



THERE'S NO SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE WITHOUT WOMEN

Working with the Rainforest Alliance and CARE to advance gender equality



WHEN WOMEN SUCCEED, COMMUNITIES THRIVE

At the Rainforest Alliance, we often say that the empowerment of women is a rising tide that lifts all boats. And it's not just us: Studies have shown that when women gain more economic strength, their families and communities benefit. When companies support women in their supply chains, they see higher quality and quantity of production, better worker retention, and an improved reputation.

Yet the current reality is that women in most countries earn only 60–75 percent of men's wages and are often paid less for the same labor. Women around the world are denied access to opportunities and decision-making processes that directly affect their lives.

We cannot achieve sustainability without supporting women. The collaboration between the Rainforest Alliance and CARE aims to uplift women working in agriculture by addressing the root causes of gender inequality and facilitating greater access to resources and opportunities without excluding men. By working with us, your company can have a real impact on women's rights in agriculture.



WHO ARE WE?

The [Rainforest Alliance](#) is an international non-profit organization working at the intersection of business, agriculture, and forests to make responsible business the new normal. Our alliance consists of more than two million farmers, workers, local organizations, governments, and businesses in over 100 countries. Together, we are working to protect forests, improve the livelihoods of farmers, workers, and forest communities, promote their human rights, and help them mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis. The Rainforest Alliance sees supporting women and gender equality as essential to achieving responsible value chains.

[CARE](#) works in over 100 countries and reaches more than 90 million people around the world through development and humanitarian aid programs. CARE's mission is to save lives, defeat poverty, and achieve social justice. Through meaningful partnerships and supporting solidarity groups among women and girls, CARE commits to supporting gender equality across all this work. CARE applies years of experience with women's rights programming worldwide.

PROJECT GUATEMALA: USING CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE TO UPLIFT WOMEN IN COFFEE

Climate change has severely hit the coffee sector in Guatemala. Unpredictable rainfall patterns create ideal conditions for disease, resulting in coffee harvests plagued by leaf-rust. Alongside climate concerns, the World Bank indicates that nearly 60 percent of the Guatemalan population lives below the poverty line. The country's social norms have led women smallholder coffee farmers to have less access to land, finance, market information, technology, and decision-making than their male counterparts. Moreover, women deal with a higher workload due to additional household and caretaking tasks.

In this light, the Rainforest Alliance and CARE, with financial support from Lidl Germany, started a [two-year project](#) in 2018 with the Acatenango Cooperative in Guatemala's Chimaltenango district. The main objective of the project was to improve productivity and climate change resilience for [women-managed farms](#), thereby strengthening their position within the cooperative. CARE and the Rainforest Alliance worked together with

the cooperative to raise awareness on gender equality and increase women's leadership; to train the participating women in sustainable farming; and to increase and sustain their market access by involving external stakeholders, including companies.

The project's impacts were twofold for women coffee farmers:

- **Improved coffee productivity, agricultural practices, and climate resilience.** Today, 95 percent of the women-led coffee farms have systems in place that guarantee better agricultural practices and adaptation to climate change.
- **Strengthened social and economic standing within the Cooperative.** For 111 women participants, this project resulted in more decision-making power, higher confidence, greater control over resources on their farms and in their homes, and increased motivation to participate in work groups and transfer knowledge between generations. Women also gained access to paid jobs. One participant is now secretary on the Cooperative's Board of Directors, a space where women were historically excluded.

Future projects with company partners could push the progress of the Acatenango women even further—and replicating the project would help reach more women and their families.

WORK WITH US

Gender equality and women's empowerment are an integral part of both the Rainforest Alliance's and CARE's visions. The Rainforest Alliance brings its broad stakeholder reach to its work in landscape and community-level programs, tailored supply chain services, advocacy, and certification. Our approach is to identify the root causes of gender inequality and understand the practical ways in which it impacts women and girls in a specific landscape. Collaborating with relevant local stakeholders—farms, communities, companies, NGOs, and governments—we design and implement programs to create positive impacts and tackle root causes simultaneously.

CARE brings its rich experience in community-based efforts to support gender equality across more than 1,000 projects in over 90 countries. This experience includes carrying out gender and power analyses, identifying risks of gender imbalances, using tools to assess gender integration in projects, and forging partnerships with women's rights and LGBTQ+ organizations.

“This project was a unique experience; individual and collective leadership was created.”

**DOÑA VICENTA, DOÑA ROSALBA, &
DOÑA MANUELA**

Women's Project Leadership



By combining our strengths with interested market partners who want to further their gender work, we can find innovative and impactful solutions together. Companies can partner with us to support or co-create joint initiatives to tackle gender inequality within their sectors. If you are ready to explore opportunities to work together, please contact the Rainforest Alliance's gender lead Joky Francois (JFrancois@ra.org) or CARE Nederland's manager of business development and innovation Richard Kooge (kooge@carenederland.org).

**RAINFOREST
ALLIANCE**

The Rainforest Alliance is creating a more sustainable world by using social and market forces to protect nature and improve the lives of farmers and forest communities.

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