Established in 2005, Fairtrade Africa (FTA) is the independent non-profit umbrella organisation representing all Fairtrade certified producers in Africa and the Middle East. Currently, the organisation represents over 1 million smallholder farmers and workers across 32 countries in Africa.

Fairtrade is an alternative approach to conventional trade, based on a partnership between producers and traders, businesses and consumers. The international Fairtrade system - made up of Fairtrade International and its member organizations - represents the world’s largest and most recognized fair trade system. Shoppers can recognize products that meet the Fairtrade Standards by the FAIRTRADE Mark.

It is through the Mark that we advocate for better working conditions and improved terms of trade for farmers and workers across Africa and the Middle East. The FAIRTRADE Mark on products most often attracts a Fairtrade Minimum Price, which aims to cover the average cost of sustainable production; while over and above the premium price Fairtrade farmers and workers receive a Fairtrade Premium, which are additional funds above the purchase price, which they invest in social, economic or environmental projects of their choice. This then translates that the more a producer organisation sells the more premium they receive to invest.

Education is a vital component to Africa’s growth and development; a child’s education in Africa affects his/her overall life in society and employment. According to UNESCO and World Bank statistics, Africa still lags 20% behind the world average in university enrolment rates. African parents are often eager to invest in their children’s education; however, the lack of funds to support this endeavour often creates a barrier towards the achievement of this goal. Apart from lack of funds to educate their children people living in undeveloped areas rarely send their children to school as some will end up having to study under trees or poorly constructed classrooms. The impact that the premium has had on the communities in which Fairtrade producer organisations operate has been immense. From creating scholarship funds, issuing bursaries to purchasing school supplies and constructing computer centers, libraries and classrooms. Children from remote farming communities are getting an opportunity to learn.

With the ever increasing number of beneficiaries of bursaries, FTA is launching an Alumni project for such beneficiaries to share their success stories. The initial phase will include beneficiaries from Fairtrade certified flower producer organisations.

Kenyan flower workers received an annual average of € 4,459,181.53 of Fairtrade Premium between 2014 to 2016 that has been invested in education and other social programs. Since the inception of Fairtrade and payment of premium, in excess of 6,000 children of families working in flowers farms have benefited from premium across Kenya.

Studies prove that girls and boys who attended school and received an education themselves take care that their own children get an education too. That means: A person who sends a child to school prepares the way out of poverty for generations to come.
FAIRTRADE PREMIUM
BENEFICIARIES ALUMNI

Creation of an alumni group often establishes a group of like-minded individuals who more often than not support a network of former graduates and help raise the profile of an organisation. These Alumni Associations across different spectrums bring benefits both to the organisation and the alumni.

Fairtrade Africa recognises the existing special relationship between it and the alumni who have benefited from education bursaries made possible from Fairtrade premium funds of different certified organisations, and wishes to encourage and expand the contacts between the Alumni through the Fairtrade Africa Premium Alumni Association platform.

THE OBJECTIVES OF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ARE:

1. Encourage, foster and promote close relations among the alumni themselves.
2. Support FTA’s goals by:
   a. Providing and disseminating information regarding FTA.
   b. Guiding and assisting workers in Fairtrade Certified to engage in productive pursuits.
   c. Supporting in membership recruitment drive of producer organisations within FTA by being present in events and functions to share their impact stories.
3. Strengthen ties between alumni, NFOs, partners, consumers, other stakeholders and FTA through the sharing of impact stories i.e. be FTA Ambassadors.
4. Provide a forum to exchange ideas by organizing an annual program of activities.
5. Work in partnership with FTA communication team to promote the FTA brand in communities in which they operate. Eg family/institutions by appearing in publications, videos and agreeing to undertake media related interviews.
6. Mentoring students in schools of Fairtrade Certified Producer Organizations.

Fairtrade Africa will endeavour to engage with our premium benefit alumni through different mediums depending on their interests, skills and where they currently are in their life. We believe that creating a supportive, engaged alumni association is crucial to the realization of FTA’s strategic objectives.

The management of Fairtrade Africa-Eastern and Central African Network (ECAN) recognizes the already formed FAPAA and commits to work closely with them to advance the common course of helping the needy as measured through communication of premium impact, social economic empowerment and sustainable livelihoods.

The inaugural alumni project is currently being implemented in Kenya with a focus on beneficiaries from flower producers located across the country. This document highlights the success stories of 11 of our initial FAPAA members.

WE BELIEVE THAT CREATING A SUPPORTIVE, ENGAGED ALUMNI ASSOCIATION IS CRUCIAL TO THE REALIZATION OF FTA’S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES.
IMPACT

EMPOWER

ENABLE
Growing up in Gilgil town, located between Naivasha and Nakuru and along the Nairobi - Nakuru highway, Wreford has always wanted to be a soldier. The Gilgil community hosts two large Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) barracks and the headquarters of the National Youth Service. The exposure to the defence forces was a constant source of motivation. But as he grew older fate would have him change his dream of protecting Kenya’s boarders to protecting its cyber space.

Wreford has always been a ‘boy genius’, always emerging the leading student right from his primary schooling all the way to his high school years. Both his parents were workers at Oserian Flowers as flower graders, so when he started his schooling years, he was enrolled at Oserian’s early childhood program and later joined Hilltop academy, where he went on to be the first student in his school to attain 393 points out of the overall 500 points. His parents were unable to pay for his high school fees when he was called to attend Koilel High School, a county public, boarding boys’ secondary school.

Through the full scholarships he received from the Fairtrade Premium Committee, Wreford was able to once again showcase exemplary performance and passed his O levels to join the University of Nairobi to study his new found passion in Electrical and Electronic Engineering. Cyber space security is a field that Wreford fell in love with. Once he completed his university education, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) offered him a position as a Technology Consultant due to his background in electrical engineering and certifications he received in CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associate) and the Certified Ethical Hacker. “Having a sponsor gives one a peace of mind. If I was not sponsored I don’t believe I would have finished my schooling. The sponsorship that was pegged on me performing well was a welcomed motivation”, says Wreford.
Historically workers working in flowers firms have often been plagued with poor pay and harsh working and living conditions. However, with the introduction of Fairtrade workers are able to demand for better pay and adequate working and living conditions. With better pay, most of the workers are able to provide better lives for their families.

Florence’s mother was working at Flamingo Horticulture when Florence started her high school education at Mirera High School in Naivasha. Since the fee was too high a burden for her mother to fully cater for, she approached the Fairtrade committee who provided 50% of the school fees and her mother paid for the remainder. Fairtrade often encourages for students to show exemplary performance in their education and when Florence passed her high school and secured a space at the KCA University to pursue a diploma course in business management back in 2015, her mother was able to have her enrolled because through the Fairtrade premium, she was able to afford full tuition for her daughter.

Florence a last born and only child to have acquired a college education credits efforts from her mother and the assistance of Fairtrade of having taken up her case for her educational sponsorship. She is currently working as at Flamingo Horticulture in Naivasha as a Human Resource Assistant, but she hopes she can pursue a degree in human resource management and do an MBA after her degree course.
It is estimated that in Kenya, over 500,000 people, including over 100,000 flower farm employees depend on the floriculture industry impacting over 2 million livelihoods. Most of those employees do not get to enjoy the benefits of having to work for a Fairtrade Certified farm, and therefore struggle in trying to provide a better life for their families.

The ever cheerful Lindah is a cashier at Mt. Longonot Transit Hotel in Maai Mahiu. As the first born in her family, her father ensured that her daughter had education so that she would be able to help the family financially. Her father through the assistant of Fairtrade Premium ensured that Lindah completed her high school education at Mirera in Naivasha and was later enrolled at the Cooperative University to pursue a diploma in Catering and Hotel Management back in 2015.

Having worked as a cashier for two years, Lindah has dreams of going back to school to pursue a degree in Medicine which she feels is her calling. With her father still working at Flamingo Horticulture as a Supervisor, Linda has put those dreams at the back burner as her father is now focusing on educating her other two siblings, so that they too can get jobs and not be dependent on him for their livelihood.

As the first girl in her extended family to have received a college education, Lindah has now to step in and provide financial support back home. She acknowledges that had it not been for the sponsorship received from the Fairtrade Premium, she too like so many other girls in her village would either have been married off or living in her rural home helping her mother in peasant farming.

“Lindah has dreams of going back to school to pursue a degree in Medicine which she feels is her calling.”

LINDAH CHANYISA
CASHIER
MT. LONGONOT TRANSIT HOTEL
According to data from the Engineering Board of Kenya, there are slightly over 2,124 registered engineers in the country and only slightly over 170 are women. This has made the engineering field a predominantly male oriented field. However, there is a shift forming in the industry as more women are enrolling in colleges to study Engineering courses.

Sandra Ochieng (26 years) is one of the women hoping to gain a seat at the Engineering table having graduated from Dedan Kimathi College with a degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering. A bright student right from primary school to college, Sandra's story is one of a girl who has conquered adversity to become the best student in her high school having attained an A-with 79 points, a feat that no one has been able to achieve in her community.

Her mother raised her as a single parent when the father abandoned the family, leaving her to fend for 5 children. Working at Oserian Flower farm as a casual worker, Sandra’s mother was not able to raise fees for all her children and so when she saw her daughter’s passion in education, she approached the Fairtrade Committee and requested for sponsorship for her high school education. Unfortunately, soon after, as fate would have it, Sandra’s mother was let go from her job leaving Sandra with no hope of continuing her education. Since her mother could not make school fee payments, her high school head teacher approached the Fairtrade Committee and requested they extend the bursary option to Sandra as a special case. She passed her secondary school education where she attained an A- as the leading student in her school. Once again Fairtrade stepped in and paid for her first year tuition at the Dedan Kimathi University. During her 2nd year in college, an area MP paid for her. Once again she approached the Fairtrade committee and they paid for the third and fourth year school fees and her accommodation at the campus.

Currently working as an Electrical Technician at Kenya Breweries Limited, she ensures all electrical/electronic systems are safe to operate and in good condition. She also carries out planned and corrective maintenance on electrical and electronics systems and installations including PLCs and factory instrumentation and pneumatic system to ensure maximum availability of equipment and utilities.

She hopes to register for certification with the Engineering Regulatory Commission and also take a course in control automation so that she can start her own consultancy firm and also help her mother and other siblings move out from the poverty level that they currently live in.

“A girl who has conquered adversity to become the best student in her high school.”
It is said that Africa is not a place for orphans. Once a child loses both parents, traditionally the extended family will take them in or leave them to wander off to the streets. In most cases, economical and physiological support is never accorded to the orphan.

An orphan at an early age, Rebecca’s educational journey was an uphill task. Her mother passed on when she was in class 8 and her relatives who took her in with 6 of her other siblings could not afford to take care of them. When she completed her secondary school education, she got a job as a security guard at Flamingo Horticulture back in 2008. Rebecca was determined to excel at her job and take care of a new family having been married and bringing up a young child. In 2010, she enrolled for Certified Public Accountants (CPA) course at the Kenya College of Accountancy University where the Fairtrade Premium bursary fund paid 70% of her fees while her husband assisted her pay for the 30%. She later got employed as an accounts assistant at Flamingo Horticulture.

Rebecca attributes her success in life to the bursary she received from Fairtrade Premium. “Now I am able to take care of my other siblings and also better my life back at home,” she says.

“REBECCA ATTRIBUTES HER SUCCESS IN LIFE TO THE BURSARY SHE RECEIVED FROM FAIRTRADE PREMIUM.”
Research has often told us that our careers are inherited genetically and others say the driving force is due to upbringing and the nurturing we get from our parents. Research indicates that the way a child turns out can be determined in part by the day-to-day decisions made by the parents who guide the child’s growth.

Mary having taken a course in Human Resource (HR) did not pursue her passion of being in the HR world as her father persuaded her to get a position as an accountant at Flamingo Horticulture. Mary’s father had been a Pack house Manager for the last 7 years at Flamingo and his wishes were to have his eldest daughter follow in his footsteps.

She started off as a clerk but a few years into the job her passion for being in the HR realm was burning like a fire that she could not quell. When she learnt of the Fairtrade Premium that supports employees pursue their educational aspirations, she applied and received a bursary to undertake some professional HR courses. She later enrolled for a two year degree course at the Moi University where Fairtrade Premium paid KES 40,000 per year. This year Mary will be graduating with a degree in HR and she hopes that now that she has the necessary qualifications to pursue her dreams, she will get a job as a HR practitioner.

“Her father persuaded her to get a position as an accountant at Flamingo Horticulture.”
The economic and social progression of women in Africa is often plagued by culture, traditions and customs related to death of their spouses.

Rosemary is one of the few widows who have managed to pull through societal expectations and claim her place as a provider within her community. Having lost her husband back in 2000, she was left to fend for 3 young children with no income since her husband was the sole breadwinner. Her parents were supportive enough to step in and take care of her children as she relocated to Nairobi to seek employment.

Her employment journey begun 15 years ago, having started off as a general worker. When her first born and second born sons started their educational journey, Rosemary was unable to pay for their education. One of her brothers volunteered to pay for their schooling and they both managed to pursue their education up to the university level. However, when her youngest son, Felix was enrolled to join a national school, the burden was too much for any of her relatives to take up and Rosemary could not afford the fees. She approached the Fairtrade Premium Committee at Panda and was able to secure 75% of the fees then she raised the remaining 25% for his schooling for the first year.

In the second and third year of Felix’s education, his performance was exemplary and the FPC awarded him a full scholarship. However, during his final year, with limited Fairtrade premium, she was only granted 40% of the school fees, which saw her reach out to the local government for a bursary in order to cover the balance. Felix was able to finish his high school education at Maranda high school and with a grade of B+ he is currently waiting to join Dedan Kimathi University to pursue a degree in Mechanical and Electrical (Megatronics) Engineering. This year, Kenya will be fortunate enough to take through its system an intelligent young man who will be part of the incumbent innovation environment that will bring Kenya’s big four agenda to fruition.

As for Rosemary, having had Fairtrade as a partner towards securing a brighter future for her children, she can pursue her dreams of bettering her life. She is currently a supervisor at Panda Flowers and has been in various committees within the farm as well as the chairperson of the Health and Safety committee.
Migration of people from the rural to urban areas in Kenya is commonly characterized as being in search of employment and better standards of living. It is for these reasons that Victor’s mother left their homeland in Homabay County so that she could supplement her husband’s income that was sustaining the family through peasant farming.

Victor grew up in Homabay with his four siblings. As the eldest son, his mother relocated him to Nairobi once she secured employment at Oserian as a casual worker. Her work diligence and determination had her secure a permanent position and with that she was able to enroll Victor at Oserian High School. The FT premium partially paid for his last year at secondary school and later when he passed was enrolled at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in Control and Instrumental Engineering. He pursued his degree through the support of the FT premium.

As part of the African culture, the eldest son often bears the burden of supporting the family if his parents are not able to do so. This early adulthood responsibilities often are meant to ensure that the family’s sustainability is kept intact. In Victor’s case, he quickly had to take up the breadwinner responsibilities by financially supporting his siblings acquire the same schooling that he was able to attain. Victor followed in his mother’s footsteps and after interning at the Oserian Geothermal Plant having received his college degree, he was employed as the Plants mechanical technician. He lives with one of his brothers at the Oserian estate as he pays for his schooling at Oserian High and at the same time supports his other brother who is in college.

Victor’s current goal is to educate all his siblings so that they too can have a better life. He hopes to support his father’s progress from being a peasant farmer to hopefully engage in large scale farming.
Despite Kenya having over 40 different ethnic groups with different cultural practices, they all share one common barrier- fostering girl child education. Barriers towards education of the girl child include; early marriages, parental attitudes, early sexual contact and financial constrains in homesteads with limited resources that choose to educate the boy child.

At 23 years of age, Jane boasts of being the first person let alone girl to have finished her college education from her community. Girls in her community are not fortunate enough to pursue their education past their high school. Her father worked as a general worker at Flamingo Horticulture and was able to pay for his daughter’s education through the help of the FT Premium.

It is every girl’s dream to be educated and be able to be whatever she wants to be in life. This dream was not any different for Jane who attained a Diploma in Supply Chain Management and was employed at Flamingo Horticulture as a Stores Administrator.

They say that when you educate a woman you are uplifting a community, this rings true with Jane who is financially supporting members of her extended family by paying for their school fees. She also encourages women in her home area not to give up on pursing their education.

**“**

At 23 years of age, Jane boasts of being the first person let alone girl to have finished her college education from her community.
Nursing remains one of the most popular courses in Kenya. However, for one to pursue this three year course they require to pay approximately KES 164,900. This is an amount that would be deemed as quite steep for a family of five struggling to make ends meet deep in the heartlands of Ol Kalou. Esther a third born in a family of five had a dream of becoming a nurse once she completed her secondary schooling. Unfortunately her parents could not afford to pay for her college fees and so she stayed at home, helping her parents being up her other siblings.

Esther’s parents were often surviving through keeping merger odd jobs here and there to sustain the family. This saw Esther stay at home for three years and as they say, following one’s dreams is usually easier said than done, she got pregnant since she had no financial support, motivation nor inspiration from those around her to successfully pursue her dreams of becoming a nurse.

Now as a single more of two, Esther had to fend for her young family. She sort for employment at Bigot Flowers and got one as a general worker. But that was not to be the end of Esther’s story and her desire to pursue her dreams. While at Bigot Flowers she received a one year bursary for which she pursued a Diploma in Information Technology (IT). Though her dream of becoming a nurse had changed, Esther was determined to make a better live for her children. Upon completion of her IT course, she got a job as a recorder in the packhouse while still working for Bigot Flowers. With this new position, Esther has been able to pay school fees for her two daughters and offer them better living standards than those she grew up with. Her children attend a school build by Bigot flowers through the Fairtrade Premiums received. There are often systematic obstacles which prevent ambitious women from being able to pursue their goals and dreams, but support from others can often mean that one receives the much needed support to pursue other dreams.

“Esther has been able to pay school fees for her two daughters and offer them better living standards than those she grew up with."
The Fairtrade Mark on products most often attracts a Fairtrade Premium Price, which aims to cover the average cost of sustainable production while over and above the premium price Fairtrade farmers and workers receive a Fairtrade Premium, which are additional funds above the purchase price, which they invest in social, economic or environmental projects of their choice. The flower growers Fairtrade Premium Committee (FPC) Chairman Enock is one individual who has benefited from this Premium.

In 2002, he was employed as a mechanic at Flamingo flowers. He took advantage of the bursary being offered through the Premium and acquired a Diploma in Business Management and a certificate in Monitoring and Evaluation. His wish was to attain a higher education qualification, but since his mechanical job pay was not sufficient enough to supplement the bursary received, he settled for the Diploma and Certificate course.

His passion and commitment towards the use of the Fairtrade Premiums had him elected as the Fairtrade Premium Committee (FPC) Chairman. Through his leadership the Committee was able to implement various projects on healthy that saw the purchase of x-ray machines, baby care support of over 300 children and donation of 21 beds to the Huruma Health Center- located within the community where Flamingo flowers operates.

It is this hard work and qualifications that got Fairtrade Africa (FTA) to recognise his efforts and through a vigorous employment process he landed a job as a Business Support Officer at FTA, a move that was to change his life and improve his income. Enock was able to pay school fees for his daughter who is at a national school in Kenya.

"His passion and commitment towards the use of the Fairtrade Premiums had him elected as the Fairtrade Premium Committee (FPC) Chairman."