

Gender just climate solutions: Indigenous women-led sustainable agricultural production

Honduras, Latin America



Intibucá is located in western Honduras, a country that is highly vulnerable to climate change due to its exposure to climate-related hazards, such as hurricanes, tropical storms, floods, droughts and landslides. In recent years, climate-related weather change has caused repeated crop failure, which has led to increased food insecurity and displacement. The effects are particularly severe for the area's Indigenous Lenca women. Women are responsible for nearly half of Intibucá's agricultural production, yet their income levels are among the lowest in the region.

The Association of Renewed Intibucana Women (Asociación de Mujeres Intibucanas Renovadas, AMIR), a grassroots organisation of some 650 Indigenous Lenca women, is actively addressing these problems by promoting women-led sustainable agricultural production, which contributes to climate adaptation and mitigation.

The women participate in the production of fruits and vegetables, as well as in the processing processes of products at AMIR's plant. The women sell their products, including preserves, jams, wines, sweets and frozen products, under the brand name Siguatas Lenca. (The term comes from the Lenca language and has several meanings, including woman and girl.)

Collective plots facilitate women's climate action



In Honduras, as in many places across the globe, women are denied access and control over key resources like land, which not only contributes to their food and economic insecurity, but precludes their full participation in measures to adapt to and mitigate climate change. AMIR saw the challenge first hand: in Silimania and Planes Rio Grande, two areas in Intibucana, Lenca women were engaged in agriculture on plots that they rented, which meant they had no guarantee of using the plots again. This created a

barrier to their investment in the health of the plot, such as measures to enhance soil nutrition, since the women may not be able to enjoy the benefits. Moreover, the women lacked sufficient knowledge about the management of certain crops and consequently used practices that are harmful to the environment.

To deal with this problem, AMIR tried a new strategy. The group raised funds to acquire plots in Silimania and Planes Rio Grande for collective use by Lenca women. In the case of Silimania, the property was used by its previous owners to produce vegetables, basic grains and tubers, with aggressive management that had deteriorated the soil considerably. Moreover, the plots were difficult to get to, so AMIR engaged with local authorities, which helped improve access to the collective plots. In Silimania, a new paved street enables women to use a care to enter with the tools, supplies and materials to carry out their work and to harvest crops with less effort and lower cost.

AMIR provided materials, supplies, tools and seeds for development of the collective plots, including installation of an irrigation system. Through training and technical support

of local resources for the manufacture of organic fertilizers and sustainable management of irrigation systems. The women are now sustainably managing the available water resources, and have implemented soil and forest conservation and recovery measures, which help reduce the impacts of climate change. The women have already harvested potatoes, vegetables and beans, and are excited to increase production. The collective plots enable the women to meet their household needs, as well as contribute to AMIR's collective strategy of marketing agricultural products. With access to the land, the women can use it sustainably and can make decisions about economic resources, which fosters their autonomy.

A Green Market for Lenca Women

The municipality of Intibucá has signed a framework collaboration agreement to support AMIR's initiatives. Among other things, AMIR has also been working to influence the government to allocate a permanent space for Lenca women to market their agricultural and processed products. In the meantime, the group has succeeded in getting a temporary space, known as the Green Market for Lenca Women, which is used twice a month. The

Green Market is a key space for Lenca's women's income generation, and has facilitated greater participation and involvement of Lenca women in the entire value chain. This is a significant achievement, as one of the greatest challenges for women producers is the dominance of intermediaries, who buy their products below the market price.

The collective plots in Silimania and Planes Rio Grande and the Green Market are in the early stages of development. But already, they show the effectiveness of Indigenous women-led sustainable agricultural production. The Lenca women are playing their part to address climate change, restore their local ecosystem and sustainably manage the land and water, while strengthening their livelihoods.

For more information, visit: gaggaalliance.org, or contact gaggacommunication@fondocentroamericano.org

About the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA)

The Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA) is a diverse network of women's funds, environmental justice funds, NGOs, and women-led community-based organisations that have joined forces to strengthen the nexus of women's rights, climate and environmental justice. It works at local, national, regional and international levels in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and Europe. GAGGA's aim is to influence governments, investors, and donors to divest from fossil fuel (related) industries, defend critical ecosystems, and support inclusive, sustainable and gender-just climate solutions. It does so by strengthening and deepening connections and collaborations among women-led community-based organisations (CBOs) and movements working on women's rights, environmental and climate justice, and by pursuing women-centred lobby and advocacy (L&A) agendas.

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