



RECLAIM Sustainability!

CHRONICLES OF CHANGE





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**This document is interactive when using [Acrobat Reader](#).*



WELCOME

The world is in turmoil. Civic space has been shrinking across the globe and multiple challenges stand in the way of a sustainable and inclusive society, with fair and clean supply chains. Smallholder farmers, workers and miners are among the true heroes in the battle to tackle these challenges, such as the climate crisis and persisting inequalities. Their role and contribution to sustainable and inclusive supply chains are enormous and invaluable; yet their voices are often unheard among the decision-makers in our global supply chains.

We need systemic change to reclaim sustainability and to eradicate poverty and inequality in all their forms.

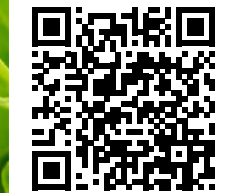
This **vision** has guided our 5-year RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, implemented in strategic partnership with the **Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs** under the Strengthening Civil Society framework (2021- 2025).

Facing up to these challenges requires solid and sustainable collaboration. In this partnership, **Solidaridad**, **TrustAfrica**, **Business Watch Indonesia** and **Fairfood** have striven towards genuine and inclusive sustainability in global supply chains, where the voices of farmers, miners, workers and citizens are well represented in decision making, and civil society is strengthened. This programme had a strong focus on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI).

In **Chronicles of Change**, we look back to reflect on some of the essential work done under RECLAIM Sustainability! over these five years, and look forward to the next chapter of fostering this sustainable and inclusive progress; across several regions, supply chains and implemented by many partners we have worked with. This catalogue contains but a small selection of case studies from the programme which reflect this necessary work and the ways in which it contributes to our vision.

Our hope and ambition is to continue this work for as long as this is necessary to facilitate more just, sustainable and fair global supply chains. We hope you enjoy reading these stories of producers from across the world!

Sincerely yours, the RECLAIM Sustainability! consortium



**Check out our
RECLAIM
Sustainability!
impact video series**





IMPACT IN BRIEF

RECLAIM Sustainability! has worked towards impact that fosters a responsible private sector, a supportive public sector, and a vibrant and strong civil society.

Over the period 2021-2025, we have achieved:

- 50 new and improved private sector policies for sustainable sourcing, production, trade and investment developed and implemented;
- 61 new and improved private sector inclusive tools and business models for sustainable sourcing, production, trade and investment developed and implemented;
- 266 private sector actors that commit to implement innovative tools and business models recommended beyond the project;
- 86 new or improved governmental policies implemented for sustainable production, trade and/or consumption;
- 584 civil society actors actively participating in dialogue, safeguarding sustainability, gender and social inclusiveness, and holding public and private decision makers accountable.

This was implemented through three impact pathways: Advocate through inclusive dialogue, Accelerate disruptive innovations, and Amplify the voice of citizenry.

Over the period 2021-2025, we have achieved:

- **Advocate through inclusive dialogue:** 382 innovative and inclusive solutions / recommendations that are submitted by civil society through inclusive dialogues to key public and private sector decision makers for adoption and implementation;
- **Accelerate disruptive innovations:** 1,092,321 farmers, miners and workers with improved bargaining position through equitable access to (digital) market intelligence or as a result of new and innovative business models;
- **Amplify the voice of citizenry:** 20,065,433 individuals activated and mobilized to raise their voice to push the policy agenda, influence societal (gender) norms, make informed decisions (consumer and corporate behaviour, e.g. on production and consumption practices).

As a joint initiative, the programme strove towards a strengthened civil society, where civil society organizations are supported with speaking up and engaging in policy dialogue.

Over the period 2021-2025, we have achieved:

- 392 Civil Society actors and target groups with increased Lobby & Advocacy capacities.

**These figures are preliminary final numbers for 2021-2025.*



Key Performance Indicators: Cumulative End-of-Programme Results



RESPONSIBLE PRIVATE SECTOR

- **50** new and improved private sector policies for sustainable sourcing, production, trade and investment developed and implemented
- **61** new and improved private sector inclusive tools and business models for sustainable sourcing, production, trade and investment developed and implemented
- **266** private sector actors that commit to implement innovative tools and business models recommended beyond the project



SUPPORTIVE PUBLIC SECTOR

- **86** new or improved governmental policies implemented for sustainable production, trade and/or consumption



VIBRANT AND STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY

- **584** civil society actors actively participating in dialogue, safeguarding sustainability, gender and social inclusiveness, and holding public and private decision makers accountable



STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

- **392** Civil Society actors and target groups with increased Lobby & Advocacy capacities
- **522** Civil Society actors and target groups supported

**These figures are preliminary final numbers for 2021-2025.*



“I am very proud to be a tea grower. [...] As part of the collective, [now] I supply my tea leaves directly to the factory, and I am being compensated fairly. [...] Together, we are stronger.”

Tapan Mandal, tea grower, India

Read more about this on page 103.



ABOUT RECLAIM SUSTAINABILITY!

The RECLAIM Sustainability! programme (2021-2025) was implemented by the consortium partners Solidaridad, Fairfood, TrustAfrica and Business Watch Indonesia (BWI), in strategic collaboration with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was active in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia,

Egypt, China, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Honduras, Peru, and the Netherlands (in the larger European context). The programme's supply chain focus was on cocoa, coffee, tea, palm oil, cotton & textiles, and gold; with a special focus on the local food systems in Africa.

RECLAIM Sustainability! worked towards creating impact along three pathways:

Advocating through inclusive dialogue:

Influencing agendas and developing evidence-based solutions to address socio-economic and environmental shortcomings in trade and supply chains.

Accelerating disruptive innovations:

Aiming to optimize the bargaining position of farmers and workers in the supply chains.

Amplifying the voice of citizenry:

Mobilizing, activating, and engaging citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) to change norms, and influence the policy agenda on issues related to unsustainable and non-inclusive trade and supply chains.

'Reclaiming sustainability' requires commitment by a supportive public sector, a responsible private sector, and a vibrant and strong civil society. Empowering civil society was essential to the programme's vision, whereby genuine transformation is set to benefit smallholder farmers, workers, and miners at the beginning of supply chains.



"As a mining woman, I will raise my voice with dignity. [...] I want to be heard more than anything else. That is my dream."

Justa Taype, miner and board member at National Network of Women in Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining, Peru

Read more about this on page 89.



TIMELINE OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMME

2021

- Launch of the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme
- Reclaiming the essence of sustainability for systemic change



Progress Report 2021

2023

- Fostering inclusive value chains: Accelerate, Advocate, Amplify
- Mid-Term Review



Progress Report 2023

2025

- Progress Report 2025*



2022

- Advocacy and collaboration yield results in push for sustainable value chains



Progress Report 2022

2024



Impact video series



Progress Report 2024

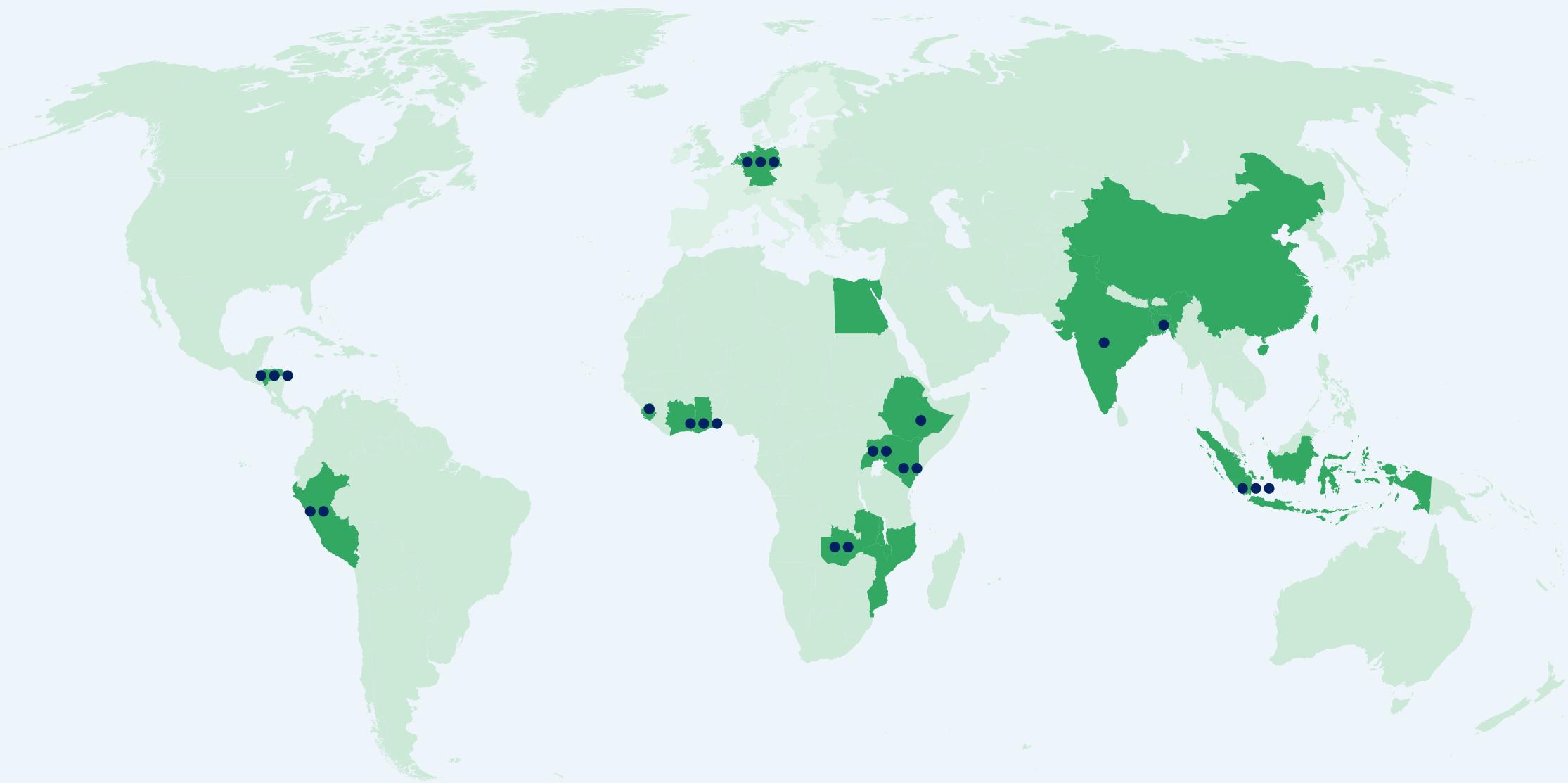
2026

- Chronicles of Change
- End-of-Programme Evaluation Report*
- Voices to Value: How inclusive dialogue adds value in supply chains (Event)

*At the time of publication, this process is still ongoing and/or being finalized.



OUR PROGRAMME WORLDWIDE



 [Click to know more](#)



SELECTED CASE STUDIES



Advocate

Check out the stories from our programme that foster this impact pathway.

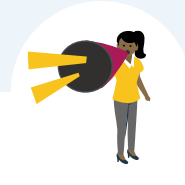
- Cotton & Textiles in Europe
- Africa Food in Zambia
- Cocoa in Ghana
- Coffee in Honduras
- Tea in Uganda
- Palm oil in Indonesia
- Cocoa in Europe
- Cotton in Zambia
- Advocacy in Europe



Accelerate

Check out the stories from our programme that foster this impact pathway.

- Coffee in Uganda
- Tea in Indonesia
- Africa Food in Kenya
- Coffee in Honduras
- Cotton & Textiles in Indonesia
- Gold in Peru
- Textiles in Bangladesh
- Coffee in Honduras



Amplify

Check out the stories from our programme that foster this impact pathway.

- Gold in Peru
- Cocoa in Ghana
- Cotton & Textiles in Ethiopia
- Coffee in Kenya
- Cocoa in Sierra Leone
- Tea in India
- Palm oil in Ghana



Global Learning Themes

Check out our Global Linking & Learning themes, which have fostered our work across the supply chains:

- Decent Work
- Fair Value Distribution
- Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)
- Climate and Natural Resource Management





GLOBAL LEARNING THEMES

With RECLAIM Sustainability!, our consortium worked on **4 cross-cutting global learning themes** that dealt with challenges confronted by the stakeholders across all the supply chains the programme was active in. This work was spearheaded by the Global Linking & Learning team.

These overarching global learning themes were: **Fair Value Distribution, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Decent Work, and Climate & Natural Resource Management.**





DECENT WORK

Under RECLAIM Sustainability!, the *Decent Work* learning group, modeled on the requirements of key due diligence legislation, enabled MSMEs in developing economies to meet emerging due diligence requirements, such as the EU Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD), including the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD). It translated complex compliance expectations into actionable steps aligned with local capacities. By doing so, it strove to mitigate the risk of supplier exclusion, support fair value distribution, and embed decent work principles across lower tiers of global supply chains.

National awareness workshop



HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Theme** - Decent Work
- **Types of deliverables** - Digital Tool, Reports & Research, Policy Work, Sharing of Best Practices, Evidence-Based Activity
- **Project name** - Mandatory Due Diligence Toolkit: Building Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises' Readiness for Sustainable Supply Chains
- **Subheading** - Helping Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Global South adapt to Universal Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD) requirements, while advancing decent work and safeguarding inclusion in global value chains.

Mandatory due diligence toolkit:

Building micro, small and medium enterprises' (MSMEs) readiness for sustainable supply chains

Why this matters:

- The average compliance cost for a South Asian MSME exceeds **13,000 EUR** annually, not including the cost of due diligence requirements limiting competitiveness.
- Less than **10% of suppliers** from the Global South meet European due diligence documentation standards.
- Without targeted support, up to **60% of export-oriented MSMEs** risk exclusion from buyer networks.

What are we achieving:

- 3 countries piloted the toolkit (India, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia).
- 4 national consultation processes were convened (India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka).
- 42 MSMEs in Ethiopia were using the toolkit for self-assessments.
- 2 corrective action plans were completed addressing wage transparency and occupational safety.
- 1 common KPI framework was developed for the network to track risk assessments completed, worker risks mitigated, and supplier retention rates.



“Before this process, due diligence felt abstract. The toolkit showed us where to start, how to map risks, record worker data, and engage buyers constructively.”

Textile MSME owner, Addis Ababa – Ethiopia

The establishment of mandatory due diligence requirements, like those borne from the CSDDD, marked a paradigm shift in global supply chain governance. For practitioners of the decent work agenda, it represents both challenges and opportunities.

On the one hand, mandatory due diligence offers a transformative mechanism to extend decent work standards beyond first-tier suppliers. It creates a formal incentive for brands to integrate labour rights and environmental safeguards across their entire supply chains. On the other hand, these directives introduce new challenges for suppliers in the Global South, where institutional capacity, financial resources, and technical systems remain limited.

Due diligence legislation (such as CSDDD) requires brands to identify, prevent, and mitigate human rights and environmental risks within their supply chains. While suppliers are not “directly” bound by the regulation, they are *de facto* responsible for providing evidence of compliance. The CSDDD’s “no cut and run” clause discourages brands from

disengaging with suppliers facing risks, yet it remains to be seen how this will be enforced in practice.

Suppliers across global supply chains face a structural dilemma: excessive de-risking raises operational costs and undermines competitiveness, while inaction could mean exclusion from global buyer networks. In this context, the regulation, while *in principle* is progressive; *in practice* it risks reinforcing existing global north-south asymmetries unless meaningful capacity-building support accompanies compliance demands.

The CSDDD toolkit was developed to address this gap (and can also be adapted to work with other

HREDD regulations where relevant). Conceived through multi-stakeholder consultations in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, it provides MSMEs with a structured, low-cost process to undertake risk mapping, impact assessment, and corrective action planning aligned with EU expectations.

In its first phase, the toolkit was piloted in India, Sri Lanka, and Ethiopia, with implementation supported by industry associations and ministries. In Ethiopia, partnership with the Ministry of Industry and leading textile exporters facilitated rapid adoption. In phase two, the toolkit was fully digitally integrated into an online dashboard for MSMEs to use, free of charge.

The screenshot shows the 'Solidaridad' dashboard for 'Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive CSDDD'. The interface includes a sidebar with navigation options like 'My Project', 'Dashboard', 'Data', 'Brand Dashboard', 'Brand Supplier Hierarchy', 'Link Brand/Supplier', and 'Link Request'. The main content area displays a questionnaire for the 'Identify' category. Question Q37 asks about systems in place to identify areas of operations with a risk of employees not being paid a minimum wage. The response is 'Yes'. Below the question, there is a table for 'Required Documents' with columns for S.No, Required Documents, Upload, Uploaded Documents, and Action.

S.No	Required Documents	Upload	Uploaded Documents	Action
1	Risk Assessment Reports			
2	Risk Mapping Documents			
3	Internal Audit Reports			

Figure 1: Risk Identification questionnaire for suppliers



To date, **42 MSMEs globally have registered to use the digital toolkit for risk self-assessments**, and **two corrective action plans have been implemented** to address labour documentation and safety management systems.

The next phase will focus on the brand uptake of the toolkit. This will enable enterprises to generate and share standardized risk data, expand coverage to agriculture and light manufacturing, and link results with global buyer reporting systems. Through these mechanisms, the project seeks to align decent work, sustainability, and competitiveness within a rapidly evolving compliance landscape.

The toolkit also enables brands to map their global supplier networks and receive real-time updates on risk levels across their operating countries. Its modular architecture allows rapid adaptation to new due diligence regulations and the specific requirements of any supply chain, from fashion to agriculture. This ensures the toolkit remains future-ready in a landscape of evolving compliance

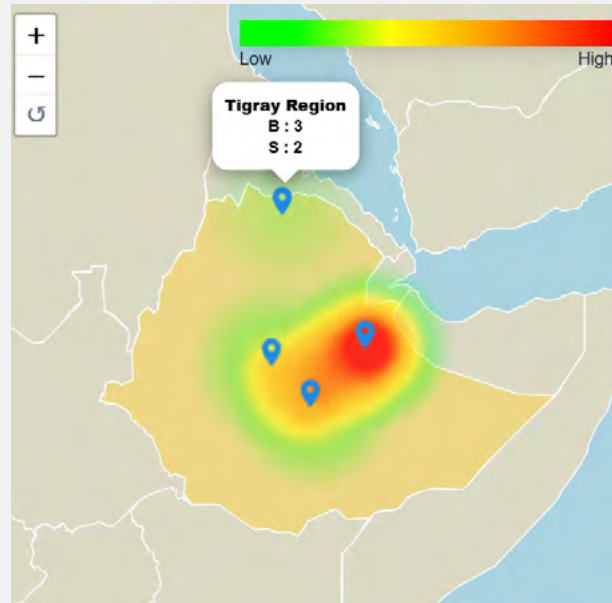


Figure 2: Visual Supply Chain Mapping for Brands

obligations. By embedding practical due diligence capacity at the enterprise level, the initiative contributes to a broader ecosystem shift toward transparency, accountability, and decent work across borders.

Key Insights & Learnings

- Translating complex policy into localized, actionable tools enhances adoption among MSMEs.
- Early engagement with ministries and associations ensures institutional continuity.
- Framing due diligence as a competitive strategy, not a compliance burden, increases supplier participation.
- Shared KPIs framework enables monitoring of decent work outcomes within supply chain systems.

Reading List

- **CSDDD Toolkit (Digital Tool, 2024)**

A structured self-assessment and reporting guide enabling MSMEs to operationalize due diligence processes:

<https://duediligencecompliancehub.org/>





CLIMATE & NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

This practice-oriented report bridges evidence, tools, and local action to strengthen climate resilience where it matters most: with small-scale farmers and organizations supporting them. Climate action is urgent yet under-resourced — and too often top-down. By pairing participatory risk assessments, adaptation tracking, participatory agroforestry, and finance entry points, the report turns principles into practical learnings and tools that can be used to leverage further climate action and impact.





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Theme** - Climate & Natural Resource Management
- **Types of deliverables** - A consolidated, field-driven approach that blends evidence synthesis, step-by-step methods, case studies, and ready-to-use tools.
- **Project name** - Reclaiming Resilience
- **Subheading** - Bridging tools, practices and local action for climate change

Reclaiming resilience:

Bridging tools, practices and local action for climate change

Why this matters:

- Over 500 million small-scale farmers produce one-third of the world's food, yet they are among the most exposed to climate shocks, declining productivity, and shrinking incomes.
- Despite record levels, it is estimated that less than 1% of climate finance actually reaches small-scale farmers.
- This imbalance leaves those most critical to food security and ecosystem stewardship without the resources they need to protect their livelihoods, adapt to a changing climate, and sustain resilient supply chains.
- Yet these same farmers are uniquely positioned to drive climate solutions — restoring soils, protecting forests, and reducing emissions through agroforestry

and regenerative practices. They should also be fairly rewarded for providing ecosystem services of global importance, ensuring that climate finance recognizes and values their contributions to a more resilient planet.

What we are achieving:

- Network wide endorsement of the Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) principles, and advancing work on mainstreaming them into the programme management cycle;
- Supporting the scaling of climate-resilient and sustainable farming practices by clarifying key concepts, advocating for increased climate finance for small-scale producers, supporting locally-led approaches, and promoting the exchange of good practices and enabling tools.



This report brings together Solidaridad's emerging approaches to climate resilience, and locally led climate action. Developed through the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme and the Climate & Natural Resource Management learning group, 'Reclaiming Resilience' captures practical experiences from across regions to strengthen evidence, coherence, and learning on how to support small-scale farmers to adapt and thrive amid growing climate risks.

The publication responds to an urgent gap: while climate impacts on farmers are accelerating, adaptation finance and practical guidance remain limited. It positions climate change not only as a technical challenge but as a social and institutional one — requiring new ways of understanding risk, empowering local decision-making, and linking field realities with finance and policy.

Rather than presenting standalone tools, the report demonstrates a set of practical approaches that promote regenerative and climate-resilient agriculture, and strengthen Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) across the entire project cycle — from risk analysis and design to monitoring, learning, and resource mobilization.

At the diagnostics and planning stage, participatory Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessments (CVAs) help farmers, cooperatives, and institutions identify climate hazards, prioritize locally relevant resilience strategies, and inform sectoral planning processes. Solidaridad also developed a report unpacking key agricultural concepts and approaches, including

information on how to guide them from a farmer perspective to drive innovation and contextualize regenerative agriculture into planning and implementation.

During implementation and monitoring, the Climate Adaptation Index (CAI) provides projects with a practical mechanism to track exposure, sensitivity, adaptive capacity, and the adoption of adaptation practices. By generating structured adaptation data at scale, the tool strengthens evidence-based decision-making, adaptive management, and accountability for climate outcomes within monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems.

To support resource mobilization and sustainability, the report also examines pathways to more inclusive climate finance. It highlights barriers that prevent local actors from accessing funding and showcases emerging approaches — such as Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), insetting, and blended finance — that can help channel resources toward small-scale producers while strengthening advocacy for more accessible and predictable financing mechanisms.

Finally, the report presents practical guidance for embedding Locally Led Adaptation throughout the project cycle, using Solidaridad's LLA Project Management Checklist to support devolved decision-making, gender-responsive approaches, and continuous learning loops.



Together, these tools and approaches demonstrate Solidaridad's commitment to translating climate ambition into grounded, farmer-centred action. 'Reclaiming Resilience' is both a reflection and a call to action — showing that locally led, data-driven, and finance-informed strategies are essential to build climate resilience, reduce emissions, and secure sustainable livelihoods for farmers and their communities.





Key Insights & Learnings

- **Participatory Agroforestry Design Guide:** Step-by-step co-design approach linking local knowledge, gender inclusion, and climate-smart agroforestry.
- **Guide for Climate Finance for Smallholders:** Practical entry points and good practices to access inclusive, locally relevant finance.
- **LLA Project Management Checklist & Commitment Form:** Tools to embed Locally Led Adaptation principles and self-assess project alignment.
- **Good Practices for Designing Adaptation or Cross-Cutting Climate Proposals:** Guidance to strengthen the climate rationale in funding proposals.

From Good Practices to Grassroots Innovation: Overview of regenerative agriculture concepts and farmer-driven innovation pathways.

Reading List

- **Climate Vulnerability Assessment for Cotton Farmers in Mozambique**
Through our Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA), we delved deep into the cotton value chain, offering invaluable qualitative and quantitative insights into the climate change challenges faced by small-scale farmers in Niesa and Nampula provinces.
- **Take Stock, Take Action**
Take Stock, Take Action: Solidaridad's Position on Farmer-Centered Action at COP30
- **Climate Finance**
The need for effective and locally-led climate finance to build farmer climate resilience
- **Financing Resilience for Small-Scale Farmers**
Call to action to climate delivery organizations and policy makers to increase and improve access to climate-finance for small-scale farmer initiatives.

"Agroforestry systems don't [always] fail because the biology is wrong — they fail because the design doesn't reflect what farmers need or can manage."

Participatory Agroforestry Workshop facilitator, Kenya





FAIR VALUE DISTRIBUTION

A living income calculates what is needed for smallholders who produce our food to be able to make their businesses viable while ensuring a decent standard of living. To make fair value distribution measurable and actionable, the Fair Value Distribution learning group focused on living incomes as a core element of fairness. By linking transparency and pricing, the group supported the development of a Commodity Living Income Strategy. This was tested in Honduras and Uganda, and later in Sierra Leone. Together with an open-source Farmer Income Data Toolkit, this work provides a legacy of data-driven tools as enablers of fairer trade.

Our focus has been on developing actionable approaches and tools that make living income a practical target, not just an aspiration.





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Theme** - Fair Value Distribution
- **Types of deliverables** - Digital tool, reports & research, evidence-based activity, policy engagement, sharing of best practices
- **Project name** - Living Income Commodity Strategy and the Sierra Leone Case Study
- **Subheading** - Data-driven solutions for fairer value distribution in agri-food supply chains

Shaping a living income commodity strategy: The Sierra Leone case study

The gap is structural: In Sierra Leone's cocoa sector, a Living Income Price (LIP) is nearly 4x higher than what farmers currently earn at the farmgate.

- **Gender inequality deepens the gap:** **31% of farmers are women**, yet smaller landholdings push their LIP 10% higher than men's, despite comparable or better yields.
- **Extreme dependency: Cocoa makes up 83%** of household income; off-farm income only 5%, leaving families vulnerable to price shocks and poor harvests.
- **Few are earning enough:** Out of 466 farmers sampled, only 17 reach a living income; the rest would need 2–4x higher prices or major productivity gains to close the gap.

- **Structured support works:** Certification and cooperative membership are linked to better cost efficiency and higher yields — showing that targeted interventions can bridge the gap.

What are we achieving

- Uptake of the **Commodity Living Income Strategy** by private and civil society partners in multiple supply chains. Development of a **Farmer Income Data Toolkit**, used by RECLAIM Sustainability! partners to collect and analyse farm-level data.

The Fair Value Distribution learning group, coordinated by Fairfood and Solidaridad West Africa, sought to answer a pressing question: **How can transparency and pricing data jointly lead to a fairer income for farmers?**

Recognizing that fair value is impossible without a living income, the group developed and tested a Commodity Living Income Strategy — a practical approach that turns complex data on costs, yields, and prices into actionable insights. Developed under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, this strategy helps value chain actors pinpoint the root causes of income gaps and which interventions can close them.

After early pilots in Honduras and Uganda, the team commissioned a third study in Sierra Leone. It was designed to validate this model beyond private sector contexts – in a country where limited data and unfamiliarity with living income concepts hinder farmers from becoming viable supply chain partners. Validated by the Produce Monitoring Board (PMB) and the Ministry of Agriculture, this study collected data from almost 500 cocoa farmers across five key cocoa producing districts (Kailahun, Kenema, Kono, Bo, and Pujehun). The programme generated one of the most comprehensive datasets on farmer income and productivity in the country's cocoa sector.

At the heart of the approach lie two complementary methodologies:

- **Living Income Price (LIP)** calculations that determine the minimum farmgate price needed for a decent standard of living, and
- **Cost–Yield Efficiency (CYE)** analysis that identifies structural barriers — such as low productivity or high labour costs — preventing farmers from reaching that benchmark.

The Sierra Leone case revealed both potential and inequities. The median LIP was nearly four times higher than the average farmgate price, underscoring the scale of the gap between current earnings and a decent livelihood. Certified farmers consistently outperformed non-certified peers, producing roughly 100 kg/ha more while spending less per kilo produced. Women farmers showed equal or slightly higher productivity, yet their smaller plots drove a 10% higher LIP gap compared to men.

The study also identified four farmer profiles, ranging from “*efficient performers*” (low cost, high yield) to “*excluded survivors*” (low cost, low yield). Only 17 out of 466 farmers earned a living income — evidence that price alone cannot bridge the gap without yield improvements, cost-efficiency gains, and tailored interventions.

To build capacity across the RECLAIM Sustainability! consortium, the learning group hosted a series of learning sessions to introduce this model and its tools. The result is a resource that forms the Fair Value Distribution learning within the programme.



“This research highlights the structural and market inefficiencies that perpetuate poverty among producers, while offering practical, context-specific solutions to bridge the living income gap.”

Raymond Bob Katta, Executive Chairperson,
Produce Monitoring Board – Sierra Leone

This includes the Commodity Living Income Strategy, the Sierra Leone Case Study, and the Farmer Income Data Toolkit, an open-source digital tool that consolidates all templates, dashboards, and analytical frameworks developed throughout the programme.

This toolkit equips both supply chain actors — including cooperatives, unions, and small exporters — and public sector institutions to apply or build upon this model. It allows users to measure impact beyond yield and cost, capturing income-based

“In today’s world of technology and innovation, data and evidence are the catalyst for learning and improvement. The information in this report is a blueprint for closing the living income gap.”

Raymond Bob Katta, Produce Monitoring Board
– Sierra Leone

results backed by contextual, verifiable data. By doing so, it helps connect policy and practice: informing fairer pricing decisions, tracking progress, and supporting compliance with emerging due diligence regulations.

Together, these tools mark a major step forward: moving farmers, cooperatives, and national institutions closer to using data not only to understand inequity — but to correct it.



Key Insights & Learnings

- **Transparency is a precondition for fairness.** Knowing what farmers actually earn enables fairer negotiations and more realistic price-setting. The Living Income studies across Honduras, Uganda, and Sierra Leone show how data transparency turns abstract debates about “fair prices” into actionable discussions grounded in evidence.
- **We are one step closer to strengthening farmers’ bargaining power.** While true data ownership by farmers remains a long-term goal, these studies were built on informed consent and contextual awareness. In Honduras, the process included validation sessions with farmers themselves to review and discuss their data. In Uganda, it led to the **training of cooperative data analysts**, equipping local organizations in how to manage and interpret income data.
- **Context matters — and so must targets.** Living income benchmarks and strategies must be tailored to reflect differences in productivity, household size, and cost structures. The Sierra Leone case study shows that even within the same value chain, regional and demographic differences require distinct strategies for closing income gaps.
- **Fair value starts with the right lens.** The learning group’s work demonstrates that when actors apply a cost–yield–income lens instead of relying solely on productivity or yield data, they can identify which interventions truly lift farmers above the poverty line, and which only increase output without improving livelihoods.

- **Collaboration beats duplication.** The open-source **Farmer Income Data Toolkit** empowers partners across the consortium to build on one another’s work, using shared templates, methods, and dashboards rather than starting from scratch.
- **From compliance to transformation.** Linking living income analysis to traceability data not only supports EU Due Diligence compliance (such as the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence (CSDDD)), but also drives long-term impact, ensuring that fair pricing and income transparency become cornerstones of sustainable trade systems.

Reading List

- [Data-Driven Solutions for Closing the Living Income Gap: A Case Study on Pricing and Efficiency in Sierra Leone’s Cocoa Sector](#)
Presents evidence from five cocoa-producing districts, applying the Living Income Price and Cost–Yield Efficiency methodologies to identify farmer profiles and income gaps.
- [White Paper: A Data-Forward Living Income Strategy for Commodity Supply Chains](#)
Co-authored by Fairfood and Heifer International, this white paper introduces the dual-methodology approach to dynamically assess living income gaps through real cost and yield data.
- [Farmer Income Data Toolkit \(Open Source\)](#)
Developed by Fairfood and Akvo, this practical toolkit guides users step-by-step in collecting, analysing, and visualizing farmer income data for informed decision-making.





GENDER EQUALITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION

The GESI learning group drove transformative, evidence-based advocacy across global agricultural supply chains. Its learning agenda was rooted in intersectional feminist and participatory approaches, prioritizing the voices of those historically excluded from leadership and decision-making.

Across four case studies—in Ghana, Zambia, Indonesia, and Uganda — the group applied a consistent *Knowledge Pathway*: research, product development, dissemination, and uptake. This approach ensured that knowledge serves as an empowerment tool and a policy lever. After all, inclusive engagement is at the heart of equitable sustainability. When communities co-own research and its products, transformation becomes both sustainable and scalable.





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Theme** - Gender Equality & Social Inclusion (GESI)
- **Types of deliverables** - Learning Agenda Workbook
- **Project name** - RECLAIM Sustainability! – Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Thematic Learning Group (TLG)
- **Subheading** - Advancing Inclusive Knowledge Systems through Intersectional Feminist Learning Models

Gender equality and social inclusion:

Advancing inclusive knowledge systems through intersectional feminist learning models

The Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) learning group under RS! catalyzed systemic change by democratizing knowledge, amplifying marginalized voices, and translating intersectional feminist research into action. Through four case studies across Africa and Asia, the initiative demonstrated how evidence-based learning can transform power dynamics in markets, institutions, and civic spaces. The goal was to ensure that the knowledge generated from lived realities becomes a tool for justice, accountability, and transformation—bridging the gap between grassroots advocacy and global policy influence.

Why this matters:

- **36%** of multi-stakeholder platform participants in Zambia's cotton sector are women, revealing persistent representation gaps.
- Women in Ghana's oil palm sector make up a majority of the workforce yet held **less than 10%** of leadership positions prior to intervention.
- Smallholder farmers in Indonesia typically earned **less than 20%** of retail tea value before Teh nDeso introduced direct-to-consumer models.
- Across RECLAIM Sustainability! supply chains, women contribute to **more than 60%** of production labour but remain largely excluded from decision-making and profit distribution.





“We proof, learn, adapt, and act—fast. The group’s iterative learning cycles ensure the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme stays responsive, inclusive, and effective on the ground. By centering the voices of women, youth, and marginalized producers, we’re not just collecting data—we’re co-creating pathways for justice, representation, and sustainable change.”

Njeri Kimotho, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion learning group lead in RECLAIM Sustainability! programme

What are we achieving:

- **30% leadership quota** for women institutionalized in Ghana’s Oil Palm Development Association (OPDAG).
- Over **3,000 farmers** engaged in policy dialogues through Zambia’s Cotton multi-stakeholder platform.
- **Micro-entrepreneur (‘micropreneur’) income and confidence** increased significantly through Indonesia’s Teh nDeso network.
- Uganda’s **inclusive tea sector** research was cited in national tea policy and international conferences, influencing cross-country replication.

Across four case studies—in **Ghana, Zambia, Indonesia, and Uganda** — the group applied a consistent *Knowledge Pathway*: research, product development, dissemination, and uptake.

In **Ghana’s oil palm sector**, participatory gender analysis exposed barriers faced by ethnic minorities

and Muslim women. This led to Ghana’s Oil Palm Development Association’s (OPDAG) **first Gender Policy (2023)** and set a **30% female leadership quota**, empowering women to contest and win executive positions. The case demonstrated how structural reforms and male allyship can institutionalize equality.

In **Zambia**, a study of the cotton sector revealed that women and youth remained underrepresented. Through policy briefs, accessible summaries, and visualized data, the group helped turn research into advocacy tools. This made farmer voices more visible, shifting national policy dialogue toward inclusion.

The **Teh nDeso initiative in Indonesia** used market engagement as a civic tool. By integrating QR codes for product transparency and building a ‘micropreneur’ network, tea smallholders gained better market access, income, and confidence. The model now serves as a template for linking economic empowerment with social accountability.



In **Uganda**, evidence from six tea-growing districts revealed barriers to participation for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Using local examples in a peer-reviewed paper, the project extended grassroots findings to national and international stages—proving that localized learning can inform global discourse.

Together, these cases underscore that inclusive knowledge systems are not incidental—they are intentional and structured. When communities co-own research and its products, transformation becomes both sustainable and scalable. The group’s approach turns **learning into advocacy, data into dialogue, and evidence into equity**—a model that continues to influence RECLAIM Sustainability! partners and beyond.

Key Insights & Learnings

- Shifting from “**knowledge storage**” to “knowledge activation” accelerates policy influence.
 - Cross-country learning strengthens advocacy consistency across regions.
 - **Men as allies and community-led validation** are critical accelerators of gender transformation.
-

Reading list

- [GESI Research Guide](#)
Provides participatory research methods centering marginalized voices and addressing structural inequalities across RECLAIM Sustainability! projects.
 - [GESI Learning Guide](#)
Translates research findings into adaptive learning strategies and feedback loops aligned with the RECLAIM Sustainability! Theory of Change.
 - [GESI Knowledge Management Guide](#)
Outlines how to package, store, and mobilize evidence-based knowledge products for advocacy and learning.
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CASE STUDIES

With RECLAIM Sustainability!, we have worked towards our vision through three impact pathways:

- **Advocate through inclusive dialogue:** Influence the policy agenda and develop evidence-based solutions to address socio-economic and environmental shortcomings in trade and value chains.
- **Accelerate disruptive innovations:** Optimize the bargaining position of farmers and workers in the supply chain through supply chain innovations, e.g. digital tools and new ownership models.
- **Amplify the voice of citizenry:** Mobilize, activate and engage citizens and civil society organizations to change norms and influence the policy agenda.

In this section, you can read about some concrete examples from our 5-year programme in various supply chains, including stories of producers, tools and interventions, best practices, policies, and products developed and implemented on the market.





INCREASE & MAINTAIN CIVIC SPACE



ACCELERATE DISRUPTIVE INNOVATIONS

Advocate for optimization of position of (female) farmers and workers in the supply chain, through innovative, digital and fair business models.

Engage producers, private sector, local and international technology partners

Co-design and promote inclusive new production and trade models

Improved transparency and traceability and market intelligence

Better negotiation position of farmers and workers



ADVOCATE THROUGH INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE

Influence agendas and develop solutions to address issues in value chains and trade in an inclusive way.

Engage power holders and rights holders in dialogue

Set agenda

Formulate and investigate innovative recommendations for solutions

Submit innovative and inclusive solutions to decision makers



AMPLIFY THE VOICE OF CITIZENRY

Mobilize, activate and engage citizens & CSOs to change norms and influence policy agenda.

Awareness raising & campaigns

Citizens are informed (knowledge)

Social Norms influenced (attitude)

Citizens raise their voice & make informed decisions (behaviour)



CASE STUDY Chapter 1

Advocate Through Inclusive Dialogue





Check out
this video

One of our strategies was influencing the policy agenda and developing evidence-based solutions to address socio-economic and environmental shortcomings in trade and supply chains. With our lobby & advocacy work and the capacity strengthening of civil society groups we strove to attain systemic change to enable farmers, miners and workers (with a particular focus on women, youth, migrants, and other marginalized groups) to significantly improve their socio-economic situations and raise their standards of living.

Farmers, miners and workers should have a position of equal bargaining power where they can negotiate fair prices for their goods. They should have a say in the political arena as well, and be enabled to truly participate and benefit from policies and decisions that affect their lives.



**RESPONSIBLE
PRIVATE SECTOR**



**SUPPORTIVE
PUBLIC SECTOR**



**VIBRANT AND STRONG
CIVIL SOCIETY**



**STRENGTHENING
CIVIL SOCIETY**

Over the period 2021-2025, we have achieved:*

- **382** innovative and inclusive solutions / recommendations that are submitted by civil society through inclusive dialogues to key public and private sector decision makers for adoption and implementation
- **437** dialogues initiated, strengthened or joined to engage Civil Society and Civil Society's agenda in debate with public and private decision makers
- **168** (governmental and private) policies for sustainable production, trade and consumption influenced

**These figures are preliminary final numbers for 2021-2025.*



HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Cotton & textiles
- **Region & Country** - Europe / Global
- **Pathway** - Advocate
- **Theme** - Decent work
- **Consortium Lead** - Fair Wear, ETI, PST, Solidaridad
- **Partners** - Fair Wear, Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI), Ethical Trade Norway, German Partnership for Sustainable Textiles (PST), Solidaridad, Ethical Trade Denmark, Fair Labour Association

Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices (CFRPP)

The Common Framework for Responsible Purchasing Practices (CFRPP) is a learning track for brands, investors, retailers and policy makers to start working on their responsible purchasing practices. As many brands and retailers in the fashion sector have committed to ensuring better social and environmental practices in their supply chain, this framework provides the necessary tools for brands to work towards this goal, supported by multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs), with Solidaridad among these MSI partners.

Purchasing practices can have a negative social and environmental impact in the supply chain of brands, like late order changes leading to overtime, pressure on prices and low wages. More responsible purchasing practices, on the other hand, can help to facilitate more sustainable supply chains and

production, including improvements in productivity, a more stable workforce and increased resilience in supply chains. They also contribute to preventing harm and facilitating social and environmental improvements.

Facilitating sustainable improvements in cotton, leather & textiles

A key element of responsible purchasing practices is creating a two-way and equal dialogue between suppliers and workers in producing countries (e.g. outside of Europe) and brands (for example, in Europe). The vision of the CFRPP is that producers and brands can jointly contribute towards better working conditions and more sustainable supply chains. The Framework and the way in which it is implemented by a particular brand or retailer is adaptable to the needs and particular situation of that party.



RECLAIM Sustainability! has played a convening role in linking brands with Multi-Stakeholder Platforms that brought and shared knowledge on how to comply with the CFRPP, and facilitated inclusive discussions with other brands and manufacturers to share best practices and understand their perspectives.

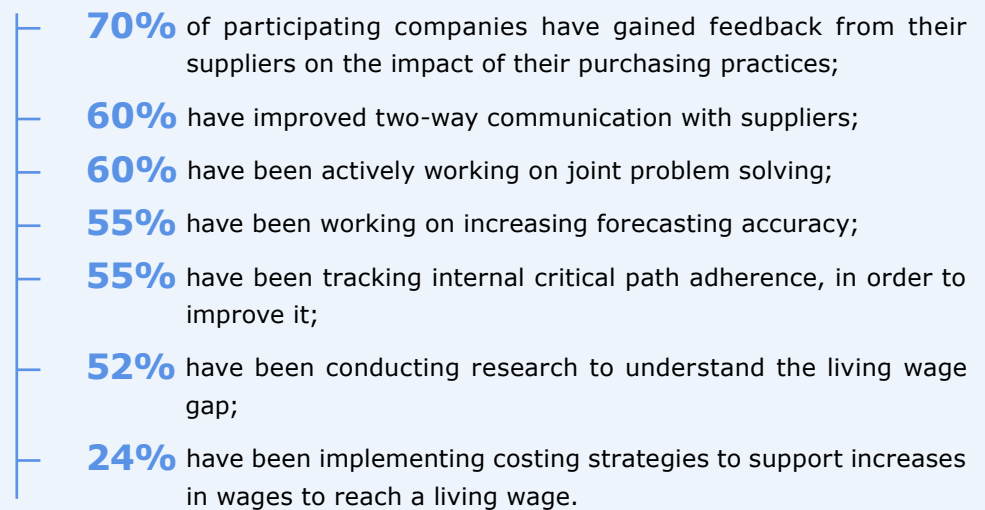


The Learning and Implementation Community (LIC) of the CFRPP involved a group of 36 garment brands and retailers.

- They committed to a 2-year journey to improve purchasing practices (2022-2024)
- The community members joined online meetings every 2 months
- Every other session, jointly with manufacturers (in break out discussions)
- Support from a group of organizations like Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives, NGOs, industry associations to make changes
- One of the outcomes was brands and retailers using the 'Common Framework' as a reference document

The key impact achievements of the LIC - in support of RPP implementation - include:

- Increased collaboration between Corporate Social Responsibility and commercial/purchasing teams
- Increased consideration of human rights by purchasing teams in their buying decisions
- The end survey showed tangible actions on purchasing practices impacting over 955,000 workers
- The end survey showed, among others, that:



Data above is based on the information gathered by the MSI working group of the LIC.



Collaboration with O'Neill, Hunkemöller and HEMA to implement RPP

As part of its work in facilitating sustainable fashion, **Solidaridad supports brands** with reviewing how sourcing practices relate to the issues found at manufacturer level, and links responsible purchasing practices to the situation at factory and farm level, to make sustainable improvements for both brands and producers.

In the context of the CFRPP, since 2022 **Solidaridad has worked with three brands - O'Neill, Hunkemöller and HEMA - in their journey to start implementing responsible purchasing practices**, by helping them through the Learning and Implementation Community (LIC) of the CFRPP, a two-year training programme for brands. These three companies have implemented changes in their business practices, such as adjusting payment terms and embedding responsible purchasing practices in board KPIs. These are concrete steps which can help create long-lasting change.

Three steps towards better purchasing practices

Solidaridad's collaboration with HEMA, a popular store in the Netherlands that sells a variety of consumer articles including clothing, has shown the importance of brands and retailers committing to responsible purchasing practices. Initially, HEMA's staff involved in bringing RPP to the table found the principles of the CFRPP to be 'ambitious'. Fortunately, this hasn't stopped them.

"The first impression when we brought this to some internal stakeholders was that the principles were ambitious, but not out of reach. We learnt very quickly that the team in HEMA were willing to be that ambitious."

Marieke de Haan-Doolaard, HEMA

At HEMA, and many other companies, Solidaridad observes a deep desire to shift more and more towards responsible purchasing practices as core elements of their work. This cannot be achieved by the isolated work of different teams. It requires that the leadership of an organization set the agenda and bring all different strands of the company together towards this goal.

Solidaridad's collaboration with HEMA has led to the insight that **these three steps are essential** for a company willing to work on integrating responsible purchasing practices:

- **Having ambassadors in place:** the people who can take a good idea and get all the right people working on it, and who build something that management can support;
- **Building your case** to support the goal is critical, as management can only take something forward upon having good information and concrete steps;
- **Making it operational** is most important:



change cannot happen without a clear set of action points.

Due diligence and purchasing practices

In the policy arena, the CFRPP gained visibility and legitimacy within Dutch and EU-facing policy and industry debates on due diligence and fair value distribution, including in European Parliamentary discussions. Solidaridad used its position and credibility as a technically strong partner to connect policy-level debates with practice in producing countries.

Due diligence is a complex process and while purchasing practices are a way to look at internal behaviour and make positive change, it also means changing internal practices, which can lead to a lot of resistance and therefore needs company support. Convincing companies to take part in the Learning Community took time, as they had to persuade their leadership teams, and get internal commitment to analyze their company purchasing practices and work towards improvement.



What's next?

The framework includes a variety of tools, with high potential for scalability. After the development of the CFRPP, the working group took it a step further and developed the Purchasing Practices Due Diligence (PP-DD) framework. This framework is a recommendation to policymakers, regulators, multi-stakeholder initiatives, and investors, and involves the following:

- Outlines the key steps companies should take to make their purchasing practices more responsible by applying an HRDD lens (Human Rights Due Diligence).

- Details what is required of purchasing companies at each step to ensure this approach is meaningful.

As a next step, the group will focus on further integration of responsible purchasing practices within the organizations themselves and joint promotion of the CFRPP and PP-DD Framework as key reference points for the sector. The MSIs in the working group will work on a technical guidance document for this framework, whereas Solidaridad will focus more on the uptake of the frameworks and the practical translation of the frameworks into working in tier 2 or with cotton farmers.

Learn more online

- The [CFRPP website](#) includes all the information and resources developed, including [guidelines](#) for brands and other stakeholders on how to use them.
- [Solidaridad's proposition and track record](#) on our work in sustainable fashion, including cotton, leather and textiles.
- An [article](#) on Solidaridad's work implementing RPP with HEMA.
- ETI has created an [online resource hub](#).





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Africa Food
- **Region & Country** - Southern Africa - Zambia
- **Pathway** - Advocate
- **Theme** - Decent Work
- **Consortium Lead** - Solidaridad
- **Partners** - CUTS International, Zambia Bureau of Standards and Medeem

Strengthening food safety in Zambia: ZAMGAP initiative set to enhance Zambia's agricultural competitiveness

As more people move to urban areas and rely on local food markets, foodborne disease and pesticide residues have led to significant public health and economic concern in Zambia. Besides the domestic impacts, this affects the country's ability to export food, which can hurt farming families' livelihoods. The Zambian Good Agricultural Practices programme (ZAMGAP), launched in 2025 under the RECLAIM Sustainability! Local Foods project, is geared to provide a solution to this challenge.

Securing the competitiveness of farmers in Zambia

Certifications are an important tool for farmers to address these health and safety concerns, and improve consumer confidence and market

access. At the same time, unclear standards and an increasing demand for food safety certificates presents a challenge for fruit and vegetable farmers who often lack the resources and knowledge to comply. As Zambia is home to approximately 1.5 million fruit and vegetable smallholder farmers, this is a broad issue across the country.

A solution for Zambian farmers is the Zambian Good Agricultural Practices programme (ZAMGAP), launched in 2025. Created through the RECLAIM Sustainability! Local Foods project - a collaboration between Solidaridad and the Zambia Bureau of Standards - ZAMGAP is the country's first national standard for fruits and vegetables as it is now the direct pathway for farmers to secure their competitiveness.



MSP collaboration paving the way forward

The development of ZAMGAP was the result of a multi-stakeholder platform (MSP) established by Solidaridad and the Zambia Bureau of Standards that brought together farmers, civil society organizations, academia, and retailers. To ensure its immediate success, the RECLAIM Sustainability! Local Foods project focused on building local capacity: 28 public extension officers from the Ministry of Agriculture and 30 fruit and vegetable lead farmers received in-depth training on advanced food safety practices, ensuring a network of local



“We believe that the ZAMGAP certification scheme will be a game-changer in promoting sustainable agriculture, boosting market access, and fostering long-term resilience for farmers and agribusinesses in Zambia.”

Lillian Bwalya, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry

experts is available to support wider farmer adoption of the new standard.

Demonstrating commitment to sustainable practices

The ZAMGAP scheme is now fully established and operating under the custody of the Zambia Bureau of Standards. This certification is a powerful instrument for farmers, as it enables them to demonstrate a verifiable commitment to sustainable production practices. More importantly, the certification will open doors to high-end markets both locally and regionally, directly translating into better prices and improved livelihoods for farming families.

With the launch of ZAMGAP and an increase in outreach, organizers anticipate a significant increase in farmer registration fueling the widespread adoption of sustainable production practices across the agricultural sector.

What's next?

To ensure the ZAMGAP Certification system thrives and delivers long-term benefits, the Zambia Bureau of Standards will continue to build auditor capacity with ongoing training to maintain a credible and trustworthy certification process. Furthermore, the programme has offered financial and technical support to the first 10 farmers who will apply for the full-cycle certification assistance system (including testing, audits, and recertification). This support is a critical step in de-risking the certification process for early adopters of the standard.



Most significantly, the ZAMGAP Certification scheme is designed to serve as a pathway to graduate practicing farmers to Global GAP standards. This transition, which is central to ZAMGAP's mission, is the key to improving their access to lucrative international markets and will significantly contribute to the country's gross domestic product.

Learn more online

- [ZAMGAP standards to enhance Zambia's agricultural competitiveness - cuts-consumerwatch.online](#)
- [Policy-brief-strengthening-the-capacity-of-food-system-in-zambia.pdf](#)



HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Cocoa
- **Region & Country** - West Africa, Ghana
- **Pathway** - Advocate
- **Consortium Lead** - Solidaridad
- **Partners** - Nwomaso Cooperative Cocoa Farmers Union

Eliminating child labour:

Breaking the cycle: a farmer's journey against child labour

Child labour remains a hidden challenge in Ghana's cocoa sector. Many farmers continue to rely on their children for labour in spite of the impacts to their health and education. Musah Kalamdulai was among them, but a training course shifted his perspective. Now he has become a leading advocate against child labour in his community.

For five years, Musah Kalamdulai, a cocoa farmer and tailor in Ghana's Central region, believed that having his children laboring on the farm was a normal part of family life. Like many smallholders, he saw their support as necessary, but he did not fully understand the long-term risks to their health, safety, and education.

Under RECLAIM Sustainability!, Solidaridad organized child labour sensitization training for cooperative unions across major cocoa-growing

districts. These sessions helped farmers distinguish between safe and appropriate tasks, and hazardous child labour that harms development. The training also encouraged open discussion, allowing farmers to share personal experiences and learn together. Musah was skeptical; he attended sessions intending to challenge the trainers. However, hearing real-life examples, and discussions with fellow farmers gradually shifted his perspective. He realized hazardous farm work, handling tools, carrying heavy loads, and working during school hours could limit his children's future.

Today, although his own children are now adults, Musah has become a leading advocate against child labour in his community. He has engaged more than 100 community members, urging them to keep children in school and limit farm tasks to age-appropriate activities.





Cocoa Farmer Victoria Asiedu is one of the community members influenced by Musah’s advocacy. For years, she and her children worked on Musah’s orange farm to support her household. The labour, however, began taking a toll. “The work affected their academic performance, and they were eventually dismissed from school,” Victoria recalls.

Musah’s conversations with Victoria were not easy at first. She resisted, believing the work was necessary. But through dialogue and community support sessions, she began to see the impact on her children’s well-being. Victoria has since re-enrolled her children in school and now limits their farm work to Saturdays. She has also started a small food vending business to support her income needs.

Results & insights

Musah Kalamdulai’s advocacy against child labour

“I tell parents that education must come first. Children can still learn responsibility without risking their health or missing school. I am committed to preventing the mistakes I made. Today, I work to ensure no child in our community is taken out of school for farm work.”

Musah Kalamdulai

has transformed his community. As president of his cooperative union, many farmers look to him for advice on safe ways to involve their children in farming without harming their development.

More parents now understand the dangers of child labour and refrain from taking them out of school. Musah and his union act as community guardians, ensuring no child work occurs on farms during school hours. His leadership shows how informed community advocacy and practical actions can significantly reduce child labour and protect children’s rights while supporting sustainable farming.

What’s next?

Providing cooperative unions with tools for monitoring and peer learning can foster a community-led system of accountability. The community guardian model is effective and ready to be replicated in other unions and farming areas to reinforce child protection and education.

With supportive partnerships from government, NGOs, and private sector actors, this grassroots approach can be rolled out across cocoa-growing regions, amplifying positive impacts on livelihoods, child welfare, and sustainable cocoa production.

Since the implementation of the project:

- 210 cocoa farmer unions trained across 8 cooperative-led sessions, strengthening community-led protection systems against child labour.



- 100+ community members sensitized through peer outreach led by Musah to drive grassroots change
- Children have been kept in school rather than withdrawn for farm labour
- Shift from hazardous tasks to safe, age-appropriate work

Learn more online

[Solidaridad network - journey against child labour](#)





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Coffee
- **Region & Country** - Latin America; Honduras
- **Pathway** - Advocate
- **Theme** - Gender equality & social inclusion
- **Consortium Lead** - Solidaridad
- **Partners** - Under Secretariat of Agriculture, Rikolto, Socodevi, HNRS, IWCA (AMUCAFE Honduras)

Women transforming coffee in Honduras: Gender policy in Honduras coffee value chain

For years women have played a vital role in coffee production in Honduras, yet their contributions went largely unrecognized. Under RECLAIM Sustainability!, the implementation of a Gender Policy for the Coffee Sector has set the stage for inclusive rural development.

In the heart of Honduras' coffee-growing mountains, the aroma of coffee also carries stories of transformation as women claim their place as equals. The Gender Policy for the Coffee Sector began in the aftermath of a 2018 study on gender from the International Coffee Association. The report found that although women operate 20-30% of the world's coffee farms and represent up to 70% of the labour in coffee production, they lack many of the rights and recognition for their efforts.

In response to the report, the National Coffee Council of Honduras worked with Solidaridad and Rikolto to develop a gender policy for the country's coffee sector. The accompanying advocacy effort has aligned government institutions, producers, and civil society around a shared vision of equality that challenges traditional norms and builds new governance models.

The Power of Collaboration

Realizing the full potential of Honduras' Gender Policy required collaboration. This led to the development of the Interinstitutional Gender Roundtable for Coffee to bring together all stakeholders with a goal of strengthening civil society organizations, improving access to land, and promoting women's leadership at all levels.



As a representative for women coffee farmers and workers, AMUCAFE and the Roundtable have emerged as key actors in advocacy and decision-making. Through training and strategic planning processes, women coffee producers are now active participants advocating in shaping the future of the sector.

Land ownership is a critical area where women can assert their place in coffee. To support this, the Roundtable developed a practical guide that explains step by step how to obtain legal land titles in cases such as inheritance, purchase, or agrarian reform.

At the local level, gender committees within coffee producer associations have strengthened their skills in leadership, annual planning, and budget management. These committees now design and fund initiatives led by women, ensuring that gender equality becomes part of institutional practice and not just discourse.

“Women who work alongside their husbands, even if they do not own the land, will also benefit from access to credit or training in technical farming practices.”

Orietta Pinto, president of the Honduras Chapter of the International Women in Coffee Alliance (AMUCAFE-IWCA).

Results & insights

The success of the Gender Policy for the Coffee Sector lies in its participatory approach and strong institutional alliances. By positioning gender equality as a shared responsibility, it fostered ownership among key actors and generated tangible results, including access to land titles and the creation of women-led coffee brands. These outcomes demonstrated the impact and potential for scaling the integration of gender perspectives into value chain governance.

The key insight: change happens when women move from being beneficiaries to active decision-makers shaping the sector’s future.

What’s next?

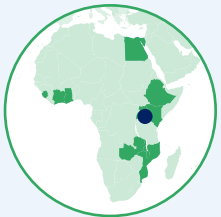
The Gender Policy’s collaborative and forward-looking design makes it a scalable blueprint for inclusive rural development. The next step is to strengthen impact measurement systems to capture long-term changes in women’s income, land ownership, and leadership participation.

Expanding successful initiatives, like the Gender Policy, have the potential to deepen systemic change, and evolve into a national framework for inclusive agricultural transformation that inspires replication across other value chains and Latin American contexts.



Learn more online

- <https://latinoamerica.rikolto.org/historias/honduras-politica-genero-sector-cafe-firma-acuerdo-interinstitucional>
- <https://www.laprensa.hn/economia/sendadelcafe/avancesimplementaciondelapolitica-de-genero-en-el-subsector-cafe-de-honduras-GP19253014>
- <https://solidaridadlatam.org/news/aprueban-politica-de-genero-en-el-sector-cafe-de-honduras/>
- <https://solidaridadlatam.org/news/politica-de-genero/>
- <https://solidaridadlatam.org/news/aprueban-politica-de-genero-en-el-sector-cafe-de-honduras/>
- <https://www.undp.org/es/honduras/comunicados-de-prensa/fortalecen-la-implementacion-de-la-politica-de-genero-del-subsector-cafe>



HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Tea
- **Region & Country** - East Africa, Uganda
- **Pathway** - Advocate
- **Theme** - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI)
- **Secondary theme** - Fair Value Distribution
- **Consortium Lead** - Solidaridad
Partner - TrustAfrica

From Margins to Masters:

Women Redefining Uganda's Tea Industry with Advocacy and Specialty Tea Business Models

In Uganda's male-dominated tea sector, women were long confined to raw material suppliers and low-wage labour roles. Through Solidaridad's RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, grassroots mobilization paved the way for the National Association of Women in Tea Uganda (WiTU), a civil society movement for gender justice and economic empowerment. WiTU has transformed women from marginalized labourers into policy influencers and specialty tea entrepreneurs, pioneering new models that deliver equity, dignity, and market access.

Uganda produces about 60,000 metric tonnes of tea per annum and **about 90%** of tea is exported. For decades, women in Uganda's tea sector have provided a large amount of farm labour, often over 70%, but were excluded from decision-making and value creation. They remained invisible in policy spaces and locked into low-income tasks, while profits from tea flowed to powerful exporters and the Mombasa auction house.

Recognizing this imbalance, **Solidaridad** under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme launched



an ambitious initiative to mobilize smallholder tea farmers beginning at the grassroots. This led to the formation of a **collective voice for women in the sector**, the National Association of Women in Tea Uganda (WiTU), bringing together 1,200 women farmers from 26 tea-producing districts. This was not the strengthening of an existing structure, but the **creation** of a completely **new civil society organization** representing actors who have historically been underrepresented and marginalized within the tea sector.

Raising the position of women tea farmers through WiTU

In a short time, WiTU has succeeded in advocating for and **amplifying the voices** of the women for gender equity within the sector. WiTU secured a historic win: gender equality was adopted as a core principle in the Uganda National Tea Policy. The association also **influenced** the adoption of inclusive business models in the policy, allowing women to move beyond raw material supply into higher-value business processes. This has positioned women not as beneficiaries of aid, but as equal partners shaping the future of the tea industry.

Beyond policy, WiTU members pioneered the innovative specialty tea business model that shifts women from price-takers in bulk supply chains to value creators in differentiated markets. Through affordable small-scale processing technologies and collective branding, members are able to produce



specialty and artisanal tea products, access premium buyers, and significantly improve margins while strengthening their bargaining power within the supply chain. This low-investment, high-reward approach enables them to process and brand their own tea products. Unlike conventional tea businesses limited to the Mombasa auction where prices hover below USD 1/kg, WiTU's women-led enterprises are now **exporting** directly to **niche international markets** in the Netherlands, Belgium, and the UK, fetching between USD 20–100/kg.



“For the first time, women in Uganda’s tea industry are not only part of the conversation — we are leading it, shaping policies and exporting our own brands.”

Julian Nyabuhara, Chairperson, WiTU

This shift has boosted incomes and changed perceptions, women are no longer seen merely as labourers and suppliers of low value raw materials but as entrepreneurs, exporters, and leaders. The government of Uganda, through the Presidential Advisory Committee on Exports and Industrial Development (PACEID), now consults WiTU to replicate the specialty tea business model across the sector, demonstrating its scalability and national significance.

Furthermore, WiTU’s advocacy against gender-based violence (GBV) within the sector has further cemented their influence, attracting new partnerships and funding.

WiTU’s journey embodies the **principle that equity is not charity. By coupling advocacy with entrepreneurship, women have secured a seat at the table**, dignity in their work, and a pathway to generational transformation.

When grassroots mobilization meets inclusive business models

The WiTU model has proven that the combination of grassroots mobilization and inclusive business models leads to women moving from the margins of the sector to decision-making spaces, influencing national policy and accessing premium global markets. Their incomes and social recognition have risen significantly, and they now serve as role models across Uganda’s agricultural sector.



Key insights include:

- Policy change is achievable when grassroots voices are organized into a collective platform.
- Economic empowerment amplifies advocacy, ensuring women’s voices carry weight.
- Specialty tea models can be replicated in other supply chains to transform marginalized farmers into global players.

Remaining opportunities include scaling training on topics such as specialty tea processing, quality control and marketing, in addition to deepening investment in processing infrastructure, and expanding regional markets.



What's Next?

WiTU's success has sparked interest in replication. Solidaridad, PACEID and market actors are exploring scale-up strategies across Uganda's tea sector and beyond, targeting marginalized groups such as Kenya Women in Tea Value Chain Association. The specialty tea model offers a blueprint for other agricultural supply chains such as specialty coffee, where women face exclusion.

Future priorities include strengthening export networks, building climate-resilient production systems, and expanding women's leadership across multi-stakeholder platforms. With stronger partnerships and resources, WiTU could catalyze a **gender-responsive transformation of Uganda's entire tea sector**, positioning women as equal partners in sustainability, trade, and policy.

Learn more online

- [Women in Tea Uganda \(WiTU\)](#)
- [Uganda National Tea Policy documents \(Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries\)](#)





SIONAL
DUKUNGAN SARPRAS
WADAYA



HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Palm Oil
- **Region & Country** - Asia, Indonesia
- **Pathway** - Advocate
- **Theme** - Fair value distribution
- **Consortium Lead** - Solidaridad
Partners - Solidaridad Asia, Directorate General of Estate Crops of the Ministry of Agriculture of Indonesia, Palm Oil Plantation Fund Management Agency (BPDP), Credit Union Keling Kumang (CUKK), agricultural services in provinces and districts of West Kalimantan, Central Kalimantan, and East Kalimantan.

Paving the way for smallholder inclusion: Acceleration of Indonesia's Sustainable Palm Oil Certification (ISPO) System

By 2029, all Indonesian oil palm growers must achieve ISPO certification to maintain market access. However, millions of smallholders remain unaware or overwhelmed by the complex, costly requirements. A critical barrier is obtaining the STDB registration. Under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, Solidaridad Indonesia simplified access to the e-STDB registration platform where government funding programmes are offered. By combining direct farmer outreach with strengthened policy implementation, Solidaridad and partners have reduced administrative hurdles, saving smallholders time and money while securing their professional future.

The challenge of smallholder inclusion in ISPO

The government of Indonesia requires that, by 2029, all oil palm growers in Indonesia obtain Indonesian Sustainable Palm Oil (ISPO) certification. If they don't acquire this certification in time, they will lose access to the market. While most large palm growers are well on their way to achieve this, millions of Indonesian smallholder farmers are unaware or face barriers in acquiring ISPO certification.

STDB-registration as a requirement for ISPO-certification

One of the barriers for ISPO certification is the requirement to be officially registered as a small-scale palm oil farmer following basic sustainability



standards, the so-called Surat Tanda Daftar Budidaya (STDB)-registration. This 'golden ticket to ISPO-certification' and hence for survival in the market, is one of the most important documents for small-scale farmers who manage less than 25 hectares of land. The registration is a formal acknowledgement by the government that a farmer is cultivating a specific plot of land with specific types of seeds and farming practices. Unfortunately, many small-scale palm oil farmers don't know how to apply for this registration, while others find the registration process too complicated and expensive.

Advocating to streamline STDB-registration through policy integration

To accelerate STDB registration, Solidaridad Indonesia successfully advocated for the Indonesian government to streamline the process for small-scale farmers. By integrating STDB registration into an existing government funding programme: the Plantation Fund Management Agency (BPDP), the administrative burden and document duplication were significantly reduced. By integrating these processes and enhancing the digital e-STDB platform, smallholders could save both time and cost, establishing the vital foundation for mandatory ISPO certification.

From policy to practice

To move from policy to practice, the next phase focused on increasing awareness of the government funding programme among smallholders and assessing their eligibility for BPDP support. To achieve this, Solidaridad set up a pilot with the

Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture, the BPDP, and Credit Union Keling Kumang (CUKK)—a long-term trusted partner (see box) with deep roots in the local community. In this pilot, the partners provided direct technical assistance to 20 oil palm smallholder cooperatives, including 1,000 smallholder oil palm farmers, spread across West, Central and East Kalimantan. The aim of the pilot was to demonstrate scalable best practices that can be replicated in other regions to make ISPO smallholder-inclusive and accelerate its adoption among oil palm smallholders in Indonesia.

Results & insights

Reframing STDB: from administrative burden to economic opportunity

The pilot revealed that oil palm smallholders in Indonesia currently view STDB as a government requirement with no direct reward. When STDB is clearly positioned as the gateway to funding for ISPO certification, faster loan access, and potential price premiums, smallholders become motivated to participate. The registration rates, then, can improve dramatically. This can be a win-win-win: farmers gain economic incentives, the government registers faster ISPO compliance, and the market gets traceable palm oil.

Influencing national policy for STDB scaling

The findings and learnings from the pilot were captured in the report 'STDB: The Way Forward'. The report was shared at a national-level workshop attended by the Ministry of Agriculture, BPDP,





Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Agrarian Affairs, the ISPO certification agency, government representatives and farmer groups from West, East, and Central Kalimantan. The workshop recommendations were then compiled and shared with the Indonesian government in the form of an updated policy brief. It called for creating a 'whole-of-government-approach' at the district level to resolve land overlap, improve the e-STDB platform, and harmonize interministry policies.

What's next?

Solidaridad Indonesia continues supporting the 20 cooperatives toward full ISPO certification,

leveraging the Kalimantan pilots as a national model for integrating e-STDB registration with BPDP funding. This proven framework offers a replicable path for all palm-producing provinces to meet the 2029 mandate through streamlined administration and technical assistance. By scaling this initiative through local government engagement and broad awareness campaigns, we can address low registration rates. Ultimately, this ensures that the 40% of Indonesia's palm oil produced by independent smallholders is brought into a transparent, sustainable supply chain, enabling fair value and global market access for millions.

"E-STDB is essential for independent palm farmers to provide the government with accurate data on farmer distribution, enabling targeted assistance delivery."

Anik Setyowati, representative from the Mentohi Raya Sub-district, Lamandau, Central Kalimantan Province.



The **partnership between Solidaridad and Credit Union Keling Kumang** began in 2011, with CUKK mobilizing its oil palm farmers' base to participate in the Farmer Field School training

conducted by Solidaridad. The overarching aim of the partnership was to improve the livelihoods of small-scale oil palm farmers in West Kalimantan. This partnership has since continued, and grown stronger over time.

This partnership led to the formation of the Keling Kumang Palm Oil Farmers Alliance (APKS KK) in 2015. The alliance comprised Field School alumni of CUKK, who had participated in Solidaridad programmes.

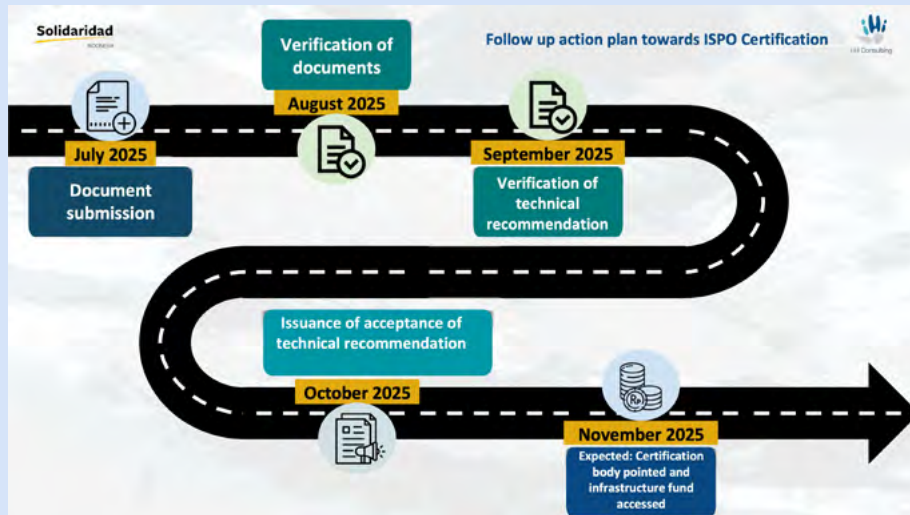
Solidaridad works with APKS KK on promoting regenerative oil palm production. It also supports the farmers in meeting sustainability standards, securing formal recognition through STDB, preparing for ISPO certification and accessing targeted government finance that helps them offset costs

tied to certification and become ISPO-ready. CUKK provides support on and off farm on income generation, credit access and financial literacy to its members.

The journey with CUKK started as a programmatic collaboration, but is now a strategic partnership grounded in shared values and long-term commitment to improve the economic conditions of oil palm small-scale farmers in West Kalimantan.

"Our collaboration with Solidaridad has contributed to strengthening our efforts to support smallholders," says Valentinus Narung, CEO of CUKK. "Together, we have worked to improve regulatory compliance, enhance livelihood opportunities, and promote sustainable practices within the palm oil sector. Over the past 15 years, this partnership has provided a platform for aligned work at the grassroots, with both organisations contributing to the progress."

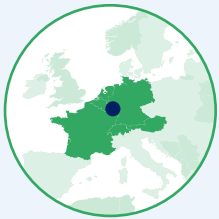




“The collaboration between Solidaridad, the Ministry of Agriculture, and BDPD marks a significant milestone and reflects a shared commitment to advancing sustainability. This joint initiative undertaken under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme has strengthened the confidence of smallholder farmers, who are now able to connect sustainability with institutional support. This breakthrough has the potential to accelerate both the strengthening as well as the international acceptance of ISPO as the benchmark for sustainable palm oil in Indonesia.”

Yeni Fitriyanti, Country Manager, Solidaridad Indonesia





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Cocoa
- **Region & Country** - Europe (The Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and Austria), as well as main cocoa-producing countries linked to the Dutch market (Ivory Coast, Ghana, Cameroon)
- **Pathway** - Advocate
- **Theme** - Fair Value Distribution
- **Consortium Lead** - Solidaridad
- **Partners** - DISCO, GISCO, Beyond Chocolate, FRISCO, SWISSCO, Oxfam Novib, Tony's Open Chain, Fairtrade the Netherlands, Fairtrade International, Question Mark



The power of collective action in cocoa:

Building a European movement for responsible procurement through advocacy, partnerships, and campaigning

Under RECLAIM Sustainability!, Solidaridad Europe and partners have moved beyond traditional agronomic fixes to attempt to break down the structural inequalities, power imbalances, and unfair value distribution that prevent smallholder farmers from achieving a living income. By leveraging high-level advocacy, partnerships and public campaigning, this initiative contributed to shifting responsibility from individual farmers to all supply chain actors. The result is a commitment from leading Dutch supermarkets to adopt responsible procurement practices for their private label cocoa, enabling cocoa farmers to earn a living income. Significant potential exists to scale this model geographically, expand into other

commodities like coffee and tea, and extend the approach to major chocolate brands.

The challenges that cocoa farmers face

Since late 2023, the cocoa sector has experienced unprecedented turbulence: prices surged dramatically throughout 2024–2025 before falling sharply again in the last quarter of 2025, while crop shortages and climate impacts have continued to push most of the risk onto small-scale farmers, leaving many trapped in poverty. Farmer poverty is a driver of just about every problem in the cocoa sector: deforestation, child labour, and gender inequality are all made so much harder to tackle if cocoa household incomes are not raised significantly.





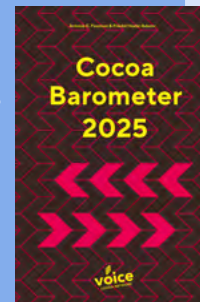
Fixing the chain, not just the farm

There is **significant evidence** that current approaches to raise farmer income have had a marginal impact at best. For decades, these approaches have been mostly, if not exclusively, focused on agronomic solutions. Implicit in these approaches is that farmers are poor because they are either not working hard enough, not working smart enough, or a combination of both.

In collaboration with fellow civil society organizations, Solidaridad Europe has pushed to rebalance accountability for farmer livelihoods, moving away from individual farmer responsibility toward a collective supply chain approach involving all supply chain actors. Through the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, Solidaridad played a pivotal role in the VOICE Network, contributing

“To escape the poverty trap, cocoa farmers must start earning a living income. For living income to become a reality for cocoa farmers, action is necessary on three separate dimensions at the same time: good agricultural practices, good governance policies, and good purchasing practices.”

Cocoa Barometer, 2025



both technical expertise and strategic media engagement to two editions of the **Cocoa Barometer** (and related consultative papers). As a globally respected publication reaching millions of industry stakeholders, the Cocoa Barometer has been instrumental in amplifying this call for collective responsibility.

Advocating for good procurement practices

Our movement towards good procurement practices began in 2020, through the Dutch Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa (DISCO), a multi-stakeholder platform uniting traders, brands, retailers, governments, civil society organizations and research institutes. As a steering committee member, Solidaridad Europe pushed for action and delivery of a 2030 living income ambition. Key milestones include:

- Setting the standard: DISCO agreed on the **Procurement Practices Principles: A DISCO Position Paper**, establishing a blueprint for responsible procurement practices.
- The ripple effect: Because DISCO set the most ambitious living income commitments in Europe, it served as a catalyst for similar platforms in Belgium (Beyond Chocolate), Germany (GISCO), and Switzerland (SWISSCO).
- European alignment: this resulted in the **ISCO statement at the World Cocoa Conference 2024**, aligning European markets towards a unified living income strategy.





As a key member of the VOICE Network, we co-authored a guide on **Good Purchasing Practices**, outlining clear, actionable demands for companies:

- Publish a time-bound living income policy
- Publicly report on responsible purchasing key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Pay farmers for their data sharing, and ensure they have access and ownership

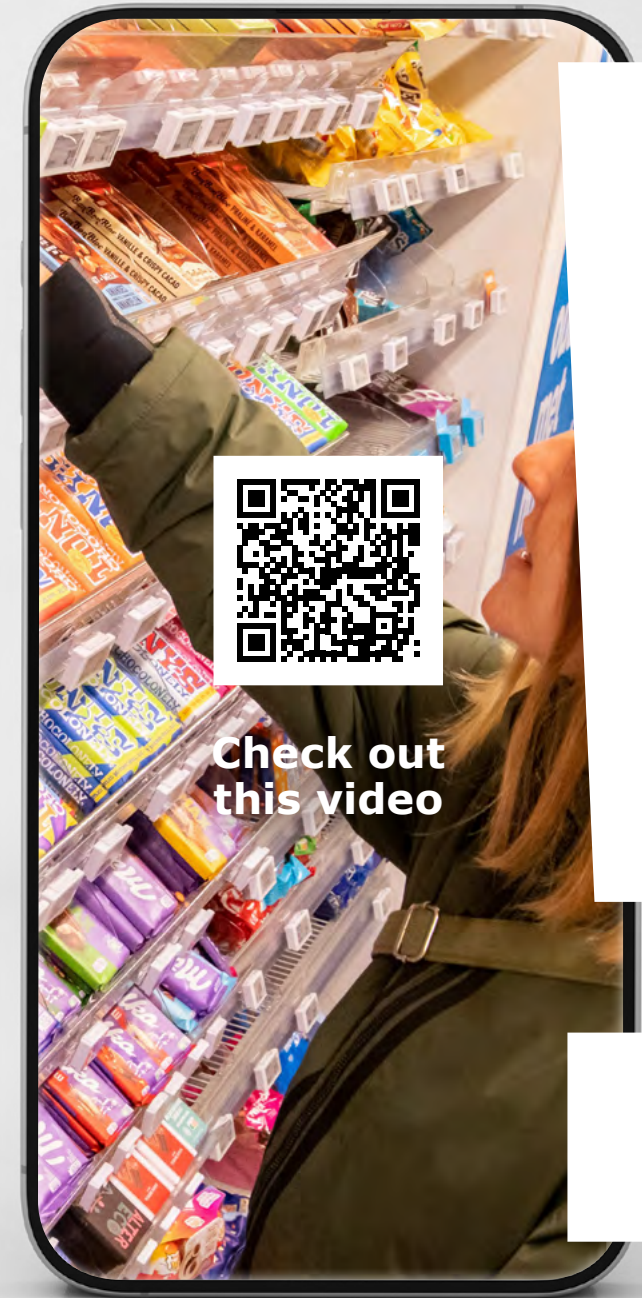
Alongside these initiatives, Solidaridad Europe collaborated with civil society partners to challenge chocolate brands, retailers and traders to pay a fair price, share the risks, and be accountable, by way

of a **call to action** based on the Good Purchasing Practices concept, developed by Tony's Open Chain and Fairtrade International.

Throughout this process, Solidaridad has maintained a **critical perspective on Fairtrade's Living Income Reference Price (LIRP) levels**. While we acknowledge them as a positive step forward, we argue that these prices are still too low to provide a truly sustainable living income. Solidaridad's contribution to the debate has led to the model being revised at present (in early 2026).

Public campaigning and increasing pressure on Dutch supermarkets

Building upon the call to action mentioned above, and the findings of the **Superlist Social 2023** benchmark report, which we wrote in collaboration with Question Mark and Oxfam Novib, we developed a multi-annual consumer campaign to increase pressure on Dutch supermarkets, to call on them to ensure that all chocolate products sold on their shelves contain sustainable cocoa, and that they use their procurement power to change the status quo and influence brands to adopt responsible procurement practices. After all, as the primary link between farmers and consumers, supermarkets sit at the heart of our global food systems. This unique position gives them both the power and the responsibility to drive systemic change. With a potential reach of 6 million, the campaign's visibility rivalled any other campaign undertaken by Solidaridad Europe.





Systemic change gains momentum through collective action

The milestones described above laid the groundwork for Dutch supermarkets **Albert Heijn, Superunie, Jumbo and Lidl** to adopt responsible procurement practices for their private label cocoa. By committing to Living Incomes for cocoa farmers in their supply chain, these supermarkets have committed to a proven model for responsible procurement.

Our work was effective because it combined high-level ambition with advocacy, partnerships, and campaigning. Living income targets agreed in DISCO created a ripple effect and broader alignments, while advocacy, publications, benchmarking and campaigns delivered with partners added pressure and accountability. At the same time, ready-made models from Tony's Open Chain and Fairtrade lowered the barrier for retailers to act.

The key insight: systemic change requires long-term persistence, but gains significant momentum when stakeholders align their unique strengths through collective action.

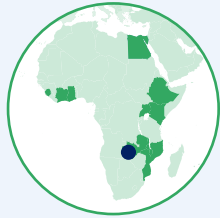
What's next?

The next potential for impact lies in scaling both in the Netherlands as well as to other countries and across commodities, as well as with chocolate brands. Geographically, there is a clear opportunity for remaining Dutch and European retailers to follow the lead of Albert Heijn, Superunie, Jumbo, and Lidl, fostering a unified European movement for responsibly purchased cocoa. Beyond cocoa, this model can be adapted to other high-risk commodities, such as coffee and tea, where producers face similar income gaps. Finally, major chocolate brands must now embrace their responsibility to move beyond pilot projects and adopt these responsible procurement models at scale.

Learn more online

- [Dutch Initiative on Sustainable Cocoa \(DISCO\) - IDH - the Sustainable Trade Initiative](#)
- [Procurement Practices Principles: A DISCO Position Paper](#)
- [ISCO statement at the World Cocoa Conference 2024](#)
- [Superlist Social 2023](#)
- [Cocoa Barometer 2025](#)
- [Smallest chocolate shop campaign](#)
- [Crucial role of supermarkets in driving transformational change](#)
- [Solidaridad Cocoa Awards](#)
- [Critical perspective on Fairtrade's Living Income Reference Price \(LIRP\) levels](#)





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Cotton
- **Region & Country** - Southern Africa; Zambia
- **Pathway** - Advocate
- **Themes** - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion; Decent Work; Fair Value Distribution
- **Consortium Lead** - TrustAfrica
- **Partners** - Cotton Association of Zambia; Cotton Board of Zambia; Ministry of Labour and Social Security; International Labour Organization; Solidaridad

Harnessing the Power of Collective Action to Foster Equality and Equal Ownership in Zambia's Cotton Sector

In 2025, Zambia marked a turning point in its cotton sector with the launch of the Decent Work Guidelines for the cotton sub-sector under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme. Developed in partnership with TrustAfrica, the International Labour Organization, the Ministry of Labour, the Cotton Board of Zambia and multiple stakeholders, the Guidelines fill a long-standing gap in labour regulation. These Guidelines establish firm standards for fair wages, social protection, safety and farmers' rights, and aim to revitalize Zambia's cotton industry by aligning policy, labour practices and supply chain inclusivity. In addition to the guidelines, the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme has strengthened the Cotton Association of Zambia's advocacy power,

advanced the reform of the Cotton Act and catalyzed women's leadership across the supply chain.

Women's cooperatives at the heart of the transformation

Zambia's cotton farmers, long marginalized in a liberalized market dominated by ginners, are reclaiming power through organization and collective action. For decades, farmers, especially women, had no voice in price-setting or policy decisions. Yet, between 2021 and 2025, the balance began to shift, thanks to farmer-led advocacy supported by TrustAfrica and its collaborating partners Solidaridad, We Effect and the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute.



At the heart of this transformation are women's cooperatives. Once confined to unpaid labour and care work, women are now producers, entrepreneurs and advocates shaping the national discourse on fair value distribution.

Cooperatives such as Tuswayane Cooperative in Choma, Temwani Women Club in Petauke, the Handloom and Textile Technologies Association of Zambia and others in Eastern and Southern provinces are adding value in multiple ways. They engage in weaving, cottonseed oil processing, mushroom production and fabric production — creating jobs, generating income and increasing visibility for rural women.

TrustAfrica's engagement began with a capacity needs assessment of the Cotton Association of Zambia (CAZ), which revealed limited inclusion of women and weak advocacy coordination. Guided by these findings, TrustAfrica delivered a gender-responsive advocacy training using its Policy Advocacy Toolkit.

Over **80 association leaders and farmers, including 30 women**, were trained in negotiation, collective bargaining and media engagement. TrustAfrica also supported the Cotton Association in drafting a Layman's Version of the Cotton Act amendment, which prioritized farmer (and particularly women's) representation in price-setting and governance structures.

To institutionalize inclusivity, TrustAfrica and its collaborating partners facilitated the formation of a Cotton Multi-Stakeholder Platform (MSP) in 2022, bringing together farmers, ginners, traders and policymakers. The stakeholders meet regularly to deliberate on seed access, pricing transparency and extension support. Women's leaders from cooperatives sit on the MSP, ensuring that gendered experiences and concerns inform national dialogue.

Zambia's first National Decent Work Guidelines for Cotton Sub-Sector

The partnership between TrustAfrica, the Ministry of Labour and the International Labour Organization led to a landmark policy milestone: Zambia's first National Decent Work Guidelines for the Cotton Sub-sector, launched in May 2025.

"Decent work for the cotton sub-sector meant a fair living wage to all persons, whether employed formally or informally, access to social security coverage for employees and farmers and freedom to form trade unions for workers, among others."

Permanent Secretary Zechariah Luhanga at a national cotton sector dialogue in Lusaka, 2025

The guidelines embedded gender equity, labour rights and child labour prevention into national policy, and consists of six pillars:

1. Fair remuneration, including living wages and fair farmgate prices
2. Freedom of association and collective bargaining
3. Healthy and safe workplaces, including zero tolerance for child or forced labour and gender-based violence
4. Social protection, especially for seasonal and informal workers
5. Transparency and accountability
6. Capacity building and productivity

TrustAfrica's model of sub-granting the Cotton Association, rather than implementing directly, has further supported farmers and cooperatives in owning their advocacy agenda. This shift placed financial resources and decision-making power directly in farmers' hands, reinforcing local ownership and gender-balanced leadership.

Women-led cooperatives are now accessing microloans, equipment support and training, with some groups securing weaving machines and solar dryers through government and donor partnerships. Farmgate prices **improved by nearly 50% between 2022 and 2024**, and over **200 women farmers have transitioned** from seasonal labourers to cooperative entrepreneurs.





“Before, we women were just helpers on our husbands’ fields. Now we are business owners, earning income, saving in our cooperatives and speaking in national forums.”

Weaving cooperative leader from Mumbwa

Key Results and Insights

With the Ministry of Labour and Social Security at the heart of the Decent Work Guidelines development process, the cotton sector has been dubbed a pioneer in the agriculture sector and will thus receive priority inclusion in the wider Decent Work Country Programme commencing in 2026. The development process itself offers important insights on how a 10-member task team, drawn from both individual experts and institutional policy holders, utilized consultations with diverse constituencies (farmers, workers and ginners) to draft the Guidelines for adoption in one year. Sustained multi-stakeholder engagement, legal alignment, and linking decent work to broader sector goals were key to driving change.

The experience demonstrates that women’s cooperatives are not only participants but drivers of fair value reform. It also shows that evidence-based advocacy and inclusive dialogue platforms sustain progress over time. Finally, it demonstrates that local ownership through sub-granting strengthens institutional resilience and builds continuity beyond donor cycles.





However, work remains. Enforcement capacity is not yet fully scaled, as labour inspectors, extension officers and sector oversight bodies require resources and training. Measuring impact on wages, incomes and working conditions will require baseline data and monitoring systems. Ensuring that the guidelines translate into contracts, compliance and farmer/worker awareness will be crucial.

Sustainability is also an ongoing concern. Many cooperatives still depend on donor grants for equipment and lack access to government financing mechanisms such as the Constituency Development Fund. While the Cotton Association of Zambia has grown into a credible national advocate, financial reliance on external support threatens long-term continuity. Strengthening internal governance, savings systems and market linkages will be key to sustaining progress beyond project cycles.

Collective action has shifted the narrative from dependency to agency, demonstrating that gender equity and fair trade are mutually reinforcing in building a sustainable cotton future.

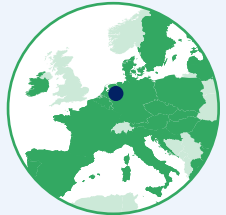
What's next?

Turning the Guidelines into reality will require a detailed implementation plan, including training for extension officers, labour inspectors, ginners and farmer groups alongside revising the Cotton Act. The Cotton Multistakeholder Platform will remain functional, advancing the implementation of the Guidelines.

The Guidelines should also be embedded into contract standards across the supply chain, with buyers and processors committing to upholding them. Piloting compliance monitoring (including grievance redress) in selected zones will help refine tools. Expanding social protection coverage to informal agricultural workers and securing funding for enforcement will be critical to ensure that the Guidelines sustainably improve lives and livelihoods across Zambia's cotton communities.

TrustAfrica and partners will consolidate these gains by strengthening women's cooperatives as engines of inclusive growth. Under the current Cotton Association of Zambia Strategic Plan, efforts will focus on developing a Farmers Network, linking women's enterprises to ethical cotton and textile markets, expanding value-addition infrastructure and securing fair finance to scale cooperatives.

Regionally, through the Eastern and Southern African Cotton Organisation, Zambia will share lessons on gender-responsive cotton governance with neighbouring countries, building regional solidarity and harnessing regional markets. Nationally, full adoption of the Cotton Act amendment and operationalization of the Price Stabilization Fund will ensure that both women and men farmers benefit equitably from the cotton economy they sustain.



HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - All
- **Region & Country** - Europe / Global
- **Pathway** - Advocate
- **Theme** - Fair Value Distribution
- **Secondary themes** - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion; Decent Work; Climate and Natural Resource Management
- **Consortium Lead** - Solidaridad
- Partners** - Fair Trade Advocacy Office, Fairtrade International, Rainforest Alliance; Women’s cooperative of cocoa farmers in Adzopé, Côte d’Ivoire; Cotton Farmers’ Forum (FONPA), Mozambique; Ankole Coffee Farmers’ Cooperative Union (ACPCU), Uganda; ASUNAFO cocoa farmers’ cooperative, Ghana; Sarawak Dayak Palm Oil Farmers Association (DOPPA), Malaysia.



Supporting sustainable supply chains through advocacy in Europe

In July 2024, the European Council and Parliament formally adopted the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), legally requiring companies to identify, prevent and mitigate human rights and environmental risks in their supply chains. Thanks in part to advocacy by Solidaridad and partners (implemented by Solidaridad under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme), the directive recognizes the right to a living income as a binding human right. While companies cannot single-handedly fix global

poverty, the directive marked a systemic shift where corporate accountability regarding smallholder interests (m/f) moved from voluntary Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to a binding legal requirement for companies across the EU. Sadly, the CSDDD has since been incorporated into the Omnibus package, substantially reducing the number of companies that need to comply with this directive. Nevertheless, the advocacy by Solidaridad and partners over the past years has achieved important milestones.





- Adoption of **UNGP** and **OECD Guidelines**: Protect, Respect and Remedy; June 2011.
- The Cocoa Coalition of companies and NGOs publishes a joint **position paper**; December 2019
- With **Changing Gear** Solidaridad calls on policy makers to adopt a smart mix of voluntary and mandatory measures; July 2020.
- First public consultation by the European Commission; July - October 2020.
- First **EU proposal for CSDDD**; 23 February 2022.
- **Visit from African and Asian farmers** to EU Parliament; 26 January 2023.
- **Adoption of CSDDD**; April 2024.
- EU elections: June 2024.
- **Omnibus 1**; December 2025.

Advocating for a 'smart mix' of measures

In collaboration with partners, Solidaridad has been advocating for a 'smart mix' of measures for several years, including both mandatory and voluntary measures to foster due diligence practices in international trade. Recognizing that voluntary measures were slow and limited in impact, in 2020 Solidaridad issued a call through the '**Changing Gear**' initiative, urging policymakers to also implement mandatory measures to protect human rights and environmental standards.

This call resonated widely, reinforcing broader support for stronger legislation. Some companies openly requested legislation, recognizing that without a level playing field, they cannot solve problems in their own supply chains. The **Cocoa Coalition**, a consortium of cocoa and chocolate companies and several civil society organizations, including Solidaridad, has been instrumental in advocating for these changes.





The initiation of CSDDD in Brussels

The first public consultation on Sustainable Corporate Governance by the European Commission ran from July to October 2020, attracting a substantial response. The process ultimately led to the European Commission's **first proposal** for the Corporate Social Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) in February 2022. The dossier immediately drew significant attention.

Recognizing the scale of this lobbying, Solidaridad strategically joined forces with an existing network in Brussels, composed of the Fair Trade Advocacy Office, Fairtrade International and Rainforest

Alliance. This close cooperation amplifies the voices of farmers and workers outside Europe, ensuring policymakers can hear directly from those most affected.

Amplifying the voices of farmers at EU Parliament

On January 26, 2023, **6 farmers' representatives from Africa and Asia visited the European Parliament** at the invitation of MEPs Heidi Hautala (Greens) and Christophe Hansen (EPP). Each farmer representative highlighted the same point: **improving farmers' incomes is essential to building sustainable supply chains.**

"Smallholders produce a third of the world's food supply, but they remain some of the most marginalized actors in global value chains," said Heidi Hautala, in response to the farmers. "The proposed CSDDD is an opportunity to tackle this issue and contribute to decent livelihoods for smallholders. It must, in particular, ensure that companies take their responsibility to assess and address the impacts of their purchasing practices, including the price they pay to producers, to improve the incomes of smallholders."

At this Parliamentary discussion, Christophe Hansen agreed that it's important not to exclude anyone in international chains, and that smallholder farmers should receive adequate support, adding that good cooperation should facilitate enforcement of the rules.



"If there is child labour, farmers are blamed. If there is forced labour, the farmers did it. Deforestation? It's the farmers."

Gyinayeh Daniel Amponsah, Union President of Asunafo Cocoa Farmers (Ghana), shared at the EU parliament

Although the CSDDD has since been incorporated into the **Omnibus package**, the advocacy by Solidaridad and partners over the past years has achieved important milestones. Securing recognition of smallholder interests in EU-level discussions, influencing the legislature and ensuring that farmers' voices were heard at the highest policy levels are impressive feats, but there remains work to be done.



Results & Insights

In April 2024, the European Parliament voted in favour of the CSDDD. This landmark piece of legislation made it mandatory for large companies in the EU to address human rights and environmental impacts across their operations and global supply chains. This version strengthened requirements for meaningful stakeholder engagement, which is crucial for impactful human rights and environmental due diligence. Solidaridad has consistently advocated for Responsible Procurement Practices and ensuring that earning a living income is possible for smallholder farmers. We celebrated the inclusion of these points in the final directive.

Key priorities of our continuing advocacy work include recognizing Living Wage and Living Income as binding human rights, addressing the impacts of companies' purchasing practices, and ensuring that disengagement from suppliers occurs only as a last resort and responsibly.

The launch of the Omnibus package

In June 2024, elections for the EU Parliament brought new political headwinds for themes like human rights and sustainability. The new European Commission launched a series of **Omnibus deregulation packages** that made major changes. With the reelection of Trump in the White House, the headwinds turned into a storm, putting the sustainability agenda under siege.

“We are witnessing a rollback of years of progress. Landmark regulatory frameworks —such as the CSDDD— are not just being postponed; they are being actively weakened with the **false claim** of strengthening the European economy. We cannot accept a future where essential corporate accountability is dismantled.”

Boukje Theeuwes, head of the policy influencing team at Solidaridad Europe

Claims that human rights due diligence imposes a cost burden or undermines the competitiveness of European companies are contradicted by evidence. Both a recent **UNDP analysis** and a **World Benchmarking Alliance discussion paper** argue that strong human rights performance enhances business competitiveness, return on assets and operational resilience—demonstrating that profitability and purpose are mutually supportive.

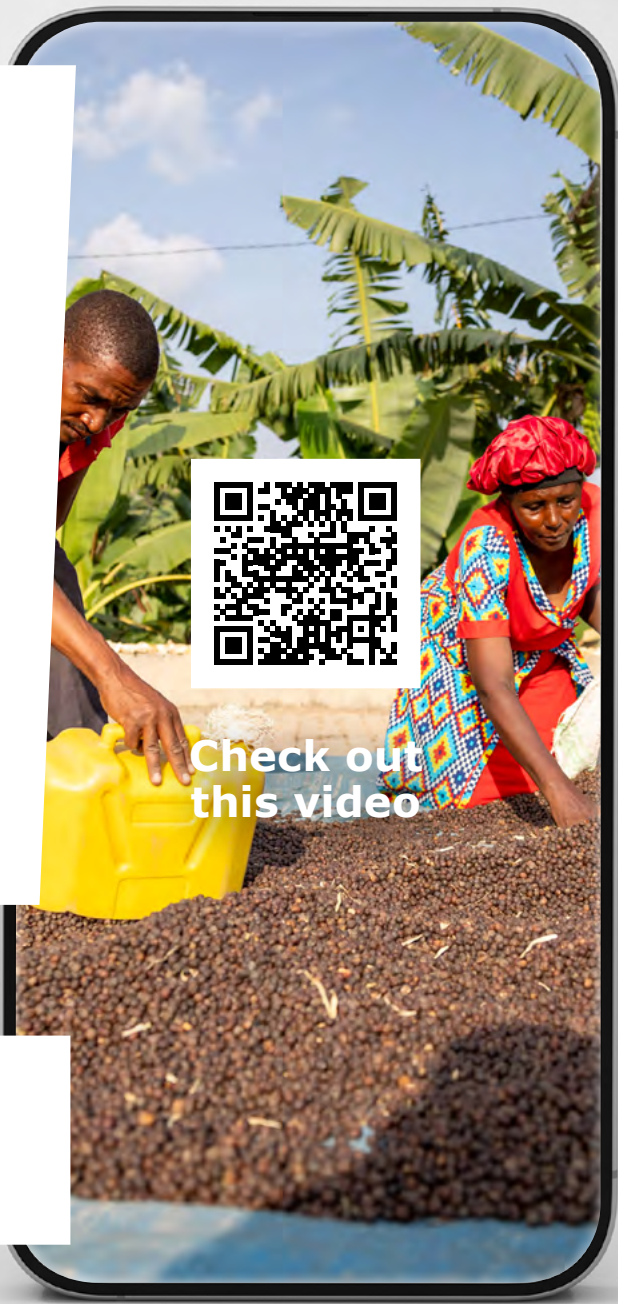
What's next?

With the Omnibus adopted, transposition of the CSDDD into national law across EU member states has begun. Solidaridad will now focus on supporting national implementation and enforcement to ensure that the directive delivers real improvements in the living and working conditions of millions of smallholder farmers and workers worldwide.

CASE STUDY Chapter 2

Accelerate Disruptive Innovations





Check out
this video

Our work with RECLAIM Sustainability! included enhancing and optimizing the bargaining power of farmers, miners and workers. Various initiatives in the programme leveraged scalable supply chain innovations, like digital traceability tools, new ownership models and regenerative farming. These initiatives have demonstrated how equity and sustainability can coexist, paving the way for systemic change in global trade.



**RESPONSIBLE
PRIVATE SECTOR**



**SUPPORTIVE
PUBLIC SECTOR**



**VIBRANT AND STRONG
CIVIL SOCIETY**

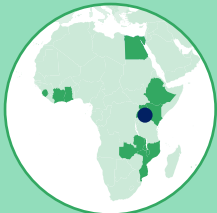


**STRENGTHENING
CIVIL SOCIETY**

Over the period 2021-2025, we have achieved:*

- **1,092,321** farmers, miners and workers with improved bargaining position through equitable access to (digital) market intelligence or as a result of new and innovative business models
- **1,104,740** farmers, miners and workers using the developed tools and business models being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment
- **76** tools and business models developed and being tested for sourcing, production, trade and investment
- **280** private sector partners engaged to co-design, test and promote new tools and business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment
- **223** other non private sector partners (knowledge, public, CSOs, others) engaged in co-design, test and promote new tools or business models for sourcing, production, trade and investment

**These figures are preliminary final numbers for 2021-2025.*



HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Coffee
- **Region & Country** - East Africa
- Uganda
- **Pathway** - Accelerate
- **Theme** - Fair value distribution
- **Consortium Lead** - Fairfood
- **Partners** - Ankole Coffee Producers Cooperative Union (ACPCU), Solidaridad East & Central Africa, Enabel

Advancing traceability and sustainability in Uganda's coffee sector:

Turning compliance into opportunity for Uganda's coffee farmers

From pilot to practice: Uganda's farmers embrace digital traceability

As new sustainability and due diligence regulations come into effect, coffee farmers in Uganda face fresh challenges with compliance. A cooperative union in the country has worked on digitizing their supply chain to enhance transparency with support from Fairfood and Solidaridad under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme. What began as a 50-farmer pilot is now extending to 1,500 farmers, a clear sign of the union's commitment to inclusive, tech-driven transparency.

Digitizing the first mile: a learning journey with ACPCU

Uganda is the fourth-largest producer of Robusta coffee in the world, with 80% of its exports bound for Europe. As new regulations take effect, coffee producers and exporters face mounting pressure to comply or risk losing access to global markets. Since 2022, Fairfood and Solidaridad have worked with cooperatives and EU buyers to co-develop practical digital tools that bridge compliance and inclusion. Building on Fairfood's foundational traceability innovation, the **Trace platform**, the





partnership focused on strengthening **first-mile digitization**; enabling cooperatives to record transactions, trace coffee flows, and make farmer data visible in the supply chain.

An initial pilot with Ankole Coffee Producers Cooperative Union (ACPCU), a farmer-owned exporter that comprises 32 primary societies, became a central focus for advancing first-mile digitization.

“We are offering all information according to the cooperative, and we expect these efforts to be appreciated through better prices. But also, we expect that eventually the cooperative will be able to access transparent information from the roasters, from the buyers and especially the consumers,” says Vincent Mushabe, farmer (and Chair of a cooperative associated with ACPCU) in Nyeibingo, Ankole region.

In 2024, Fairfood and ACPCU piloted two technologies designed to make traceability practical and accessible. The first, Fairfood’s Farmer Card, is an offline system that provides proof of payment to farmers who lack smartphones or bank accounts. The Due Diligence Dashboard, later developed under the GIZ-funded Due Diligence Fund, integrates geolocation and certification data to help ACPCU demonstrate EUDR compliance and broader sustainability efforts.

The result: streamlined data export for buyers and auditors, improved transparency, and reduced administrative burden for cooperatives.

By the end of 2024:

- Geolocation coverage expanded from **1,200 to 12,847 farmer records**
- **50 farmers** tested the Farmer Card system
- Transactions were recorded offline and linked to cooperative data systems across Kyagundu and Nyeibingo societies

Due to the pilot’s success, ACPCU is now working with Fairfood to scale up digitization further. With new funding from Enabel, the cooperative will extend the tools to 1,500 more farmers.



“Digitization offers an opportunity to leverage paper data as fuel for sustainable sourcing and consumption.”

Derrick Komwangi, project manager at ACPCU





Technology is not an end in itself, but a tool for inclusion

Coffee farmers are often excluded from digital supply chain systems due to lack of smartphones, internet access, or formal financial accounts. The Farmer Card was specifically designed to address this gap by enabling offline transaction recording and farmer verification, ensuring that farmers without digital infrastructure can still participate in traceable and compliant supply chains.

This approach enables inclusion in three important ways:

- **Access to compliant markets**
With growing EU due diligence requirements, farmers risk exclusion if supply chains cannot demonstrate traceability. Digitization allows cooperatives like ACPCU to maintain market access for thousands of smallholders.
- **Verification of transactions and payments**
Farmers receive proof of recorded transactions

through the Farmer Card system, increasing transparency around volumes sold and payments received.

- **Stronger position in value chain discussions**
When transaction and farm data are recorded digitally, cooperatives gain better visibility into production volumes, farmer participation, and supply chain flows. This strengthens their ability to engage buyers with verified data.

By combining open-source innovation with cooperative ownership of the data systems, Fairfood ensures that the technology remains accessible, adaptable, and useful for farmers. The Uganda pilot proved that small-scale digital tools can make complex due diligence processes practical, even in low-connectivity environments - and, more importantly, that fairness must be considered from the design stage when it comes to truly inclusive innovations.

By pairing Farmer Cards with a digital dashboard, ACPCU gained visibility across its supply chain while reducing administrative costs. The project also demonstrated that compliance efforts can serve as entry points for farmer inclusion when data systems are co-designed with cooperatives.

Key insight: digitization and fair value distribution go hand in hand. When farmers can verify transactions and trace their coffee to global buyers, transparency becomes a foundation for equity.



What's next?

In 2025, Fairfood and ACPCU expanded digitization to 1,500 farmers under the new Enabel-funded project. The focus will be on scaling the payment system, expanding geolocation coverage, and integrating transactions and income data to link traceability with sustainable livelihood strategies. In Uganda, the same tools are now being tested with other partners, such as the trader Ugacof-Sucafina and specialty buyer Wakuli, advancing the global effort to make sustainability and compliance work for farmers.

Learn more online

- [Empowering Ugandan producers through RECLAIM Sustainability!](#)
- [Fairfood x ACPCU partnership announcement](#)
- [Video: Advancing traceability and transparency in Uganda's coffee sector](#)





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Tea
- **Region & Country** - Asia; Indonesia
- **Pathway** - Accelerate
- **Theme** - Gender Equality & Social Inclusion
- **Secondary theme** - Fair value distribution
- **Consortium lead** - Business Watch Indonesia
- **Partners** - Solidaridad Asia, Paguyuban Tani Lestari

Teh nDeso:

Advancing women's livelihoods through their role as tea micro-entrepreneurs

Women play a crucial role in the Indonesian tea sector, yet they often face low wages and minimal recognition for their work. The Teh nDeso initiative changes this by supporting rural women as micro-entrepreneurs, and raising the profile of smallholder tea producers.

Women are the heartbeat of the tea harvest. Their work directly affects the quality of the final product, yet they earn little. Beyond the fields, they juggle household duties and childcare.

At the same time, smallholders struggle selling their tea through middlemen, which significantly cuts into earnings. This reliance leaves them vulnerable to unfair pricing, and the lack of transparency in these transactions deepens their economic disadvantage.

The producer organization Paguyuban Tani Lestari, which represents over 40,000 smallholders, has worked since 2016 to help their members improve farming practices, and collectively market their tea. The support of Solidaridad and Business Watch Indonesia under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme has strengthened the position of the organization in establishing the Teh nDeso brand, owned by Paguyuban Tani Lestari.

It facilitated the participation of tea smallholders in multi-stakeholder forums and assisted them in developing their networks in the supply chain, government and business. Furthermore, the Teh nDeso campaign on smallholder tea products has led to strengthening the presence of tea smallholders in the supply chain and gaining





support from consumers. The brand brings high-quality tea directly to consumers, generates employment opportunities for women, and reflects a commitment to inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods.

The Teh nDeso business model elevates visibility and market access for smallholders, while creating entrepreneurial opportunities for rural women.

In the model, women receive training as local tea micro-entrepreneurs (*micropreneurs*) selling packaged smallholder tea directly to neighbors and nearby markets. Unlike formal factory jobs, Teh nDeso allows women to work at their own pace and schedule, balancing tea-related work with family duties.



“People now respect me differently. I am no longer seen as a mere farm worker. ... I can now afford and ensure a decent education for my children.”

Watini, a farmer and mother

The initiative strengthens the position of smallholders in the market and helps women to achieve tangible personal gains, both economic and social. Direct selling increases income, and as their role becomes more visible, they gain respect in their communities and families. They're no longer seen as laborers but as entrepreneurs who contribute to the local economy.

Watini, a farmer and mother, increased her monthly income by nearly 30 euros after joining the initiative. The extra earnings help her cover household expenses and repay debt.

Some impact numbers

- Since 2022, smallholder tea sales have grown from 10 metric tonnes per year to over 180 metric tonnes.
- Farmer incomes have risen by 15-25%.
- Over 900 women and smallholders are selling tea products in their neighborhoods and in local shops.

What's next?

The Teh nDeso initiative exemplifies a commodity-driven approach to rural empowerment, rooted in community ownership and inclusive participation. The model has the potential to reach over 40,000 smallholder tea producers through Paguyuban Tani Lestari's network.

Although domestic demand for smallholder tea is growing, broader distribution remains limited and needs strategic investment in retail access, digital



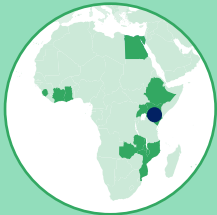
marketing, and policy engagement to increase reach and impact.

Whilst the brand is already on the market, it remains important to support the growth of this model. Some important points include developing modern management systems related to knowledge transfer among women micro-entrepreneurs, as well as increasing their number and fostering their skills and knowledge as micro-entrepreneurs. With targeted support, the business model could become a practical solution for inclusive growth with the potential to extend to other sectors, such as coffee, cocoa, and spices.

Learn more online

- [Teh nDeso connects tea farmers in Indonesia, Solidaridad Network](#)
- [Teh nDeso website](#)
- 'Brewing Change with Teh nDeso'. The Teh nDeso story in the Partos publication: [“The Power of Partnerships: 27 Stories of Civil Society Driving Change”](#)





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Africa Food (Potato)
- **Region & Country** - East Africa; Kenya
- **Pathway** - Accelerate
- **Theme** - Fair value distribution
- **Secondary theme** - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
- **Consortium lead** - Solidaridad
- **Partners** - National Potato Council of Kenya (NPCK)

Digital Innovations

For trade, digitizing Kenya's potato trade to deliver fair prices and structured markets

Potato farmers in Kenya have long faced unfair pricing, limited access to accurate market data, and exploitation by brokers. To help farmers better position themselves, a new digital platform launched under RECLAIM Sustainability! Programme rebalances market power and has created new opportunities for young people.

According to the **National Potato Council of Kenya**, there are an estimated one million potato farmers in Kenya, the majority of them operating on less than one hectare of land. These small-scale farmers are often subjected to unstructured markets, which leave them at the mercy of the market with little say in pricing decisions. Even though potatoes are the country's second most

important crop, small-scale farmers have been invisible in formal trade systems.

Building a better system

The National Potato Council of Kenya (NPCK) knew that a better system was possible using digital tools; the challenge lay in creating an accessible, inclusive approach that could reach as many farmers as possible given the varying degrees of connectivity and technology.

In 2021, the NPCK and the RECLAIM Sustainability! Programme launched the first iteration of **Viazi Soko**, a digital platform comprising a Web-based portal, a mobile app, and USSD platform that allows farmers without internet access to use the tool via a cellphone. The platform relies on farmer-reported





“I no longer wait for brokers to dictate prices, I now receive a price alert before harvest and only list my produce when I see a good offer.”

Jane, Farmer, Nyandarua

prices, transport loss assessments, and buyer procurement data to help farmers make better choices about when to sell.

The tool has become an indispensable resource for improving market access with its buyer–farmer matching system. Farmers can also organize on the platform to support aggregation, which lowers transport costs and reduces post-harvest losses.



Generating employment opportunities

Young people are at the center of this shift helping farmers access the platform. As Viazi Soko Digital Champions, they support farmer onboarding, quality control, and digital order processing, earning commissions with each transaction. This has created a new digital service economy, where young people find employment without leaving rural areas.

“I never imagined I could earn from agriculture without farming. As a Viazi Soko Digital Champion, I help farmers process orders and get paid per transaction. I became part of the market system, not just an observer”, says Daniel, 24, Digital Trade Agent Nakuru.

Growing the approach

Since its launch, the platform has expanded into a full-service ecosystem, offering access to certified seed suppliers, potato-specific fertilizers, approved agrochemicals, soil testing, mechanization, and spray service providers, ensuring farmers have access to inputs from verified partners. The platform also provides county governments and farmer cooperatives with market intelligence dashboards, including trade volumes and price trends, that can help inform local policy.

To date, over 158,000 farmers are actively using Viazi Soko, earning KES 1,600–2,000 per 50kg bag, nearly double previous farm-gate prices. As broker dependency falls, digital trade records are influencing county trade decisions, and Viazi Soko

is emerging as national digital infrastructure with potential for traceability, credit scoring, and export readiness.

“Our cooperative moved 38 tonnes in one market week without a broker. We negotiated like traders, not desperate farmers”, says Kahuru, Chairperson, Farmers Cluster

Viazi Soko is more than technology, it is a platform for justice, dignity, and innovation, proving that when farmers are digitized, they are recognized as equal partners in trade.

What’s next?

Viazi Soko has succeeded because it addressed a core market injustice that excluded farmers from price discovery and more formalized trade networks. However, opportunities remain to grow the platform. Greater integration with financial institutions could accelerate credit scoring, and county-level adoption could formalize digital receipts as trade records. Stronger women-focused onboarding and expanded digital literacy among elderly farmers could expand its reach dramatically.

Learn more online

- [NPCK Viazisoko \(official platform portal\)](#)
- [About Viazi Soko. The Digital Platform Empowering Potato Farmers in Kenya](#)
- [Media Publication](#)
- [Viazi Soko Flyer 1](#)
- [Viazi Soko Flyer 2](#)





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Coffee
- **Region & Country** - Latin America; Honduras
- **Pathway** - Accelerate
- **Theme** - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
- **Consortium lead** - Solidaridad
- **Partners** - PROEXO, AMUCC, IHCAFE

Café de Mujeres Brisas:

Women farmers innovating coffee in Honduras

A coffee brand in Honduras is making waves, distinguished not only for its flavor profile but by the 245 women who own it. “Café de Mujeres Brisas” is a specialty coffee brand borne of partnership between women coffee farmers, the social enterprise PROEXO and Solidaridad.

The coffee brand took root following a knowledge exchange in Colombia, organized by Solidaridad with support from GIZ and the Honduran Coffee Institute (IHCAFE). Rather than the entire group traveling, a delegation of representatives from the Honduran women farmers traveled to witness the operations of AMUCC, a successful women’s smallholder association.

These representatives toured farms and processing facilities, absorbing vital lessons on

everything from coffee selection and cupping to the financial management of revolving funds. Upon their return, this knowledge was shared and implemented locally, directly benefiting a group of 52 women farmers who applied these insights to build and launch their own brand.

“The importance of these exchanges lies in the opportunity to learn directly from AMUCC’s experience, history, challenges, achievements, and hear about the perspectives that shed light on the actions that can be implemented in our organizations.”

PROEXO staff member



Inspired by the Colombian model, the women farmers and the PROEXO team returned to Honduras ready to implement new ways to raise their profile. The catalyst was a workshop titled “Women’s Business Empowerment Day,” where producers explored complex topics such as blockchain technology, certification, and digital traceability.

The workshop spurred the idea of launching a women’s coffee brand called “Café de Mujeres Brisas”. Incorporating some of what they learned in the event, the women insisted on packaging that featured QR codes, allowing consumers to scan and trace the origin of the beans to connect the drinker directly to the grower’s story. The brand officially launched in October 2023.



Women find a place in the coffee market

Café de Mujeres Brisas moved quickly from concept to commercial reality, securing a contract to supply coffee to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) for an entire year. For the organizers, however, the brand represents something far more valuable than a simple commodity. The women receive a status as leaders and innovators within their communities.

Today, PROEXO is looking toward the future, seeking funding to establish a revolving fund model similar to the one observed in Colombia to further promote entrepreneurship among its members. By organizing as a collective, these smallholders have secured access to field advisories and fair markets that value inclusion. “Café de Mujeres Brisas” now stands as a testament to the power of shared knowledge, promising increased incomes and long-term stability for women, their families, and their communities.

What’s next?

Since its initial success after launching in 2023, the women’s coffee can now be found in the United States, Canada, and Europe. Looking ahead, the organisation plans to deepen market linkages, enhance digital traceability and certification processes, and continue positioning women producers as leaders in the specialty coffee sector.

“We launched the brand with them because, for us, the smallholders are the protagonists. The brand for us is a women’s empowerment platform that is created with the vision to be a support for women smallholders.”

PROEXO staff member

Learn more online

- <https://www.proexo.org/brisas/>
- <https://solidaridadlatam.org/news/legado-reforcemos-sostenibilidad-cafe-honduras/>
- <https://solidaridadlatam.org/news/cafe-brisas-empoderamiento-honduras-mercados-eeuu-canada/>
- <https://www.solidaridadnetwork.org/news/making-coffee-work-for-small-scale-farmers/>
- <https://www.laprensa.hn/economia/marketingempresas/liderando-con-innovacion-y-sostenibilidad-el-impacto-de-proexo-en-la-caficultura-hondurena-JO21859099>
- <https://www.solidaridadnetwork.org/story/meet-scarlette-zeron-coffee-innovator-in-honduras/>
- <https://www.laprensa.hn/economia/marketingempresas/mujeres-proexo-esenciales-inspiradoras-industria-cafe-PG15643738>



HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Cotton and Textiles
- **Region & Country** - Asia; Indonesia
- **Pathway** - Accelerate Disruptive Innovations
- **Theme** - Decent Work
- **Secondary theme** - Fair value distribution
- **Consortium lead** - Business Watch Indonesia

Digital Innovation: KUBU, a collaboration for labour

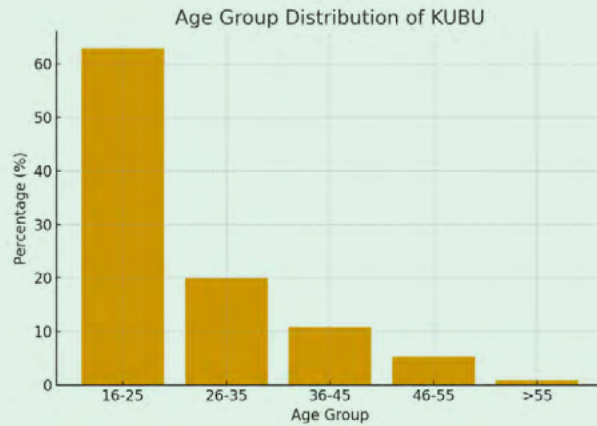
In February 2025, Indonesia's unemployment rate approached 5%, the highest in Southeast Asia. Behind this number lies a stark reality: the steady rise of informal workers. As formal job options dwindle, workers are forced into informal employment. The KUBU platform launched under RECLAIM Sustainability! is providing solutions.

Currently, over 86.5 million Indonesians — nearly 6 in 10 workers — earn their living in the informal sector. The textile and garment industries have been particularly hit hard due to declining exports, rising imports, and thrifting fashion trends. A similar story can be found across other sectors; for many learning new skills is the only way to compete.

This reality led to the development of KUBU, a digital and in-person platform, created to promote job opportunities and skills development. What began as a response to the crisis in the textile and garment sector has grown into an employment platform that connects workers and employers from every background. The pilot has shown strong potential in providing new hope to workers.

KUBU: Connecting Worker to Work

KUBU was designed to strengthen collaboration, communication, and solidarity among workers through social media (SosmedKU), online forums (GroupKU), a job portal (LokerKU), and team management features (TeamKU). KUBU's user base comprises workers, job seekers and employers, with young job seekers being the largest demographic (82%).



“I was initially interested in KUBU because of LokerKU as I was looking for a job. But as I explored KUBU further, both through the app and the website, I found plenty of valuable information that has really benefited me.”

Daniel, 27, young worker, KUBU user

Since launching in app stores in May 2023, KUBU has grown beyond expectations. The job portal quickly became the most popular feature with more than 10,000 jobs posted by mid-2025, and 63% of registered users actively engaged on the platform.

Detailed daily job listings keep users engaged, and once they find a suitable role, a single-click sends their resume to employers. The forums offer spaces for women workers to share workplace experiences and solidarity. KUBU also features soft-skill courses that help strengthen job skills, update users on job market trends, and more.

Daniel was a casual worker in Bali, but had to leave his job and move closer to his family in Java, where he found himself competing with millions of job seekers. At first, he thought it would be difficult to find a job that matched his expectations but KUBU helped ease his worries. His new job makes good use of his strong digital communication skills.

Though KUBU was developed for workers in the textile and garment sector, it has found a much larger audience, helping build the voice of workers in the region. In Indonesian, “kubu” means ally, and that spirit is the foundation of KUBU.id’s mission: to stand as a companion for workers in pursuit of a better life, rights, and well-being.



What’s next?

The future potential of KUBU lies in reaching Generation Z users who will dominate the majority of the workforce in coming years. This generation enters the workforce in an increasingly competitive job market that demands up-to-date and relevant skills. The platform also helps build greater awareness and understanding of labour rights and the role of unions. With greater resources, KUBU has the capacity to address the needs of Gen Z, and help employers navigate the challenges of engaging this generation.

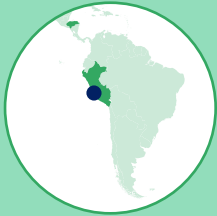
Learn more online

- <https://kubu.id/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/1b1KZ69NYzk>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zY5wmoa6_3U





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HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Gold
- **Region & Country** - Latin America; Peru
- **Pathway** - Accelerate
- **Theme** - Decent Work
- **Consortium lead** - Solidaridad
- **Partners** - Minera Ores, Swiss Better Gold Association (SBGA), Caja Los Andes, Caja Ica, Ministry of Energy and Mines (MINEM)

REVALORO and building pathways for coexistence:

New mining models with artisanal miners in Peru

In Peru’s gold sector, large-scale mining exists side-by-side with artisanal and small-scale operations, often competing for territory. RECLAIM Sustainability! has helped redefine how the private sector engages with this reality to show how collaboration can yield viable gold supply chains rooted in transparency, inclusiveness and shared value.

Across Latin America, relations between large-scale mining (LSM) operations and artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM) have long been marked by tension and polarization. It is common to see large-scale operations seeking to evict small-scale informal operators from their concessions, yet surging gold prices and limited opportunities for income in rural areas continue to attract thousands of families to ASM.





Under RECLAIM Sustainability!, Solidaridad is helping create a new paradigm of collaboration to increase decent opportunities for ASM that benefit the entire sector. The programme shows how responsible private-sector engagement can foster peaceful coexistence, legal compliance, and shared prosperity.

Since 2021, Solidaridad has piloted an innovative coexistence model in partnership with Minera Ores, a mid-scale gold mining operation in southern Peru. By integrating ASM operators into formal value chains these miners are able to connect to broader markets under clear social, environmental, and safety standards.

Solidaridad worked with partners to build avenues for sustained dialogue, technical assistance, and legal guidance that grew into a formalized collaboration between Ores and over 70 ASM groups operating inside and around its concession. This formalization process reduced tensions, and strengthened both safety and dignity at work.

As a result, miners gained access to tailored financial services, accident insurance coverage, and performance-based incentives. They also received rescue training and were able to establish rescue brigades capable of responding rapidly to emergencies.



For Minera Ores, the initiative consolidated a responsible sourcing model, enabling certification of due diligence practices, integration of formalized ASM into its supply chain, access to the Swiss export market, and price premiums for responsibly produced gold. Since 2021, Minera Ores has expanded its ore collection by 20%, generating an additional 260 kilograms of gold annually.

By fostering dialogue between Ores, ASM organizations, and the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MINEM), the initiative demonstrates that trust, transparency, and shared value can turn coexistence into opportunity.

“Through this collaboration, we proved that responsible ASM engagement is not only possible — it creates real value. Working with Solidaridad helped us transform our relationship with artisanal miners, recognizing them as strategic partners in building a profitable, transparent, and people-centered business.”

Sergio Samaniego, Minera Ores



Results

- 40 artisanal operations improved productivity, safety, and governance and 30 new small-scale mines were established under formal agreements.
- 600+ jobs are now sustained across new and existing sites offering jobs that are safer, more productive & dignified.
- Three rescue brigades were established and trained.
- 17 ASM operations accessed loans totaling USD 120,000, connecting with 20 formal providers of equipment and services.
- 70 ASM operations obtained affordable accident insurance for 600 workers.



What's Next?

Minera Ores has consolidated this model into its core corporate policy, incorporating all developed services into its framework for supplier development and responsible sourcing. The company now offers prepayments and loans to ASM operations, requires insurance coverage for the ASM workers, and has fully integrated performance-based incentives to enhance ESG performance across its ASM supply network. The collaboration has also attracted interest from the Swiss market along with support from the Swiss Better Gold Association.

The integration of ASM operators can serve as an example for other mid- to large-scale mining operations. Solidaridad is currently developing a Practical Guide on Productive Coexistence providing actionable guidance for replication in similar contexts.

Learn more online

- [Making the case for financial inclusion for a safe & responsible small-scale mining sector in Peru](#)
- [Meet Jony Rodríguez: a miner, an entrepreneur](#)
- [Film: PrestaMAPE: Enabling financial inclusion for artisanal and small-scale miners](#)





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Textiles
- **Region & Country** - Asia; Bangladesh
- **Pathway** - Accelerate
- **Themes** - Climate & Natural Resource Management, Decent Work
- **Secondary theme** - Gender Equality & Social Inclusion
- **Consortium lead** - Solidaridad **Partners** - Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), relevant government bodies, and trade unions.

Environment, economics, inclusivity:

A look at tangible impacts in Bangladesh's textile industry

This RECLAIM Sustainability! initiative is transforming Bangladesh's textile sector by tackling pollution, water, chemicals and energy inefficiency, and fostering worker well-being. Through policy dialogue and capacity building, the project promotes green practices and fosters gender inclusivity. It has also been working pro-actively towards preparing the country's readiness to meet human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD) expectations from European market actors ¹.

Environmental transformation vs. economic viability

Bangladesh's immense textile and apparel sector is a major engine of its economy, making the country the world's third-largest fashion exporter (after EU and China), and the second biggest textiles production country. With ongoing European Union (EU) policy regulations, such as the Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence (HREDD), the industry must pivot from voluntary green efforts to institutionalized, financially attractive

¹ The Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) has been a significant driver in this process. However, what had begun as a landmark regulatory framework to ensure sustainable global supply chains reaching the European market, has been considerably weakened in the European Parliament in the course of 2025. Nevertheless, Solidaridad and partners continue to advocate for strong and sustainable human rights and environmental due diligence requirements. Read more: <https://www.solidaridadnetwork.org/news/csddd-dismantled-false-dilemma-undermines-corporate-accountability/>





sustainability. Solidaridad's textiles project under RECLAIM Sustainability! has been spearheading this transformation, proving that environmental compliance and economic viability are two sides of the same cloth for sustaining the business viability of the fashion industry.

Historically, the sector's large-scale consumption of water and chemicals has created an unsustainable environmental footprint. This project began by



"The changes we're driving in our operations are designed to create value for both the environment and the business. Sustainability isn't optional; it's a responsibility. We must act now to ensure our industry operates with integrity, accountability, and a long-term vision."

Ahmed Ali, Lead – Operational Sustainability, Q Collection

convening high-level, multi-stakeholder dialogues involving government, industry associations like Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), and civil society. These discussions established a crucial policy foundation: adopting cleaner technologies and increasing resource efficiency aren't just compliance costs—they are a competitive advantage.

The core success of the project lies in translating this policy shift into tangible action at the factory level. By focusing on resource efficiency and cost savings, the project made the environmental imperative financially compelling.

Cleaner Production and Chemical Management

The chemical management training modules developed by the project are changing the use of biodegradable and environmentally friendly chemicals for safer and more sustainable and circular production practices. Four leading companies—SQ, Gramtech, Aboni, and 4A Yarn Dyeing—adopted advanced chemical management systems. This resulted in a significant reduction in harmful chemical use, directly addressing both environmental pollution and worker safety. The financial incentive is clear: Bangladesh spends billions on chemical imports, and the project's approach tackles the inefficiency that wastes a

large portion of these costly resources during dyeing. This success spurred BGMEA to draft a new Sustainability Policy for the entire industry, formally institutionalizing the need for change.

Energy Efficiency and Carbon Neutrality

The energy policy paper and round table discussion influenced industry stakeholders to adopt energy efficient industrial production to effectively reduce carbon emissions. In response to global pressure for decarbonization, ten major textile factories adopted new clean energy policies and targets. As energy costs can account for about 20% of total production expenses, investing in energy-efficient technologies and promoting cleaner options like co-generation directly lowers operational costs while aligning the industry with international climate goals and preparing for future carbon taxes.

Weaving Inclusivity: The Social Dimension of Due Diligence

This project has been championing gender and social inclusion in textiles through the development and implementation of the Gender Inclusivity Assessment Tool (GIAT) that is especially designed to identify and address the deep-rooted social norms limiting women's leadership in the textile sector. Companies like 4A Yarn Dyeing, Dosh Garments and InterFAB established operational standards at the factories involved in the project to comply with the international brands' requirements on workplace inclusivity.





“I began my career at 4A Yarn Dyeing Ltd., a sister concern of TEAM Group in September 2020, as a General Quality Inspector on the factory floor, never imagining that I could one day move into a management role. With encouragement from my supervisors, along with training opportunities and increased responsibility, I was able to grow both my skills and confidence. The company’s culture of inclusivity and commitment to giving women the same opportunities as men played a key role in my career. As a result, I was promoted to Junior Executive.

Today, I contribute not only to quality improvement but also to mentoring other women on the floor. I feel confident in my work and proud to show other women that they, too, have a future here if they continue to learn and take on greater responsibilities.”

Eva Moni, Junior Executive at 4A Yarn Dyeing Ltd.

The GIAT evaluates and enhances factory policies on technical skills, compliance, and female leadership. Recognizing that **women make up 60% of the 4-million-strong workforce**, the programme trained **2958 workers (70% female)** on productivity and leadership. This focus on empowering women into supervisory roles is a powerful step towards a more equitable, productive, and resilient workforce, ensuring that sustainability efforts positively impact workers’ livelihoods.

Meanwhile, as **automation** is reshaping the production lines, it’s essential for Bangladesh’s garment sector competitiveness. However, it is also displacing workers, with a **30.58% workforce reduction**. This necessitates a “just transition” roadmap to protect vulnerable groups (women, unskilled labourers). By partnering with civil society organizations, trade unions, and research institutes, this project has been mobilizing the political will of the government and other stakeholders to ensure that the progress doesn’t leave behind the vulnerable workers.





Impact Numbers

- **10 major factories** adopted a new **clean energy target**, setting a national precedent for green transformation.
- **4** key factories adopted cleaner processing methods through efficient chemical management (in addition to above).
- Achieved an average **15–20% reduction in chemical use**, improving effluent quality by 30% and cutting worker exposure risks.
- **3** textile factories (among the 10 specified above) implemented the Gender Inclusivity Assessment Tool and gender-sensitive training modules.
- **2,958 workers (70% women)** participated in training on **productivity, compliance, and leadership**, improving women's participation in supervisory roles (through promotion) by 25%.
- **2** major industry associations (BGMEA & BKMEA) issued formal guidance notes to members encouraging preparation for EU due diligence regulations.
- **BGMEA** formally committed to embedding chemical and energy efficiency standards into its policy framework.

Results & Insights

- This project demonstrated impact and scalability by proving that sustainability is a financially attractive prerequisite for market access and alignment with emergent policy requirements, such as the CSDDD.

Key Results & Scalability

- It secured top-down institutional commitment by integrating external mandates into BGMEA/BKMEA policy, which is the engine for industry-wide change.
- Factory-level changes in chemical and energy efficiency (e.g. co-generation) promoted circular production practices that reduced both pollution and operational costs (energy is ~20% of expenses).
- The Gender Inclusivity Assessment Tool (GIAT) fostered social due diligence, empowering women into supervisory roles to create a more resilient workforce.

What's Next?

The industry's future viability rests on successfully weaving these challenges— including green transition and inclusive work environment into its business model. The key possibility for scale lies in ensuring that institutions like BGMEA and BKMEA embrace the holistic concept of due diligence, looking at social, environmental and commercial factors at the same time; in an effort to secure Bangladesh's position as a preferred choice for sourcing of fashion products.

The unfinished opportunity for potential impact is connecting Ready Made Garment (RMG) factories, especially Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, with 'green finance' to accelerate energy-efficient technology adoption at scale. The next step in creating further impact would be the adoption

of HREDD regulation frameworks at the national level as well, facilitating a legally binding, cohesive compliance structure for the entire sector's green and social transition.

Learn more online

- [Solidaridad's EU CSDDD Workshop Attracts Attention in Apparel Sector](#)
- [How Bangladesh's Apparel Industry Can Adapt to EU Sustainability Rules](#)
- [Chemical Management Use Must Improve for Workers' Health, Safety, Pollution Control](#)
- [Adopting Energy-efficient Machines Key to Cutting Carbon Emissions](#)
- [Greening the Textile Sector in Bangladesh](#)
- <https://www.tbsnews.net/economy/rmg/automation-rmg-sector-led-3058-decline-workforce-study-1024546>





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Coffee
- **Region & Country** - Central America, Honduras; and Uganda and Sierra Leone indirectly
- **Pathway** - Accelerate
- **Theme** - Fair Value Distribution
- **Consortium lead** - Fairfood
- **Partners** - Molinos de Honduras (Volcafe Ltd.), Heifer International, Akvo Foundation

Living income for coffee farmers in Honduras: Grounding the living income agenda in real farmer data

From data to dialogue: building an inclusive path to living incomes In Honduras, Fairfood and Heifer International piloted a methodology that grounded pricing decisions in real production realities, ensuring farmers receive a fair share of the value they create. Co-developed with the help of Volcafe’s team in Honduras, then applied in Uganda and Sierra Leone, the model enabled a coffee subsidiary of the industry giant to validate and refine internal support programmes. What started as a pilot is becoming a blueprint for an industry that can no longer afford to simply guess. Under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, Fairfood partnered with the living income experts at Heifer International to foster this transition.

Grounded in data, guided by farmers

Coffee farmers in Honduras face mounting challenges, from volatile prices and rising input costs to the growing impacts of climate change. While many companies and NGOs have committed to achieving a living income for producers, translating that ambition into measurable action remains difficult.

Under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, Fairfood partnered with the living income experts at Heifer International to bridge this gap. Together, they developed a pragmatic, data-based approach to help companies and producers identify living income gaps and design targeted interventions. The methodology defines **Living Income Pricing (LIP)** and applies **Cost-Yield Estimation (CYE)**



to profile farmer groups and understand their different needs, resulting in realistic income models grounded in segmented local realities.

The first application of this joint methodology took place in partnership with **Molinos de Honduras**, a Volcafe subsidiary. Molinos opened their books: a representative sample of 272 coffee farmers in 2 regions were analysed using a combination of farm and household-level data. The study identified the main factors influencing income gaps, from productivity and farm size to fertilizer use, hired labour, and gender-related disparities. The resulting **case study** now serves as a roadmap for others looking to apply the model themselves.

Inclusive and participatory: farmers in Honduras validating the data

For **Fairfood**, inclusivity is one of the pillars of sustainability: to ensure new data systems do not create new gaps or replicate existing inequalities, the project involved making the process more inclusive and participatory. Although full farmer data ownership is not yet possible, Fairfood and Molinos organized a **Living Income Lab** in Honduras, inviting the sampled farmers to review and validate both the study's findings and the process itself. The Lab brought together sampled farmers to review and validate the study's findings. This session gave the data back to those who generated it, allowing farmers to discuss whether the results matched their lived experience and how the insights could inform practical action.

Main findings of the case study:

- **A 60% price increase is needed** to close the \$1.85/kg gap between the median farmgate price (\$3.07/kg) and the median Farmgate LIP (\$4.92/kg) — the minimum price at which a farmer can earn a living income based on their actual production costs.
- **Women farmers face a 58% higher LIP** (\$7.44/kg vs \$4.70/kg for men), driven by structural barriers in access to training, inputs, and resources. Although women were underrepresented in the sample, the disparity raised an internal alarm for the Volcafe team, and it signals a systemic failure that fair value distribution strategies must directly address.
- **Segmentation exposes where the system is failing — and where it isn't.** The disparities identified explain why a price increase alone is not a sustainable solution. CYE analysis profiled farmers into four groups by cost and productivity. Each has a different Farmgate LIP and responds differently to interventions, making it possible to direct fair pricing and support to those who need it most, rather than averaging across a diverse farmer base.
- **A 10% productivity increase reduces the LIP by 9.1%** across all segments. In high-cost segments, labour efficiency gains add further impact (up to 5.2%). In low-cost segments, income diversification — through agroforestry, beekeeping, or ecotourism — delivers equivalent or greater gains (up to 9.6%). Numbers that reinforce existing assumptions, but guided the company to address the efforts to specific groups.
- **Combining targeted interventions with fair pricing dramatically reduces income gaps.** Scenario modelling shows that aligning segment-specific support strategies with pricing interventions could reduce the overall living income gap in the sample by up to 96.6%. Around 26% of farmers already receive prices at or above their Farmgate LIP, primarily in the high-productivity, lower-cost segment.
- **The model can expand to address broader sustainability challenges.** The survey framework is now being expanded to include child labour and environmental indicators, allowing partners to analyse how regenerative agriculture practices, agroforestry, and labour dynamics affect farmer incomes. This integrated approach will help target interventions that simultaneously support living incomes, climate resilience, and social outcomes.



The solutions proposed by farmers during the Lab closely aligned with the study's recommendations. This alignment validated the company's existing **Volcafe Way** farmer support programme, which focuses on improving yields, quality, and resilience. The comparison between certified and non-certified farmers confirmed the programme's effectiveness, while also revealing where additional support is needed to help farmers withstand potential price drops.

Like many corporate sustainability programmes, the Volcafe Way had traditionally been measured through a productivity lens. Following this study, Molinos de Honduras now aims to integrate an income layer into how it tracks and reports impact, ensuring progress is measured through both production and livelihood outcomes.

"Together with Fairfood, we are developing a strategy to reach groups that have been historically left out, equipped with clear indicators to track results. [...] During the living income workshop, we saw something truly inspiring: the active participation of the producers. They understood the concept, identified their own barriers, and shared ideas on how to improve."

Andrea Moncada, Responsible for Sustainability and Special Projects at Molinos de Honduras.

The Honduras pilot showed how contextual data can make living income strategies actionable, and led to a Memorandum of Understanding signed between Fairfood and Molinos de Honduras to continue exploring ways to leverage on the initial findings. Rather than treating living income as an abstract target, the study offers a data-driven "diagnosis" that enables companies and cooperatives to identify where interventions are needed and how to measure progress over time.

The study also underscored the importance of gender-sensitive data collection, revealing that women farmers often face higher living income gaps due to structural inefficiencies. These insights are now helping to shape new approaches in other countries, emphasizing local validation and adaptive programme design.

Replicating the model

The approach is already informing new applications in **Uganda, Ghana, and India**, where partners are testing more advanced models including price simulations and intervention design. As part of the programme, a second case study from Uganda built on the learnings from Honduras and advanced it by modelling price scenarios to help farmers prepare for fluctuations while in Sierra Leone, the Ministry of Agriculture was involved in assessing regional findings and validating living income prices as a way to encourage and support investments that are grounded in data.





By combining local data, farmer participation, and company engagement, this work is setting a new standard for how the living income agenda can move from commitment to measurable change/impact.

What the data revealed. And why it matters

The Honduras pilot showed that combining Living Income Pricing (LIP) and Cost-Yield Efficiency

(CYE) profiles creates a solid foundation for evidence-based decision-making. The approach helps companies to validate their farmer support programmes against real income data, ensuring that interventions are both targeted and measurable.

The main insight: living income price cannot be reduced to static benchmarks; it can be - and should be - a practical indicator for impact measurement and pricing dialogue.



“We used to live day to day, not knowing what tomorrow would bring. Today I have a productive farm, I’m part of a Rural Savings Group, and I play an active role in my community. What I value most is the transparency and trust we’ve built with Molinos. Thanks to them, we producers have learned that with hard work and good practices, it’s possible to live with dignity from coffee.”

José Aníbal Gutiérrez García — Farmer

What’s next?

Fairfood and partners are expanding the use of this methodology to other commodities and regions beyond the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme. The following case study, from Uganda, introduces price modelling to test how income projections can inform fair pricing conversations along the supply chain. As the methodology evolves, it will continue to provide a shared evidence base for companies, cooperatives, and policymakers to design living income strategies that truly work for farmers: grounded in data, adaptable across contexts, and open-source by design.

Learn more online

- [Molinos de Honduras’ Living Income Commodity Strategy: a blueprint for sustainable sourcing](#)
- [Living Income Lab: Back to the Source](#)
- [Farmer Income Data Toolkit](#)
 - [Sierra Leone case study](#)
 - [Uganda case study](#)



Amplify the Voice of Citizenry





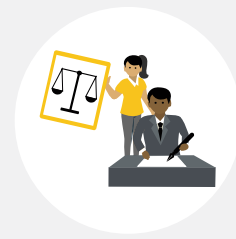
Check out this video

This part of our strategy involved mobilizing, activating and engaging citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) to change norms and influence the policy agenda regarding value distribution, natural resource management, decent work, and gender equality and social inclusion in international supply chains.

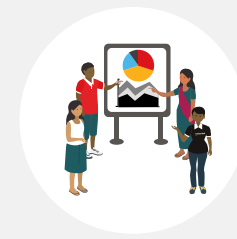
Informing and activating citizens remains essential to our work. It is vital to continue telling the story behind consumer products, for example, via various campaigns, petitions, and events, as well as supporting petitions and initiatives by other CSOs. We have worked with, and continue to collaborate closely with various stakeholders in our focus regions to ensure their strengthened positions in the supply chain and civic space.



RESPONSIBLE PRIVATE SECTOR



SUPPORTIVE PUBLIC SECTOR



VIBRANT AND STRONG CIVIL SOCIETY



STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

Over the period 2021-2025, we have achieved:*

- **20,065,433** individuals activated and mobilised to raise their voice to push the policy agenda, influence societal (gender) norms, make informed decisions (consumer and corporate behaviour, e.g. on production and consumption practices)
- **255** CSO led awareness raising campaigns

**These figures are preliminary final numbers for 2021-2025.*





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Gold
- **Region & Country** - Latin America; Peru
- **Pathway** - Amplify
- **Theme** - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
- **Secondary theme** - Decent Work
- **Consortium lead** - Solidaridad
- **Partners** - National Network of Women Miners (RNM-MAPE), planetGOLD Peru (UNDP/GEF), CINCIA, Pure Earth, Wyss Academy for Nature.

REVALORO and the network of women miners in Peru:

Women leaders in Peru’s ASM sector build their first network and elevate their political voice

In Peru’s artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASM) sector, women miners are converting awareness into influence through Solidaridad’s REVALORO initiative. The grassroots National Network of Women Miners (RNM-MAPE) is now shaping public policy, driving collective action, and inspiring new gender-equity standards in responsible gold value chains.

Across Peru’s gold-rich regions, women have long played essential yet undervalued roles in artisanal and small-scale mining. REVALORO, under RECLAIM Sustainability! set out to change that by amplifying women’s voices, strengthening leadership, and embedding gender equality into ASM governance. At the heart of this transformation stands the National Network of Women Miners of Peru (RNM-MAPE), an alliance that unites over 400 women across 25 organizations.





Women leaders are now engaging with technical working groups and high-level dialogues with the Ministry of Energy and Mines and other authorities. Their proposals informed the 2022 Gender Plan for ASM, the sector's first formal policy tool for gender mainstreaming. Crucially, their specific demands have been reflected in at least three draft laws, marking a breakthrough in legislative impact.

Transformation is also unfolding regionally. In Madre de Dios, the regional Women's Network — composed of nine associations — co-leads a technical support group with Solidaridad, CINCIA, Pure Earth, and the Wyss Academy for Nature.



"We realized we can organize. We can raise our voices. And we deserve to be part of the conversations we've been left out of for too long."

Julia Pomalique, ASM leader from Puno (featured in *Entre Polvo y Sueños*)

Together they are implementing work plans through 2027 focused on leadership, capacity-building, safe mining, market access, and policy dialogue.

In parallel, Solidaridad and RNM-MAPE have worked to transform social norms. Over 200 women completed leadership and safety training, and the first Occupational Health and Safety Manual for Pallaqueras was published. Awareness campaigns on gender equality and safe mining reached 249,000 people in social media, sparking national discussion of women's roles in ASM. A *pallaquera* is a female miner who works on piles of waste rocks from artisanal mines, manually seeking discarded ore containing tiny contents of gold.

The work has even become a documentary, produced by Solidaridad and creative agency BÁLU. *Entre Polvo y Sueños* (*Between Dust and Dreams*) follows María Reyes, Julia Pomalique, and Vilma Contreras — three women whose stories reveal systemic barriers and the change they hope to realize. Premiering at the 14th Annual Workers Unite Film Festival in New York, the film invites viewers to take concrete action toward gender equity in mineral supply chains.





What's next?

RECLAIM Sustainability! Gold Peru shows that when women's organizations gain legitimacy and build alliances, systemic change follows — even in highly constrained political environments. While advocacy efforts have not yet resulted in concrete legislative reforms, they have shifted the policy debate by explicitly positioning women miners, particularly *pallaqueras*, within proposed ASM legal frameworks. Several draft bills discussed in official technical working groups now name women miners directly, with some proposing their recognition

under specific legal categories with defined rights and obligations.

The initiative's key insight: intersectional collaboration — across policy, organization, and communication — turns visibility into structural influence, offering a replicable model for equitable mineral value chains.

Generaciones, a new EU-co-financed project under RECLAIM Sustainability!, will scale leadership and entrepreneurship training for women and

youth across ASM regions. Efforts continue to institutionalize and fund the Gender Plan for ASM to 2030, with monitoring led by state agencies and civil society.

Future priorities include replicating the technical support group model in other mining zones and expanding the visibility of *Entre Polvo y Sueños* to inspire regional policy dialogue. These actions will sustain women's collective agency as a cornerstone of responsible and inclusive ASM.





Learn more online

- [Solidaridad Network. \(2022, June 21\). Julia's story.](#)
- [Solidaridad Network. \(n.d.\). Women miners make the case for changes to Peru's new National Policy for Artisanal and Small-scale Mining.](#)
- [Solidaridad Network. \(2018, August 28\). Female miners in Peru gain landmark recognition of key role in gold value chain.](#)
- [Solidaridad Network. \(2025, August 14\). 'Entre Polvo y Sueños': New Documentary on the Strength and Collective Power of Women Miners.](#)
- [Solidaridad Network. \(2025, September 18\). Strengthening the voice, safety and recognition of pallaqueras in Peru's ASM sector.](#)





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Cocoa
- **Region & Country** - West Africa, Ghana
- **Pathway** - Amplify
- **Theme** - Fair Value Distribution
- **Secondary themes** - Decent Work, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
- **Consortium lead** - Solidaridad
- **Partners** - TrustAfrica, Agriterra, World Cocoa Farmers Organization

Uniting cocoa farmers' voices:

Introducing the Ghana cooperative cocoa farmers & marketing association

Cooperatives play an important role in Ghana's cocoa sector, uniting farmers to improve access to services, inputs and markets. While individual cooperatives give farmers greater voice, they often lack influence higher up in the value chain. RECLAIM Sustainability! has helped cooperatives across the country improve governance and ensure that farmers are heard at all levels.

In January 2025, thousands gathered for the launch of the Ghana Cooperative Cocoa Farmers and Marketing Association (GCCFA), the first umbrella organization of its kind in Ghana. This milestone marked the culmination of a bottom-up process, ushering in a new era of inclusion and sustainability, where farmers' voices, rights, and interests shape the entire value chain.

Across Ghana, nearly 120 cocoa cooperative unions provide vital services to farmers and the communities where they operate. Though they represent a large proportion of cocoa farmers, these cooperatives often operated in isolation with some stronger than others.

In 2022, a partnership between Solidaridad, the World Cocoa Farmers Organization, Ghana's Department of Cooperatives, and Agriterra under RECLAIM Sustainability!, launched a two-tier strategy to improve governance and inclusivity, and establish a national association of cocoa cooperatives.

The partnership began with leadership and governance training for cooperative leaders on strategic planning, leadership, conflict management,



business communication, and financial skills. A Gender and Social Inclusion policy was co-developed to embed gender equality efforts in the cooperative bylaws.

By strengthening cooperative structures and increasing awareness of inclusive leadership, particularly women's participation, farmers mobilized nationwide to form a unified, democratic platform. This led to the creation of the GCCFA, comprising 75 cooperative unions, over 2,000 societies, and approximately 340,000 farmers across 9 cocoa-growing regions in Ghana.



"For too long, women have been disadvantaged in our cooperatives, but the training from Solidaridad and the gender-affirmative action they championed has given women like me the courage and opportunity to step forward."

Comfort Kwaasibea, Second Vice President of the new Association

The GCCFA is led by an executive committee made up of 13 individuals, including six women, who were elected from 210 candidates. Comfort Kwaasibea, elected as second vice president, is committed to boosting women's leadership across cooperatives.

Since its launch in March 2025, the association has advocated for stable pricing, government support, secure land rights, and fair incomes for cocoa producers. Now farmers have a seat at the **Ghana cocoa monitor steering committee**, providing direct input into decisions at a national level.

"Through the establishment of the association, we have been empowered to take a seat at the table to advocate for our welfare, confront our challenges, and enhance our livelihoods by collaborating closely with key stakeholders," says Issifu Issaka, the association's president. This farmer-centric approach underscores GCCFA's role as a catalyst for inclusive growth in Ghana's cocoa industry.

What's next?

This large-scale collective mobilization has dramatically strengthened farmers' bargaining power nationally and internationally. So far, the association has received the necessary recognition by the EU ambassador, and the Ministry of Labour, Jobs and Employment as the vibrant national cocoa farmer group advocating for farmers' welfare. This has led to strategic partnerships with international organizations such as the FAO and private companies like Latex Foam. The association is envisioned to be a member of the cocoa pricing review committee.

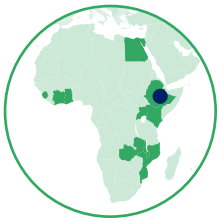


However, new opportunities remain. Ongoing capacity building is needed to further strengthen all cooperatives, and a need has been identified for low-interest loan programmes for farm investment.

Additionally, continued reinforcement of the gender and inclusion lessons is needed to protect gains and fully integrate marginalized groups.

Learn more online

- [Solidaridad Network - Cocoa Farmers Cooperative Association](#)
- [Ghana Cooperative Cocoa Farmers and Marketing Association website](#)



HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Cotton & textiles
- **Region & Country** - East & Central Africa, Ethiopia
- **Pathway** - Amplify
- **Theme** - Fair value distribution, decent work
- **Secondary theme** - Climate & natural resource management
- **Consortium lead** - Solidaridad

Contract farming agreement model empowers smallholder organic cotton farmers in Ethiopia

For decades, smallholder cotton farmers in Ethiopia have faced instability due to unregulated contract farming practices that left them vulnerable to exploitative prices and unpredictable markets. Solidaridad Ethiopia, under RECLAIM Sustainability!, worked with government actors, civil society, and the private sector to pilot a new approach with cooperatives that enhances transparency, ensures fair pricing, and builds farmer confidence.

Although the majority of smallholder farmers in Ethiopia are organized into cooperatives, a smaller proportion is engaged in contract farming arrangements, which often lack legal protections. Without a proper framework for the practice, these cotton farmers have had little influence in pricing or contract terms.

Solidaridad began advocating on the farmers' behalf in 2021, which led to the establishment of a **new regulation** that provides legal protections for farmers and the formalization of contract farming as a business model. With the regulation in place, Solidaridad partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture, development partners, Gamo Development Association, seven organic cotton cooperatives, and private textile buyers to pilot the country's first contract farming model.

Capacity building was a critical element. The independent smallholders and cooperative leaders received training on price negotiation, contract literacy, transparency, and partnership principles. This gave farmers the confidence to engage as equal partners in the cotton value chain.



Some impact numbers

- 800 smallholder farmers (1.1% of national cotton SHFs)
- 1,000 hectares of organic cotton cultivated
- 500 tons of organic cotton produced in 2024
- Farmers' incomes increased by 11%



"This cotton is the backbone of our livelihood. Even when the rain stops for two or three months it continues to produce seeds. For us farmers, it is like a bank once planted it stands strong and does not die easily. It resists insects and is not easily destroyed. Despite harsh weather and long dry periods it still gives yield. This cotton is truly climate resilient and sun resistant, giving farmers confidence and hope for the future."

Burchekeo Bebiso of Barecho Kebele, Abala Abaya Woreda

By the end of 2024, 800 farmers had entered into formal agreements, producing 500 tons of organic cotton, and generating revenues of ETB 25 million, an 11% income increase compared to pre-agreement levels. Beyond income growth, the model laid the foundation for inclusive markets that improved trust among farmers, buyers, and government institutions.

The policy's impact has been significant. The Ethiopian government officially recognized contract farming as one of its top agricultural business models. Furthermore, the Development Bank of Ethiopia now requires textile factories applying for loans to adopt contract farming, connecting the model to financial systems.

What's next?

This pilot shows that systemic change requires multi-stakeholder collaboration that links policy, practice, and financing. The contract farming model worked with all parts of the supply chain to combine policy advocacy, farmer empowerment, and private sector commitment. However, coverage remains limited; representing just 1.4% of smallholders nationally.

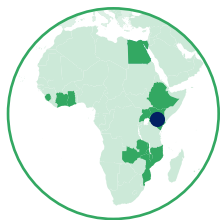
The next step is scaling the model to Ethiopia's 57,000 cotton-farming smallholders, which requires sustained investment in farmer training, stronger monitoring systems, and continued multi-stakeholder dialogue. Solidaridad and partners plan to expand training, integrate more cooperatives, and strengthen monitoring and traceability systems.



"For me cotton is white gold, it is my economy and what clothes our bodies. I encourage farmers to stand hand in hand and work together. Our area has always been suitable for cotton, and today the world needs it again. With expert training and continuous support, I decided to plant cotton on my four hectares. I am happy and confident using organic methods to protect the crop. Cotton has given us hope for a better future."

Eliyas Gufiso of Garfa Kachama Kebele, Arbaminici Zureya Woreda

As the approach grows, there is also strong potential for adapting this approach for other crops, using the lessons learned in cotton as a foundation. With continued support from donors and development partners, Ethiopia's cotton sector could become a leading example of sustainable and fair contract farming in Africa.



HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Coffee
- **Region & Country** - East Africa, Kenya
- **Pathway** - Amplify
- **Theme** - Fair value distribution
- **Consortium lead** - Solidaridad
- **Partners** - Coffee Estate Farmers Association (CEFA) and Kenya Coffee Producers Association (KCPA)

Leveraging the potential for collective action through dialogue:

Strengthening coffee farmers’ voices amid shifting rules and policy gaps

Although Kenya is a renowned coffee origin for its quality, the small-scale farmers who produce it often lack influence in the supply chain. Government attempts to reform the sector have been largely top-down, ultimately limiting farmer ownership and participation. Today, farmers are driving change from the bottom up pushing for fairness, transparency, and a better future.

From a high point in 1988, coffee production in Kenya decreased 70% by 2021. A combination of weak governance, low producer prices, aging plants and half-hearted policy enforcement were partially to blame. As a result, producer organizations

struggled to deliver value to their members, leaving farmers subject to exploitative buyers. Government efforts to revive the industry showed promise, but they rarely translated into meaningful impact for those who mattered most: the producers.

Amid the uncertainty, the RECLAIM Sustainability! Programme rallied producers in a push for transformation working with civil society organizations and farmer associations to champion farmers’ rights and demand accountability.

Farmers Take the Lead in Kenya’s Coffee Reforms
When the government began implementing new regulations in the coffee sector in 2019, optimism



ran high. The regulations promised to streamline licensing, marketing, and cooperative oversight, but as implementation faltered, farmers' frustrations mounted.

At that moment, farmers found an opportunity for real reform with support from RECLAIM Sustainability! and the Kenya Coffee Producers Association (KCPA) and the Coffee Estate Processors Association (CEPA). The partners prepared and presented detailed memoranda to the National Senate, which resulted in partial adoption of key recommendations. This small but significant step validated the power of coordinated farmer-led engagement.

RS! and programme partners then doubled down on advocacy. Farmers united to submit memoranda to both the National Senate and the National Assembly for even more improvements that embed fairness, transparency, and farmer-centered principles.

"For the first time, we are not just being told what policies mean for us, we are part of shaping them. Through the RECLAIM Sustainability! Program, our voices as farmers are finally being heard where decisions are made."

Rosemary Matu Chairlady Nyeri Coffee Estate Farmers Association (NCEFA)

"When the new coffee regulations came [in 2019], we hoped for change but nothing happened. Through KCPA and RS!, we learned to speak up, and seeing our contributions proved that our voices truly matter."

Peter Gikonyo, Coffee Farmer and KCPA Chairman

Altogether, 22 coffee stakeholders and 13 farmer unions submitted written comments to the National Assembly Committee, a record level of engagement. The effort led to the creation of farmer-owned brokerage firms, which gave farmers greater market control and better prices. The effort also resulted in stronger civil society actors with the capacity to engage policymakers, ensuring that farmers' perspectives will continue to be represented in discussions on the sector's future.

What's next?

Today, farmer-owned brokerage firms account for the majority of coffee trading companies in Kenya, a remarkable shift in market power dynamics in just 5 short years. Kenyan farmers are no longer passive actors; they are informed advocates, organized stakeholders, and equal partners in shaping the future of their industry.

The effort shows that policy reform is most sustainable when farmers are co-authors. By

equipping producer organizations with the knowledge and platforms for engagement, the project turned fragmented frustration into collective action. With their newfound confidence, Kenya's coffee farmers continue to organize and increase their visibility in national conversations about the future of their sector.

Learn more online

- [Advocacy over piling coffee at the mills](#)
- [Advocacy in Bungoma County on the new coffee regulations](#)
- [Advocacy during the Deputy president dialogue](#)





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Cocoa
- **Region & Country** - West Africa, Sierra Leone
- **Pathway** - Amplify
- **Theme** - Gender equality and social inclusion
- **Consortium lead** - TrustAfrica
- **Partners** - Women in the Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL)

Strengthening and campaigning for women's land rights in Sierra Leone:

Kpetema village land committee resolves landmark dispute

In Sierra Leone's Kpetema Village, the community Land Committee has successfully resolved a landmark dispute, hereby challenging the existing gender bias and strengthening women's rights to land ownership. With support from Women in the Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL) and TrustAfrica, under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, the committee applied provisions of the Customary Land Rights Act to restore a widow's farmland, setting a precedent for equity, accountability, and inclusion in local land governance. In the cocoa sector in Sierra Leone, the programme has been engaging civil society in inclusive dialogues to develop and submit recommendations to the

national authorities on topics such as land rights, forest governance, living wages and child labour.

Establishment of the Land Rights Act in Sierra Leone's communities

Kpetema Village, located in Sierra Leone's Eastern Province, is among several communities that have established functional Land Committees under the new Customary Land Rights Act. These committees were formed to promote transparency, fair access, and community participation in land governance. For Kpetema, the committee's work has already led to a remarkable transformation in land relations, particularly for women.





About the Customary Land Rights Act:

In 2022, the Land Acts (the National Land Commission Act and the Customary Land Rights Act) were passed by the national government in Sierra Leone, seeking to guarantee protection of customary land rights, the elimination of discrimination under customary law, and the management and administration of land subject to customary law, and other related matters¹.

¹ Information taken from **RECLAIM Sustainability! Progress Report 2023** (pages 23-24).

A recent dispute has tested the committee's resolve and the principles of the new law. The case involved the town chief and the widow of his late brother. According to community members, the chief had insisted that the widow could only regain access to her deceased husband's farmland if she agreed to marry him. Historically, such coercive practices were common and often went unchallenged, leaving women without recourse to justice or livelihood.

Empowered to assert their land rights

Empowered by radio programmes, public sensitization, and training facilitated by TrustAfrica under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, in collaboration with Women in the Media Sierra Leone (WIMSAL), the widow refused the marriage

demand. She cited the Customary Land Rights Act, which clearly upholds a woman's right to her husband's property and prohibits discrimination in land inheritance and use.

The Kpetema Village Land Committee, comprising six men and four women, convened to deliberate on the issue. After reviewing testimonies and referencing the provisions of the law, the committee unanimously ruled that the widow should reclaim her farmland without any preconditions. The decision was accepted peacefully, and the widow has since resumed farming. Her courage, supported by a responsive governance structure, **became a turning point for women's confidence in claiming their rights.**

"TrustAfrica has been working with civil society organizations, women champions and farmer organizations in the cocoa and palm oil supply chains to advocate for inclusive dialogue, and to amplify their voices, under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme."

Rachel Gyabaah, Programme Officer at TrustAfrica





Campaigning for women's rights to own land in Sierra Leone

Under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, TrustAfrica has campaigned to strengthen women's rights to own land in (cocoa) communities in Sierra Leone. In 2023, their community awareness campaigns reached **291 community members from seven districts**.

This sensitization placed particular emphasis on the provisions for women in the Land Acts, and also raised awareness on the Forestry Policy and the Gender Empowerment law. In addition to direct engagement with the (cocoa) farmer communities, in 2023 TrustAfrica worked with

women champions, civil society organizations (CSOs) and local media to produce a **video** with a clear **call to action: Increase women's ownership and access to land, and ensure 30% representation of women in the land committee**.

This was followed up through community and radio discussions to discuss and sensitize on how these issues affect women farmers. Working with local media has been a powerful means to expose land rights' violations, and particularly instrumental for women to reclaim their heritage and to successfully challenge the male-centred land governance.

The Kpetema Land Committee's contributions to women's rights

Since its establishment, the Kpetema LandCommittee has recorded additional achievements. No land has been sold in the village since it began operations, a marked shift from previous years of unregulated land transfers. Instead, two plots have been leased through transparent family consultations where women's participation is mandatory. The committee has also allocated **10 acres of land exclusively for women's farming activities**, granted outright

rather than leased. While formal documentation is pending, this move has already boosted food production and women's economic independence.

Regular community meetings are now held to explain land laws, resolve emerging conflicts, and promote peaceful coexistence. Even the late husband's brother, Mr. Alpha, who initially supported the chief's claim, now assists the widow without attaching marriage as a condition; a quiet yet significant cultural shift toward fairness and respect.





The importance of knowledge, law and inclusive governance

The Kpetema case demonstrates that knowledge, law, and inclusive governance can transform entrenched cultural norms. Access to legal education through WIMSAL's radio programmes empowered women and built trust in local land institutions. Additionally, assisting communities with the formation of the land committees and ensuring the 30% women representation ensures inclusivity in decision making. The Land Committee's gender-balanced composition and transparent processes proved effective in preventing exploitation and promoting equity. Importantly, it showed that community-led enforcement of national laws can strengthen justice at the grassroots level without external enforcement.

However, the experience also highlights areas for growth: formalizing documentation to secure women's titles, sustaining committee funding, and extending legal literacy to neighboring communities. Embedding land rights education into local development programmes could further consolidate these gains.

What's next?

Building on this progress, Kpetema's approach offers a model for replication across Sierra Leone and beyond. The next step involves formal land registration for women (cocoa) farmers and expanding committee training to reinforce legal literacy and mediation skills. If able to secure the necessary resources, TrustAfrica and WIMSAL aim to scale this model to other districts, with the aim

of ensuring that women's rights are embedded in every layer of customary governance.

By linking community land committees to district and national land institutions, this initiative could shape a sustainable, gender-inclusive land governance framework, transforming land from a source of conflict into a foundation for empowerment and equitable development.

Learn more online

- [Check out the video with the Call to Action](#)
- [RECLAIM Sustainability! Progress Report 2023](#)
- [An important call for women's rights to own land in Sierra Leone](#)





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Tea
- **Region & Country** - Asia, India
- **Pathway** - Amplify
- **Theme** - Fair Value Distribution
- **Secondary themes** - Decent Work, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
- **Consortium lead** - Solidaridad
- **Partners** - Indian Tea Association, Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers' Associations (CISTA), All Assam Small Tea Growers Association (AASSTGA), All Bodoland Small Tea Growers Association (ABSTGA), Jalpaiguri District Small Tea Growers Association (JDSTGA), United Planters' Association of Southern India (UPASI), Malai Mavatta Siru Vivasayigal Nala Sangam (MMSVNS)



Finding strength in the collective: Organizing tea growers in India

Small tea growers in India struggle with numerous challenges that directly affect their livelihoods. Among them are climate change, skyrocketing input prices, lack of access to resources, navigating intermediaries and more. Under the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, Solidaridad has supported tea growers in

organizing themselves into collectives, linking them to factories and helping them embrace transparency and traceability. The result? Better-quality leaves, higher prices for farmers with direct links to factories and improved resilience to climate and market risks.



Small tea growers account for more than 50% of India's tea production. Despite the country being the second-largest producer of tea in the world, small growers struggle with numerous challenges that directly affect their livelihoods. These include climate change, lack of access to resources, intermediaries who claim a share in the profit, skyrocketing prices of inputs and labour shortages.

Through the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, Solidaridad collaborates closely with smallholder organizations by forming, supporting and strengthening collectives that support farmers through shared resources and increased bargaining power. This approach increases access to subsidies, farm equipment and market opportunities, enhancing overall resilience and income potential.

Seven associations and two women collectives, representing 110,000 tea growers, are expanding their operations in India. More than 10,000 women are participating in the programme.

For individual farmers such as Tapan Mandal, a member of the Jai Jalpesh collective supported by the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme in West Bengal's New Jalpaiguri district, the benefits are immense.

The approach

The programme has supported the transformative journeys of the Jai Jalpesh group and farmers such as Tapan with a two-pronged approach. First,



"We, as a group, can buy inputs in bulk at lower prices, and we also have access to loans now. For example, I used a loan to install a modern irrigation system. It has made a big difference. We now supply leaves directly to the factory."

Tapan Mandal, tea farm owner and member of the Jai Jalpesh collective

organizing tea growers based on their production capacities and proximity to each other to link them to the nearest factory within a radius of 1 to 5 kilometres. This has helped local farmers reduce transportation time and costs, and allowed them to focus on producing a consistent supply of good-quality leaves. Second, introducing a **traceability tool** via tea factories to bring transparency and traceability to their supply chains, which can contribute to fairer prices for the farmers.

The role of larger tea associations

Some issues, however, are too large for small farmers and collectives to solve on their own. This is where larger tea associations such as CISTA



been able to reduce their expenditure on fertilizers and chemicals from ₹34,760 (€388.88) per hectare in 2019 to ₹22,840 (€252.74) in 2024. The average yield of these farmers has consistently stayed above 3,800 kg per hectare in 2024—a 20–25% increase from 2019.

By shortening and tracing its supply chains, the Jai Jalpesh factory now sources the finest leaves from its members, transforming them into teas that command higher market value. Between 2019 and 2024, the average sale price per kilogram rose from ₹122.9 (€1.35) to ₹173.35 (€1.90)—a remarkable 41% jump. This success has deepened growers' commitment to the factory, increased its membership and inspired the launch of packet teas proudly carrying its own brand.

have stepped in. "When collectives inform us about their problems, we meet with the association and come up with a concrete solution," says Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty, President, CISTA.

CISTA then presents these as recommendations to the state and central government and international platforms such as FAO Intergovernmental Group – TEA, and the **Asia Tea Alliance** (a confederation of tea organizations from six leading tea-producing and consuming countries in Asia).

"For instance, due to changes in climatic conditions, pest attacks are becoming more common, leading to huge financial losses. So, one of the many recommendations we have submitted is crop insurance, which is a safety net," Bijoy adds.

Results & impacts

As a result, bulk buying of inputs, as well as the adoption of good agricultural practices, have reduced the input spending for the farmer collective. On average, Jai Jalpesh farmers have



"We know what kind of leaves a grower gives. Those who provide high-quality leaves get better prices."

Bangshidhar Roy, tea grower and executive member, Jai Jalpesh Factory



The power of collaboration

Jai Jalpesh's success demonstrates the power of people working together. Community mobilizers from the Solidaridad Farm Support Center built close ties with small tea growers. Technical experts visited gardens regularly, showing simple, practical ways to improve farming. In their meeting with the small tea growers, the Project Manager and Associates inspired them to seek support on resources and to bargain for inputs as a collective. These efforts turned individual struggles into a shared story of progress.

Building on the groundwork laid with small farmers and collectives, Solidaridad—working alongside professional consultants, the Indian Tea Association (the country's oldest apex producer body), CISTA,

and other regional associations—developed a comprehensive policy intervention document with recommendations. This document was submitted to the Government of India for consideration. The Government responded by instructing the Tea Board of India to review the existing price-sharing formula and design an implementation plan to ensure fair and equitable price distribution for farmers.

What's next?

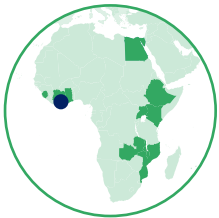
The policy intervention by the Government of India for tea growers offers significant possibilities for scale by extending collective models and fair-pricing mechanisms across all other tea-producing regions in India. An unfinished opportunity lies in deepening farmer capacity building, ensuring wider adoption of sustainable practices and strengthening

market linkages beyond local associations. The potential for impact is substantial: equitable price distribution can improve farmers' livelihoods, reduce exploitation and incentivize high-quality production. Moreover, scaling these interventions nationally could transform the tea sector into a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable industry, setting a precedent for other agricultural commodities.

Learn more online

- [Finding Strength in the Collective: Organizing tea growers in India](#)
- [RECLAIM Sustainability! Episode 2: Tea growers in India uniting through collectives and associations](#)





HEADLINE INFORMATION

- **Commodity** - Oil palm
- **Region & Country** - West Africa; Ghana
- **Pathway** - Amplify
- **Theme** - Fair Value Distribution
- **Consortium lead** - Solidaridad
- **Partners** - Oil Palm Development Association of Ghana (OPDAG)

Development of a pricing mechanism for the oil palm sector

Setting a minimum price: A step towards fair value for oil palm smallholders in Ghana

Ghana's oil palm sector has long suffered from volatile prices that discourage farmers and weaken confidence in the supply chain. Through the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, Solidaridad worked with the government, industry actors, and researchers to develop and adopt a transparent pricing mechanism for fresh fruit bunches (FFB). This system ensures a fairer value distribution, improves farmer income stability, and rebuilds trust across the supply chain.

Tackling the challenge of price volatility

For years, Ghana's oil palm farmers faced unpredictable prices that made production planning nearly impossible. Prices fluctuated sharply across regions, and farmers were often forced to sell below production costs. The lack of a standardized pricing system not only discouraged smallholders but also created deep mistrust among farmers, aggregators, and processing mills.



Recognizing this gap, Solidaridad, through the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme, supported the development of **Ghana's first pricing mechanism for the oil palm sector**. The initiative sought to ensure fair returns for farmers, stabilize trade relations, and promote equity across the value chain.

Gathering key stakeholders for dialogue and collaboration

As a first step, Solidaridad brought together key stakeholders, including farmers, aggregators, mill operators, government regulators, and policymakers, for consultations on pricing challenges. These dialogues laid the groundwork for collaboration and consensus-building. Solidaridad then engaged the Institute of Social, Statistical, and Economic Research (ISSER) at the University of Ghana to facilitate the dialogue and co-develop the pricing formula.

The team examined pricing models from Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia, and Malaysia - countries with established oil palm pricing systems - and analyzed their adaptability to Ghana's context.

They also studied plantation-level mechanisms that already existed in parts of Ghana. Every actor's perspective was considered, from farm-level costs and transport margins to mill conversion rates and global market trends.

After months of joint analysis, the actors finalized a benchmark formula, indexed to international Crude Palm Oil (CPO) and Palm Kernel Oil (PKO) prices and adjusted for the local exchange rate. Subsequently, Solidaridad facilitated policy dialogues with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Tree Crop Development Authority to review, refine, and approve the formula for national adoption.

Establishing the minimum producer price for FFB

In oil palm, the minimum producer price for fresh fruit bunches is agreed by stakeholders and announced monthly, subject to some key considerations and market dynamics. This flexibility helps farmers and processors adapt to changing global conditions while maintaining fairness and predictability.

"The minimum producer price ensures that every farmer, regardless of location, is assured a fair price for their produce. It has restored confidence and reduced the constant haggling between farmers and aggregators."

Isaac Ampofo, General Manager, Nat-K Royal Limited (An Aggregator)

The new system also addressed long-standing tensions between farmers and buyers. Previously, farmers accused aggregators of underpaying, while aggregators struggled to meet their own costs amid fluctuating mill prices. Today, both groups operate with greater transparency and trust.

"Farmers now understand the pricing logic and know what to expect. For once, we all feel part of the same value chain," said Martin Ola, a farmer from Ghana's Western Region.





Shared ownership key to pricing mechanism's success

Since its launch in January 2023, the pricing mechanism has been successfully implemented with consistent monthly announcements of the FFB price. About 25,000 smallholder farmers are benefitting from the price mechanism. Farmers also report improved income stability and renewed motivation to stay in oil palm production. The participatory process and continuous communication have been key to its acceptance and success.



“Previously, I did not have a stable income because prices were volatile and dependent on what the mills or artisanal processors were offering. In some weeks or months, I sold a ton of palm fruit for 450 Ghana cedis (37 euros). Since the implementation of the pricing mechanism, I now sell a ton of fresh fruit bunches for a price between 1,400 and 1,600 Ghana cedis (123 to 138 euros) a ton.”

Opong Korang, an oil palm farmer in the Eastern Region of Ghana

Price of Fresh Fruit Bunches of oil palm and raw rubber cup-lumps as fixed and announced by TCDA for each month:

JANUARY 2026

OIL PALM FRESH FRUIT BUNCHES
GHC1,570.32/ton
Given: CPO/ton = \$1,026.25; CPO/ton = \$1,731.75;
BoG FX Rate = \$1,000; GH¢10,264. Reference date of parameters: 26th November 2025 to 25th December 2025.

RAW RUBBER CUP-LUMPS
GHC7.2235/kg
Given: Average SICOM TSR120 Price = \$14.47/kg;
BoG FX Rate = \$1,000; GH¢11,384.4. Reference date of parameters: 26th November 2025 to 25th December 2025.

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TCDAGhana www.tcdagov.gh

Price of Fresh Fruit Bunches of oil palm and raw rubber cup-lumps as fixed and announced by TCDA for each month:

FEBRUARY 2026

OIL PALM FRESH FRUIT BUNCHES
GHC1,521.90/ton
Given: CPO/ton = \$1,050.70; CPO/ton = \$1,700.75;
BoG FX Rate = \$1,000; GH¢10,708. Reference date of parameters: 26th December 2025 to 25th January 2026.

RAW RUBBER CUP-LUMPS
GHC7.1360/kg
Given: Average SICOM TSR120 Price = \$14.952/kg;
BoG FX Rate = \$1,000; GH¢10,708.4. Reference date of parameters: 26th December 2025 to 25th January 2026.

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TCDAGhana www.tcdagov.gh

Price of Fresh Fruit Bunches of oil palm and raw rubber cup-lumps as fixed and announced by TCDA for each month:

MARCH 2026

OIL PALM FRESH FRUIT BUNCHES
GHC1,456.03/ton
Given: CPO/ton = \$988.05; CPO/ton = \$1,666.14;
BoG FX Rate = \$1,000; GH¢10,947. Reference date of parameters: 26th January 2026 to 25th February 2026.

RAW RUBBER CUP-LUMPS
GHC7.6266/kg
Given: Average SICOM TSR120 Price = \$14.953/kg;
BoG FX Rate = \$1,000; GH¢10,947. Reference date of parameters: 26th January 2026 to 25th February 2026.

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TCDAGhana www.tcdagov.gh

Opong Korang, an oil palm farmer in the Eastern Region of Ghana, is now enjoying a higher, stable price than before.

Opong's awareness of minimum price before harvesting means that he is able to plan well, which has led to an improved livelihood, including investing in higher education for his children and in the farm. He recounts that some of his fellow farmers have been able to maintain their farms and hire more labour support as a result of the pricing mechanism.

The monthly announcement of the fresh fruit bunch price gives him strong bargaining power and the confidence to negotiate with buyers.

The pricing mechanism's success lies in its inclusivity and transparency. Farmers, processors, and regulators were part of every step, from data collection to validation, ensuring shared ownership. The monthly review approach provides flexibility and helps prevent exploitation during market dips. The process built mutual trust, restored confidence in the sector, and encouraged more consistent participation among smallholders.

A key insight is that policy reform anchored in data and collaboration can drive lasting market fairness. Farmers are now better equipped to advocate for equitable prices, and aggregators enjoy predictable business relationships.





“The pricing system is really about fairness and clarity. It has helped farmers to know that they’re getting a fair price for their palm fruits, and it also helps processors plan better because prices are more predictable. In the end, it’s good for everyone in the palm oil value chain, and it is helping the industry grow stronger.”

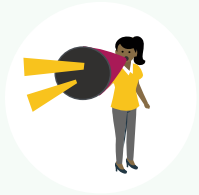
Samuel Avaala, former President of the Oil Palm Development Association of Ghana (OPDAG)

What’s next?

As part of the scaling up of the pricing mechanism to benefit other tree crop sectors, the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme supported the development of a **coconut pricing mechanism**. By embedding fairness in pricing and value sharing, Ghana can set a new standard for equitable prices across other commodities in the country.

Learn more online

- [Making a Minimum Price - web article](#)



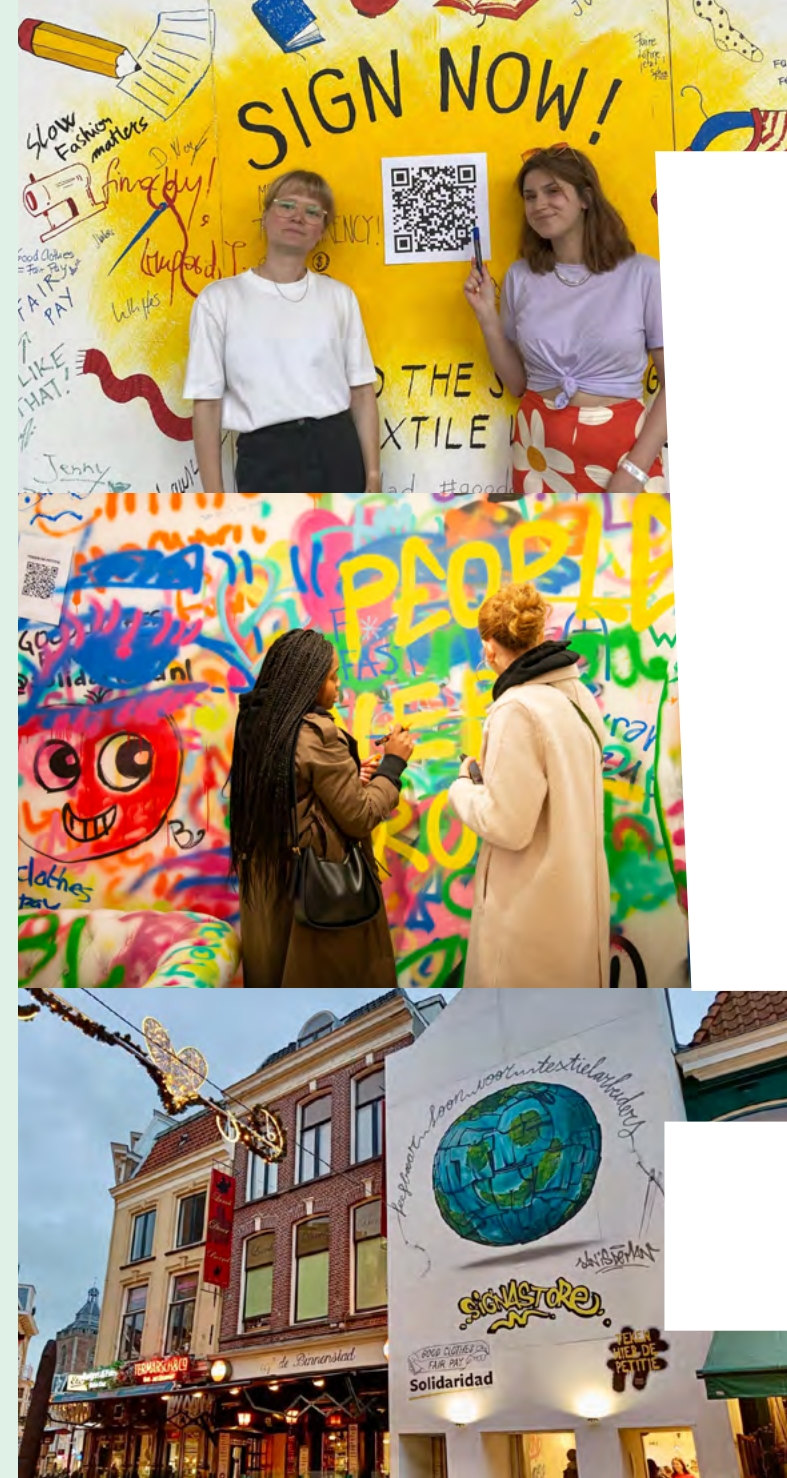
Campaigning for citizen awareness and engagement with Good Clothes, Fair Pay

Solidaridad's work under RECLAIM Sustainability! has also involved mobilizing, activating and engaging European citizens and civil society organizations to change norms and influence the policy agenda. Our policy and advocacy work in Europe has helped to reinforce the efforts made throughout the programme.

A good example of a campaign geared at gaining support from the European public for more sustainable and inclusive policies is the **Good Clothes, Fair Pay initiative**. This was undertaken also as part of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI), and included campaigning efforts by Solidaridad in the Netherlands and Germany, aimed at collecting one million European citizens' signatures by July 2023 (jointly with the coalition partners).

This campaign supported lobbying efforts towards EU living wage legislation in the garment and textile sector, where 70 percent of workers are women. Our campaign included an online petition to collect signatures; the opening of a so-called Signastore in a busy shopping street in the Netherlands on Black Friday; and a special 'Signawall' during the Berlin Fashion Week.

Although the campaign didn't reach the aimed-for one million signatures (with a total of 240,000 signatures collected by all campaign organizations collectively by July 2023), it created tremendous awareness in Europe, also amongst numerous influential policy makers that have been involved with the petition.





EPILOGUE: CALL TO ACTION



CALL TO ACTION

At the heart of the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme and its consortium partners is a commitment to strengthening civil society and ensuring that the perspectives and priorities of farmers, miners and workers are reflected in supply chain decision-making. This is also part of our programme legacy as a *Power of Voices* partnership under the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Strengthening Civil Society policy framework. We sincerely believe that these stories of thriving producers mark the beginning of a broader shift towards more sustainable and inclusive supply chains worldwide.

Five years is not a long time in the broader context of systemic change. This work is ongoing, and it must continue. While the RECLAIM Sustainability! programme has come to an end, its impact remains, as does the urgency of continuing this important work. We call on donors, policy makers, the private sector, and civil society to increase our collective efforts towards sustainable and inclusive supply chains.

At the same time, we are proud of what this collaboration has achieved. The RECLAIM Sustainability! programme has laid a solid foundation for a number of inspiring and promising initiatives and cases to continue this work. Some highlights, as also reinforced by the findings in the programme's Final Evaluation Report, include:

- **Supporting a vibrant and strong civil society and enabling civic space:** Our work has facilitated inclusive policy dialogues and coordination, convened participatory multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs), provided locally grounded evidence for decision-making, and helped to connect the government, private sector and community actors. A transparent civic voice reinforces accountability to other stakeholders, as the public becomes more aware of lived realities and production standards, and ensures that supply chain governance is both inclusive and locally led.
- **Fostering a supportive public sector:** Through direct engagement with the public sector, RECLAIM Sustainability! has successfully influenced institutional changes through the co-design of both new and improved government policies based on locally led agenda setting. This collaborative work reinforces the importance of bottom-up advocacy through inclusion of and leadership by local producers as well as the participation and support of public stakeholders.
- **Steering a responsible private sector:** The initiatives under RECLAIM Sustainability! have contributed to a responsible and supportive private sector through its contributions to new and improved corporate policies for sustainable sourcing, production, trade and investment as well as security of supply for the Netherlands.
- **Ensuring the prioritization of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion:** Across a variety of initiatives and projects under

RECLAIM Sustainability! women's agency and autonomy have increased through targeted interventions that aim to build their individual and collective strengths. By engaging women and men together, we have seen a positive shift in norms and attitudes in communities, with men better understanding the added value of increased women's equality in supply chains.

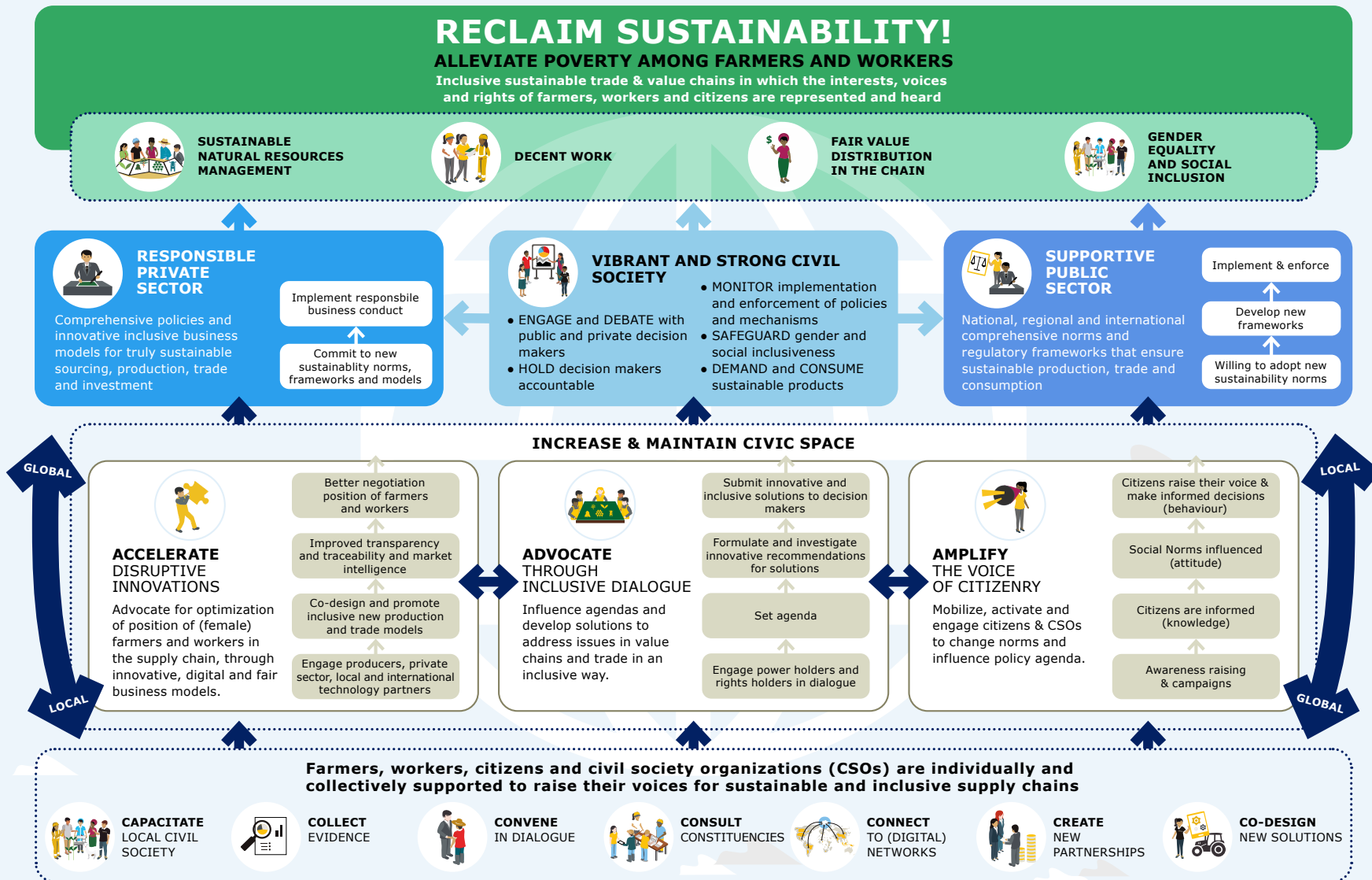
The momentum created through RECLAIM Sustainability! must continue. This necessity is undeniable when viewed through the lens of the current geopolitical climate that has shifted fundamentally since the programme's inception five years ago. We now face a stark reality: seven of nine planetary boundaries have been crossed, yet the very regulations designed to protect our people and planet are being dismantled. In many arenas, the short-term profits of a few are being prioritized over the long-term livelihoods of the many.

To navigate these complexities, we must continue to drive the sustainability agenda through a dual lens of resilience and cost-effectiveness. Systemic change cannot be achieved in isolation; it requires an unprecedented level of collaborative action to ramp up efforts, increase investment and set higher goals. We invite you to join us in building on this collaboration and shaping the next chapter together.

Yours sincerely,
the RECLAIM Sustainability! consortium
Solidaridad, TrustAfrica, Business Watch Indonesia, and Fairfood, in strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs



ANNEX: THEORY OF CHANGE





COLOPHON

Photography

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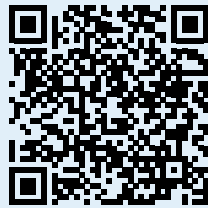
Mascha Alexandrova, Irene Diaz Soto, Kyle Freund.

Design

Bingo! graphic design

With many thanks to RECLAIM Sustainability! partners TrustAfrica, Business Watch Indonesia, Fairfood and Solidaridad for their contributions to this catalogue.





Check out our RECLAIM Sustainability! impact