

Position paper

Gender Equality



Introduction

UTZ's mission is to work towards a world where sustainability is the norm. Through training, standards and certification, a transparent traceability system and strong cooperation with farmer groups, industries and civil society, UTZ strives to make a vital change in the cocoa, coffee, tea and hazelnut sectors to benefit farmers, their workers and families, their environment and thereby the planet as a whole.

Sustainable agriculture cannot be achieved without addressing gender inequality. Gender equality is a human right that should be protected. It is also one of the Sustainable Development Goals, meaning it is considered a global development priority to achieve by 2030. In addition, gender equality is an effective strategy for economic growth and poverty reduction, as the potential for women to increase their productivity is high. The impact of an improved situation for women can also be felt by the whole community, as women tend to invest their earnings and efforts mostly in the family and the community.

Only by ensuring that male and female farmers, smallholders and workers have equal access to and control over knowledge, opportunities and resources, that their rights are respected and that they are able to voice their needs will a sustainable future be possible.

The challenges

There are different types of challenges for male and female farmers and male and female workers in the coffee, cocoa, tea and hazelnut sectors.

Both male and female farmers play an important role in the production process, but female farmers are often not valued as such due to social norms. They can face difficulties to have access to land or tree ownership which is usually necessary to become a member of the organization. This again, means they have limited access to information, innovation and resources related to production. Lack of access to these resources means that female farmers are less able to farm sustainably, have lower productivity rates and cannot voice their needs.

Smallholder farmers are generally characterized by limited education, lack of access to extension services and inputs, which

WHAT IS GENDER?

Gender is about the relations between men and women, the roles and responsibilities assigned to men and women, the opportunities open to them, and the work they engage in. These roles, responsibilities, opportunities and work are determined by the understanding of what is appropriate for men and women, i.e. they are socially constructed. It is different from sex, which refers to the biological and physiological differences between men and women.

Gender inequalities are normally anchored in (cultural) norms, values, rules and regulations. Improving gender equality is a complex process in which it is essential to work closely together with different local actors.



makes it difficult for them to reach their potential levels of quantity and quality of the cash crop.

For female smallholders and farmers this situation is often exacerbated due to:

- Lack of representation in cooperatives or farmer organizations, which means their contribution is invisible and therefore not valued. This leads to them being less able to access benefits and resources that would allow them to innovate or be more productive, and a failure by representative groups to effectively advocate on women farmers behalf.
- Social norms and values in a male dominated society, which further limit women and girls access to a decent education or mean women are economically dependent on their husband and/or extended family and often are legally or culturally denied access to land and/or tree ownership.
- Multiple responsibilities. Women usually have to balance the competing demands of reproductive, caring and productive tasks which mean they are time poor. This leads to inefficient production and can also lead to child labor as women need to ease their work burden.

Studies by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)¹ found that if women farmers had the same access to resources, training and information as male farmers, they could produce 20-30 % more on their land.

Many farms and estates have a significant number of female workers. As with farmers and smallholders, these women can face specific issues in addition to the challenges

experienced by male workers. This is the case because women are limited by social norms, lack of representation and the multiple responsibilities they have.

The working conditions of female workers are generally challenging and often do not address gender-specific needs such as the right to maternity leave, child care facilities and equal job opportunities. Women do sometimes not have access to better paid jobs and fixed contracts. In addition, women and girls can face the risk of gender based violence, such as sexual intimidation by superiors or sexual harassment by other workers in remote picking areas. Male dominated working areas and limited access to trade unions or workers organizations makes it difficult for them to claim their rights and demand safe working environments.

In short, gender inequality has led to an imbalance between men and women when it comes to distribution of tasks, access to education, organization, information and knowledge and to the risk of gender based violence and discrimination in the workplace. This inequality leads to inefficiencies in production and unfair labor conditions. This not only affects the farmer, workers and their families, but also the companies that are looking to source in a sustainable way, as gender equality is an important contributor to productivity.

UTZ's vision

UTZ sees gender equality as a human right that has to be protected and promoted.² With gender equality UTZ understands that "men and women experience equal rights and

¹ [FAO](#) 2011. *The state of food and agriculture 2010-11. Women in agriculture: Closing the gender gap for development*. Rome.

² These human rights are internationally recognized through, between others, ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)

Convention, 1958, (No. 111), Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1975 (No. 156), Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, UN).



opportunities and are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles or prejudices.”³

UTZ works towards a future in which:

- Male and female farmers, smallholders and workers have equal access to and equal control over knowledge, opportunities and resources regarding productivity and innovation;
- Female farmers and workers are able to voice their needs and actively participate in farmer groups, worker unions and platforms;
- There is equal pay for equal work, equal access to fair and safe working conditions and participation in farmer and worker organizations.

How does UTZ address gender equality?

UTZ' approach to gender equality is complemented by driving women's empowerment.

Gender equality concerns women and men, it involves working with men and boys, women and girls to bring about changes in attitudes, behaviors, roles and responsibilities at home, in the workplace, in organizations and in the community to bridge the inequalities currently embedded in gender relations.

Equality means more than parity in numbers or laws; it means expanding freedoms and improving overall quality of life so that equality is achieved without sacrificing gains for men, women, girls and boys.

Women's empowerment is achieved when women and girls acquire the power to act freely, exercise their rights, and fulfill their potential as full and equal members of society. While empowerment often comes from within, and individuals empower themselves, cultures, societies, and institutions create conditions that facilitate or undermine the possibilities for empowerment.

Both strategies need to go hand in hand. Gender equality strategies strive for changes in institutions and structures like the family, organizations, access to training, market access and access to finance, involving both women and men in the change process. On the other hand, women's empowerment aims at filling the gaps in capacities and freedoms by building women's and girl's internal as well as social capabilities, to stand up for their own rights and freedoms, claiming access to resources, organizations, sharing roles and responsibilities more equally in families and communities and being protected from violence.



Gender in the UTZ Code of Conduct

UTZ seeks to promote gender equality among producers through specific gender related control points within the Code of Conduct. Several control points refer to gender related

³ Laven et al 2012. Challenging Chains to Change. Gender Equity in Agricultural Value Chain Development. KIT, AgriProFocus and IIRR.



topics. Some specifically focus on the empowerment of women. See figure 1 at the end of this paper for more details.

Influencing change

In addition to the UTZ Code of Conduct and the training and guidance, UTZ advocates with key stakeholders in order to share knowledge on the effects of gender inequality and the best practice approaches that can be taken to address these issues.

What is needed?

In order to address gender inequality:

Companies must respect, support and reward supply chain practices that empower women and promote gender equality within farmer and worker organizations. By incorporating gender equality as a norm in their own organization and by supporting gender-sensitive solutions to barriers related to gender equality, companies can have a

EXAMPLE: IMPROVING GENDER EQUALITY IN NICARAGUA

UTZ works with Coffee Quality Institute's Partnership for Gender Equity (PGE) to improve opportunities for female farmers and their families in Nicaragua. There, we work with cooperatives in a project designed to build women's leadership skills and economic empowerment and to give training on household methods for coffee communities. By shifting power dynamics in households and cooperatives, so that men and women share responsibility and decision-making, farming as a family business and within a cooperative becomes more lucrative. The main purpose of the project is to develop methodologies of gender equality that can help develop policies and practices in the organizations; strengthen capacities for lobby and advocacy nationally and internationally; and contribute to the exchange of knowledge and research.

UTZ works with local partner organizations including NGO's, farmer groups and trade unions to strengthen their capacity to lobby and advocate on behalf of the producers, especially female farmers and workers, and represent their needs and interests. This includes gender awareness raising processes on the level of cooperatives, farmer and worker organizations, as well as supporting the capacity building of female producers to enable them to participate in decision making structures.

positive impact on gender equality in a sustainable way.⁴

Governments must protect the human right to equality in gender and create an enabling environment in which gender equality is accepted as a social norm and in which women and girls are empowered. They should support gender equality through effective regulation, implementation, communication and awareness raising.

Farmer and worker organizations must create the conditions and regulations for men and women alike to participate actively on the different levels of the organization. This

⁴ For advice and tools on how to respect and support gender equality as a business, consult "Gender equality: It's your business" by [Oxfam UK](#).



includes decision making structures, equal access to the same rights and opportunities and where gender based discrimination and

effective policies that address gender based discrimination and violence.

Conclusion

Agricultural supply chains can only be called sustainable if both men and women can exercise their rights to access to knowledge, resources and decision making structures and where both men and women have the liberty to make their own choices. UTZ works with farmers, workers, communities, local organizations, governments and business to promote both gender equality and women's empowerment. In this way a sustainable future will be available to all.

Figure 1: Gender related control points in the UTZ standard

Topics	Sub-topics	Criteria linked to the topics
Management	Record keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview m/f of all group members, operators and group staff - Overview m/f of all workers - Attendance lists of m/f participants to trainings to group staff, group members and operators
	Responsible persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On topics related to 'equal rights and opportunities for women' - General on working and living conditions
	Training and awareness raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training on topics like working and living conditions - Awareness raising sessions on child labor; equal rights and opportunities for women; sexual harassment, diversity and discrimination; health and safety including HIV/AIDS, family nutrition and other issues that improve general health. - Taking measures to ensure equal opportunities for women to participate in training and awareness raising sessions
Working and living conditions	Addressing specific needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers living on-site have access to convenient and affordable day care services for their children. - Workers receive maternity rights and benefits - Workers can return to their job after maternity - Breastfeeding women have two additional 30-minute breaks per day to nurture the child.
	Wages and contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work of equal value is remunerated with equal pay, without gender based discrimination.
	Discrimination and respectful treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers are not subject to discrimination in hiring, remuneration, access to training, opportunities or termination, on the basis of gender. - Workers are not subject to corporal punishment, sexual harassment, (...).



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equal participation of disadvantaged groups is encouraged, particularly with respect to recruitment, staff, and committee membership. -
	First aid and emergencies	Workers and their families living on-site have access to primary health care, including maternal health care.
	Pesticides handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers who are under 18 years, or pregnant or breastfeeding do not handle pesticides - Men and women have access to protective equipment
	Hygiene and living conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there are living quarters for individual workers, these have divisions between men and women. - Changing and shower facilities have separate compartments for men and women.

