



# Final Evaluation Brief

## Promotion of Rural Economic Development of Women and Youth of the Lempa Region of Honduras (PROLEMPA)

**Background:** Between July 2017 and April 2023, in partnership with CESO - SACO and TechnoServe, CARE Canada led the project: Promotion of the Rural Economic Development of Women and Youth of the Lempa Region of Honduras (PROLEMPA). This project was completed in 25 municipalities of the Intibucá, La Paz, and Lempira departments in Honduras and focused on coffee production and tourism, two very recognized means of livelihood with the potential to reduce poverty in rural areas. The objective of PROLEMPA was **to improve the economic well-being of 11,600 small entrepreneurs and producers, particularly women, youth, and indigenous peoples** in this region, through the equitable management of productive and financial resources and the increase in productivity and sales of small businesses with a strong gender and governance strategy.

This is a summary of the final evaluation, which consisted of documentary analysis of secondary sources and 39 interviews with key informants from the 3 departments and technical teams of the Consortium partner organizations and local partners; 48 focus groups with key actors from the coffee chain, tourism, and the gender component; 7 evaluation workshops with producers; 22 observation visits to coffee producer farms; 22 visits to businesses; 1 learning workshop via Zoom with representatives of partner organizations, with whom a questionnaire was also applied to identify good practices; a survey of 315 coffee producers and 102 entrepreneurs from the tourism chain in the three departments.

### Main Findings

#### Leadership roles

- **85% of female coffee producers make their own decisions about their businesses.** For tourism businesses, 78% of women entrepreneurs say they are the main decision-makers about their income.
- **The number of women in leadership roles in coffee production increased.** The number of women leading went from 16 in 2018 to 67 in 2022. All women in a leadership position are Indigenous.

### Economic wellbeing

- **85% of coffee producers perceive greater economic well-being. Of these, 41% are women.**

This is because producers increased both the productivity and the quality of coffee. They also increased formal sales because they had direct relationships with exporting companies. All of this contributed to higher incomes for coffee producers and their families.

- **People benefit beyond economics.** Women coffee producers not only reported better economic well-being but also better health, better family relationships, and greater participation in women's groups and networks.

- **61% of tourism entrepreneurs perceived better economic well-being. Of these, 44% were women.**

A number of female entrepreneurs identified that through PROLEMPA, they developed business skills, their entrepreneurial spirit, and their resilience to face the complexities and limitations that the tourism chain presents.

**“At first, we women did not have plots of our own, with the project, now we have been able to have ownership of the plot and produce coffee and also decide on the management of the income. We do it with men.”**

**-Female participant from Yamaranguila in Intibucá, Honduras**

### Local capacities and partnerships created

- **Power structures, policies, and budgets were transformed to create favorable conditions for women.** Using participatory processes, **local governments approved a total of 10 municipal women's policies. Twenty-one municipal agreements were reached** with the authorities for the investment of public resources.

- **Stronger local capacities provided technical assistance to entrepreneurs.** The project worked to organize many different actors to work together, especially strengthening connections between groups for economic activities. This work also prioritized the participation of Indigenous women and youth.

- **The partnership model used by PROLEMPA** allowed for the alignment of common purposes and the articulation of impacts by building relationships of trust, which is key to achievements. Collaborative networks with public and private actors in the communities strengthened the intervention to achieve results.

### Lessons learned

**When women participate on a truly equal footing, improvements happen in their economic well-being, that of their family, and that of their community.** Strengthening women's knowledge and skills facilitates their empowerment, participation, and leadership in family, economic, community, and political structures. These achievements lead to the transformation of gender-family-work stereotypes, which require long-range processes to influence cultural and political structures.

**It's key for local producers to get involved in the innovation and research processes for new technology choices.** It is vital that coffee producers get directly involved and participate in research processes through projects. This helps lead to better, more realistic options, better decisions for farmers, and overall ownership and success of the new options.

**Human capital is key to continuity and sustainability.**

Educational strategies are key to strengthening capabilities, helping people apply what they have learned, and supporting the continuity and sustainability of actions. For example, training and strengthening community trainers, local human resources with greater technical capabilities, and the ability to relate to the formal market all contributed to greater and longer lasting uptake.

**“In coffee production it is not only the man who works, the wife and children are also involved. We women used to give that power to men, because we said “no, I can't handle money, you're the one who can, now they've taken away that blindfold we had.”**

**-Female participant**

## Applying analysis findings to programming

The following recommendations are the results of the lessons learned and challenges identified in the PROLEMPA intervention.

- **There is a need to continue linking coffee producers with economic ventures.** There is still a need to continue strengthening their capabilities in areas such as financial control, farm profitability, and added value so that they can diversify their sources of income.
- **Gender inclusion needs to be further strengthened throughout the production and marketing processes of the coffee chain.** For example, marketing processes continue to be led mainly by men.
- **Sustainability of the project.** For the exit strategy, there is a need to connect the processes, achievements, trained human resources, and tools left behind by PROLEMPA with the current tourism policy promoted by the government.

