Fair Trees Fund
2025 Annual Project Report

Foreword

In 2025, the Fair Trees Foundation navigated significant structural and financial changes while successfully safeguarding its core social impact. Despite a substantial reduction in its operating budget due to a shifting cooperation format, the Foundation effectively refocused its resources on initiatives that deliver the greatest and most direct community benefits.

Core Impact and Key Initiatives

- Support for Cone Pickers: Key efforts concentrated on improving the living conditions of cone pickers and their families, ensuring continued support for one of the most vulnerable groups within the supply chain.
- Essential Healthcare: The Foundation sustained its children's free dental care program—a vital service fully dependent on Fair Trees funding and essential to long-term community well-being.
- Educational Opportunities: The Foundation continued to champion local youth through its scholarship program, ensuring that promising students from the community maintain access to vital educational resources and future opportunities.

Strategic Prioritization and Future Resilience

Through strategic prioritization, the Foundation responsibly phased out projects that had access to alternative funding opportunities. This allowed limited resources to be redirected toward high-impact, mission-critical activities.

In parallel, Fair Trees invested in long-term sustainability by:

- Adapting training formats for pine cone collectors.
- Initiating a new partnership with 180 Degree Consulting to optimize operations.
- Transitioning the dental clinic toward a partially self-financed model to ensure its continuity.

These proactive measures enabled the Fair Trees Foundation not only to preserve its core impact throughout 2025 but also to strengthen its resilience and strategic direction for the future.





Marianne Bols

Founder and Board Member of Fair Trees Fund

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About Fair Trees Fund

The Fair Trees Fund (FTF) is an NGO based in Ambrolauri, Georgia. It was founded in 2009 with the vision of providing the people of the Racha region a better everyday life with increased safety, health, education, equality and prosperity, while protecting natural forest resources through sustainable management and harvesting. The Fund does this by improving the livelihoods of Georgian cone pickers, their families, and their community through various social investments. The funds for the social investments are raised through the sale of Fair Trees Christmas trees throughout Europe. Every time a consumer purchases a Fair Trees Christmas tree, a percentage of the sales price is allocated as a fixed amount directly to the Fair Trees Fund.

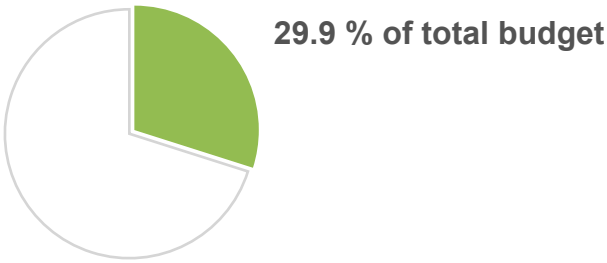
Committed to the 10 Fair Trade principles, FTF's work is securing better and safer working conditions, ensuring workers' rights and fair wages, and improving healthcare, education and infrastructure through sustainable investments in the Racha region.

The organization consists of local staff in Georgia who handle project implementation, stakeholder relations, and various other tasks. Additionally, board members and volunteers are employed by various organizations across Europe, such as Fair Trade Denmark and the German retailer REWE, the largest retailer in Europe.

FTF also employs freelancers when a particular set of skills is required, for instance for the annual safety and climbing training for cone pickers, which involves leading international climbing experts. As a Non-Governmental Organization, FTF works primarily for its stakeholders, not for its employees, and the organization is structured in a way that can best fulfill its mission and strategy. Therefore, FTF strives towards making sure that the organization at any point is shaped in such a way that it can serve the most people within the target audience as efficiently as possible within its mission.

1. Healthcare: Free Dental Clinic in Ambrolauri

A pillar of FTF's strategy, 18.040 € **(56.907 GEL)** was invested in healthcare initiatives in 2025, corresponding to **29,9 %** of the annual expenses.





The Fair Trees Foundation's dental clinic in Ambrolauri provides vital, cost-free dental care to local children who otherwise lack access to reliable oral healthcare. Fully funded and managed by the Foundation, the clinic focuses on both preventative care and necessary treatments, serving as a cornerstone for long-term community health.

Direct Impact: The clinic successfully administered 1,419 free dental treatments to children over the course of the year.

A Growing Regional Model: The success of the Ambrolauri project serves as a blueprint for nearby communities. In 2025, the Oni municipality officially adopted the Fair Trees Foundation's concept, establishing its own dedicated children's dental clinic in Oni.

Transition to Self-Sustainability: To ensure the clinic's long-term viability amid budget shifts, the Ambrolauri facility expanded its services to include commercial treatments for adults. All revenue generated from these adult services is directly reinvested into the clinic, funding and securing the continuation of free dental care for the region's children.

2. Education: Students' Scholarship Program

The Fair Trees Foundation firmly believes that a quality education is the strongest foundation for a better future. Consequently, promoting educational opportunities remains a core area of ongoing investment for the Foundation. The FTF Students' Scholarship Program is dedicated to supporting academically talented students residing in the Ambrolauri and Oni municipalities who face financial challenges. By providing scholarships, the program aims to reduce inequality in access to higher education and encourage students from rural areas to pursue their academic goals. The project addresses the SDG Goal 4: Quality Education.

In line with this commitment, a total of **€6,499 (20,503 GEL)**—representing **10.8%** of the Foundation's total annual expenses—was dedicated to educational initiatives, with the vast majority of these funds directly supporting student scholarships. This investment ensures that promising youth from the community retain vital access to academic resources and long-term opportunities.



10,8 % of total budget

The program's long-term impact is highlighted by **13 successful graduations in 2025**, marking a significant milestone for both the students and their communities.



Mariam Popkhadze, Fair Trees Foundation scholarship alumna

Success in Action: *A notable example of the program's success is Mariam, who graduated with a degree in Civil Geography from Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University with the support of a Fair Trees Foundation scholarship. Upon completing her studies, Mariam chose to return to her hometown of Ambrolauri. She now works at the local Tourism Information Centre, where she actively contributes to the development of sustainable and eco-tourism within the region.*

3. Quality of Life

3.1 Girls Football Club "Racha 2020"



In September 2020, the Fair Trees Fund (FTF) co-founded the Girls Football Club "Racha 2020" in the RLKS region, committing to fund salaries for the female coach and director. Aligned with UN SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and partnering with the Georgian National Football Federation, the project builds infrastructure, trains female sports leaders, and challenges social barriers.

The club has become a vital community hub for youth development, experiencing continuous growth. A major milestone came in 2024 when the team advanced to the first league, and two players were invited to join Georgia's national team.

Following the FTF's final investment in 2025, we are absolutely thrilled to announce that the club has achieved ultimate sustainability! Moving forward, the Ambrolauri Municipality will proudly fund the initiative from its public budget. This transition to public backing is a massive victory, securing a bright, permanent future for these talented athletes and ensuring the club continues to inspire the community for generations to come.

In 2025, the Fair Trees Fund has invested 499 € **(1.575 GEL)** in the football club in 2024, which corresponds to **0,6 %** of the total expenses of the year.

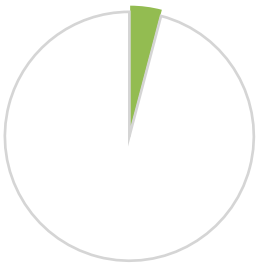
0,6 % of total budget

3.2 Fair Wage for Fair Trees Cone Pickers

The Fair Trees Foundation remains deeply committed to the well-being of the Racha community, particularly the cone pickers who supply seeds for the Christmas tree industry. In 2025, FTF continued its dedication to enhancing the financial stability of these workers by offering robust economic support.

To ensure their long-term financial security, the Fund guarantees a living wage—a "Fair Wage"—which includes a pension during years without harvests. This proved crucial during the challenging 2025 season, as crop failures become an increasing concern due to climate change. Under this structure, each cone picker is guaranteed a monthly payment of 90,00 € throughout the harvest season, providing a reliable financial safety net when it is needed most.

This Fair Wage and is crucial for helping pickers and their families endure the harsh winter months in the region. A total of 2.499 € **(7.883 GEL)** was invested in this initiative in 2025, which corresponds to **4,1 %** of the total expenses of the Fund.



4,1 % of total budget

4. Safety

Occupational safety and health remain a cornerstone of The Fair Trees Fund's strategy. In 2025, the Fund invested a total of **9,874 €** (**31,148 GEL**) directly into projects dedicated to ensuring the physical safety of cone harvesters and protecting the health of both the workers and their families. This vital funding represents **11.5%** of the Fund's total annual expenses.



11,5 % of total budget



The Fair Trees Fund is actively working to enhance safety and climbing standards in the industry by implementing internationally recognized best practices across Georgia. As part of this commitment, the Fund fully covers and organizes annual professional retraining in climbing and safety techniques for the cone pickers.

In line with these safety standards, the Fair Trees Fund provides occupational injury insurance for cone pickers in the event of workplace accidents. Furthermore, regardless of whether it is a harvest season or not, cone pickers and their family members receive comprehensive health insurance that covers them throughout the entire year.

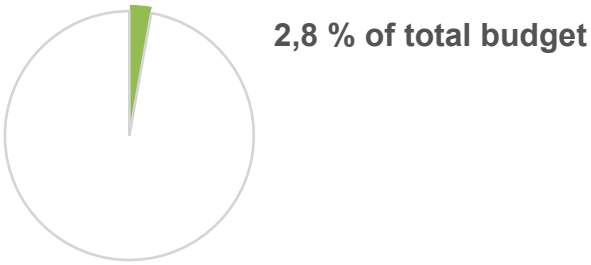
6. Oni Hub-in



The Oni Hub-in project, initiated in 2022, is a collaboration between the Institute of Architecture and Culture at the Royal Danish Academy, VAADS University, Danish floor manufacturer Dinesen and FTF, supported by Oni's municipality and the New Democracy Fund. This project aims to contribute to the sustainable development of Georgia's Racha Region by evolving traditional wooden construction techniques into a self-reliant and sustainable building culture, through the exchanges of students between Georgia and Denmark, studying and practicing construction and architectural techniques from the two cultures. Key areas of focus include heritage preservation, viable timber production, tourism promotion, and sustainable forestry practices.

In 2025, the Fair Trees Fund continued to finance the maintenance of the physical infrastructure for the Oni Hub-in project. Although the initiative had attracted strong interest from external donor organizations in previous years, the shifting political landscape in Georgia has led to a pause in development opportunities. Despite this setback, FTF remained committed to preserving the core infrastructure of the project, in the hope that the situation will improve and Oni Hub-in can soon return to a path of positive growth and impact.

The total investment in 2025 was 1.115 € **(3.518 GEL)**, which is **2,8 %** of the total expenses of the Fund.



8. Financial Insights

8.1 Expenses

The Fair Trees Fund is dedicated to providing comprehensive insight into both the activities supported and the expenditure of funds. The aim is to ensure that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of how contributions are utilized. FTF is committed to effectiveness in its mission, assuring every supporter that their contributions are used effectively. To this end, FTF offers full transparency on both completed and ongoing projects, as well as detailed financial figures in this report. The

Statement of Activities and Functional Costs		**Exchange rate LARI -> EURO 0,317**	
	LARI	EURO	%
Income Statement			
Contributions	**270.576 GEL**	**85.773 €**	
Social Investments			
Health expenses	-56.907 GEL	-18.040 €	*29,9%*
Safety expenses	-31.148 GEL	-9.874 €	*16,4%*
Education Expenses	-20.503 GEL	-6.499 €	*10,8%*
Contribution to subsistence income	-7.883 GEL	-2.499 €	*4,1%*
Projects			
Expenses Girl's Football	-1.575 GEL	-499 €	*0,8%*
Danish Royal Academy Oni Hub-in	-3.518 GEL	-1.115 €	*1,8%*
Office costs			
Salary expenses	-46.445 GEL	-14.723 €	*24,4%*
General and administrative expenses	-10.083 GEL	-3.196 €	*5,3%*
Notarius, translation and juridical service	-0 GEL	-0 €	*0,0%*
Financial costs and services	-0 GEL	-0 €	*0,0%*
Tax and pension	-12.324 GEL	-3.907 €	*6,5%*
Total expenses	**-190.386 GEL**	**-60.352 €**	***100,00%***
Extraordinary revenue	0 GEL	0 €	
THE PERIOD'S RESULT	**80.190 GEL**	**25.421 €**	

overview below illustrates the expenditures across various categories for the year 2025.[1]

[1] The Fair Trees Fund maintains a financial reserve to safeguard its ability to fulfil committed obligations and ensure operational continuity in the event of unforeseen changes in circumstances.

Salaries and travel expenses for employees who are associated with special projects are booked as expenses for the respective projects.

8.2 Accounting Principles

The base currency in the accounting system is LARI. In some accounts, such as the revenue accounts, the amounts are posted in EURO, which are automatically transferred to LARI at the rate of the posting date.

To produce the annual report and the income statement, amounts in the base currency LARI are exported as a spreadsheet file, and a column in EURO is added using the year's average exchange rate. Because the Lari exchange rate fluctuates a lot, with the euro accounts there will be a difference between the amount registered in the system and the amount converted in the spreadsheet.

When posting a transfer from a Euro account to a LARI account, the accountant calculates the exchange rate as X GEL/Y Euro. This exchange rate therefore includes the bank fees, which are thus not recorded in the income statement.

When transferring a EURO amount to Georgia, the Georgian bank deducts a certain amount and deposits the rest into the fund's Euro account. The difference is booked under the Euro Transaction Cost. The amounts stated in the turnover accounts correspond to the amounts sent from Denmark.

To save fees, certain expenses are paid via Fair Trade Marketing's account in Denmark, where the base currency is DKK. To include fees and the actual exchange rate in Euro, the DKK amounts are converted to euro amounts, which are posted in the Euro account DK, which thereby becomes negative until reset at the end of the financial year. When reset, the amount is registered as turnover in the account "REWE, paid into DK account".



Fair Trees Fund

Make Christmas Trees Fair Trees, protecting people and forest

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