



Solidaridad

**AFFIRMATIVE GENDER ACTIONS
AND INCLUSIVITY REPORT 2022**



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Hello, everyone! It's great to be back!

I am excited to share with you the 4th edition of the Gender Inclusivity Annual Report 2022 for Solidaridad Asia, which highlights the progress and challenges in promoting gender inclusivity and women's empowerment. I am particularly thrilled to introduce you to "feminization of the supply chain", a concept that offers a nuanced and comprehensive methodology to address the unique needs of women, particularly in rural contexts.

It aims to empower women throughout the supply chain, recognizing their invaluable contributions and potential for driving sustainable change. In the following sections, I will delve deeper into the framework and strategies associated with the feminization of the supply chain, offering practical insights and examples from successful initiatives. Over the past year, I have actively engaged in various projects and programmes, successfully showcasing my capacity to get integrated into the formal supply chain and lead by example.

This report serves as a highlight of the initiatives undertaken by myself and my allies throughout the past year. It showcases the progress made, the challenges encountered, and the tangible results achieved. By documenting the collective efforts, I aim to inspire others and foster a culture of inclusivity and gender equality within the organization.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF 2022

Women's participation in agriculture is a known fact and so is their non-recognition (not receiving financial consideration) in the formal supply chain. Our efforts to economically empower women have resulted in:

Collectivization of more than 1,000 women farmers and engaging them in aggregation of produce, and participation in higher value chain activities (producing value-added products):

20,000 women now have control over their income and have got formal recognition as farmers. Not only do they receive money directly in their bank accounts, they also have access to digital services.

Inclusion 2 Integration (i2i) model which was piloted last year in Bangladesh, is now ready to be scaled up with replication in India and Sri Lanka. The i2i model was further enhanced through introduction of the QR code-based mechanism to propagate engagement of women farmers in India. Cooperative model of women collective was introduced in Sri Lanka with the engagement of 500 women farmers, with a plan to scale it up to 1,000 by the next year.

End-to-end women-owned and operated enterprise was tested where women dairy farmers in Bangladesh were engaged in livestock management, aggregation of milk, processing it for further value-added products (yoghurt, clarified butter, sweets), and three women-operated sweet shops were established.

Access to services, information, and inputs are critical enablers for women to engage in supply chain activities, especially when key farming activities are executed by women. Unfortunately, the agriculture extension services are designed based on the needs of men. We at Solidaridad, in the last year, have taken conscious and concrete steps to include the needs of women farmers in designing interventions that facilitate access to service and inputs.

Capacities of more than 100,000 women farmers were built on good agricultural practices through in-person training and digital outreach.

Bridging the digital divide: 15,000 women were supported with digital ownership to access agriculture advisory services, trade (price, quality and quantity) information which has seen increase in the quality of produce, thereby fetching a higher price in the market.



Women Resource Centres established earlier were strengthened to include distribution of farm equipment conducive to use by women.

The supply chain markets are a distant dream for women farmers. To encourage participation of women in supply chain and ensure market access, we adopted a multipronged approach:

Women collectives were linked to the input and output markets, which has enabled at least 1,000 women farmers to have direct access to markets.

3 women-operated sweet shops were established as a pilot to demonstrate a supply chain which is women-run and operated on an end-to-end basis.

500 women entrepreneurs were promoted or strengthened during the last year. Some of these women-run enterprises provide nutritional services, some sell agricultural inputs while others are in the business of selling value-added products from soybean and milk.

I am grateful for the support of my colleagues who have made these achievements possible. Together, we have paved the way for transformative change and set a solid foundation for future endeavors. I look forward to being on this journey with you and engaging in fruitful discussions to further advance the cause of gender equality and women's empowerment within the supply chain.

I am deeply grateful to Dr Shatadru Chattopadhyay, Managing Director of Solidaridad Asia, for his visionary leadership and invaluable guidance in enabling gender mainstreaming. His unwavering commitment has been instrumental in driving positive change. I would also like to thank Nitin Rao for his valuable insights and continuous support throughout our gender mainstreaming journey. I appreciate the unwavering commitment of the Gender team in Asia, whose tireless efforts have been pivotal to our programme's success. Special thanks to Arjun Phillips for his invaluable support in compiling this report. I am also thankful to the country managers, programme leads, and their teams for their unwavering commitment to gender inclusivity. Lastly, I extend my gratitude to the inspiring women farmers who have entrusted us with their livelihoods and fearlessly challenged social norms. Together, we have made significant strides in empowering women in the supply chain, bringing change that matters.

THE ASIA GENDER TEAM



Neha
Gender Lead, Asia

Neha is Senior Manager, Gender in Solidaridad Asia. She has an experience of more than a decade working on various gender-related issues. In her present role, she is working on integrating gender into all programmes and projects of Solidaridad Asia.



Nitin

Nitin is the Planning and Innovation Lead for Solidaridad Asia. A development professional with close to two decades of experience, Nitin was the CEO of a consulting firm prior to joining Solidaridad. Nitin is solution-oriented and strongly feels that integrated and multiple methods are effective ways to achieve results.



Suksma

Suksma joined Solidaridad Indonesia in 2015. Prior to that, she was working with local and regional organizations focusing on health, harm reduction, gender, and human rights. She is currently handling communication and gender portfolios for Solidaridad Indonesia.



Heena

Heena is a development professional with a Master's degree in Human Resources. She brings on board more than seven years of experience of working with premier executive search firms. She has experience in handling and delivering multiple projects and streams of work while applying excellent partner management and influencing skills. She supports employee and organizational development through training initiatives.



Preeti

Preeti comes with 14 years of experience in the CSR and NGO space. A Masters in Geology, Preeti has expertise in areas like rural livelihood, watershed management, and GIS mapping, and has actively worked with rural women, providing them training on capacity-building in agricultural activities, nutrition, and rural entrepreneurship. Preeti focuses on empowering women through comprehensive approaches that address behavioral and social aspects of their lives.



Arjun

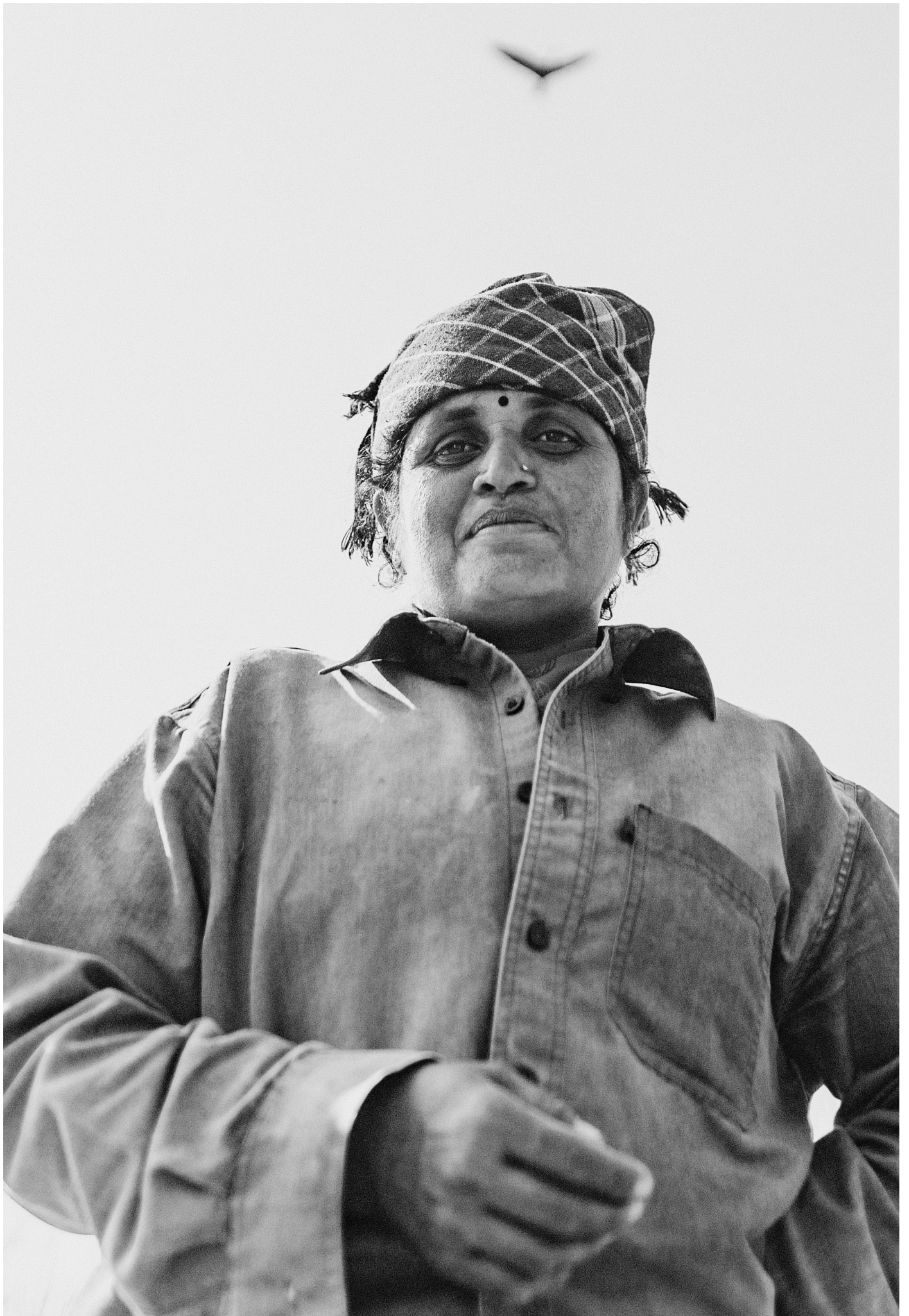
Arjun is the Gender Lead for Solidaridad India. He has a decade of experience in the development sector. He is passionate about empowering women through sustainable practices which he believes can be achieved by sectoral transformation and continuous learning and improvement.



Shahena

Shahena has 14 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation (M&E). She has led the M&E portfolio in various development projects, collaborating with organizations such as the European Union, USAID, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and The Global Fund. Shahena's expertise lies in designing comprehensive logical frameworks, impact pathways, and M&E systems to effectively monitor progress against key targets. With a strong understanding of gender dynamics and social norms, Shahena is well-versed in conducting gender assessments using tools like the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). Her profound understanding of gender issues and her ability to integrate them into development initiatives make her a highly valuable and sought-after professional in her field.





FROM THE MD'S DESK

Dr Shatadru Chattopadhyay
Managing Director, Solidaridad Asia



With immense pleasure and unwavering enthusiasm, I introduce the Inclusivity Annual Report 2022 for Solidaridad Asia. This report serves as a testament to Solidaridad Asia's remarkable progress and the challenges we have encountered in our relentless pursuit of gender inclusivity and women's empowerment within the supply chain. We are proud to showcase the transformative changes we have initiated and the culture of inclusivity and gender equality we have fostered.

While there is widespread recognition of the imperative to reduce negative social and environmental impacts in supply chain activities, achieving true gender equality continues to pose significant challenges. The prioritization of gender compliance remains inconsistent, and there is a lack of consensus on its precise definition. However, it is crucial to acknowledge women's vital and often unseen role in agriculture and allied industries. Remarkably, women constitute nearly 37 percent of the workforce in the agricultural sector. Unfortunately, women across diverse social categories encounter substantial gender-specific constraints rooted in deep-seated social and cultural norms that dictate acceptable behaviors and prescribed roles. They also face unequal access to crucial resources such as land, credit, training, and technology. These inequities limit their potential as economic actors and impede their ability to fully reap the benefits of their contributions.

Within the pages of this report, you will discover a series of compelling case studies that outline Solidaridad Asia's unwavering commitment to "changing the game" by providing women with opportunities to participate in inclusive and prosperous supply chains while fostering sustainable practices. By empowering women at every stage of the supply chain and recognizing their invaluable contributions, we unlock their potential as catalysts for driving sustainable change.

None of these remarkable achievements would have been possible without the unwavering support and collaboration of our esteemed colleagues, generous donors, and invaluable partners. I express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of them. As we embark on the next phase of our journey, I extend a warm invitation to all of you to join us in advancing the cause of gender equality and women's empowerment within the supply chain. Let us come together for fruitful discussions, exchange insights, and work hand in hand to create a more inclusive and equitable future.

Together, we possess the power to make a tangible difference.



INTRODUCTION

At the heart of achieving sustainability lies the imperative to empower women and recognize their integral role in driving change. Acknowledging the significance of making women a central part of this transformation necessitates changes in structures and systems. Drawing from my extensive experience of working with women in rural areas and astute understanding of the complexities within the supply chain, I have developed the concept of “feminization of the supply chain”. This concept emphasizes the need to actively integrate women and their perspectives throughout the entire supply chain (and not just limiting to the production level), ultimately leading to more sustainable and inclusive practices.

There are numerous forums, and platforms focused on highlighting and empowering women in the formal workforce, and I have been an active participant in such forums. However, over a period of time, I have come to recognize the urgent need to expand our focus to also include rural women empowerment. Despite their active involvement in production activities, these women frequently face challenges related to recognition, access to resources, and ownership. Additionally, the formalization of markets through gender-blind policies further marginalizes women, alienating them from the system and any source of income.

If we need to make supply chains inclusive, and if we want to work towards poverty alleviation for women in rural areas, I propose that we work on “feminization of the supply chain”. The key focus of the concept is on the following aspects:

1. Establishing a production system that is both resilient and inclusive.
2. Inclusive service delivery aiming to provide equitable access to services for all individuals.
3. Fostering inclusive market systems that benefit all.

With the establishment of pilots around this concept and the reported success from various geographical locations in the last two years, I have grown more confident about its viability and market acceptance. In the final section of the report, I have presented the detailed framework of the concept. I am eager to engage in discussions with individuals from diverse backgrounds to further refine and strengthen this concept. By collaborating and working together, we can collectively strive towards achieving our objective of inclusive supply chains. I welcome open and constructive dialogue to foster innovation and maximize the positive impact of our efforts.

Coming back to the report, Solidaridad Asia has been trying to ‘change the game’ by opening spaces for women to become a part of the agricultural supply chain. Our strategy of training them on good practices, providing a supportive business ecosystem, advocating a conducive policy environment, and stimulating increased market uptake helps us to create gender-inclusive supply chains. Our interventions have equipped many women in rural areas to climb the ladder of economic prosperity and adopt sustainable practices that make their farming business resilient to environmental change. While unfairness and challenges remain, I am sure that with Solidaridad’s programmes, we will be able to take concrete steps to empower rural women.

For a better understanding, I have compartmentalized this report into our three overarching themes – prosperity, social inclusivity, and in balance with nature. The aim is to see the interventions also from the point of interconnectedness with Solidaridad’s vision. Hope you enjoy reading it.

A. PROSPERITY (ECONOMIC)

We are all aware of the tremendous economic progress in Asia, with many experts calling this an “Asian century”. Despite the economic progress, a large section of people are reeling from poverty and inaccessibility to economic resources. Glaringly, we see big data gaps on sex disaggregated information on poverty. Open Data Watch, an international non-profit headquartered in Washington, D.C., and UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in April 2021 conducted a study in Bangladesh and four other countries in Asia and found significant data gaps with as much as 46 percent of the gender indicators missing in the national data collection mechanisms. If asset ownership can be considered as a proxy to economic status, the sex disaggregated data on asset ownership in Asian countries is a reminder of how women have been systematically and structurally alienated from economic participation. An Asian Development Bank pilot study confirms that many women in parts of developing Asia still face barriers to owning assets like land or a house.

The Human Development Index shows that majority of Asian countries fall under the medium human development bracket. Women represent two-thirds of the poor in Asia; the economic insecurity is often caused by discrimination in employment and education. The Gender Development Indexes reveal that in many of these countries women have little control over economic resources, there is greater income inequality between men and women coupled with a huge educational gap.

As part of Solidaridad Asia, our relentless efforts revolve around empowering women to participate in the market system, engage in economic activities and have control over income. Below are some of the models we are using to achieve our goals vis-à-vis women’s empowerment:

1. Collectivisation

As women, we constantly face numerous structural challenges that hinder our participation in agriculture. These challenges range from limited access to landholding and collaterals to the lack of recognition as farmers. The agricultural sector is predominantly influenced by male-dominated thinking and practices, making it difficult for us to establish ourselves. The services essential for agricultural development, such as extension services for training, input shops, agricultural tools and equipment, market participation requirements, and formal supply chain contracting mechanisms, to name a few (and this list is not exhaustive), have historically exhibited a patriarchal approach and hence are not able to benefit/reach out to women farmers. Changing such deep-rooted systems requires a comprehensive and long-term approach, as these challenges cannot be resolved overnight. It is crucial to address these issues to foster more inclusive systems that empower women to actively engage in the formal economy.

One approach that holds promise in tackling these challenges is the formation of collectives. Over the past year, we have conducted experiments with collectives in various regions, and the outcomes have been incredibly encouraging.



Pragati Mahila Swayam Sahayata Samuh, a self-help group (SHG), was started by 12 women in Mozar village of Yavatmal district in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. Vidarbha is often in the news for farmer suicides. Understanding the need of the hour, the group of women decided to supplement their family income by starting a small-scale business by organizing themselves as an SHG to sell spices, turmeric and coriander powder. In the initial stage, the group started saving a small amount for their SHG. Of the 12 members, nine women are farmers and the remaining are agricultural laborers.

Solidaridad established a training and resource center at Mozar which provided them with an opportunity to learn about good agricultural practices. They received training on the preparation of Dashparni, Neem Arka, Jivamrut, vermicompost as well as on soil testing, and how to market their produce.

“Extensive use of chemical fertilizers made the soil hard and impacted its fertility. When we started practicing sustainable agricultural methods and transitioned towards natural crop protection products, we saw positive changes in the form of increased production and improved soil health,” said Anu Tai Nikam, a member of the SHG. “We don’t have to visit the town to buy chemical pesticides and fertilizers as we can prepare the natural crop protection products ourselves.” The cotton production, the group said, has improved from 5 quintals per acre to 8 quintals per acre.

The group also received training on mushroom cultivation and is planning to start a unit for its production. The women farmers started using natural crop protection products on their farms, which led to reduction in expenses on inputs. Additionally, they created awareness on sustainable farming practices in their village, which in turn helped other farmers increase their income. Members of the SHG are also active in disseminating the information received through Solidaridad agri-advisories among the farmers in the locality, and demonstrating the methods to prepare natural crop protection products.

Solidaridad conducted an exhibition of the products prepared by the Pragati Mahila Swayam Sahayata Samuh at a Solidaridad training and resource center, to help introduce their business to the villagers.

Inclusion in Formal Supply Chain

Agricultural supply chains (various stages involved from production to marketing and distribution) are dominated by men and women remain at the last and the most exploited leg of the ladder. Markets by virtue of their gender blindness have created structures that act as hindrance for women to participate in the formal economy. There is evidence on how the markets have played a role to structurally eliminate women from the formal agriculture supply chains. “Feminization of supply chain” aims to tackle the issue of absence of women from the supply chain. While the strategy is in its formative phase, we have tried and tested a few of its components and are really enthused by the impact it has created.

Inclusion through integration is one of the pathways which can lead to women getting formally included in the supply chain. The dairy model which kicked off in Bangladesh two years ago has been replicated in India and Sri Lanka, and today I can proudly attest that the pilot is now a proven model ready to be integrated into new programmes across Asia.



The dairy supply chain in Sri Lanka is fragmented and dominated by men. The country is heavily dependent on imports to fulfill its consumption requirement. Recognizing the need for improvement, the government has prioritized the strengthening of the dairy sector and building a more resilient supply. As is the case in most Asian countries, women in animal husbandry play a critical role as primary caregivers, yet they are often excluded from formal market participation. In an effort to advocate the policies of the government and engage the private players, Solidaridad devised a cooperative model, wherein women dairy farmers would be provided with knowledge and skills to adopt good dairy farming practices as part of capacity building, and would be subsequently connected to the formal market.

S.W. Dushanthi Silva (48) has been a dairy farmer for the last eight years. In Dushanthi's family of seven, four are dependents. From her three cows, she gets 30-35 litres of milk everyday, with a litre priced at LKR 12. Her monthly income is about LKR 18,000, of which LKR 10,000 is spent on cattle rearing expenses. Her dairy income is the only steady source of money for the family as her husband Jayaratha works as a daily laborer after medical retirement from the military forces. He attends the training with Dushanthi and is supportive of her decision to join the Solidaridad programme and vocal about its benefits.

Interestingly, Dushanthi was among the 29 percent of the baseline survey correspondents who had said they were not willing to attend any training. However, after attending a few training sessions, she registered herself as a milk farmer at the Milk Collection Centre of Pelwatte Dairy company, which is a private sector player supporting the project. Pelwatte Dairy has established a Milk Collection Centre in the village from where the milk is collected and money is given to the registered women farmers.

Although in early stages, the project has already achieved a significant milestone by registering 65 women farmers at the Milk Collection Centre. This marks the beginning of a more inclusive and equitable approach to organizing the dairy supply chain. Additionally, this model can serve as evidence for policy advocacy with the government and private sector, promoting the adoption of inclusive dairy supply chains.



3. Entrepreneurship Development

As I reflect on the path to empowerment, one vital approach that resonates strongly with me is nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit in women. The pervasive influence of patriarchy often hinders many of us from pursuing independent livelihoods. Even for those who manage to overcome these barriers, the journey is fraught with challenges. At Solidaridad Asia, our strategy is centred around rewarding and leveling the playing field for women, fostering their entrepreneurial aspirations.

The entrepreneurship model aims to empower aspiring and experienced female entrepreneurs who want to launch, manage, and expand their businesses and enterprises, and to foster inclusive, resilient, and sustainable business models. In order to scale women entrepreneurs' contribution to economic growth and sustainable development, and to enable their significant engagement in entrepreneurship ecosystems, the model aims to address the gender disparities in enterprise development.



“My husband left us, and back then my only source of income was shrimp cultivation in which I wasn’t actively involved, so I neither had much experience nor the expertise in modern farming methods of shrimp production. I used to cultivate shrimp on a 2.5 bigha land using conventional farming methods which were costly and inefficient, and which resulted in crop loss. I was disappointed, and had almost given up shrimp cultivation.”

Monowara Begum heard about Solidaridad’s ‘Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Linkages (SaFaL)’ project and joined it in 2015. She learned about improving farm management practices including preparing nursery and stocking, feed management, and so on. She also got the opportunity to learn about ecosystem-based shrimp farming under another project of Solidaridad called ‘Sustainable Coastal and Marine Fisheries’. “Using that learning, I have planted mangrove saplings (*Sonneratia apetala*) on both sides of the pond, resulting in reduced dependency on supplement feed supply because fallen leaves from the mangrove produce natural feed along with filtering the water (by the pneumatophores while water enters into the pond through the canal). I have also established a mangrove nursery beside my pond,” she said.

“The booming shrimp production has ensured better livelihood for us,” she added. In 2020, Monowara had cultivated 135 kg of shrimp, which increased to 140 kg in 2021 and 210 kg in 2022. This is a 100 percent increase from the 105 kg of shrimp she cultivated in 2018. Further, the ecosystem-based shrimp farming helped her get a better price for the produce – in 2020, she got BDT 700 per kg, in 2021 it was BDT 780 per kg, and in 2022, BDT 840 per kg. The mangrove saplings on either sides of the gher has also generated extra income – she sold the mangrove fruit and earned BDT 32,000 and another BDT 2,000 came from selling the branches.

“I strongly attribute this change to the application of ecosystem-based shrimp farming, which includes practices like planting mangrove saplings. I have noticed that the growth of shrimp, and their survival rate is much better compared to traditional shrimp farming practices.” With better income and higher profits, Monowara could save enough to build a brick house and a wooden door, buy two goats, a gas stove, and even repay a loan of BDT 35,000.

“My success has inspired neighboring women farmers to participate in the training sessions of Solidaridad. My neighboring farmers started planting mangrove saplings on their pond’s embankment, which has boosted the sale of saplings from my nursery.”

B. INCLUSIVITY (SOCIAL PROSPERITY)

Patriarchal norms have historically impeded many of us from being independent and participating in the market. The access to markets and resources is non-inclusive to women which exacerbates our exclusion. It is therefore critical that an enabling environment is provided to women, which allows them to easily participate in the markets. To address this, Solidaridad has undertaken interventions that nudge markets towards social change. These are:

1. House hold-level Interventions

The journey towards women's empowerment often involves challenging deeply entrenched patriarchal structures and social norms, which can lead to resistance and pushback from those in positions of power. Many times, women are restricted to doing household chores and not allowed to work outside. Based on the feedback we received, we initiated a sensitization campaign at the household level. Field experiences tell us that it is beneficial to build trust and gain the support of the family members in order to effectively work with women. By starting with issues which are more acceptable to society it is possible to establish a foundation of trust with the community. Once this relationship is established, it becomes easier to address other important issues related to women's empowerment. This approach not only helps to tackle the backlash from communities but also accelerates progress to more sustainable and impactful results.





Santa Parvin (24) of Ramkrishnapur village in Bangladesh received the Joyeeta Award 2022^[1], which recognizes and pays tribute to the struggles and contribution of women in economic and social development.

Santa lives with her husband, who is a day laborer and two children. The family could hardly afford daily meals with the husband's income. With her back against the wall, she joined the SaFaL project as a community nutrition volunteer (CNV) in 2015. She acquired skills in basic healthcare (e.g. checking blood pressure and blood sugar) counseling, and information services on health, and nutrition. The CNVs provide health services to the most-disadvantaged in rural communities. Santa further optimized her skills to find alternative income sources such as tailoring, and goat rearing which together unlocked a monthly earning of BDT 8,000-9,000 for her.

This additional income enabled her to send her children to schools, save money for future needs, and repair her house.

While the economic benefits secured the family financially, the social benefits were transformative. A victim of trafficking and previously divorced, Santa faced humiliation and societal discrimination. Without an income, her voice never mattered and was even suppressed. However, things changed for her as she started earning. Her community started respecting her opinion.

“When you can buy your kids chocolates or ice cream with your money, it's a heavenly feeling. This inspires me to work hard and also contribute to women empowerment,” she said.

The annual Joyeeta Awards in Bangladesh – a government initiative introduced in 2011 – have made a big impact in raising awareness about women's empowerment. Every year, the awards are given to inspiring women in areas like entrepreneurship, social development, education, employment, motherhood, and prevention of repression.

2. Access to Information

Access to knowledge is vital for improving agricultural practices and livelihoods. Yet entrenched gender roles limit access to extension services, training programmes, and other sources of agricultural information to many of us. In addition, we face barriers of language, illiteracy, limited digital literacy, which exacerbate the information deficit.

Solidaridad has taken various initiatives to address the challenges of limited access to information and knowledge for women farmers in Asia. One of the key steps is to make the extension team more gender-inclusive, by engaging more women as extension workers and trainers. We developed digital platforms specifically designed for women farmers, which provide access to relevant agricultural information, weather information and market updates. These platforms are tailored to the needs and preferences of women farmers, including those who may have limited literacy or digital skills.

Solidaridad has also taken steps to make training programmes more accessible to women farmers. This includes holding training sessions at convenient time and locations, and providing childcare support to enable women with young children to attend.



Fifty one-year-old Padumoni Deka is a small tea grower. She took over the farm after the death of her husband in 2011. New to the business, she had no knowledge about tea cultivation and struggled between bringing up her two children and running the plantation. The thought of selling the farm often crossed her mind. However, after attending a few training sessions organized by the All Bodoland Small Tea Growers Association and Solidaridad, she was introduced to the Trinita programme. With guidance from the field team, she has been able to reduce her input costs and increase the cultivation area from 15 hectare to 16 hectare. Her success has had a spillover effect – jobs for 20 women and 6 men on her plantation.

3. Nudge Social Norms

Social norms are deeply ingrained beliefs and behaviors that are often rooted in culture and tradition. These norms are not only enforced by society as a whole, but may also be internalized into practice by women themselves. In some cases, women may even perpetuate these norms through their own actions and beliefs, even if they are harmful or limit their own opportunities. This can create significant barriers to women's empowerment.

Empowering women economically and increasing their agency can be a catalyst for gradual change in their belief systems, providing them with the confidence to challenge retrogressive norms. Solidaridad has developed innovative mechanisms to shift/nudge these norms and reach out to women in rural areas. Solidaridad's efforts to economically empower women are also aimed at creating a ripple effect within communities. When women are empowered, they can become role models and inspire other women to challenge retrogressive norms and pursue their own economic opportunities. This can lead to a broader shift in attitudes and behaviors, paving the way for more inclusive and gender-equal societies

I am delighted to share a remarkable achievement where Solidaridad successfully resolved a land tenure conflict between PT. Kencana Alam Permai (PT. KAP), a corporate entity, and the marginalized community who had been living on the land for generations. The government commonly allocates land to companies for a fixed period. In the given case PT. KAP obtained an HGU determination covering an area of 5,511.83 hectares, administering 8 villages from 2 sub-districts confirmed by the Letter from the Head of the National Land Agency. But this process often neglects the historical communities residing in those areas. Recognizing the potential risks and impact it could have on the farming communities, Solidaridad raised concerns about the historical, ownership, and tenurial settlements that could also harm PT. KAP. We conducted a thorough risk analysis study, considering legal, environmental, and social factors, backed by rigorous participatory research in Indonesia. Presenting the findings to the company's management, we highlighted the potential damage to their operations and reputation. Our efforts convinced them to reverse their decision and initiate the transfer of the land back to the villagers. This successful intervention not only protected the rights and livelihoods of the marginalized community but also promoted responsible land management practices and upheld the principles of social justice.



4. Develop and Promote Women's Leadership

Don't we all feel proud when women become strong leaders? Nurturing women's leadership has been a key focus of Solidaridad's interventions. Cultivating a strong women's leadership will result in greater social change. There is evidence that women at leadership positions exert positive influences that are in line with sustainable development and that's what we experience in our work with the rural communities.



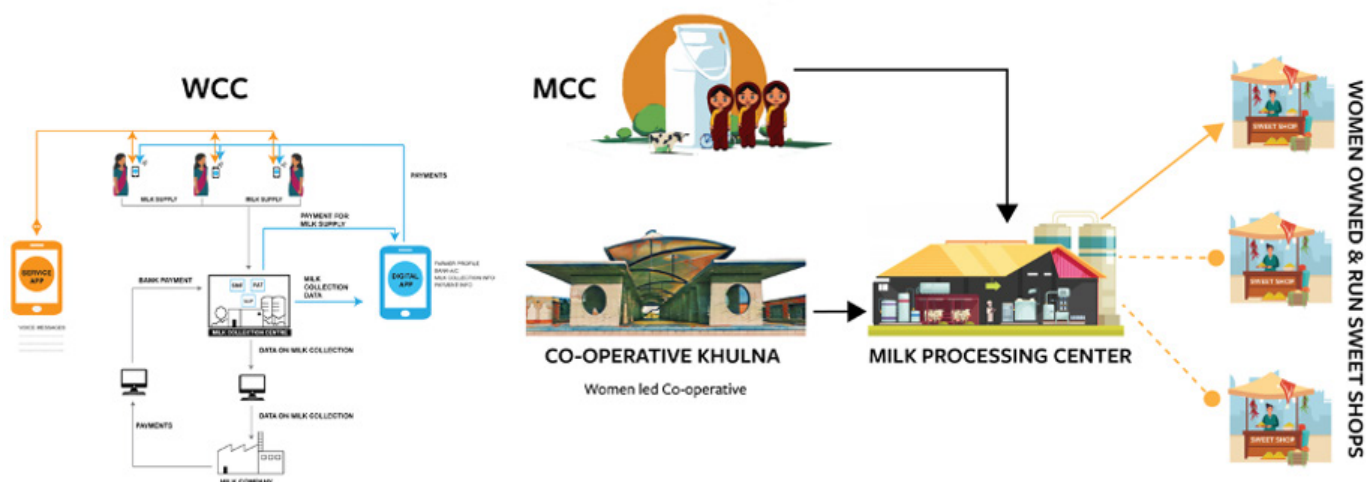
Sapna Rai is the Executive Director of Rakshika Mahila Kisan Producer Company. This company was formed on 15 February 2021 under the guidance of Solidaridad and Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission. The company has set a target of adding 1000 women farmers; so far, 300 women farmers have financially contributed towards its corpus. After receiving training on making and marketing of soybean products, the FPO has set up a semi-automatic plant to produce soybean products like tofu.

Sapna Rai joined Rakshika as a Board of Directors(BOD) but after seeing her performance and her dedication towards growing the FPO, Solidaridad and MPSRLM jointly decided to promote her as executive director. Additionally, through her position, she is training and building the capacity of other FPO members. She is also developing the go-to-market strategy for the company's chief product, tofu.



5. Inclusive Market Connect

Inclusive market connectivity is critical to empowering women and promoting gender equality. By ensuring that women have equal access to markets, resources, and opportunities, we can create a more inclusive and sustainable economy. Solidaridad recognizes the importance of connecting women to markets and works towards bridging the existing gaps. Through various initiatives and interventions, we strive to empower women farmers and entrepreneurs by providing them with the necessary skills, knowledge, and access to resources. By enabling women to participate in the market system, we aim to break down barriers and create a level playing field for them. This includes facilitating market linkages, improving value chains, and promoting gender-inclusive business models. By connecting women to markets, we can unlock their potential, enhance their economic independence, and contribute to their overall well-being. Additionally, inclusive market connectivity for women can lead to broader social and economic benefits, such as poverty reduction, improved livelihoods, and sustainable development. Solidaridad remains committed to promoting inclusive market connectivity for women and creating an enabling environment where they can thrive and contribute to a more equitable and prosperous society.



With a clear objective of bringing women into the formal dairy supply chain, a pilot was established with women dairy farmers in two districts of Bangladesh. In this pilot project, digital solutions were designed with a human centric approach (specially designed for women farmers) to overcome the social norms and in turn create an enabling environment for women to participate in the formal economy. This has resulted in more than 12,000 women being part of the formal supply chain, where women get the training on good dairy practices, receive the money from the sale of milk and have necessary information on quantity and quality of milk on a daily basis. The overall impact of the pilot has not just been limited to economic empowerment but transcends to social and societal empowerment of women farmers.

Alongside, under SaFaL, two women-led cooperatives were formed, one each in Khulna and Jashore. The cooperative in Khulna has a membership of 1,800 farmers of which 80 percent are women. Most of these farmers are engaged in dairy farming. With the support from SaFaL, the cooperative in Khulna started a small manufacturing unit to make milk sweets and sell it through a shop in the Khulna main market.

The pilot demonstrated the ability of women to start a business and run it profitably. Buoyed by the success of the pilot, the cooperative opened two more sweet shops in Khulna.

6. Inclusive Service Delivery System

While women form the backbone of agriculture, the extension services are not designed with a gender lens and hence do not reach out to women. Solidaridad is working diligently to address this issue by creating service delivery systems that take into account women's needs. Through our initiatives, we aim to break down the barriers, provide tailored assistance, and foster an inclusive agricultural sector that benefits everyone. Our aim is to provide relevant training to improve skill sets and required information that empower women in agriculture.



Krishi Choupal (agriculture meetings) is an online platform which provides farmers timely information and knowledge about good agricultural practices (GAPs) for sustainable farming thereby improving agricultural productivity and the quality of life of the farmers. The online meetings have created massive awareness on GAPs among the farmers, within a short span of time. The initiative has been appreciated by farmers and local stakeholders as it intends to bring about change by leveraging technology, to move farming from subsistence to enterprise.

Teena Jaiswal, a farmer, has been attending the Krishi Chaupal organized by the Smart Agri Knowledge and Information Hub of Solidaridad since last year. “In spite of insufficient water for irrigation, we used to have six cycles of irrigation for our wheat crop, yet we were not getting the desired results in terms of quality and quantity. After attending a Krishi Chaupal on scheduling of irrigation for wheat crops, we learnt about the right irrigation schedule. Now even four rounds of irrigation are sufficient for a good wheat production. This time the yield was better in quality and quantity,” she said.

“Krishi Chaupal is a convenient mode to access information, especially for women farmers. It gives us the opportunity to acquire knowledge through our mobile phones while sitting at home.”

C. BALANCE WITH NATURE

As a concerned individual in this changing world, I recognize the pressing issues facing humanity. Currently, around 50% of the habitable world is dedicated to cropping and animal husbandry, resulting in significant consequences like climate change, food insecurity, land degradation, resource pollution, natural disasters, and loss of habitats. The urgency to address these challenges calls for sustainable development that prioritizes the preservation of nature and maintains a delicate balance. Therefore, I am supporting Solidaridad and its multifaceted interventions aimed at improving agricultural productivity through regenerative approaches. By empowering women and ensuring their active participation in adoption of sustainable practices, we can foster a resilient agriculture sector that benefits both people and the planet.

1. Good Agriculture Practices

Good agricultural practices (GAP) are a broad range of activities that help farmers to improve the condition of their soil and grow their crop in a sustainable way, which benefits their farm and income. This entails assisting workers and farmers in producing in balance with nature and optimizing their farm management techniques. This is especially important when agriculture is facing the effects of climate change, declining water levels, deteriorating soil, loss of biodiversity, and uneven social and economic growth, to name a few. Good agricultural practices not only boost farmers' output and revenue, but also bring in long-term benefits like better soil health.



Lata Vilas Patil is a 46-year-old woman farmer from Shittur Warun village, Kolhapur, Maharashtra who meticulously followed good agricultural practices and reaped the benefits – a significant jump in the sugarcane yield and a sharp fall in input costs. She had heard about farmer field schools in her district and decided to attend one where she was told about the benefits of GAP. Lata took a chance and offered her field as a demo plot. By changing her irrigation and harvesting practices, she was able to increase the annual crop yield from 83 metric tonnes/hectare to 127 metric tonnes/hectare.

“I am very happy to see the results from my sugarcane farm. At first, I was reluctant to give my farm as a demonstration plot but after listening to the benefits, I agreed. Now I think this is the best thing I have done for my farm. The training and exposure visits helped me a lot in achieving higher yield.”

2. Certification

Standards and certification are effective tools to promote sustainability. Solidaridad initiated the fair trade labeling by introducing the Max Havelaar label for coffee in the Dutch market in 1988 and for bananas in 1997 and expanded the concept to other European markets. The agenda has always been to work towards a better and sustainable way of agriculture which not just benefits the overall ecosystem but also the smallholder farmers.

In its pursuit of working for the betterment of smallholder farmers and improving the soil quality, regenerative agriculture has been introduced with a new certification scheme “regenagri”. An initiative driven by a wealth of knowledge and decades of experience, aiming to uplift smallholder farmers and enhance soil quality. This certification scheme represents a culmination of insights gathered over nearly half a century, now applied in practical ways to promote regenerative agricultural practices.



“It is very important to spread knowledge through education, without education we will not be able to grow our agriculture and without agriculture we will not survive.”

Shathi Sultana from Debhata in Satkhira district of Bangladesh is among the 500 mango farmers who received the regenagri certificate with the help of Solidaridad. She has 50 decimals of land where she currently cultivates mango, beans as well as grass for cows. She has learned to use her land for multiple crops at the same time following the training provided by Solidaridad on regenerative farming practices. Through the training on regenerative agriculture I have learnt to use only the green hologram-labelled pesticides (the toxicity of the pesticide is represented through these hologram with green showing the least toxic and red being maximum) on my crops.

“I have completely stopped using the red and the yellow-labelled pesticides, which have a high chemical content. I also use pheromone traps for catching harmful insects,” said Shathi. All these steps, she said, have helped to increase her farm’s production.

“Earlier, if I got 50 kg of beans from my land, 20 kg would be pest-infected and I would not get a good price for the produce. However, after using these methods, now of the 50 kg of beans, less than 5 kg is pest-infected. This has helped in increasing my income massively.”

“I try to use compost fertilizer on my land and avoid using chemical fertilizers. From the training I have learnt that chemical fertilizers can reduce the earth’s production capacity over time. Now I am more conscious to not hurt the earth while farming,” she said. Last year Shathi earned about BDT 35 lakh from selling mangoes grown in her orchard to the exporters.

Shathi uses her increased income to grow her farm and for her children’s education. Her husband is a teacher and tries to help her whenever he gets time. They are both passionate about education and farming. She wants to continue farming as long as she can.

Inspired by Shathi’s success, a lot of families in her village are becoming more conscious about their children’s education. Men are also taking a cue to empower their wives and give them access to decision-making. Shathi is a hero in driving change in her community.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

Gender Impact Stories

Solidaridad embraces and acknowledges the transformative power held by individuals of all genders, including men, women, and youth, as catalysts for fostering an inclusive economy and society. To honor the remarkable achievements of women within the community, Solidaridad has taken the initiative to publish a Gender booklet. This inspiring publication showcases a compilation of success stories, highlighting the exceptional accomplishments of these extraordinary women.



Impact report (WCC)

Solidaridad, with financial support from USAID, implemented the “Digital Inclusion and Empowerment of Women Dairy Farmers in Bangladesh” project. The project focused on three main components: digital integration, women’s empowerment, and dairy farming. Leveraging its expertise in supply chains and markets, Solidaridad successfully bridged technology and market forces to reshape social norms and establish a system that facilitates the inclusion of women dairy farmers in formal supply chains.

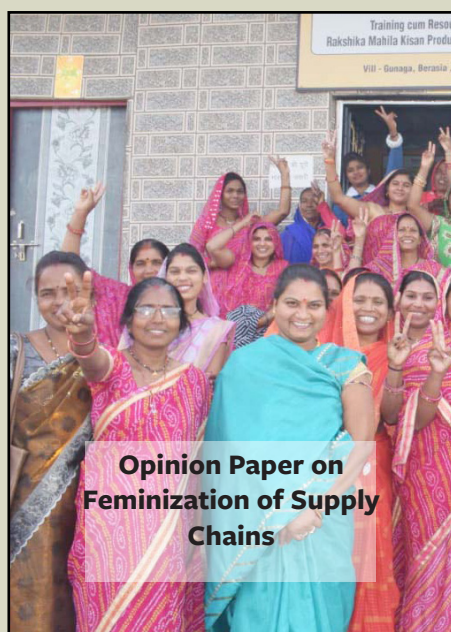
At the conclusion of the project, a comprehensive impact assessment study was conducted by a third party, revealing tremendous success and providing a promising path for the feminization of the supply chain. The findings of the study demonstrated the potential for replicating the digital solutions and strategies employed by the project across various commodities and with women farmers in general. The economic empowerment of women through this initiative

served as a catalyst for challenging and transforming restrictive social norms. The study also highlighted the existence of a solid business case for supply chain actors to recognize, engage, and actively include women in the supply chain. Moreover, the economic empowerment of women brought about positive changes in household consumption patterns, resulting in the addition of supplementary food groups. Notably, interactions with women farmers revealed that increased income led to a higher priority being placed on the education of their children. Given these compelling outcomes, further investment in the project would enable a greater number of women to participate in the supply chain, thereby amplifying its impact

Gender Report Indonesia



Opinion Paper on “Feminization of Supply Chains”



The feminization of supply chains opinion paper highlights how women have been systematically not allowed to participate in the formal supply chain. This approach recognizes and promotes the valuable contributions that women make in the agricultural production system. Women play a crucial role in food production and security, often serving as the backbone of rural economies. By actively involving women in supply chains, it not only enhances their economic empowerment but also contributes to overall rural development and poverty reduction. Moreover, incorporating women’s perspectives and experiences into decision-making processes can lead to more sustainable and inclusive agricultural practices. By addressing the historical systematic alienation of women in commercialized agriculture, the feminization of supply chains aims to rectify past injustices and create a more equitable and inclusive agricultural sector. It recognizes that women should not bear the burden of market imperfections and advocates for their fair and equal participation in all aspects of agricultural supply chains.



Highlighted SDGs in the figure illustrates the ones Solidaridad Asia has contributed to through various gender inclusive actions.



GI speaks...

With the increasing acceptance and recognition of my work within the organization, I believe it is the right time to plan for more intensive engagements.

As we enter the next year of implementation, we are witnessing positive outcomes in our efforts of creating an enabling system and environment for women's participation in the formal market. It is becoming increasingly clear that our model has the potential to challenge structural and systemic barriers faced by women and bring them various benefits. This year, I aim to broaden the reach of our agenda beyond the organization and engage a larger audience. By joining forces with external stakeholders, we can make a greater impact and ensure that our initiatives truly work for women in rural areas. In 2023, my primary focus will be on establishing the concept of “feminisation of supply chain” as a transformative model for empowering women economically, socially, and psychologically.

By championing the “feminisation of supply chain,” I aspire to contribute to the broader discourse on women's empowerment and catalyze meaningful change in the lives of women in rural areas.

I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and look forward to collaborating with like-minded individuals and organizations to advance the agenda.

Context (why is the topic important?)

The gender-blind structures and institutions have for long discounted the contribution of women in the field of agriculture leading to restricted participation of women at the lowest step of the agriculture supply chain.

Moreover research (<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/32570/women-sri-lanka.pdf>) shows that as sectors transition from informal to formal, even if women-dominated, women are being ousted from supply chains and pushed towards marginalization, causing economic disempowerment.

The agricultural supply chain (from production to marketing and distribution) is dominated by men. There is evidence to demonstrate how the market has played a role to structurally eliminate women from the formal agriculture supply chains.

Arguments for “Feminization of Supply Chain”

There are many compelling reasons for women to formally participate in the agriculture supply chain, both from a business standpoint and from a broader social and economic perspective. Here are some of the key reasons:

Socio-economic arguments

Business argument: Consistency of product supply is one of the key factors for companies. Women farmers have demonstrated higher consistency in supply due to their acquired behavior over time. Their active engagement in core agricultural activities allows for better implementation of good practices, ensuring high-quality produce. Additionally, women’s cultural role as custodians of family health gives them a better understanding of the importance of soil health and nutritious produce.

Economic growth: As per FAO, closing the gender gap in agriculture would produce significant gains for society by increasing agricultural productivity, reducing poverty and hunger, and promoting economic growth. An increasingly strong body of evidence confirms that gender-smart solutions in agribusiness can increase the sector’s productivity and profitability and lead to stronger, more integrated value chains.

Sustainable agriculture: A study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) found that women are often better at managing natural resources and can make more sustainable and efficient use of land, water, and other resources. Women are often responsible for the management of natural resources such as soil and water, which are critical for sustainable agriculture. When women are included in agriculture, they can contribute to more sustainable farming practices and help to protect the environment.

SDG and ESG reporting: Working with women in the supply chain would strengthen brand reputation and customer loyalty through ethical sourcing and compliance with environmental and social standards.

Social Justice arguments

Gender equality: Gender equality in agriculture is crucial as women have always played a significant role in the sector but have often been overlooked. Patriarchal biases have created systemic barriers, hindering recognition of women’s contributions. By including women in formal agriculture supply, we can promote gender equality, reduce discrimination, and foster more inclusive and equitable communities and societies.

Poverty alleviation and food security arguments

Economic empowerment: Social norms often hinder women’s participation in the formal economy and curtail their financial independence. Breaking this cycle is crucial. Women in agriculture

can earn income, gain financial independence, and improve their economic status – empowering themselves socially and psychologically. Moreover, increased income allows women to invest in healthcare, nutrition, and education, benefiting their families and communities. Addressing gender inequality is essential in the fight against poverty, particularly in the agricultural sector.

Improved food security: Women play a crucial role in ensuring food security, as they often grow, process and sell food in their communities. When women have access to resources and training, they can produce more food, which can help to reduce hunger and malnutrition. Giving women access to the same resources and education as men could increase food production by women up to 30 percent, potentially eliminating hunger for 150 million people.

Overall objective: In the entire supply chain, from production to retail, there is a deliberate effort to embrace gender diversity and promote the inclusion of women at every stage.

PATHWAYS for establishing the model

1. Establishing a production system that is both resilient and inclusive.
2. Inclusive service delivery aiming to provide equitable access to services for all individuals (Women enterprises, access to finance).
3. Fostering inclusive market systems that benefit all (commitment, policies, finance allocation).

Establishing a production system that is both resilient and inclusive: Empanel women in formal supply chain

Replication of I2I model in different commodities: In the upcoming year, my focus will be on replicating and expanding the pilot initiatives such as I2I (inclusion through integration) across various other commodity supply chains. Furthermore, my focus will be on scaling up the established model. This will involve integrating the model into ongoing projects and upcoming initiatives. Additionally, we will actively seek to secure more resources by engaging in fundraising efforts and developing strategic partnerships. By expanding our reach and increasing our resources, we can successfully scale up the model and make a greater impact.

Access to service and inputs:

Ensuring equitable access to services and inputs for women is crucial for fostering gender equality and empowerment throughout the supply chain. To address this issue, it is important to advocate for policies and initiatives that promote equal access to services and inputs, regardless of gender. This can involve working with government bodies, industry associations, and relevant stakeholders to develop guidelines and regulations that explicitly prohibit discrimination based on gender.

Furthermore, targeted programs and initiatives should be implemented to provide women with the necessary support and resources. This can include, education and training, mentorship and networking, infrastructure, technology and awareness and advocacy.

By advocating for equal access to services and inputs for women, implementing targeted programs, and promoting awareness, we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment that empowers women to actively participate and thrive in the supply chain.

Access to Financial Services: Promote access to financial services, including loans, grants, and microfinance options, specifically tailored to women entrepreneurs and workers in the supply chain. This can help overcome financial barriers and enable women to invest in their businesses or access necessary inputs.

Inclusive service delivery aiming to provide equitable access to services for all individuals.

Promote women led enterprises in the supply chain

i. Supplier Diversity Programs: Encourage companies to implement supplier diversity programs that prioritize sourcing from women-owned businesses. This can create more opportunities for women entrepreneurs to access markets, gain visibility, and secure contracts for supplying goods and services.

ii. Capacity Building and Skills Development: Provide training and capacity-building programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of women entrepreneurs. This can include training on digital literacy, technology adoption, leadership skills, and innovation.

iii. Support and promote women entrepreneurs: Will work towards fostering a supportive ecosystem for women entrepreneurs by collaborating with incubators, accelerators, and entrepreneurship support organizations. These entities can provide guidance, resources, and infrastructure to help women entrepreneurs succeed.

Enable women to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for employment across different stages of the supply chain through training and upskilling initiatives.

Fostering inclusive market systems that benefit all

Knowledge products:

In our ongoing journey to refine and strengthen the concept, I am dedicated to conducting thorough research, developing informative white papers, and sharing valuable insights gathered from the implemented pilots and impact reports. My aim is to contribute to the evolution and solidification of the concept by documenting and disseminating this knowledge effectively.

Through rigorous research, I will delve into the intricacies of the feminization of the supply chain, analyzing its impact, identifying best practices, and exploring innovative approaches. The resulting white papers will provide a comprehensive framework, outlining key strategies and practical recommendations for empowering women in rural areas within the context of the supply chain.

Furthermore, I will actively seek opportunities to publish opinion pieces in esteemed journals and platforms, aiming to raise awareness, stimulate discussions, and rally support for our approach. These articles will showcase real-life experiences, success stories, and challenges faced, sparking broader conversations about the importance of gender inclusivity in the supply chain. By sharing our insights and lessons learned through various publications, my intention is to contribute to the collective knowledge base and inspire further refinement of our approach. These resources will serve as valuable references for stakeholders, practitioners, and policymakers, ensuring the efficacy of our endeavors and facilitating the successful implementation of the concept.

Together, through our dedicated efforts to share knowledge, we can advance the empowerment of women in rural areas and cultivate a more inclusive and sustainable supply chain.

Dissemination of learning and sensitization of the relevant supply chain actors:

To generate broader support and awareness for our concept, I am committed to actively engaging in conferences, seminars, and multi-stakeholder platforms. By organizing or participating in these events, my goal is to garner buy-in from diverse stakeholders and create a collective sense of ownership.

Through these platforms, I will effectively communicate our concept, sharing its significance, objectives, and potential impact. By presenting case studies, success stories, and practical examples, I aim to foster a greater understanding of the concept's potential and its relevance in addressing the challenges faced by women in rural areas within the supply chain.

Furthermore, these conferences, seminars, and multi-stakeholder platforms will provide an opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions, exchange ideas, and gather valuable feedback from experts, practitioners, policymakers, and other key stakeholders. This input will be instrumental in refining and strengthening our concept, ensuring its practicality and alignment with diverse perspectives.

Policy advocacy with companies and governments:

I strongly believe that the existing structural barriers within the supply chain prevent women from participating in the formal market and accessing its benefits. To bring about a meaningful change, it is crucial for us to eliminate these barriers and create a supportive environment that enables women's participation in the supply chain. I am committed to actively advocating with both government entities and companies, urging them to adopt gender-inclusive policies.

It is imperative for us to address these structural fallacies and foster a more inclusive environment that empowers women to fully engage in the supply chain and unlock their potential. I understand the significance of government and company policies in providing guidelines for sector implementation, and I am determined to ensure that these policies are gender-inclusive. In the upcoming year, I will intensify my efforts to amplify the voices of women and advocate for their inclusion in relevant policies. In the upcoming year, I am excited to implement pilot testing of a gender assessment tool that I have designed specifically for companies. This tool will empower companies to evaluate and address gender inclusivity gaps within their

processes, including procurement, sustainability, and corporate social responsibility (CSR). The primary objective of this exercise is to create a self-assessment tool that companies can utilize to identify areas where gender inclusivity can be enhanced within their supply chains. By leveraging this tool, companies will be able to develop targeted strategies to promote gender mainstreaming and create more inclusive environments.

Through active engagement in policy discussions and advocacy, I aim to influence the development and implementation of gender-inclusive policies. This proactive approach will contribute to creating an enabling environment that supports the empowerment and participation of women in the formal economy. I firmly believe that by working collaboratively, we can overcome these barriers and pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable supply chain ecosystem. Together, let us make a lasting impact and create opportunities for women to thrive in the supply chain.

Company Commitments:

To achieve the objective of integrating women throughout the supply chain, it is crucial for companies to move beyond mere acknowledgment and make a strong commitment to taking concrete actions. This commitment should involve policy change, dedicated budget allocation, and tangible measurable actions on the ground. In addition to advocating for policy changes to foster inclusivity, my focus would be on obtaining specific commitments from companies to address gender-related issues within the supply chain.

By engaging with companies directly, I would encourage them to make clear and measurable commitments towards integrating women throughout the supply chain. These commitments should be tied to actionable goals and timelines, ensuring that progress is consistently monitored and achieved.

Additionally, I would advocate for the allocation of dedicated resources and budget to support the implementation of these commitments. This financial investment would enable the company to actively address the barriers and challenges faced by women in the supply chain

Drivers

The two identified drivers to achieve the proposed objectives are

Digital Technology:

Unleashing the power of digital technology for rural women has the potential to revolutionize their lives, enhance their economic opportunities, and amplify their voices. Through targeted training, improved connectivity, tailored platforms, and advocacy, we can empower rural women to thrive in the digital era and contribute to their communities' sustainable development. It is a transformative endeavor that can greatly enhance their empowerment and inclusion. In the coming years, I am dedicated to implementing initiatives that leverage digital technology to bridge the digital gender divide.

One key focus will be to provide digital literacy training specifically tailored to the needs of rural women. By equipping them with the necessary skills to navigate digital platforms, access information, and utilize digital tools, we can empower them to actively participate in the digital age.

Financial inclusion:

Financial inclusion for rural women is not just about access to financial services; it is a pathway to their economic empowerment, gender equality, poverty reduction, and overall well-being. By prioritizing financial inclusion initiatives and removing the barriers that hinder rural women's access to financial services, we can unlock their potential and contribute to building more inclusive and resilient rural communities. Access to formal financial services, such as savings accounts, credit facilities, and insurance, is a critical aspect of financial inclusion. By providing rural women with access to these services, we enable them to manage their finances, build savings, and access capital for entrepreneurial activities. This, in turn, helps them create sustainable livelihoods, invest in education, healthcare, and improve their overall quality of life.

Financial inclusion also plays a pivotal role in reducing poverty and inequality. When rural women have access to financial services, they have greater control over their income, assets, and resources. This empowerment allows them to make informed financial decisions, participate more actively in economic activities, and break the cycle of poverty.

The four identified enablers are:

Community participation: Community participation refers to the active involvement and engagement of individuals within a community in decision-making processes and initiatives that affect their lives. It is a participatory approach that recognizes the importance of including diverse perspectives, local knowledge, and community voices in shaping policies, projects, and programs. By promoting community participation, we create inclusive and democratic processes that empower individuals, strengthen social cohesion, and lead to more effective and sustainable outcomes for the community as a whole.

Government Policies: Government policies can serve as a framework for compliance within the private sector. These policies outline the legal and regulatory requirements that private businesses must adhere to in order to operate within a specific jurisdiction. This can act as a very strong enabler for working with the private as well as public sector.

<https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2022/in-full/1-5-performance-by-region/#:~:text=Lastly%2C%20South%20Asia%20reports%20the,gender%20parity%20measure%20of%2062.4%25.&text=The%20regional%20results%20presented%20in,included%20in%20the%202022%20edition>
<https://opendatawatch.com/publications/bridging-gender-data-gaps-in-asia-and-the-pacific-technical-report/>
<https://hdr.undp.org/gender-development-index#/indicies/GDI>

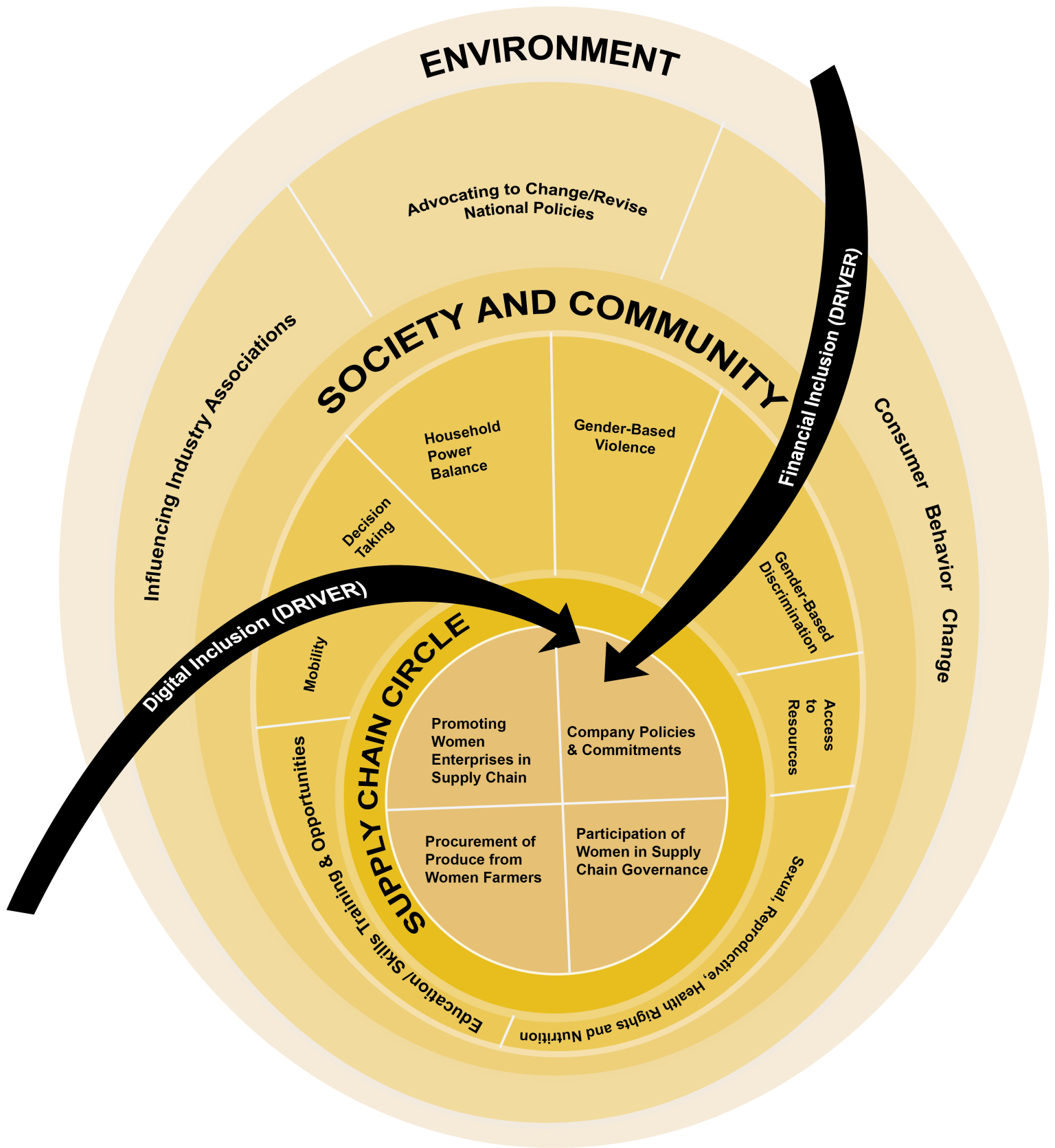
Consumer Awareness: Consumer awareness plays a crucial role in creating pressure on the private sector to adopt responsible and sustainable practices. By increasing consumer awareness and knowledge about the impact of their purchasing decisions, individuals can drive change by making informed choices and demanding ethical and sustainable products and services.

Influencing Industry Associations: When we talk about influencing industry associations, we are referring to the process of actively engaging and working with these organizations to promote and drive changes related to gender equality in the supply chain. This can include efforts to change policies, practices, and attitudes within the industry through collaborative efforts, sharing best practices, advocating for guidelines, and fostering dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders. The aim is to encourage industry associations to take a proactive role in advancing gender equality within their respective sectors and to leverage their influence to drive positive change throughout the supply chain.

This is my proposal for the feminization of the supply chain. The implementation process varies based on commodities and geography, making it dynamic and context-specific. Due to its complexity, I haven't provided detailed steps in this report. However, I encourage open discussions and invite everyone to consider this concept and engage in further conversations with me.



APPROACH TO FEMINIZATION OF SUPPLY CHAINS





Solidaridad

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