



Fund for Innovation  
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LESTARI SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS

# Women's Empowerment, Agricultural Innovation, and Climate Change Adaption

## Context

Agriculture is considered among the most vulnerable sectors to climate change. Increased temperature, unpredictable rainfall and extreme weather events have grave impacts on crop yields, pest and disease incidence, income generation and food security. Women farmers who typically have less decision-making power, fewer productive assets (e.g., land, financial capital), and lower access to information and services than men farmers, face greater challenges in adapting to climate change.

## The Innovative Solution

Supported by FIT, Lestari tested an innovative solution that involved disseminating newly developed drought-tolerant coffee varieties using gender responsive climate-smart coffee farming methods to small-scale coffee farmers, particularly women. The gender responsive farming methods included ensuring women had equal access to training and farming needs and were able to fully participate. Others included planting shorter varieties of coffee trees to ensure women could easily reach the trees and farming in well-lit areas for pruning and harvesting, which had also previously been a safety and security barrier for women farmers. Two demonstration plots, ¼ hectares each, were used to train and mentor the farmers. Capacity-building to enhance women's leadership, decision-making and advocacy skills were also included in the training and mentorship provided.

## Advancing Gender Equality

Gender was integrated at every step of the innovation. From the outset, coffee was planted in a gender responsive way to accommodate women farmers. For example, providing sufficient space between coffee plants not only improves coffee production, but also allows enough space so women can prune and harvest more comfortably. Capacity building of farmers on gender equality, in the context of coffee farming and in their households, was also a central element to the test. This included gender sensitization and leadership training, which focused on assertiveness in group facilitation and communication, including in public speaking.



COUNTRY	AMOUNT
Indonesia	\$250,000

**TESTING PERIOD**  
15 months  
Ended March 2022



**GENDER RESPONSIVE (GE2)**

**THEME: CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT**

# Testing Framework

The testing activities involved planning (including assessment and consultation with women farmers in developing a gender approach), baseline data collection, demonstration plot development, training, and farmer to farmer peer learning. Data collection was conducted every four months to measure coffee growth, as well as farmers' climate-smart farming skills. Post surveys were conducted to investigate changes in women's decision making and leadership capacity, as well as their perceptions of and experiences with climate vulnerability both in the home and in the fields.

# Results and Impact

All participants indicated that their confidence to cope with climate change impacts has improved. They have started using improved coffee varieties on their own fields and continue to use gender responsive coffee farming techniques. Most women farmers said they were moderately to strongly confident in coaching other farmers about climate-smart coffee farming. All women and men farmers reported an increased confidence to express opinions and participate in public decision-making. In addition, Lestari fully integrated gender into their project, including upskilling and training their local partner (the Indonesian Coffee and Cocoa Research Institute or ICCRI) and all project stakeholders on gender topics. The ICCRI was very responsive to the innovation test and stated they had previously never incorporated a gender lens in their work but wish to do so in all initiatives going forward.

# Key Lessons

1. Demo-plots are a powerful method for innovation dissemination. They allow farmers to observe the growth of and farming techniques of new coffee varieties compared to conventional coffee farming. The placement of demo-plots in high traffic areas allowed farmers and non-farmers alike to view progress.
2. Lestari learned that women are more likely to engage with other women farmers. Moving forward, it would be best to encourage women farmers to be the regular caretakers of some of the demonstration plots so other women are more likely to learn and engage.
3. When couples both participate in GE training, communication and application are easier. If resources allow, where possible and appropriate, it would be beneficial to involve both wives and husbands in the project's gender training. This should be handled with sensitivity.

“The training made me more confident. As the head of (a women's farming group), I used to be hesitant about making decisions in groups. However, with the knowledge I received from WE-AICCA, now I don't hesitate to make decisions.”

- Woman Coffee Farmer

## PARTNER ORGANIZATION

- Indonesian Coffee and Cocoa Research Institute

## TARGET PARTICIPANTS

50 (31 Women; 19 Men) small-scale Indonesian coffee farmers

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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## ABOUT FIT

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation supports Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) testing innovative solutions that advance gender equality in the Global South.

