



The Way Forward

Accelerating Gender Equity in Coffee Value Chains

Executive Summary of Stage 1 Research Findings & Recommendations for Action

Coffee Quality Institute's Partnership for Gender Equity



Women in Rwanda sort parchment coffee, one of their tasks in the production process.

Preface

For nearly two decades the coffee industry has engaged in efforts to address the imperative of producing and sourcing quality coffee that meets environmental, social and economic criteria. By placing sustainability as a core element of our supply chain strategies we have collectively and dramatically impacted the coffee industry. Yet, our efforts have largely been missing a critical element: women's empowerment and gender equity. Without a strategic approach to this complex issue, our investments have fallen short of achieving their potential return. Put simply, too often half of the productive workforce found in coffee-growing communities has been left out of the picture.

“ *Studies show that when women are supported and empowered, all of society benefits. Their families are healthier, more children go to school, agricultural productivity improves and incomes increase. In short, communities become more resilient.”¹*

We are increasingly aware of the fragile nature of our supply chain, especially in smallholder coffee farming communities. In this chain, the weakest link can be the farming household. Of special concern is how to strengthen the participation and position of women to ensure a brighter future for coffee families.

With encouragement from the development sector, a number of initiatives have started to address the issue of gender equity in coffee production. Some of them are making good progress. Now we have an opportunity to do more, to broaden and deepen these efforts, to build on an industry tradition of collective learning and impact. In many of the discussions we held over the past year, industry leaders have confirmed their awareness and willingness to take action.

Our hope is that the information and recommendations in this report will not only serve as a practical guide, but will also inspire each of us to become powerful change agents – whatever our role – as we work together to build vibrant coffee communities and a prosperous coffee industry for generations to come.

Download the full report at:
www.coffeeinstitute.org/genderreport

¹ The Hunger Project, (viewed, August 12, 2015), www.thp.org.

The Partnership for Gender Equity

“Increasing women’s participation in supply chains can lead to significant improvements in crop productivity, quality, and environmental and social sustainability. Female farmers can also deepen a firm’s supplier networks....By understanding the role of gender in supply chains, firms can increase the cost-effectiveness of smallholder engagement strategies.”²

Background

The Coffee Quality Institute (CQI) founded the Partnership for Gender Equity (the Partnership) in the fall of 2014. The objective of this strategic initiative is to illuminate how gender inequality at origin impacts coffee outcomes and the well-being of producers – and to determine how to respond. Ultimately, the goal is to contribute to the sustainability of the industry. CQI designed the Partnership to take place in three stages:

- Stage 1 – Research & Discovery
- Stage 2 – Strategy Development & Pilot Projects
- Stage 3 – Scalable Investments.

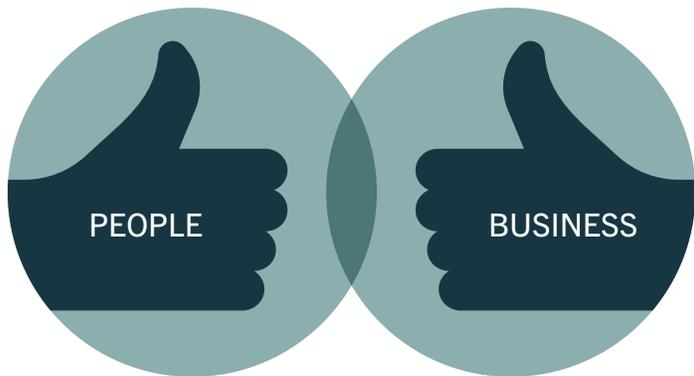
This summary report describes the highlights of Stage 1 findings.

This work would not have been possible without the generous support of many private sector, trade, non-profit and producer partners contributing valuable resources and expertise to the initial research phase of this initiative. See the full list of partners on page 21.

Rationale for Investing in Gender Equity

There are two main reasons to invest in gender equity in coffee: it’s right for people and it’s right for business.

² IFC (2013), *Working with Smallholders - A Handbook for Firms Building Sustainable Supply Chains*



Human rights: Most nations and international laws support the principle that women and men should have the same rights and be treated equally. We know, however, that the human rights of women are frequently violated. The gender gaps in many coffee-growing countries are among the greatest in the world.³

By some estimates, nearly half of all smallholder coffee farmers live in poverty.⁴ Women's social and economic marginalization has profound implications for the income, health, nutrition, and education of their families. Leading global development agencies agree that addressing gender inequalities in agriculture is key to improving human development and well-being, and is necessary for the sustainable development of agriculture.⁵

Business case: An estimated 25 million smallholder coffee farmers produce 80 percent of the world's coffee.⁶ Women do much of the work on

smallholder coffee farms, including key cultivation and processing activities that affect coffee yields and quality. In addition to the millions of women members of coffee-farming households, an increasing number of single women heads of household depend on coffee farming for their families' livelihoods. Despite their contributions, women are often excluded from decision-making processes and enjoy less access to resources, including land, credit, agricultural inputs, training, information, and leadership opportunities. Although they may not intentionally exclude women, development efforts and business practices often do not take into account their unique needs and perspectives. Given the critical sustainability issues facing coffee farming today – including climate change, plant disease, and an aging farmer population – the capabilities of women producers need to be more fully engaged and rewarded.

While some efforts have been made within the coffee industry to address gender equity and women's empowerment, they are not widespread and systemic. Much more can be done by adapting existing policies, practices, and projects to become more gender aware and equitable, and by investing in programs to improve gender equity. Businesses need encouragement and guidance on how to take action.

³ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Reports, Gender Inequality Index*, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/table-4-gender-inequality-index>

⁴ Technoserve website (<http://www.technoserve.org/blog/a-fresh-approach-for-smallholder-coffee-farmers>)

⁵ World Bank, FAO, and IFAD, (2009), *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook World Bank: Washington, DC, p.2*

⁶ Fairtrade Foundation, *Coffee* <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/farmers-and-workers/coffee>

Stage 1: Research & Discovery

Objectives

To better understand gender inequity in coffee production and its impact on outcomes; to capture findings; to develop recommendations for action; and to spur interventions and changes to policies and practices across the industry.

Methodology

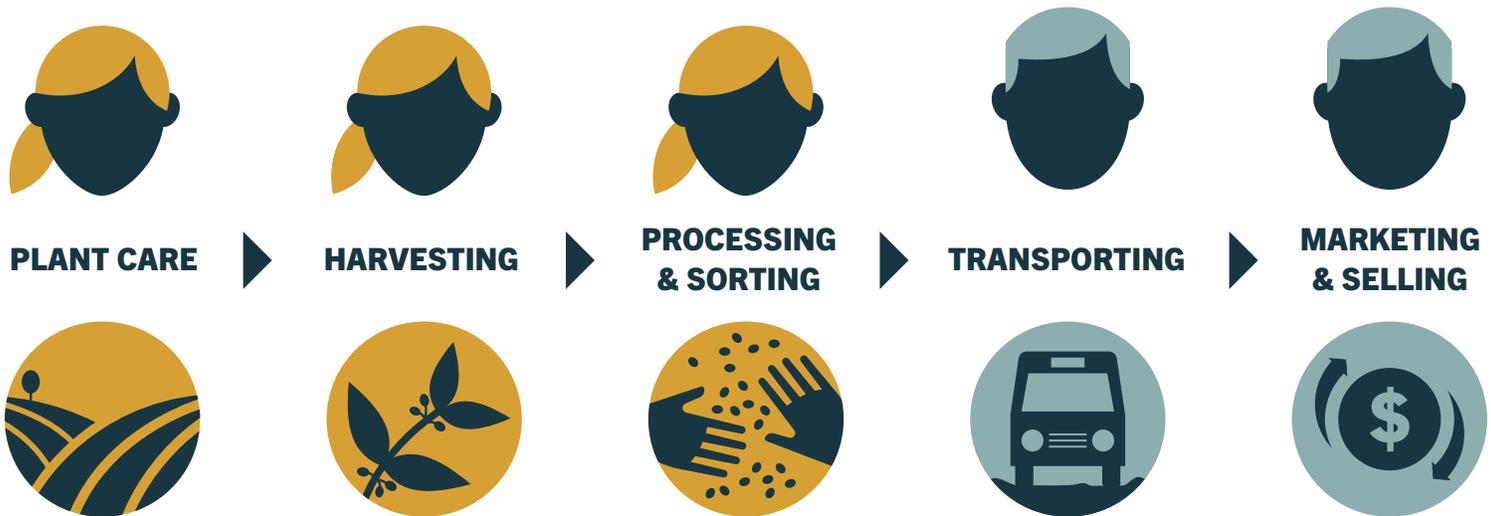
The Partnership's Stage 1 research involved both primary and secondary research methods, including producer workshops, focus groups, and interviews with more than 200 people from

throughout the coffee value chain; a comprehensive review of relevant academic literature; and a current best-practice review on addressing gender concerns in coffee production.

Gender equity is the approach of treating women and men fairly. It takes into account the different needs of women and men, and includes measures to compensate for imbalances between the sexes, most often addressing disadvantages faced by women. Gender equity is a means for achieving gender equality.



Gender workshop participants in Indonesia display the vision they developed for their community.



Roles in the Coffee Process:

While there are variations by region, women tend to contribute a majority of the labor in the early stages, while men capture and control income

The Way Forward: Accelerating Gender Equity in Coffee Value Chains

Gender and development is not a new topic. In this report, we highlight a number of current practice cases that are having an impact. Yet, in our conversations with industry leaders, many concur that they lack understanding of the issue and welcome guidance for how to engage effectively. Others require more data on the business case for investing in gender equity to increase the sustainability and competitiveness of our business.

An extensive Q&A is offered at the beginning of the report as a way to recognize concerns raised by industry during the Research stage. Despite

the questions and concerns raised in our conversations with industry members, we found that these were not barriers to taking action, but rather, issues to be taken into account as we move forward.

In the full report, we present a framework for that shared understanding and concrete recommendations that can guide our collective action in pursuit of real impact and change.

Download the full report at
www.coffeeminstitute.org/genderreport

Key Research Findings

These insights form the foundation for the recommendations in this report:

- Women do not enjoy equal access to resources and assets, nor an equal voice in decisions impacting coffee production and household matters that impact farming and family outcomes.
- Women producers carry a disproportionate burden of roles within and outside the household, and “time poverty” is a widespread issue.
- Training programs can help communities, men and women, build an understanding of the benefits of changing the rights and responsibilities of household members and the ways they relate to one another.
- Women are under-represented in the leadership of community, cooperative and producer groups.
- Due to limited experience, networks, financing or other practical, cultural or historical factors, female producers often have difficulty successfully marketing and optimizing their income from coffee.
- Despite the fact that women conduct a substantial part of the work on the coffee farm, coffee is often considered to be a “man’s crop”: it is the men who market the coffee and control the income from the coffee sales.
- Gender equity and women’s empowerment are vital for building resilient coffee communities and value chains. Both men and women play key roles in activities in coffee production that impact coffee quality and yields. Business and development outcomes are improved with gender-balanced decision making at the household and community level.



Workshop participants in Cauca, Colombia present a gender balance tree showing the work contributions, income, and decision-making areas for men and women within their households.

- Many organizations in the coffee industry see the potential in promoting gender equity and women's empowerment at origin, however, few have yet made it a priority or taken action to address the opportunity. A commonly held concern is how to promote change respectfully, in collaboration with producers, and with sensitivity to avoid unintended consequences.

- There is a need for greater understanding and more data on how gender equity relates to coffee production and farmer outcomes, as well as how to most effectively advance gender equity.
- Producer organizations may need incentives to make the changes necessary to address gender inequality and inequity.



We realized the importance of the role of the women, and that we hadn't always recognized the value of the work that they do - on the farm, upkeep of the home, taking care of the children. Coffee has such an important impact in the international market, the work that the women do is key.

*-Denis Omar Delacruz
Member of Asprocoop, in the municipality of Patia,
Southern Cauca. Asprocoop is one of 12 farmer
cooperatives that form Cosurca and Expocosurca.*

Recommendations

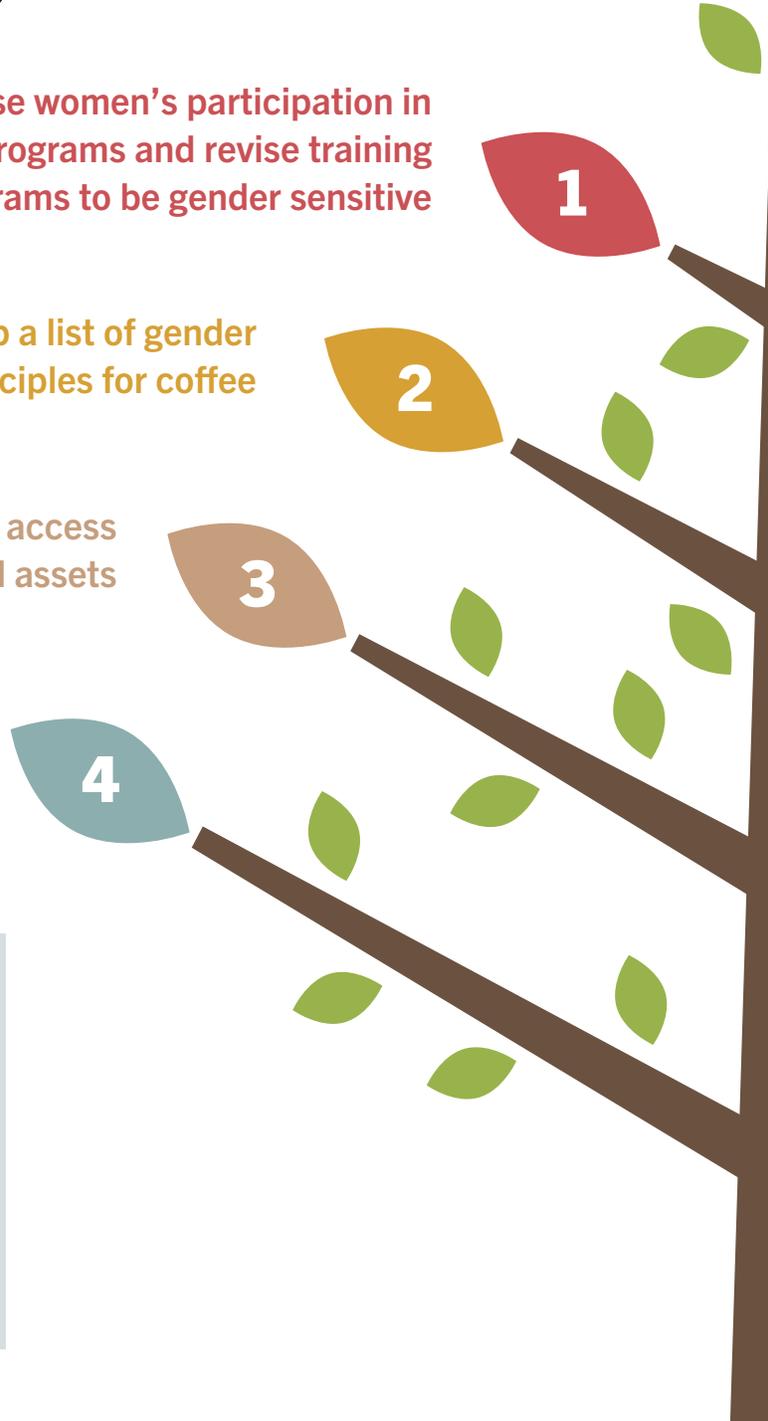
Increase women's participation in training programs and revise training programs to be gender sensitive

Develop a list of gender equity principles for coffee

Improve women's access to credit and assets

Achieve greater gender balance in leadership positions

The Partnership believes that addressing gender equity issues in coffee-producing households and communities will lead to improved productivity and quality of coffee as well as improved livelihoods. These eight recommendations can be undertaken to accelerate gender equity in coffee value chains.





5

Support joint decision-making and ownership of income and resources at the household level

6

Specifically source and market coffee from women producers and coffee produced under conditions of gender equity

7

Invest in programs to reduce time pressures for women

8

Continue to build understanding through research and measurement

In the full report, each of the recommendations is accompanied by ample background from our research, with links to relevant case examples of good practice, and draws on industry feedback and experience. Text boxes highlight potential unintended consequences.

Download the full report at
www.coffeeinstitute.org/genderreport

Enabling Factors to Ensure Success

When acting on the recommendations, there are a number of important enabling factors that will increase chances of success:

- ***Partnerships and coordination*** among industry stakeholders and within coffee-growing regions will be critical to move forward with the right expertise and resources to be efficient and effective.
 - ***Context analysis and baseline diagnostics*** must be part of program design. This will aid projects in choosing the right approaches for diverse coffee-producing contexts and will position them to capture key metrics necessary to build learning and empirical evidence.
 - ***Industry has the power to use a wide variety of incentives*** to directly and indirectly influence gender equity at origin. These include supplier qualification criteria, increased volume commitments, program support, and price premiums.
- ***Men's engagement is essential.*** The challenges of gender equity are not just a “women’s issue” but a household and community issue. Change requires men and women working together to achieve different and better ways of relating to one another.





1

Increase Women's Participation in Training Programs and Revise Training Programs to Be Gender Sensitive

- Ensure women, as well as men, are invited to producer training programs. Invite both the man and woman of the household to attend the training; they could attend together – if culturally appropriate and feasible – or attend the same training at separate times.
- Exercise cultural sensitivity about men and women interacting in social spaces.
- Ask producer organizations to conduct an analysis of the coffee-processing roles and responsibilities among their membership and target training to the appropriate individuals.
- Schedule training sessions on days and at times when both men and women can attend.
- Find creative ways to provide childcare options and other support needed to give women time to attend.
- Hire both female and male trainers.
- Ask participants to share their learning with others in their household, community, or farmer organization.
- Track participation through sex-disaggregated data.
- Establish quotas for participation by women, with explanations for why it is important.
- Offer accommodations to make participation feasible and comfortable for both men and women.
- Update training content to incorporate a theme of gender equity, such as that applied in Farming as a Family Business⁶ trainings. Include instructions for training facilitators on how to encourage gender balance in participation and how to foster a learning environment appropriate to both women and men.
- Engage women in cupping trainings and site visits to farms.

⁷ *Farming as a Family Business approaches aim to change gender norms and increase crop quality and production by engaging the entire household in the agronomy, quality, and other production-related trainings and activities that they do.*

2

Develop a List of Gender Equity Principles for Coffee to Unite and Galvanize the Industry

- Collaborate in the development of gender-equity principles for coffee.
- Sign on to the Gender Equity Principles for Coffee, once they are established.
- Report on your organization's efforts to support the principles.

The United Nations' Women's Empowerment Principles (WEP) are a potential model for gender-equity principles for coffee. These principles were developed through a collaboration of the UN Global Compact and UN Women, an entity established by the United Nations in 2010 to unify its efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. The WEP "emphasize the business case for corporate action to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and are

informed by real-life business practices and input gathered from across the globe."⁸

- Principle 1: Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality
- Principle 2: Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination
- Principle 3: Ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all women and men workers
- Principle 4: Promote education, training, and professional development for women
- Principle 5: Implement enterprise development, supply chain, and marketing practices that empower women
- Principle 6: Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy
- Principle 7: Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

Similar principles can be designed for coffee through an industry-wide consultation process built on existing knowledge of gender dynamics in coffee production, as well as input from members throughout the industry.

⁸ www.weprinciples.org

3

Improve Women's Access to Credit and Assets

- Learn about cultural barriers (including inheritance rights) to asset ownership and control for women.
- Offer loans that do not rely upon ownership of land, a requirement that disproportionately disqualifies women.
- Seek out opportunities to support female producers and women members of producer communities with credit.
- Learn about how men and women may use credit differently. Support credit and investment into both farm and non-farm activities, because coffee farming outcomes are impacted by both.
- Work with lenders who demonstrate a commitment to providing loans to both men and women (or consider putting in place requirements that lenders adopt lending policies that promote gender equity within a specific timeframe).
- Provide support for cooperative-based women's savings groups and revolving fund groups.
- Measure and track lending using sex-disaggregated data regarding opportunities and barriers to acquiring credit and assets.
- Provide financial literacy trainings for better financial and business management of household and farm income.



Photo by Root Capital

4

Achieve Greater Gender Balance in Leadership Positions

- Create incentives for cooperatives and producer groups to adopt formal policies to increase the percentage of women in leadership positions, such as board members, staff, and trainers.
- Enlist women to act as model farmers in train-the-trainer programs.



- Invest in educational programs for girls and women in the community so that they can meet minimum education requirements to serve in leadership positions and build confidence to act as leaders.
- Provide support to women's committees where women can gain experience and confidence to take on leadership roles within cooperatives and producer groups.
- Encourage producer groups to increase women's membership, e.g., by changing membership criteria or by encouraging men to give land to their wives and daughters.
- Create opportunities for cooperatives and producer groups to interact with, learn from, and support each other to increase gender equity within their structures.
- Promote literacy and numeracy training for adult women so they are prepared to access leadership positions more easily and be more effective in these roles.

5

Support Joint Decision-Making and Ownership of Income and Resources at the Household Level

- Work with cooperatives and other supply chain actors to help producers identify and analyze intra-household dynamics and inequalities to achieve greater sharing of decision-making within their households. Different methodologies and approaches exist to address this. The GALS methodology is one such tool that allows men and women within the household to discuss how gender issues affect their own development and create a shared vision of the household as a “family unit” and of the coffee farm as a “family business.”
- Encourage cooperatives to create and fund a gender specialist position, a local person who helps communities and families find ways for men and women to work together to improve incomes and quality of life.
- Make men part of any intervention, so that families as an entity can decide to work together to improve farming outcomes.
- Offer gender-sensitization trainings focused on men, and encourage men’s full participation as partners and change agents in the effort to achieve more gender equity.
- Offer support for income generation by women through access to micro-lending, savings groups, and training.



Photo by Sustainable Harvest Harvest Coffee Importers/Kim Cook

6

Specifically Source and Market Coffee from Women Producers and Coffee Produced under Conditions of Gender Equity

- Work with female coffee producers to help them improve the quality of their coffee.
- Help women build their capabilities to market their coffee and obtain a fair price.
- Develop and market differentiated products positioned as “women’s coffee” or as “gender-equity coffee.”
- Tell the story of women producers, or gender-equity successes in your supply chain.
- Pay a premium for coffee produced by women coffee farmers or is produced under conditions of gender equity.
- Leverage certifiers to verify that coffee is produced by women or that the coffee meets the designated “gender-equity” standards.



Photo by Sustainable Harvest Coffee Importers



Invest in Programs to Reduce Time Pressures for Women

- Invest in programs that help reduce time pressures for women and improve the distribution of chores within the household. Some interventions can ease the daily burden on women and reduce the time spent on daily chores. For example, water pumps can reduce the time women spend carrying water, and energy-efficient cook stoves can reduce the need for wood and thus the time spent on cutting and carrying firewood. Proper needs assessments should be carried out prior to making such investments to ensure adequate implementation and sustainability of the interventions.
- Engage men in couples dialogues and household discussion methodologies to increase the sharing of responsibilities at the household and farm level and reduce the burden on women.



Continue to Build Understanding through Research and Measurement

- Begin capturing sex-disaggregated data wherever possible.
- Build gender-based measures into the design of existing and new programs aimed at improving producer outcomes. Capture pre- and post-intervention metrics.
- Conduct pilot programs to measure the impact of gender-focused interventions.
- Partner with development organizations, funders, and supply chain partners at origin to carry out research.
- Engage producer organizations in participatory research.
- Publish results to garner greater investment from industry and other funders.
- Use findings to improve effectiveness of gender-focused policies and practices.

The Partnership for Gender Equity: Next Steps

The full report “The Way Forward: Accelerating Gender Equity in Coffee Value Chains” describes how promoting gender equity at all levels of the value chain has been shown to have positive outcomes on the development of coffee-producing households and communities. In turn, increased gender equity in coffee households and communities has been shown to have a positive effect on coffee quality and productivity. To help the industry capture these benefits, the Partnership has identified next steps to accelerate efforts to address gender inequalities in the coffee value chain. The Partnership is a multi-stage initiative, composed of three main stages that logically flow from one another. With the publication of the report, the project will move from Stage 1 toward the next stages of the initiative:

Stage 2 - Strategy Development & Pilot Projects

The objectives for this stage are to (1) generate proof of concept of the means and impact of improving gender equity in the coffee value chain, (2) attract investment to implement programs on a larger scale, and (3) build industry capacity and practices to positively impact gender balance. The chief activity for this stage will involve partnering with private sector companies to implement a series of pilot projects. This active learning

approach will bring immediate benefits to coffee communities, as well as build the case for additional investors to expand programs in Stage 3. Key drivers of pilot development will be industry interest and available funding. The Partnership will work with industry members and development organizations to identify communities where projects can be piloted, and solicit the necessary resources to fund them.

Stage 3 - Scalable Investments

The objective for this stage is to broaden and mainstream gender-aware approaches and interventions by the industry to further the goals of improving producers' lives and the supply of coffee quality.

The Partnership will take the lessons learned from pilot studies and develop projects on a wider regional basis. Stage 2 pilots that demonstrate impact and are ready for expansion will be converted into Stage 3 activities – along with support from industry and public partners. The Partnership will help build public-private partnerships and secure funding and resources for collaboratively designed and implemented programs to be scaled up in Stage 3. In addition, the Partnership will continue, as needed, to recruit organizations to adopt the Gender Equity Principles and inte-

grate gender-aware policies and practices into their operations.

Coffee industry members are encouraged to collaborate with and seek support from the Partnership to develop gender-sensitive policies and practices; design, participate in, and/or fund pilot projects; coordinate efforts at origin; and share data and insights with other industry members.

As this effort grows and evolves, the Partnership will maintain its focus on the steps necessary to include women's voices and optimize their contributions in coffee-producing communities around the world; to deepen the impact of the specialty coffee industry's sustainability efforts; and to improve the quantity and quality of coffee production around the world by investing in women.



Conclusion

In communities where women share decision making with men, and where they have access to the resources that allow them to contribute fully to the development of their households and communities, they create better futures for themselves, their families, and the coffee industry. Yet today, women in coffee-producing communities are underpaid, undervalued, and disenfranchised. Their potential contributions to household income are limited and this has a negative impact on the quantity and quality of coffee production.

There remains an opportunity to further develop and widely disseminate approaches for coffee-producing communities to encourage and capitalize on improved gender equity. Likewise, members of the industry need guidance on how they can support that effort throughout the value chain. The industry can help address the problem of gender inequity and stands to benefit from improved gender equity with its promise of contributing to a more resilient supply chain. A number of practical recommendations have been

provided to equip the different stakeholders in the coffee value chain to accelerate gender equity in coffee.

CQI is actively seeking to form alliances and will, in the long-term, secure funding for collaboratively designed and implemented programs, many of which will link to ongoing company-specific and industry-wide efforts in sustainability. The Partnership for Gender Equity presents multiple opportunities for partner contributions to be recognized, and members of the coffee industry are invited to participate and invest in the next stages of the initiative.

All stakeholders in the coffee value chain will benefit from these efforts. They will contribute to improved livelihoods and financial outcomes for the coffee-producing households, thus leading to stronger and more resilient communities and families. They will also lead to an improved and more sustainable supply of coffee for roasters and importers/exporters in the years to come.

Contributors

This work would not have been possible without the generous support of many partners, including those who have provided critical financial resources in the first stage of this initiative.

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