



Top challenges in sugar production

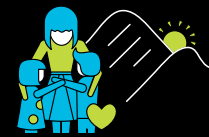
- 1 Sugarcane producing countries of the Global South are competing with beet-sugar producing countries of the Global North, some of which subsidize and protect their national sugar production
- 2 Volatile sugar market and record low prices
- 3 Effects of climate change on sugar crops
- 4 Human rights violations such as child labour

Where is Fairtrade focusing its efforts?

- ✓ Supporting sugar farmers to strengthen their cooperatives
- ✓ Taking action to remediate child and forced labour
- ✓ Increasing the sales of Fairtrade sugars



THE IMPACT OF FAIRTRADE



Tackling child and forced labour

Following an independent evaluation of Fairtrade's Youth Inclusive Community Based Monitoring and Remediation (YICBMR) system, Fairtrade is funding a Good Labour Practices program in Belize.

Member farmers, cane cutters, and temporary harvest workers have been trained to identify and respond to child and forced labour, and to prevent unacceptable labour practices. In addition, training tools and an internal control system have been developed, along with a remediation system if any cases of child and forced labour are identified.

The program also aims to encourage young people into cane farming by ensuring safe and appropriate working conditions; tackle gender inequality, violence and discrimination; and eliminate child and forced labour. In addition, it's hoped to improve economic viability and community development through investment of the Fairtrade Premium.



Driving the change towards sustainable sugar

Fairtrade sugar farms are present in 19 countries and represent nearly 55,000 farmers and 99 producer organizations.

These figures have been more or less stable over the past five years, demonstrating the sustainability of the initiative. Producer organizations must comply with strict standards covering all aspects of sustainability in order to sell their produce to the Fairtrade market. In return, producer organizations are paid a Fairtrade Premium of US\$60 per metric tonne of Fairtrade sugar sold (US\$80 per tonne for certified Organic sugar) to invest in sustainable production, business and environmental projects, as well as community programs. In 2020, sugar producer organizations received over US\$7 million in Fairtrade Premium funds, an increase of 27 percent over the previous year.



Leading in sustainable agricultural practices

Four Fairtrade sugar producer organizations from the Belgaum Karnataka region of India have formed a consortium to grow sugar cane seedlings in the nursery before planting out.

Because the plants are raised under controlled conditions, water use has been cut by 22 percent, while crop yields are expected to grow by 28 percent, generating an extra 12 percent income.

Other benefits include using less fertilizer - thereby cutting costs - and reducing carbon emissions. The project was funded by the Swiss development agency SECO, with the four co-ops contributing from Premium funds.

Surinam Souillac CCS Mauritius



Story from the field

To incentivize farmers and buffer them against low sugar prices, Surinam provides financial aid for each tonne of cane produced. The more cane the farmers produce, the more Premium they receive. The coop's Premium has also paid for timely cutting, loading, and transportation of the cane to the mill, thus increasing both the sucrose content and the farmers' income.

There has been a positive environmental pay-off, too. Cultivating cane on the mountains is tough, but the crop cover helps prevent soil erosion. Farmers are also helping to combat global warming as sugarcane is a C4 plant, which absorbs more carbon dioxide.



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To say that the Fairtrade Premium has buttressed farmers' income at a time when the price of sugar is at a record low would be an understatement... Fairtrade has not only helped maintain many of our small growers in cane cultivation, but has also ensured a regular cane supply to the mills.

- Devesh Dukhira
CEO of Mauritius Sugar Syndicate, Mauritius

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