

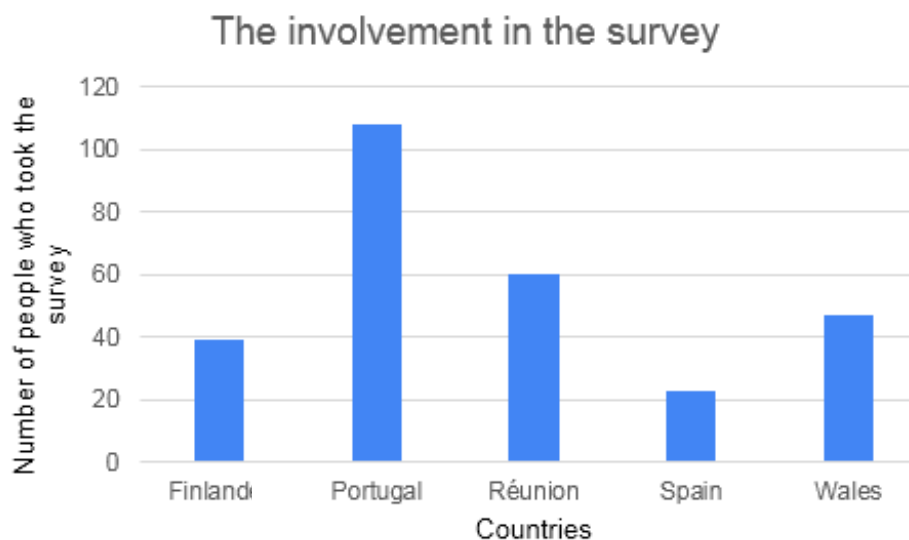
Purchase fair-trade products

The context

Students from Finland, Portugal, Réunion, Spain, and Wales participated in a survey about their habits. We answered questions focusing on how often we did several actions to limit our threatening impact on the environment. The students had to choose between three proposals : not in use, in use, and regular use. The questions of the survey deal with aspects of the 17 SDGs established by the UN on 25th September 2015 :

- fight inequalities and injustices
- end extreme poverty
- tackle climate change.

The results were gathered to understand to what extent our behaviors consider these issues.



As we can see on this bar graph depicting the involvement of the survey, the students from Portugal and our country participated the most. While more than a hundred students answered in Portugal and 60 students answered in Réunion, around 20 students participated in Spain.

Why are these questions important ?

When global warming has become a contemporary issue, it's important to question our habits. According to scientists, the temperature may rise by 7 degrees Celsius by 2100 if we don't change the way we consume and our habits. The questions of the survey are crucial because setting what they promote up will **enable to achieve the SDGs and to limit the harmful consequences of global warming.**

A solution is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by eating less meat, not using our car, buying local products... In 2018 the production of electricity caused a release of 39 million tons of carbon. As a matter of fact, greenhouse gases like CO₂, CH₄, and H₂O absorb a part of infra-red light produced by the earth, a warm body. Then they re-radiate this part towards the surface increasing the temperature.

Plastic is a threat for the ecosystems that are already threatened by a rise in the pH of the oceans too.

Protecting forests permits photosynthesis, therefore the greenhouse effect is reduced. Sunlight enables plants to produce glucose molecules and other sugars from H₂O and CO₂ while oxygen is released.

As for purchasing fair-trade products such as bananas, cocoa, coffee, and cotton, it is an ethical solution since it's an environmentally friendly way to produce by reducing both the waste of energy and water and the use of pesticides. Besides the products are free from genetically engineered ingredients. Fairtrade, based on sustainability, maintains soils and tends to protect forests as much as possible. It contributes to climate action (13)*.

Another important issue is to improve the well-being of every human by managing food and water supplies (1)*. Fairtrade enables to set better prices for local farmers and those coming from the developing countries (8)*. Indeed, producers involved in fairtrade earn 40% more on average. In 2018 producers earned 166, 2 million pounds thanks to Fairtrade premium.

It ensures traceability and transparency in global supply chains (12)*. In other words, the main goal is to raise awareness of the working conditions so that consumers know where their purchases come from and how they were made. Farmers are therefore protected from competition with agricultural lobbies for their products are of better quality (10)*.

Fairtrade also promotes partnership between farmers and those using their crops and avoids child labor (8)*.

Moreover, the employees benefit from decent working conditions (8)* and food security as well as the most vulnerable people (1 ; 2)*. Not to mention the good impacts on the communities !

It guarantees fewer injustices. It doesn't only give access to standard, environmental and social improvements but also to better economic conditions. Thanks to higher productivity, the whole economy is enhanced (8)*.

What's more purchasing fair-trade products links poor and rich countries : one of the major aspects of the SDGs.

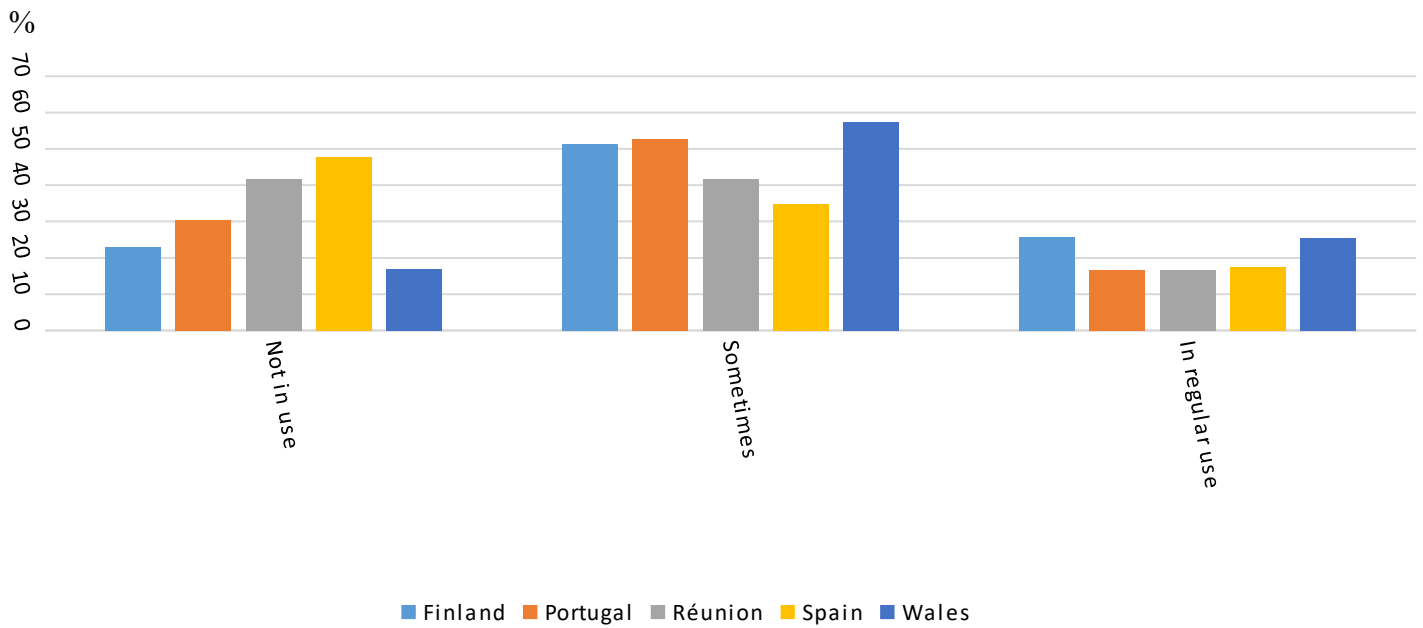
*(Here are the SDGs whose numbers are mentioned above :

- 1) no poverty
- 2) zero hunger
- 3) good health and well-being
- 8) decent work and economic growth
- 10) reduce inequalities
- 12) responsible production and consumption
- 13) climate action.)

The importance of fairtrade has changed. Nowadays more than 1.7 million farmers and workers are involved in fair-trade certified producer organizations. While in 2003 people spent around 3 euros to buy fair-trade products, in 2018 this amount of money was 6 times higher.

What's the place of fairtrade in student's daily life ?

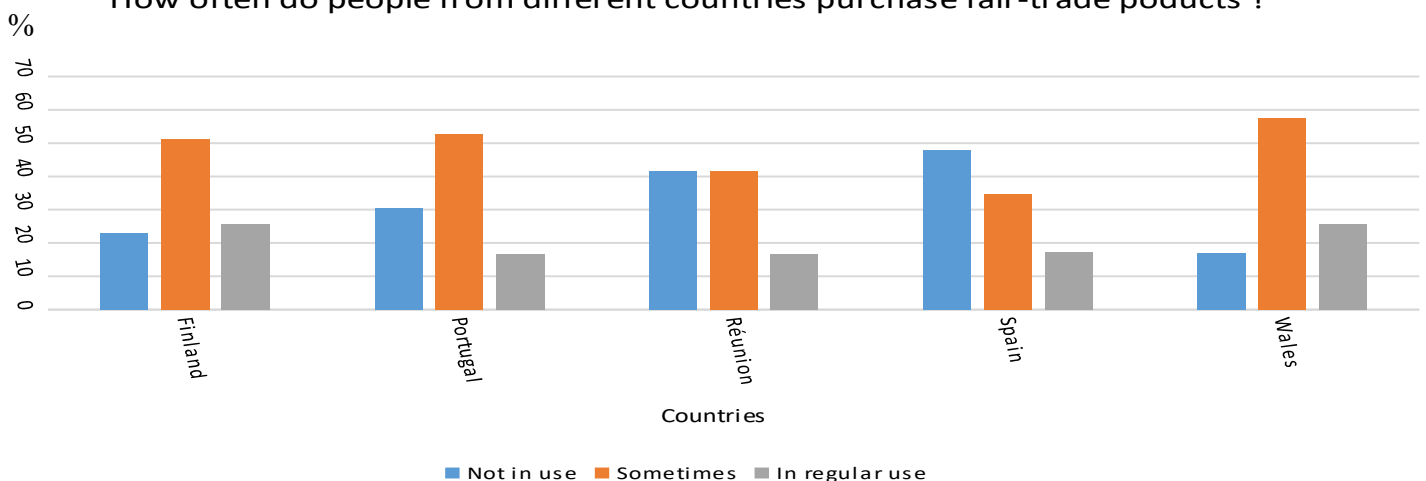
How often do people from different countries purchase fair-trade products ?



When comparing the frequency at which students or their families buy fair-trade products, we can notice that they mostly sometimes do it no matter the country. They tend not to promote fairtrade regularly.

Contrary to the students from Spain and Réunion who don't purchase these types of products much, this habit matters to those from the other countries studied. Indeed, 40% to 60% of Finnish and Welsh students do it sometimes. Around 25% of them buy fair-trade products on a regular basis.

How often do people from different countries purchase fair-trade products ?



As for the frequency compared within the countries, we can see that in Wales, Portugal and Finland, 50% of the students or more regularly purchase fair-trade products whereas in Reunion and Spain approximately 40% and 50% of them are not used to doing at all. To conclude Wales' students seem to be the most concerned by the necessity to change the way we consume for the amount of “sometimes” and “in regular use” is the most important.

Why are these results so different ?

The students living in countries where governments raise awareness and a lot of parents teach the respect of the environment such as Wales and Finland tend to be more careful to the certification guaranteeing the authenticity of fair-trade products. As a matter of fact, the UK was one of the first countries to set FLO (Fairtrade Labelling Organizations) up back in 1994. The Welsh government was the first nation to take sustainable development into consideration and to promote it as a way for a country to thrive. Besides Wales is involved in the creation of a social, environmental, and economic prosperity fairtrade is based on. Jeff Cuthbert, Minister for Communities and Tackling Poverty, said “We need to create sustainable, quality jobs and get the right economic growth to lift people out of poverty. We need people to be healthy, to achieve their potential and to make Wales a more equal society.” In 2016, the government collected citizens' views on how to reach this prosperity showing that it tries to sensitize its inhabitants. Then it passed the Well-being of Future Generations Act, based on the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. It created a Future Generations Commissioner for Wales to involve young people and protect them. The United Nations even declared “We hope that what Wales is doing today the world will do tomorrow”.

As for Finland, the “slow food” movement based on wild, natural, and locally-produced foods is at the heart of the Finnish lifestyle. Simplicity and authenticity are part of the Finnish culture. In 2018, the first “100% sustainable” Fashion week even occurred in Helsinki proving that Finn's relationship with the environment is special. On the website of the country, it's even written : “Finns understand the important relationship between plate, people and planet, and are the third largest consumers of fair-trade products in the world.” The answers the students gave reflect a general trend. What Finns are used to consuming also involve them in fairtrade. Actually, Finns consume more coffee per capita than any other nation in the world.

Another factor influencing our consumption of fair-trade products is the knowledge we have of it. According to EFTA, 86% of British consumers know fairtrade and its assets. From October 18th to October 20th, 2019, the "International Conference of Fair Trade Towns" even took place in Cardiff. By living in an ancient agriculture-dominated country, Finns relate to farmers and are more confident in the way fairtrade improves their life.

On the contrary, Reunionese prefer buying local products rather than fair-trade products which are usually less promoted and more expensive. (It's essential to bear in mind that the Reunionese purchasing power is quite low compared to the one of the mainland's inhabitants. Here the prices are 7.1 % higher than in the mainland.) This trend might be explained by the creation of other certifications promoting local farmers and producers such as Nou La Fé. Reunion Island relies a lot on importations too. As a consequence, it might be hard to recognize fair-trade products. Nevertheless, fairtrade has become a little more accessible. Restaurants or supermarkets like “L'hôtel Concorde” in Saint-Pierre and “Vindémia” sometimes propose fair-trade goods.

Spanish spend on average 35 cents per year on fairtrade which appeared in their country and Portugal in the 1980s. So it's less developed than in other European countries. Only a few NGOs highlight the assets of this process such as Oxfam Intermón or Fundación Vicente Ferrer. Fair-trade products' buyers in Spain are mostly restaurants. They represent 38% of the consumption while supermarkets' share is 35%. The fair-trade products mainly consumed come from food industries : coffee (45%), sugar (27,4%)... There, 78 firms are involved in fairtrade. The distribution of the shops selling this type of product is unequal. They mainly gathered in Madrid, Barcelona, Catalonia, or Balearic and towns of 100 000 to 500 000 inhabitants.

In a nutshell, the results of this survey reveal that the country in which we live and the importance its inhabitants give to the environment influence the choices we, students, future citizens, make.

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