



# PROGRESS TOWARDS GENDER EQUITY IN THE BANANA INDUSTRY SUMMARIES OF CASE STUDIES

Gender Equity in the Banana Industry  
Third Conference of the World Banana Forum  
7 November 2017



# INTRODUCTION

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In December 2015, women representatives from civil society organisations in the four major banana exporting regions of the world, Asia, the Caribbean, Africa and Latin America, met to develop a strategy towards gender equity in the industry. The meeting was organised in Bonn by the Gender Equity Task Force of the World Banana Forum (WBF). The Forum has within its mission a commitment to 'achieve consensus on best practices regarding gender equity'.

At the Bonn meeting, participants shared the practical progress that their organisations had made to improve the experiences of women engaged in banana export production. **BanaFair** began with reflections on the Global Women's meeting that they organised in 2000. This was the first international exchange of gender specific problems in banana production and developed the international cooperation on these issues that we continue to build upon.

This publication summarises these presentations and provides updates about progress since 2015. All of the original presentations are available to download at [www.bananalink.org.uk/gender-progress](http://www.bananalink.org.uk/gender-progress). A common theme throughout is the meaningful impact achieved when women organise themselves to make and implement decisions about the issues that affect their lives at work, in the home and in their communities. As Iris Munguia, Coordinator of COLSIBA (the Latin American Regional Coordination of Banana & other Agro-Industrial Workers' Unions), reflects 'In order for women to have their needs represented, they need to be at the bargaining table.' This self-organisation prioritises education and training at all levels as well as initiatives to fund social provision in the workplace and to generate income for the household.

Banana Link presented the findings of comprehensive research into the situation for women in the global banana industry at the Bonn meeting. These papers capture both the low numbers of women employed in the industry and wide-ranging discrimination in the workplace, as well as a number of corporate and civil society initiatives to address this. This research is now available to download. We would also recommend visiting the website of the WBF at [www.fao.org/world-banana-forum/projects/good-practices/en/](http://www.fao.org/world-banana-forum/projects/good-practices/en/) for examples of good practice of strategic approaches to bettering conditions for women workers and small-scale producers.

We hope that all of this learning will be used to constructively inform discussions at the Gender Equity Meeting which is being held on 7 November in Geneva as part of the Third International Conference of the World Banana Forum, and will inspire our ongoing activity with – and on behalf of - women throughout the industry.

Please visit: [www.bananalink.org.uk/gender-progress](http://www.bananalink.org.uk/gender-progress) to download all of the presentations summarised in this publication as well as further reading, which includes:

- [the full report of our meeting in December 2015](#)
- [COLSIBA: A collective bargaining strategy based on our own experiences](#)
- [Women in the Banana Export Industry Global Overview and Regional Reports from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America](#)

## Acknowledgements:

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Photos: James Robinson (cover) FARMCOOP (p5) Banana Link (p7) IUF Africa (p10) SINTRAINAGRO (p12)

# ORGANISATIONS

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## COLSIBA (Coordinating Body of Latin American Banana and Agro-industrial Unions)

COLSIBA is composed of unions in the banana and other agricultural industries such as sugarcane, coffee and flowers, in Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia and Ecuador.

**Region/Country:** Latin America (Regional)

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## Priority areas for action

### Regional Agenda for Women 2015-16 (6 strategic themes):

- Working conditions
- Employment and unemployment
- General social conditions
- Occupational health and environment
- Women and leadership
- Women and politics

## Example Initiatives

### Platform of Women Banana Workers' Demands

- Worked to include specific gender clauses in the Collective Bargaining Agreements and labour codes in the country members of COLSIBA
- Women's participation in the negotiating commissions is key
- Coordinated work with other partner organisations in Latin America
- Follow-ups to review and update the platform are necessary

### Regional and Sub-Regional Meetings

- Analysing everyday difficulties facing women in the workplace
- Developing strategies to address these problems
- Active participation of women in COLSIBA meetings

### Platform of Women Banana Workers' Demands

- Helped them achieve the inclusion of specific clauses for women in collective bargaining agreements in Colombia, Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala
- Essential to include women at the negotiating table to defend their rights

### Publication of 3 books on women's rights in the Latin American banana industry:

- El poder de las mujeres ('The power of women') by Dana Frank
- Lo que hemos vivido: Luchas de las mujeres bananeras ('What we have lived: women banana workers' struggle') by ASEPROLA and COLSIBA
- Derechos y reveses ('Duties and setbacks') by Clara Gómez Velásquez

Setting up roundtables for discussions between producer companies, unions and/or small producers: Successfully carried out a discussion process between COLSIBA/Chiquita. It led to the signing of a new clause on sexual harassment and mutual understanding on the matter.

### **Pilot Project in Panama (since 2013)**

- Coordinated between COLSIBA, IUF and Chiquita
- Goal – to increase the hiring of women in the banana industry workforce to increase their access to employment
- Created 486 jobs with fixed-term contracts for women in Chiquita plantations.

## **Achievements**

- Winning the right to participate in the WBF
- The creation of the women’s dialogue roundtable with Chiquita
- The pilot project in Panama
- The sexual harassment clause in Panama

## **Other tools for action/ Future initiatives**

- It should be noted that COLSIBA lacks specific funding for gender work. This limits progress in our fight for gender equity.
- Need to create and strengthen roundtables with other companies to get to agreements that better women’s conditions in the banana industry
- Even if we have achieved improvements in Panama and Colombia with these efforts, in other countries in the region the hiring of women is declining.
- There have been no improvements regarding freedom of association and collective bargaining – these are becoming worse.



### **FARMCOOP (Foundation for Agrarian Reform Cooperatives in Mindanao)**

An NGO supporting 14 cooperatives of former banana plantation workers who benefited from the Agrarian Reform, some of whom produce organic bananas and other crops.

**Region/Country:** Mindanao, Southern Philippines

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## **Priority areas for action**

- Sustainable and resilient farming communities
- Support services to farmers’ cooperatives
- Gender equity at home and in the workplace

## Example Initiatives

### **Program on Safety, Health, Environment and Gender And Development (SHE-GD) involving 6 partner cooperatives**

- SHE-GD committees formed in each cooperative
- Training on occupational health and safety, health and welfare of women, emergency and first aid skills, and indigenous medicinal plants.
- Workshops on special topics e.g. financial literacy for couples, laws on anti-violence against women and children and pesticide-use awareness.

### **Gender Sensitivity & Women Empowerment training**

- Group discussion and experience sharing among women
- Cooperative governance and management trainings
- Women gained key responsibilities in their cooperatives in areas including Finance & Administration and on Education Committees and Peace Mediation Committees.
- Assisting health and holistic development for women in the banana industry; use of organic products.
- Continuous Gender Sensitivity Trainings (GST)

### **Creative Nurturing Communities (CNC) – Pageno Project (started 2014)**

- More holistic approach to development in the indigenous peoples community of Sibulan after a visioning workshop
- Establishment of Indigenous People’s Learning Center at Mt. Apo Elementary School
- Backyard gardening in the community for food security and additional livelihood
- Will pilot a Gender Action Learning System (GALS) (beginning in early 2018) to
  - address gender inequalities and female and household poverty

### **Medical Clinics among Partner Cooperatives Project (in Barangay Sibulan, Toril District, Davao City)**

- Partner cooperatives and tribal community

### **Group Saving Loan Associations (GSLA) Project with WE EFFECT (2014-2016):**

- “Building Capacities for Cacao and Coffee Agri-Business Development of Tribal Farmers in Sibulan Ancestral Domain”
- GSLA serves as an insurance fund and a source of small loans
- Nine GSLA were established in 2015



## Workshops and informal discussions for men and women workers

### Women's Associations (WA) in banana cooperatives (2016-17)

- Training on the processing of 'rejected' organic bananas into products for sale (banana chips, vinegar, ketchup and flour)
- Assisting and monitoring the activities of WAs in non-organic partner cooperatives

## Other tools for action/ Future initiatives

Will establish a special desk and assign a focal person to work on gender and development issues and concerns.

Challenges towards gender equity, need:

- More access to trainings and skill development to increase women's earning capacity
- Women's education in and leadership skills training
- Strict enforcement of gender-focused laws
- Preventing/eliminating sexual harassment in the workplace by increasing awareness among board members, managers, and supervisors

## FAWU (Fako Agricultural Workers Union) Cameroon



FAWU (Fako Agricultural Workers Union) organises plantation workers in the South West Province of Cameroon.

**Region/Country:** Cameroon

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## Example Initiatives

### Maternity Leave

Distributed flyers outlining procedures and legislation for maternity leave to women workers at CDC, PHP Tiko and BOH.

### Nursing mothers

Negotiated with BOH management on behalf of nursing mothers. They now work 5 days and take the 6th day off (which is payable) to spend time with their babies. Women workers preferred to accumulate their paid daily breastfeeding time and instead use it as a whole day off. Intend to negotiate to achieve with CDC too.

### Muster Talks (5.30am)

Continuous gender awareness campaign to all workers

This increases our union membership of both women and men and makes the women in particular more active members, rather than feeling in the minority.

### Recruitment

Gaining new women members by sharing FAWU's successes with members and non-members.

### Meetings with women representatives and women workers

- To discuss women's issues at the workplace
- To develop suggestions/proposals to negotiate with management
- To allow for constant communication with and between women representatives
- Distribution of membership forms through representatives to recruit more women members
- Field visits to talk with other women workers and make sure women representatives are giving them feedback from the meetings that they participate in

### Creation of Steering Committees (SC) in the CDC and BOH Plantations Limited to pilot the prioritisation of women's issues in the workplace

- Intend to form Women's Committees (lead by women representatives) at farm level to work alongside the SC



## Achievements

### BOH Plantation

The SC in BOH achieved the following after negotiations with management:

- Separate dressing rooms for men and women at the packhouse.
- Toilets (separate for men and women) now provided in the pack house. Toilets and huts constructed in the field.
- Two women undergoing training to become Headwomen (the level between worker and supervisors). These two women were promoted following capacity building through and active membership of the SC. One promoted woman is the President of the SC.
- Potable water now provided in plantations (still need to improve water quality) as negotiated by women!

BOH report that 50% of their management are women. Although we cannot verify this, it is clear that there is an active woman in management who attends SC meetings and has been very helpful in ensuring women's issues are addressed. 30% of workers at BOH are women and 75% of workers are members of FAWU.

A group of women produced a laundry detergent and sold it to women in various plantations of CDC, PHP and BOH. There are plans to undertake other skills training (bag, sandal and soap making). This both provides small funds for the SC and provides skills for alternative income generation. In time the SC could explore extending credit for women wanting to use these skills but needing initial capital investment.

- A new hospital and laboratory.
- One new truck even though transportation is still a problem.

## CDC

- In CDC, portable water has been provided in Ndongo and Holtforth and it is to be extended to some other farms.
- There is now first aid in all the farms with standby nurses.
- Sexual harassment has greatly reduced.
- Gender equality, e.g. women now work as welders and engineers.
- Women are no longer deflowering as they were experiencing abdominal pains, irregular menstruation and even miscarriage due to frequent climbing of ladders. Instead undertaking alternative jobs such as deleafing.
- Payment of housing allowances to all workers while on leave.
- Share learning amongst themselves on how to take care of their babies, e.g. sterilize bottles, prepare and serve babies food etc.

## PHP

- Light duties to pregnant women and nursing mothers. They put in shorter hours.
- Special building – crèche where babies can be looked after by a special worker employed by PHP for that purpose. Women are not comfortable with this idea, however, because of the intensive use of chemicals in the area which are a serious health hazard.



## FESTAGRO

FESTAGRO is the Federation of Agro-industrial Workers' Unions with members in banana, sugar-cane and melon production and processing.

**Region/Country:** Honduras

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## Example Initiatives

**The 12 gender specific clauses in company CBAs, achieved through collective bargaining. Including:**

- Maternity clause: paid maternity leave for 12 weeks (6 before and 6 after giving birth).
- Breastfeeding clause: breastfeeding women are entitled to two paid 30 minute breaks for breastfeeding (morning and afternoon) until the baby is 6 months old.
- Sexual harassment and physical abuse clause – regarding the processing of complaints at the workplace.

**Local fundraising initiatives for training activities for women:**

- The Women's Committee managing the catering on plantations, fundraising to further educate and train women

**Promoting participation of women in leadership roles in worker unions**

**Distributing awareness raising leaflets for women, including:**

- Information on maternity rights.

- Guidance on how to join the union, including contacts.
- Sexual harassment and domestic violence awareness, including guidance on how to report it and get help.
- Women's health awareness, including the importance of vaginal cytology and mammography, and information on breast and uterine cancers to help to prevent cancer.

### **Agreement on how to put forward their proposals:**

1. Raise awareness on the platform amongst more women on the plantations, enabling them to learn about the regional agenda.
2. Capacity building for their fellow women union leaders in collective bargaining strategies.
3. Make women aware of the need to have women sitting on the negotiating bodies in order to champion the clauses submitted at the preliminary stages of the collective bargaining process.
4. Hold meetings with the women's committee and male and female bosses from the packing department to discuss women's needs and prepare clauses using the PRMB (Platform of Women Banana Workers' Demands) as a guide.
5. Preparation of a document with 5 clauses on: 1. The crime of sexual harassment, 2. Non-discrimination of women who live with HIV/AIDS, 3. First aid kits containing sanitary towels, 4. Job stability for women and 5. Canteen management by the women's committee at the packing plants.
6. To seek support from union leaders and women members and share proposals with the trade union Executive Boards.
7. Hold meetings with the women's committees of each trade union, with the aim that each committee should meet with women workers on each plantation so that the women could assimilate the content of the clauses and insist on being involved in the committee preparing the list of demands.
8. At their first attempt they did not get a single clause accepted. They tried again at the next contract discussions and, helped by previous experience and better preparation, they sought out male colleagues who would support their efforts so that when it came time to negotiate they would get at least one clause accepted.
9. This time they insisted on having a woman on the negotiating body to champion the clauses they had proposed. Finally getting women onto the negotiating body was a huge step forward because for many years, indeed ever since the unions were set up, it has been the men who have been the negotiators.
10. At these second negotiations they only managed to get one clause accepted (the one on sexual harassment). This success reinforced their determination to continue their involvement.
11. In subsequent collective bargaining negotiations they kept up their efforts to exert their influence and continued holding regular meetings with women on each plantation in order to find out which other clauses they could include in the next round of negotiations and getting women involved in standing up for themselves.

## **Achievements**

- Company's financial support for women's medical examinations (vaginal cytology, mammography)
- 1 hour off work to celebrate the International Women's Day
- Law of Regulation of HIV – providing coordinated education and prevention
- Permit for women to take their children to the doctor (paid)



### **IUF Africa**

IUF Africa is the regional structure of the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers which unites workers organised in 429 trade unions in 130 countries

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## Priority areas for action

### Aims of women’s work in the banana industry

- Gender equity in the work place
- An end to sexual harassment
- Better maternity protection
- An end to insecure jobs
- Better health and safety rights

### The Women’s Project

- Recruiting and organising more women into trade unions
- Increasing the number of women in decision-making bodies of the trade union
- Getting gender issues onto the mainstream union agenda
- Confidence and capacity building of women union members
- Awareness raising of women’s rights
- Campaigns to get these rights implemented (focus on the ILO Convention 183 - Maternity Protection, Convention 189 Decent work for Domestic workers)



## Example Initiatives

### IUF Africa Women’s Project

- Implemented in 16 of the 28 African countries with affiliate organisations.
- Ghana’s two banana companies (Volta River Estate Limited (VREL) and Golden Exotic Limited (GEL)) are beneficiaries of the project:
- Capacity training programmes to promote women’s issues in Collective Bargaining Agreements
- Education and training on gender-based violence at home and sexual harassment in the workplace
- Workshop to raise awareness on gender specific Occupational Health and Safety, which prohibits pregnant women from carrying out activities that require dealing with chemicals and working longer than 8 hours/day.
- Advocacy programmes to increase the participation and representation of women in union activities at all levels
- Research into the situation of women working in the banana industry.

## **Securing Decent Work in Tropical Fruit Export Production Project in Ghana and Cameroon (with Banana Link, FAWU and GAWU)**

- Education and training
- Research
- Gender specific work
- Building the capacity of, and, empowering women. Developing their communication skills to educate fellow workers on the rights of women in the workplace, e.g. observed an inspiring Health and Safety training session delivered by Comfort Ashille, a trained union representative, to more than 100 workers.

## **Collaborating with Fairtrade International and Fairtrade Africa to enhance workers' rights in the banana sector**

- Seven-day course "Train the Trainers on Training Packages on the Fairtrade Standards for Hired Labour" in 2015 at Arusha, Tanzania.

Aim: to develop a network of trainers to deliver the Hired Labour Standards training programmes for Fairtrade Certified Companies. Three IUF Africa Team members participated (Adwoa Sakyi, Omara Amuko and Mopholosi Morokong).

### **FAWU (Cameroon)**

- Education and training
- Negotiated for separate dressing rooms for men/women
- Construction of toilets in the pack houses and in the field.
- Selected women undergoing training to become Headwomen at CDC.
- Portable water is now provided on some farms

## **Achievements**

- Increased number of women participating in negotiation at the banana plantations of VREL, GEL and CDC, and in the WBF
- Unions prioritising advocacy work on gender equity
- Promoting women's issues in CBAs e.g. maternity protection (anti-natal and postnatal provisions, paid 90-day maternity leave, and time off for nursing mothers to breastfeed their babies for nine months).
- Negotiating for better child care and nursing facilities, and for increased women's employment (currently 130/604 and 183/2500 workers are women in VREL and GEL respectively)
- Almost 40% of women representation at the leadership level, as seen at the FAWU Congress, Cameroon
- Promotion of women to 'supervisor' positions at VREL and GEL. One woman promoted to Assistant Manager and a gender focal person appointed.
- A more systematic mechanism between IUF and concerned affiliates and Fairtrade International, which could oversee the application of the Hired Labour Standard and facilitate discussion of areas of mutual concern.
- IUF/Fairtrade gender training for male workers in GEL
- Research to "Understand women's attitudes towards barriers to employment at GEL" (results will be shared through the WBF)
- Reduced sexual harassment
- Improved gender rights and responsibilities
- The relationship between the trade unions, IUF, Fairtrade and Banana Link is important to improve working conditions for women banana workers.

## SITRAIBANA

SITRAIBANA is the trade union of banana workers employed by Chiquita subsidiary, Chiriqui Land Company.

**Region/Country:** Panama

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### Example Initiatives

#### The Chiquita/COLSIBA/IUF Pilot Project:

Goals set in 2014:

- Identifying employment opportunities for women
- Carrying out Health & Safety risk assessment for women
- Ensuring that there are opportunities for personal development/education
- Communicating the program to the workers

#### Activities including:

- Analysis of H&S risks for women workers in pack-house and field
- Communicating the sexual harassment policy in the workplace
- Campaign on the Women's committee and inclusion of a gender clause in CBAs
- Working with the company towards the hiring of more women

#### Action for the Committee:

- Communicate the sexual harassment policy and the Agreement between Chiquita, COLSIBA and IUF in the workplace.
- Present a risk analysis of plantation work and packing work.
- Ran a campaign on the Women's committee and gender clauses in Collective Agreements.
- Make sure that industry and government respect the law and fully uphold the rights of women in Collective Agreements, Framework Agreements and Conventions of the ILO (International Labour Organization) 87, 98 etc.

#### Census in the Teobroma communities in 2013

- Gathered information about unemployed women
- The goal was to use this information to find ways to increase their employment opportunities

An update about this work will be presented at the Gender Equity Meeting.





## SINTRAINAGRO

SINTRAINAGRO is the national agricultural workers' union with members in the banana, sugarcane, oilpalm, rice and flower sector.

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### Priority areas for action

Collective bargaining and equality of opportunities for women

### Example Initiatives

**Since 1995, working to secure the recognition and participation of women in the banana industry.**

#### **Negotiation on collective bargaining incorporating a gender-sensitive approach:**

- Using collective bargaining as a tool to redress inequalities between men/women in the workplace; claiming that gender sensitivity should inform the entire process
- Incorporating a gender-sensitive approach means that the interests of both men and women are represented and reflected throughout the entire collective bargaining process
- Presence of both men and women throughout the negotiations was essential:
  - Before: assessment and list of demands
  - During: Negotiating Committee formed by men and women
  - After: men and women present on the committees set up to monitor agreements
- Presented 21 'Demands for women workers' that can be used to define union priorities

#### **2 more women have been integrated in SINTRAINAGRO's Board of Directors**

#### **Women's Employment and Training**

- Priority is being given to women in contracting procedures, which is positive towards women's employment. But women are still finding barriers to being hired in plantations.
- Negotiations August 2017: agreed that companies will hire 2 more women for each productive unit
- Ongoing programme to train >350 women in banana industry work (through the SENA, Neo Program, the union and the company) so they can qualify to be employed in the plantations.

### Achievements

#### **9 principal achievements made by SINTRAINAGRO for women workers in CBAs:**

- Progress towards ending discrimination on the grounds of age and gender
- When vacancies arise on plantations, women with skills will be hired in preference to men (to increase the number on women workers)
- Activities for organisations of women who are the main family breadwinners: capacity-building and training on skills to run the catering on plantations
- It is not permitted to specify an age range for candidates to be recruited
- The running of the plantation canteens will be handed over to women who are main family breadwinners (where possible)

- Companies will promote the participation of trained trade union members who are the main family breadwinners in the drawing-up of staffing schedules for the workers
- Agreements on extra-legal benefits (help with maternity, family bereavement, marriage, schooling, rent, purchasing glasses, and Christmas bonuses...)
- Companies agreed to take on a minimum of two women per plantation (to increase opportunities for women)
- Augura and Sintrainagro will coordinate the roll-out of the capacity-building programmes in order to guarantee that women have the skills to carry out the plantation work

Progress is still very limited, and there is a lot of work to do.



## SITRABI

SITRABI is the trade union representing workers at Del Monte's banana plantations in Izabal.

**Region/Country:** Guatemala

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## Example Initiatives

**In Guatemala: "Manifesto for Women's Day" - Women's Committee of the Union of Izabal Banana Workers SITRABI** - <http://colsiba.org/?p=260#>

**Collective bargaining for specific clauses for women in collective agreements, negotiated with the Del Monte company (trading as Bandegua). Women have had a strong influence on collective bargaining situations:**

1. Raised awareness on the Platform of Women Banana Workers' Demands (which COLSIBA already had in place) with members of the SITRABI executive board and groups of SITRABI members (men and women).
2. Met colleagues from the women's committee and bosses from the packing sector to discuss our needs as women and prepared proposals based on those discussions.
3. Once their list of demands had been prepared, they submitted them to the communications committee, which meets before the final submission of demands in order to review which articles can be taken to the negotiating table.
4. In 2004, they began to formally submit their own draft agreements, using the Platform of Women Banana Workers' Demands as a guide to draw up clauses for women. However, not one single clause from their proposal got passed on this occasion.
5. In 2010, they met colleagues from the women's committee and some male colleagues from the packing department and they discussed the importance of having women involved in the collective bargaining negotiations so that there would be someone championing women's interests when negotiations were taking place but they only managed to get one woman to represent women at these negotiations.
6. Prepared a new proposal and submitted it to the negotiating body and the communications committee.
7. At the next meeting held to elect the negotiating body, they put forward their colleague, María del Carmen Molina Palma, to act as an observer but in fact she ended up being a negotiator. She did an excellent job at the negotiations, getting 5 clauses accepted.

At the next contract negotiations in 2012, they again prepared another proposal and this time managed to get another four clauses accepted.

In 2015, they again submitted their list of demands and got another clause accepted, evidence that they have been making progress and gaining negotiating knowledge and skills but they have realised how important it is to have skilled women leaders representing them in the collective bargaining negotiations.

**Throughout this whole process, they had:**

- A meeting with SITRABI executive board members.
- A meeting with the women's committee and bosses from the packing department.
- A battle to get women onto the communications committee and the negotiating body.
- An awareness campaign on the need for and importance of having women involved at the negotiating table.
- A guidance campaign on making good use of our advances.
- Sharing of information about the clauses for women we managed to get agreed as well as information about our obligations to make use of the rights we have gained.
- Regular meetings with the women's committee.
- A social partnership with some of our male colleagues.

## Achievements

**Managed to get the following clauses accepted:**

1. An equity approach in the collective agreement (which they did not have before).
2. Two hours' breastfeeding for women who have given birth to twins or triplets.
3. An additional week's pay over and above the legal entitlement for women who give birth by Caesarean section.
4. A meal for International Women's Day.
5. When women are sacked during their probationary period because they have found the work physically difficult, they will have the chance to be re-hired.
6. Payment for washing the canvas aprons the women use in their work. The company used to pay an outside contractor Q 50.00 quetzals (US\$6.50) for each apron to be washed but now each worker is paid Q 2.58 (US\$0.34) to wash her own apron.
7. 25% salary adjustment in cases of maternity, common illness or accident.
8. Taking unpaid leave due to a child being sick will not affect their attendance record.
9. Whenever there are production shutdowns, the women will work calibrating fruit and testing it for ripeness.
10. Whenever the packing department is hiring, preference will be given to women applicants.
11. The company will donate 8,000 quetzals (=US\$1050) to cover the costs of commemoration of the International Women's Day
12. A public holiday for Mother's Day (this is due to the government's Legislative Decree)

## Achievements

**Factors we women need to make these advances:**

- To encourage women to get involved in the negotiating bodies
- To have class consciousness
- To have subject knowledge
- To have enough arguments to contest particular cases
- To be skilled
- To be dedicated and conscientious
- Teamwork
- To communicate well
- To have analytical skills

- To set up partnerships with our male colleagues
- To have a gift for persuasion
- Not to give up
- To have vision
- And, above all, to have confidence in ourselves.



## UROCAL

The Unión Regional de Organizaciones Campesinas del Litoral (UROCAL) is a grassroots association of small-scale organic and Fairtrade certified banana producers who also produce other crops as part of non-monoculture systems.

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## Priority areas for action

Promoting food security and diversified exports for small producers

## Example Initiatives

**The Institutional Gender Equality Plan (PIEG) started in 2005. This is UROCAL's Plan of Action focusing on Gender Inequality and activity has included:**

- Awareness programme for managers and UROCAL's staff
- Gender awareness campaigns for women and men producers and workers including public discussions and mobilisation
- Human development workshops
- Incorporation of a focus on gender in internal organisational rules and strategic planning; monitoring of compliance with this
- Increasing female participation on the Board of the organisation
- Training female leaders

## Sexual and reproductive health training

**Food Sovereignty Programme includes promotion of agriculture for domestic consumption and the local market and of women's organisations in food security/ sovereignty/ savings and credit services**

- Workshops on food processing (yogurt, cocoa paste...); health & nutrition; environment; leadership and community management
- Saving and credit accounts
- Implementing agro-ecological family kitchen gardens
- Training on agro-ecology for self sufficiency and commercial production (e.g. producing natural insecticides)
- Gender awareness workshops for families, including intra-family violence
- Women's participation in local agro-ecology fairs and meetings