

PRESS RELEASE



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

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The Gender Equity Index for Coffee and Cocoa Offers First-Ever Scalable Strategy Ensuring Women Benefit from Global Sustainability Investments

A precompetitive, globally scalable, capacity-building approach ensuring technology gains and farmer training reach women in producing countries.

Washington, D.C., February 16, 2021 --The Partnership for Gender Equity has received \$105,000 from a group of coffee and cocoa partners to develop and launch a gender equity indexing tool. The new Gender Equity Index (GEI) will be used by companies and organizations that provide services to farmers and will support their efforts to reach more women more effectively.

With the coffee industry spending \$300-\$400 million on sustainability efforts each year, the GEI seeks to leverage this investment in support of the women who provide between 40% to 80% of the pre- and post-harvest labor - including activities that are critical to product quality and yield, as well as the profitability of the family farm.

The GEI will evaluate the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and other program domains that are the foundation to achieving regionally relevant gender equity "best fit" practices. Until now, there have been no common language, goals or objectives used by the industry to ensure that existing gender inequities do not present a barrier to receiving effective training. The GEI diagnostic will offer recommendations and resources to assist service providers as they prioritize action to address identified gaps. The tool will also provide a shared language about gender equitable capacity building at origin so that producers, roasters, brands and green suppliers can clarify specific goals and prioritize action.

Rossi Veronica, Sustainability Manager at Lavazza Group said, *"It's very important to Lavazza Group that our sustainability investments are made gender equitably. We strongly believe that women's empowerment is a key driver for sustainable development and economic growth in every country: this is why the UN's Sustainable Development Goal #5 (SDG 5), supporting global gender equity development, is one of our priority sustainability pillars for people and businesses".*

The goal of the GEI is to overcome the gender barriers related to technology and skill transfer at origin regarding good agricultural practices (GAP) training, renovation and rehabilitation, post-harvest processing, financial literacy training, quality assurance training, Q-grading, and other efforts designed to increase the profitability and resilience of producers. For instance, details such as the time and location of a training can be barriers for women trying to attain vital skills and technologies.

Alejandro Cadena, CEO of Caravela Coffee, said, *“This is a very interesting approach because it’s not about creating a siloed gender equity project, but rather seeks to weave gender equity within existing strategies and investments.”*

Current industry partners contributing both personnel and finances to this effort include roasters, green coffee suppliers, NGO’s, and foundations: Lavazza Coffee Company, Barrie House Coffee Roasters, Allegro Coffee Roasters, Paulig Group, Jot, Caravela Coffee, EFICO Green Coffee, Lutheran World Relief/MOCCA Program, and Women Forward International.

Craig James, CEO at Barrie House Coffee Roasters said, “What I like about this project is that it acknowledges gender equity is a journey, not a destination. What we are striving for is concrete evidence that our sustainability service partners at origin have a robust plan, leveraged by best practices, and that they achieve positive progress year after year.”

Kimberly Easson, CEO at The Partnership for Gender Equity said, “This effort complements our existing portfolio of tools designed to support roasters working with producer groups in their own supply chains. These strategies to improve gender equity among producers with PGE’s ‘Virtual Learning Journeys’, and the transformative Gender Action Learning System (GALS) has proven its effectiveness. Building on our work over five years, the Gender Equity Index is a scalable strategy that enlists extension and other advisory service providers to adopt gender “best fit” practices in the design and implementation of their programs.”

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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.