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“Exploring opportunities ...
for managing natural resources and a better life for all”

Technological innovation for the empowerment of women coffee growers: Transforming challenges into opportunities

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Abstract

In the rural area of the department of Cauca and Quindío, in Colombia, women play a relevant and decisive role in the community network, livelihoods and family well-being; Women are administrators of resources and providers of food, goods and in general in the care economy: education, health and protection. Several studies highlight a trend of gender inequality in participation, representation and in the administration of income in their productive units and therefore decision making at both the productive and economic levels of their productive units is low, almost non-existent. Women are highly vulnerable, productively, economically and socially, as they face barriers in accessing resources (agro-inputs, machinery, credit, land) and information to overcome climate and development challenges. In fact, despite being participants in agricultural field work, women are excluded from decision-making, mainly those related to land use, natural resource management and landscape governance, which keeps them in a systemic poverty trap. That is why since 2021, together with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture CIAT, Producers Direct, the TECNiCAFÉ Coffee and Coffee Innovation Technology Park and 520 coffee farmers from Cauca and Quindío in Colombia, we have been developing Croppie agricultural technology, a digital application that uses photographs of crops in production, to provide small-scale women coffee farmers with real-time predictions of the harvest performance of their coffee crops, providing agricultural advice and a greater possibility of including women in the commercial process of their coffee, being a technological innovation co-created by and for women, as an alternative to promote the social and economic empowerment of rural coffee-growing women, through their inclusion in the value chain.

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