

Prepared by



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# GENDER INCLUSION BRIEF

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Snapshot,  
Rural Guatemala

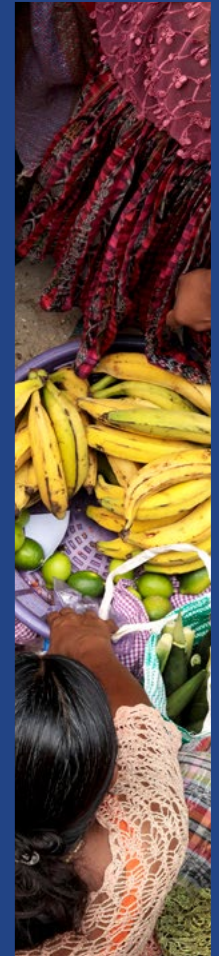
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# I. Introduction

## Why did we write this Brief?

Over the past two decades, there have been some gains towards gender equality in Guatemala, but significant challenges remain. Women are now graduating from school at the same rates as men, and joining senior and middle management jobs in greater numbers.<sup>1</sup> In spite of this, persistent gender inequalities in entrepreneurship and rural development remain. Women comprise 50% of the population but only hold 8%<sup>2</sup> of the land and lead 12% of large businesses<sup>3</sup> in Guatemala. In particular, indigenous women tend to experience poverty, discrimination and exclusion at higher rates than women that are not indigenous.<sup>4</sup> All of this is happening in the country with the largest GDP in the region suggests that additional improvements towards gender equality are realistic and achievable in the short- and medium-term with the focus and coordination of organizations working on the ground.

Rural poverty and income inequality are particularly persistent problems in Guatemala, with over 70% of the rural population living below the poverty line. Promoting gender equality can have positive transformative socio-economic outcomes on women, agriculture and rural sectors, and on society as a whole (for further discussion see Section II below). Given the existing infrastructure and resources available to rural women, entrepreneurship is seen by the organizations included in our data collection and analysis as one of the most promising ways to help women secure socioeconomic opportunities. In fact, 75% of rural entrepreneurship support organizations- organizations that provide financial and/or technical support to Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) - have programs specifically supporting women entrepreneurs.

Rural entrepreneurship support organizations in Guatemala (“Support Organizations”)<sup>5</sup> work to improve the socio-economic conditions for women both for its direct impact and because improving the situation of women has a ripple effect, stemming from improvement to an individual woman’s life, to that of her family and children, and further to create impacts on extended family units, communities and surrounding areas more broadly. By looking at the support currently available from Support Organizations, and what additional support might be needed to overcome the remaining gaps in access, services, and other support for women in rural Guatemala, we hope to provide a guide to designing and implementing a way forward for these Support Organizations to continue to positively impact gender equality in rural Guatemala and also to reflect these values within their organizations.

<sup>1</sup> World Bank. Guatemala indicators.

<sup>2</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization. 2020. [Giving women in Guatemala a voice in food security and nutrition](#), Rome: FAO.

<sup>3</sup> World Bank. 2017. Enterprise Surveys.

<sup>4</sup> USAID. 2018. [Proyecto de Reforma Fiscal y de Compras: Diagnóstico de Tributación y Género en Guatemala](#).

<sup>5</sup> Interviewed and consulted in the development of this report.

## Objectives

This Guatemala Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Snapshot: Gender Inclusion Brief provides an overview of what Support Organizations are doing to promote gender equality and, in particular, better socioeconomic outcomes for women in the rural entrepreneurship ecosystem in Guatemala.<sup>6</sup>

This Brief outlines how these Support Organizations are currently working to support rural women in their various roles in the private sector: as entrepreneurs, employees, producers and clients of rural MSMEs in Guatemala. We also analyse the internal policies of Support Organizations on gender equality and how these organizations are “walking the talk” by promoting gender inclusion within their organizations. Based on key insights from the Support Organizations, this Brief highlights the **challenges, needs and opportunities** that these actors have in their journey towards achieving gender equality for rural women in Guatemala. To this end, it includes a list of **recommendations and outlines good practices** from Value for Women’s work around the world to address these challenges and opportunities, and to provide a practical guide for those in the sector to scale and improve their work in gender.

## Methodology

This report is based on research conducted by Value for Women and ANDE between October 2020 and April 2021. This included Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), surveys and other research and data collected to inform the Rural Guatemala Ecosystem Snapshot conducted by ANDE, and inputs from a stakeholder validation session for that report held in September 2020. We worked closely with ANDE throughout this process and have drawn on the analysis and conclusions from the Rural Guatemala Ecosystem Snapshot, which includes the whole rural entrepreneurship ecosystem, to focus on and elaborate the issues that are pertinent to women in rural areas specifically. We recommend that organizations and individuals interested in the current status of gender equality in rural Guatemala and potential for future improvements read these two reports together in order to have a full understanding of the enabling environment and the gaps in access and outcomes for rural women.

<sup>6</sup> ANDE defined rural areas based on definitions used by the governments of Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC in its acronym in English), and other international sources as follows: of 1) Residents of villages, hamlets, or farms; 2) residents of settlements/towns in which 50% or fewer households have lighting, electricity, and piped water in their home; 3) residents of settlements/towns that lack land communication routes (roads) or regular air or maritime service, primary level schools (six grades), and mail services.



## IN FOCUS:

### What are ANDE Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Snapshots?



ANDE's core strategic program goal is to improve entrepreneurial ecosystems in emerging markets and they have sought input on how to approach this from numerous key stakeholders in multiple geographies in emerging markets. A key first step identified by entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial Support Organizations, investors, and funders in cultivating a strong ecosystem is developing an understanding of the existing entrepreneurial landscape.

Based on this feedback, ANDE developed an ecosystem mapping methodology, or "Snapshots," which offer a mechanism to identify the players currently supporting entrepreneurship, pinpoint barriers and gaps in services, and provide solutions and opportunities to address those gaps. Snapshots represent the entrepreneurial ecosystem in a specific location and point of time. Most importantly, the Snapshots reveal where funding and capital support are most needed, and clearly depict where resources could best be utilized in the ecosystem.

Since 2014, ANDE has completed more than 20 ecosystem Snapshots for geographic areas in Latin America and Africa. These are now hosted on ANDE's publicly accessible interactive digital platform: [ecosystems.andeglobal.org](https://ecosystems.andeglobal.org). The resulting products give a never before-seen glimpse into the various players within these geographies' entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Data collection included KIIs conducted via Zoom with Support Organizations, including capacity development providers and financial support providers with programs focused in rural areas in Guatemala. These KIIs have been triangulated with quantitative survey data from 117 organizations supporting entrepreneurs in rural Guatemala<sup>7</sup>, which was collected and analyzed by ANDE from August to October 2020. The process of analyzing this data was collaborative and structured through invited input and feedback on the findings from the stakeholders involved, with 44 Support Organizations operating in rural areas in Guatemala engaged in validating the findings in September 2020.

<sup>7</sup> All of the support organizations that completed the survey operate either partially or completely in rural areas.

## II. Guatemala Gender & Rural Entrepreneurship at a Glance

Outcome Indicator	Guatemala
Labour force, million people (female vs. male)* <sup>8</sup>	2.23 vs.4.23
Wage equality for similar work <sup>9</sup> , 0 (most unequal) - 1 (equal)*	.579
% of firms with a female top manager <sup>10</sup>	18.5
% change in firms with a female top manager from 2011 to 2017 <sup>11</sup>	-15.5
% of working women who are self-employed <sup>12</sup>	49.71%
Women's access to land use, control & ownership, 0-1 (worst)*	.25 <sup>13</sup>
% Prevalence of gender violence in lifetime, % women*	18
% of female professional/ technical workers vs.% male professional /technical workers*	49.2 vs. 50.8
% of rural women working in the informal sector <sup>14</sup>	88

<sup>8</sup> World Economic Forum. 2021. World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021. Geneva: World Economic Forum.

<sup>9</sup> The World Economic Forum's wage equality is scored from 0–1, where 1 represents equal pay between women and men who are working in a similar position.

<sup>10</sup> World Bank. 2017. World Bank Enterprise Surveys. Washington, DC: World Bank. Please note that these enterprise surveys exclude the following sectors: agriculture; fishing; mining; public utilities; financial intermediation; public administration; education, health and social work.

<sup>11</sup> [Female share of employment in senior and middle management \(%\) - Guatemala](#). The World Bank. Accessed March 2021.

<sup>12</sup> [Guatemala - Self-employed: Female \(% Of Females Employed\)](#). Trading Economics. Accessed March 2021.

<sup>13</sup> Index measuring whether women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to non-land assets. 0.25 = Women and men have the same legal rights and secure access to non-land assets, without legal exceptions regarding some groups of women. However, some customary, religious or traditional practices or laws discriminate against women's legal right.

<sup>14</sup> Hall, D. and Heredia-Ortiz, E. In Guatemala, New Research on Gender Equality Shapes Government and USAID Investments in Taxation. DAI. March 2020.

Outcome Indicator	Guatemala
% of women with a transaction account at a financial institution vs. % of men <sup>15</sup>	41 vs. 46
UNDP Gender Inequality 2020 rank out of 189 countries <sup>16</sup>	127
Global Gender Gap 2021 Index Score <sup>17</sup> and rank out of 156 countries*	0.655 (Rank 122)
Economic Participation and Opportunity 2020 Score and rank out of 153 countries <sup>18</sup>	.560 (Rank 129)
Number of companies that are Women's Empowerment Principles signatories <sup>19</sup>	39
Ratified UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	Yes
Women, Business and the Law Index Score <sup>20</sup>	70.6/100 <sup>21</sup>

\* Data compiled by the World Economic Forum in: World Economic Forum. 2021. World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021. Geneva: World Economic Forum.

<sup>15</sup> FINDEX. 2017. Financial Inclusion Index (FINDEX) Online. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Development Programme. 2020. Gender Inequality Index (GII). New York: UNDP.

<sup>17</sup> The Global Gender Gap Index Score value ranges between 0 (complete inequality) and 1 (complete equality).


<sup>18</sup> World Bank. 2021. Women, Business and the Law. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>19</sup> The number of companies that are WEPs signatories as of January 31, 2021.

<sup>20</sup> World Bank. 2021. Women, Business and the Law. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>21</sup> The index covers 190 economies and it is structured around the life cycle of a working woman. In total, 35 questions are scored across the eight indicators. Overall scores are then calculated by taking the average of each indicator, with 100 representing the highest possible score. Data refer to the laws and regulations that are applicable to the main business city (Guatemala City). Based on this approach, Guatemala scores 70.6 out of 100. The overall score for Guatemala is lower than the regional average observed across Latin America & Caribbean (80.1). Within the Latin America & Caribbean region, the maximum score observed is 95 (Peru).





### III. Why is it Important to Promote Gender Equality in the Rural Entrepreneurial Ecosystem?

The inclusion of rural women presents a compelling business and economic opportunity, having direct and indirect positive impact across multiple parts of the rural entrepreneurial ecosystem, including: increased business financial performance; improved employee satisfaction and lower turnover; better consistency and quality from women suppliers<sup>22</sup>; and improved decision-making when women are in management and leadership roles.<sup>23</sup> With 70% of Guatemala's rural population living in poverty despite living in the country with the highest GDP in the region, the opportunity to alleviate this condition is too good to ignore. The benefits of increasing women's inclusion in rural businesses have led to increasing interest from enterprise intermediaries, service providers and financial institutions in gender lens investing, as it is clear that lack of attention to the particular needs of rural women in the past has limited the effectiveness of poverty alleviation efforts and stifled economic growth in rural areas and sectors.

When men and women participate equally in the economy, countries can reach their full growth potential. Indeed, if women participated equally in the economy of Guatemala, projections suggest that the country's GDP could increase by \$12 trillion by 2025 (approximately 11%).<sup>24</sup> This potential is recognized by Supporting Organizations in Guatemala, who reported during interviews that inclusion of women is important for them, not only to support human rights, but also because enhancing opportunities for rural women entrepreneurs and businesses will enhance sustainable growth for the entire country.



**Gender equality is good for the economy, poverty reduction and agricultural productivity**



<sup>22</sup> IFC. 2016. [The Business Case for Women's Employment in Agribusiness](#). Washington, DC: IFC.

<sup>23</sup> ["How Diverse Leadership Teams Boost Innovation,"](#) BCG article, January 2018.

<sup>24</sup> This projection is based on a "best in region" scenario in which all countries match the progress toward gender parity of the fastest-improving country in their region. McKinsey Global Institute. 2015. [The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add \\$12 Trillion to Global Growth](#). New York: McKinsey Institute.

## A. What are the opportunities for women in rural Guatemala?

Gender equality presents immense potential for sustainable growth in the rural entrepreneurship ecosystem. **Encouraging women as not just leaders but active players throughout the entire ecosystem can have transformative effects** that stretch far beyond the individual, to their family, community and broader society. For example, from 2000 to 2010 increases in women's labor force participation in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) contributed to decreasing extreme poverty by 30%.<sup>25</sup>

**Women, who own just 8% of land in Guatemala, have the potential to increase agricultural productivity.**<sup>26</sup> Global data shows that if women had the same access to productive resources (inputs) as men, agricultural output could increase by 2.5-4%, reducing the number of people affected by hunger by 12-17% globally.<sup>27</sup>

**Women farmers play a key role in ensuring supply reliability to buyers further along the supply chain,** which is vital as global food demand increases. As Guatemala experiences increased urbanization and out-migration from rural areas (largely by men), women are more likely to be the on-farm decision makers and head of the household. Food businesses that have recognized this shift and focused on women farmers as key to their supply strategy, have improved supply stability and their ability to plan for future growth.

**Investments in more gender-inclusive supply chains create strong brands and positive marketing outcomes.** This stems from the increasing demand by end consumers for products that are ethically sourced and empower women. Businesses that focus on gender inclusive supply chains, such as Café Femenino, which roasts and sells coffee grown and processed by women from Guatemala and elsewhere in the US, presents a prime example of this. Café Femenino's successful model shows how investing in inclusive supply chains can help agri-MSMEs access premium markets with higher pricing, and therefore lead to better incomes for farmers.<sup>28</sup>



**Yet, gender inequalities still hold back the potential of women entrepreneurs**

<sup>25</sup> World Bank. 2012. *The Effects of Women's Economic Power in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>26</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization. 2020. [Giving women in Guatemala a voice in food security and nutrition](#). Rome: FAO.

<sup>27</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization. 2011. [The State of Food and Agriculture report](#). Rome: FAO.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.cafefemenino.com/guatemala-nahuala>

## B. What are the challenges for women in the rural entrepreneurial ecosystem in Guatemala?

**Gender biases and norms and culture perpetuate and exacerbate inequality, particularly for indigenous women.** Gender biases restrict the growth of women-led businesses by hindering their access to key financial, physical, social, and human capital. Within the Guatemalan ecosystem, structural inequalities continue to permeate. *Machismo* stemming from an entrenched patriarchal system lead to cultural norms that perpetuate inequity, discrimination, and violence against women, and in turn, access to employment, education, land and healthcare, including amongst women themselves.<sup>29</sup> This bias-driven inequality also affects indigenous populations, causing higher poverty rates in indigenous communities,<sup>30</sup> and indigenous women are particularly affected, having 48% illiteracy compared to 19% for non-indigenous women.<sup>31</sup> Bias, norms and culture work together to systematically entrench and perpetuate inequality, making it particularly difficult to change.

**Women dedicate disproportionate hours to work that is often not compensated or recognized.** In agriculture, women's work is often counted as part of their husband's work and is not separately valued or compensated.<sup>32</sup> On average, women in rural Guatemala dedicate 6.1 hours daily to labour that contributes to the household and community on top of an average 7.5 hours of paid labour each day. This is contrasted with men who work 2.6 hours non-compensated and 8.6 paid hours on average.<sup>33</sup> This inequality in the responsibility for childcare and other unpaid work has many negative effects on women, families and the community, from reducing their financial independence, to devaluing the type of work that women typically do (childcare, cooking, community work), to reducing opportunities for additional training and education.

**Informal businesses.** According to a recent Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report, Guatemalans view entrepreneurship as a good opportunity and few express fear of failure as an impediment to starting a business, relative to other countries in the region.<sup>34</sup> However, the tax burden that comes with registering a business can make it nearly impossible for small businesses to survive, and many MSMEs operate in the "informal" sector instead. This affects women adversely as they account for 73% of the working Guatemalan population that are informally employed, a number that grows to 88% when focusing specifically on rural areas.<sup>35</sup> Informal businesses lack minimum wage and other labour protections for workers and have limited potential for growth, as informal businesses have limited options for growth. Entrepreneurs in the informal sector also

<sup>29</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization. 2020. [Giving women in Guatemala a voice in food security and nutrition](#). Rome: FAO.

<sup>30</sup> World Bank. 2015. [Closing Gaps to Generate More Inclusive Growth, World Bank Group](#). Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>31</sup> UNWomen. ['Guatemala'](#). New York: UNWomen.

<sup>32</sup> UNWomen, ['Guatemala'](#). New York: UNWomen.

<sup>33</sup> Instituto Nacional de Estadística. 2011. [ENCOVI](#).

<sup>34</sup> Guatemala: Reporte Nacional 2019/2020. Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM).

<sup>35</sup> Hall, D. and Heredia-Ortiz, E. [In Guatemala, New Research on gender equality Shapes Government and USAID Investments in Taxation](#). DAI. March 2020.

face increased barriers to access to finance beyond the significant challenges already faced by rural businesses in general in Guatemala, creating a job pool without good future prospects.

**Regulatory barriers further restrict women-inclusive business growth.** In Guatemala it is not illegal to discriminate based on gender when making credit decisions. Moreover, no laws exist that prohibit discrimination based on gender in hiring or mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value.<sup>36</sup>



**Women entrepreneurs dominate the base of the pyramid and can't access the tools to transition to the next level**

## C. What are the opportunities for enhancing support of women entrepreneurs and workers?

**Women are better represented in the leadership of micro and small businesses than in medium and large firms.** While 40.3% of micro enterprises and 20.3% of small enterprises in Guatemala as of 2017 had a woman as a top manager, only 15.3% of medium firms and 12.1% of large firms were led by women. Further, formal firms with women top managers have a higher percentage of full-time women workers (51.9%) than those without women's participation in top management (33%).<sup>37</sup> By increasing the number of women in leadership of larger businesses, not only would there be direct benefits to those women, but also secondary effects in terms of increasing the percentage of women full time workers.

**Many women-led businesses do not have adequate access to finance.** The formal finance gap for women-led SMEs in Guatemala is USD \$903 million and when combined with the gap for women-led microenterprises totals USD \$1.2 billion or 2% of the country's GDP. This figure is derived from the 31.6% of women-led MSMEs who are either fully or partially financially constrained (i.e. these firms were not able to access any finance or not enough to grow their businesses).<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> World Bank. 2016. Women, Business and the Law 2016: Removing Restrictions to Enhance gender equality. Washington, DC: World Bank and IFC.

<sup>37</sup> World Bank. 2017. World Bank Enterprise Surveys. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>38</sup> International Finance Corporation. 2019. [IFC MSME Finance Gap Database](#). Washington, DC: IFC.

**Discrimination may hinder access to the financial products that would enable women-led businesses to thrive.** Key entrepreneurship support institutions manifest these inequalities. A study in Guatemala demonstrated this, revealing how bias in the bank loan application process impacts women and men and particularly indigenous women and men differently. This study found that many women felt discriminated against and that they would have received better treatment as men.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, indigenous men and women were more likely to report discrimination.<sup>40</sup>

From 2011 to 2017, the World Bank Global Findex showed a **2.5 times increase in the percent of Guatemalan women holding bank accounts from 16% to 41%**, and an increase in account ownership for men from 30% to 46%. This resulted in a significant decrease in the gender gap in account ownership from 14% to 5%. Importantly, men's and women's account ownership is still well below the Latin American and Caribbean average, and gender differences remain in relation to the use of financial products and services for personal and business use. The gender gap widens again when looking at formal financial savings, which are low overall with 10% of women having saved in 2017 compared to 15% of men. Among the 38% of women who saved any money in the past year, only 17% were able to save to start, operate, or expand a business (or farm) compared to 21% of men.<sup>41</sup>

**The gender digital divide, exacerbated in rural areas, can hinder women entrepreneurs from modernization and advancement.** The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2020 found that in Guatemala, 71% of women own a mobile phone compared to 79% of men and the mobile ownership gender gap is widest in rural areas.<sup>42</sup> Further, the gender gap is even larger for mobile internet users, only 55% of women are mobile internet users compared to 65% of men.<sup>43</sup>

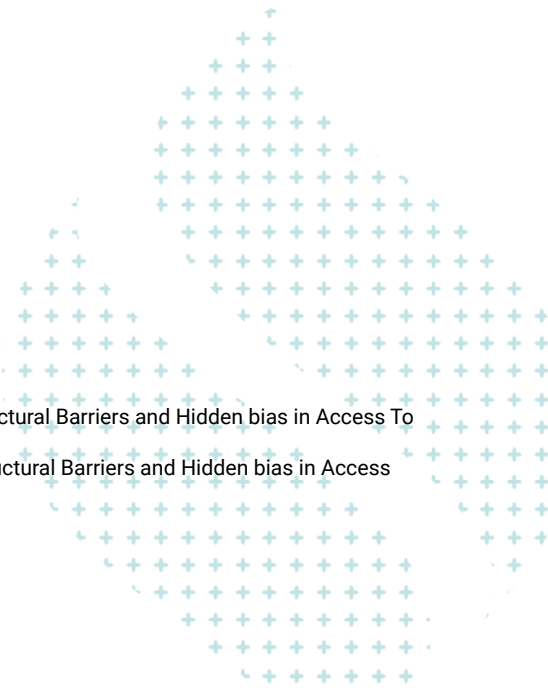
<sup>39</sup> Oxfam, Babson College and Value for Women. 2018. Understanding Structural Barriers and Hidden bias in Access To Credit for Women Entrepreneurs.

<sup>40</sup> Oxfam, Babson College and Value for Women. 2018. Understanding Structural Barriers and Hidden bias in Access To Credit for Women Entrepreneurs.

<sup>41</sup> FINDEX 2017, op. cit.

<sup>42</sup> GSMA. 2020. [The Mobile Gender Gap 2020](#). London: GSMA.

<sup>43</sup> GSMA. 2020. [The Mobile Gender Gap 2020](#). London: GSMA.






## IV. The Findings: Gender & the Rural Entrepreneurial Ecosystem in Guatemala

Based on the data gathered from 117 organizations that took part in ANDE's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Snapshot of Rural Guatemala, including 12 KIIs and a validation workshop, this section builds on the "Ecosystem Data" section of the ANDE Ecosystem Snapshot, and delves into the motivations, actions (external and internal) and challenges faced by Support Organizations when seeking to advance gender equality.

### A. The Rationale: What motivates Support Organizations to promote gender equality?

**It is the right thing to do.** 41% of respondents in the Ecosystem Snapshot survey that align their work with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reported that one of their top three priorities is on promoting Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Support Organizations report being motivated by fairness and inclusiveness, an ethical obligation, to advocate for gender equality. The key informants believe that working towards gender equality will also deliver improvements to society as a whole, providing benefits that extend to families, communities and broader society.

**It is the smart thing to do.** Investing in women is cost-effective at creating positive economic and social impact and the Support Organizations are pursuing impactful results from their services and interventions. There are numerous economic justifications for gender equality and organizations identified these as persuasive in successfully convincing stakeholders to support their programs and projects. Some key informants mentioned that donors are increasingly drawn to organizations that work on gender and want to invest with a gender lens.



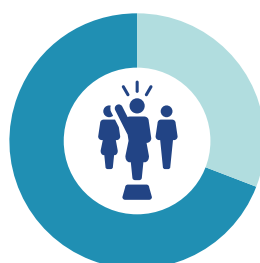
## B. How are Support Organizations acting on gender equality in programs?

In their programs, the primary way these Support Organizations are promoting gender inclusion external to the organization is by supporting women-led rural enterprises. Ninety-four percent of the participants that target women, focus on women entrepreneurs with their programming, and 73% of organizations supporting rural entrepreneurs target women.<sup>44</sup> To a lesser extent, some Support Organizations recognize and promote a more diverse understanding of women’s roles and abilities throughout the entrepreneurial ecosystem and in particular business supply streams, including as employees. This fairly narrow focus on women leaders and entrepreneurs in the majority of Support Organizations points to potential for expansion of the understanding of gender equality, beyond a focus on women-led to how other barriers can be dismantled or counteracted throughout the value chain and in providing products and services that benefit women.

### Percent of organizations by target focus for women



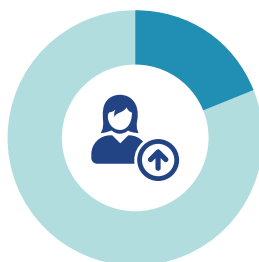
**94%**  
Women as  
entrepreneurs



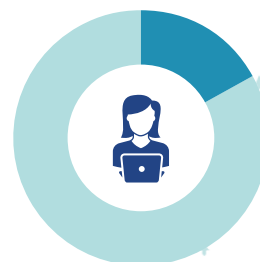
**69%**  
Women as  
leaders



**44%**  
Women as  
suppliers



**19%**  
Women as  
consumers  
or clients



**17%**  
Women as  
employees

<sup>44</sup> ANDE Rural Guatemala Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Snapshot, 2021, p.15-16.



## IN FOCUS:

### Technoserve's Gender Policy<sup>45</sup>



TechnoServe, an ANDE member, has a Gender Policy that explicitly outlines their commitment to advancing gender equality through their work both internally (corporate practices) and externally (programming). It is anchored in **TechnoServe's belief that gender equality will increase operational and organizational effectiveness**, in turn contributing to their work on sustainable poverty alleviation.

TechnoServe commits to:

- ▶ **Valuing and creating visibility** for the contributions of both women and men;
- ▶ **Listening to and providing space** for both women and men to exercise influence;
- ▶ **Equal access for both women and men** to information, assets, services and opportunities.

#### External Actions: Programming

Gender is intended to be streamlined into external practices through integration from design through implementation and learning phases of the program cycle. This includes conducting in-depth and independent gender analyses, routinely collecting sex-disaggregated data and testing and continually improving monitoring, evaluation and research tools with a gender lens. From these actions, lessons are captured, shared about the intentional and unintentional impacts on men and women.

#### Internal Actions: Corporate Practices

TechnoServe commits to incorporating a gender perspective beginning with organizational policies and strategies and extending to the practical through a focus on improving administrative functions and culture. To achieve this, they mainstream gender throughout their human resource policies and processes and ensure that all staff have learning opportunities in gender. Notably, leaders also regularly set an example for other employees by demonstrating their commitment to gender equality by communicating this.

Additionally, TechnoServe strives to achieve gender balance of the workforce across all countries and at all levels.

<sup>45</sup> TechnoServe, 2015 'Gender Policy', [accessible here](#)



**In many cases, donors influence gender priorities.** Donor approval and other requirements often influence the direction and focus on programming for Support Organizations that rely on this type of funding to operate. Shifts in the sector and business opportunities or needs can also entice Support Organizations (particularly service providers) to increase focus on gender. The growth in gender lens investing is impacting the direction of growth of Support Organizations and shifting their focus towards women. Increased interest in funding women-led businesses has led to two organizations to establish quotas to meet donor requirements about the number of women-led businesses served. Key informants also spoke about how increased funding supported them to create programs with a gender lens.

“Since we have been working with women, it has paid off. There are donors who provide funds only for women. We see that there is a potential to sustain our advisory services as they are a strong lever to support women’s growth.”

## Fostering women leaders

Support organizations are **embracing women’s leadership** in a male-dominated environment. A key theme covered by key informants was the difficulty in finding companies led by women in the agricultural sector. Despite agriculture being an historically male dominated environment, **organizations are making concerted efforts to build up the skills and leadership of women in the sector**, with an aim to influence organizational change.

“Our client portfolio is mainly made up of coffee organizations, we consider it to be one of the most exclusionary sectors, that is most dominated by men in the entire value chain - from the plot to marketing. However, we have identified that women are behind, hidden and the idea arises to promote this visibility and enhance their participation in decision-making.”

“We work on women’s leadership so that they empower themselves and see the potential they have. We work with the board of directors to motivate women to participate and in parallel, a leadership program should be worked on to strengthen women’s competencies. It is important to work with men in women inclusion programs.”

David Martínez, FundaSistemas

Specifically, three organizations working with agricultural cooperatives are **providing practical support through the co-development of action plans to increase the number of women leaders at board level**. Furthermore, they are ensuring that those women working in cooperatives are supported with technical and personal skill development opportunities. This hands-on approach can lead to greater diversity and contributes to building awareness of the benefit of gender inclusion and diversity.

“At the organizational level, the aim is to break the monopoly of men on boards of directors and change the number of men in cooperatives or organized groups. Many times they tell you that the one who registers is a man because he is the owner of the land and we see that 90% are men and 10% women. In Guatemala, you don't have to own the land to own the organization. We seek to encourage more women to participate within the organization and on the board of directors. A gender equity plan is made at the organization and board level.”

Eduardo Ruata, Technoserve

## Developing targeted actions to support the inclusion of women or women entrepreneurs

### **Harnessing opportunities for women entrepreneurs in niche agricultural sectors.**

Certain sectors in the rural entrepreneurial ecosystem are dominated by women, presenting promising opportunities for gender progress in Guatemala. Fundap and FundaSistemas identified value chains like oyster mushrooms, poultry and earthworm fertilizer as value chains where women are overrepresented. These two organizations are ensuring that women already engaged in the value chain have the practical skills and knowledge to excel in these areas and transfer this knowledge to other women. Fundap and Fundasistemas see this as an opportunity that requires attention to the distinct needs of women as suppliers. Considering this, they provide both technical and business training programs to increase their chances of success.

**Pushing beyond subsistence. Some organizations are targeting women at the bottom of the pyramid.** There is huge potential for further focus in this sector, according to the IFC, 95% of the women-led MSME in Guatemala are micro enterprises.<sup>46</sup> There are some noteworthy examples of organizations with programs that target women with subsistence enterprises. Recognizing the intersection of sexual health, wellbeing and education (both business and financial) in order to achieve sustainability, these programs are multidimensional. Fundea's program *Boost your dreams* provides a comprehensive

<sup>46</sup> International Finance Corporation. 2017. MSME Finance Gap. Washington, D.C.: IFC.

business development training package aimed at transitioning micro-enterprises to self-sustainability. Whilst Friendship Bridge offers microcredit to women entrepreneurs at the base of the pyramid and complements this with preventative health services, technical assistance and education.

“In our agricultural program we provide women with practical knowledge, we train them in specific skills (birds rearing; compost with the red worm production) and they can replicate this knowledge to train other women. We support them to go from a subsistence business to a dynamic one.”

Madeline Franco, Fundación para el Desarrollo Empresarial y Agrícola

## Supporting and incentivizing gender inclusion within enterprises

**Taking it one step further. A few organizations are working to transform structural inequalities.** These organizations talked about the need to level the playing field, by taking into account women’s disproportionate burden in aspects like unpaid domestic labour, education and healthcare access. These inequalities intersect and lead to a situation where women entrepreneurs are starting a few steps behind making them disadvantaged from the beginning. Organizations are addressing these multiple intersecting dimensions through workshops on themes including: sexual and reproductive health, sexual and gender-based violence and access to justice. A noteworthy project ‘Empower’ by Swisscontact delves into these issues, by recognizing the impact of the physical and personal sphere such as safety, reproductive and sexual healthcare and the care economy. This initiative aims to reduce the gender gap in financial inclusion, employment and entrepreneurship and achieve cultural shifts in terms of gender norms.

“We work on the empowerment of women from the physical, economic, and political autonomy spheres. We address the issue of sexual and reproductive health, the prevention of gender violence and the care economy. We address gender equity, how to reduce gender gaps for women and address gender roles. We also work to reduce the gaps in access to entrepreneurship and technical training issues, create new opportunities in non-traditional self-employment and entrepreneurship.”

Swisscontact

**Incentivizing change. Financial incentives are providing the stimulus for agribusinesses to act on gender inclusion.** Root Capital has designed a program to tackle the lack of resources from agricultural cooperatives to address gender inclusion through their Gender Equity Grants (GEGs) program. This program was launched in 2016 and provides agribusinesses with dedicated funding towards achieving gender equity in their operations and broader communities. The GEGs provide funds and the incentive to improve women's quality of life and representation within their companies across identified priority areas in their operations and programs. These grants not only improve equality for grantees, but also aim to present a broader business case for gender inclusion and demonstrate what impact investors and agribusinesses can achieve in collaborating.



## IN FOCUS:

### Root Capital's Gender Equity Grants



Gender Equity Grants (GEGs) are an innovative core component of Root Capital's Women in Agriculture Initiative (WAI). In 2019, Root Capital launched its first-ever climate resilience-focused Gender Equity Grants in Mexico and Central America. This arose from a deep understanding of the impact of climate change on women, and how women can champion climate change mitigation.

A coffee cooperative in Guatemala was one of the climate-resilience GEG recipients. This cooperative had primarily indigenous members who had not been exposed to education around gender inclusivity. Through the GEG, the coffee cooperative sought to increase the productivity and quality of coffee it produced through a number of gender lens interventions. These included: raising awareness and building capacity within the cooperative on gender and climate change; implementing good practices for climate change resilience on the plots of the most vulnerable women members, and designing a credit product for women.

This GEG demonstrated numerable results:

- A recognition of the vulnerability faced by women members of the cooperative towards climate change;
- Women's participation in the cooperative increased, yet it is still limited;
- Women applied new practices on their farms to help them mitigate the effects of climate change;

An understanding that women need credit to continue implementing climate-smart agricultural practices that mitigate and generate knowledge on the effects of climate change.

**Dismantling barriers to equal participation in trainings.** The acknowledgement of the intersection between personal life and work and specifically the additional burden carried by women is vital in gender inclusion. Some organizations have connected this to lower participation rates in trainings, which can then affect women's business performance.

Various **organizations are implementing or considering factors such as household and care responsibilities** when executing trainings. For instance, Root Capital has developed a checklist that incorporates gender considerations for staff to use when planning trainings. FundaSistemas are also consciously aware of how childcare affects women's ability to participate and are considering this in the design of programs focused on women entrepreneurs.



## IN FOCUS:

### TecnoServe recognizing the intersection of healthcare, gender and economic participation



In a project to train coffee smallholder farmers, Technoserve staff identified that women were not attending the trainings because they had to collect wood to cook. Recognizing this, Technoserve took proactive steps to resolve the root of the issue through launching a partnership with Habitat for Humanity. This partnership led to the provision of clean cooking stoves for approximately one thousand families. This not only improved women's participation in the trainings but also had immense socio-economic benefits in terms of healthcare, finances and time, through reduced firewood consumption and smoke inhalation.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Improving the Productivity and Sustainability of Smallholders Coffee Farmers in Guatemala. A case study of Technoserve's Coffee project in Sololá, Chimaltenango, and Socatepéquez.



## Digitalization of programming

**Going digital to deliver business development support at scale and overcome Covid-19 challenges.** COVID19 compelled organizations to shift their models to function in a digital world. For instance, a microfinance institution switched their in-person meetings to virtual to maintain relationships and continue to provide their educational and health services. Without previous experience, the organizations quickly adapted to digital tools like WhatsApp, pre-recorded phone messages, Zoom virtual work sessions, Facebook Live trainings and videos elaborated for WhatsApp. For those without internet access, coaching and advisory services were given via phone and printed materials distributed and in one case radio was even used. Other organizations went a step further and established partnerships to provide tablets and data to women entrepreneurs to reduce the digital divide.

“We are focused on how we can digitize our services but it is difficult because our clients do not have smartphones, not all of them have their own phone, or it may be from the family or their child. We have learned that we need to help our clients with digital literacy to be better positioned to take advantage of it in the future, access to information is very important on gender issues, it is an inequality for women.”

Caitlin Scott, Friendship Bridge

## C. Walking the Talk - Promoting gender equality and Diversity Within Support Organizations

Turning inwards, organizations are considering gender inclusion in their internal policies and workplace practices, evidenced by initiatives such as gender policies and efforts to increase leadership diversity. While the exception rather than the norm, some organizations are committing to a formal gender strategy or policy to guide their work. A formalized gender policy is foundational to creating shared understanding of gender equality and to working towards gender equality in practice. Of the organizations interviewed, only two have a gender policy and two mention gender equality and women's empowerment in their mission and/or vision.

The survey found that **38% of the organizations surveyed are led by a woman (i.e. a woman is occupying a senior level position of Executive Director, General Director or President)**, aligning with the “2x challenge” goal of 20-30% at senior leadership.<sup>48</sup> This

<sup>48</sup> The 2x challenge is a commitment and related set of criteria to inspire the G7 and other Development Finance Institutions to invest in the world's women, through innovative financing. [Read more here.](#)

demonstrates that there is a significant presence of women in leadership, which can bring changes in employee performance, decision making and overall financial outcomes for the organizations.

**Some organizations are promoting gender equality and diversity internally as well as in their programs but this is not yet the norm.** Internal progress is evident through the presence of women in senior leadership and the creation of gender inclusive policies and strategies. These changes among others, show a commitment to embracing gender equality within the internal practices of the organizations, which can pave the way for furthering their work in gender. Despite this, the small number of organizations actually ‘walking the talk’ reveals that there is significant work to be done to increase rights of women in the workplace and in turn create positive social and economic outcomes for those in the rural entrepreneurial ecosystem.

**Efforts are being made to increase equity in teams and leadership.** A key milestone in the journey towards gender equality is equitable representation of women and men in leadership and teams. The organizations interviewed spoke about how they aim to achieve gender diversity in their workforce and leadership teams. Many comprise a high participation of women in their workforce, including their leadership teams, specifically that there are women in directorial positions (C-Suite) and/or in their board of directors. According to the Guatemala Ecosystem Snapshot survey by ANDE, 39% of the organizations that provide rural entrepreneurship support, are led by women. Certain organizations are also demonstrating progress in this space, with Fundap setting a quota of 50/50 for women in leadership.

**Women remain vastly underrepresented in some positions and organizations are motivated to address this.** Despite the drive to reach more women and diversify the workforce, women are disproportionately represented in various positions throughout the rural entrepreneurial ecosystem. A number of key informants emphasise this point, and demonstrate a desire to recruit and retain women, but face roadblocks in achieving this. The issue is multifaceted and requires understanding of the unique barriers preventing both entry and continuation in these employment pathways. The organizations demonstrate awareness that they must take affirmative actions to increase women’s participation, particularly in positions such as credit promoters and agronomists. To reach more women, organizations identified a series of concerted actions that they are committed to. Among those mentioned, included: providing transport and establishing quotas for women, creating job descriptions with inclusive language and advertising openings through non-traditional avenues.

“We want more women facilitators [loan officers] because it is easier for similar women to understand other women, but it is difficult to find women who can drive a car or motorcycle [due to cultural context] to get to the places where our clients are. This is why we look for ways to empower our employees to learn how to use a motorcycle - providing incentives and financial assistance, instead of accepting we would have to hire men.”

Caitlin Scott, Friendship Bridge

“At Technoserve, we like that there is equity when applying for positions. When we recruit for technical positions, more men are going to apply because there are more male agronomists, but we make an effort so that there are equal conditions for women and men to participate. We have to look for alternative ways to reach women.”

**Eduardo Ruata, Technoserve**

**Taking action to support gender equality in the workplace.** Although few organizations have a gender policy, all of them mentioned having additional policies and practices that delve deeper into how discrimination and inequality disproportionately affects women in the workplace. These include: policies on anti-discrimination, anti-sexual harassment, equal pay for equal work and support provided to meet the needs of parents and primary caregivers such as job flexibility and scholarships for children’s education.

“We strive to promote gender equality within our team, focusing on skill sets to create inclusive hiring systems. We have a small team and try to be very flexible, for example, one of our investment associates was our first maternity leave case and that lead us to change our internal processes.”

**Daniel Granada, Pomona Impact**







## V. The Hurdles: What prevents Support Organizations from deepening their work on gender equality?

Concerted effort towards gender equality has been made by the Support Organizations but there is more to be done. This section outlines a number of challenges that plague Support Organizations and hinder their progress. From resource constraints, and lack of expertise in gender inclusion, to prevailing systemic inequality in Guatemala, the Support Organizations face numerous barriers in their efforts towards helping women in Guatemala achieve equality.

### A. Program Design and Approach

**There is a will but the way is lacking on how to apply a gender lens.** The organizations that participated in the meeting to validate the data with ANDE for this Snapshot, signalled that they have the intention to improve gender inclusion in Guatemala through their programs but they fail to understand the practical steps required to achieve this. A further consequence of this is that they lack a framework with a formal commitment to gender, such as a gender strategy and inclusive policies. This results in a lack of a clear pathway towards gender equality and an unsystematic approach to tackling it.

**Lack of integration and mainstreaming of gender.** Despite some promising initiatives towards gender inclusion and women's empowerment, there is little integration of gender across all programs, and it usually is only a consideration for programs for women or rural women. In cases where a gender-inclusive approach has been applied more systematically, it is in large part as a result of donor requirements. This comes from both a knowledge gap in terms of what it means to address gender equality on the part of Support Organizations, and a lack of funding and technical expertise to bridge that gap.

### B. Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Support Gaps

**A lack of funding for rural businesses, and women-led businesses in particular.** 65% of ANDE survey respondents listed "lack of early-stage investment funding" as one of the top challenges for the rural Guatemala ecosystem, and the Snapshot reports an overall lack of products and services for the rural and SME sectors in general. Regardless of whether women are entrepreneurs, suppliers, or employees, this constraint on access to finance has negative consequences for the ability of rural businesses of all types to grow and to propel sustainable economic growth. While the Snapshot did not specifically

collect data about access to finance for women-led businesses, key informants noted that women are more likely to lead smaller and earlier stage enterprises. Hence, the reported lack of early stage funding may disproportionately affect women, who also have less access to traditional bank and financial institution support.

**Cultural norms and gender roles hinder the work of Support Organizations to advance gender equality, especially in rural areas.** Women's participation in productive activities is hindered by *machismo* (misogyny) and expectations around gender roles, affecting their ability to fully participate in economic activities outside of the domestic sphere. According to the Support Organizations interviewed, the burden placed on women in terms of caregiving and maintaining the family and broader community through activities such as caring for dependants, cooking, and fetching firewood and water, leaves women with significantly less time for paid labour or to develop a business or career outside of the home. The Support Organizations identified cultural norms and gender roles as one of the primary restrictions that women face in participating in the value chain, due to the *machismo* that prevails in the society.

“We need to identify what women need to be able to participate in these processes and do them. If not, they will not participate even if the project is for them, if they have responsibilities at home, they will not be able to participate because they can get into trouble at home with their husbands or partners.”

Marisol Argueta, FundaSistemas

**The digital divide emphasised by COVID-19.** The COVID19 pandemic affected the work of the Support Organizations in Guatemala, as the majority had to digitize part or all of their services to continue operating during isolation, whilst some ceased their activities entirely. In remote locations where connectivity is poor and technology access and literacy are low, digitization is inherently more expensive and complex. Women are disproportionately affected due to the technology gender gap and lack of access to and control of resources. The pandemic also created a new scenario for women and families globally, that came with unforeseen challenges. Notably for women, confinement **decreased women's available time** as caregiving work increased, which significantly limited the time they had to participate in the programs.

**Women in rural areas face disproportionate challenges that require tailored solutions.** According to participants, programs must be adapted to dismantle barriers that women face, such as the lack of mobility, time restrictions due to care responsibilities, and the education level that is generally lower for rural, and more so for indigenous women. In addition, programs must be designed in indigenous languages, use tailored pedagogical methods to improve learning outcomes, and teach content that is contextually relevant.

“In rural areas they do not have high educational levels, and, for many of them, Spanish is their second language and they do not have much confidence to interact in Spanish, especially in topics of education and training. There is a difficulty in participating in training events due to the language barrier and the fact that many accelerator programs or entrepreneurial courses are not appropriate in terms of educational level. For example, the services are in a room, in a class and for them it is difficult to sit down and absorb the content, it is better if the training is participatory or one on one. Particularly for rural women, distance mentoring is not very successful, individual accompaniment is better as it’s adapted to their context.”

Caitlin Scott, Friendship Bridge





## VI. Taking Action: How can Support Organizations deepen their work in gender equality?

There are a number of potential entry points for Support Organizations to have a positive impact on gender equality in rural Guatemala. In this Brief, we have identified **12 key ways that organizations can amplify their work in gender equality and lead to positive outcomes for individuals, communities, enterprises and their organizations.**

These 12 entry points aim to be practical ways that will build upon the work already being completed by Entrepreneurial Support Organizations in Guatemala. These shifts begin with identification of diverse needs and preferences and then building strong programs and internal processes tailored to womens' needs. These actions should be taken as a starting point and to complement a holistic approach that acknowledges the pervasive cultural norms that continue to prevent progress on gender equality in Guatemala.

### Be intentional in applying a gender lens

**1. Make a commitment to invest with a gender lens.** First and foremost, Support Organizations must set an intention to make change happen. Applying a gender lens requires a commitment to learning and also unlearning, from organizational leadership and staff, through to programs. Support Organizations can then develop a strategy to solidify this commitment with specific targets related to improving the quantity and quality of support for women-led businesses and engaging MSMEs around applying a gender lens in their businesses (See in Focus: What are Gender Forward Businesses?).





## IN FOCUS:

### What are Gender Forward Businesses?



Value for Women definition of a “gender forward business” goes beyond quantitative measures of women’s representation in leadership, and aligns with the gender lenses described above. A gender forward business, therefore, is one that **intentionally** seeks to redress gender inequalities by providing products and services that close gender gaps or that are designed to meet the specific needs of women or girls; and/or supports workplace equity through internal policies and practices that promote gender diversity within the workforce; and/or strengthens the business’s inclusion and diversity across operations and the value chain.

According to this definition, in order for a business to be gender forward it must have gender lens intentionality and meet at least one of the following gender lens criteria:

Gender Lens Intentionality	Gender Lens Focus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The business has a mission or objective explicitly focused on promoting women’s well-being and/or gender equality (gender transformative) ; AND/OR</li> <li>▶ The business has an explicit strategy targeting women, girls, or gender equality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Product or service that specifically benefits women.</li> <li>▶ Business model that provides specific opportunities for women in the value chain or benefits women in the value chain (e.g. hires).</li> <li>▶ Business provides at least one “2x challenge “quality”indicator beyond compliance.</li> </ul>

Investors should consider “pushing the envelope” and looking not only for businesses with a gender lens focus but rather gender forward businesses that intentionally seek to redress gender inequalities.



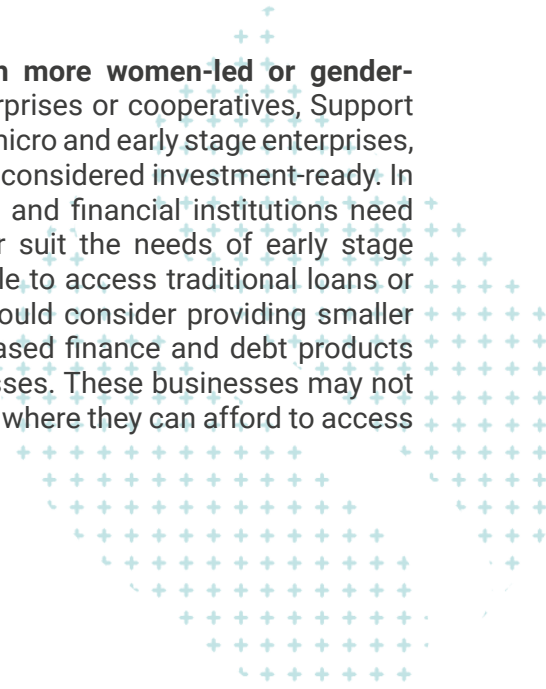
## Understand and address women's specific needs in programs

**2. Create practical tools that improve understanding of women's needs.** The majority of the interviewed organizations mentioned that to improve their work on gender in their programs they need to be able to improve their understanding of women's differentiated needs. To understand these distinct needs and preferences, organizations require practical tools to conduct needs assessments and then to use this information into changes to their own methodologies. One way they could do this by developing quick-fire interviews, surveys, focus groups and feedback mechanisms with existing and potential women beneficiaries.

**3. Develop business development services based on understanding of women entrepreneurs' needs.** Utilizing gendered needs assessments, organizations could modify the methodologies they use so that they are relevant for women. This could transfer to concrete actions such as: conducting trainings in the appropriate language of women participants and using different pedagogical methods such as one on one and mentoring, that are more suited to the learning needs of women. Additionally, these trainings could be tailored directly to the women engaged by offering topics where there is a knowledge gap for women, such as in soft skills like leadership and negotiation or technical skills in markets, administration and agriculture.

**4. Develop financing options to meet rural women entrepreneurs' needs.** During ANDE's Snapshot validation workshop, Support Organizations mentioned that the majority of the women-led enterprises they know are enterprises that arose due to necessity, limiting their growth potential. Many of these organizations and key informants identified the barriers in access to finance as a hurdle to women-led MSME growth. There is a need for more financial products that are tailored to MSMEs, particularly micro and small enterprises, complemented by business development services. In particular, there is a need for hybrid support mechanisms that help identify and finance the opportunity-led microenterprises with the potential to grow.

**5. Impact investors should expand criteria to reach more women-led or gender-forward social enterprises.** In the case of social enterprises or cooperatives, Support Organizations noted a gap in finance options between micro and early stage enterprises, where women are overrepresented, and those who are considered investment-ready. In order to reach more women entrepreneurs, investors and financial institutions need to develop financial products and criteria that better suit the needs of early stage enterprises or smaller businesses that may not be able to access traditional loans or equity products. In particular, financial institutions should consider providing smaller loans, repayable and/or start up grants, or revenue-based finance and debt products may be more suited to early stage women-led businesses. These businesses may not have a high growth model or still need to reach a stage where they can afford to access traditional SME finance.



“We have three criteria that the companies we invest in must meet, they must be economically profitable, socially responsible and environmentally sustainable. Very few organizations meet these criteria, and even fewer those led by women. If we want to grow we have to open ourselves up more, to reach those smaller organizations, to help them grow, so that they have the level to obtain the minimum amount of credit we offer.”

“We have women micro entrepreneurs that have the potential to grow, we provide them with individual credit and technical assistance appropriate to their business. Women at this stage often have very specific challenges in their business that have not allowed them to advance, such as registering their brand, their recipe, or exporting; we need to support them in these matters. In addition, they often need very expensive assets or need to make major investments, such as remodeling their workplace, for this reason they need larger amounts, such as seed capital, to grow their business. We are in the process of creating a program for this segment. We hope that if we focus on this segment and support them to move from the very bottom of the SGB segment, they will be able to create more jobs and generate more income and in turn develop the rural communities.”

Caitlin Scott, Friendship Bridge



## Bridge the digital divide through your programming

**6. Improve or consider accessibility to the internet, digital literacy and devices when developing business support services.** The pandemic elucidated the digital divide for women entrepreneurs in rural Guatemala even further. A sudden reliance on digital technology paired with internet access showed the disparity faced in these areas and also opportunity for transforming these enterprises. Digitisation of the programs brings about an exciting opportunity to reach more women, but a lack of access to digital devices and connectivity is hindering the efforts of Support Organizations. To resolve these issues, the organizations should consider applying a multi-pronged approach to address these deficiencies, including: increasing digital literacy, accessibility to reliable networks and quality digital devices.

“The pandemic complicated access to people on the ground, here in Guatemala where connectivity is bad, in rural areas it is even worse, that limited people’s access, in May and April we tried to make adaptations to make virtual processes but it was very complicated due to internet access. In regards to gender, there was coordination with other organizations to facilitate connectivity, internet, lending tablets and giving data to our beneficiaries in all our programs.”

Jaime Vargas, Swisscontact

## Generate knowledge and skills to apply a gender lens

**7. Conduct gender-sensitization training for women and men entrepreneurs.** As part of business development services, it is integral to take steps to sensitize men and women on how applying a gender lens can improve business and social outcomes. Training could focus on applying principles from Value for Women Business First Approach to Gender Lens Investing:

- Understanding the differentiated needs and aspirations of women in the workforce, value chain and market to develop gender-lens business solutions;
- Focus on the business case for gender lens investing (e.g. do it because it is good for business revenues as well as for social impact);



- Take a “bottom-up” approach focused on identifying business or social problems first and then applying a gender lens to the solutions; and
- Include gender lens investing funding opportunities, concepts and metrics as part of training curricula for impact investors and for social enterprises.

Additionally, organizations, particularly those working with producer groups or agricultural cooperatives, can develop workshops to address negative gender norms. As without changing the perceptions around women’s role in the personal and professional sphere and how these intersect, restrictions will continually be placed on women’s movement and participation in the workforce, limiting full and meaningful participation.

Potential topics for trainings include:

- Challenging typical masculine stereotypes and norms towards creating healthy, more egalitarian relationships;
- Highlighting the importance of women’s leadership in businesses and producer organizations;
- Addressing the needs of the most vulnerable women in areas with a high potential to suffer the negative effects of climate change and natural disasters.

“Many times [the low participation of women] is due to the cultural issue, as ‘my husband does not give me permission, I do not want them to look at me badly that they think I am doing other things’. It is important to find a way to break down these barriers, to change the way of thinking, but from this perspective. That they (the women themselves) are deconstructing this little by little.”

Lesly Estrada, Cámara de la industria de Guatemala

#### **8. Apply lessons learned to advance gender inclusion and integrate these holistically.**

There is a wealth of knowledge existing within these organizations which needs to be organized and streamlined. Most of the participating organizations have significant experience working with women in women-focused programs and understand what works to achieve positive impacts on women, their families, and the community. However, there remains a challenge in bridging the gap from theory to practice, to allow for replication in all of their programs. In order to effectively apply learnings, the organizations need measurement and evaluation tools to replicate successful models, particularly those that were not specifically designed for women.

“We have a fund where there is a majority of women’s participation, we would like to be able to systematize what we did to achieve it and our progress in gender inclusion, particularly in access to financing for women and thus be able to replicate it in all our programs and position ourselves in the region.”

Ana Gabriela Chinchilla, Alterna

## Building partnerships to promote gender equality

### 9. Strengthen the collaboration around gender issues between Support Organizations.

There is a strong network of organizations who can act as a hub for exchanging knowledge and creating visibility of positive stories of change. For example, entrepreneur networks present a great platform where both online and offline events can be executed and stakeholders can share experiences, good practices, learnings and methodologies where a gender lens has been applied.

**10. Provide access to financial support dedicated to gender inclusion.** Organizations need financing that is specifically delegated to applying a gender lens. This funding can support gender inclusion in their programs, to identify women’s needs and in turn create new tools and methodologies that are responsive to these needs. Sufficient funding could tackle barriers in achieving more active participation of women as employees, clients, producers and leaders. The Gender Equity Grants provide a promising example of how to execute dedicated financing with a gender lens and the potential outcomes of this. Targeted funding opportunities such as these give organizations the resources to address gender holistically.

“We need time and resources to identify women’s needs, resources to overcome cultural barriers specifically, not only for training. There has to be a systemic change so that a women inclusion program in rural areas works.”

David Martínez, FundaSistemas

## Advance gender and diversity in the workplace


**11. Identify and support the needs of parents in workplaces.** Flexible work became widespread with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet it also brought other vast changes to how we live in our homes and interact with others in our families. As a result, organizations were faced with new challenges with employee workload, due to homeschooling or other duties brought on with the changing landscape. New duties such as teaching children from home have typically fallen to women, contributing to the disparate burden women already carried. Various organizations noted this as a key challenge that affected the business performance and disproportionately affected women. Despite this, they failed to make major changes to their practices to accommodate diverse needs. To create more inclusive and equal participation, workplaces could consider implementing flexible working policies and practices and support for primary caregivers.

“The work team was not affected, they sent us to the home office and the operations were followed virtually. There were difficulties for women, a large number of employees have children who are now homeschooled because schools closed. We had to make a bigger effort not to lose performance. I have spoken with colleagues and they told me that at the beginning it was very difficult to organize.”

Lesly Estrada, Guatemalan Chamber of Industry

**12. Implement inclusive processes to promote diversity in work teams.** Workplaces can further develop their inclusive practices by integrating gender inclusive recruitment and retention strategies. Potential recruitment processes include: the development of: inclusive job descriptions, harnessing channels to reach more women and, an explicit commitment to gender equality. Additionally, organizations can introduce processes to advance the career of current women employees such as standardized performance evaluations, career plans and leadership programs. Together, these steps will contribute to greater diversity in work teams and organizational leadership and result in improved social and business outcomes overall.





# Conclusion

Opportunities abound for Support Organizations to transform the rural entrepreneurial ecosystem and advance gender equality. Yet, it is manifest that **women entrepreneurs in rural Guatemala are not beginning on a level playing field**. Systemic inequalities have fostered a situation where women are faced by barriers that simply do not exist in the same way for men. This is further exacerbated **for indigenous rural women, where inequalities and discrimination intersect to create an environment where growth is stagnated**.

**Support Organizations have already begun to change this reality.** They show clear motivation and understand some of the benefits of investing in women, yet this needs to be catalyzed into tangible actions. By moving beyond a single-focus on women-led enterprise, to recognizing women as customers, suppliers, customers, and employees. **Support Organizations can transform internal practices, strengthen and diversify value chains and create products and services to benefit women.**

To make this shift, Support Organizations need to **be intentional and take an approach that acknowledges the intersectional inequalities** that set women back. Additionally, they need dedicated time, financial resources and technical expertise to apply methodologies that are contextually relevant.

Importantly, Support Organizations are not alone in this journey. There is a strong entrepreneurship support network that can foster this transition, by encouraging and highlighting best practices that **go beyond the status quo and recognize the individual context, respect diversity and celebrate differences.**





## About Value for Women

**Value for Women (VfW)** is a women-led global social enterprise that works closely with partners to design and implement research, technical assistance programs, evaluations, tools and blended capacity-building initiatives in Africa, Asia and Latin America focused on impact investing and the small and medium enterprise (SME) space. VfW helps organizations to advance gender inclusion. We believe that women are key drivers of economic and social growth, and that women's inclusion is essential for better business outcomes. We identify and test new solutions that foster inclusion while unlocking the powerful economic potential that women hold. Specifically, we support investors seeking business and social returns in diverse sectors, such as finance, agriculture, and clean energy by providing research and technical advisory support.



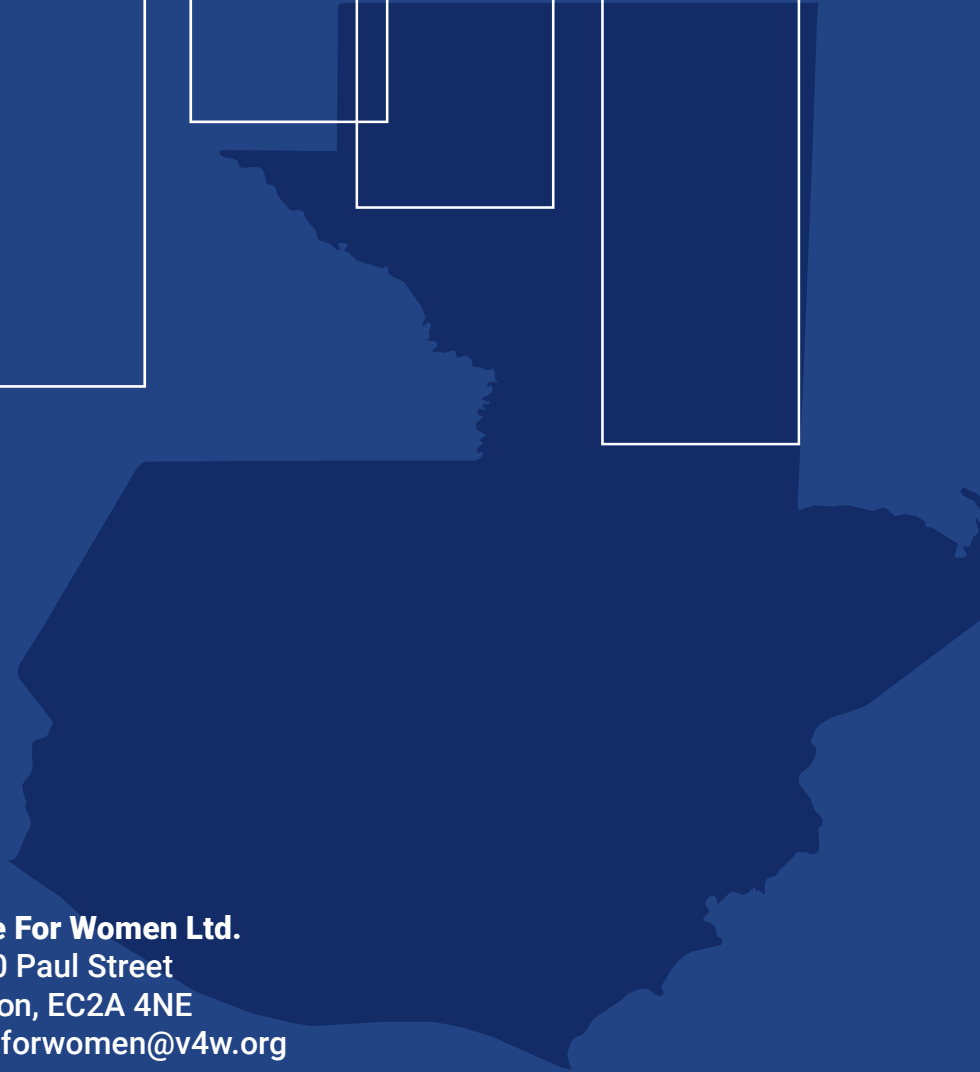
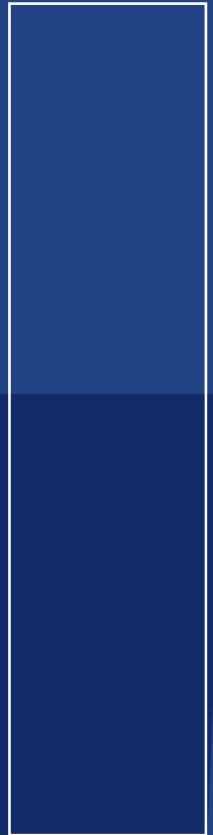
## About ANDE

**The Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE)** is a global network of organizations that propel entrepreneurship in emerging markets. ANDE members provide critical financial, educational, and business support services to small and growing businesses (SGBs) based on the conviction that SGBs will create jobs, stimulate long-term economic growth, and produce environmental and social benefits. Visit [www.andeglobal.org](http://www.andeglobal.org) for more information.



## About Philanthropy at Walmart

**Walmart.org** represents the philanthropic efforts of Walmart and the Walmart Foundation. By leaning in where our business has unique strengths, we work to tackle key social issues and collaborate with others to spark long-lasting systemic change. Walmart has stores in 27 countries, employing more than 2 million associates and doing business with thousands of suppliers who, in turn, employ millions of people. Walmart.org is helping people live better by supporting programs that work to accelerate upward job mobility for frontline workers, address hunger and make healthier, more sustainably-grown food a reality, and build strong communities where Walmart operates. To learn more, visit [www.walmart.org](http://www.walmart.org) or find us on Twitter @walmartorg



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