

*Presentation written and given by Maritza Midence at the 2018 IWCA Chapter Forum.
Contact IWCA (info@womenincoffee.org) with questions or to seek permission from the author.*

SCAA 2018 – PRESENTATION FOR THE IWCA CHAPTER FORUM – Apr 21, 2018

I wish to thank IWCA and especially Maria Elena Botto, our dear Chapter Relations Chair, who could not attend SCAA this year, for the opportunity that she has given me to represent the IWCA Chapter of Honduras in this Forum to speak on the subject of Gender Equity.

Slowly but surely steps have been taken in the right direction but it is in the interest of making coffee production sustainable that we need to make intentions a reality and move forward faster in our producing societies.

BACKGROUND

The assignment of roles based on tradition that are deeply rooted in ancestral practices often obstruct the development of societies; such is the case that prevents or withholds the incorporation of women and youth with equal rights to coffee production. **This situation threatens the sustainability of coffee production**

Just as the Specialty Coffee rescued coffee consumption by re-inventing the product and turning it into a high quality, versatile and sophisticated product that is increasingly demanded; it has also led producers in many countries to organize in cooperatives and associations that enable them to carry different certifications that have greatly contributed to improve systems of production and raise quality standards.

The coffee market is divided in two quality segments

- 1) Conventional or generic coffee (also called mainstream, that due to its volume is the dominant segment of the international market)
- 2) Differentiated coffees that are distinguished by their physical attributes, systems of cultivation, varieties, cup qualities or by the way in which incomes are translated to social benefits that are used collectively to favor producers and their social environments. Those coffees may be certified fairtrade, organic, environment friendly, ethical, bird friendly coffees and others. The certifications guarantee to consumers compliance of commitments made by producer groups that are periodically verified by the certifying agencies. Said commitments are made in order to earn the preference of consumers that pay premiums and have a greater demand for a specific type of product depending on its quality and the different interests that buyers may have

Among the most popular certifications are:

Fairtrade	Certification of social responsibility
Organic	Agricultural system of production that protects biodiversity
Rainforest Alliance	Wild life and ecosystem protection and workers' rights
UTZ	Involves social and environmental practices
4C	A certification of a group of European roasters that favor social and environmental practices
Café Practices	Certification for Starbucks suppliers that recognizes through price premiums ecofriendly and social practices

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SMBC
Slow Food
movement

Bird Friendly certification
Gastronomic certification that opposes the Fast Food

Previous to the existence of Specialty Coffees some certifications such as Fairtrade or Organic were already in operation. In the past they were seals of solidarity that in the case of Fairtrade ensured minimum prices to producers in order to improve their living conditions or, in the case of Organic coffees; premiums were paid in order to compensate the low yields of farms whose owners were unable to invest in fertilizers or in better husbandry. The purposes for which those certifications were initially created, when only mainstream coffees were traded and all coffees were only a commodity, did provide assistance to producers but were not incentives for quality improvement.

But the advent of the Specialty Coffee has created ever increasing market opportunities by providing recognition to the quality of the above average and unique coffees that have rescued coffee consumption and have withdrawn a part of the total produced from the condition of being a commodity and in turn converting it into a product with diverse and desirable characteristics that each day earns more consumers. High quality Coffee is increasingly demanded and has created market opportunities in which millions of women producers participate but most are hidden in the shadow of their households without the social and economic recognition that they deserve since their silent contributions are traditionally non-remunerated activities that are considered to be inherent to their roles of housewives or mothers or simply because they are expected to be the usual role of their activities in the family. Likewise, the young members of the families (male and female) that work in the coffee farm often fall into the same household category and seldom receive recognition for their performance; **such anonymity is translated into low incomes that stimulate many to look for different alternatives, away from the coffee farm.**

Current and potential market opportunities for women's coffee

The Specialty Coffees (often also called gourmet coffees)

The beginning of the Specialty Coffee movement in 1982 defined Specialty coffee as “a well prepared coffee, of a unique origin and with distinctive flavor”. This concept refers to the geography and microclimates that favorably influence the production of coffees with a unique flavor, with particular cup profiles and characteristics that preserve their identity. **Telling the story of each special coffee helps its promotion and makes it different from the mass.** It is a desirable requirement and can be very valuable for a special coffee to have its own story that individually identifies it and contributes positively to its marketing. It would be valuable to offer training to women so that they take up the responsibility of writing those stories. Knowledge and information are key to power and learning about telling the story of their particular coffees would earn women the respect of their husbands or partners and would lead to gender equality in the homes since the couple would work as a team to produce and promote the sale of their special coffee.

The specialty coffee movement has had the effect of rescuing the coffee market that had been losing its place to the competition of alternative beverages that have today won new places in the

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stomachs and pockets of the consumers such as: purified and mineral waters, teas, infusions, carbonated drinks, juices, wine, beers and many others. It has been possible to “rescue” the market for coffee and advance in its marketing because the product has been rediscovered and is now professionally served in a diversity of drinks, in many different manners of HIGH QUALITY and usually in attractive environments that are catered by trained baristas. And, since the advent of the specialty coffees, all of the certifications mentioned before also have some quality assurance implied to them.

IWCA is a global association that has been fostered by the United Nations for the purpose of creating tools to improve the incomes and health of women and of their children and to promote their education that will lead to the elimination of poverty. Since most of the numerous coffee farmers that are dedicated to coffee production live in countries with low social and economic development in tropical areas of the world, it is considered that if women can earn income from their productive activity it will be more likely to reach the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and IWCA could serve as a model for improvement of the conditions of other women that are also involved in producing commodities.

During SCAA 2017 the following considerations were made when the subject of Women and Gender Justice was discussed:

It is estimated that of the 25 million farmers that produce coffee 70% work in small farms with less than 10 hectares. These small farms require the whole family to work in them.

When the coffee is bought from the producers it is often the male who is identified as the producer because men are usually the owners of the land. In cooperatives, in many countries the membership is also determined by land ownership, which again entitles men to receive the income resulting from the sale of the coffee thus leaving women and the young members of the family that work in the farms with very low remuneration, if any.

On the route that the seed makes to the cup it is important to understand that the participation of women contributes significantly in the different processes that the coffee production requires. However, it repeatedly happens that despite their contribution in the farm women/wives usually are not paid for their work. What they sometimes receive as indirect compensation are subsidies or training.

Given their deep roots the legacy of social prejudice and tradition are very hard to break and they result in lower incomes for the women, little access to land, credit, inputs, training, leadership and market information. But when the women’s income increases it results in personal empowerment, in maintaining homes with a better gender balance that tends to connect the female coffee producers with the market and to influence the level of the family’s investment in health and education. A better quality of life with more opportunities keeps the families together and ensures sustainability of coffee as a business.

Last year during SCAA it was also said that the lack of harmony in the family resulted in a low Quality product that threatened sustainability. But when the couples work together with a common purpose they decide on their system of production and also on how the income is used to provide

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a better and bigger development of the farm for the family's benefit. It was said that in order to work as a team it's good to find answers to such questions as:

- What am I doing in my family?
- How am I supporting my family?
- How am I supporting my spouse?
- How am I supporting the coffee production within this family?
- How will the income generated by this family be shared?

In coffee producing families the coffee farm is the project for the life in common and its success is the goal that all members should share.

If the remuneration that the woman or mother of the house receives for her work were to be verified by certifying agencies it's likely that her percentage of work in the farm could be recognized as "women's coffee" and entitle that proportion to receive a premium price. This could be a possibility to explore at board levels of cooperatives and producer associations persuading members to keep verifiable records of such remunerations in order to be able to claim such premiums. The record keeping will promote entrepreneurship in the family with the wife and youth sharing in the proportion of their contributions.

In a recent interview Arancha Gonzales, Executive Director of the International Trade Center, which is a multilateral agency of United Nations, based in Switzerland, said to have received a tweet saying:

"What is so much noise about women?"

Her comment was that *"the truth is that if we put money in women's pockets their spending pattern is different: 90% of what they spend returns to the community. Of each \$1 that a woman earns she spends 90 cents feeding the children, sending them to school and spending them in health."* This pattern is motivated by the natural concern that women have for the family's wellbeing.

The awareness of the need for gender equality is creating market opportunities for high quality coffees that women produce. But the **concept of "Women's Coffee" not only requires traceability but also needs for specific plans to be made on how the premiums should be invested to attain gender justice within the family circle, in the community and in the organizations of producers.** The market recognizes the value of coffee that women produce and connects it with the value chain that will lead to gender equality.

An importer who sympathizes with the subject of gender justice last year said that "gender justice matters because it is a good business". He explained that it is so because buyers are interested in a sustainable coffee trade that can only be ensured when Gender Justice exists. Sustainability requires investment in women's coffee but the premiums to be paid for women's coffee will be earned by good coffee. Investment is needed to train women in the different jobs that they perform in farms in all origins.

Positive results evidence that when women are involved in training there is a more consistent application of the lessons that are learned such as good practices at farm level and washing or sun drying processes. In the same way when women have to perform leadership positions higher

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quality coffee is obtained and it is quality that makes the coffee business sustainable. Training and leadership are crucial to high productivity and profitability.

10 years ago, in 2008, the social impact that coffee crisis of 2000-2004 that caused huge losses of coffee jobs in producing countries were acknowledged.

But at that time coffee was also analyzed as a global source of employment as these brief notes reveal:

- As many as 500 mm people depend on coffee
- 25 mm small holder producer families depend on coffee as their only income
- In the U.S. 150,000 full and part time jobs are created by the coffee industry (including indirect jobs the figure could be as high as 1.8 mm people in the U.S.)
- In the U.S. alone, the coffee industry generates some \$19 billion in annual business
- The Specialty coffee alone accounts for almost \$11 billion in annual sales
- In Japan up to 3.1 mm direct and indirect jobs are created by the coffee industry (4.6% of the entire Japanese work force)
- In Russia about 30,000 people work in the coffee business
- In Italy about 110,000 coffee shops create jobs for at least 330,000 people

The logical conclusion is that Sustainability of the Coffee Business concerns every part of the value chain, both in the producing and the consuming countries.

Coffee producers need to be economically viable. A job that does not receive fair remuneration reduces its viability in the chain value. This is what happens to the jobs that women do in the farms when gender equality does not exist. The market needs to ensure that a next generation exists to replace the current coffee producers. A better quality of life in the farm means that the children will stay in the areas of productions increasing its quality and productivity and that is what will ensure the sustainability of the coffee trade. It's time to apply common sense and to explore solutions within our organizations. The world is about change and about being conscious of our choices. **We cannot create gender equality if men and women do not work together.** Gender equity is not a female issue it is a social and economic issue so it's really important to be united. If groups are convinced of this necessity Gender Equality will become a common goal and progress will be possible faster than we can imagine.

I recently read about an initiative that was totally new to me. It's called the 30% Club and concerns women in FTSE (Financial Times and Stock Exchange) boards. In 2010, the 30% Club was founded in the U.K. to collaborate with business, governments and other campaigns, to improve gender diversity and accelerate the pace of change from schoolroom to boardroom. The organization supports research on why women are good for business and what works to ensure more women progress through the executive pipeline. The Club now has 9 chapters and the current goal is to have a minimum of 30% of women integrating FTSE-350 boards by 2020 (the percentage is now at 24.8 %.)

It could be a good idea that in the pursuit of Gender Equality, as one of the U.N.'s Social Development Goals, IWCA, SCAA and ITC could team up and jointly lobby with the different

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Certifying agencies so that they set up time frames for the boards of coffee cooperatives and producers associations to include 30% of women in their Boards. Probably with adequate training women will be able to efficiently integrate their boards and start to influence decisions in such a manner that . . .

Families that are economically prosperous are created,

That a sustainable supply of coffee is created and

That the environment for prosperous future generations is created.

When investment is made in women all of this happens, everyone stays in the business and good coffee is produced. When high quality is ensured, investment in coffee produced with gender equality will be a good business.

GENDER EQUALITY A COMMON GOAL:

Equity and **equality** are two strategies that can be used in an effort to produce fairness. **Equity** is giving everyone what they need to be successful. **Equality** is treating everyone the same. **Equality** aims to promote fairness, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help.

When the office of ITC opened in Medellin Colombia in May 2017, the Executive Director, Arancha Gonzales said:

“When Women participate in the economy the countries are more competitive they grow more and faster and are capable of eliminating poverty at a greater rhythm but, nevertheless, numerous legal discriminations still exist, practices, or lack of access to credit that limit the women’s participation in the economy. If we were to eliminate them it would be like adding a new economy to the world of the size of China and the U.S. together. “She Trades” is the initiative of the International Trade Center to empower and to help close the working gap for women. We want commercial policies more sensitive to the gender dimension, better access to credit, more business women in private and public purchases and to end legal discrimination. Our objective is to connect a million business women to the market of goods and services by year 2020 and want that at least 350,000 of them be Latin American.”

As participants in the world of coffee trade females in the coffee business should participate in “She Trades” in order to take a qualitative leap in Women’s development.