



CLIMATE JUSTICE SURVEY 2021

OVERALL SUMMARY

Introduction

Between March and April 2021, staff members of EFTA's affiliate organizations conducted a round of semi-structured video interviews with 16 representatives of Fair Trade enterprises, based in 12 different countries of the Global South.

The survey was run in preparation of the Climate Justice Campaign 2021, a set of coordinated marketing and communication activities which will be executed by EFTA's affiliates in Autumn 2021, in concurrence with the UN Global Conference on climate change (COP26).

The specific purpose of the survey was threefold:

1. to collect updated information about the ongoing experiences and good adaptation practices meant to increase the level of climate resilience of their communities;
2. to investigate the environmental impact mitigation actions they are embedding into their own business models;
3. to collect thoughts and opinions about the role that the different stakeholders (Fair Trade counterparts, policy-makers, active citizens) should play to contribute in the search for viable solutions of the climate crisis.

This publication is meant to recap the most relevant thoughts expressed by the interviewees – as much as possible using their own words and “voices”. Being a small-scale qualitative survey, results have clearly no statistical significance – they should be regarded as anecdotal evidence. Yet, the level of consistency among the facts and thoughts expressed by people located in very different countries and contexts is a striking element. Which is confirming once more that even if the climate crisis is definitely a global issue concerning all of us, its impacts are disproportionately damaging the most vulnerable communities.

On the other hand, the interviewees are consistently stating that being part of the global Fair Trade movement is making the difference in terms of possibility to test and implement solutions which could improve their own environmental impact.

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1. Background

Between March and April 2021, EFTA ran a set of qualitative video-interviews with representatives of a selected group of Fair Trade suppliers (trading partners), with the primary goal of collecting updated information about:

1. the impacts of climate change on their communities;
2. the ongoing practices of adaptation to those consequences and the actions meant to improve climate resilience of their communities;
3. the environmental impact mitigation activities that are being implemented in their respective business models.

EFTA members interviewed 16 representatives of trading partners from 12 countries: India, Sri Lanka, Laos, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Thailand, Paraguay, Peru, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Kenya, Uganda.

	Interviewee	Interviewee's full name	Interviewee's activity/role	Interviewee's location
1	ACPCU	Yorkonia Tumwijeho	Human Resources Officer	Bushenyi, Uganda
2	ATPI	Raymundo Tenefrancia	Production Manager	Kolkata, India
3	COOPROAGRO	Joan Manuel Heredia	Certifications Manager	Duarte, República Dominicana
4	CREATIVE HANDICRAFTS	Johny Joseph	General Manager	Mumbai, India
5	COOPERATIVA MANDUVIRÀ	Alicia Florentín	Projects Manager	Arroyos y Esteros, Paraguay
6	NORANDINO	Santiago Paz López	Export Manager	Piura, Peru
7	SOFA ¹	Bernard Ranaweera	Chair	Matale, Sri Lanka
8	TPI	Ashwini Sashidhar	Resp. for sustainability	Kolkata, India
9	Y DEVELOPMENT	Patcharin Aviphan	Managing Director	Chiang Mai, Thailand
10	COOPECAÑERA	Sonia Murillo Alfaro	Board Member and producer	San Ramón, Costa Rica
11	CJW	Milton Suranjit Ratna	FT Development Manager	Dhaka, Bangladesh
12	CRC	Indro Dasgupta	CEO	Kolkata, India
13	LFP	Bouakhaykhon Svengsuksa	External relations Manager	Vientiane, Laos
14	LAST FOREST	Nandan HS	Sales Manager	Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu, India
15	MERU HERBS	Sally Kimoto Sawaya	Export Logistic Director	Taraha District, Kenya
16	VILLAGE WORKS	Norm Bunnak	General Manager	Baray, Cambodia

¹ Sofa was not video interviewed but it sent the answers by e-mail.

2. Impact of climate change

“Climate change is a global crisis and emergency. The impacts of climate change are already severe. Despite the Paris Agreement and SDG 13, not much is happening concretely. Education and awareness raising are key. Climate justice is also about the right for our future generation to live a decent life on planet Earth, with fresh air, clean water, etc.”

Patcharin Aviphan, Managing Director (Y Development)



All the interviewees highlighted the dramatic and devastating impacts of climate change on the living conditions and economic activities of their local communities, already struggling with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Climate change is expected to increase temperatures and extreme weather events, to reduce precipitation and weather predictability. While there will be variations based on local specificity, this will result in a general drop of the productivity of both crops and livestock throughout the farming systems. The interviewees all underline that saving livelihoods and production would require urgent action to address the climate emergency.



“There is a lot of talk about climate change but nobody does anything about it in practice. Nobody gives up their economic growth. We will have to talk about the issue seriously.”

Santiago Paz López, Export Manager (Norandino)

2.1 Consequences for the local communities

- Almost all interviewees mentioned the following main consequences of climate change: floods, droughts, extreme weather, shifting rainfall, decreasing water resources, pollution and pest attacks.
- All the above factors compromise the availability and the quality of products and instability in the market, increasing inequality and poverty.
- Tropical and subtropical regions are most at risk because productivity is set to decline as temperatures rise.
- The increase in frequency and intensity of extreme weather events is forcing people to migrate to cities and leave rural areas.
- Deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, fewer crops, flooding cause more problems for marginalized people, e.g. indigenous people, and vulnerable people, such as women and children.



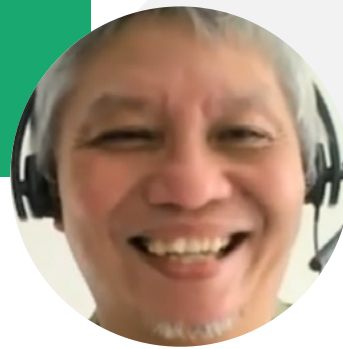
Ph: Roop_Dey | istockphoto.com

ATPI, Philippine

Climate change has greatly affected the communities that belong to ATPI. In fact, the usual production process has suffered as the change in the weather patterns makes the atmospheric conditions unpredictable for the farmers. At times when it is usually very dry during the year, it has suddenly rained a lot - and vice versa. In recent years, "El Nino" has become stronger and stronger, with fatal consequences for the farmers' work. During times of "El Nino" the productivity of crops can drop by 50%, which means a lack of income for farmers. Pest attacks and diseases have increased, especially when it rains frequently.

"The small farmers are the ones that are suffering most from climate change."

Raymundo Tenefrancia, Production Manager



Creative handicrafts, India

Climate change is affecting the entire population, but the poor are especially concerned because they have no viable alternative. An example of this is offered by the women living in the slums of Mumbai, who are the direct producers of Creative handicrafts. Rainy and dry seasons in the region are not the same as before and their work is vulnerable to the unpredictability of the climate. In recent years producers in the slums have been affected by floods. In 2005 there was a big flood, but every year the low-lying area of the slum gets swamped.



"One flood is enough to wash away their earnings of the past 10 years. (...) Their entire life savings can be destroyed by this."

"This farming sector has become over the years very unsustainable because of the irregularity and unpredictability of the climate. (...) So, this has a multipliable effect because what happens is that the farming sector in the small villages becomes unsustainable and people migrate to the cities. And all our beneficiaries have migrated to the city."

"They are basically forced out of their villages and to leave their farms. (...) And this is one of the main effects of climate change."

Johnny Joseph, General Manager

TPI, India

In the regions of Darjeeling, Dooars, and Assam where TPI is located, the local communities are very much affected by climate change. Change of weather patterns, unreliable monsoon times, less sunny days, severe droughts, soil erosion, increased pest attacks are among the noticeable repercussions. In the last 8 years, especially the droughts have become a huge problem.

"In 2021, the tea-growing areas had the lowest rainfall in 10 years! This makes the tea bushes weak and more susceptible to diseases."

Ashwini Sashidhar, Responsible for sustainability



CRC, India

CRC pointed out the decrease in rainfall during the monsoon season and the increase in the average temperature in India. Also, more periods without any rainfall or extreme events like tornadoes are reported. In the rural areas, the availability of fresh water has decreased, and farmers are experiencing problems with agriculture.



"Our people are affected, they are not living a good life, they are not doing enough money. Our process is also affected: we cannot get the raw materials, we experiment with the increase of prices of raw material. Finally, we cannot afford the technology that could improve our situation regarding the climate crisis, for example, to harvest water."

"The people who are suffering more are the people who contribute less to the climate crisis, as their lives are very sustainable in the rural areas."

Indro Dasgupta, CEO

Last Forest, India

Last Forest, based in Kotagiri in the heart of Nilgiri mountains, denounced that the loss of trees, desertification, soil erosion, fewer crops, flooding caused a vast array of problems for indigenous people.

"[...]We buy only from tribal people or the marginalized communities - 1609 members (...) We are seeing more and more forests being removed and there is traditional agriculture e.g. tea. The growing of tea is replacing forest because tea is a cash crop or there are lots of pesticide-based vegetables and fruits growing and after a few years that soil is ruined. So they leave that back and go to another place. And the way we see this also indirectly is the number of bees that come back, the number of hives that are built, the quantity of honey and if the bees are not there, there is no flowering, plants get to start problems with the pollination and there is an entire cycle of impact. You see the forest getting hit."

Nandan HS, Sales manager



Ph: Pablo Tosco | Oxfam Intermón

2.2 Impact on business activities

- Damaging weather events – such as hurricanes, floods, downpours, or frost – increase in frequency and intensity. Consequently, weather patterns are less predictable and therefore it is more difficult to maintain and grow crops because forecasts cannot be relied upon.
- Almost all of the producers interviewed denounced the increasing production costs and the reduction of incomes due to climate change consequences.
- In the rural areas, the availability of water has decreased, causing problems for agriculture activities.
- Small-scale farmers' livelihoods are at risk due to their direct dependence on natural resources.



Ph: Pablo Tosco | Oxfam Intermón

Cooperativa Manduvirà, Paraguay

Manudivira communities in Paraguay have to face extreme weather events: frost, poor rainfall distribution – with very strong sporadic episodes – droughts, and desertification. The main consequence of these events is the low productivity of sugarcane. In the case of the 2017 frost, the plants were severely damaged and had to be harvested immediately. Consequently, the incomes decreased. It affected the whole community, and they are starting to recover only now.

Norandino, Peru

Piura is one of the most affected regions in Peru by climate change. In Piura, the climate is tropical and dry, so agriculture works by irrigation. In recent years the rainfall has increased from 10 millimetres to 5,000 millimetres, causing the flooding of the river, with damage to roads, bridges, and crops. The consequences of climate change are truly dramatic for Norandino's community. Coffee used to grow at 800m above sea level, but now it can only be cultivated at 1500m above sea level. Producers had to leave the low zones and move the coffee cultivations to higher zones (where previously it could not be sown due to heavy rains) In 2017, roya, a fungus that creates coffee rust, arrived in Piura and destroyed 80% of the production area. Moreover, due to rising temperatures, heavy rains, and periods of drought, coffee does not reach the quality standards required in the market. Plagues and diseases have also damaged cocoa and raw cane sugar crops.

Sofa, Sri Lanka



"The irregular weather pattern affects the crop of Sofa's farmers. As regards tea production, due to lack of sunlight the leaves are spoiled. The diseases can easily occur and crops are mostly destroyed. Also, during the drought, production is very low. In cinnamon cultivation, extra shoots are grown during the heavy rain and this makes the cinnamon bush weak. The quality of cinnamon will be deducted due to the extra shoots and flowers. Due to the drought, peppercorn does not mature and sometimes, the seeds are very small even though they are matured. Further, due to the irregular rain pattern, sun drying cannot be done, so the crop should be dried using the dryer machines. This is an additional cost for the farmers more than the income they get through their crops. Therefore, the quality of the products is deducted."

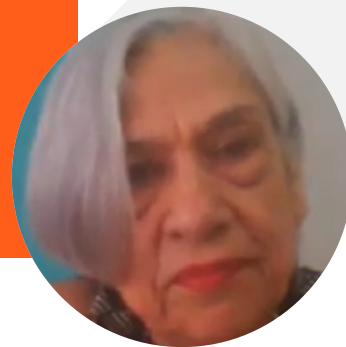
Bernard Ranaweera, Chair

Coopecañera, Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, it is possible to identify two negative consequences of climate change: increase in temperature and variations of rainfall (dry regions vs. humid regions). Hence, there are more natural disasters such as hurricanes and heavy rainfalls/thunderstorms (particularly in the South). Low productivity has become an issue for Coopecañera.

"Sugarcane is affected by the increase of the temperature and irregularities of the rainfalls. Sugarcane needs certain conditions to grow well and to mature. Irregular and heavy rainfalls affect the soil negatively. Producers need to apply more fertilizers and costs of production increase. Conditions for the production are no longer ideal."

Sonia Murillo Alfaro, Board Member



LFP, Laos

The cooperative company Lao Farmers Product (LFP) was established in Laos to stimulate farmers in terms of the organic quality conservation of Laos countryside's products. Climate change has a dramatic impact on LFP's production of rice, tea, and honey. In particular, the representative interviewed reported that rice producers suffer from the reduction in the development of rice grains destroyed by floods. In addition, the rainfall during the dry season makes it difficult to dry the tea leaves for processing oolong and black tea and low temperatures in the mountains damage the honey production. Just as damaging as floods is drought, especially for rice cultivation. Delayed start of the rainy season or droughts at the beginning of the growing period significantly reduce yields. Solar-powered pumps could represent a very good solution to address this challenge.

Meru Herbs, Kenya

Meru Herbs produces herbal teas in the Meru region of Kenya, on the eastern slopes of Mount Kenya. In this area, the impact of climate change on agriculture and farmers' living conditions is dramatic.

"The climate crisis connected with global warming is affecting the ecosystem, water resources, food security, industrial activities, human growth and even social and economic development. Looking at a national level Kenya is largely an agricultural community and so every climatic change is affecting agriculture, fisheries, livestock, tourism; each one of these aspects drives the economy in all the country. 75% of our population of Kenya largely depends on agriculture."

Sally Kimoto Sawaya, Export Logistic – Managing Director



Cooproagro, Dominican Republic

The cooperative Cooproagro is located in the Dominican Republic, in the Caribbean, and as a result, it is highly vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change such as instability in production, low yields, early or late harvest, or no harvest at all. Typically, there used to be two harvests: one in winter and one in summer. But, two years ago the 3000 small and medium-sized Fair Trade cocoa producers of Cooproagro experienced an over-harvesting accumulating 50,000 tons in just one month. They did not have the capital and the appropriate infrastructure to handle this large quantity. In addition, in the case of over-harvesting, the quality of the cocoa is lower. On the other hand, the winter harvest was practically nil causing a significant complication for the producers who rely on agriculture as their main source of income.



"The Dominican Republic is in the heart of the Americas, which puts us in the most vulnerable position. With excessive rainfall and excessive drought, our agriculture and livestock need policies and politicians that support the entire productive system of the Dominican Republic."

Joan Manuel Heredia, Certification Manager

2.3 Envisaged future evolution

According to the majority of interviewees, the future is challenging and a long-term perspective is needed to guarantee the sustainability of the communities. Furthermore, some Fair Trade producers pointed out that although governmental action is crucial in facing global climate change, individuals can also take steps and play a significant role. Political shifts, global demand, and agricultural practices will influence how farms fare in the future.



Ph. Pablo Tosco | Oxfam Intermón

"As we are well aware, environmental protection is an important topic and it is discussed even during international meetings, conferences, etc for many years. But, it is regrettable to mention that we still do not see a result or a solution. Global warming is increasing day by day."

Bernard Ranaweera, SOFA (Sri Lanka)



"The effects of climate change, I am not sure that this is taken seriously enough, by the producers, by the people and our own beneficiaries because it is seen as a long-term problem. They don't see it as a short-term problem. (...) They are busy addressing serious short-term problems in their lives. (...) But as an organization, we definitely look forward to adopting new ways like involving green energy, renewable energy, zero waste, you know, less pollution, These are matters we as an organization would like to adopt."

Johnny Joseph, Creative handicrafts (India)

"In the future, coffee production will decrease dramatically. Eighty percent of the area dedicated to production has decreased due to the roya, and high temperatures no longer allow cultivation in low-lying areas."

Santiago Paz López, Norandino (Peru)



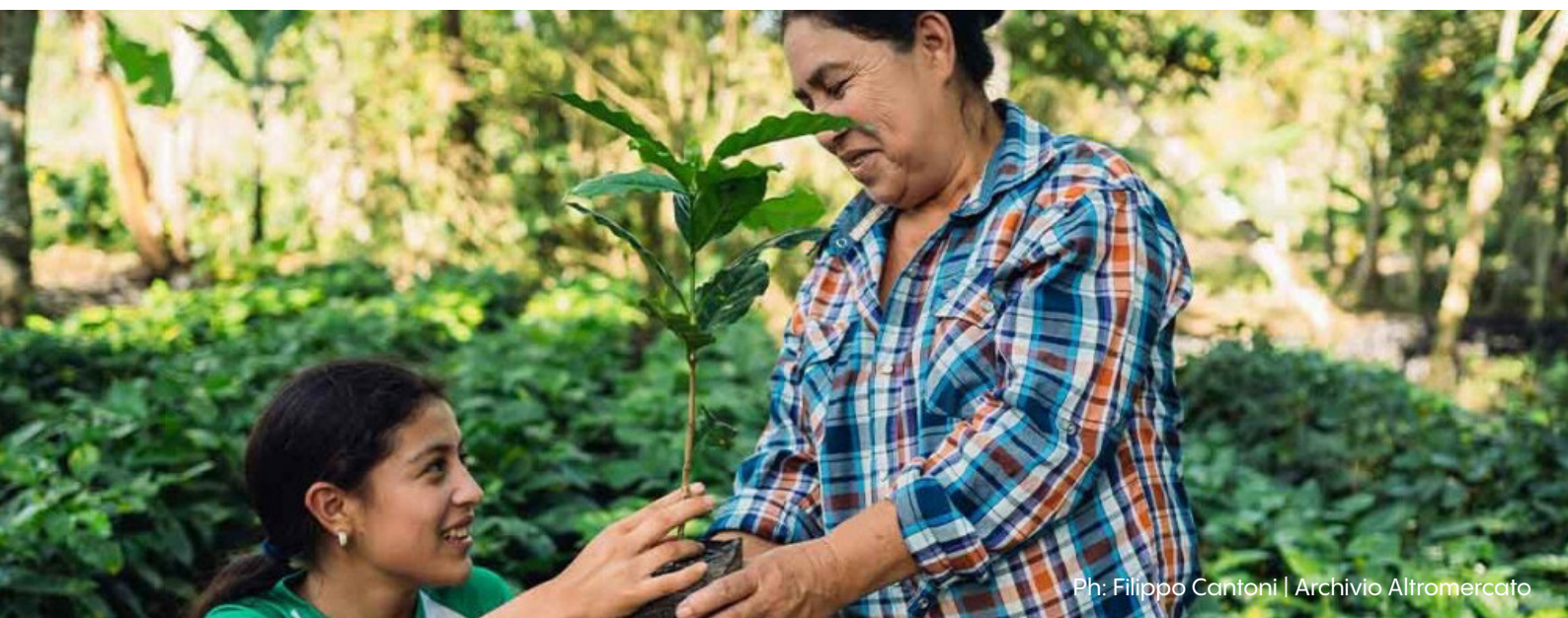


“People have to try to change, they have to understand that most problems come from human beings. We destroy nature, we over-consume natural resources”.

Patcharin Aviphan, Y Development (Thailandia)

“If we do not put much effort into the environmental issue, people will face landslides, soil erosion, flooding in the future... It will be especially difficult for those farmers who do not have any irrigation system, due to the droughts. They will not be able to practice farming, so people will have to move to other places to get jobs. The availability of food will decrease in this area of Uganda...not only farming but also livestock (cows, sheep, etc).

Yorkonia Tumwijeho, ACPCU (Uganda)



Ph: Filippo Cantoni | Archivio Altromercato

3. Adaptation initiatives

Many effective adaptation strategies, adopted by the trading partners, combine food chain management and risk management with soil degradation prevention, and the promotion of food security. Extreme weather and rising temperatures are dramatically hitting the production of major Fairtrade commodities such as coffee, cocoa, sugar, and tea. All interviewees agreed that soil management must move towards a system that increases the resilience of agricultural and forest ecosystems. Several interviewees are directly involved in the protection of forests and reduction of forest degradation, one of the adaptation measures with the highest potential in terms of environmental and social benefits. The main relevant actions, chosen by the Fair Trade producers surveyed, to be more resilient and cope with the negative effects of the climate crisis are the following:

- increase of organic production;
- crop diversification;
- promotion of biodiversity;
- afforestation;
- drainage system to collect the water;
- bio-control against pest and disease;
- agroforestry against drought and soil erosion;
- training and developing knowledge for farmers to become more resilient.



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This is an Organic Field

Ph: Podie | EZA Fairer Handel

Norandino, Perú

Norandino has taken several innovative measures to help the cooperative's members resist the negative effects of climate change. At the production level, Norandino has selected varieties of plants that are more resistant and less susceptible to pests and "roya". Innovative technologies are used to make irrigation systems more efficient despite severe droughts. In addition, production is being diversified so as not to be overly dependent on one product. The farmers grow cane sugar (panela), cocoa and other local products. Training courses are organised for small producers on climate change and methods for combating it. Since 2008, Norandino has promoted the Sierra de Piura reforestation project, which aims to produce carbon credits and reduce CO2 emissions.

"Norandino won many awards for its work on environmental sustainability. Norandino wants to be a leader and a competitive economic player in this issue. Consumers don't just buy a product, they buy a story and they get involved with us in changing the world. This allows us to promote innovative projects such as the production of carbon credits. We are aware of the criticism that carbon credits are considered a greenwashing technique. However, for Norandino the benefits to the poorest communities are very relevant."

Santiago Paz López, Export Manager

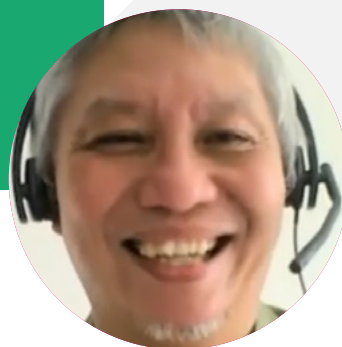


ATPI, Filippine

According to ATPI, environmental issues will be the main focus in the strategic plan to better counter the consequences of climate change. ATPI increases organic production and promotes the diversification of other products besides sugar cane and bananas thanks to the program "sustainable agro-ecological villages". ATPI also supports an afforestation program with Pur Projet and GEPA: since 2013 more than 115,000 timber and fruit trees have been planted (out of them, approx 60,000 in the context of GEPA's project).

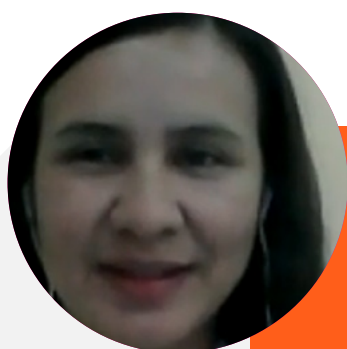
“We have the thinking that doing sustainable and organic farming together with empowering the community is good for mother earth. That is the mission of ATPI”.

Raymundo Tenefrancia, Production Manager



Cooperativa Manduvirà, Paraguay

Manduvirà is undertaking several innovative initiatives to support its members' effort to adaptation such as technical support to install sensors in irrigation systems used to determine soil humidity; installation of a weather station to predict climatic risks; production of compost and bio-fertilizer from sugarcane waste to improve soil quality; monitoring of pests through satellite energy.



“We will have to adapt to climate change, it will continue in the future. We will have to adapt to new technologies.”

Alicia Florentín, Projects director Manduvirà

TPI, India

TPI considers organic production a key element of the strategy to prevent and adapt to climate change. The tea gardens of TPI are 100% organic. Another relevant action is the diversification of crops (e.g. honey production along with tea farming). TPI realizes different projects to support employees and tea growers: using better-adapted tea plant varieties to promote biodiversity; plantation of hardwood trees and shade trees to prevent soil erosion and to create a healthier soil; and distribution of drinking water to the tea growers and their families.



"We definitely believe that organic farming is an answer for climate change. It might not be the only answer, but it is one of the solutions to climate change. That is where we see the future."

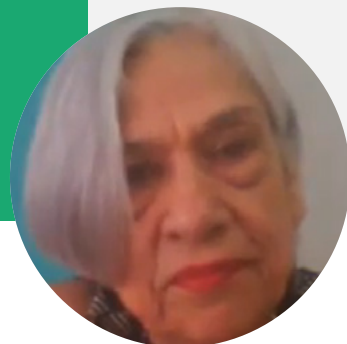
Ashwini Sashidhar, Responsible for sustainability

Coopecañera, Costa Rica

Differently from other trading partners, Coopecañera in Costa Rica does not count on organic production as a means to face climate change, because the costs are too high and the sale prices too low. For this reason, there are only 1 – 2 organic sugar producers out of 273. According to the Coopecañera, the only way to adapt is to use new, better suited varieties capable of renewing the sugarcane plantations (there is a special program of LAICA – Agricultural Industrial League of Sugarcane – to test new and better-adapted varieties). The main problem is the lack of resources: since the cooperative had to close its sugar mill, it has been facing economic challenges. However, the cooperative still tries to support its members, organizing workshops in the sugar fields and giving technical support, even if it would like to do more.

"The way of working in Fair Trade is completely environmentally friendly and sustainable because the measures and actions required to comply with Fair Trade standards are getting increasingly strict. This makes Fair Trade production different from conventional non-fair trade production".

Sonia Murillo Alfaro, Board Member

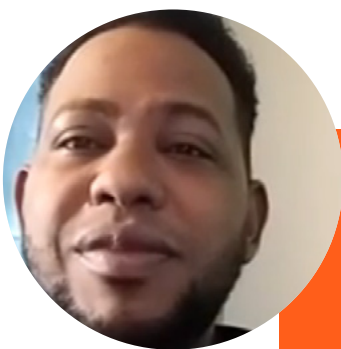


Last Forest, India

Last Forest focuses on market opportunities for producer indigenous groups and communities that work on forest and agriculture products that are natural, wild and local. Training, organic agriculture, reactivation of soil and forest, planting of 5,000 native species a month for 5 years (30,000 new trees), networking to learn from each other, awareness-raising, working with government and NGOs (most of this is done by their sister-NGO, the Keystone Foundation), are the main initiatives adopted by the social enterprise in response to climate change. Moreover, they promote the good practice of the "Payment for ecosystem service", which calls for a percentage of the price to be assigned to conservation environmental projects.

Cooproagro, Dominican Republic

Cooproagro has implemented several strategies to cope with climate change. The cooperative is certified and engaged in organic and biodynamic agroforestry projects. Thanks to the Fair Trade premium, two years ago, it seeded plants with a higher production yield and used organic fertilizers to increase the fertility range of the soil. Cooproagro also promotes the "Cocoa Forest project" to test new sustainable production models, planting forest plants to promote biodiversity, and provide additional economic resources to the community.



"We are getting used to producing naturally. The field belongs to Mother Earth, and it should always produce the same".

Joan Manuel Heredia, Certification Manager

ACPCU, Uganda

Ankole Coffee Producers Co-operative Union Ltd (ACPCU) is a coffee cooperative union with about 9,150 members based in Southwestern Uganda. ACPCU is now experiencing more extreme weather patterns and the growth of population which are putting a strain on the land and natural resources. They are taking positive measures to reshape the way of farming; reducing soil erosion by building terraces and planting trees; boosting soil fertility with nitrogen-fixing plants, mulch, homemade compost, and animal manure; and promoting biogas to reduce the need for cutting down trees for cooking with firewood.

CJW, Bangladesh

Jute is the natural, sustainable, and recyclable raw material that allows Bengali women artisans of CORR The Jute Works (CJW) to have a secure job and a recognized social role. CJW is developing new products based on alternative raw materials like seagrass, which can grow in saline fields, or hogla, to adapt to climate change. In fact, within 20-25 years half of Bangladesh is predicted to be salinized or submerged - causing a surge of climate refugees - and the production needs to adapt accordingly. As early as the 1980s, CJW began building a green belt of indigenous trees to protect people from cyclones. Since then, more than 3.5 million trees have been planted. The Fair Trade organization has a strong environmental policy: using recycled packaging instead of plastic; experiments in vegetable dyes, proper waste management, recycling water, and solar energy.



"Development should be sustainable, humanity has always adapted to new contexts, learning new skills to survive."

Milton Suranjit Ratna, Fair Trade Development Manager

4. Environmental impact mitigation practices

Fair Trade partners have more flexibility to develop investments that minimize environmental impact and prioritize social and environmental goals over the profits. They carry out innovative green practices that protect the environment and increase its resilience (in terms of electricity, water use, gas, transport, waste, etc). Several trading partners are currently working on measuring institutional carbon footprint in order to identify advanced mitigation strategies. The most significant actions taken to reduce the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere are lessening consumption to promote energy efficiency and replacing fossil fuels with green energy sources (mostly solar panels). Some mitigation actions require economical resources, technologies and knowledge that, in many cases, the small Fair Trade organizations surveyed cannot afford. A general overview of the most relevant mitigation initiatives and good practices reported by the interviews includes:

- using renewable energies (e.g. solar panels);
- making older equipment more energy efficient;
- organic farming and use of natural bio-fertilizers;
- hand-made production;
- afforestation and reforestation;
- responsible use of water;
- promotion of biodiversity instead of monoculture;
- sustainable packaging (e.g. plastic free);
- reduction of CO₂ emission in transport and logistics;
- reuse and recycling;
- waste management;
- training and support for producers and farmers on climate change mitigation techniques;
- advocacy and education actions.

Even if all interviewees manifest their clear commitment to mitigate their environmental impact, they pointed out multiple challenges they are facing throughout the process of shifting to greener business models: economic sustainability (the cost of production is higher and the consumers are frequently not inclined to pay more), difficulties in managing organic cultivations, deficiency in technologies, absence of government support, and the necessity of specific skills to comply with complex environmental and Fair Trade certifications.

Meru Herbs, Kenya

Meru Herbs community practices organic farming and its production processes are designed to be in line with the ecosystem. The members do not use fertilizers or chemicals and they use renewable energies, all the machines used to process the herbs and tea bags are powered by solar energy. They are also determined to reduce waste: for example they use the leaf of hibiscus for the tea, its fruit to extract oil, the seeds to replant it, and the residue to make compost. Meru Herbs is also attentive about the packaging, the tea bags are biodegradable and unbleached. Regarding the logistics, they opted for sea shipments, which allowed them to cut carbon emissions compared to air shipments. Furthermore, the cooperative implements different activities to mitigate the farmers' carbon footprints. Firstly, it promotes a campaign on water irrigation: it has distributed to all farmers a kit with a drip irrigation system (which is more useful for water-conserving than sprinkle irrigation) and a water tank. Secondly, Meru Herbs makes a campaign to sensitize their farmers about soil conservation, seeding of resilient crops, and manageable livestock. Thirdly, it encourages the people of the community to use renewable energies: it has distributed solar panels kits to the farmers (cleaner and safer than candles or paraffin lamps). Finally, the cooperative considers trees very important for water catchment, to prevent soil erosion and also to reduce the carbon emission in the atmosphere.



"We are often speaking a lot about our activities and the environment. They are contributing directly or indirectly to the climatic crisis... What can we do? We want to create awareness."

Sally Kimoto Sawaya, Export Logistic – Managing Director

Creative handicrafts, India

Creative handicrafts shifted from sourcing 100% conventional cotton to the current 50% organic cotton. More than 50% of the production of the garments is realized in the main production center equipped with solar panels. For the packaging of the garment, handicrafts uses mainly recycled plastic bags but it is looking into new options of "organic plastic" made from corn. The carton boxes used for the transport are made with recycled paper. All the waste of garment production is upcycled and reused to develop other goods to guarantee the long life cycles of products



"Creative handicrafts, I mean, is a Fair Trade organization and we live or practice the principles of Fair Trade on a day to day continued basis. Besides providing opportunities for disadvantaged women we also look at how sustainable the production process is, how environmentally-friendly our work is, and how much more sustainable we can be. So we look at our products being made in a sustainable fashion as well as in dignity. These are the two components that qualify or mark our products."

"Our energy supply is absolutely free because we have installed solar panels. It is definitely a little expensive to install it but we have done the math's (...) and 5 years of electricity charges for the conventional energy is enough to install solar panels and then you have the energy free for 25 years. (...) So, our products are made with clean energy."

"We make sure that the factories we source the fabric from or where the fabric is dyed or printed are using all protocols to respect the environment. Our direct involvement is in the confection of the garments."

Johnny Joseph, General Manager

Cooperativa Manduvirà, Paraguay

Manuvira is currently working on measuring its carbon footprint. Its main source of energy continues to be fossil fuel but it is developing strategies to reduce energy consumption. The sugar cane waste from the factory is reused in two ways: as fuel for the boiler, instead of using wood, and as an input for compost and bio-fertilizer to improve soil quality. Regarding the use of water, there are three treatment pools for waste to decompose naturally and the leachate is reused in the compost. Manduvirà built a laboratory to monitor the process of producing organic compost in a controlled environment and improve soil fertilization. The cooperative also promotes a reforestation project: a nursery where 25,000 seedlings of exotic native species and fruit trees will be produced to reforest the farmers' plots (200 plots per year).

Norandino, Peru

Norandino's carbon footprint is measured and largely offset: it promotes organic farming and invests in afforestation programs. It is working for the installation of bio-carbon plats and the use of solar panels, according to the most advanced standards. Nonetheless, its environmental mitigation approach has to face many challenges: the increasing production costs, the difficulties in managing organic cultivation, and economic sustainability.

TPI, India

TPI produces and processes only organic tea, without using fertilizers or pesticides. TPI calculates the carbon footprint for all its operations and manufacturing to reduce carbon emissions step by step. TPI has replaced coal with compressed natural gas in its processing units. Moreover, it has achieved a great result: all tea gardens of TPI are powered by solar lights. TPI is currently looking for investors and supporters to extend the solar energy project for its factories and processing units (which would require high investments).

Y Development, Thailandia

Y Development tries to develop a low-carbon business model throughout: supporting the artisans with new eco-friendly designs using sustainable raw materials (leaves, bananas, wood) and natural dyes; using recycled and upcycling materials; reducing water usage; adopting waste separation; reducing plastic packaging; and fostering awareness campaigns in networking with governmental and non-governmental organizations. It also organizes educational training for staff and producers, especially women, on climate change mitigation to change lifestyles towards a greener way of life and reduced carbon footprint.

ACPCU, Uganda

Deforestation is widespread in the Ankole region, where trees are needed as firewood in the household kitchens. Local stoves, used by most of the ACPCU farmers, do not only consume a lot of firewood but also produce a lot of carbon dioxide that is dangerous to human beings...If people become sick, they cannot take part in any economic activity including farming which is the main source of livelihood in the area. Women and children are the most active group in coffee farming and are deeply affected by this problem since they are regularly in the kitchen preparing meals. To reduce the number of felled trees for firewood and the amount of smoke inhaled by women and children, ACPCU has partnered with ZENSHO Holdings for the construction of energy-saving stoves in the three primary cooperative societies of Kiyo-ora, Katojo and Abateganda. Fair Trade Africa is contributing to the stoves project to ensure that the stoves meet the necessary standards, so ACPCU can know exactly the carbon footprint of the stoves. In the future, ACPCU will be able to sell Fair Trade carbon credits.



Ph: Green Net | EZA Fairer Handel

5. Role of Fair Trade

The protection of the environment, biodiversity, and the long-term availability of natural resources have always been fundamental pillars of Fair Trade (as WTO prescribes in the Principle Ten of the International Fair Trade Charter Respect for the Environment). Fair Trade helps farmers, artisans and workers become more resilient to the climate crisis and, at the same time, allows them to reduce their carbon footprint. Thanks to Fair Trade, enterprises can spend additional resources in realizing sustainable projects such as tree planting, irrigation, crop diversification, and clean energy. Moreover, through projects such as reforestation or energy-efficient cook-stoves, vulnerable communities can reduce emissions and become eligible for carbon credits while also strengthening themselves against the repercussions of climate change, as in the case of ACPCU in Uganda or Norandino in Peru. The possibility to offer Fair Trade carbon credits could enable farming communities to obtain additional financial means to tackle the effects of climate change. According to all interviews, Fair Trade has a leading role in responding to the demand for higher climate justice. In particular, the Fair Trade system:

- supports the development of good environmental practices and sustainable projects (especially for small scale producers), giving them the means to be invested in trainings, technical skills, and technologies;
- sustains resilient and equitable supply chains;
- promotes resilient farming practices (e.g biodiversity and agroforestry);
- works to increase consumer awareness about responsible consumption practices;
- promotes networking and sharing of the good sustainable practices at the global level;

- fosters a sense of belonging to a system that considers the planet and people over the profits;
- guarantees a fair price that allows the enterprises to respect the environment, improves living conditions and, at the same time, ensures economic sustainability;
- promotes advocacy and awareness raising campaigns to adopt green laws and policies at the national and international level.

As regards the type of further support expected from Fair Trade importers to cope with the consequences of climate change and to strengthen their mitigation efforts, some interviewees mention the need for a simplification of organic and Fair Trade certifications, because they are very costly and time-consuming.



"For Cooproagro, Fair Trade is life. It is our lungs."

"Through the premium and Fair Trade criteria, we have been able to adapt to climate change. We have been able to counteract some issues with the Fair Trade premium. And also thanks to the standards and principles we improve our standard of living."

Joan Manuel Heredia, Cooproagro (Dominican Republic)



"Fair Trade has already done a lot to be fair for producers, now we need to be fair to nature"

Patcharin Aviphan, Y Development (Thailandia)

"Everything that we do in this particular manner is because of our adherence to Fair Trade. If we are not an FTO or if we are not part of this Fair Trade movement, our concerns would be very different. (...) But because we are in Fair Trade, profit is not the mayor or the primary motivation, but sustainability, environmental concern, sustainable production becomes the core value of our organization."

"The investors in our activities are the Fair Trade partners and support organizations. Fair Trade buyers are organizations that are interested in our activities. They do not only buy and sell our products, but they support these investments and change of production processes (e. g. use of solar energy and installing of solar panels)."

Johnny Joseph, handicrafts (India)



"Fair Trade was the basis for this impressive development in Peru because it opened the door to the international market for our products. For example, raw sugar cane had no value in the market and was produced using wood or tires as fuel, causing terrible contamination. Thanks to Fair Trade we have been able to build sustainable plants and significantly reduce the level of pollution."

"Fair Trade has been important in using new technologies that have reduced pollution and improved the living and working conditions of the producers."

"Without a fair price we cannot recognize the efforts of our producers. Even if the whole market talks about sustainability, only Fair Trade talks about a fair price."

"Without a fair price we cannot recognize the efforts of our producers. Even if the whole market talks about sustainability, only Fair Trade talks about a fair price."

Santiago Paz López, Norandino (Peru)

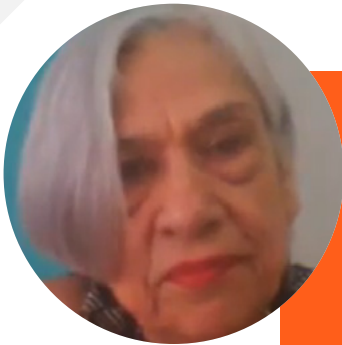


"Fair Trade helped a lot! For example, the solar energy project in the tea gardens in the past has been initiated through Fair Trade."

"Fair Trade has a positive influence to fight this battle of climate change."

"Fair Trade is beneficial not only for the producers and tea workers but for the entire community in that region".

Ashwini Sashidhar, TPI (India)



"Fairtrade standards promote environmental sustainability and efficiency in terms of energy, in terms of soil and better use of resources including water use (...) For me, Fair Trade has become a way of life, a philosophy: now we know that we have to protect the soil, that we have to protect the water, that we have to improve production and also productivity. All this is our obligation as producers".

Sonia Murillo Alfaro, Coopecañera (Costa Rica)

"Fair Trade supports us to protect the environment and creates a network so that we are not alone to deal with this global issue. (...) I feel that I am not alone to work on this, but it is a big community that takes care of the environment and to be more sustainable in our mission."

Norm Bunnak, Village Works (Cambodia)



"We learn from each other, we grow together".

"In the Fair Trade world, we treat each other more as partners than competitors."

Milton Suranjit Ratna, CJW (Bangladesh)

5.1 Message to policy makers

All countries must ensure an equitable transition towards sustainability and de-carbonization for workers and communities affected by climate change. There should be a global effort to reduce poverty and inequalities and guarantee the enjoyment of human rights. In addition, priority must be given to investing in responsibly produced renewable energy and social protection, while supporting the adaptation and mitigations models carried out by the Fair Trade Enterprises.

"Policy-makers have to keep in mind- whatever actions and policies they make - they have to keep in mind the small producers. Because most of the policies are in the minds of big corporations and less for small producers."

Raymundo Tenefrancia, ATPI (Filippine)



Ph: Rosana Poza | Oxfam Intermòn



"Third Countries like us need you to put in place good and sustainable policies, so that we can survive in the long term. We need strong policies, especially to support vulnerable countries."

Joan Manuel Heredia, Cooproagro (Dominican Republic)

"The environmental standards should be strengthened and the organizations who focus on environmental sustainability should be assisted. The funds, grants, loans can be provided for such organizations."

Bernard Ranaweera, Sofa (Sri Lanka)



"We should not lose sight of the climate change crisis, and governments around the world should make environmental issues part of their economic recovery plans".

Ashwini Sashidhar, TPI (India)



"We have many problems to address, especially the environmental crisis and inequality. I would ask them to tackle them together."

Indro Dasgupta, CRC (India)



"The policy makers are focused on the big companies, but they have to put a lot of emphasis on the local people; they are the biggest number of people who are affected by climate change. People, for example, cut trees (each family cuts 1 tree in a week, so in a population of 1000 people, they are cutting down 1000 trees every week). Therefore, they need to focus on local people, training, empowerment, sensibilization..."

Yorkonia Tumwijeho, ACPCU (Uganda)

"Many of the veggies, tea, etc. are primarily for customers which are in the large cities and don't get to see the impact of nature on a day to day basis. And often the policy makers are also sitting there (...). When you are making policies, it is important to also understand smaller eco-systems, and how those contribute to the larger holistic picture (...) Often you have policy-makers taking a decision without understanding how that policy can act differently at ground level. (...) Policy makers should also look at the problems of the smaller groups, because - at least in India - smaller companies account for the largest part of the population."

Nandan HS, Last Forest (India)



5.2 Message to Fair Trade consumers

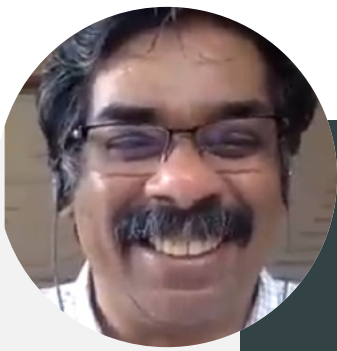
Fair Trade consumers (labeled as socially responsible, ethical, green, and eco-friendly) are a key driver of social and environmental change. They play an important role in the context of protecting the environment and achieving a development that is economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable. The interviewees ask consumers to use the power of their purchase to make a real difference in the lives of farmers and workers.

"If you buy the products from us it means that you buy a product that has 3 effects: for the environment, for the people, and for a sustainable income for our people!"

Norm Bunnak, Village Works (Cambodia)



Ph: Pablo Tosco | Oxfam Intermón



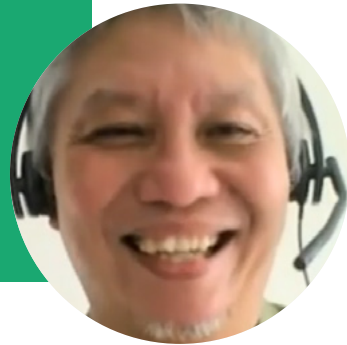
"The more customers you will have, who are aware, (...) to make this change in their purchasing habits, the more changes you can see at the ground level. Every purchase has a lot of multiplier effects including down to the farmer."

"I would urge the customers to continue to buy the products that are made under good working conditions, that are sustainable, and products that are made in dignity."

Johnny Joseph, Creative handicrafts (India)

"Support all products of Fair Trade because they are made by small producers. It is helping people's lives! The small purchase has a very big impact on communities all over the world".

Raymundo Tenefrancia, ATPI (Filippine)



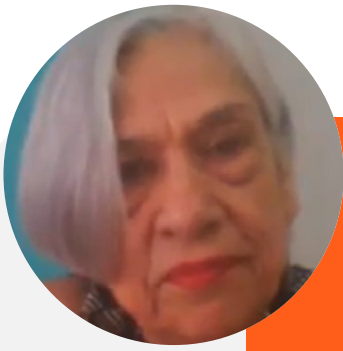
"In our modest role, we can change the world. Fair Trade is the most important project of the last century that involves millions of activists all over the world. The consumer should not make a big effort: only paying a little bit more can change the lives of producers, promote a more egalitarian and fair business model and protect producers' lands."

Santiago Paz López, Norandino (Peru)



"Consume responsibly, slow down your consumption, and in case you have to, buy products that have a meaning, as fair trade products."

Indro Dasgupta, CRC (India)



"We don't want charity, we want a market. We want people to buy our product."

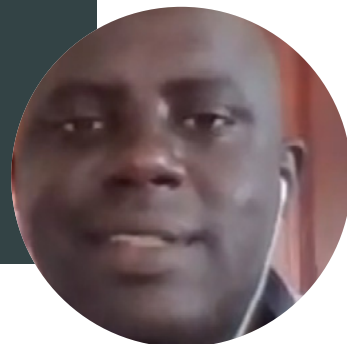
"Let's go back to what Fair Trade was in the beginning... Buying from organized small producers regardless of their country or continent should be a choice, an attitude of awareness, of conscience. Consumers have to recognise the effort and importance of agricultural production. We are the ones who bring food to homes, to the plates of those who have the purchasing power... When we are producing Fair Trade, we are building our homeland, we are building democracy".

"We would like consumers to really know the process of our production, the costs it has (...)so there could be an appreciation for the products."

Sonia Murillo Alfaro, Coopecañera (Costa Rica)

"This coffee is coming from Uganda, from farmers who depend on the climate, and if there is a change, it affects the quality of the coffee. So all of us have to think about climate change, because if not, in the future we will not have this good coffee in our cups."

Yorkonia Tumwijeho, ACPCU (Uganda)



"We have to take care of our Earth because it's the only one we have. And on this Earth, we have enough resources for our needs, but not for greed. So be responsible for your consumption and think twice before buying or consuming something, and then wisely use it".

Milton Suranjit Ratna, CJW (Bangladesh)

6. Final Remarks

The climate emergency is a global crisis of unprecedented proportions.

Climate change and its knock-on effects are seriously undermining income levels, food security, and the right to a life lived in dignity for many communities in the Global South. Although natural disasters are not new, climate change increases their frequency and intensity, making it harder for Fair Trade partners to cope with its impacts.

Interviewees' words are confirming that the climate crisis is already exacerbating inequalities: the highest price is being paid by the most vulnerable segments and communities.

All interviewees perceive the protection of the environment as a fundamental component of Fair Trade, not as an addition. At the same time, they all testify that Fair Trade enterprises – who prioritize social and environmental goals over profits – are consistently investing their limited resources in the development of initiatives that can mitigate their own climate impact. Indeed, the survey underlines the increasing relevance of some practices within their operating models: organic farming, protection of biodiversity, search for efficient water management solutions, prevention of soil erosion, agro-forestry, improved waste management, circular economy.

Fair Trade enterprises are doing their part, but given the magnitude of the climate emergency they are consistently sending a clear message – the same that will be at the heart of the EFTA Climate Justice Campaign 2021: on top of acting on the causes of the crisis (such as carbon emissions), we need to re-balance the distribution of its consequences.

Reducing poverty and inequalities are necessary steps to reduce unsustainable practices.

In one sentence, tackling the climate crisis is also a matter of justice. Of climate justice.

Appendix 1 – Table of interviewees

Interviewee	Interviewee's full name	Interviewee's location	Interviewer	EFTA member organization	Date of interview
ACPCU	Yorkonia Tumwijeho	Bushenyi, Uganda	Leonor Garcia	Oxfam Intermón	21/04/21
ATPI	Raymundo Tenefrancia	Kolkata, India	Verena Albert	GEPA	17/04/21
COOPROAGRO	Joan Manuel Heredia	Duarte, República Dominicana	Leonor Garcia	Oxfam Intermon	24/04/21
CREATIVE HANDICRAFTS	Johny Joseph	Mumbai, India	Birgit Calix	EZA Fairer Handel	15/04/21
COOPERATIVA MANDUVIRÀ	Alicia Florentín	Arroyos y Esteros, Paraguay	Leonor Garcia	Oxfam Intermon	14/04/21
NORANDINO	Santiago Paz López	Piura, Peru	Marta Benini	Altromercato	20/04/21
SOFA	Bernard Ranaweera	Matale, Sri Lanka	Birgit Calix	EZA Fairer Handel	01/03/21
TPI	Ashwini Sashidhar	Kolkata, India	Verena Albert	GEPA	26/04/21
Y DEVELOPMENT	Patcharin Aviphan	Chiang Mai, Thailand	Laura Pinault	Oxfam-Magasins du monde	08/04/21
COOPECAÑERA	Sonia Murillo Alfaro	San Ramón, Costa Rica	Birgit Calix	EZA Fairer Handel	24/03/21
CJW	Milton Suranjit Ratna	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Laura Pinault	Oxfam-Magasins du monde	06/05/21
CRC	Indro Dasgupta	Kolkata, India	Leonor Garcia	Oxfam Intermon	16/03/21
LFP	Bouakhaykhon Svengsuksa	Vientiane, Laos	Helga Duhou	OFT	08/04/21
LAST FOREST	Nandan HS	Kotagiri, Tamil Nadu, India	Julian Fellner	EZA Fairer Handel	24/03/21
MERU HERBS	Sally Kimoto Sawaya	Taraha District, Kenya	Maddalena Campello	Altromercato	31/03/21
VILLAGE WORKS	Norm Bunnak	Baray, Cambodia	Birgit Calix	EZA Fairer Handel	24/03/21

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Helga Duhou (Oxfam België/Belgique)

Julian Fellner (EZA)

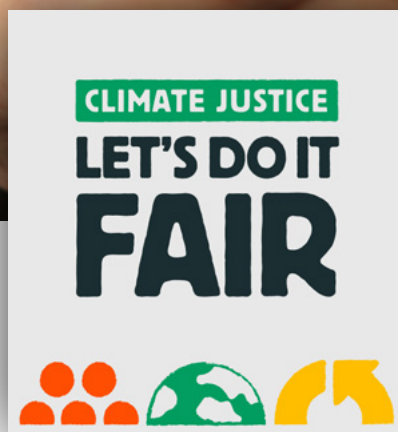
Marta Fracasso (Altromercato)

Leonor Garcia (Oxfam Intermón)

Laura Pinault (Oxfam Magasins du Monde)

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