



STRONG WOMEN = STRONG COFFEE CASE STUDY

Coffee Grafting Grows Women's Empowerment

IWCA Guatemala and Anacafe organize coffee grafting competitions to build national awareness and provide new approaches to build rural economic powerment.

In May 2018, the Association of Women in Coffee in Guatemala (Mujeres en Café Guatemala) celebrated the Sixth Regional Grafting Competition in four regions of Guatemala. The final competition was held on June 7, 2018 and showcased the best female grafter in four regions of Guatemala: Region I: Coatepeque, Quetzaltenango; Region II: San Sebastián Retalhuleu; Region III: San Pedro Yepocapa, Chimaltenangol and Region IV: Barberena, Santa Rosa.



What it grafting?

Grafting is the union of two different coffee plant species. Robusta usually serves as the rootstalk, and then a variety from the Arabica species is grafted on, thereby allowing coffee producers to take advantage of characteristics from both species - for example, better resistance against disease and drought from the Robusta species and superior bean quality from Arabica. With the compounding threats of climate change, shifting coffee growing regions, and the challenges of managing pests, coffee grafting is an important technique for coffee communities.

Guatemala Country Context

- **Population** (2017): 16,900,000
- **Poverty** (2014): 8.7% population at International Poverty Line US\$1.90/day.
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII)**(2015) : 0.49
0=equality, 1= high inequality
- **World Risk Index Ranking** (2015): 4
1=high disaster risk, 171=low disaster risk

References

Population & Poverty: <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/GTM>

GII measures human development & status by gender: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>

World Risk Index measures exposure & vulnerability to natural hazards: <http://www.uni-stuttgart.de/ireus/Internationales/WorldRiskIndex/>



Summary

Year after year, IWCA Guatemala hears different stories about how women, some of them mothers, others single, have initiated grafting as an extra source of income to support their families. In the 2015 regional competition, IWCA Guatemala interviewed a participant who shared that she had suffered from depression. She got involved to learn how to graft and her state of mind improved notably. Besides specializing in this meticulous work, she earned an income and was motivated to move ahead with her life. She convinced herself that she is worthy and it increased her self-esteem. She was empowered.



2018 Testimonials: Grafting Entrepreneurs

This year, a woman who had never participated in a grafting competition came accompanied by her mother and a friend. Together they walked almost four hours from one of the surrounding villages in Camotán, Chiquimula to participate. They have been working in coffee fields since they were girls. They learned to graft and everything was going well, until the plantation where they worked went bankrupt due to leaf rust. They lost their only jobs, and now their idea is to perfect their grafting skills to create a business amongst themselves, allowing them to be contracted to graft for other farms. Besides being inspired by winning a prize, they had the entrepreneurial idea of expanding their grafting skills and forming a business owned by women that produces and sells grafted Cooperwood trees.

IWCA Guatemala

The IWCA Guatemala chapter has over a decade of experience as an organized group. It has a strong alliance with ANACAFE, Guatemala's National Coffee Association, as well as an innovative board that spans across the coffee supply chain, positioning the IWCA Guatemala chapter well for cultivating partnerships with stakeholders. Please visit the IWCA Chapters page to connect with Muejes en Café Guatemala: www.womenincoffee.org.

The mission of the International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA) is to empower women in the international coffee community to achieve meaningful and sustainable lives; and to encourage and recognize the participation of women in all aspects of the coffee industry.