

A photograph of three women in a vineyard. They are wearing red long-sleeved shirts, black aprons, and white hairnets. The woman in the center is holding a large wooden crate filled with dark grapes. They are all smiling. The background is a lush green vineyard with clusters of dark grapes hanging from the vines.

# ETHICS & SUSTAINABILITY

WOMEN IN JOHN LEWIS  
PARTNERSHIP SUPPLY CHAINS

2021

JOHN LEWIS  
& PARTNERS

JOHN LEWIS  
PARTNERSHIP

WAITROSE  
& PARTNERS





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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Every day women face discrimination and inequality, yet the first two articles of the [Universal Declaration on Human Rights](#) are that we are all born free and equal and there should be no discrimination. It is sadly still the case that in some countries legal systems penalise women. In countries where equality is a legal requirement, women often face more barriers than men.**

This paper is designed to unpick the specific challenges that women face in our supply chains, and what the John Lewis Partnership is doing to try and address these issues from both a policy and programme point of view.

Our [Responsible Sourcing Code of Practice \(RSCoP\)](#) sets out expectations of how all workers are treated within our supply chains. The experiences of men and women in relation to these expectations are often different, and women often have fewer opportunities to access effective grievance mechanisms.

At the John Lewis Partnership we have initiatives in place to support women in supply chains where there is a specific risk to their rights. Our supply chain programmes - the **Waitrose Foundation** and, in John Lewis, **Better Jobs** - focus on ensuring that all workers are listened to, including women. The Waitrose Foundation supports women's economic empowerment across the 10 countries in which it operates. The Partnership also funds the John Lewis Foundation which is not directly connected to our supply chains, but supports communities in which the business operates. It too has a focus on women's rights and improvements to working conditions.

In the Partnership's raw material supply chains, we work in partnership with industry leaders such as BCI and Fairtrade whose ambitions to support women farmers we fully recognise. We support Fairtrade's advocacy work, and their calls for action from governments and businesses to address inequality in these supply chains. Over the last few years we have increased our own advocacy work for women's rights. We know there is still a long way to go.



## INTRODUCTION

**Goal 5 of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, highlights the need for a focus on gender within our supply chains. Furthermore, there is a broader commitment, central to the delivery of the SDGs, to 'leave no one behind'**

It is important to note that gender equity and gender equality are not the same, but one does lead to the other. Equity promotes fairness whilst considering individual different needs. Achieving gender equity means that men and women will have equal opportunities for financial independence, education and for personal development. Men and women may not always be treated exactly the same, but where there are differences, then it is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits and obligations. Equality means that all people are treated the same regardless of their innate differences.

It is widely recognised in reports published by the United Nations over more than 10 years, as well as studies done by many Non Governmental Organisations across the world, that increased equity promotes economic development at a grass-roots level. A powerful enabler in all communities, this is particularly important for low income countries.



## WHY DOES GENDER INEQUALITY EXIST?

**In order to address gender inequality and gender inequity within our supply chains, it is important that the Partnership recognises why these issues exist in the first place. Legislation can play a huge part in determining the role of women within a nation, but there are also other factors. Physical differences, societal constraints and cultural mores can have a significant impact on women's position in society and their ability to be economically active.**



According to Oxfam, in 2020 there were still 153 countries with laws in place which discriminate against women economically<sup>1</sup> and in 18 countries a husband can prevent his wife from working. Whilst the 18 countries listed would not be considered to be major sourcing countries for the Partnership, we do source some fresh produce from Jordan. There are also other nations for example Moldova<sup>2</sup>, from which we source a small amount of fashion. Here, permission is not required from a guardian for a woman to go to work, but there are restrictions on the roles that women can perform.

If a woman wants to start her own business, there are limiting factors on women's ability to access credit in many countries including Kenya, from where we source fresh produce, tea and coffee. In Kenya, women also do not have the legal right to register a company in their own name and are not allowed to own land.

Motherhood often impacts a woman's ability to work and in some cases, women may struggle to access work if they are perceived to be of child bearing age. In many countries, paid maternity leave of 14 weeks or more is a legal entitlement, but only 50% of countries support employers with payment<sup>3</sup>, meaning the financial burden falls on the mother. In comparison, paid paternity leave is mandated in approximately half of countries, but the duration is a matter of days rather than weeks<sup>4</sup>. This means that it is often perceived as 'more expensive' to employ women in the first place. Even if women are considered for a job, pregnancy testing may be 'offered', or simply just conducted before employment, giving unscrupulous employers the opportunity to turn down women. In addition, pregnant women may be seen as unable to perform all the usual tasks, or be prohibited from working certain hours (for example night work or overtime) required as part of their role.

Care roles fall disproportionately on women, with women spending at least three times as many hours undertaking unpaid care work as men<sup>4</sup>. Unpaid roles include looking after elderly family members and children, domestic work and fetching water. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this situation with women having to take on more care provision as lockdowns have been in place globally and home-schooling necessary.

This domestic input is often not recognised as 'work', but it can effectively prevent women from undertaking paid work, or means that they require shorter or more flexible hours to allow them to meet these familial responsibilities. Carers also have less time to undertake additional training and this often leads to women having to take lower paid positions and prevents them from being able to reach managerial roles.

There are often differences in the nature of work undertaken by men and women. For example, women are over-represented in the garment and textile industries, and on tea and flower plantations. Jobs in these industries are often more precarious and at the lowest end of the pay-scale. Within our own supply chains we are seeing some changes to the more traditional roles taken by women. For example, one of our largest pig suppliers commented that the gender balance has changed in recent years. There has been greater recognition that women are both able and willing to undertake some of the 'hardier' roles traditionally undertaken only by men.

On top of this, it is still a plain fact that men and women are simply paid differently for the same job. While this is illegal in many countries, it still occurs - even in the UK<sup>5</sup>.

Finally, a woman who has successfully negotiated all the legal and social barriers to becoming economically active, faces the shocking reality of being more prone to be a victim of workplace violence or harassment. According to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)<sup>7</sup> 35% of women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence, and 40-50% of women experience unwanted advances, physical contact or other forms of sexual harassment at work.

1. Oxfam (2020) '[Gender Justice and Women's Rights](#)', Accessed 15th July 2020

2. World Bank (2020) '[Women, Business and the Law 2020](#)', World Bank

3. World Bank (2020) '[Women, Business and the Law, 2020](#)', The World Bank Group. Accessed 15th July 2020.

4. World Bank (2020) '[Women, Business and the Law, 2020](#)', The World Bank Group. Accessed 15th July 2020.

5. UN Stats (2020) '[The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020](#)', Accessed 15th July 2020.

6. Berkshire Live (16th March 2020.) '[The 'sorry episode' of £15m compensation for women who should have been paid fairly in the first place](#)', Accessed 29th July 2020.

7. ITUC (2019) '[Stop Gender Based Violence at Work](#)', Accessed 17th July 2020

# OUR POLICY AND RISK ASSESSMENT

## POLICY

The John Lewis Partnership Responsible Sourcing Code of Practice (RSCoP) sets out our commitment to workers' rights, and our expectations of suppliers regarding issues such as pay, working hours, and child labour. It is based on the [Ethical Trading Initiative \(ETI\) Base Code](#) and in turn, relevant [International Labour Organization \(ILO\) Conventions](#). Specifically calling out gender:

- **Clause 7** requires that there is no discrimination in hiring, compensation, access to training, promotion, termination or retirement based on .... gender, marital status, sexual orientation
- **Clause 9** requires that there is no physical abuse or discipline, and states that the threat of physical abuse, sexual or other harassment and verbal abuse or other forms of intimidation is prohibited.

The natural differences between men and women impact the way the code is implemented. Depending on personal circumstance, the code may also impact individuals of the same sex differently. For example, a pregnant woman will not only have different health and safety requirements from a man, but these will also be different from a woman who is not pregnant (see appendix I for further examples).

It is also important to note that, should a grievance need to be raised, the mechanism for doing so is

not always the same for both men and women. There may be restrictions on women joining trade unions, or there may be few or no female workers' representatives, meaning that the views and opinions of women are not properly advanced and addressed. Discrimination may be institutionalised, resulting in women failing to raise grievances in the first place, as they believe that they will not be heard.

The RSCoP is applicable to all suppliers, at all tiers, including goods for resale and goods not for resale. It covers both product and service providers. Those trading with the Partnership are expected to work towards compliance with the RSCoP and, in doing so, must also comply with all relevant national and other applicable laws. Where there is a difference between the protection offered by the law and that offered by RSCoP, then the higher standard should be applied.

Where suppliers are not able to comply with RSCoP they must explain to the Partnership how their own policies, processes and standards address the fundamental principles of the particular provision in question, and demonstrate how their standards were developed in collaboration with workers. The Partnership has verification processes in place to ensure standards within our supply base are acceptable. Verification requirements are targeted at those areas where we can have the most direct impact and where we have the highest risk. More details can be found in our latest [Modern Slavery Statement](#).





## THE WAITROSE FOUNDATION AND THE JOHN LEWIS FOUNDATION

The Partnership does not stop at policy making with regard to the equal and fair treatment of women. We also design and implement support programmes, offering training both to our own supply chain partners and the wider communities in areas in which we operate.

The [Waitrose Foundation](#) is a supply chain programme. A percentage of retail sales are invested directly back to the farms from which we source. Currently established in 10 countries, the Waitrose Foundation directly supports projects chosen by worker committees on farms, and has a global fund which focuses particularly on programmes to support women and young people.

The [John Lewis Foundation](#) has a remit to support communities both in the UK and overseas where the John Lewis business operates. The John Lewis Foundation is a charity and specifically seeks to support projects and programmes that lead to meaningful and sustainable employment, covering things such as training and skills development. The Foundation does not focus exclusively on John Lewis supply chains; its work is designed to support those living and working in the locality in which these supply chains are based. Included in the remit is a focus on women's rights and working conditions.

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## RISK ASSESSMENT

As noted already, women are often in lower paid positions and often have more precarious employment than men. Women are working in a variety of supply chains to the Partnership, though the proportion of male to female workers differs depending on the supply chain tier, the country, and the industry. As part of our ongoing ethical trade work we have programmes in place to assess where the greatest risks to workers rights might be, and where there is the greatest risk of our Responsible Sourcing Code of Practice not being adhered to. We map data about our supply chains, which allows us to assess where there may be specific, or disproportionate, risks to women. These programmes are tailored to the different types of supply chains.



## TIER 1 FACTORIES

The garment industry is one of the largest employers worldwide, providing work for over 150 million people. Over 75% of these workers are women<sup>8</sup> ([European Commission, 2018](#)). Within food supply chains, women have traditionally been employed in food production and packing more than at the farming and fishing level, though this has started changing over the last few decades.

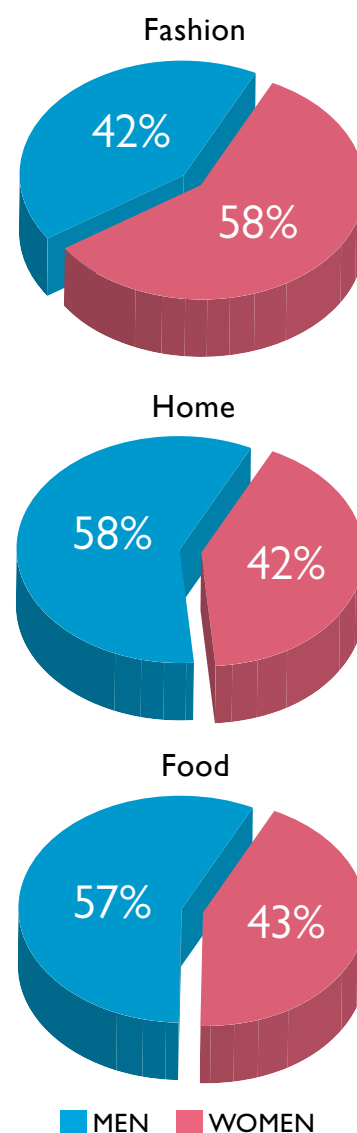
For Tier 1 factories<sup>9</sup>, we assess compliance with the RSCoP through ethical audit programmes. We use Sedex Members Ethical Trade Audits (SMETA) for these assessments as it is a cross-industry recognised audit methodology. SMETA audits also verify the worker types at a factory, giving accurate data on the ratios of men and women workers at a site. For further details of our risk assessment and audit programmes please see our [Modern Slavery Statement](#).

In the UK, our general merchandise factories are invited to be part of our [Better Jobs programme](#). We recognise that the standard factory auditing process only gives a snapshot of a factory at a particular moment in time. Through Better Jobs, which allows employees to give feedback through a worker survey, we are able to drive more meaningful and sustainable behaviour change. The survey is designed around seven key themes, including 'voice'. We want the people who make our products to be empowered to voice their opinions, ideas and concerns.

Through the data we have collected about our Tier 1 factories, across food, farming and home, we can start to understand where the greatest proportions of women are employed in Partnership supply chains. Figure 1, based on our 2020 data, shows that the largest proportion of women, at Tier 1 level, are employed in fashion supply chains.



**FIGURE 1:  
PROPORTION  
OF WOMEN IN  
TIER 1 FACTORIES**



<sup>8</sup> European Commission, 'Sustainable Garment Value Chains' 2018. Accessed 6th July 2020

<sup>9</sup> Tier 1 factory, Defined as those sites manufacturing a finished product, or where the majority of assembly and packaging of the product bearing the John Lewis or Waitrose label occurs.







## FARMING AND FISHING

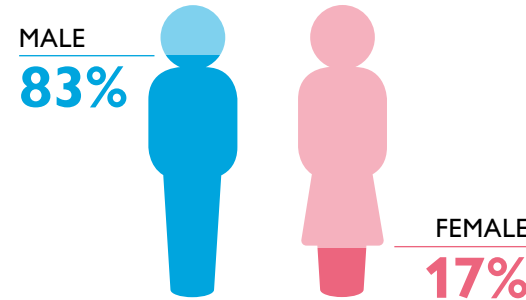
At fresh produce and livestock farms, where we have the best insight into working conditions, we conduct risk assessments to identify where there may be a divergence from our RSCoP standards. We assess through a combination of self assessment and third-party oversight. Data from the individual farm assessments is cross-referenced with information from trade unions and NGOs, allowing us to be constantly aware of where women's rights are most at risk. Figure 2 shows us the proportions of men and women in our livestock supply chains, pulled from self assessment data.

We have also worked with the [Wilberforce Institute of Slavery and Emancipation](#) to conduct deep dive studies into some of our fresh produce farming supply chains in Peru, Chile, Italy, Spain and the UK. Through these on-site assessments worker interviews are conducted to determine whether employment conditions meet the standards that we require. The assessors will also engage with local NGOs and trade unions to ensure they build up a more complete picture of conditions (more details on these

assessments can be found in our [Modern Slavery Statements](#) and on our corporate website).

When we are looking to expand the Waitrose Foundation into a new country, we conduct assessments among farm communities to identify where basic needs are being met and which areas require support. For example, in 2019, as we launched the Waitrose Foundation in Senegal and The Gambia, we asked about the aspirations of those within the farming communities. Women notably talked about ambitions to be economically autonomous and support their families and communities with improved incomes. Challenges they cited included family and child care responsibilities, limited economic opportunities and lack of local infrastructure. This research is used to inform programme delivery.

**FIGURE 2: PROPORTION OF WOMEN IN WAITROSE LIVESTOCK SUPPLY CHAINS**



## FARMED FISHING

Whilst we have not yet conducted in-depth research into all of our farmed fish supply chains, in conjunction with the Wilberforce Institute we have begun the process with telephone-based risk assessments. Initially focused on those supply chains deemed to pose the highest risk, we plan to move towards on site assessments in the coming years. (For more detail about these risk assessments please see our corporate website).

The findings from these assessments showed that, for those farms and hatcheries in scope, 95% of the workforce were identified to be male. This gender disparity seemed to stem from the fact that fish farms and hatcheries are generally remotely located and the tasks often physically demanding.



## RAW MATERIALS

With raw materials, we have less direct visibility of our supply chains. Within some of our most high risk food supply chains we require Fairtrade certification, and in cotton supply chains we work with BCI. This helps to ensure that basic standards of working conditions are met. We are also better able to understand where women work in these supply chains (see figures 3 and 4), what the conditions are like for women and identify areas of particular risk.

FIGURE 3: PROPORTION OF WOMEN IN FAIRTRADE BANANA SUPPLY CHAINS

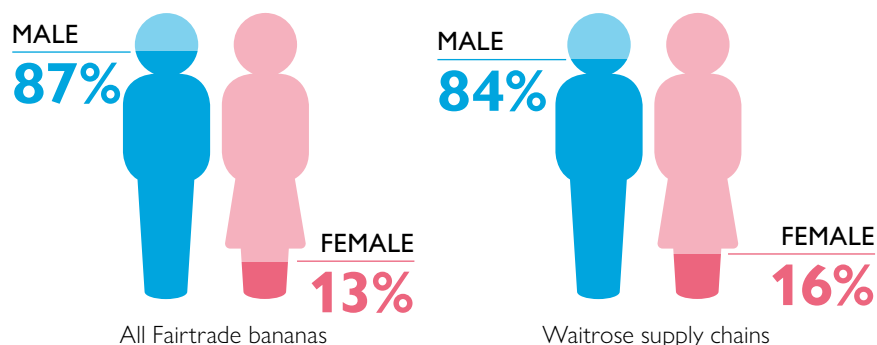
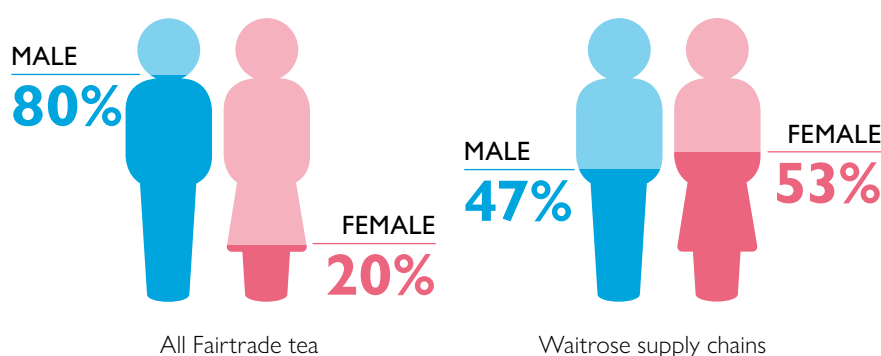


FIGURE 4: PROPORTION OF WOMEN IN FAIRTRADE TEA SUPPLY CHAINS



Based on our risk assessments we have identified key areas where women's rights are at risk. This map focuses on some of our highest risk food supply chains.



# SUPPORTING WOMEN IN OUR SUPPLY CHAINS AND BEYOND

## STATE AND LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURES

**The John Lewis Partnership cannot tackle the issues related to state and legislative structures on its own. Collaboration with other stakeholders is essential to drive change. Advocacy is one area in which collaborative work can be particularly powerful. This can be demonstrated in our work with the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and other members, to lobby the UK Government to ensure the [ILO Convention on Ending Violence and Harassment in the World of Work \(c190\)](#) was brought into being. The collective voice, including that of a number of big businesses, was a powerful combination, sufficiently persuasive to convince the government of the need for the Convention in its most robust form. The ILO Convention c190 will come into force in June 2021.**

Where we are unable to influence governments to raise standards, we know we can make beneficial changes through voluntary schemes that set high standards, benefit workers and positively impact output. We are acutely aware that compliance and certification to a set of guidelines will not solve all of the issues that women in our supply chains face, but they can offer an important baseline from which to measure progress. Where these guidelines are in place, we are committed to ensuring they are meaningful.

For example, fishing is often considered to be a predominantly male industry. There has been relatively little research into the roles women do play in the industry, or the challenges women face and therefore why they might choose not to fish. Waitrose representatives on the Technical Advisory Group and the Advisory Board for the Responsible Fishing Scheme v2, advocated for gender equality and maternity protections to be included as part of the new standard requirements. These protections are now included in the standard. We also fed into the Sustainable Supply Chain Initiative (SSCI) consultation, which benchmarks certifications and standards, ensuring the bar is continually raised.

Part of our close relationship with Fairtrade involves supporting their programmes to improve opportunities for women. In many cocoa producing areas, women are often not permitted to own land or join cocoa cooperatives which means they often lack access to markets. Cocoa production is an industry



blighted by low wages and extreme poverty, and even within this lean arena, women often earn less than men. Fairtrade is working to precipitate action from governments and businesses to address this situation, focusing on increasing equality and driving for fair prices to be paid. As part of our Partnership commitment to support this work in West Africa, all the cocoa in our confectionery is now sourced as Fairtrade. This follows our existing policies to source 100% Fairtrade bananas, tea, block chocolate, coffee and speciality sugars.

The Bangladeshi constitution states equality for women but the country also recognises religious laws, which do not offer equality to women. This contradiction is a daily issue for female citizens, and one which actively discriminates against them in secular situations, even though the inequalities arise from religious mores. In 2020, within John Lewis Fashion supply chains, just under 60% (or c. 18500) workers were women, and within the Home Assortment supply chains this was approximately 25% (c. 200). From 2016 – 2019 the John Lewis Foundation worked with Oxfam on a programme to empower and engage 25,000 marginalised women and girls from slum areas to understand their legal rights, organise to assert these rights, and access market opportunities. By supporting females in this way, the programme tackled local attitudes and cultural norms enabling women to be heard, and having an impact on employers' practices to ensure women are increasingly awarded equity of opportunity and income.



## EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

As noted under our policy section, the RSCoP is applicable to all Partnership suppliers, and compliance with this includes the requirement to ensure equal pay for equal work. The Partnership verifies that suppliers are meeting these requirements through a combination of third party audits, supplier assessments and self assessments, though we recognise that this may not always give us the complete picture.

## RECOGNISING AND SUPPORTING UNPAID CARE WORK

Even if state structures are in place to mitigate the usual imbalance, women traditionally play the role of primary carers in societies. At the Partnership, we recognise that women are often disadvantaged in their capacity to take paid employment due to the need to perform unpaid domestic work including caring for others. In South Africa and Kenya the Waitrose Foundation is trying to tackle the challenge of unpaid care work through the support of on-site child care facilities and after school clubs for children of school age. This allows parents, specifically women, to undertake paid work on the farms and work for longer hours.

A recent impact assessment to celebrate the first 15 years of the Waitrose Foundation highlighted the importance of these facilities to farm-workers, in particular women. The child care centres also offer the workers' children the opportunity to improve their education, supported by trained facilitators, in a safe environment. Literacy rates amongst parents are often not substantial enough for them to be able to support their children outside the classroom, so these centres are highly valued. The pre-school and after-school care supports both boys and girls, offering a positive basis on which to build the notion of an equitable society and the value of equal opportunity.

In Ghana, rural schools and communities often lack basic water and sanitation facilities. A lack of adequate toilets can result in a lower attendance rate for girls, who may drop out or miss classes during menstruation. The Waitrose Foundation has supported numerous projects to improve facilities both in communities and schools. This is helping to improve school attendance, educational achievements, and therefore future opportunities for girls.



### CASE STUDY: THE WAITROSE FOUNDATION SOUTHERN AFRICA

A recent review of the Waitrose Foundation South Africa farms showed that overall only 34% of farm workers were women, but this rose to an equal 50:50 split for seasonal workers. Seasonal workers often live in townships close to farming areas where there are limited facilities and poverty is a real concern. By offering safe and secure child care options, with proper healthcare provisions and educational stimulation, the Waitrose Foundation has supported the increase of earning opportunities for parents on these farms. As unpaid care work statistically falls more on women, this has been particularly effective at increasing the earning opportunities for mothers:

“Farmers acknowledged the positive and beneficial effects of pre-school care and stimulation of the children of their workers in the sense that their employees are more at ease and less worried about their children's health and welfare. This increased the productivity of these workers and they have also become more focused and satisfied workers.”  
WFSA Impact Assessment, 2020

“Now you can enjoy your work, because you know that your child is safe at the (ECD) centre. You know that there is a professionally skilled teacher, who can assist your child with homework, after school... Years ago, the children would be in the orchard with the parents, while we were working. Children had to leave school at an early age as there was no one to take care of them”  
Farm Worker, 2020

## IMPROVING WORK OPPORTUNITIES

A lack of available educational and further training opportunities for women means that access to work can be harder, and when work is available, then there are often fewer chances for women to reach senior positions should they want to. Similarly, if women are permitted to own their own farm, they often struggle disproportionately with access to markets for their goods.

Since 2015, John Lewis has been members of the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) and we continue to source cotton which supports the programme. As an industry leader in sustainable cotton, BCI launched their Gender Strategy in 2019 to address some of the impact that gender inequality has within the cotton industry. Through the strategy, BCI have committed to taking a gender-sensitive approach, and are collating data on the participation of women in their training programmes at different stages of the supply chain. During 2018/19, in two of our major sourcing countries China and India, 40% and 20%, respectively, of farmers and farm workers who were trained by the BCI were women.

Another way we are trying to address this is through a collaboration between the Partnership, Bewley's, Olam Speciality Coffee and the Fairtrade Foundation<sup>10</sup>. The Partnership sources all coffee within our cafes as Fairtrade, and has committed to a three year programme to support the Asopep co-operative in the Huila district of Colombia. The cooperative is made up of over 300 members in post-conflict zones, where the coffee industry can be a critical lifeline, but one that has been put at risk through low prices, a lack of infrastructure and limited access to education. £100,000 is being invested to support a new quality lab and training programme for farmers. There is a particular push for the engagement of women and youth in the coffee sector to ensure economic sustainability, with 50% of places exclusively held for these groups. A focus on upskilling, training, and developing core skills will lead to career opportunities and secure a brighter future for Colombia's next generation of coffee farmers. This programme was delayed due to Covid but we hope to restart in the coming months.

The John Lewis Foundation has been working with ActionAid to secure a living wage and decent work for female garment workers in Delhi and Chennai. The specific project with ActionAid helped the female workers form collectives, to have their voices heard, and to enable them to have a positive impact on their working conditions and pay. Over the last year, 27 workshops have taken place, reaching 1156 workers. Subsequent negotiations by workers have led to increases in pay, provision of daily cooked food and increased pension contributions. The project was picked up by the media, and the BBC interviewed some of those who had undertaken the training. The women felt so empowered that spoke out to the journalists about their experiences of working excessive hours, unfair pay and unsafe conditions<sup>11</sup>.

During the past year when COVID has made life particularly hard for many of these workers, the project in Delhi and Chennai has demonstrated the value of the John Lewis Foundation's commitment to broadening benefit. As well as being demonstrably more empowered within their workplaces, the collectives of female workers have used the skills they've learned through this project to support their communities.



### CASE STUDY: THE WAITROSE FOUNDATION SOUTHERN AFRICA

#### ROOIPAD BOERDERY, AGANANG WOMEN'S PROJECT

The Aganang needlework Project, supported by the Waitrose Foundation, was set up to address the seasonal nature of employment on the grape farm, and secure a more regular annual income for workers.

The project started in 2015 with 20 participants learning basic sewing and needlework skills. Their first project was to produce bags to be sold to farm workers. Off season, the group now also runs a washing and repair service for workers' overalls. Most recently, they have received orders from local hotels for the embroidery of cushions and upholstery.

The women on the project are now able to top up their farm salaries and one has even used the skills she has learnt to advance to a team leader role on the farm.

<sup>10</sup>. The Grocer; 'John Lewis & Waitrose invest £100k in Colombian coffee farmer programme', 26 February 2020. Accessed 29th July 2020

<sup>11</sup>. BBC Online; 'Indian factory workers supplying major brands allege routine exploitation', Accessed 3rd March





## CASE STUDY: THE WAITROSE FOUNDATION GHANA

### KINTAMPO SCHOOL

Kintampo is a town in the Brong-Ahafo region of Ghana, with a population of around 50,000 people. The local mango farmer association of over 200 farmers is located in the northern part of Kintampo, where there is a particularly high rate of teenage pregnancy. Many young mothers drop out of school and become marginalised. Working with our partner, the Blue Skies Foundation, we provided a school for the area, encouraging more young women to return to education and improving their long term prospects.

## ENABLING ACCESS TO FINANCE

In Kenya, the Waitrose Foundation, delivered locally by Farm Africa, has been supporting a micro-loan programme, managed through a digital platform. To date, more than £400,000 has been disbursed to workers across the Foundation's farm partners in the horticultural and vegetable sector. Approximately 1700 workers have benefitted, of which 45% are women. In the majority of cases women are using the funding to support education of their children. In some cases funds are being used to develop additional income-generating projects.

“From the loan obtained, I have bought 2 bulls for fattening and farming. This has reduced labour costs on my farm as I use the bulls for ploughing, I will fetch some good cash when I decide to sell them for beef” - Beatrice



### SCHOOL FARM PROJECT

To address a growing concern in Ghana that insufficient young people are interested in going into agriculture, the Foundation launched the School Farm Competition in 2015. Schools are encouraged to compete against each other to create and manage their own school farms. Prizes are awarded to schools that best engage students in farming, and to students who demonstrate learning in food, agriculture, the environment and entrepreneurship. Since 2015 more than 7000 students have been involved in the programme. The competition encourages representation from both girls and boys, by rewarding prizes for best female and male students.

Belinda, who was awarded best female student in the 2018 competition:

“Winning means a lot to me. I did not have the basis for farming so in the beginning it was difficult, but after I got to know, it is now easy.”

Belinda has gone on to supervise other students and become a role model for her friends. Her dream is to work in food processing.

## HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AT WORK

The Partnership recognises we have a role to play in ensuring that necessary structures are in place to achieve a fairer and more equal society. As we note above, the ILO convention on Ending Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, is an important milestone towards establishing safe working environments for women. As we note above, we are proud of our contribution to creating this Convention. It was our belief that only strong commitments and clear guidance could lay the foundations for workplaces free of violence and harassment.

We are aware that, within our supply chains, there are areas where women are particularly at risk of harassment - and one such example is the strawberry fields in Spain. Every year, around 3,000 Moroccan women travel to Huelva, Southern Spain to pick berries<sup>12</sup>. There is evidence to suggest that women with children are preferred for these roles, as they will have a vested interest in returning home to their children at the end of the picking season<sup>13</sup>. Once in Spain, the women are often housed on the farms, in remote areas and therefore are completely dependent on the growers.

The Partnership believes that sustainable change is only possible if there is an understanding of why this change is needed and a willingness to take the necessary steps. During 2019, Waitrose sat on the Governance Group for the Spanish Ethical Trade Network, which consists of grower led forums working collaboratively to raise standards and address issues in the country. Through the in-person forums, growers are able to share best practice examples of how to ensure fair treatment of workers, one such example being a workshop on the development and implementation of a sexual harassment protocol and training programme for growers in the region.

It is, however, very true that these issues can be more effectively tackled by educating migrant workers about their rights and where to go if they need support. In 2019, the Spanish trade body Interfresa began a programme informing women heading to Spain of their rights before leaving Morocco. Some of the largest Waitrose suppliers introduced a similar programme in circumstances where they have greater influence on the initial recruitment process. There were approximately 3360 Moroccan women employed in farms supplying berries to us that year. Through encouraging our suppliers to engage with the programme, 65% of those women benefited from the Interfresa programme and a further 21% from supplier's own programmes. Whilst these programmes may not be completely independent, they are a huge step in the right direction and are a basis on which we can build further.



### CASE STUDY: THE WAITROSE FOUNDATION GHANA

#### NSAWAM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SUPPORT UNIT

In 2020 the Foundation renovated part of a police station in Nsawam in Ghana to provide a facility for the local Domestic Violence Support Unit (DOVSU). The facility comprises a washroom, office and rest area to provide victims with a temporary shelter, comfort, and privacy while their cases are investigated.



## HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AT WORK continued

Within the Fashion and General Merchandise side of our business, India is one of the main sourcing countries and one in which we recognise a high risk of harassment for women. Garment workers are often female migrants from small villages where there are lower levels of education and literacy rates<sup>14</sup>. The John Lewis Foundation has funded an ActionAid programme offering women training in employment law and supporting them to become group representatives. Through this programme, women who were previously the subject of much discrimination have seen their working conditions improve, and increasingly held their employers accountable.

Slightly differently, the need for infrastructure and support services was identified as being crucial for protecting female garment workers in Cambodia<sup>15</sup>. Approximately 84% of the workers in factories producing fashion for the Partnership in Cambodia are women. The John Lewis Foundation funded an ActionAid programme with female garment workers in Phnom Penh, helping women challenge violence against them, and improving local infrastructure needed to support their safety. Programme delivery included working with local government to create better street lighting and with employers to organise safe transport for late shift workers.

Outside the context of work, during the coronavirus pandemic, there has been an increase in violence against women, particularly domestic violence<sup>16</sup>. Impacts of this have been seen on farms in South Africa. To redress this the Waitrose Foundation is starting a programme of training and development for farm health workers, enabling them to recognise and support farm workers experiencing physical and psychological distress.

12. Thomas Reuters '[Shocking abuse of migrants forced to pick strawberries in Spain, U.N. says](#)', 1st July 2020, Accessed 24th July 2020

13. European Parliament, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs '[The vulnerability to exploitation of women migrant workers in agriculture in the EU: the need for a Human Rights and Gender based approach](#)', May 2018

14. Fairwear Foundation (2013) '[Standing firm against factory floor harassment](#)' Fair Wear Foundation

15. ActionAid (2015) '[Women and the City III: A summary of baseline data on women's experience of violence in seven countries](#)', ActionAid

16. UN Women (2020) '[The Shadow Pandemic](#)' Accessed 18 Feb 2020



# TARGETS AND COMMITMENTS

We are aware that there is still much to be done to secure equity for men and women in our supply chains and, as we have already noted, we cannot do this alone. We have identified clear targets for ourselves for the next couple of years, and commit to monitoring how we are progressing towards these.

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## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In 2020, we carried out an assessment of the Waitrose Foundation Southern Africa's activity over 15 years of operation. These findings are helping to inform future Foundation programme design. We have committed to improving overall monitoring and evaluation processes for global Foundation activities. The work will begin in the first quarter of 2021 and our target is to have the impact framework in operation by summer 2021.

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## TRANSPARENCY

We are committed to being more transparent with our supply chain data including publishing gender data in the future. During 2021 we will be collating baseline gender data for key fresh produce and livestock farming supply chains, and commit to reviewing our targets based on this data.



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## SPECIFIC PROGRAMME TARGETS

**South Africa** - Through our programme work with the Waitrose Foundation, focusing on education, health and wellbeing, economic empowerment, and ensuring a sustainable environment, we hope to positively impact the lives of over 27,000 people, and have a target that 55% of beneficiaries will be women.

**Colombia** - Through our quality lab and training programme for coffee farmers, in conjunction with the Fairtrade Foundation, Bewley's and Olam Speciality Coffee, our target is that 50% of those engaged will be women and youths. We will be focusing on upskilling, training and developing core skills with an ambition that farmers will see a 10% increase in yield following project completion, and production of 20MT of exceptional grade micro lots coffee (bringing higher income).



# EXAMPLES OF HOW RSCOP APPLIES TO WOMEN

Description	Examples of how these clauses affect women
Employment is freely chosen	Women and girls make up 72% of global trafficking victims, though the majority of those trafficked for exploitative labour are men and boys.
Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining	Women often face disproportionate barriers to trade union representation and are often not included in worker committees.
Safe and hygienic working conditions	Pregnant and lactating women have specific health and safety requirements to protect their child. Often factories do not have sufficient toilet facilities Accommodation is unlikely to meet the basic needs of women Workplaces usually are not designed for women
Child labour and young workers	Child labour is often caused by families being unable to meet their needs without supplementary income from children.
Living wages are paid	Wages should meet the needs of workers and their families Rates of pay should be equal for both men and women for the same role
Working hours are not excessive	Overtime hours are often sought out in order to earn additional income to support a family Pregnant or lactating women may have limits on hours worked, and when these hours can be worked (e.g. no night work in some countries)
No discrimination	Specific preferential treatment given to men workers over women can take a number of implicit and explicit forms: Access to training, promotions in the workplace, working hours that are inflexible to allow for other non-paid work that women carry out
Regular Employment	Start/finish times can affect women's ability to carry out non-paid work that they are responsible for Home working arrangements can be exploitative as women carry out the work in and around other duties but rate of pay may not adequately cover this time
No inhumane treatment	Harassment and abuse in the workplace is commonly experienced by women in factories. Women are often scared to speak up/raise grievances as they will be disproportionately impacted, not listened to or not believed

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