

Ensuring Equitable Benefits in Service Provision for Coffee Farmers



THE COMPANY

A global coffee trading company pioneering sustainable and equitable supply chains to empower farming communities.



Sucafina is a global coffee company specializing in green coffee sourcing, trading, and logistics. It's known for its sustainable and transparent supply chain practices, aiming to connect farmers to roasters in meaningful ways. Sucafina operates across multiple countries, offering a range of services from farm to cup, including financing, risk management, and quality control. The company is committed to sustainability, working on initiatives to improve livelihoods in coffee-producing communities and minimize environmental impact.

THE IMPACTS

Since participating in Equal Origins' Better Together Workshop (BTW), Sucafina is able to better structure and systematize its approach to gender across the East Africa region. They have appointed a regional gender lead, who is meeting regularly with the teams and has delivered the first of ongoing staff training. The BTW process has given Sucafina insights into the capacity of each country team, laying the foundation for a more global, unified gender equity approach. They are now focusing on measurement, considering how to capture the impact of gender interventions on household decision-making and how to standardize indicators and tools across the country teams. They are also considering how to use the Gender Equity Index (GEI) with other supply chain partners and the potential of GEI scores being part of KPIs for lending.

At a Glance

THE CHALLENGE: Sucafina has long promoted gender equality and women's empowerment through various initiatives at origin, but had no formalized gender strategy – and alignment with priority East African countries was needed.

THE SOLUTION: Country teams completed Gender Equity Index (GEI) assessments, developed customized SWOT analyses, Theories of Change, and Gender Equity Development Plans (GEDP).

THE IMPACT:

Integrated global to local approach:

Able to better integrate global gender approach across the East Africa region; insights into local barriers and opportunities for acceleration; standardizing measurement.

Strategic planning and

budgeting: Supported creation of (5) Gender Equity Development Plans and gender-responsive budgets, designed and owned by local country teams.

Resourcing and capability

building: Appointed regional gender lead; delivering ongoing staff training.

BACKGROUND

In East Africa, sustainability efforts are constrained by a context of structural gender inequality. Typically, women contribute valuable labour to coffee, but this work is not fully recognised or remunerated. Women lack access to productive resources and extension services, and have limited participation in household and organisational decision-making. Social norms and expectations of women's and men's roles can be a barrier to change, creating resistance or backlash if not effectively addressed. At the start of Sucafina's engagement with Equal Origins, the team assessed its capacity to respond to these challenges and found that despite its institutional commitment to gender equity, constraints remained, such as the tendency for work on gender to be project/donor led, and the lack of company-wide gender training or an impact measurement system that captured and analysed data beyond women's participation in training.

THE SOLUTIONS

Sucafina engaged with Equal Origins in 2023 to equip its five East Africa country teams with essential gender equity knowledge tailored to their roles. Through the BTW, they completed the GEI assessment to gain insights and recommendations and used this as a starting point for internal reflection and discussion within the team. Each country team developed a SWOT analysis, Theory of Change, and Gender Equity Development Plans (GEDP), supported by gender-responsive budgeting sessions. Beyond the creation of plans, the teams found the process itself and the mindset it engendered to be beneficial, commenting on how their participation had stimulated engagement with gender issues across the teams and had shifted their thinking from responding or complying with externally led requirements, to being driven by the results they wanted to see.

THE HIGHLIGHTS

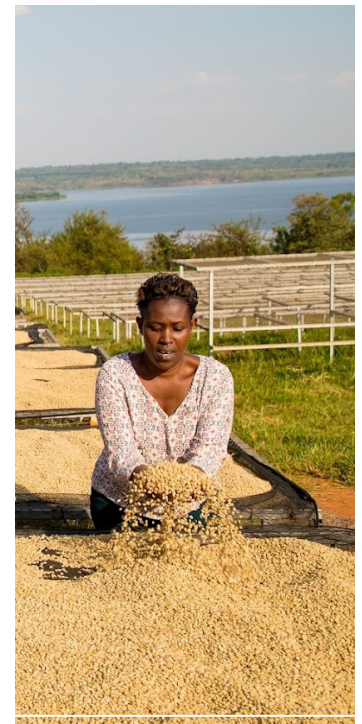
The BTW led each Sucafina country team through a process, during which diverse team members came together to discuss their current strengths and weaknesses and the constraints and opportunities they face in addressing gender inequalities. Each GEDP was developed and owned by the teams, and reflects their priorities, while also providing insights to the regional gender lead, to inform coordinated efforts. GEDPs laid out a combination of aims relating to both internal capacity and the changes they wanted to see in coffee communities; including for example deepening staff understanding of gender and supporting them to apply this in their work; reviewing and strengthening policies; reaching more women through more gender-responsive infrastructure and services informed by gender analysis; and increasing women's access to and control over income and productive resources.

The scope of ambition of each plan was tailored to the current capacity of each team, with an emphasis on identifying key 'next steps' to move them forward. The company envisions continuing to use the GEI to measure progress, providing motivation as implementation of the GEDPs results in higher scores over time, and formalizing the process of continual improvement. This is aligned with Sucafina's role as a proactive leader and innovator within coffee sustainability.



Before the Better Together Workshops, we hadn't consolidated our efforts on gender into a joined-up approach. Now, we're excited to be developing and implementing our strategy.

-Robinah Najjingo, East Africa Gender Lead



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