

GENDER EQUALITY ANALYSIS IN COLOMBIA'S COFFEE SECTOR

Voices of men and women
engaged in coffee growing
and their organizations



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Global Coffee Platform (GCP)

The Global Coffee Platform (GCP) is the leading facilitator of change in the coffee sector's journey towards sustainability. The GCP works to improve the livelihoods, ecosystems and resilience of coffee farming communities and the sector as a whole by enabling producers, international roasters, governments, traders, and NGOs to align and multiply their efforts and investments, collectively act on local priorities and critical issues, and grow and scale successful sustainability initiatives across the coffee world.

In Colombia, the GCP develops its activities in coordination with Solidaridad and the Sustainable Trade Platform (PCS).

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The PCS is a public-private partnership promoted and funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It was created in 2012 in order to facilitate work between the Government, the society at large and private companies to ensure that the supply of agricultural products in Colombia meets the growing demand for sustainable products in the global market.

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A black and white photograph with a red diagonal overlay on the left side. A man in a black polo shirt is shaking hands with a woman in a red sleeveless shirt. Another woman in a red vest is standing behind them. They are outdoors in a grassy area with trees in the background. The word "OVERVIEW" is written in large white letters at the bottom left.

OVERVIEW

Why gender equality matters?

Gender equality is a key factor for reaching sustainability in coffee growing, since it benefits women, their families and the coffee industry at large: “Empowering women farmers and workers, economically as well as politically, can have a variety of positive impacts, enhancing women’s decision-making power and control over assets within the household; strengthening democratic systems and encouraging a more equitable allocation of resources within producer organizations. It also helps to raise productivity and improve quality.” (Twin, 2013, p. 5).

Gender equality means ensuring that men and women have the same conditions, treatment and opportunities, adapted to their special characteristics or situations, including sex, gender, social class, ethnicity, age, religion, in such a way that equal access is guaranteed.
(Solidaridad, 2017)

The Global Coffee Platform (GCP) commissioned Solidaridad to conduct a study on gender equality in the coffee sector, in order to identify the opportunities and challenges related with this issue in the Colombian context.

“Gender analysis is the systematic and permanent collection and examination of information on gender differences and social relations, in order to identify, comprehend and modify gender inequalities”.
United Nations Population Fund
(UNFPA, 2006 p.102)

Gender inequality can reduce worker’s productivity and efficiency, while “if women’s unequal access to knowledge, resources and decision-making through specific activities and services is addressed, farmers and workers achieve higher incomes and better living and working conditions” (IDH et al., 2014).

Gender equality poses a challenge for sustainability in coffee growing. Although the coffee industry has made a number of efforts in order to attain it, women are still socially and economically marginalized. This is reflected in the low appreciation and recognition of the work they do in their homes and in coffee growing, as well as the “insufficient access to productive factors such as funding and technical support,” combined with “the informality and high concentration in land ownership, and the higher levels of poverty in rural areas, compared with urban areas” (Republic of Colombia, CONPES, 2013, p. 18).

Purpose of this study

This study aims at recognizing gender practices, as well as their interpretation by coffee growers and organizations. The goal was understanding the strengths and limitations of women in terms of access and equal representation within the coffee sector, assessing their roles and functions in coffee growing as well as their contributions to the production process and their involvement in decisions related to the coffee farm. Additionally, the study sought to identify the practices implemented by organizations to promote gender equality in coffee growing.

The results of this exercise can enable agreements on a specific vision and goals within the 2020 agenda for the sector of the Sustainable Trade Platform (PCS) and the Global Coffee Platform (GCP). They are also expected to be used by partner organizations in different projects.

Current situation of women in the rural sector

Without ignoring the differences between men and women, gender equality means that their behaviors, expectations, needs, opportunities and rights are taken into consideration, appreciated and promoted in the same way, so that they can both develop their abilities and achieve the life they want, under mutually respectful relations.

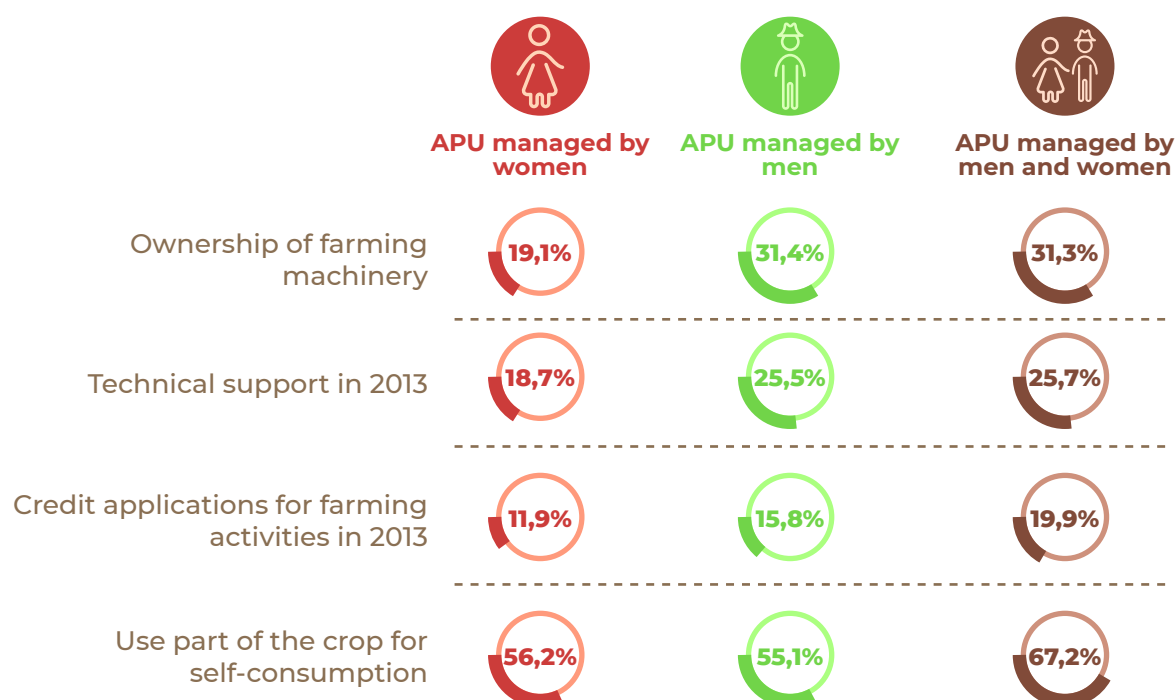
Studies conducted in different regions of the world show inequalities in gender relations that prevent women from exercising their rights, even though the political constitutions of those nations and some special laws recognize them formally. According to the *Coffee Quality Institute* (CQI) in 2015, social and economic marginalization of women has deep implications on the income, health, nutrition and education of their families.

In the case of Colombia, it is important to highlight the results of the research titled *Hacia una valoración del empoderamiento de la mujer en el sector cafetero* [Towards an assessment of women empowerment in the

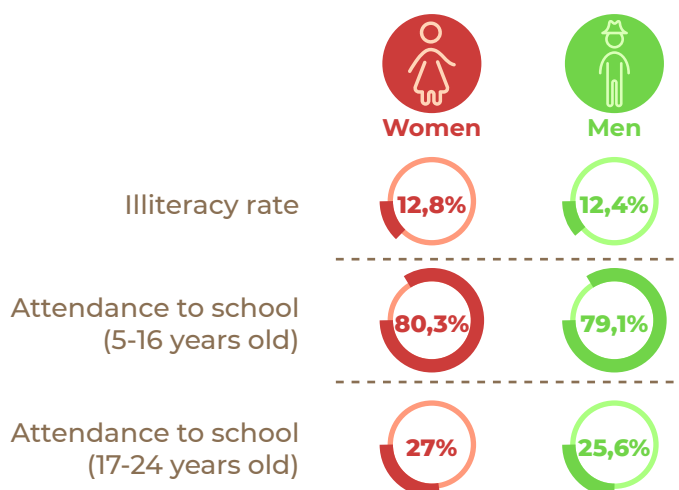
coffee sector] (CIDER, FNC et al., 2015), conducted in the departments of Cauca, Nariño and Huila, which shows important progress in the **social dimension** (equitable and democratic relations within the coffee family, right to a life free of violence, family sexual and reproductive rights, education and access to training and extension programs); followed by the **economic dimension** (work, coffee and specialty coffees production, productive and organizational capacity and women's coffee trade); and showing a lower level, the **political dimension** (full participation of women in the public life of their community, women leadership and participation in guild politics).

This shows that much progress has been achieved, but there are still gaps to be filled, despite the fact that the last decades have been marked by an empowerment process for women, coupled to the efforts of different institutions to promote the adoption of a gender approach that allows to identify inequalities, recognize their causes and formulate strategies to overcome them.

The following data were gathered from the 2014 National Census of Agriculture, which studied the Agricultural Production Units (APU), composed of natural persons. Among the people who make decisions about production, 499,000 APUs managed by women (26.0%) were surveyed, 1,179,000 APUs managed by men (61.4%) with 241,000 APUs managed by women and men who take equal part in production decisions (12.6%).



Education level



Source: DANE- CNA, 2014

These results show that APU access to farming machinery, technical support and credit is improved to the extent that the decisions are taken jointly, since in all cases, the percentage of APU participation was equal to or exceeded men's.

When women are in charge of their land, they allocate a greater part of their production for self-consumption. This behavior is only

overcome when land responsibility is shared by both genders.

On the other hand, in terms of school attendance and illiteracy rate, there are no marked differences between men and women in two different age ranges (DANE-CNA, 2014). In rural areas, female unemployment rate is 3.5 times higher than that of men (Colombian Republic, CONPES, 2013).



1. STUDY GOALS AND APPROACH

In order to identify gender equality practices in coffee growing as well as their interpretations, the study set the following goals:

- Understanding gender relation and social representations, stereotypes and different appreciations of femininity and masculinity in the coffee sector.
- Giving visibility to gender equality practices adopted by partner organizations participating in this study.

- Giving recommendations on how to integrate the gender approach to Colombian coffee industry organizations.

During field work, multiple stakeholders were engaged: women and men coffee growers, as well as sustainability technicians and managers from coffee organizations. A total of 100 coffee growers, 46 representatives of technical teams and 5 sustainability managers of partner organizations participated in the study.

Partners of the Sustainable Trade Platform that participated in this Study

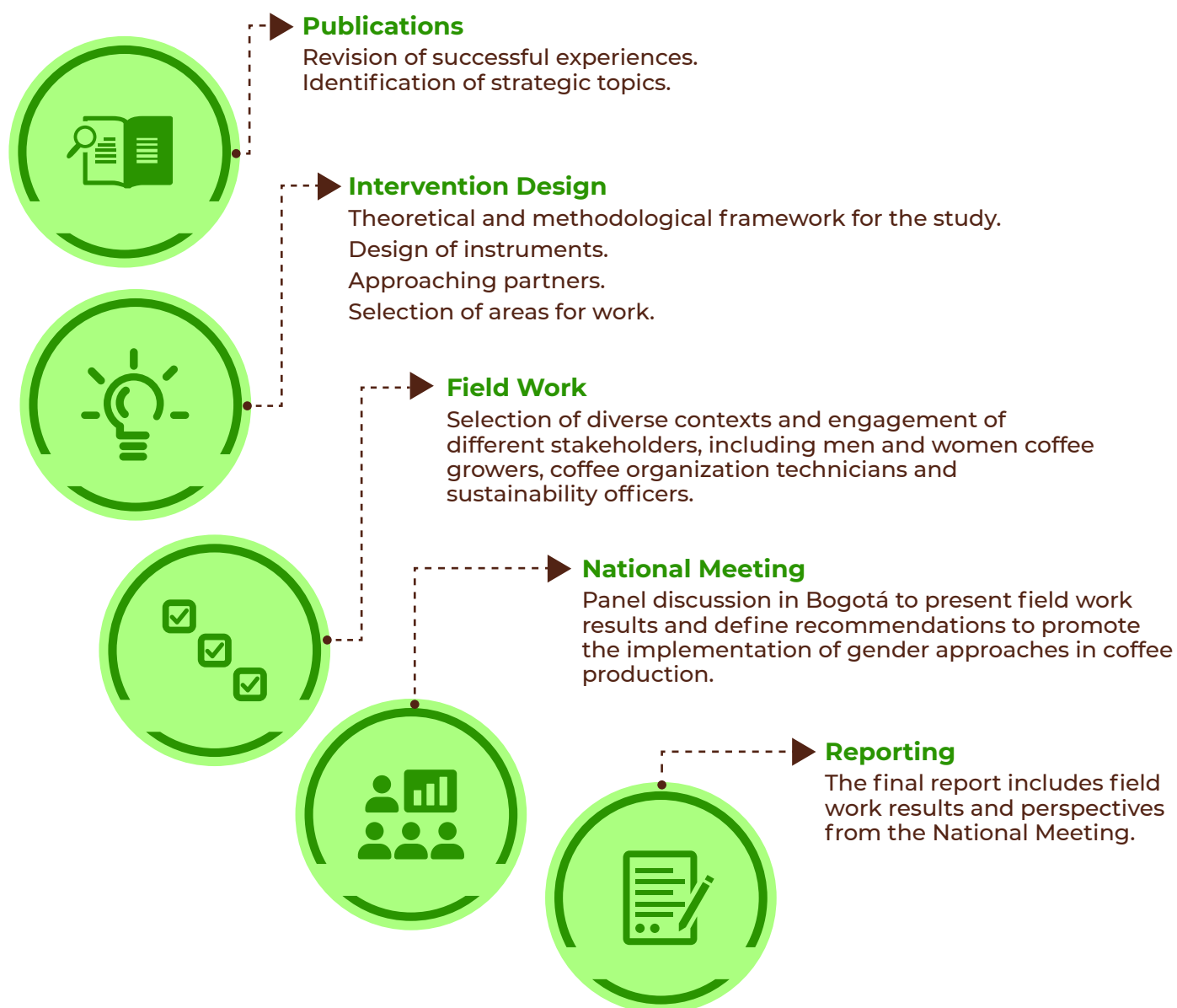


Regarding the contexts, different coffee regions in the country were chosen due to their cultural differences and different experiences in terms of women empowerment and gender equality promotion by coffee organizations.

The study had a qualitative focus. This made it easier to understand gender practices and interpretations from the subjects' perspective, examine the meanings that they attribute to their experience and explore how they are expressed.

The selection of and call for participants was made by partner organizations. The selection criteria were: small family farmers with a stable family and a balanced sample of men and women per selected group.

In the cases of Huila and Risaralda, both the Asociación de Mujeres Cafeteras del Occidente del Huila and the Asociación Veredal Grupo La Española participated in the study.





A black and white photograph of a man in a black jacket holding a baby wrapped in a blue and white patterned blanket. He is looking off to the side with a slight smile. In the background, several other people are visible, including a woman looking towards the camera. The scene appears to be outdoors under a covered structure.

2. PERCEPTION OF GROWERS ON GENDER RELATIONSHIPS

As mentioned, one of the goals of the study was to contribute to the understanding of gender relations and social representations, stereotypes and different appreciations of the feminine and masculine roles in the coffee sector. This chapter shows the results in three sections: gender roles, resource access and control and gender equality and recognition.

General regional trends were identified, as well as some particularities that may be attributed to context, degree of rurality in the municipalities and communities, land ownership, family type and individual differences¹.

2.1. Gender roles

Gender roles are understood as the set of socially assigned behavior standards for men and women in different areas: reproductive, productive and community. This allocation is strongly associated with the perceptions of

coffee growers about the differential capacities of men and women, as well as their conceptions about femininity and masculinity².

One of the main reasons that coffee growers attribute to the division of labor in the three areas analyzed is biological differences between men and women: the former have more physical strength, which, from their point of view, is a sound reason behind women exerting “lighter” trades. Masculinity and femininity tend to be understood as a dichotomous variable, strictly linked to being a man or being a woman. Masculinity is underlined by strong stereotypes and is usually defined as brusqueness, rudeness and force; while femininity is represented as beauty, love, gentleness, solidarity, tenderness and fragility, concepts that justify that the woman belongs “to the home by nature.” Contrary to conceptions that highlight women’s “fragility,” men and women tend to consider that women have a greater capacity to work and overcome the loss of their partner.



¹These particularities are referred to when the cases have sufficient evidence.

²During the focus groups, the views of technicians and coffee growers about other gender identities were explored. In general, the debate is reduced to sexual orientation and, in particular, to homosexuality. Strong stereotypes were found in this regard.

Although there are some exceptions, most participants tended to think that role assignment is not a social construction or, as one participant said, “an agreement between a couple,” but a natural thing, and thus it is difficult to change. This assignment is only modified under exceptional circumstances. Basically, coffee growers identify changes associated with the coffee harvest season -which uses more women labor in the productive sphere- or with temporary situations -such as the woman’s illness or her temporary absence from the farm- that lead men to take on various household chores. Some stories also highlight changes due to separation or death of the couple or armed conflicts, which lead some women to increase their leadership and assume new roles to protect their partners.

Roles in production

Because these are small farms, it is not uncommon for all the members of the family to take part in productive activities, although there are relatively well differentiated tasks according to gender. The following infographic shows the participation of women in coffee production, based on the results of field work.

From the perspective of the coffee growers, different factors explain that women engage in some tasks and not in others:

- The participation in coffee processing, drying, vegetable garden management and small animal breeding is explained by

the possibility of performing these tasks near or inside the house, without losing sight of their children or other relatives who demand care, or neglect the preparation of food and other household chores.

- The ability of women to perform tasks that demand care and gentleness justifies their participation in coffee beans selection and the preference of some farm owners to hire them for harvesting³.
- Participation in record keeping is explained by the fact that they “have more time” and that they tend to be more organized.
- Health risks for women of reproductive age and their children due to handling of agrochemicals is a reason for men performing this activity almost exclusively.
- The lower physical strength of women explains that transportation of heavy loads and activities that involve the use of agricultural machinery, such as scythes and chainsaws, are carried out by men.

Likewise, participation of women in the productive sphere increases when they must manage the farm due to widowhood or separation; when they intervene in specific projects that encourage their participation and during coffee harvest, since they are in charge in coffee harvesting and processing, as well as preparing food for harvesters, without neglecting the tasks they perform daily throughout the year.

³ However, some coffee growers are prejudiced about the participation of women in the harvest, “because they damage the coffee stick.



Participation of women in farm work

Main activities



Drying (Easier since it occurs near the house)



Coffee bean selection and sorting



Record keeping



Maintenance and cleaning of coffee processing facilities



Preparing meals for workers during the harvest season

Women play a significant role in:



Vegetable garden



Small animal breeding

These activities are an important family source of food and income to cover some personal expenses.

Collaboration with men



Construction and maintenance of nurseries and seedlings

(specifically, bag filling, watering and weeding)



Collection and cleaning of coffee beans



Coffee sale

This activity is frequently performed by women only when they are the formal owners of certifications and in the case of Huila women.

Low or no participation

Justified usually by physical strength and resistance requirements, as well as due to reproductive risks.

seeding
weed control

bulbing
pest control

fertilization

application of agrochemicals

firewood collection



Roles in reproduction

Women are responsible for taking care of the home and the family, even when they are strongly involved in the productive and community spheres. An example of this is the women of the Asociación del Huila, who have assumed the exclusive roles that were performed by their husbands, although in many cases their responsibilities in the reproductive field remain intact. As a result, they have more work than before, which does not seem like a problem for them, thanks to the emotional, social and economic benefits of being part of the Association.

However, in some cases, the empowerment of these women has had a tremendous impact on role assignment:



“I was always the one in charge of taking care the children... He worked to buy the farm we now own. It was always work, work and work, and I was the one that stayed at home [...]

Now we share the workload. When I’m not here, he’s taking care of my daughter: what time she arrives, where she is, who she hangs out with.

And now our workloads are more equitable, he comes to the training sessions with me, we manage our farm accounting, he helps me with the records and everything.

He helps me if I forget something, he writes it down. If I have to improve or there is work to be done at the farm, he also helps me.

We are closer and share everything”.

**Testimony of a woman
coffee grower**

Men claim that they rarely participate in household chores (such as cooking, washing dishes, or making coffee in the morning)⁴. This is due to the raising patterns that their mothers instilled in them so that they learn to manage and be self-dependent both in the productive and in the domestic spheres. Participation of men in the reproductive field is “active” when it comes to tasks that involve physical strength (carrying grocery bags or packages, for example), driving vehicles (when a sick person needs to be taken to town), resorting to their authority to discipline children in domestic or school situations and when the woman has health problems or needs to attend meetings outside the farm. However, it is usually one-off activities and partial responsibilities: it is common for women to point out that before attending a meeting or training, they must get someone to take care of their children and prepare lunch and do the daily chores well in advance.

Roles in community

In this sphere a clear sexual division of labor can also be seen. Although coffee growers do acknowledge a significant increase in women’s participation in community affairs, she is often confined to caregiving tasks. This is the case in education and health-related projects or in food preparation, as well as during collective works of road maintenance or repair and other community infrastructure.

In general, women are considered to be more willing to attend community meetings and women stand out in certain processes certain processes, although “formal representation” in community organizations is performed by men.

⁴ According to some participants, there are domestic activities which are “banned” for men, such as ironing clothes and cleaning the bathroom.

The intervention of men and women in the Community Action Boards varies depending on the village. In some, a conventional structure is kept, where the participation of women in management positions is minor; while, in others, women have the support and trust of their communities and have gained prominent leadership spaces.

2.2. Resource access and control

The study also inquired about resource access and control by men and women. Access refers to the opportunities to have the means -economic, social, political, internal, personal and free time- required to exercise their roles.

On the other hand, control refers to the ability to determine how resources will be used and impose that definition on others, which is directly associated with decision making.

Access to resources

Almost all participants in the study point out that the land is family property, although in most cases, men are the formal owners that appear in the deeds⁵. In general, only women who benefit from an inheritance or from the allocation of a plot of land by their husbands appear as formal owners (especially in the Asociación de Mujeres de Huila, where this practice is a requirement to market their coffee). This is an act of positive discrimination implemented by the buyer's policies.



Access to resources by women coffee growers



Formal owners

Income received after coffee sales, which enables them to receive VSS or Quality premiums.

Non-owners

Income received from

- "Pasillas" -Low grade coffee- (gifts from the husbands to pay for their personal expenses)
- Vegetable garden and small animal breeding near the house
- Coffee harvest but with a deduction due to limited physical abilities to carry coffee cherry sacks



⁵The same is observed in the case of vehicles, agricultural equipment and machinery and livestock. Theoretically, they are owned by the family, but men are the ones who access and control these resources.



This circumstance impacts on women's participation in decision-making and income: the formal women owners of plots of land usually have access to their income after selling the coffee. By contrast, it is the husbands of non-owner women who have access to and control the lion's share of the income. In general, access to money by women is derived from the sale of "pasilla" and the first "pepeos," gifts that men give to their wives so that they have some resources to cover their personal expenses, although these are often used to meet family needs⁶. These practices represent acts of negative discrimination, due to the subordination and invisibilization of the contribution of women to the family's work and income.

Other sources of income for women are those derived from vegetable gardens and the small animal breeding and for a few women, their work outside their farms. In the latter case, women point out some disadvantages: responsibilities in the reproductive field restrain their possibilities of working outside their homes, and it may imply obtaining lower income than men.

When referring to women who work as harvesters, in some places the second disadvantage is reported: according to a technician from Huila, since women do not have the physical conditions to load and deliver the coffee to the buyer's premises, "when they collect coffee they are discounted COP 2,000 per bag because they do not have enough physical strength to bear it on their shoulders."

"Sometimes a woman does a better job. We are more responsible, because sometimes, on Sundays, men are used to drinking and they come to have their "guayabo." They do not find what to do there at work, they even lie down and rest. [Instead], we women have no day off.

Imagine ... and men will be paid 18 and us 16 or even 13 thousand pesos, because we do not do what a man does, but no, that's not right".

Testimony of a woman coffee grower

Often, men coffee growers say that the money obtained from selling coffee goes to a "common purse" to meet the needs of the whole family. However, this does not necessarily mean that decisions are always made jointly, nor that resources are distributed equitably. In fact, it is not uncommon for women to be angry over the fact that their husbands spend a lot of money on leisure activities and, especially, on liquor.

Access to training and technical support

This access tends to be more restricted for women than for men. This is largely due to role assignment within coffee growing families, as well as the decisions made by technicians. In the first case, it is worth noting

⁶In Nariño, an alternative practice is mentioned: women extract the best coffee for sale from the garbage waste.

that some men refuse to allow their wives to attend training meetings for fear of losing “authority” or because women might neglect their household responsibilities:



“I like to go to meetings and all the events they do, but he doesn’t... I almost have to beg him down on my knees to let me go to the meetings. I say, it’s good to go out and listen to learn more every day [...] There are men who still refuse to do it, because if the woman starts to participate, they fear that the woman might leave them.”

Testimony of a woman coffee grower

In general, technicians tend to target men more than women in training and technical assistance activities, since men are “the head” of the family, they have access to and control over resources, they have required knowledge about the crop and can make decisions. This pattern only changes when a woman leads the farm or when there is an express request from the husband to bring his wife along in training or accompanying visits.

Regarding the opportunities to learn about crops, different perspectives are observed among women. While some regard them as “a worthwhile sacrifice” because they acquire tools to participate in decision-making, worker management and to be prepared for a possible absence of their husbands, others tend to self-exclude from these opportunities.



“Sometimes people come to give information to the farm and it’s about planting coffee or something like that. But what does the woman say?: Let’s wait for my husband because he takes care of that. She knows that it is easier for him to understand that information because he’s going to be able to act upon it better than her. She attributes that value to him, like the skill to do that job.”

Testimony of a woman coffee grower

Except when there is a project specifically targeting women or they are registered as official representatives of their farms in the various organization initiatives, their access to training and technical assistance does not usually result from an intentional process, but rather from the convenience of others, particularly of the husbands, who delegate the responsibility of attending training sessions to women due to lack of time or because they prefer not to go to training courses.



“In some cases, the woman is the boss in the farms, but this is very rare. We even have the user who appears in the deed but when asked, she replies: ‘No, the one who fertilizes, the one who knows which fertilizers we apply is my husband; or the one



who knows what we are spraying with is my husband; or the one who plans the activities is my husband. Speaking of the deed, ¿why does that come up?

Sometimes there are families in which the husband is a farmer who devotes his times to practical work rather than administrative work. He prefers his wife to do the sales and assist to training sessions or appear in a given project because he is so busy handling the many tasks of a farm, a plot of land, taking care of the animals, so he says:

‘No, I do not have time to’ go ‘, but she does.

Then, as she is the one who goes to the training meetings, she is listed as a beneficiary, as certified, and it is she who sells, because she has the time to do that.”

Testimony of the technician

“That’s frequently heard in the field; the man recognizes this in the field: the wife works more than the husband. The woman is the first one to get up and she makes breakfast, prepares the children, and she has to go pick up coffee beans with her husband, and in the afternoon, she is the last one to go to bed, she prepares and serves dinner, organizes the kitchen and all those kinds of activities she takes care of.”

Testimony of the technician

This situation differs from other projects such as Huila, in which women are intentionally targeted to participate in a process of training and accompaniment that has allowed them to gain autonomy for managing their crops and their income.

Leisure time

In general, women have little time for resting compared to men, who often have opportunities for leisure at the end of their day and on weekends. A frequently heard expression when talking to coffee farmers is: “The woman is the first to get up and the last one to go to bed.”

Both men and women say that household chores are time consuming, but some consider that women’s work is less burdensome because it takes place at home and requires less physical effort. In general, women are considered to work longer since work in the kitchen and the rest of household chores are almost permanent and therefore, they can have less time to devote to themselves or for resting. Although this fact is seen as not very fair -or at any rate, associated with a lack of recognition of women’s work- it is usually justified with statements such as: “But men work harder.” Likewise, some men consider that women do not take enough time to rest and that even when they have the possibility of changing their daily work routine, they do not do it.

Resource control

Regarding decision-making about crops and income distribution, different types of arrangements are observed. Although in some cases shared decision-making is described, resources are often controlled by men, even when women have an important degree of participation in coffee production and

processing. Combined with daily income generated from the sale of small animals, vegetables and labor -including coffee harvest and various tasks-, this family income helps cover the expenses between harvests.

Generally speaking, decision-making and control of expenses is closely associated with conventional role assignment, that is, men have a greater impact in the productive sphere, while women have a broader participation in the reproductive sphere.

On the other hand, leisure and recreation weigh more in men's expenses, in addition to the productive field, while women's expenses are more family oriented. Likewise, important differences are observed in investment decision-making: although both genders are interested in the welfare of the family, men think more about investing in productive activities, while women care more about house maintenance, farm keeping, garden keeping, clothes and children education. It is remarkable that women support their husbands or partners regarding economic decisions aiming to improve production conditions which displace other family needs, but both genders prioritize the education of their children.



"He always decides to reinvest all of our revenue from the farm in the farm itself, in the crops, coffee plantations, timber and fish pools. I would rather he invested in the house as such [...] Sometimes we argue over that because my dream would be to have a beautiful, well-kept house fixed and his dream would be to have beautiful coffee plantations."

**Testimony of a woman
coffee grower**

Additionally, women are believed to have a better sense of community well-being and to manage money more responsibly, which leads some men to delegate resource administration to their wives. It can be thought that these are exceptional cases. On the other hand, we find households in which men are responsible for all kinds of expenses, including women's personal items -from clothing to cleaning supplies, for example-, either due to role assignment or according to some, for practical reasons due to the distance between the farm and the urban center. Some women have spoken about the difficulties they faced when having to manage familiar economy on their own.



"Sometimes you say: 'This is simply too much for me' or 'I don't have the courage to do it', but it eventually turns out that given the circumstances of life, sometimes reality slaps you in the face and everything changes in the blink of an eye, and that's where it is very important when the man teaches the woman to do everything that needs to be done in the farm [...]"

When my husband got injured and then died, I thought it was the end of the world. I had nothing, nothing. I only had my own hands to work and my three children...

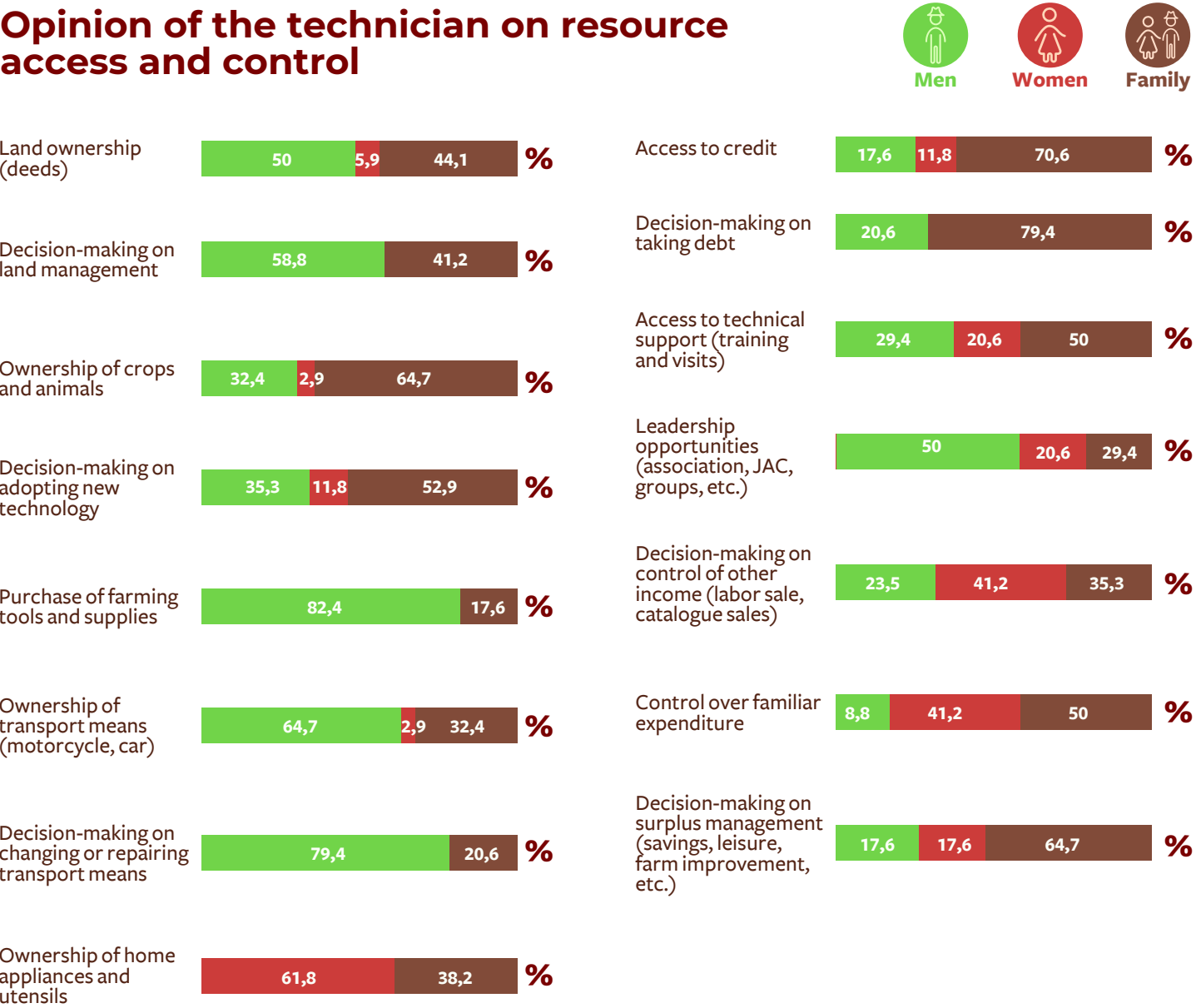
Sometimes we women say: 'But why am I going to learn that if he handles everything.' This is totally wrong, we must learn because you never know what the twists of life have to bring you.

**Testimony of a woman
coffee grower**

To illustrate what technicians think about access, control and decision-making related to coffee farm resources, an on-line survey was conducted to estimate the percentage of families in which men, women or both are

responsible for the following activities, based on the number of families that receive assistance. Consolidated results appear in the following table.

Opinion of the technician on resource access and control



In most respects, the perspective of the technicians matches that of coffee growers. However, it is worth noting that technicians assign a much higher percentage to the participation of women in training and technical support

than coffee growers. Technicians also consider some resources and decision-making as shared by both genders in areas where farmers recognize the prevalence of men over women.

2.3. Gender equality and recognition

The study also explored coffee farmers' concept of gender equality, their thoughts on recognition of men and women skills, rights and contributions, as well as their own self-appreciation.

Concept of gender equality

According to coffee growers, there is no gender equality in terms of equal opportunities for men and women, absence of discrimination and fair distribution of responsibilities. Although they consider that conditions have improved for women thanks to their higher level of education, training opportunities and the existence of specific legislation to protect them; men have greater advantages than them in terms of decision-making. Likewise, men's skills and work are appreciated more than women's.

To achieve greater equality, they think the State and organizations should do more to help improve women's education at all levels, create income sources for women, invest in the farms to facilitate women's work -for example, installing sun dryers for the coffee beans- and, above all, design training initiatives and programs that involve the whole family.

As part of this process, they think children should be raised differently so as to change old conceptions and practices that have led to the naturalization of gender role divisions. For example, coffee growers consider that women should not make decisions, and this is reflected in household chores that sustain stereotypes; such behaviors have a strong cultural root that varies from region to region.

In general, no clear intention of changing role structure was seen, although some coffee farmers say it is important to guarantee a kind of "gender relay," so that, in the event of their absence, women are able to take on responsibilities in the productive field:



"I tell him: 'We are going to sign an agreement on the farm, a contract for a deweeding task' and the worker approaches him. He tells the worker: 'Go talk with the woman boss', but he does not do it because he is not able to give orders or sign the agreement, but to make people understand that if he is not there, I can also manage the farm.

Then this makes me feel safer when he is not on the farm, because he is working elsewhere.

When he is not on the farm I make the decisions.

If I have to go to supervise, to check the deweeding task.

Any activity that needs to be done, I do it, we work as a team.

**Testimony of a woman
coffee grower**

Recognition and self-appreciation

Some factors contribute to women's work being less appreciated than that of men: the fact that work carried out in the productive sphere is more visible -outcomes are seen in the harvest and in the income from coffee sales-and the "ephemeral" nature of housework -some point out that it is a job that "cannot be seen," because the kitchen and house get dirty easily and meals are consumed quickly. One participant stated: "Men are more recognized," because a common belief is that "since women stay at home, they do nothing."

As already mentioned, men's work is considered heavier than household work, since the latter is carried out at home and is "lighter," which justifies men keeping privileges when it comes to income control and leisure opportunities.

This does not mean that the contributions made by women go unacknowledged. Rather, there is a tension between appreciating and underrating their work: men accept that women's working hours are long and that they are overburdened with responsibilities. They also admit that women play a role in the family's well-being and finances. However, this does not translate into an income that allows them to gain a certain autonomy, nor in structural changes that allow for a more equitable distribution of responsibilities, or in the creation of opportunities for resting or in other forms to

express that recognition. At best, recognition of women is shown by actions such as "taking them" occasionally to a leisure activity or preparing food for them so they can rest on some special dates.

Some coffee growers say that they appreciate the value of women's work, especially when their wives have health problems and they must take care of women's chores; or when they hire women, especially in the coffee harvest season, when women prepare food for harvest workers. Yet again, this awareness does not translate into effective recognition of women.

Although it is evident that some of them have gained a certain degree of autonomy that allows them to advocate for their rights, many of the participants in the study do not claim greater recognition for their work, not only in terms of financial compensation, but in the symbolic appreciation of their contributions. According to some technicians, women know that they are valuable, but they are submissive and they do a steady, silent work. In fact, it is relatively common for men to point out that women should empower themselves "and recognize their own worth."

In contrast, Huila stands out again; in this case, women who belong to the Association usually state that they have strengthened their self-esteem and they have learned to appreciate their contributions.



Asociación de Mujeres Cafeteras del Occidente del Huila

This Association illustrates the positive impact of an initiative focused on women coffee growers, whose engagement in coffee farm activities and decisions has significantly increased.

Women point out important progress in terms of acquired knowledge, participation in decision-making and autonomy, largely due to their greater involvement in technical support processes. In general, they all state that their self-esteem has strengthened and that they have learnt to value more their family contributions⁷.


Coffee has a sustainability premium with two components: an incentive paid in cash to women and a sum invested in projects that directly promote gender equality. These involve topics such as associativity, financial education, participatory processes and psychosocial care for women.

The technicians highlight the improvements made by these women in terms of coffee growing technical and management skills, but also when it comes to developing their leadership skills and transforming their roles within their families. An example of this is their greater participation in coffee sales and in decision-making processes regarding resource distribution.

On the other hand, the changes achieved in productive role structures do not always have their counterpart in reproductive roles, which translates into a work overload for women. Although some report a fairer distribution of responsibilities in domestic chores, women are still responsible for their family's care and wellbeing.

It is clear that these processes take time and that they have different impacts on households, since in some families, macho culture still prevails, leading to women's contribution being underrated.

⁷ However, some indicate that their participation in this experience has required them to show their families and communities that they are doing something of value and that they are not neglecting their duties or wasting time.

A black and white photograph with a red diagonal overlay on the left side. A woman in a blue polo shirt is leaning forward, writing on a clipboard with a pen. She has dark hair tied back. A man wearing a dark baseball cap with the 'STIHL' logo and a patterned button-down shirt is looking down at something in his hands. The background is a bright, hazy outdoor setting.

3. GENDER EQUALITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ORGANIZATIONS

This chapter shows how gender equality is promoted in the institutional context, including knowledge and practices related with this issue. Field work shows that organizations are at different levels of development and ownership. The analysis is complemented by testimonies from the technical team members and some representatives of partner organizations in this study.

3.1. Concept of gender equality

Organizations describe gender equality using the following criteria: women's participation in the productive sphere, access to technical support and productive resources, leadership positions in community organizations and trade associations. These will help mitigate social and economic marginalization of women in the coffee sector.

Gender equality should be regarded as having to do with family development, where women become promoters and integrators of the family, and their empowerment should go beyond the economic aspect, and that is why at the social level it is important to provide greater visibility and recognition to their role as a producer.

Self-esteem and leadership strengthening is another factor that helps improve women's ability to make decisions and act upon them to achieve the results they desire.

Based on the testimonies, the participants highlight the importance of men and women having equal opportunity of access to resources, decision-making processes and personal and professional development, but understanding personal characteristics and everyone's particular situations.

The perspective of organizations matches that of coffee growers: there are many gaps in the coffee industry that hinder gender equality, and women face greater challenges because they are more marginalized. Although they acknowledge some degree of progress, they consider that the predominant patriarchal model in the rural sector prevents both men and women from being on an equal footing regarding conditions, treatment and opportunities.



"The leap from talking about rural women to gender equality implies a change of language and going beyond the discussion of "women-only" programs; equality can only be achieved by engaging men. There are challenges that need to be faced together with all the institutions and stakeholders. It requires a change of focus to understand equitable relationships, an extension of autonomy for both men and women."

Testimony of an organization representative

3.2. Practices regarding gender equality

In general, the gender approach can be strengthened in institutional conceptions and practices.

Based on the interviews with representatives of the four partner organizations, some internal limitations that restrain gender equality practices in coffee grower families were

identified. In this sense, some organizations identified having a gender strategy leader as a strength. The staff in charge of the projects exhibits a high degree of heterogeneity in their sensitivity and approach to gender equality. This largely reflects the differences of each space when raising awareness and providing training in this area. On the other hand, some of the organizations reported having received guidance from external staff regarding issues or problems of interest in women in the coffee sector and gender equality. The following testimony illustrates the organizational challenges faced when working on these subjects.



“In institutional practices, we sometimes tend to fall into cliché when it comes to language and projects; we need to be more ambitious and creative to implement the gender equality approach, to try to simplify project execution with clear strategies to obtain results in the short term.”

Testimony of an organization representative

As regards practices within coffee grower families, there are some mechanisms to guarantee women's participation in projects and ensure that both men and women benefit from its results; this is a clear strength. However, there is still work to be done regarding equitable access to resources by men and women and strengthening women support so that roles are more equitably assigned in the reproductive and community spheres. At this point, the challenge of how to achieve greater engagement by men and other family members was raised in the reflections on gender equality.



“With the help of technical teams, gender equality strategies can be developed bearing in mind family dynamics through training strategies that are easy to implement and improved decision-making. Joint work with the family impacts not only on gender equality issues but also helps improve intergenerational connections.”

Testimony of an organization representative

Regarding monitoring and assessment, important progress has been made in terms of recording general data on the participation of men and women coffee growers in the areas served by each organization; this information is collected using proprietary software. Although there are sex-disaggregated statistical data on participation in training meetings (attendance lists), there is no systematic analysis process so as to tailor support strategies based on these results.

Besides, organizations point out the importance of strengthening socio-demographic data to determine the user's household composition.

The leaders pointed out that sometimes the technicians are reluctant to ensure the participation of women in the projects and consider it important to establish a follow-up system to monitor this aspect, hopefully with clear indicators that enable the acquisition and replication of best practices.

In general, there are very few gender indicators for the programs and projects implemented, mostly on household composition and attendance at training events; the organizations

recognize that indicators are poorly defined, since to a great extent they are a requirement of donors and some of them are subjective. The foregoing reflects the lack of planning from a gender perspective.

Follow-up and assessment mechanisms that enhance women's participation in projects depend to a large extent on indicator accuracy; furthermore, they pointed out that measurement is very expensive, and when resources are limited this process ends up being restricted.

GCP and CQI Partnership for Gender Equity are conducting a pilot project on a Common Gender Measurement Framework for the Coffee Sector, which aims at “creating a practical system to provide information that helps households, cooperatives and businesses to make decisions that promote gender equality and strengthen livelihoods in rural coffee communities.” (GCP, 2017)

There are still challenges in communicating and promoting gender equality at the internal and external levels of the organization in order to give visibility to best practices and document experiences that enable reflection on gender equality with the multiple project stakeholders.

According to the Global Coffee Platform (GCP) in 2017, “gender equitable technical training ensures that all coffee producers -both men and women- have access to the information required to improve the quality and sustainability of produced coffee.” Several studies indicate that in most cases the restricted

access of women to technical assistance is due to the fact that they do not appear in the databases as land owners, which becomes a limiting factor for their inclusion in the productive process.

The technical teams acknowledge that they do not undertake systematic and deliberate actions to ensure that women and men have an equal level of participation during their training activities. However, they acknowledge that they try to engage all family members during their support, with a view to improving implementation levels.

Additionally, implementation levels differ from region to region. The most recurrent actions mentioned by technicians are shown in the text box below. It is worth noting that these actions are not necessarily guidelines from organizations, but instead are developed at the discretion of the technician who works closely with women in a certain project.

Technical team strategies to include women in their technical support programs

- ▶ Engaging the whole family in the technical support process, especially during farm visits. Women are assigned activities according to their abilities.
- ▶ Promotion of technical support processes and invitation to take part in them and engage in conversations on technical issues. Assessment of their contributions and recognition of their attendance, so they are motivated to return.
- ▶ Raising the awareness of men so that they openly recognize and value the participation of women in training spaces, since some fear that they will lose authority and control of money as women increase their knowledge.

On some occasions, women take responsibility for participating on projects by delegation of the man, either because he cannot attend due to his own activities, because he trusts in the abilities of his partner to handle certain issues or because there is a clear guideline of donors or funders of the private sector that have a gender agenda.

Both organization technicians and leaders value the role of women in communicating acquired knowledge to their families and communities. Although technicians are well aware of the roles and functions of men and women in coffee growing, the design of the training content and the call for participation are not specifically targeted to people based on their role, except in some cases. For example, during the trainings given in the area of business and management of the coffee farms, the technicians reinforce the call for women and their children to participate, since the issues of record management and information analysis are relevant to them and they show greater commitment in this.

The organizations consider that associativity is a key factor, since the participation of women creates a social fabric that benefits their families and the community, given that women prioritize the collective aspect. Some technicians indicate that they have specifically supported the associations based on the legal framework, and have provided guidance on establishment and setting up.

The following are some of the concepts held by the representatives of the partner organizations about women's work in the projects:

- Women are enthusiastic and demonstrate a strong commitment to project activities.

- Women are more optimistic about life in the field. That is why their vision of the intergenerational connection is different and they seek to educate their children, but they ensure that at least one of them returns to take over the family business.
- Better results in coffee quality can be achieved with women commitment. They are more detail oriented in coffee bean processing and handling.
- Women are dynamic and authentic communicators, and they like to share their results.

3.3. Gender in the interaction between technicians and coffee growers

A common recommendation in gender and agriculture is to promote the inclusion of women in technical teams and determine if this results in different outcomes regarding the implementation of technology, access to knowledge and the relationship with the members of the coffee family. Therefore, this aspect was discussed in focus groups with technicians and it was found that most of them consider that credibility does not depend on gender, since a trust building process is required for coffee growers to embrace changes.

In contrast, some technicians consider that being a man gives certain advantages when it comes to communicating knowledge and promoting technology implementation, as shown in this testimony:



“It is much more difficult for a woman to enter or change the mindset of a farmer, because they have a strong macho culture, they think that a woman knows nothing about this. But, by gender affinity, they are more open about crop stuff with a man, like, ‘I have this problem with the crop, what do I do? What do I spray it with? What activities should I do?’ However, if a woman approaches them they are always more reluctant to start the conversation.”

Testimony of man technician

According to technicians, another disadvantage of being a woman technician specialized in coffee growing is the risk associated with visiting farms and the vulnerability of women when moving around alone in the rural environment. In contrast, men coffee farmers value the physical effort made by women who work in the technical teams and recognize their high level of empathy with the members of the family.

In their conversations, they stated that male technicians enjoy a greater credibility among men coffee farmers when discussing technical issues (fertilization, pest control, coffee bean processing), while women technicians are more popular when dealing with management issues (record keeping, financial education) and social issues (certifications in Voluntary Sustainability Standards or VSS, safety issues related to handling agrochemicals, food safety, good treatment to harvesters).



Once a woman coffee grower told me: ‘Engineer, this man hired me to work but now he does not pay me. Talk to him because it’s not like that, he has to pay me.’ Then you are like caught between two fires and you have to say: ‘Well, I talk to him.’ Once in the plot of land we started walking and talking: ‘Did you pay the woman who helps you here with the work?’ He laughed: ‘Hahaha, no’. Then I told him: ‘Well, Sir, that’s wrong.’ I started to advise him and when I returned the following month this woman comes to me and tells me: ‘Hey, thanks, they’ve already paid me.’ “

Testimony of a woman technician

3.4. Gender equality learning needs

The technical teams indicate that they receive training mainly on productive issues, while social issues are rarely dealt with. They are aware of the importance of integrating gender equality in their work, although some believe that these issues should be addressed by professionals from other areas. Only those who have been part of specific women projects are familiar with training processes, but these have not been continuous and they have lacked support to include them in their work practice.

Technicians feel that they can receive training in general topics, but they recognize that there are specific situations and issues that require specialized knowledge.

For example, on how to act in cases of gender violence. In general, the teams are not interdisciplinary and there are no professionals from the social area.



“We have an empirical approach. We have to become psychologists empirically and listen to everything, but in fact, each one acts based on what they know from the training received.”

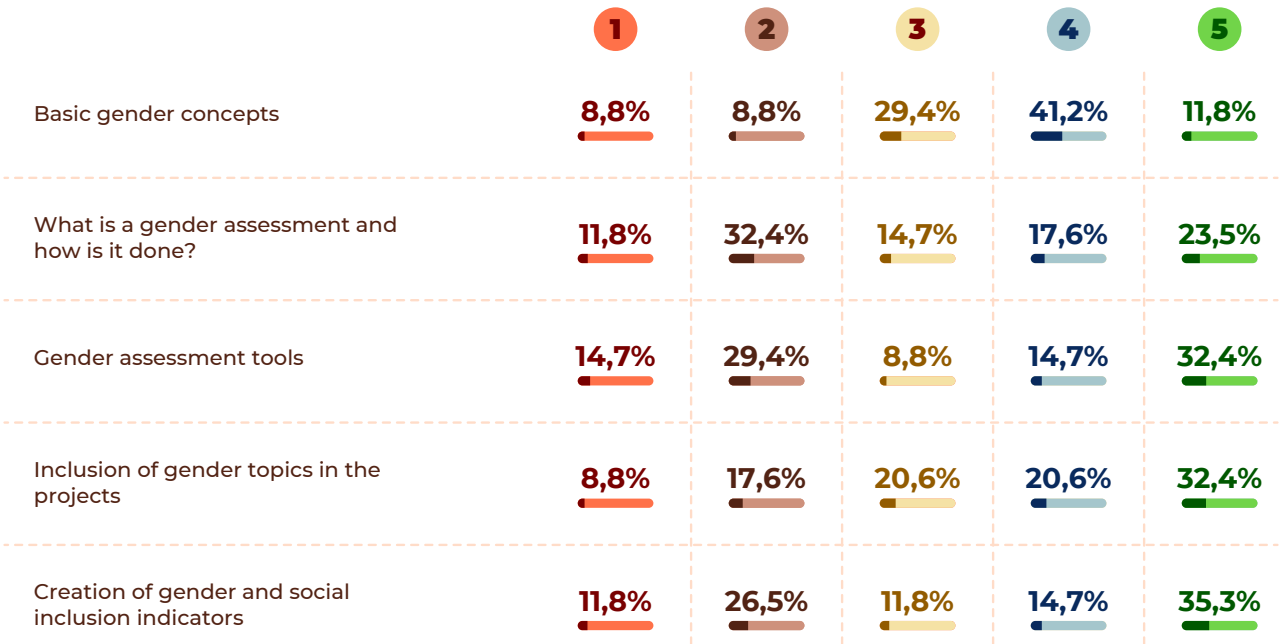
Testimony of the technician

To assess gender equality learning and training needs, the team of technicians assigned a score of 1 to 5 to the following topics (1 would be the least important and 5, the most important).

As seen below, qualification of the topics by technicians shows a very homogeneous behavior. The highest scores are related to the creation of gender indicators, as well as their inclusion in projects and tools to enable gender assessments.

As mentioned above, technicians consider that there are few or no training processes that allow them to better approach gender issues in coffee growing. Training allows for much more gender-sensitive technical teams, with a more inclusive perspective of family. The issues are recognized, but technicians lack enough tools to collaborate with the transformation of cultural values that restrain gender equality, something which requires breaking traditional roles within the household.

Relevant topics for the technician



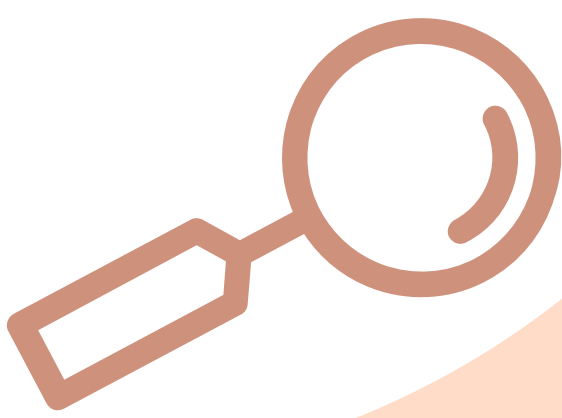




4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



This section presents the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the gender analysis. Its results are expected to be used as the basis for organizations in the sector to improve the inclusion of the gender approach.



Conclusions

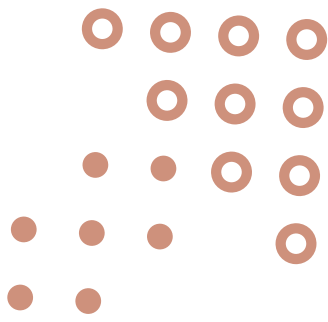
- Gender roles are mediated by stereotyped representations of men and women, and by what it means to be a man and a woman. From this perspective, the “natural” scope for the performance of men is considered to be the productive sphere, and for women, the reproductive sphere. Women’s participation in the community, increasingly open for them to occupy leadership positions, is still largely shaped by their performance of roles associated with care, typical of the reproductive field.
- The tendency of some coffee growers to naturalize role division and to fail to understand it as a social construction leads them to deny the possibility of changing it. However, it is generally understood that this type of transformation can be achieved in the long run, based on family-based parenting practices.
- The intervention of women in coffee production is especially conditioned by the mandate that their participation should not interfere with the performance of their roles in the reproductive field. Considerations associated with women’s biological and psychological characteristics are also very important.
- The growing participation of women in the productive and community spheres has not implied changes in a corresponding distribution of responsibilities between men and women in the reproductive field, which results in a work overload for women, which gets worse during coffee harvest.
- Compared to men, women have less access to and control over resources -land, income, training and technical support, leisure time. Their participation in decision-making related to the productive sphere is restricted. Men and women justify this on the grounds that women have less knowledge about coffee crops.
- The opening of coffee growers to women’s participation in the productive sphere -e.g., attendance to technical training or participation in some projects- is often based more on a matter of personal convenience of the husband, than on an authentic interest in empowering women. Only some men coffee growers show an authentic interest in helping develop women skills and strengthening their autonomy.
- There is a strong tension between appreciating and underrating women’s work in the productive, reproductive and community spheres. Although women’s working hours are recognized as longer than men’s, their work is considered “lighter” because it requires less physical effort and it is mainly done at home. Similarly, although women’s

work overload is recognized, this is not reflected in structural changes in the responsibility distribution, access to income, or resource control. Although women are aware of this problem, they do not seem to claim more recognition of their work.

- In general, coffee growers and organization leaders and technicians consider that there is no gender equality. However, they recognize some degree of improvement in opportunities for women, as well as some personal changes that make them more capable of asserting their rights.
- Organization practices focus mainly on the economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability, while the social aspect is still to be developed. In terms of gender equality, these practices are usually limited to the specific initiatives undertaken by technicians, cooperatives or companies. Most of the solutions to social problems are altruistic while the economic dimension is more linked to business. For this reason, gender projects end up being an “additional” element of the industry instead of a systemic solution that makes formal part of the business model.
- The technical teams admit that it is important to strengthen the social dimension in the work done with coffee farmers, as well as to contribute to gender equality. However, they do not feel qualified for this or consider that their

performance related to the fulfillment of other goals prevents them from participating in these areas.

- Gender stereotypes are also held by organization staff, which leads technicians to reinforce the predominant patriarchal model among coffee farmers. With few exceptions, technicians have a narrow vision of what gender equality and the creation of opportunities for women mean. There is a tendency to suggest that these opportunities should be created in the reproductive sphere -e.g. through training in food preparation or food safety- and be accompanied by the creation of other sources of income through small undertakings -e.g. handicrafts production.
- In all cases, the involvement of women in the organization’s activities does not usually follow a deliberate action. The technical teams acknowledge that they do not advance systematic and deliberate actions to ensure that women’s participation in training activities is equal to men’s. There are no follow-up actions in place to verify the benefits resulting from women’s participation.



Recommendations

To coffee growers

- Gender equality initiatives should involve both women and men at all stages of the projects. It is important to identify the opportunities created by the projects that have a positive impact on the life of both men and women in order not to widen the gender gaps. Certain tools that incorporate gender criteria in programs and projects, such as the *International Food Policy Research Institute* (IFPRI) framework, can be used in projects for gender analysis, as well as the tools in the CATIE project cycle.
- In order to overcome obstacles to women's participation and leadership in their families, communities and organizations, men and women should be supported so that they can learn about gender equality and promote recognition practices about the work that both perform in their homes, in coffee production and in their communities. This can be achieved with training strategies for the different family members that highlight the importance of transforming cultural values and recognizing the contribution that each of them makes to the household.
- Unpaid women's work perpetuates unequal distribution of income in the coffee growing household. Hence the importance of a more equitable assignment of roles and functions among the family members, in order to ensure recognition for their contributions and respect for their dignity through a fairer distribution of economic and social benefits, such as redistribution of household chores, leisure opportunities and other forms of recognition. Both men and women do unpaid work, for example, it is not expected that the work of cooking for workers is economically compensated, but it should nonetheless be recognized, since it is often an invisible effort. Additionally, income from family-produced coffee sales should be jointly used and distributed.
- It is important to have family arrangements in place that allow women to improve their direct access to income and production resources, which include technical support, microcredits, supplies and technology. To the extent that this does not change, women will continue to access second category income ("pasillas" and lower quality volumes) in coffee production.
- Regarding producer associations, it is important to encourage women's

engagement within their governance structure in order to broaden their participation in decision-making processes and leadership opportunities. For this purpose, incentives can be created to increase the percentage of women in leadership positions, affiliation of women to cooperatives or producer associations and strengthen leadership processes, etc.

To organizations

- It is important to adopt a participatory approach for creating alternatives that promote gender equality, so that the needs, interests and demands of men and women coffee growers are included in a culturally relevant manner. For this, interviews, focus groups and workshops should be conducted, with participatory methodologies, including the use of GALS (Gender Action Learning System), an empowerment methodology to enable men and women to reflect on gender issues within the household and its productive unit.
- The productive component and associativity do not solve gender inequalities found in coffee production. Overcoming inequality requires not only expanding their participation in the productive sphere but also changing role distribution in the household, so that their workload is not increased.
- Organizations should broaden their gender equality vision and do more than just provide training support, coffee plot allocation and enable women's participation in their projects. The gender approach needs to be adopted through practices that lead to fair benefits for men and women -division of labor, resource access and control, participation and leadership, compensation, recognition-, integrating the participation in the coffee growing, community and family spheres. This can be done via pilot projects that include hand-on actions to improve gender equality and have a follow-up and assessment system in place to gather key information not only for organizations, but also for coffee grower families.
- The organizations that support the work with coffee growers should be inspiring when it comes to promoting gender equality and, therefore, commit internally with actions that favor people's access to equal opportunities, rights, alternatives, responsibilities and skill development.
- It is important to follow up gender indicators that ensure the provision of key information to families, farmers' associations and sector organizations, to make informed decisions with a view to strengthening gender equality. A first step towards any such follow-up system would be to have gender-disaggregated data related to productivity, income, decision-making and use of time indicators. For example: percentage of women reporting control over coffee-producing land; percentage of training participants who adopt Good Agricultural Practices disaggregated by sex; percentage of men and women attending workshops on gender equality; percentage of households with family budgets and fair income distribution, etc.



Follow-up and assessment of these indicators will enable accumulating lessons learned and replicating the best practices.

- To the extent that men and women have equal access to technical support, they will be better equipped to apply what they have learned, with women acting as a social multiplier. In this sense, technical teams should bear in mind women's participation in the coffee production and choose days and hours that encourage their regular attendance. Additionally, the whole family should be engaged during farm visits, since it is a key element to promote gender equality and, additionally, improve the intergenerational connection.
- Training processes for technicians should be developed so that they can be better equipped to address relevant gender issues in coffee growing and related regulations, including land ownership and gender violence. It is worth noting that some technicians have positions that reinforce the patriarchal model, and this restricts their supporting role.

Photo: Maria Teresa Matijasevic

- Organizations need to have multidisciplinary teams that complement the technical perspective that currently prevails and promote discussion and actions to enact their commitment to gender equality, beyond the simple fulfillment of a requirement imposed by donors or project funders. The various organizations could set up a common team to work on shared problems.
- It is important to develop a differential approach to support women who manage their productive units, since time management, gender roles and resource access and control are improved to a great extent when these women are supported by their husbands and children.
- Organizations should support practical initiatives to create sources of income for women, taking into account their interests, their particular skills and community visibility in order to provide women and their families with an additional source of income. These activities should not indiscriminately increase women's workload.





ANNEX 1. THE VOICES OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Because we strongly believe that listening to facilitate allows us to approach the speaker's essence and co-create new possibilities, we invite you to:

- hear to listen;
- listen with all the senses, not only with the ears;
- focus all your attention on the person speaking, because listening is selective; and
- listen to the feelings behind the words⁸.

The following testimonies from women and men coffee growers, technical teams and representatives of the partner organizations in the study illustrate our facilitating listening during field work.

⁸Adapted from Brenson, G. (2017). Facilitation module: Perceive, Listen and Ask.



"The woman collaborates in all the tasks assigned to her near the house because this way she is not neglecting her children or the kitchen. The coffee bean process is readily accessible to a woman because it is done near the house."

Man coffee grower

"Daughters are raised in the same environment and that's why these women, although they have the skills and brains to act as leaders, are limited because they know that as women they are not expected to make those decisions."

Woman coffee grower

"There are women who still work very hard: they get up at three or three thirty in the morning, they pick up coffee beans, do this, do that, they water the plants, they choose the coffee beans so that they produce good quality coffee.

But you go and ask her: How many kilos did your husband sell? How much did he make from that sale? How many kilos did he pick up this year? How many kilos did the farm throw away? and how much money did they make this year? She will say: 'I don't know'. And what happened to the money? 'I don't know what he did with the money.

You see, there was a lot of coffee beans, a lot of sacks, I'm not sure how much we made."

Woman coffee grower

"Boys and girls are always around the house. 'Boy, go and take breakfast to the men. The boy goes to the coffee field. 'Girl, come here and do the dishes', and the boy is never told to do the dishes, help make the beds, sweep the floor or anything, because that's a girl job."

Woman coffee grower

"We do value women's work, but we never show it.

We recognize what they do, but we have done nothing about it."

Man coffee grower

"When I think about her life, if she took control of her own life and claimed her rights as such, believe me that a man, no matter how stubborn, would have to be flexible or everything would blow up for them, because that way they would be stuck."

Man coffee grower

"I have also learned a lot, because I was one of those who knew nothing about the farm: what fertilizers were used, in which quantities, how pests were controlled, everything was a mystery to me. But now, thank God, with the training we have received, I know how pests are controlled, how much fertilizer should be sprayed on a plant.

Economically I have also [learned] a lot, because before my husband handled the money and now we have our own crops and income."

Woman coffee grower

"Previously, let's say when the woman was not so involved [in the productive sphere], often her husband would not explain things to her... 'yes, I went to town and sold a sack of coffee', but he would not tell her how much money he'd made. Now he [...] says 'Come on, let's sell this coffee so that we can pay here and here. How are we going to do this and that? We have this much left... 'Then the husband and the wife make the decision on what to invest in, either at home, in an item or they can even decide to buy what they need for the farm: fertilizer, machinery and so on.

You can see both are very engaged, that they work like 50/50 or that both are managing their finances, their resource. That has improved a lot."

Technician

"Before you went to town only to see the doctor, to celebrate San Pedro or in December, if there was enough money to buy clothes. That is, you were totally dependent on your husband. Instead, now we go out together, as a family; he asks you what you think about something, what you want. Now it's not just the man the one to call the shots but the whole family [...] Before, you didn't have a voice... They made the decisions and what they wanted was fine."

Woman coffee grower

"I think the human factor has played a key role, I mean, the fact that the woman has demonstrated enough determination to persist in her project against all odds. So I think that has helped women to keep on track, despite the fact that many times they were about give up. Leadership has been critical, because it combined the experience of knowing the coffee market with the willingness to accomplish the project."

Technician

"As a technician, I take great care not to do activities for women only. I never plan them like that precisely because they make men suspicious. Why can women go and I can't? They may say: 'then if I can't go, my wife will not go', and that means the end of the program.

For that reason, I try to engage the whole family."

Technician

"Today, the projects that we have supported are clearly successful. But we still need to be trained in strategies for working with women and young people. We must propose activities that are relevant to all members of the family so as to create more interest in coffee growing. A more integral work must be done."

Technician

"We lack more specific training in these topics. As part of our continuous improvement, we must become familiar with the culture of the region we serve, because that is vital to identify the problems and their potential solutions. But this is not going to improve overnight."

Technician

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