

ADAPTING CASHEW COOPERATIVES TO FAIR TRADE PRINCIPLES

ADEQUAÇÃO DAS COOPERATIVAS DE CAJU AOS PRINCÍPIOS DE
COMÉRCIO JUSTOADAPTACIÓN DE LAS COOPERATIVAS DE ANACARDO A LOS PRINCIPIOS
DEL COMERCIO JUSTO<https://doi.org/10.56238/edimpecto2025.080-011>Francisco Francirlar Nunes Bezerra¹**ABSTRACT**

Cashew cooperatives, when trading in the international market, seek to change their management oriented towards obtaining Fairtrade Labeling Organization International (FLO) certification. Therefore, the general objective is to analyze the adequacy of the cooperatives of the Central de Cooperativas de Cajucultores do Estado do Piauí - COCAJUPI in the almond production segment to the principles of fair trade that propagates social, economic and environmental benefits. The study methodology used field research, applying forms and unsystematic non-participatory observation, with reference to the principles of fair trade endorsed by FLO; and, secondary sources related to the theme. The research universe consisted of cooperatives linked to COCAJUPI, in which presidents-directors were interviewed in four cities. The results show that cooperatives, when adapting their production process to FLO principles, achieved greater financial gains by valuing their product, in addition to social improvements in compliance with labor standards in mini-factories, although the internal environment of cooperatives did not generate total comfort to employees. In the environmental scope, the effects were timid, related to end-of-pipe techniques, such as rationalization of inputs, highlighting that there was still no eco-awareness of managers. It was concluded that the cooperatives affiliated with COCAJUPI adapted their production process and obtained the Fair Trade seal, generating economic and social advantages. However, the need to maintain a continuous learning process is paramount, in order to sustain, efficiently, the fulfillment of these requirements in the mini-factories.

Keywords: Agriculture. Cashew Culture. Certification. Business. Sustainability.

RESUMO

As cooperativas de caju, ao negociarem no mercado internacional, buscam mudar suas gestões. Assim, objetiva analisar a adequação das cooperativas da Central de Cooperativas de Cajucultores do Estado do Piauí - COCAJUPI no segmento de produção de amêndoas aos princípios do Comércio Justo que propaga benefícios sociais, econômicos e ambientais para a obtenção da certificação *Fairtrade Labeling Organization International* (FLO).. O

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método utilizou pesquisa de campo, observação assistemática não participativa e aplicação de formulários aos presidentes-diretores, tendo como referência os princípios do comércio justo estabelecidos pela FLO. O universo da pesquisa consistiu nas cooperativas ligadas à COCAJUPI sediadas em quatro cidades, Francisco Santos, Ipiranga, Monsenhor Hipólito e Pio IX localizadas no semiárido piauiense. Os resultados demonstram que as cooperativas ao adaptaram seu processo de produção aos princípios da FLO, alcançaram maiores ganhos financeiros pela valorização de seu produto, além de melhorias sociais no cumprimento de normas trabalhistas nas minifábricas, embora o ambiente interno das cooperativas não gerasse total conforto aos funcionários. Em âmbito ambiental, os efeitos estão relacionados às técnicas de fim-de-tubo, como racionalização de insumos, destacando-se que ainda não houve conscientização dos gestores sobre os aspectos de preservação dos recursos naturais. Concluiu-se que as cooperativas afiliadas à COCAJUPI adaptaram o seu processo produtivo e obtiveram o selo *Fair Trade*, gerando vantagens ambientais, econômicas e sociais. Contudo, ressalta-se a necessidade de manter um processo de aprendizado contínuo, a fim de sustentar, de forma eficiente, o atendimento desses requisitos nas minifábricas.

Palavras-chave: Agricultura. Cajucultura. Certificação. Comércio. Sustentabilidade.

RESUMEN

Las cooperativas de anacardo, al negociar en el mercado internacional, buscan cambiar sus prácticas de gestión. Por lo tanto, este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar la adecuación de las cooperativas de la Cooperativa Central de Productores de Anacardo del Estado de Piauí - COCAJUPI, en el segmento de producción de almendras, a los principios del Comercio Justo, que promueve beneficios sociales, económicos y ambientales para la obtención de la certificación Fairtrade Labeling Organization International (FLO). El método utilizó investigación de campo, observación no participativa no sistemática y la aplicación de cuestionarios a los presidentes/directores, utilizando los principios de Comercio Justo establecidos por FLO como referencia. El universo de la investigación consistió en cooperativas vinculadas a COCAJUPI ubicadas en cuatro ciudades: Francisco Santos, Ipiranga, Monsenhor Hipólito y Pio IX, situadas en la región semiárida de Piauí. Los resultados demuestran que las cooperativas, al adaptar su proceso de producción a los principios del Comercio Justo, lograron mayores ganancias financieras gracias al aumento del valor de su producto, así como mejoras sociales en el cumplimiento de las normas laborales en las minifábricas. Sin embargo, el ambiente interno de las cooperativas no generó un bienestar total para los empleados. En términos ambientales, los efectos se relacionan con las técnicas de final de tubería, como la racionalización de insumos, lo que destaca la falta de concienciación entre los directivos sobre la conservación de los recursos naturales. Se concluyó que las cooperativas afiliadas a COCAJUPI adaptaron su proceso de producción y obtuvieron el sello de Comercio Justo, generando ventajas ambientales, económicas y sociales. Sin embargo, se enfatiza la necesidad de mantener un proceso de aprendizaje continuo para mantener eficientemente el cumplimiento de estos requisitos en las minifábricas.

Palabras clave: Agricultura. Cultivo de Anacardo. Certificación. Comercio. Sostenibilidad.



1 INTRODUCTION

The unequal relationship between organizations located in the northern hemisphere and the producers of the less competitive nations of the southern hemisphere of the planet, gave rise to the proposal of Fair Trade (used as a synonym in this article) as an alternative to overcome obstacles imposed by the traditional market, mainly provided by the entry of large multinational companies, generating differences in earnings for negotiators who lived in different parts of the world.

Thus, Fair Trade emerges as an alternative to overcome obstacles imposed by the traditional market. According to Alvarez (2018), the first formal Fair Trade store that sold these and other products was opened in 1958 in the American nation. And during the First United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (1964), there was a clear demand for economically less developed countries, under the slogan "trade, not help", the idea that would justify the Fair Trade movement at the international level.

The practice of Fair Trade has its actions consolidated with greater vigor, only from the year 2001 in Brazil. For Bossle et al (2017), since then, this form of commercialization has not been limited to the exports of goods to developed countries, but those active in this practice have also developed new forms of marketing, internally, in that country.

In Piauí, with Ordinary Law No. 6,057 of 01/17/2011, there was an impulse for this segment of the market to emerge in this federation unit. As of 2012, two cooperatives, producers of honey and nuts, managed, with the help of the Brazilian Micro and Small Business Support Service – SEBRAE, which offered advice and training, to obtain a FLOCERT Fair Trade certification that allowed them to export to the European market.

Fair Trade certification is a labeling system, managed by the Fairtrade Labeling Organization International, responsible for auditing products throughout the supply chain, from the producer, the trader to the final product, conferring good commercial, social and environmental practices (FLOCERT, 2019a).

In this perspective, cashew cooperatives (*Anacardium occidentale* L.), located in the Brazilian Northeast and, in particular, in the semi-arid region of Piauí, when seeking to increase their sales in order to increase their revenues and the generation of jobs, found in the international market a viable alternative to achieve these objectives from the 2010s, among the opportunities that arose they had to obtain a Fair Trade certification and bring their production process closer to standards required by this type of negotiation (SUPERINTENDENCE OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STUDIES – CEPRO, 2019).

It is noteworthy that the Central of Cashew Growers Cooperatives of the State of Piauí - COCAJUPI paid attention to this market reality only in the early years of the 2010s, achieving



its first seal of the Fair Trade Certification - FLOCERT in 2012 (FLOCERT, 2019a). In this way, this rural organization aimed at a management in order to remain in Fair Trade. The training and improvement of actions in the eagerness to comply with the Fair Trade principles aimed to support the achievement of the FLOCERT Certification during the following applications to be maintained for labeling.

According to the FLORCER certification (2019a), in the period of March 25, 2019, the Central of Cashew Growers Cooperatives of the State of Piauí – COCAJUPI and the Chico Mendes Cooperative, located in the city of Modena in Italy, commit to a commercial agreement for the departure of cashew nuts to this nation, generating annual revenue of more than R\$ 100,000.00 to producers. Since then, this enterprise has been negotiating linked to compliance with the principles of Fair Trade with a contract that runs until March 25, 2023.), and the Chico Mendes Cooperative is responsible for receiving the cashew almonds, upon payment and distributing it in the European market.

And so, in this context, the role of cooperatives also arises that seek to increase their income in order to provide economic and social benefits, through forms of commercialization in which foreign trade becomes a viable possibility, finding in Fair Trade new ways of acting in this segment.

There is a consensus on the essentiality of cooperativism as an element that contributes to socioeconomic development, notably due to the characteristic of distribution of results among its participants. In this sense, Santos (2017) highlights the importance of the cooperative movement for the world, being accepted and worshipped by all forms of government and political systems.

According to Pizzolatti (2016), the first cooperative emerged in the neighborhood of Rochdale, in Manchester – England, where 27 weavers and a weaver, seeking an economic alternative to operate in the market, in the face of capitalism that subjected them to abusive prices, exploitation of the working hours of women and children who worked up to 16 hours and the growing unemployment arising from the Industrial Revolution, founded the Society of Problos Pioneers of Rochdale, on December 21, 1844.

For the aforementioned author, the principles of the cooperative movement were ratified in 1985, giving rise to the creation of the International Cooperative Alliance - ICA, serving as a reference to the present day. And so, with a new Congress of this organization, held ten years later, the guidelines in lines of cooperative actions underwent adjustments and reformulations, resulting in the following principles: free and voluntary adhesion; democratic management and control of members; economic participation of the partner; autonomy and



independence; education, training and information; cooperation between cooperatives; interest and concern for the community.

The cashew growers' cooperatives located in the semi-arid region of Piauí can be an axiomatic example of the search to overcome trade barriers to the extent that they aim at the insertion of their products in the international sphere. Promptly, in accordance with Pádua (2012), it was detected that the process of obtaining Fair Trade certification in Piauí cooperatives, particularly in cashew farming, had several segments, with the support of the government, training from SEBRAE and monitoring and inspection of the European certifier Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International - FLO or Fairtrade International - FLORCER in 2012. Thus, the exported nuts must be improved in the drying process, cleaned and sold only the almonds.

In this sense, in addition to distribution obstacles such as logistics costs, gains for indirect distributors, competition is another obstacle that presents itself in the negotiation of cooperatives, showing a scenario that goes against solidary, stable and long-term production practices, based on dialogue and respect between producers, buyers and consumers.

Stelzer and Granemann (2019) point out that production and marketing with an ecological concern are encouraged in which there is an economy of resources such as water, energy and raw materials. Actions that negatively impact the environment are rejected, such as the disposal of untreated waste in nature, as well as investment in training on production methods less aggressive to the planet and recycling should always be focused on by those who want to receive the Fair Trade certification.

Therefore, Fair Trade has shown itself to be an alternative path in the commercialization of products from the primary sector, proposing dignity and better living conditions for small producers, since they encourage, through cooperation, changes in the practices of transaction of goods called, a priori, traditional, favoring those who are penalized for not being able to work in equal conditions. Thus, it is observed that these cooperatives, when seeking to insert themselves in this alternative form of negotiation, aim at better benefits, thus enabling financial results and, consequently, decent living conditions for their participants.

From this perspective, international non-profit organizations (NGOs) have emerged in order to discipline alternative ways of negotiation through guiding principles. Thus, two main OGN's can be considered: International Federation of Alternative Trade - IFAT and Fairtrade Labeling Organization International - FLO.

This article works with the conception of the Fairtrade Labeling Organization International – FLO (2019a) which emphasizes that Fairtrade changes the way negotiations



work through better prices, decent working conditions and a fairer agreement for marginalized farmers and workers in a competitive market.

According to the same Institution, the fair price is an important category in Fair Trade, requiring that it must be agreed between the actors in a dialogued, responsible and participatory manner, which covers the costs of production, allowing a decent remuneration of the work and can provide conditions for organizations to sustain themselves in the market, in addition to paying a social premium (for community investments) and pre-financing (minimum 50% of the value of the final order) to guarantee the survival of the business.

Thus, this article has as its general objective, to analyze the adequacy of COCAJUPI cooperatives in the segment of nut production (almonds) to the principles of Fair Trade, which propagates social, economic and environmental benefits in the semi-arid region of Piauí.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In line with Pyk and Hatab (2018), Fair Trade is an alternative trade approach that aims to provide better trading conditions for marginalized producers and workers in developing countries, particularly by offering smallholder farmers fairer prices, access to pre-financing, protection against price fluctuations, and premiums that enable them to adopt sustainable agricultural production techniques.

For Lisbon (2018), in the early post-World War II period, Fair Trade was a charitable, charitable and political initiative that, based on the trade of products from the southern hemisphere with the northern hemisphere of the planet, sought more equitable bases, in order to alleviate the situation of Southern countries (in general, former European colonies).

Álvares (2018) states that Fair Trade was born as an alternative to compensate and fight against social and economic inequalities caused by the liberal market model that conditioned global trade practices. From the beginning, Fair Trade has aimed to reduce the presence of intermediaries in order to improve the financial conditions of small producers, especially the prices of traded goods.

In short, according to Cezar and Rosa (2021), Fair Trade brings more social and environmental benefits to cooperatives than economic benefits. Considering that the minimum price is a guarantee for producers, in which this mechanism can hold back the euphoria and desperation of selling production at all costs.

For WFTO (2020), Fair Trade is defined as a commercial partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, in which it seeks greater equity in commercial transactions, contributing to better trading conditions and guaranteeing the rights of marginalized workers and producers. The principles that underpin the WFTO are based on



the ideas of the Conventions of the International Labor Organization (ILO), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the Covenant on Economic Rights of Agenda 21 during Rio-92 and the principles and values of Cooperativism. Likewise, the assumptions of Fair Trade endorsed by the FLO (2019b) are also based on these guidelines, which briefly are: 1. Create opportunities for economically and socially disadvantaged small producers, democratically organized; 2. Establish and maintain solidary, stable and long-term business relations, based on dialogue and respect between producers, buyers and consumers. All commercial actors involved must respect the principles of democracy, transparency and accountability; 3. To pay a fair price (agreed between the actors in a dialogued, responsible and participatory manner, which covers the costs of production, a dignified remuneration for the work and can be supported by the market) to the producer organizations and the producers; a social prime (for community investments) and pre-financing (minimum 50% of the value of the final order) to ensure the sustainability of the business; 4. At the center of the economic relationship are human beings, not the maximization of profits; 5. The rejection of child exploitation and forced labor; 6. Non-discrimination on the basis of race, class, nationality, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, union membership, political affiliation, HIV/AIDS carrier, age or any other nature; 7. Ensure freedom of association and a safe and healthy working environment for employees and/or members, as well as decent working conditions. Dignify work; 8. To foster the development of capacities and skills, especially of the most disadvantaged and most vulnerable: young people, women, the elderly, the disabled, among other marginalized groups; 9. The actors involved in Fair Trade relationships also actively promote the principles and values of Fair Trade both at local, continental and international levels; and, 10. Practice and defend environmental sustainability at all levels of the commercial chain.

According to this organization, the principles for Fair Trade certification are also designed to support the sustainable development of organizations of small producers and workers in developing and less developed countries, especially those whose main income-generating activity is agriculture.

Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO) defines itself as an international Fairtrade organization whose objective is to improve the living conditions of smallholder farmers and agricultural workers by offering them a fairer form of trade. (FLO, 2020).

Gaiger (2017) emphasizes that the expansion of Fair Trade in Brazil is related to the desire to strengthen the solidarity economy, apprehended as an alternative concept to capitalism and with values of solidarity, cooperation and equality.



For Alvarenga and Arraes (2020), several institutions encourage the promotion and continuity of Fair Trade, such as: Non-governmental organizations – NGOs, government entities and private organizations with their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies, however, in Brazil, the movement in favor of ethical consumption is still in the process of formation.

In relation to the Brazilian Northeast, there are still few initiatives in favor of a more free and beneficial commercial space for people and organizations. For Fortes (2009), the growing global demand for ethical consumer products, that is, those that add value and socio-environmental responsibility, provide insertion in specific niche markets, such as emblematic cases such as the honey cooperative in the municipality of Simplício Mendes – Piauí and the coconut breakers in the middle Mearim region in Lago do Junco in Maranhão. It is also noteworthy that these cases were encouraged by non-governmental organizations and had little support from State policies.

According to Fortes (2009), only after the creation of the production base and the implementation of the Honey with Quality project in 2001, a partnership with SEBRAE and the Federal University of Piauí – UFPI to adapt the honey chain of Simplício Mendes to the quality standards of the international market, the community organization could be perceived by new customers. As a result, the Italian Fair Trade company Libero Monde enabled the first direct export of the Association of Beekeepers of the State of Piauí - AAPI with the purchase of 16 tons of honey.

In reference to the same author, it is highlighted that Fair Trade for this production model was the tool that enabled the insertion of the Cooperative's products in the international market. Certainly, the certification obtained by this honey cooperative, in 2019, with its distribution headquarters in Picos – Piauí (Central de Cooperativas Apícolas do Semiárido Brasileiro – CASA APIS) opened space for the Italian market, given that it is necessary to adapt to a new way of producing, where the pillars of sustainable development are increasingly in focus. It points out that COCAJUPI paid attention to this market reality only in the early years of the 2010s, obtaining its first FLOCERT seal in 2012 (FLOCERT, 2019a).

That said, in an urgent demand for satisfactory development from Fair Trade, small farmers find other ways to stay in this increasingly competitive scenario. Among them are the associativism and cooperativism movements, which emerge as a strategy found to overcome the productive and commercial barriers that are presented in the market.

According to Pizzolatti (2016), the first cooperative emerged in the neighborhood of Rochdale, in Manchester – England, where 27 weavers and a weaver, seeking an economic alternative to operate in the market, in the face of capitalism that subjected them to abusive



prices, exploitation of the working hours of women and children who worked up to 16 hours and the growing unemployment arising from the Industrial Revolution, founded the Society of Problos Pioneers of Rochdale, on December 21, 1844.

For the aforementioned author, the principles of the cooperative movement were ratified in 1985, giving rise to the creation of the ACI, serving as a reference to the present day. And so, with a new Congress of this organization, held ten years later, the guidelines in lines of cooperative actions underwent adjustments and reformulations, resulting in: free and voluntary adhesion; democratic management and control of members; economic participation of the partner; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation between cooperatives; interest and concern for the community.

Thus, the essentiality of cooperativism as an element that contributes to socioeconomic development is consensual, notably due to the characteristic of distribution of results among its participants.

The importance of cooperativism is notorious that for Ramos and Pedroso (2022), when addressing the rural theme, a large part of the scientific works report the importance of this movement for the increase of agricultural production, the structuring of Brazilian cooperativism and, recently, about the new structural forms of this form of organization (creation of S/A companies to gain competitiveness, IPO).

It is noteworthy that this expansion is not always linked to benefits generated to all components of the groups participating in this type of organization, still requiring some scientific studies to evaluate the real circumstances of the results, not only economic, but also social.

Cooperativism in the semi-arid region of Piauí, in particular, began in Picos and then moved to micro-regions around this city imposed from top to bottom, that is, from a project designed from the institutions of the dominant and ruling social classes and not from the initiative of the workers to unite around a collective proposal to improve their living conditions as proposed by the principles of cooperativism (Rios, 2007). Thus, cooperativism in this municipality began in the late 1960s, with the inauguration of the Agricultural Cooperative of Sussuapara (COMASUL), founded on April 24, 1969, considered one of the most important and in operation today. In the 1980s, the first honey cooperative was created in this region, called the Beekeeping Cooperative of the Picos Region (CAMPIL), with 72 cooperative members, initially (SESCOOP/PI, 2020).

The first association that focused on cashew cultivation, only emerged from 1992 with the institution of the Mixed Agricultural Cooperative of Small Producers (COMAPI) in which it brought 38 cooperative members in which various activities were concentrated, the main one



being the processing of nuts, even exporting to Italy for a period of six years, however, it soon loses the contract with the European country as the market implements changes to the point that producers do not have the structure to meet the demand, being considered a low quality product (Silva, 2011).

From that year on, cashew farmers' cooperatives started producing nuts in mini-factories, but only in 2011, they sought to have their first Fair Trade certification, achieving their labeling the following year.

3 METHODOLOGY

The universe of study was initially carried out in six cooperatives located in the municipalities of Francisco Santos – Mixed Cooperative of Family Agriculture (COMAF); Ipiranga do Piauí – Mixed Cooperative of Agricultural Producers of Ipiranga (COMPRAG); Monsenhor Hipólito – Mixed Agroindustrial Cooperative of Monsenhor Hipólito (COOMAMH); Pio IX – Mixed Agroindustrial Cooperative (COMASA); Jaicós – Mixed Agroindustrial Cooperative of Jaicós (COMAJ); and Itainópolis – Agroindustrial Cooperative of Cashew Growers of Itainópolis (CAJITA). These cashew cooperatives are linked to COCAJUPI, according to the Piauí State Planning Secretariat (SEPLAN, 2019).

This investigation corresponded to a time frame from January 2012 to December 2023. In 2019, of the six cooperatives chosen to compose the study, there was contact in only four. Through visits to the respective institutions from November 3 to 9, 2021, it was detected that three of them, located in the municipalities of Pio IX, Jaicós and Itainópolis, are no longer affiliated with COCAJUPI, and are no longer legal entities. In search of information from these extinct organizations, only contact was maintained with the cooperative member and former CEO of the cooperative located in Pio IX – Piauí, totaling four production units for analysis.

For data identification and analysis, primary sources were used, through field research in which data collection was carried out, including non-participatory unsystematic observation and, later, the application of interviews through forms (Yin, 2004). According to the characteristics of organizations regarding Fair Trade certification. In them, there were two types of questions, those closed with alternatives to choose from and those open without alternatives, considering the anonymity of the interviewee.

Thus, both the non-participatory unsystematic observation and the application of forms were analyzed with reference to the criteria presented in Chart 1.

**Table 1***Fair Trade fitness assessment criteria*

Fair Trade fitness assessment criteria	
1. Social organization and job creation	6. Non-discrimination
2. Transparent and supportive business relationships	7. Decent working conditions
3. Pay a fair price	8. Capacities and skills
4. People's well-being	9. Local valuation
5. Child labor and forced labor	10. Environmental sustainability

Source: Prepared based on the principles of the FLO (2019b).

According to these criteria, they were considered as partially or fully adequate to Fair Trade, based on the answers obtained in the forms applied to the presidents-directors during the field research. And from that moment on, to expose the data obtained, they were inserted into an electronic spreadsheet of the Microsoft Office Excel 2010 Program, in which they were tabulated, exposed by Figures and appreciated by Descriptive Statistics, then, the interpretation of the data took place through thematic analysis (Bardin, 2007).

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Central of Cashew Growers of the State of Piauí – COCAJUPI has already been associated with nine unique cooperatives of cashew growers. In order to legalize COCAJUPI, the first step was to create the Bylaws, supported by Law No. 5,764/71 for the defense of the rights, duties and obligations of members. And only after a meeting was held that appears in the minutes in 2005, in which the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer and the Administrative Director of this Institution were chosen. (SUPERINTENDENCE OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STUDIES – CEPRO, 2019). From that moment on, the cooperatives started producing cashew almonds.

Thus, this part of the article deals with the analysis of the process of adaptation of cooperatives that export cashew kernels to Fair Trade. It ends with the perspective of the cooperative members on the insertion in Fair Trade.

4.1 CASHEW GROWERS' COOPERATIVES AND THE APPLICABILITY OF FAIR TRADE

In general, 100% of the cooperatives identified that two criteria were met, 1 and 4, that is, the creation of opportunities for small producers at economic and social disadvantage, democratically organized; And, its management must put people at the center of the relationship, and not the maximization of profits, in addition to equitably distributing the financial results (leftovers) among its members.

In this sense, the cooperative members not only failed to pass on part of their financial gains to middlemen in the marketing process, but sought a direct distribution of their product,



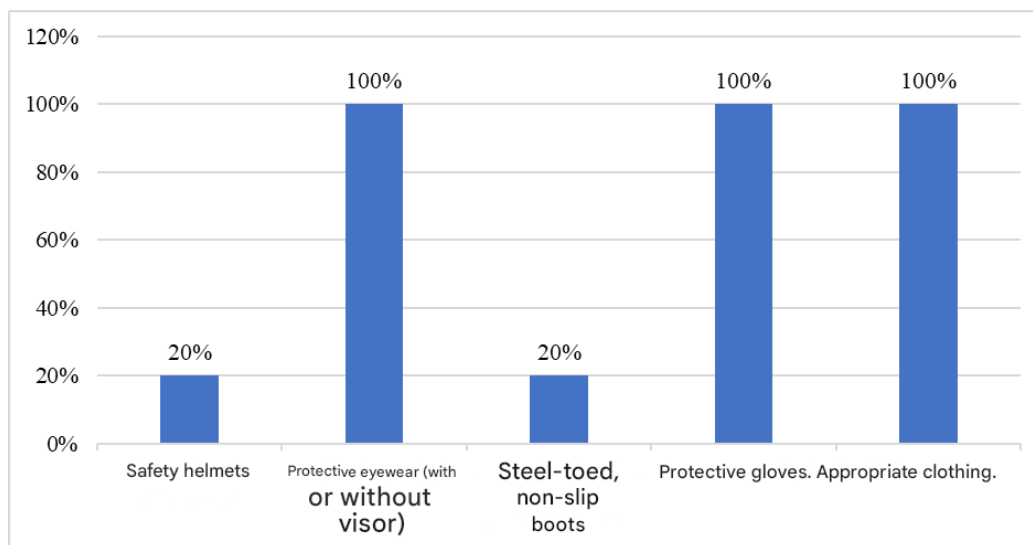
enabling the generation of employment and income in the region, and consequently, provided, on average, 50 direct jobs in the mini-factories. It was found, as appropriate, that the workers of the cooperatives are the cooperative members themselves or their families, and have a temporary work contract, receiving their remuneration for production. In relation to the number of cooperative members, there are 200 people distributed in the four municipalities.

4.1.1 Identification of good working conditions in the aspects of productive, technological and material practices

It was found that all workers in the mini-factories use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the handling of cashew nuts, in view of the requirements of FLOCERT (2019b). Such PPE is identified and quantifiable in Figure 1.

Figure1

PPE used in COCAJUPI cooperatives (2021)



Source: Bezerra (2021).

In view of the above, the instruments most used by workers in mini-factories reach 100% use in all organizations, which are: goggles, gloves and appropriate clothing, constituting essential elements for the protection of the LCC, which burns the skin when touching it. At the same time that the use of these elements is required, medication assistance is offered, such as ointments to relieve burns. The reports of work accidents, according to 100% of those surveyed, are summarized in this fact that affected almost all workers, that is, 80% of them, when they did not use PPE.

When asked if the handling of these machines and equipment posed any risk to the physical integrity of the cooperative members, 40% of the interviewees said yes, while 60%



said no. However, although there is divergence in this situation, 100% of the Presidents-Directors adduced that there is training of the employees of the mini-factories in the use of the objects in the processing of cashew kernels, in order to avoid such accidents. From this perspective, the visits of labor inspectors are opportunities for the proper inspection of activities, especially in the operational segment. Thus, it is conceivable that criterion eight, established in this work, is fully complied with, in line with the principles of Fair Trade.

Something quite recurrent in FLOCERT's inspection is to evaluate the well-being of the cooperative members, namely, in the part of the production process in the work environment in the mini-factories, and the unhealthy conditions are not accepted by this certifying organization. The concept of well-being in the workplace, followed by FLOCERT, has the same parameters established by the International Labor Organization - ILO. Therefore, a place with excessive cold or heat, continuous or impact noise, radiation, humidity, vibrations, among others, are circumstances that are not conducive to creating an environment that gives rise to a productive and healthy worker.

Therefore, when questioning about the internal environment of the mini-factories, in order to provide a pleasant place to work, in terms of temperature, humidity and lighting, the results were obtained that 40% of the respondents believe there is a pleasant environment for the workers of the mini-factories; on the other hand, 20% mention that they do not consider it – among them, the cooperatives COMPRAG and COMASA, located in Ipiranga and Pio IX, respectively, which complain that it is very hot, because there is no cooling system or even fans.

In addition, the sites must be closed to avoid dust and debris in the production process, as these facts would end up making a cashew kernel with acceptable quality unfeasible for export. This heat condition in the cooperative environment is something acceptable by FLOCERT, not violating the principle of good working conditions, since the revalidations and inspection of the certification do not place criticism or impediments to this circumstance, and do not bring compliance criteria, as can be proven by the document FLO ID No. 21,498. (FLOCERT, 2019a). Although FLOCERT does not determine any adequacy action in its last annual inspection, in 2022, it is expressed that there must be not only freedom of association, but a safe and healthy work environment for employees and/or members, with satisfactory working conditions.

As the region where the mini-factories are located is semi-arid, with high temperatures throughout the year, it is suggested that in adverse circumstances air conditioners be installed, which could make the process more expensive, but photovoltaic energy would mitigate this financial effect; or simply change the work shift to less hot hours of the day.



Some positive points can be described in this regard, such as respect for labor rights and compliance in the use of PPE. So, it is considered that in 100% of the cooperatives they partially meet the criteria of people's well-being and decent working conditions.

A study carried out by the Banco do Nordeste do Brasil - BNB, in the 1990s, diagnosed the exploitation of child labor in the nut harvest, a fact that marked, in a negative way, the image of the activity for a long period. (BNB, 2020).

During the execution of this field research, it was evidenced that in the internal environment of the mini-factories that work with almonds, the full compliance with criterion 5, of the absence of child labor practices, it was possible to maintain a commitment to the insertion of young apprentices in their cultural environment, guaranteeing access to formal education and leisure, opening job opportunities for the children of the cooperative members.

Another interesting point deals with the insertion of the elderly and women in the production process, as a way to relocate these people in the labor market; the absence of forced labor; non-discrimination on the basis of race, class, nationality, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, union membership, political affiliation, HIV/AIDS carrier, age or any other nature. In this sense, full compliance with criteria 5 and 6 is considered by all mini-factories that satisfy the execution of a Fair Trade.

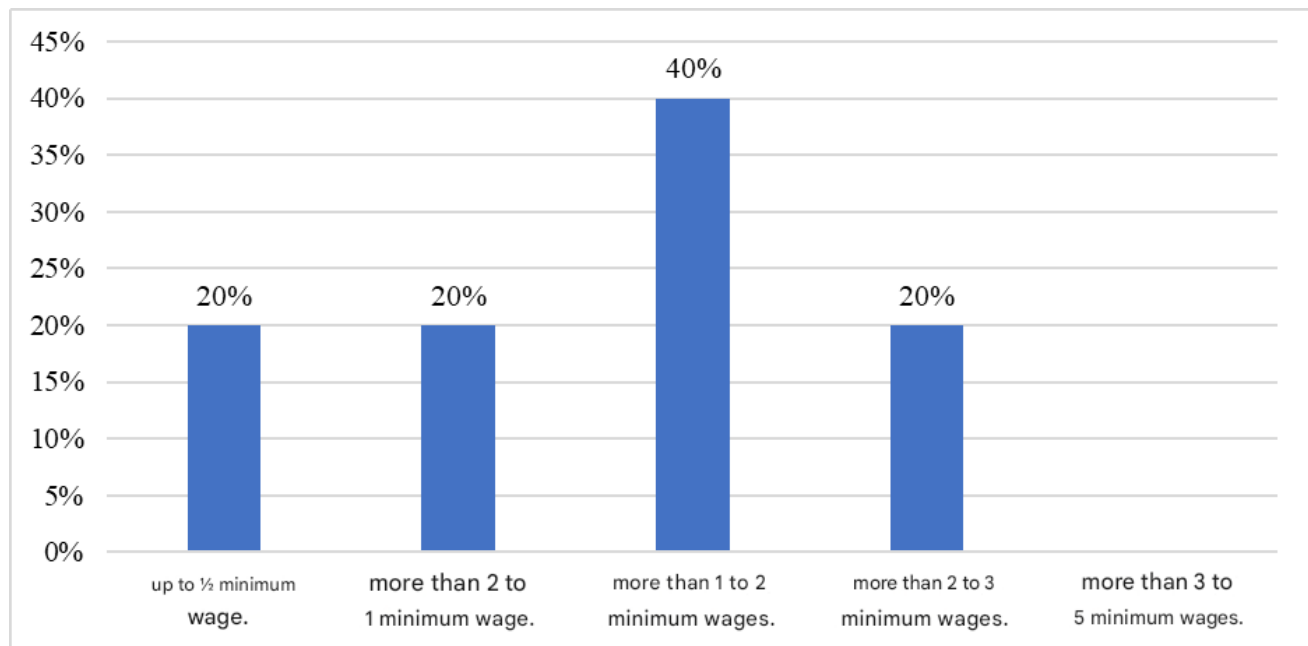
Regarding the employment contract of the employees who work in the mini-factories, it was found that it occurred temporarily, that is, it depends on the harvest of the fruit and the rainy season in the region, being quite scarce. However, with the introduction of the dwarf-precocious cashew variety and the CPP 76 variety, it is constantly allowed to harvest four to five times more, compared to the native species, with two months of maturation of the product.

Regarding the income generated by this cashew activity, specifically, with the work of almond processing, according to the interviewees, the payment occurs by production, and the remuneration value in relation to the minimum wage in force on the date of the interview reaches the values shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2

Remuneration paid to workers in mini almond factories (2021)



Source: Bezerra (2021).

Considering the information collected in relation to the time of the survey, it is revealed that the vast majority, 40% of the workers, have income per production, which varies between one and two minimum wages, with the value of the minimum wage being R\$ 1,100.00 at the time of application of the survey. In addition, those who earn up to one minimum wage represent 40% of the total, as well as those who earn up to half a minimum wage. It is noted that none of the workers receives more than three minimum wages in force in the country.

As these salaries are not monthly and depend, in part, on macroeconomic variables and atmospheric situations in the region, which influences the amount of nuts in the mini-factories, the decision is not up to the Presidents-Directors, although according to the Inter-Union Department of Socioeconomic Studies – DIEESE. (DIEESE, 2021) to have a good quality of life, it is necessary to have an income of R\$ 5,886.50 in Brazil, that is, these farmers who receive for temporary production, approaching the minimum wage (R\$ 1,100.00) in 2021, despite the difference between the salary received and the ideal, according to DIEESE, is considered adequate for 100% of respondents. However, the country's economic scenario leads to this, hence why Fair Trade has been a way that small farmers have found to resist in a region so scarce of jobs. Therefore, criteria 1 and 4 are considered to have been fully met by all the cooperatives evaluated.



4.1.2 Fair price for producers (ensuring a decent income or economic security)

The commercial relationship between the cooperative members and COCAJUPI is based on the principles of cooperativism. Thus, the nuts are taken to the mini-factories, and the remuneration only occurs after the distribution of the financial results. Therefore, the price of the almond sold in the international market influences the individual earnings of each agent participating in this production chain.

According to the interviewees, for the vast majority of producers, that is, 40%, there is no complaint about the sale price of nuts and almonds and 20% do not know how to answer on this topic. The COMASA cooperative in Pius IX believes that the established value does not provide a satisfactory value, and this consideration is a reflection of the perspective of the ability of the price of this product to exceed the average costs of production in monetary values. So, for 80% of the interviewees, this negotiated amount generates revenue capable of paying the expenses of the mini-factories; another 20% say that their revenues cannot cover these costs.

The price of almonds is determined by market forces, the balance between supply and demand for almonds, and there is a participation of the cooperative members in the economic management, both in the decision of the price of the almond and in the allocation of the financial resources obtained from the sale of this product.

It is evident that there is transparency in the negotiation between the parties in the formation of the fair price of products or services, and that criterion 3 is fully met, according to which a fair price must be paid (agreed between the actors, in a dialogued, responsible and participatory manner, which covers the costs of production, a decent remuneration for the work and can be sustained by the market) to the producers' organizations, being a social award (for community investments).

FLOCERT evaluates whether the values of the products established through assemblies of the cooperative members and by the auditors of the FLO are really reflecting decent incomes to farmers, and although the minimum price is, a priori, an important innovation of this certifier, the inflationary situation in the country has demanded a permanent update of the estimate of production costs.

Thus, for the COMASA interviewee, the cost calculation based on which CACAJUPI and FLO defined the minimum price is outdated, making the latter irrelevant. As a consequence, transactions are agreed upon in relation to market prices, as they are higher than the minimum price. The price negotiated in the international market exceeds 12 times the national value. In 2017, at the peak of quotations, the minimum price reached around R\$ 3.50 per kilogram.



It is also considered that fair prices give the cooperative members good remuneration, since the financial surpluses are shared among them, since 80% of these monetary values remain with them and the other 20% are used for investments in the cashew farming activity. When it enters into this negotiation, the agent that distributes indirectly, the cooperative, ends up having its margins of return on investment of its culture reduced.

4.1.3 Structure of organizations, in the aspects of their activity and mutual information among all those involved in the commercial chain about their products or services, and marketing methods

According to the information collected, although there are many requirements for 100% of the Presidents-Directors of the organization that receives the product, such as the specific form of transport and packaging, a commercial relationship without friction in this charge is apprehended. It was found that there is an understanding on the part of the cooperative members, as they believe it is necessary, due to the transport of the product by car (box truck) from the cooperatives to COCAJUPI, then going in closed trucks (container) to PECEM, located in the city of São Gonçalo do Amarante, in the state of Ceará, to then go by ship to the city of Modena, in Italy, where the Chico Mendes Cooperative is located and sells the almond to other parts of Europe.

It was noted that on average, 70% of the production of cashew kernels is directed to foreign trade, and those that do not pass the quality control, the 30%, that is, those broken with humidity or other characteristics not accepted in the foreign sector, are sold in the domestic market. The most notorious local points of sale are Picos and Teresina, in Piauí, where the cooperative members themselves sell in open markets, in addition to Brasília and São Paulo.

In relation to the structure of organizations and those involved in the commercial chain about their products or services, and marketing methods, for 80% of respondents, the flow of information between the cooperative and the company that buys cashew kernels remains easily accessible. It should be noted that the negotiation takes place through COCAJUPI.

FLOCERT requires direct communication between all stakeholders within the same marketing chain, taking into account criterion 2, which strives for solidary, stable and long-term commercial relationships, based on dialogue and respect between producers, buyers and consumers.

According to all 100% of the interviewees, there is respect for the commercial actors involved, that is, cooperative members, COCAJUPI, FLOCERT and Chico Mendes



Cooperative, the buyer of almonds in Europe, respecting attitudes such as democracy, transparency and accountability, actions that fully flow with the principles of cooperativism.

4.1.4 Actions of COCAJUPI and FLOCERT in the promotion of productive and commercial conditions appropriate to the principles of Fair Trade, through training, technical advice, development of social markets and new solidarity products

It was learned through the application of the form, that there is training, education and information for the cooperative members, in order to adapt them to the production process and make their production more consistent with the principles of Fair Trade, especially those determined by FLOCERT, and some companies collaborated for this adaptation, such as SEBRAE, the Banco do Brasil Foundation, Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Company - EMATER, among others. The main courses held are in the area of cooperativism, associativism, rural entrepreneurship and good practices of trade and production.

Despite all the compliances required by FLOCERT, the search for its certification, in the years 2012 and 2017, was voted in a deliberative assembly by the cooperative members, in the same way as the last one, which took place in 2019, obtaining approval from all voters. The participation in the management and democratic control of actions aimed at changes in the administration of the cooperative by the cooperative members represent a meritorious factor that characterizes Fair Trade, constituting another criterion in favor of obtaining a certification of this category, placing a certain product to be marketed abroad.

Thus, for 100% of the cooperative members, the requirements outlined by criterion 8 were fully met, which seeks to foster the development of capacities and skills, especially of the most disadvantaged and most vulnerable: young people, women, the elderly, the disabled, among other marginalized groups.

The information collected and the non-participatory observation during the field visit prove the participation in the productive process of the elderly, women and disabled people. Above all, respect was detected, in the sense of providing correct conditions for them to work and move within the mini-factories, such as access ramps, special benches and signage pertinent to the needs of this segment.

4.1.5 Environmental protection policies by COCAJUPI's cooperative members

When it comes to production processes and actions for the protection and preservation of nature, there was an obstacle in cashew farmers' cooperatives, given that 100% of the managers expressed that there had never been an Environmental Impact Study (EIA) in the mini-factories.



Meanwhile, after adhering to the Fair Trade certification seal, the concern to adapt to the precepts of FLOCERT in this category, gave rise to an environmental policy consolidated in 80% of them, in which some specific actions were imposed on the cooperative's day-to-day activities, with the exception of COMASA.

When asked about their concern with the disposal of waste generated after the production of almonds, 80% of the interviewees stated that the pseudofruit (the cashew pulp) is used to be transformed into other products, such as cashew nuts and sweets. Promptly, the bark (A), after being stored in a cemented place, so as not to contaminate the soil with the LCC, is distributed to serve as material in the boilers of the cashew mini-factories themselves. The way it is stored is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Storage of the shell (A) and wood (B) used in the cooking boiler in the mini almond factories



Source: Bezerra (2021).

The main energy input used in the cooperatives' boilers is charcoal by the autoclave method, that is, by the steam resulting from the burning of dry wood (B), originating from the pruning of the cashew tree itself. Nevertheless, the release of CO² is disapproved by FLOCERT, leading very recently to the search for photovoltaic energy. At the time of the application of the field research, this form of energy was being installed in all the mini-factories visited.

The installation of solar energy, as well as other machines used in the almond production process, was only possible through government subsidies, in an agreement that



involved different federal agencies and the Inter-American Fund for Agricultural Development - IFAD, a UN agency based in Rome.

Through data collection, it was detected that 100% of the interviewees are concerned with some actions in the cooperatives, aimed at saving water, energy and inputs, around 80%, 100% and 80%, respectively. Once again, the COMASA cooperative is largely not delineated with these activities.

Therefore, it is clear that FLOCERT is very strict in this criterion, and one of its pillars is the demand for a posture more consistent with the practice and defense of environmental sustainability at all levels of the production chain.

From this perspective, 80% of the interviewees recognize the extreme importance of natural resources for agricultural activity and for nature, with a view, on the one hand, to constituting raw material, being, therefore, fundamental for the company's continued economic process; on the other hand, because it is the reason for life on the planet.

Thus, the use of sustainable methods should be increasingly demanded by the Chief Executive Officers and cooperative members, as they consist of strategies that comprise a set of actions with the main objective of continuously improving the economic and environmental performance of organizations.

The information of this investigation allows us to infer that the cooperative members of the cashew industry located in the semi-arid region of Piauí are beginning to awaken to the adoption of environmental protection measures, particularly in their productive sectors, with the application of programs to reduce water, energy and raw materials, as well as more effective labor and production practices in terms of productivity and income generation.

However, at first, what can be glimpsed, through field research and non-participatory unsystematic observation, is that such a change is not due to a conscious posture of concern for nature, but the main incentive is economic, proven by the answers of the interviewees, that is, it comes from the search for certification in the commercial segment that, Initially, it promises better sales to new markets, bringing more attractive financial returns than before, with revenues in the domestic market only. In general, the cooperative members meet criterion 10, being aligned with what determines environmental sustainability at all levels of the production chain, especially regarding the commercial part, the focus of this study.

Therefore, the cooperative members of the cashew industry in the state of Piauí, particularly those affiliated with COCAJUPI, located in the semi-arid region of Piauí, have been fully adapting to the recommendations made to be included in Fair Trade, especially criterion 9, which promotes Fair Trade relations between the actors involved at local, national and international levels.



However, there is some criticism by all the interviewees, when they state that the charges by this organization become too complex and onerous to carry out such actions in practice. This appreciation and adherence by the respondents in relation to the principles of Fair Trade will be the subject of presentation and discussion below.

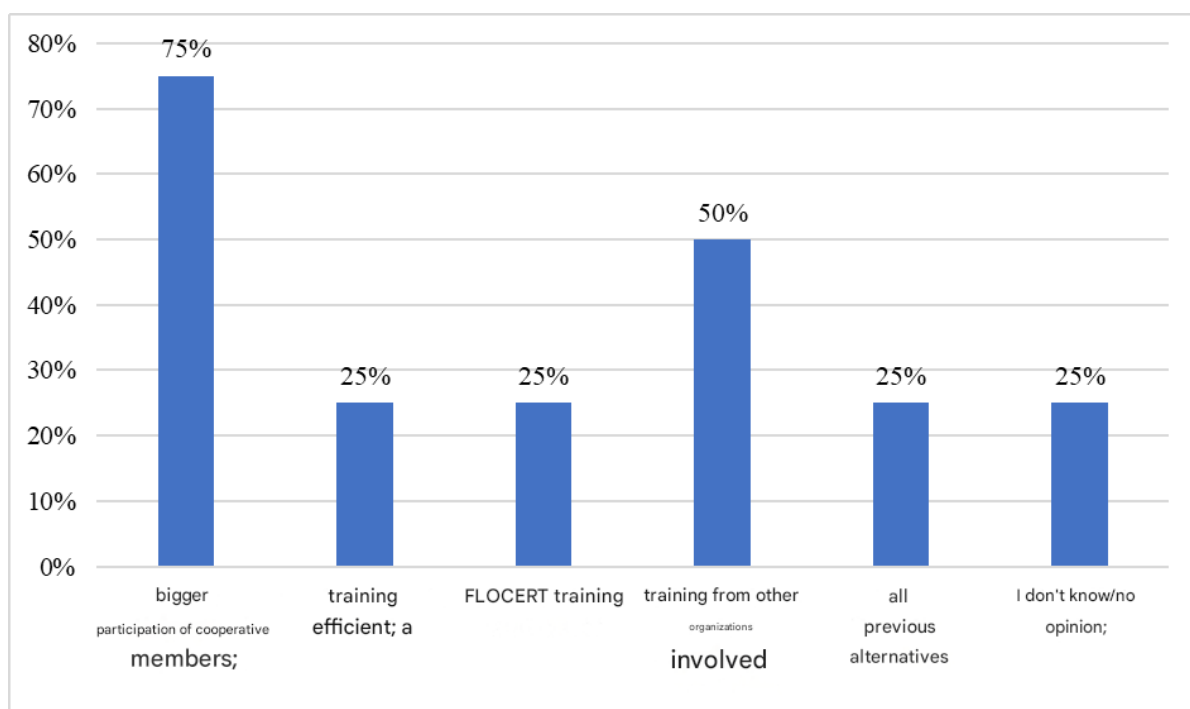
4.2 THE PERSPECTIVE OF FAIR TRADE – FLOCERT IN THE COOPERATIVES OF CASHEW GROWERS OF COCAJUPI

For the President-Directors, when asked about what made it possible for them to achieve a FLOCERT certification, some reasons were chosen as the main ones, such as: greater participation of the cooperative members in the process of adapting to the recommended principles, to be followed by FLO; and, it helps in the form of training other institutions in this process.

As mentioned earlier, the main companies that gave support to cashew farmers were the Banco do Brasil Foundation, initially; then, SEBRAE and EMATER, with training ranging from the theme of cooperativism to more technical courses. In addition, it was found that they had financial help in the form of subsidies from the public sector, and recently, the investment in solar energy itself was an initiative of IFAD, with support from the federal government, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Main reasons that led to obtaining the FLOCERT certification



Source: Bezerra (2021).

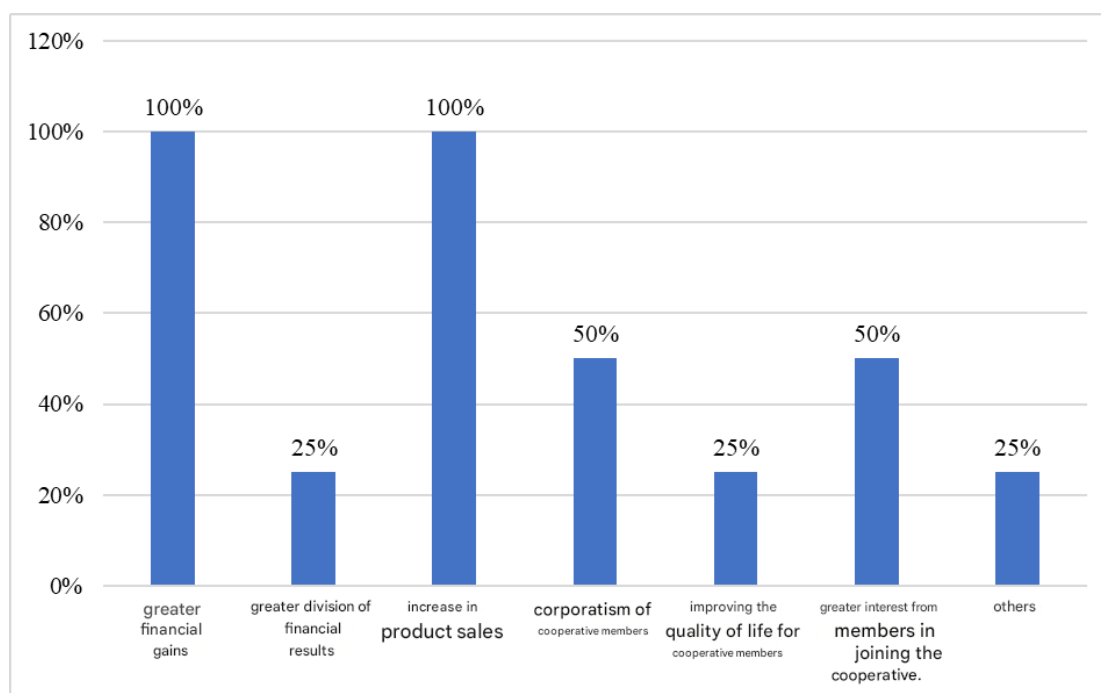


Of the total of those surveyed, 75% listed the participation of cooperative members as the main reason for obtaining the Fair Trade certificate as essential in this process. They even report that it was only after the adhesion of all of them that there was a commitment, in the sense that they assumed a more proactive posture in relation to the execution of the principles guided by the FLO in their daily lives.

The seals that deal with Fair Trade promise a series of advantages to those who have it (Fretel & Simoncelle-Bourque, 2003). Therefore, Fair Trade is a process of trade oriented towards valuing the work and expectations of producers and consumers, allowing a substantial improvement in their quality of life. In this conception, according to the interviewees, there are advantages resulting from obtaining the certification exposed here, revealed in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Main practical results for obtaining the FLOCERT certification



Source: Bezerra (2021).

For 100% of the interviewees, one of the main results of the acquisition of the FLOCERT certification was the increase in the sale of the product and, consequently, 100% of them also believe in the increase in financial gains, that is, the apprehension of this is denoted with the generation of resources for the mini-factories. Despite being one of the principles of FLO, practicing and defending environmental sustainability at all levels of the commercial chain were not recognized by the respondents, the benefits of protecting the environment in this issue.



Although the CEO is constantly concerned with expenses (raw materials, inputs, water and energy), they did not pay attention to the fact that insertion in Fair Trade, through obtaining a FLOCERT certification, can generate economic advantages, since in most situations, the expenses with waste treatment and emissions are higher than the costs of prevention, considering other benefits, such as a work environment suitable for compliance with safety, enabling increased productivity and a positive image of the company.

The certification process required by the FLO requires candidates to submit their requests for appreciation, and soon after, they are submitted to the initial audit and, thus, if all the compliance criteria are met, there is approval. Despite all the benefits that FLOCERT certification can bring to cooperative members, resulting from the sale of their products in the international market, several criteria must be followed to obtain the Fair Trade seal.

For 100% of those surveyed, it is not easy to meet all the recommendations. If refused, the plaintiff may make changes to achieve the imposed goals. When asked about the main obstacle to obtaining the FLOCERT certification, the following results were obtained: for 75% of the President-Directors, the measures required to adapt to the principles listed by the FLO are financially high depending on the machines that must be purchased; the hygiene standards that must be maintained; adequate transportation; and the form of packaging that should be used. In short, these are procedures that make the production process more expensive and reduce the financial surpluses that will generate division among the cooperative members.

For 75% of them, the orientation towards sustainable production ends up increasing expenses, due to the concern with waste disposal and the use of an energy matrix that reduces CO² emissions, such as the installation of photovoltaic energy, constituting items that make the production of almonds very expensive.

Among the main actions with this environmental bias, the search for clean energy, the reuse of waste and selective collection are mentioned, as can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Selective collection in COCAJUPI's mini almond factories



Source: Bezerra (2021).

The adoption of environmentally correct measures caused, in the short term, according to 75% of the respondents, only an increase in total production costs, negatively influencing the revenues of the mini-factories. It is emphasized that access to the cost and revenue spreadsheets was not allowed.

Despite the short-term disadvantages, it is noted that the advantages arising from the implementation of environmental protection strategies are perceived in the long term, due to the possibility of expanding markets and reducing costs, preventing, as an axiomatic example, against possible legal restrictions (fines).

It can be intuited, from the above, that the negative impact of these measures on the economic aspects of the cooperatives guided by FLOCERT has been a major obstacle to the greater dissemination of Fair Trade in the region.

However, when asked about the benefits generated by obtaining certification, 75% say they are satisfied with the granting of the FLOCERT seal. Despite this reality, such an answer generates a certain contradiction, considering that only 50% are willing to apply again to obtain Fair Trade certification, because once again, all those surveyed report that adapting to the principles of FLO becomes complex for this implementation and, in particular, makes the entire production process more expensive – and no matter how much extraordinary gains



are achieved in the sale of cashew kernels in international trade, For them, the cost-benefit ratio is not enough as a whole.

The main complaints of the cooperative members relate to the insertion of environmental protection measures in the mini-factories. In fact, it was recognized, through field research, that they did not pay attention to the measures that nature protection actions can bring positively to cooperatives, as they are unaware that small environmental adjustments can generate advantages, including financial ones, such as cleaner production techniques, by encouraging the reduction of water, energy and raw materials. enabling, on the other hand, a reduction in expenses, minimizing the aggression to the environment. Therefore, an alternative to adapt these measures would be for mini-factories to create an environmental policy and adopt an efficient EMS, which would also reduce expenses.

By capturing the data, it is noted that the Presidents-Directors, when seeking the FLOCERT certification to increase their sales and revenues in the international market, launched themselves with the objective of adapting their production process to the principles listed by FLO. However, despite meeting the established criteria and thus being awarded the Fair Trade seal, they believe that it is a very complex and costly process, raising their costs and reducing the part (leftovers) that is distributed to associated farmers.

All highlighted the improvements in the economic aspect, as they can negotiate the almond above the national price, and the cooperative members note that social advances have been made, mainly, in compliance with labor standards and worker protection in the mini-factories.

In relation to environmental sustainability, the perception that everyone must protect the planet to have a better environment goes unnoticed, as this item is linked more to compliance with FLOCERT standards, confirmed with the change of those who consider it more difficult to adapt and, therefore, more costly.

It can be seen that the interviewees consider the advantages of participating in Fair Trade to be positive, as they increased their sales and had better financial results, increasing the well-being of the cooperative members. In general, these processes of adaptation to Fair Trade by COCAJUPI cooperatives were fully complied with, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Compliance with Fair Trade criteria by cooperatives (2019-2021)

Cooperative	Meeting fair trade suitability criteria									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
COMASA	Full	Partial	Partial	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Partial	Partial
COMAF	Full	Partial	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full
BUY	Full	Partial	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full



COOMAMH	Full	Partial	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full	Full
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Source: Bezerra (2021).

COCAJUPI and its affiliated cooperatives, in order to maintain the FLOCERT certification over the years, observed the need to always be aligned with the principles of Fair Trade, and thus, those that had the criteria partially met had to review their production processes so that in the future they can achieve Fair Trade certification.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The production process of almonds in the mini-factories is oriented to comply with the requirements established by FLO, with its principles of Fair Trade being a guideline. Thus, it is apprehended that workers partially enjoy well-being in their work environment, but are fairly remunerated for their work. The products receive a Fair Price, so that all deliberations comply with the democratic process highlighted by the certifier.

Environmental protection actions were detected in their entirety through this research, such as the recycling and reuse of material left over from production, such as almond shells. Likewise, there is a concern with the use of water, energy and raw materials, as well as attitudes related to environmental issues.

However, a complaint was confirmed, since they assess that the charges on environmentally correct practices in their production processes are quite onerous, hence why they disregard that environmental sustainability can generate benefits, including financial ones, such as cleaner production techniques, by encouraging the reduction of water, energy and raw materials, enabling, on the other hand, a reduction in expenses, minimizing aggression to nature.

The research allows us to apprehend that the cooperatives affiliated to COCAJUPI, for the most part, adapted their production process in order to be certified and, thus, obtained a Fair Trade seal, leading to improvements in the economic aspect, as they were able to negotiate the almond above the national price.

In addition, the cooperative members noted that some advances have been made in the social field, with compliance with labor standards, providing greater protection to workers in the environmental segment, with increased concern in the use of resources from mini-factories.

However, there is a need to maintain a continuous learning process in order to efficiently sustain the fulfillment of these requirements in the mini-factories, since FLOCERT uses the term of conformity, and it is up to the proposing organization to recover the error or



the goals not achieved in order to then renew the possibility of belonging to Fair Trade in the annual inspection visits that are carried out.

In view of the collection of information in this article, the main contribution is the pointing out of effective actions for cooperative members who want to obtain a FLOCERT certification or maintain them, demonstrating the main obstacles and goals to be followed through the FLO principles. Thus, it is recommended to maintain a routine of evaluating the well-being of cashew farmers, especially with regard to the production process in the work environment, as it constitutes a recurring charge. It is noted that the mini-factories surveyed are poorly ventilated, due to their production, causing discomfort to the employees, and it is worth evaluating the possibility of installing an air conditioning system, since in the future, they will use solar energy and, for this reason, will not increase the expenses with electricity. In the environmental aspect, it is suggested, in this logic, that measures be adapted without increasing costs so much, having as an alternative the creation of an environmental policy and the adoption of an efficient EMS – something that does not exist in the organizations surveyed.

As for the limitations of this study, it is considered that the universe examined was limited only to the cooperatives of cashew growers of COCAJUPI, also, there was no access to cost spreadsheets to verify the veracity of the data referring to the Fair Price of the almond, by imposition of the interviewees. It is understood, therefore, that possibilities are opened for future investigations that consider these two factors.

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