



TPSA | CANADA-INDONESIA TRADE AND PRIVATE SECTOR ASSISTANCE PROJECT



SUCCESS STORY

Women Coffee Farmers Gain the Confidence to Become Cooperative Leaders

Salbiah used to be afraid to even speak in front of male coworkers, let alone speak to them, and would never have considered doing something as audacious as public speaking. But after attending a leadership and gender-equality training workshop, she felt confident enough to moderate a general assembly meeting attended by over 90 people.



Salbiah at work.

"I became bolder and more confident. I became more able to express ideas and work more comfortably with other staff in a team," says Salbiah, an administrative staff member at Arinagata Coffee Cooperative in Gayo, Aceh.

"The most visible change can be seen in Salbiah," says Ara Siberani, Arinagata's chairperson. "Previously she was shy and lacking in self-confidence and trembled even while just chatting and speaking in front of male staff. After the training, it is amazing how she has become confident around male staff and able to speak in public as well. The change in her personally has also spilled over to her becoming more professional and productive in her work."

THE CHALLENGES: WOMEN LACK LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE AND CONFIDENCE

Many women lack the experience and confidence to act as leaders within the many coffee cooperatives located in this region. Women face gender-based challenges such as the double burden (being responsible for the home and involved in paid work) and the need for spousal permission that keep them from becoming leaders.

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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH





TPSA was approached by current leaders of coffee cooperatives in Gayo who wanted to help their women members gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to become leaders within these co-ops.

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—Salbiah, Arinagata Cooperative

Gayo has both mixed-membership and women-only coffee cooperatives. In mixed co-ops, the primary issue is to move toward gender-balanced governance by bringing more women into leadership positions. The problem is different for women-only co-ops, whose current leaders are all women: They have trouble encouraging other members who have never held leadership positions to step up and take on those roles and responsibilities.

THE STRATEGY: LEADERSHIP AND GENDER TRAINING

In early 2018, TPSA partnered with the Fairtrade Network of Asia-Pacific Producers (NAPP) with the goal of enhancing women's leadership in Gayo's coffee cooperatives and helping to make their governance more gender-responsive and balanced.¹ The TPSA gender team worked in collaboration with Fairtrade-NAPP to design training modules for staff and leaders of Fairtrade-certified women-led coffee cooperatives on gender-responsive governance and enhancing women's leadership.²

The objectives of the training were to:

- identify the qualities of transformative and inspiring women leaders;
- learn about gender equality;
- gain the ability to apply gender-analysis tools and identify gender-inequality issues within cooperative policies and practices and Fairtrade principles and standards.

Twenty-one female staff and delegates from women-led cooperatives participated in a five-day Training-of-Trainers (ToT) workshop in October 2018. The participants came from six Fairtrade-certified co-ops (Kokowagayo, Arinagata, Ara Cahayani Gayo, Utamagro, Ratu Ketiarra, and Koperasi Ketiarra), as well as A3, which is not yet certified. The intent was to create a group of trainers who would go on to train other female co-op members on gender equality, gender inequality issues, and leadership skills. All of the participants in the ToT were aware of the expectation that they would conduct further training sessions within their co-ops to promote women's leadership.

ToT workshop participants also learned principles and methodologies of adult learning, and skills around group facilitation, decision-making, conflict management, and effective communication. The participatory learning methods used (visuals, music, and hands-on exercises) were highly interactive and effective when training people at the community level, especially those with less education or who live in rural areas.

Approximately one month later, several of the newly minted trainers delivered pilot training to other women staff members within their own co-ops. Kokowagayo and Ara Cahayani Gayo worked together to deliver their training workshop, as did Arinagata and A3. Utamagro delivered its training in



April 2019, assisted by Kokowagayo, who volunteered two of its ToT alumni to help design and deliver the training.

THE OUTCOME: CONFIDENCE IS GOOD FOR WOMEN—AND FOR BUSINESS

The impact of the ToT and pilot training workshops on their participants has been immediate and visible. “In addition to providing knowledge about gender equality, joining the ToT also made me more confident when speaking in front of women or in front of men,” says Mariyani, a staff member from Kokowayago Cooperative. Her colleague Rusda agrees: “I became bolder in public speaking. Previously, just watching the crowd made me tremble.”

Kokowagayo’s chairperson, Rizkani, also observes increased self-confidence in Dewi, another of her staff members who attended the training: “Dewi is now confident to speak in public. When she speaks, she does it smoothly, unlike before, when she would tremble. Perhaps, it is because she is more motivated, knowledgeable about the subject matter, and confident that she has something important to say.”

Ara Siberani, Chairperson of Arinagata Cooperative, says the whole co-op benefits when women increase their self-confidence and leadership skills: “They become more articulate and more confident when meeting with buyers who visit the village. They can convince incoming buyers. An example is Ibu Susila from Hakim village. She used to be shy, but now she is brave. In addition, the training is also a bridge of communication between cooperative management and staff and its members.”

The training helped women realize that they also benefit from greater participation and leadership within the cooperative. “I can learn new things from being a co-op member. The co-op recognizes women farmers and appreciates our contributions to coffee farming and supporting our families,” says Kadarmas, a member of Kokowagayo Cooperative.

The gender-equality and leadership training has been well-received and is already creating positive outcomes. For example, A3 and Arinagata have committed to using Fairtrade premium funds to support further women’s leadership training workshops. Kokowagayo is also committed to having more of its members participate in gender awareness and leadership training, and intends to use the same methods and learning materials used in the ToT and in the pilot training.

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—Ara Siberani, Chairperson,
Arinagata Cooperative



Dewi in the coffee field.



The ToT has also led to some unexpected positive outcomes. The participating cooperatives are now collaborating to enhance women's capacity and leadership. Kokowagayo and Arinagata, in particular, have offered to support other cooperatives in conducting leadership training for their women members. These two cooperatives have also been active in setting up the Forum Perempuan Kopi Gayo (Gayo Coffee Women's Forum), which serves as a venue for advocacy and a resource on women's leadership in cooperatives.



Kadarmas, a member of Kokowagayo.

Exposure to gender-equality concepts has helped training participants become aware that they should have the same access to resources and control of their benefits as men do. They also learned to communicate with their husbands to seek greater equality within their households. Salbiah asked her husband to take on more work in the home, and he agreed: "Previously, he used to be reluctant to do housework and take care of our child; now he's more helpful. Now I know how to tell my husband about better and equal division of labour in the family." Rafi'ah of Utamagro says she realized that husbands and wives should work together for their mutual benefit.

ENSURING SUSTAINABLE RESULTS: TRAINING MORE LEADERS

The training-of-trainers approach taken by TPSA and Fairtrade-NAPP ensures that the knowledge imparted to participants is self-propagating. The model asks ToT participants to develop their skills by training others, thus sharing information about gender equality and women's leadership more widely among women cooperative members, including those who are not staff members but work as coffee farmers or collectors.

The approach means that each woman who receives training can then become a trainer. The women who participated in the ToT are encouraging other women to take on leadership roles, which is promising. They are also informally sharing gender-equality principles with other women and with family members, including husbands and children. This may lead to greater acceptance of women as equal and essential members of coffee cooperatives.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ The Fairtrade Network of Asia-Pacific Producers (NAPP) aims to improve the economic conditions of smallholder farmers in the countries where it operates, including Indonesia. This objective aligns with TPSA's aim of ensuring that women benefit equitably with men from project resources.
- ² Fairtrade identifies a cooperative as women-led if the cooperative has one or more women on the Board or senior staff.