada and look forward to seeing the lasting benefits of this programme.



"My life has undergone a positive change, while other workmates await their salaries... I still have income from my tie and-dye business I can save for emergencies. When I received payment for my initial designs, my mother was unwell, and I used some of that money to assist her. I didn't have to wait for my salary or resort to taking a loan."

Violet Amakobe, General Worker at Flamingo Horticulture.

Find out more about [our support for Inua Dada on our website](#)

