

## PRESS RELEASE



CONTACT: Greg Meenahan  
COMPANY: The Partnership for Gender Equity  
PHONE: (503) 756-7013  
EMAIL: [Greg@genderincoffee.org](mailto:Greg@genderincoffee.org)  
WEB: <https://www.genderincoffee.org/>

Release Date: April 6, 2021

## International Panel of Gender Experts Joins PGE to Develop the Gender Equity Index

*The Gender Equity Index for Coffee and Cocoa Offers a Scalable Strategy Ensuring Women Benefit from Global Sustainability Investments*

Washington, D.C., April 2, 2021 --The Partnership for Gender Equity has assembled an international panel of economics and gender experts to assist in the development of the "Gender Equity Index," a tool for ensuring women's access to productive resources, like farmer training. It will evaluate sustainability program design, implementation, and the monitoring & evaluation necessary to achieve a regionally responsive "best fit" of gender equity "best practices" for farmer advisory services in coffee and cocoa supply chains.

The expert advisory group is made up of leading gender researchers and practitioners who will serve as a sounding board and common point for exchange of inputs on three primary aspects: 1) ensure the GEI Framework is sound and appropriate for the context of a wide range of farmer training initiatives; 2) provide input for continuous improvement process of the GEI; and 3) recommend key aspects of the validation of the GEI for regional application.

Group facilitator Rebecca Morahan, who specializes in capacity building with producer organizations, companies, and their partner organizations to enhance gender responsiveness said, "We are excited to work with the panel who bring diverse experiences and perspectives to the development of the GEI. Their in-depth understanding of gender in the coffee and cocoa sectors and other commodity chains, and of women's economic empowerment in diverse contexts will be extremely helpful."

Cheryl Doss, Ph.D, a development economist in the Department of International Development at University of Oxford who has conducted research in survey design and data collection methodologies, said, "I'm excited about the opportunity to work on measuring women's equality through the GEI. My research has focused on women's empowerment in agriculture, often in smallholder production of food crops, but it is important to also ensure that women are involved throughout the value chains for higher value cash crops such as coffee and cocoa."

Jane Onoka, who holds an MBA from Warwick Business School and an MA in Gender and Development from the University of Nairobi, has over 20 years of experience international development. She has worked extensively with agribusinesses and on projects like the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi). Currently based in Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire, she is working with the IFC, World Bank Group's agribusiness clients on supply chain development and gender integration, and has worked with various commodities including tea, cocoa, coffee, cotton, cashews, palm oil, sugar, maize, and legumes. She said, "I'm particularly excited that this has interest from industry groups, that the demand is coming from them. We often struggle with making the business case for companies to invest in gender smart interventions. This is a holistic approach to do that."

Anna Laven, Ph.D, founder of Rokit Science, Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) Associate and the co-founder of Rokbar said, "Ongoing gender research with Mars Cocoa made me realize how patriarchal cocoa growing communities actually are and how the male dominated cocoa supply chain is in itself reinforcing unequal gender norms and putting (young) women at a disadvantage. There is an opportunity to improve the diversity among supply chain staff and make women and youth better represented and served."

Other members of the team include:

Cathy Rozel Farnworth, Ph.D, is a gender specialist with over 20 years of experience in gender-responsive value chain research and development (including in coffee), gender-transformative methodologies, quality of life, and mainstreaming gender in projects and research.

Katherine Loh, Ph.D, is an international economic development consultant with over 15 years of experience in regional trade and economic cooperation, women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. An economist by training, Kathy has expertise in data analysis, policy research, program development and design, and monitoring and evaluation. Her geographic area of expertise is in Asia Pacific countries.

Olga Lucía Cuellar Gómez has her roots in the Colombian Coffee Region and has worked alongside female farmers in Cauca, Colombia. Her work with S&D Coffee's "Raiz" program has been characterized by the importance of including the farmer's voices and perspectives when establishing business relationships. Olga Lucia founded Promising Crops and works together with her clients and partners to build new perspectives that contribute to the development of rural communities.

Kimberly Easson, Founder and CEO at The Partnership for Gender Equity said, "At this critical time where progress on gender equality due to the COVID-19 pandemic is at grave risk, the input of these gender experts could not be more welcome for the GEI effort. We are thrilled with the caliber of the engagement with the GEI to date, and as a result, we expect the tool will appeal to an even broader number of company supporters as we move toward Phase 2. "

###

Organizational info:

The Partnership for Gender Equity (PGE) is creating common tools and methodologies to support the coffee and cocoa industries' engagement and investment in gender equity across the value chain. These tools will serve to improve the livelihoods of producers and enhance the sustainable supply of quality coffee. Our evidence-based approach comprises three core elements: a validated set of tools, a common language for gender equity and a platform for action that supports scalable investments and action across the sector. By harnessing the power of collective action within the industry, growers, buyers, exporters, importers, roasters, brands, private foundations, development agencies, academic institutions and more can create a positive impact from community to cup (and bar), and for every step in between.

Follow us on social media at @EqualOrigins, and find out more about us at [www.genderincoffee.org](http://www.genderincoffee.org)