QuIP
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FAIRTRADE

CASE STUDY:
Using QuIP with remote data collection

- **COMMISSIONER:** Fairtrade Foundation
- **COUNTRY OF STUDY:** Côte d'Ivoire
- **INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS:** 42 respondents
- **YEAR OF STUDY:** 2021-2022
- **PROJECT:** Exploratory research into impact of Fairtrade on cocoa cooperatives

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Fairtrade Foundation work with cocoa farmers in the Côte d'Ivoire with the primary aims of increasing their income and resilience to climate change. To achieve these goals Fairtrade works with cooperatives to provide a range of interventions, such as training in new agricultural techniques.

In 2021 Fairtrade commissioned **On Our Radar** and **Bath Social & Development Research** to undertake an impact evaluation of these activities over the past two years. QuIP studies usually collect data through face-to-face semi-structured interviews but in this case feedback was collected via SMS text messaging using **FairVoice**. FairVoice is a qualitative data collection tool designed and developed by Fairtrade in partnership with On Our Radar. On Our Radar are a specialist group of journalists, technologists, digital storytellers and development practitioners who work with reporter networks and technology to tell people's stories and boost connectivity.

Participants are trained to go into their community and gather stories, alongside their own, and then share these reports via text messages and audio clips.

WHY USE QuIP?

Bath SDR was contracted to support Fairtrade and On Our Radar to use the QuIP approach to data analysis to evaluate stories collected about the impact of Fairtrade cooperatives on cocoa farmers in Côte d'Ivoire. Fairtrade wanted an accurate portrayal of everything that was affecting farmers within these cooperatives to help inform organisation and program decisions. By asking farmers about any changes in their lives, rather than focusing directly on the project, QuIP was able to frame Fairtrade's interventions in the wider context of factors such as climate change and market forces. The study confirmed that climate change was driving negative change for many farmers, reinforcing Fairtrade's decision to focus on climate adaptation training.

APPROACH

Over four months **42** respondents were sent a series of questions related to the domains of interest and encouraged to share their insights and experiences. These respondents also acted as reporters by reaching out to their communities to collect their stories and share these through the FairVoice dashboard system. Farmers' stories were submitted via mobile telephone, in the form of written answers, videos or audio files. These reports were sent to a toll-free number and were pulled into a content dashboard which could receive, manage and send messages. A trained dashboard manager then responded to participants with any clarifying or follow-up questions. For each successful week of reporting, reporters received a credit top-up on their mobile phone to cover their costs. All personal information was anonymous and confidential and dashboard managers monitored for any safeguarding risks during the process.

The same principles as with a traditional face-to-face QuIP study for the questionnaire design. Individuals were asked a series of open-ended, non-project specific questions about any changes in their lives and livelihoods over the last two years, covering the four key domains relevant to Fairtrade's theory of change:

- Improving cocoa incomes
- Environmental protection
- Diversification of income
- Fairtrade cooperatives

The study was promoted through existing Fairtrade committees, posters and key staff members, and farmers nominated themselves to take part. The sample was split by the cooperative that farmers belonged to. The respondents' age and gender were also noted to aid comparison of the stories between these groups.

TABLE 1: CASE SELECTION FOR RESPONDENTS

|	Copaza cooperative		Cobadi cooperative		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Adult	5*	0	9*	1*	15
Youth	9	4*	11	0	24
N/A	0	0	3	0	3
Total	14	4	23	1	42

> * These groups had one mentor in the sample. Mentors are self-selected workers on the farm who work to help motivate other respondents as they send reports from their community and troubleshoot any issues.

Face-to-face QuIP interviews typically last 60-90 mins, a significant time commitment, whereas FairVoice allows participants to respond in their own time and preferred medium. The remote data collection method was less demanding for beneficiaries and allowed respondents to reply in their own words. Participants were invited to ask interview questions to others in their community, this snowball effect encouraged people who may not have normally taken part in research to share their experiences. However, individuals were not always as responsive as in a face-to-face interview; some questions were ignored by participants and many replies lacked detail.

Dashboard managers weren't always able to ask all the necessary questions to get the quality of data usually collected in face to face interviews. This meant coding the data was challenging as the detail needed to create causal chains was sometimes missing. For example, statements about income diversification often omitted the drivers and outcomes of new business and instead described the business itself. We used 'plain coding' in such cases as it allowed the analyst to capture important information, but it was not a substitute for in-depth causal stories. A follow-up sense-making workshop with reporters from one cooperative allowed for an opportunity to add to the data collected and fill some of the gaps.

HOW TO READ CAUSAL MAPS

- Maps are designed to be read from left to right.
- The direction of the arrowhead on each link reflects the direction of causation.
- Above each link there is a number which represents the number of participants who made that causal claim - out of a total of 42 in this case.
- Maps have been filtered and simplified to focus on the most frequent links.
- Orange links represent a negative/inverse effect, e.g. insufficient rainfall led to less yield and to more plant diseases.
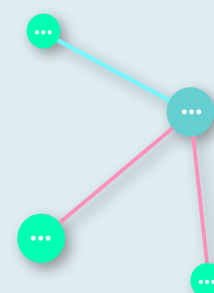
FINDINGS

Overall, climate change was the main reported driver of negative changes, including reduced crop yields. Initiatives linked to the Fairtrade cooperatives were the primary driver of positive change, including increased yield and income, and general (sometimes unspecified) improvements in their lives and livelihoods. The map below shows the overview of change, showing links cited by 4 cite or more different farmers.

FIGURE 1: OVERVIEW CAUSAL MAP
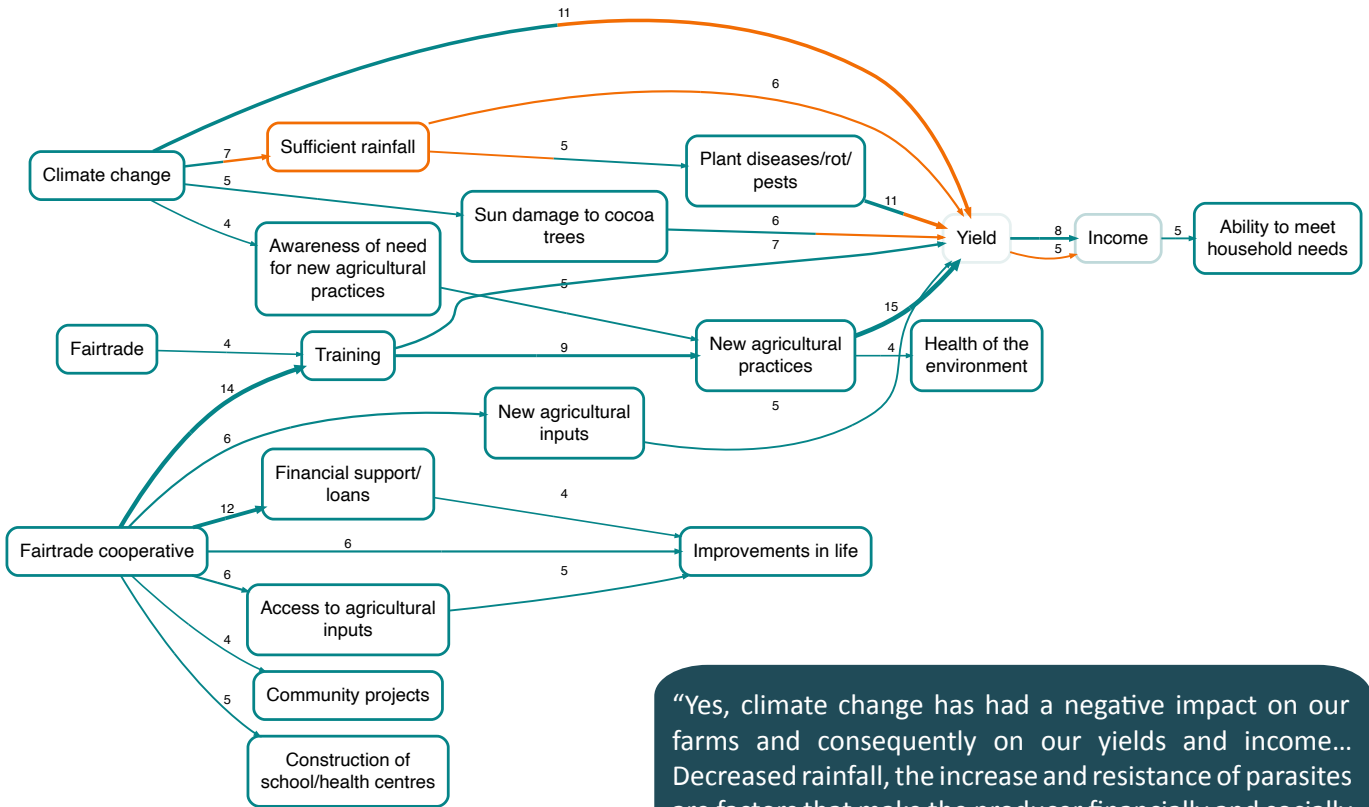
"Yes, climate change has had a negative impact on our farms and consequently on our yields and income... Decreased rainfall, the increase and resistance of parasites are factors that make the producer financially and socially vulnerable. Therefore, climate change makes us adopt resilient behaviours for a climate-smart agriculture."

IMPACT OF FAIRTRADE
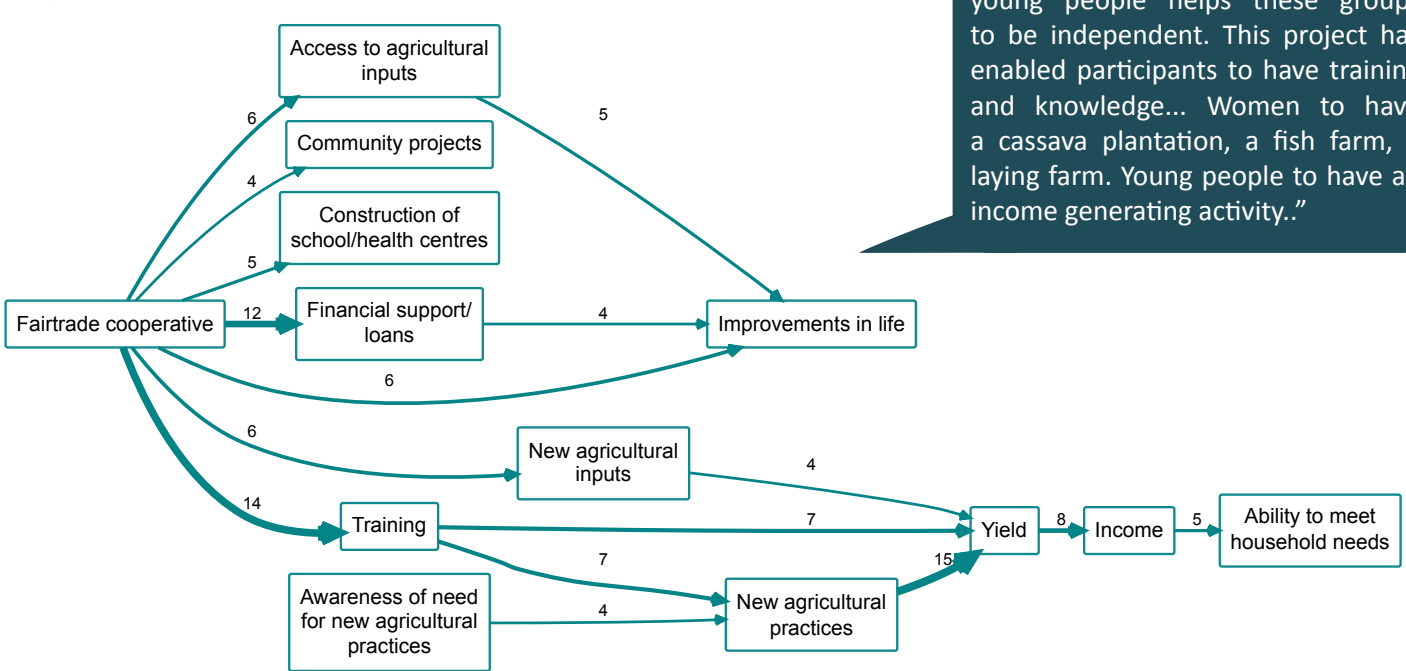
"Transform B for women and young people helps these groups to be independent. This project has enabled participants to have training and knowledge... Women to have a cassava plantation, a fish farm, a laying farm. Young people to have an income generating activity."

Improving cocoa outcomes

Cocoa production increased for the majority of respondents. The two main and opposing drivers of change are climate change and new agricultural practices, facilitated by training and new agricultural inputs. Climate change is creating challenges for farmers through unpredictable weather, poor rainfall and an increase in pests and diseases. This is decreasing cocoa crop yield, however new agricultural practices are allowing more efficient and effective growth of cocoa. This increase in crop yield can be, in part, attributed to trainings and access to agricultural inputs facilitated by Fairtrade cooperatives.

Despite an increase in cocoa yield, income from cocoa production has reportedly decreased. Income has been affected by factors such as the high costs of agricultural inputs which has made it harder for farmers to meet their basic needs.

Environmental protection

Overall, respondents saw the health of their local environment decreasing due to climate change and deforestation - exacerbated through poor agricultural practices. However, new agricultural practices were being adopted which discouraged the clearing of trees for farmland and encouraged the planting of shade trees to protect cocoa plants. These new practices were promoted through training, often facilitated by the Fairtrade cooperatives, and gave some respondents hope that the health of their local environment would improve in the future.

Diversification of incomes

In the final round of questions respondents were asked explicitly about Fairtrade's Transform B intervention which aims to increase and diversify income through supporting the establishment of new farms or businesses such as laying farms or attiéké businesses. A few respondents reported that they or members in their community had benefitted from this project and a reduced reliance on cocoa production income.

There were some reports of crop diversification which was seen as a positive change by the majority of respondents as it resulted in increased income and reduced dependence on income from cocoa production. There was no single clear driver of crop diversification, a range of factors were mentioned in relation to the decision to plant different crops.

Strong supportive cooperatives

The majority of respondents reported that the way the Fairtrade cooperative worked had improved over the last two years and they spoke positively about the services they had received. These services included financial support, support for community projects and agricultural training and inputs. Agricultural training and access to inputs were major positive drivers of change.

USE OF FINDINGS

The preliminary findings were presented to the reporters from Cobadi cooperative in July 2022 in a sense-making workshop. The reporters were then encouraged to reflect and expand on these findings to provide more in-depth insights. The findings highlighted the significance that farmers place on training, particularly focussing on agricultural practices, financial management and climate adaptation. The rising costs of living and cost of inputs as a negative driver on progress towards improvements in income is also a significant factor to consider, and existing projects that aim to provide lower cost fertiliser could play an important role here.

This project provided valuable learning for all organisations involved and encouraged Bath SDR to reflect on our practices, in particular the importance of accurate translation and the use of follow-up questions to ensure as many causal connections as possible are captured. For more on this experience, including a comprehensive table comparing the main features of QuIP and Fairvoice and how they were combined for this project, please see a blog published at bathsdr.org/quip-and-fairvoice/

Bath SDR