



**Women, Coffee and Climate Project
Origins Trip Reflection Report
October 17 – 18, 2023
Sidama Region**

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Overview of the visit

In the spirit of fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration, our recent exchange visit to Dilla and Aleta Wondo in the Sidama Region transcended borders and boundaries, providing a dynamic and enlightening experience. This visit convened individuals from diverse backgrounds and geographies, including Colombia (represented by Fabiola Tombe and members of the Women Coffee Growers Association AMUCC), Honduras (represented by Angie Rubi and Orellana-Powell, private coffee business owners), Spain (Aurora Martin, Spanish Cooperation), and Ethiopia (Alemu Tesfaye from OSSREA and Mathewos Mebrat from JARC). This gathering was made possible through the Women, Coffee, and Climate DeSIRA project, uniting us through our shared passion for coffee and its significance in our respective regions. Our journey was immersive, offering a profound exploration of coffee production, sustainable practices, and gender inclusivity in Ethiopia. As we ventured into new territories, exchanged ideas, and forged lasting connections, this exchange visit epitomized our collective commitment to fostering a more equitable and sustainable coffee industry. This report encapsulates the essence of our journey, sharing our experiences, key insights, and the collaborative potential that lies ahead.

The exchange and learning visit in Ethiopia commenced with our participation in the IWCA convention, held at the Ethiopian Airlines Skylight Hotel in Addis Ababa over three days. This event was meticulously organized by Ethiopian Women in Coffee in collaboration with the International Women in Coffee Association (IWCA). In this initial phase, the team engaged in vital discussions concerning the role of women in Ethiopia's coffee sector. These discussions included the presentation of socioeconomic studies that shed light on the challenges faced by Ethiopian women, who constitute the backbone of the entire coffee production process. Notably, representatives from the country's agricultural bodies unveiled initiatives aimed at addressing these challenges.



During the convention, the Women, Coffee, and Climate DeSIRA project had the privilege to introduce its mission and objectives to the conference attendees. We also had the opportunity to highlight the EthioLatinCoffee community of practice and its past achievements, as well as future aspirations. Additionally, the convention featured active involvement from IWCA country chapters, each showcasing the projects undertaken in their respective nations and the persistent challenges they strive to overcome.

What made this event truly exceptional was the platform it provided for connecting and exchanging diverse experiences among women involved in various facets of the coffee industry, including producers, traders, baristas, entrepreneurs, buyers, and researchers. The convention concluded with an inspiring exhibition where women coffee producers from different countries showcased their remarkable activities. As the event drew to a close, participants gathered for a networking dinner, fostering meaningful interactions, and facilitating the exchange of contacts and ideas.

The exchange visit to coffee-growing areas in Ethiopia took place on October 19th and 21st, 2023, providing our diverse team with a unique opportunity to delve into the rich coffee heritage, agricultural practices, and challenges faced by coffee farmers in the region. Ethiopia, renowned as the birthplace of coffee, served as our backdrop, with a particular focus on Awada Agricultural Research Sub Center in Dilla and Aleta Wondo, both pivotal in coffee research and production within the country.

Awada Agricultural Research Sub Center, Dilla

The Awada Agricultural Research Sub Center, situated in Dilla, is one of the 23 research centers dedicated to coffee in Ethiopia. These research centers coordinate coffee research efforts nationwide, with Jimma being the central hub. Awada is a subsidiary of the Wondogenet Agricultural Center, with a primary focus on coffee research, technology development, agronomic practices, and promoting innovative varieties.

The center conducts research on approximately 44 coffee varieties, jointly released with other centers, emphasizing productivity, disease resistance, and suitability for diverse agroecological zones. Nine of these varieties are hybrids, boasting higher productivity, with yields of around 2600 kg per hectare. Four primary coffee production systems are forest coffee, semi-forest, garden, and plantations.

Awada collaborates closely with the Jimma Agricultural Research Center to develop and release coffee varieties. The center maintains a substantial coffee germplasm collection and has released four notable coffee varieties, two of which are hybrids. The best-performing varieties and technologies are showcased and disseminated to farmers, with a focus on women's participation.

Cluster Farm Sites Visit

A visit to a local farmer, Etenesh Gebresillasie, highlighted the success of cluster farming and the positive impact of Awada's support. Etenesh, an elderly lady, inherited her coffee farm and received training from Awada. She removed old coffee plants and planted new varieties, using organic compost twice a year, supplied by Awada. Challenges she faces include climate issues, water scarcity, limited land availability, fluctuating coffee prices, and market access.

Another woman farmer, Ejigayehu Lanka, shared her positive experience with the cluster farming approach, which yielded better results than traditional methods. Challenges she faced included market access, despite having an export license.

Visit at Aleta Wondo District

Aleta Wondo is a significant coffee-growing region within Sidama, Ethiopia. The visit included interactions with women entrepreneurs, coffee farmers, and a seedling farm managed by women's cooperatives.

Sidama has 165,000 hectares of coffee land, with 400,000 coffee farmers, of which 20% are women who own land. The region boasts 450 coffee processing factories. Aleta Wondo's land covers 17,146.65 hectares, with coffee accounting for 62% of the total land coverage. The region's coffee yield has decreased due to climate change, currently at 8,100 kg/hectare.



The visit included a seedling farm managed by women's cooperatives, supported by the Woreda Agriculture Bureau and extension services. Challenges faced by coffee farmers included rainfall variability, resistance to disease-resistant varieties, and limited access to quality seedlings.

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Recommendations included a centralized seedling preparation system, closer collaboration with research centers, and establishing a seed enterprise for coffee.



The team also visited Kebebusch Lamiso PLC, a coffee processing industry, which highlighted the need for financial support for coffee farmers. Smallholder farmers, like Abaynesh Yidana, collaborate with private coffee processors, but require more extensive support, including market access and financial management.

Visit to Aleta Wondo Research Center

The visit to Aleta Wondo research center was an enriching experience for our team. Upon arrival, we were warmly greeted by a researcher and a young female geneticist who played a pivotal role in our exploration of the Alata Wondo coffee research center. Nestled within a sprawling expanse of land, this center is a hub of coffee research activities in the region. Our tour led us through a fascinating display of diverse coffee varieties and innovative intercropping initiatives. We also learned that

Overall Impression and Comparison

The exchange visit emphasized the strong connection between coffee farming, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation in Ethiopia. Ethiopian coffee farmers prioritize organic practices, soil management, and preserving traditional methods. The quality of Ethiopian coffee was praised, but commercialization remains a challenge. A comparison with Colombia and Honduras revealed similarities in soil protection and intercropping but differences in gender

inclusion. The need for empowering women in the Ethiopian coffee industry was underscored, emphasizing early efforts for lasting change and empowerment.

Notable Innovative and Sustainable Practices in Coffee Farming:

During the exchange visit, we had the privilege of witnessing several innovative and sustainable practices that are making a significant impact on the coffee industry. These practices reflect the dedication of Ethiopian coffee farmers and research centers to not only produce high-quality coffee but also to promote sustainability and environmental stewardship. Below are some of the notable practices we observed:

- **Organic Farming Methods**

Many coffee farmers in Sidama region, particularly those we visited, employ organic farming practices. They use organic compost and natural fertilizers to enrich the soil and maintain its fertility. The emphasis on organic farming aligns with global trends towards environmentally friendly and sustainable agriculture.

- **Cluster Farming Approach**

The cluster farming approach, where multiple farmers collaborate in close proximity, was evident during our visits. This approach promotes knowledge sharing and resource pooling among farmers. Farmers work together on land preparation, planting, and harvesting, which not only boosts productivity but also fosters a sense of community and cooperation.

- **Germplasm Preservation**

Research centers like Awada Agricultural Research Sub Center maintain large collections of coffee germplasm, preserving a wide range of coffee varieties. This practice ensures the genetic diversity of coffee plants, which is crucial for developing resilient varieties that can withstand disease and climate challenges.

- **Diversified Income Sources**

Intercropping was encouraged among coffee farmers to diversify their income sources. Coffee plants were often interplanted with other crops such as banana, Inset. This practice not only provides additional revenue for farmers but also contributes to improved soil health and pest control.

- **Water Management**

Coffee farmers in the region have taken steps to address water scarcity issues by drilling wells or finding alternative water sources. While challenges persist during certain dry periods, efforts are made to secure water for coffee irrigation and processing. Even though a lot has to be done in this area.

- **Preservation of Cultural Practices**

Coffee farming in Ethiopia is deeply intertwined with the country's rich cultural heritage. Farmers take pride in preserving traditional methods and rituals associated with coffee cultivation. This practice not only sustains cultural traditions but also contributes to the unique flavor and quality of Ethiopian coffee.

- **Collaboration with Research Centers**

Close collaboration between coffee farmers and research centers like Awada and Jimma Agricultural Research Center was evident. Farmers receive valuable knowledge, seeds, and technologies from these centers, contributing to improved farming practices and higher yields. Still a lot needs to be done in the area especially in seed management and seedling production.

- **Environmental Conservation**

Coffee farmers in the region have a strong commitment to environmental conservation. Practices such as managing soil erosion and protecting the natural habitat contribute to sustainable coffee production. These innovative and sustainable practices reflect the resilience and dedication of coffee farmers and research institutions. They not only contribute to the quality and productivity of the coffee but also pave the way for a more sustainable and environmentally conscious coffee industry in the region.

Challenges Faced by Women in Coffee Management and Commercialization

During our exchange visit to coffee-growing areas in Sidama, we gained valuable insights into the coffee industry, particularly regarding the challenges faced by women in coffee management and commercialization. While women play a significant role in Ethiopian coffee farming, they encounter several obstacles that hinder their full participation and success in this industry. Below, we highlight these challenges:

- **Climate-Related Challenges**

Climate change has brought increased unpredictability to weather patterns. As a result, women coffee farmers, like their male counterparts, face challenges related to erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts, and unexpected weather events. Climate-induced difficulties is affecting crop yield, coffee quality, and the overall livelihoods of women coffee farmers.

- **Water Scarcity**

Water scarcity is a prevalent challenge in the region. This issue is particularly acute during certain months, when water from wells may not be sufficient for irrigation and processing. Women coffee farmers often have to purchase additional water from external sources, incurring additional expenses.

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- **Limited Access to Land**

Landownership remains a challenge for women in the region, including those involved in coffee farming. In many cases, women have restricted access to land or inherit smaller portions compared to their male siblings. Limited land resources restricts the scale of coffee farming and hinder women's ability to expand their operations.

- **Fluctuating Coffee Prices**

Coffee prices are subject to global market fluctuations, and women coffee farmers are vulnerable to these price variations. The unpredictable nature of coffee prices is affecting the income and financial stability of women farmers, making it challenging to plan for the future.

- **Market Access Barriers**

Despite some women obtaining export licenses, market access remains a significant challenge. Women coffee farmers often struggle to find buyers for their coffee beans, leading to potential financial losses. The lack of market access and connections is hindering the women's ability to sell their coffee at competitive prices.

- **Limited Support Services**

Access to support services such as technical training, financial education, and market information is limited for the women coffee farmers. These services are crucial for enhancing coffee quality, productivity, and business management skills.

- **Lack of Agricultural Infrastructure**

Inadequate infrastructure, including roads and transportation networks, is challenging for women to transport their coffee beans to market. The poor infrastructure we witnessed leads to increased transportation costs and delays.

- **Financial Constraints**

Women coffee farmers lack access to credit and financial resources necessary to invest in their coffee farms, purchase equipment, or expand their operations. The absence of financial support is limiting their ability to improve farm productivity and increase income.

- **Limited Technical Knowledge**

While some women have received training from research centers and cooperatives, there is still a need for more extensive technical knowledge and skills development. Enhancing women's technical expertise in coffee farming practices and value chain management is essential for their long-term success.

Addressing the challenges faced by women in coffee management and commercialization in the Sidama region and in fact in other regions as well is crucial for fostering gender equity and supporting the sustainable growth of the coffee industry. Initiatives that focus on providing

women with access to resources, training, and market opportunities can empower them to overcome these challenges and contribute to the thriving coffee sector in the region.

Impact on Women: Recognizing Women's Roles and Contributions in Coffee Farming

During our exchange visit to coffee-growing areas in the Sidama region, it became evident that women play a significant and indispensable role in the coffee industry. From coffee cultivation to processing and entrepreneurial endeavors, women's contributions are crucial to the success and sustainability of the coffee value chain. Below, we discuss how women's roles and contributions were prominently evident during our visit:



- **Active Participation in Farming**

Women actively engage in coffee farming, taking on essential tasks such as planting, harvesting, and tending to coffee plants. We observed women working diligently in coffee fields, often side by side with men, contributing to the cultivation of high-quality coffee.

- **Entrepreneurship and Management**

We met a women entrepreneur in coffee during our visit. She has taken the initiative to establish and manage coffee processing facilities, including washing and drying stations. This needs to be expanded.

- **Women's Cooperatives**

We had the opportunity to visit women's cooperative actively involved in coffee seedling production. Such cooperatives empower women to collectively manage their coffee farms, share resources, and access training and support services.

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- **Cluster Farming Approach**

Women actively participate in the cluster farming approach, collaborating with other farmers in their communities. This approach fosters knowledge exchange, resource sharing, and collective problem-solving among women farmers.

- **Preserving Cultural Practices**

Women play a vital role in preserving cultural practices associated with coffee farming in the region. These practices include traditional ceremonies that celebrate coffee's cultural significance.

- **Environmental Stewardship**

Women are often at the forefront of environmental conservation efforts in coffee farming. They prioritize organic farming methods, soil management, and practices that promote biodiversity and protect natural habitats.

- **Community Building**

Women coffee farmers contribute to building strong, tight-knit communities. Their participation in cooperative activities and cluster farming fosters a sense of community and mutual support among women and their families.

- **Gender Empowerment**

The presence of women in various roles within the coffee industry (as researchers, technical staff, entrepreneurs), even though so limited, serves as an inspiration and source of empowerment for other women. It demonstrates that women can succeed and thrive in traditionally male-dominated sectors.

- **Advocacy for Gender Equality**

Our interactions with women coffee farmers revealed their determination to advocate for gender equality within the industry. They expressed the need for more inclusive policies, increased access to resources, and equal opportunities for women in coffee farming.

The impact of women in the coffee industry is profound and multifaceted. Women's roles and contributions are instrumental in shaping the coffee value chain, from farm to cup. As we witnessed during our visit, women are not just passive participants but dynamic leaders, entrepreneurs, and agents of change, even though they are very small in number. Recognizing and supporting women's contributions in coffee farming is essential for fostering gender equity, improving livelihoods, and promoting sustainable coffee production in Ethiopia. Their resilience and determination serve as an inspiration to all involved in the coffee industry.

Reflections from Participants:

Here are reflections from four participants who took part in the exchange visit. Angie Rubi, a young coffee entrepreneur based in Honduras, manages a family coffee farm in

Honduras along with her sisters. Fabiola Tombe Velasco, the President of the Women Coffee Association in Popayan, Colombia, known as AMUCC and Mayra Orellana-Powell, a coffee entrepreneur from Honduras, leads Catracha Coffee, a company actively engaged in the coffee business and supporting coffee-producing communities in Honduras.

1) Participant Name: Angie Rubi

We participated in the IWCA convention in the city of Addis Ababa for 3 days. In this first stage of the trip, very important issues about women in the Ethiopian coffee sector were discussed, where socioeconomic studies were demonstrated that evaluate the challenges that Ethiopian women present and are the main workforce in the entire coffee process, but alternatives from the country's agricultural entities were also presented to begin to counteract these challenges. There was also participation from the IWCA country chapters, where each one presented the projects that have been carried out in their countries and the challenges that they continue to seek to overcome. The importance of this space is the connection and transfer of different experiences that are lived at an international level between women producers, traders, baristas, entrepreneurs, buyers, researchers, because we are united by two things: 1. The passion and love for coffee. 2. The challenge of making our voices heard and taken into account in an industry that is dominated by men.

As the second part of the trip, we visited a coffee-producing region in Hawassa. We traveled to Dilla and Aleta Wondo to visit the model farms where JARC has been assisting with new coffee varieties, planting distances, agro-cultural activities that allow producers to produce sustainably without having to invest so much to counteract pest and disease problems. The importance of this phase was based more on the area of production, knowing the production systems of Ethiopia, seeing the reality of women in the field, and above all understanding how their coffee is marketed if they are really being remunerated in a fair way.

- ***Preconceptions or expectations you had before the trip.***

Taste their exquisite coffees and be able to live the experience of seeing the true origin and the meticulous processing that they give to this internationally recognized coffee. Learn about Ethiopian culture. Connect with different people to exchange experiences in a reciprocal way.

Key Lessons:

- **Notable Practices:** Sustainable practice: Genetic improvement and selection of varieties that are best suited to their production area. By having varieties that are resistant to pests and diseases and that have the added bonus of maintaining the desired quality, it is really a sustainable practice, the producer is not in the need to have to apply chemicals and only practices agro-cultural activities, and his production is not affected. Associating coffee plantations with other food crops such as Enset, bananas and vegetables, to maintain food security.
- **Challenges:** Highlights the challenges women face in the management and marketing of coffee at this location. The lack of price information at the national and international level to know how to market their coffees. The marketing chain within the country is very extensive, there are many intermediaries involved, which is where a large part of the money stays and what reaches the producer is only 1/4 of the real export price. The lack of information on the quality and costs of their coffee, in order to demand fair prices for their coffee.
- **Impact on Women:** Women are the main protagonists in the countryside and in their communities, they are the ones who have the greatest presence in the work of nurseries, cleaning of weeds, harvesting, drying coffee, coordinators of the activities that must be done in the field, and above all they are mothers, they watch over the well-being of their children despite the fact that they spend more than 8 hours working.
- **Community Involvement:** Share any community engagement initiatives or collaborations with local authorities that you witnessed. The nursery project is carried out by a group of 15 women to provide healthy and vigorous plants to the other producers in their area. This project began with funding from the NGO Solidaridad and once it was completed the community was able to sustain it on its own.
- **Sustainability:** Reflect on how the location visited contributes to the sustainability of the coffee industry, especially as it relates to women.

In the region we visited, we were able to observe that there is a presence of JARC investigations and assistance for both men and women. The plots of the women we visited were assisted by the JARC and provided with resistant varieties, and taught them production systems that allow them to maintain nourished, healthy plants that last for years maintaining a stable production, that is a contribution to their sustainability, because they are able to continue producing.

Also the last visit to Kebewush Lamiso PLC Coffee Industry Site is an example of sustainability where she is already empowering herself with more links in the chain, where she bought more land to increase her productive area and is already becoming an intermediary in the field by buying and processing coffee from neighboring producers who do not have the infrastructure to process their coffees.

Memorable Stories: *The visit to Kebewush was very memorable for me for the simple fact that they infected us with their culture by inviting us to eat their typical dishes, to live a coffee ritual purely from Ethiopia, to share a very typical Sidamo robe. Not only were we able to learn from their coffee production and processing, but we also learned about their customs and traditions.*

Reflections:

Ethiopia is the country of origin of coffee and its production systems have tried to keep it as traditional as possible so as not to lose its authenticity, in contrast to our countries in Latin America where coffee was brought and domesticated to our conditions. With regard to women, it is a country with many challenges to be solved. Women need to have more assistance in education to be able to become administrators of their assets and not only be part of the workforce in the field, but also have a voice and vote with good judgment, but because they have had the opportunity to be well informed.

The realities we live in as coffee-producing countries are not so far away. We have the same challenges, we have similar community characteristics, each country with a different context but in the end it is the same economic/social/environmental effect that we have. In the Community of Practice, practices and cases that are occurring in each country are shared so that in the end the experience of a person in Ethiopia can be useful to one in Honduras or vice versa.

Conclusion:

Ethiopian coffees internationally will always be the best valued for the quality that is unique in this origin thanks to its genetic diversity, its climatic conditions, its soils rich in nutrients and organic matter, but its commercialization is quite dominated internally by many intermediaries. There is a wide gap of lack of

information both for producers who know about the purchasing markets, as well as for the foreign market that does not get information from its producers.

Final Thoughts:

- *Promote it at coffee fairs, as it is a good opportunity to make yourself known to all kinds of protagonists in the coffee value chain.*
- *That there are conversations made up of different countries, but not in such large groups because sometimes it is lost in focus, there can be different groups and in the following month the people in the group exchange so that everyone has the opportunity to get to know each other.*
- *Workshop focused on women's financial education.*
- *Workshop that talks about the quality of coffee and its importance in price*

How you plan to contribute to the EthioLatinCoffee Community of Practice:

Well I have already started to do it, since I arrived in my country I have been sharing with several people in the field my experience of this trip and also to share with them the initiative of the practical community so that they can have more information about what they do in other countries and what ideas can be adopted. I am also willing to support the sharing of the experience on behalf of Honduras with others who want to know more about our production systems, marketing and our culture.

Much gratitude and admiration to my Ethiopian brothers. The compilation of information on what each country does with its coffee farming becomes a database that we can all then have a challenge and if we look for it in the community we can find similar experiences and what they have done to overcome that challenge. At the end of the day this is a community and the community backs each other up and supports each other

Additional Notes

As an additional note, I encourage them to do more about the participation of young women who are also in research positions. For example, we met a young geneticist at the coffee research center, and I was personally surprised to see a young woman in the area of research and with extensive knowledge and sympathy to explain. More consideration should also be given to young women who are in different areas of the chain.

II) *Fabiola Tombe Velasco*

We visited a coffee plantation with shade, and also a plantation of false banana, an experimental crop. Then we visited another coffee plantation, both plantations were very well maintained.

Coffee Value Chain: I believe that very little reaches the coffee farmer, there are many limitations and few business opportunities, and there is a lack of training in business-related topics. Before the trip, I had high expectations about coffee cultivation in the land of its origins. It has been a dream come true. Most importantly, for me, was witnessing how coffee and food are produced without any chemical fertilizers.

Notable Practices

- *Organic fertilization,*
- *Planting distances of 2x2 meters,*
- *Various levels of shading,*
- *Soil aeration through tilling,*
- *Remarkably, zero chemical use. Challenges faced by Ethiopian women, in general, include the need for training in various areas.*
- *Access to specialty markets,*
- *Engaging youth in coffee cultivation, processing, and marketing. Impact on Women*
Overall, women play a crucial role in Ethiopian coffee production. They work the land and make it productive, but ultimately, decisions about marketing are made by their husbands. Women are involved in every stage of production, but their role often ends there.

- **Participation:** *I believe that women mainly help in farm production; there seems to be limited involvement in different stages of the coffee chain.*
- **Limited community participation:** *I observed some presence of local authorities, but I believe there is insufficient support for women there, and if there is support, it's very limited and fledgling. Sustainability Generally, women are committed to what they do. As long as women are leading processes, they will be sustainable, whether it's in production, marketing, or any other process. Lasting Impression For me, the lasting impression that will always be in my mind is the production of coffee without any kind of chemical fertilizers. It has been a wonderful experience. There, women, children, and people, in general, are happy with what they have and what they do. What I Learned on This Journey I learned to value what I have today. As a female leader, I learned that we must share our successful experiences with others. I learned that we should value our land, our environment, our families, and everything nature gives us. These ideas align with the community of practice, sharing all these ideas and successful experiences. Transferability I believe that transferability is possible as long as we have the support and commitment of the Ethio-Latin Coffee community. We all need to paddle in the same direction, always thinking about common goals. Conclusions In my opinion, and from what I could observe during the farm visits, women are not empowered in their own processes. I see that there are many barriers preventing women from*

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training in different areas. I believe that if there is a gender policy, it is very incipient. There is a need for more technology, information, and training in various subjects.

Commitment

- *Promote and make our success stories known to the entire Ethio-Latin community.*
- *Continue working as a team.*
- *Contribute to the development of a real gender policy based on our experience.*

Final Thoughts

- *There is much work to be done.*
- *Work on a real gender policy.*
- *Provide training or informative bulletins on the most relevant topics. Proposal I propose making these successful experiences of the AMUCC organization known so that little by little, we become aware of the importance of being women and being empowered in our own processes. Feelings It has been a very enriching experience but also one with a great commitment to continue contributing as much as we can. Getting to know the land of coffee origins has been wonderful, and most importantly, seeing how things are produced there without any kind of fertilizers has been the most beautiful part. And seeing how people are happy with what they have, that's priceless. Thank you very much for allowing me to live this wonderful experience.*

III) Mayra Orellana-Powell

I had the opportunity to visit a coffee-producing community in Dilla, Ethiopia, where we were welcomed by Leta Ajema Gebisa from the Awada Agricultural Research Center. It was a remarkable experience to witness the ongoing transition of coffee producers to new coffee varieties. What struck me the most was the promotion of shade for coffee plants and the cultivation of soil-friendly crops like beans and bananas. Hearing the stories of women like Etenash G/Silassie and Ejigayo Lanka was inspiring, and I believe such opportunities for female participation will become more common, encouraging more women to get involved. Supporting coffee producers in this manner is crucial for the coffee value chain as it ensures profitability for producers and the continued presence of Ethiopian coffee in the international market.

Notable Practices: *I was particularly impressed by the fertility of the soil. Producers transitioning to new coffee varieties are adopting good practices such as spacing between coffee bushes and crop diversification. This diversification is encouraging because it means that producers won't solely rely on coffee. It's a great example for us to follow.*

Challenges: *In rural areas, I observed less female participation, limiting their voice. Marketing is a challenge, and focusing on quality is essential to open up more opportunities for women in the coffee industry. I purchased Ethiopian coffee produced by women, and there is room for*

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improvement in selection and roasting for the specialty coffee market. Promoting local consumption of specialty coffee is also important.

Impact on Women: *While attending the conference, I noticed the participation of women who are members of the IWCA. However, I was disappointed that the invited group was seated at the back and not receiving translations of the event. Such details send strong messages and need improvement. I was pleased to see the coffee culture, where women led coffee sales in every place we visited.*

Community Engagement: *I observed the involvement of local authorities and the community when we visited the homechowaeno Cooperative nurseries. What struck me was that the women we visited weren't present when local authorities were giving their presentations. In the future, it's important to include them in the presentations so they can hear what the authorities are sharing.*

Sustainability: *Ethiopia has retained its culture and way of life without succumbing to consumerism to the extent seen in my country, Honduras. I was impressed by the support provided by the Sidamo Agricultural Center to coffee producers in terms of technical assistance.*

Memorable Stories: *During the trip, we learned about the development of new coffee varieties and met Kidist, a 26-year-old researcher and mother of a 9-month-old baby. She's a talented young woman, and I hope that young people like her receive more opportunities in our industry.*

Reflections: *This journey was magical for me. I had dreamed of visiting Africa, especially Ethiopia. It helped me see what happens to a society when it maintains its culture and way of life. Ethiopia is beautiful, and its people are very kind. It's a country with many challenges and opportunities.*

These ideas align with the objectives of the EthioLatinCoffee Community of Practice. I learned a lot from Ethiopia and my fellow producers from Honduras and Colombia. We have formed beautiful friendships.

I believe we can share what we've learned and apply it perfectly in our communities. I'm sharing what I saw with producers in my community. I'm also sharing photos of the colorful artwork in the houses. They use bright and cheerful colors, which we also love.

Conclusion: *I have returned with a strong commitment to promote Ethiopian coffee. I will continue sharing what I learned and saw in Ethiopia on my social networks, focusing on good practices and experiences shared by the producers we visited. When I return to California, I would like to host an event for coffee buyers interested in Ethiopian coffee, sharing what I've learned during the trip.*

Closing Thoughts

- *Participate with a presentation/lecture at the World of Coffee in Copenhagen.*
- *Host an online event with Haile on the marketing of Ethiopian coffees.*

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I will continue participating in online meetings and sharing experiences and ideas with my fellow travelers. We are already sending each other photos of what's happening in our communities. Visiting the origin is essential for marketing coffee. In my case, I couldn't imagine Ethiopia, and one has to experience it to understand it. This trip has opened up opportunities for friendship and collaboration with people we met during the conference and later during the visit to coffee farms in rural Ethiopia.

Additional Notes:

I want to express my gratitude to Aurora and Celia, who provided us with tremendous support to ensure our experience was as comfortable as possible. From them, we learned what it's like to live in Ethiopia and how they have adapted to life there. Matthewos supported us greatly by providing more details about what's happening in the coffee-producing area. During the trip, he showed great patience in communicating with the military personnel who stopped us along the way. Alemu is the kind of diplomat every country should have. He is very educated, and I enjoyed learning about his work in decolonization. Thank you for sharing with us the beauty of your country and also the challenges that Ethiopia faces.