

CASE STUDY:

Activities by the Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.





INGENIO
LA UNIÓN



ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS





All rights reserved. 2023, Association of Sugar Producers of Guatemala (Asazgua)

Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls / Asazgua

Editorial Board:

Alfredo Vila
President of Asazgua

Luis Miguel Paiz
CEO of Asazgua

General Coordination: International Affairs Office, Association of Sugar Producers of Guatemala (Asazgua).

Editing and writing: Iván Vera, María Silvia Pineda, Griseldo Say & Anita de Castillo.

Text Reviewer: Ivy Contreras.

Collaborators: Luis Fernando Salazar, Gustavo Paredes, María Eugenia Ruiz, Lorena Flores, Leonel Díaz, Kelly Rosales & Ivy Contreras.

Design and Layout: Communications Department, Asazgua.

Association of Sugar Producers of Guatemala (Asazgua)

PBX: + (502) 2215-8000

Address: 5th avenue 5-55 zone 14

Europlaza tower 3 building, level 17 and 18 / 01014

Guatemala City, Guatemala

Association of Sugar Producers of Guatemala (Asazgua)



Guatemala



CONTENTS

THE GUATEMALA SUGAR AGROINDUSTRY	8
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	9
THE GUATEMALA SUGAR AGROINDUSTRY AND THE SDG 5	10
1. Social Strategic Framework of the Sugar Agroindustry	11
2. Better Families (Mejores Familias) Program	13
3. Better Communities for Local Development Program	15
INTERLINKAGES WITH OTHER SDGs	17
CONCLUSIONS	18
REFERENCES AND SOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL READING	19

SDG 5: ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS



Target 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.

Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

Target 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

Target 5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.

Target 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Target 5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

Target 5.a: Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

Target 5.b: Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.

Target 5.c: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

Source: United Nations, 2015.



The volcanic soils of southern Guatemala are exceptional for the growth of sugarcane

THE GUATEMALA SUGAR AGROINDUSTRY

As of 2021, Guatemala was the third largest producer in Latin America and the sixth largest exporter of sugar in the world. Sugar is the second agroindustrial product most exported of Guatemala. The Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry generates almost US \$700 million in foreign exchange annually and provides more than 55,000 direct jobs and 278,000 indirect jobs in the country. Besides, the sector receives products and services from more than 6,000 small, medium-sized and large enterprises, which also generate more employment. Only 2.97% of the cultivable land in Guatemala is used for sugarcane production. Asazgua, the Association of Sugar Producers of Guatemala, was created in 1957 to coordinate the activities of the Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry. It includes 11 sugar producers and five technical organizations specialized in research, climate change, sugar exportation and social responsibility (Asazgua, 2020). In addition, since 2022, it counts with an organization specialized in innovation. The sugar producers that are members of Asazgua include: Pantaleón, Concepción, Palo Gordo, Santa Ana, Magdalena, Santa Teresa, La Unión, Madre Tierra, Trinidad (San Diego), La Sonrisa and El Pilar.

The Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry is committed to generating opportunities and prosperity for the people of Guatemala that support the country's sustainable development. It promotes decent and valuable jobs for the wellbeing of the population, while at the same time promoting environmental protection and conservation.

The Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry follows sustainable development principles as reflected by its strategic objectives and integrated actions and programs, supporting social wellbeing, economic growth, industrialization, and environmental protection. The activities of the sugar industry

in Guatemala are recognized as examples of "Good Practices" in the effective implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Associated organizations supporting specific sustainable objectives of the Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry have been created in the last decades. In 1990 Fundazúcar was launched as the social branch for the development and implementation of programs and projects on health, education and development. In 1992 Cengicaña started research activities to develop new varieties of sugarcane, to have integrated pest management, to study land quality and to implement more efficient processes for the cultivation of sugarcane and for the production of sugar. In 1994 Expogranel, one of the most efficient boarding terminals for sugar export in the world, was launched to cover international markets in a more efficient and competitive manner. In 2010, the Private Institute for Climate Change Research (ICC) was created to perform research, activities and projects related to climate change. In 2022 the Innovation Hub was created to develop a program of innovative projects through the identification and optimization of products, activities, processes and business models of the Sugar Agroindustry.

At the international level, the Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry supports the work of ICC on climate change mitigation and adaptation with other countries of Central America. Also through Asazgua, it participates actively in the Global Network on Sustainable Water and Energy Solutions. This is an initiative led by the Division for Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). The Network promotes integrated water and energy solutions that address climate change objectives worldwide.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Sustainable Development Strategy of the Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry is based on its vision, mission and objectives which promote a comprehensive and forward-looking transformative pathway to prosperity and peace for the people of Guatemala, at the same time supporting a healthy and sustainable planet. It follows an integrated approach based on transformation and adaptation to changes expected in the future due to new challenges. With its inclusive participation policy with multi-stakeholder

partnerships, the Sugar Agroindustry, through Asazgua, is committed to coordinating the work of enterprises, governmental entities and civil society to achieve the final goal of prosperity and sustainable development for Guatemala. The Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry is a global example of efficiency and technological advance representing a very relevant factor for the economy of Guatemala with important positive impacts also on the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Objectives

1. Increase productivity through development and improvements in the field and in sugar refineries
2. Provide technical training and capacity building for human resources
3. Develop projects and programs that increase the capacity of the production systems in the field and in sugar refineries, in distribution and commercialization of products, and of the export boarding systems.

One of the objectives of the Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry is to Increase productivity through development and improvements in the field and in sugar refineries.



Vision

Before 2025 the Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry will be the most respected productive sector of the country due to diversification, competitive efficiency, generation of dignified jobs, and respect for the environment, suppliers and communities with whom it relates.

Given its policy of unified action, proactive attitude and strong socioeconomic support, the Sugar Agroindustry leads as a positive agent of change for integral development, boosting the progress of its members and the country.

Mission

The Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry mission includes the following: to act in united manner to cultivate and process sugarcane to produce sugar, electricity, ethanol and other products; to undertake other activities to increase the value of the associated enterprises with a positive impact on the integrated development of the country; to innovate constantly improving competitive efficiency; to facilitate national and international commercialization of sugar; and to ensure sustainability while building trust responsibly.



THE GUATEMALA SUGAR AGROINDUSTRY AND THE SDG 5

The Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry has some initiatives in place with the aim to support efforts to achieve gender equality and to empower women and girls, which are the main objectives of SDG 5. Activities designed to support women by the Sugar Agroindustry are coordinated through the Foundation of Sugar of Guatemala (Fundazúcar).

Asazgua created Fundazúcar in 1990 as the social branch of the Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry for the development and implementation of programs and projects on health, education, development and the wellbeing of the population. The Foundation implements programs at the community level with a focus on women, youth, teachers, health workers, community leaders and municipal leaders who are all key actors for responsibly citizenship. A considerable number of people in municipalities of interest of the Sugar Agroindustry live in vulnerable communities exposed to poverty in most of its forms. The Social Strategy of the Sugar Agroindustry emphasizes building human capital with an integrated focus that empowers people to implement changes towards the improvement of their quality of life and wellbeing.

The most important activities of the sustainable development strategy of the Sugar Agroindustry supporting the objectives of SDG 5 include the Social Strategic Framework of the Sugar Agroindustry, Better Families Program and the Better Communities for Local Development Program. The programs empowers women allowing them to become local leaders. As a result of this and other initiatives, the Sugar Agroindustry is able to continuously support women and families in Guatemala particularly in the region of influence of the Sugar Agroindustry.

1. SOCIAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF THE SUGAR AGROINDUSTRY



1.1. Social Strategic Framework of the Sugar Agroindustry

Objectives and Description

The vision of the Social Strategic Framework of the Sugar Agroindustry is that everyone should have equal opportunities to satisfy basic needs. The Mission of FUNDAZUCAR is to become a model for the promotion of social development that the Sugar Agroindustry could share for implementation in other sectors of the country with the objective of supporting the social and economic development of the people of Guatemala. The specific target is to promote the development of the south coast region and of the communities of migrant workers through the development and implementation of programs and projects on education, health and municipal development that aim to reduce poverty, increase prosperity and ensure the wellbeing of the population.

The activities of FUNDAZUCAR are based on the formation of human capital with an integral development focus in which each individual has the capabilities and potential to effectively support the prosperity of communities.

The sharing of knowledge empowers people allowing a behavioral change that induces greater autonomy and more assertive decisions which in turn improves the quality of life and reduces poverty at all levels. These activities support the objectives of SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women.

The experience of FUNDAZUCAR of the last 30 years has demonstrated that better results are obtained when the focus is on the cause of the problems; therefore, each of its programs is designed with a methodology of logical framework that allows the training and empowering of key actors. These actors effectively support the sustainable development of communities allowing the constant identification of solutions for the short, medium and long term. The key actors include women, youth representatives, teachers, school directors, health workers, community leaders and municipal authorities.

Through this strategic framework, FUNDAZUCAR has an active and permanent role in the communities. Today the Sugar Agroindustry represents a strategic partner for the state that promotes a model of responsible citizenship with trained and informed individuals that support a continuous process to eradicate poverty and promote gender equality. These individuals play an important role in the sustainability of the communities helping to optimize the use of state resources in priority projects and programs, and to strengthen public institutions.

Related Targets

The Social Strategic Framework of the Sugar Agroindustry supports the objectives of Target 5.4 on the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family. It also supports Target 5.5 on ensuring that women have full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Challenges

One of the major challenges is to ensure that the programs and projects from the private sector strengthen public institutions. Poverty eradication and women empowering are continuous challenges that need dynamic intervention not only from the public authorities but also from the private sector for the formation of community leaders as active members of development.

Another important challenge is the coordination of activities between the government and the communities to ensure the implementation of projects based on integrated development

planning. The main objective is to define public policies and implement them locally based on priorities with the efficient administration of public resources.

Lessons Learned

An important lesson from the experience of decades is the need to empower and build the capacities of key actors, particularly women, at the local level in order to effectively identify and perform the necessary actions that ensure the prosperity and sustainability of communities participating in the programs. The implementation of programs should support the state institutions strengthening the participation of qualified and informed citizens.

Continuous monitoring of poor and vulnerable communities is key to ensure progress related to the objectives of reducing poverty, increasing prosperity, achieving gender equality and supporting sustainable development. Therefore, programs are necessary for the continuous monitoring of social and economic indices and indicators that reflect progress in development objectives including on poverty, health, education, nutrition, etc.

Results

The Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry is playing an important role in Guatemala supporting the reduction of inequalities and empowering people, particularly women, through its Social Strategic Framework. Many people are benefiting from the activities related to this social strategy, especially the people from the South Coast region which is the area of operation of the Sugar Agroindustry.



A photograph showing a woman from behind, measuring a young child's height on a scale. The woman has dark curly hair and is wearing a patterned blue and white shirt. The child is looking towards the camera with a neutral expression. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a health center setting.

2. BETTER FAMILIES (MEJORES FAMILIAS) PROGRAM

2.1. Better Families (Mejores Familias) Program

Objectives and Description

The Better Families Program is an innovative model that promotes Food and Nutrition Security, self-confidence, self-management and leadership in women, as agents of change for the development and well-being of their families and their communities. It is aimed at women of childbearing age and children under the age of 5.

The objective is to train women in practices for the adequate selection, preparation and consumption of food, as well as educating mothers in preventive health with sustainable actions that improve mother-child, family and community conditions and support poverty eradication objectives. It also seeks to strengthen community organization to ensure effective processes of self-management and to make food and nutritional security sustainable.

The program places women as the catalyst for development of their families and communities. It also fosters behavioral

change and women empowerment. The Food and Nutrition Security part of the program is based on four pillars: (1) availability, (2) access, (3) consumption and (4) biological use of food.

The program has a monitoring and evaluation system, with measurable and quantifiable indicators that allow evaluating the behavioral change in a gradual manner. Due to its positive results, the program has been used by relevant government entities in Guatemala and Honduras. It has also been implemented by 18 social investors which include companies, foundations and international organizations. Social Investors are individuals or companies that wish to replicate the Fundazúcar programs with their own resources in their geographical area of interest. They are called “Investors” because they provide a social investment with a commitment to the development of human capital.

Better Families / SPOON BID Program

Fundazúcar was selected by the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) for the implementation of the regional strategy on behavioral change program called Better Families / SPOON BID Program. The objective of this program was to develop capacities of women of childbearing age on behavioral changes for the improvement of infant nutritional practices. The strategy is based on social communication and interpersonal advice focusing on the first 24 months of the lives of children. The program included the distribution of nutritional supplements for children between 6 and 24 months old. The program started in 2019 in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health covering 80 communities in 8 municipalities in the department of Baja Verapaz. The program incorporated monitoring activities of the nutritional state of children. It also included capacity building activities for women on site and through household visits and counseling to participating families.

Related Targets

This initiative is related to the objectives of Target 5.5 on ensuring the effective participation of women in leadership activities at all levels of decision-making. It also promotes the empowerment of women which is related to the objectives of Target 5.c.

Challenges

One major challenge of this initiative is related to the need to convince participants about the benefits that can be derived from a change of behavior in nutritional, health and leadership practices. Also, participation of women in this program has been limited since women

are sometimes not allowed to take part in meetings by themselves given gender restrictions due to cultural reasons.

Another main challenge is to ensure that the Law of Food and Nutritional Security of 2005 is implemented as the mechanism that allows the elimination of malnutrition in Guatemala. This law defines the responsibilities of the different institutions that promote the food and nutritional security.

Lessons Learned

A major lesson learned is that positive changes can be achieved for the benefit of women and families when women are empowered with knowledge and skills in nutrition, health, education and leadership prioritizing their freedom, autonomy and self-management. The decades of experience have proved that women who have participated in this program are no longer passive receptors but have become active agents of change achieving major positive transformations of themselves, their families and their communities.

Results

Since 1998, the Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry has supported the implementation of the Better Families Program with measurable and verifiable results that confirm its contribution to the welfare and sustainable development of the population. Since its inception, the program has trained more than 532,000 women in Guatemala and Honduras. The program supports efforts for the reduction of poverty and is making a direct impact in the reduction of chronic child malnutrition by up to 7%.



The Better Families Program is an innovative model that promotes Food and Nutrition Security, self-confidence, self-management and leadership in women, as agents of change for the development and well-being of their families and their communities.



3. BETTER COMMUNITIES FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

3.1. Better Communities for Local Development Program

Objectives and Description

The Better Communities for Local Development Program began in 1997. The objective of the program is to foster citizen participation, leadership and decision-making by community groups within the framework of the national institutional structure, through the formulation and execution of “Comprehensive Community Development Plans” (PDIC). These plans are administered and managed by the habitants of the community led by the Coordination Organs of the Development Community Councils which seek development of their communities with short, medium and long-term vision.

The Program is implemented by the different community actors who have been trained and informed to better benefit from state offers. The community actors include women, community leaders, youth, health workers and municipal employees. The behavioral change training for these actors is focused on the common objective of the PDIC. The training of women as agents of change has been a major objective.

The Program promotes responsible citizenship through active participation of people in the building of social support, strengthening of institutions and the harnessing of public services. These are indispensable elements for sustainable human development and for the building of attractive municipalities for investment and job generation.

The Program was designed to bring consultancy to the community members from the identification of their main needs to the development of a plan that allows the improvement of life-quality in their communities. The program is implemented in 143 communities. Annual operative plans (POA) are developed to follow the progress in the implementation of the PDIC and ensuring execution of priority projects.

In the Community Development Plans, projects are defined and prioritized by local representatives who are also involved in defining the timeframe to carry them out. FUNDAZUCAR trains and provides technical assistance to community members, including women, so that they can manage and execute these projects. Community representatives are educated on relevant laws, processes and other legal requirements.

Related Targets

The Better Communities for Local Development Program supports the objectives of Target 5.5 on ensuring that women have full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Challenges

A major challenge is ensuring the full participation of community representatives, particularly women, in all the steps of the process. Also, it is essential to ensure long-term attention, support and monitoring of this program given the importance of incorporating local knowledge in the decision-making process.

An important challenge is to create synergies between the community representatives (agents of change) and the state organizations that provide services to ensure a focus on mental and physical health of the communities. The objective is to transform the culture of reliance on public assistance to a culture of self-management and promotion of community participation through responsible citizenship that starts at home with maternity and paternal responsibility.

An additional challenge related to health is the need to modify the conduct of the population towards preventive health instead of curative health. By doing this, most medical services take place at the first level of attention of the Ministry of Health avoiding the saturation of the higher levels.

Lessons Learned

By focusing on the training of women as the agents of change, a generational transformation can be achieved with a change of behavior that translates into improvements on the quality of their lives, their families and their communities.

Empowering women has allowed an increase in the participation of women in key positions of the coordination organs of the Development Community Councils.

Broadening and strengthening the planning process through the promotion of participation, leadership and decision-making by community groups is indeed necessary to ensure peaceful and inclusive societies that foster sustainable development of human settlements.

Responsible citizen participation is not the fastest and easiest path, but it is the path to sustainability and community commitment to achieve development. Breaking with the top-down development paradigm, development and public policies can be effective when implemented at the local level.

Results

The Sugar Agroindustry has been successful in the last decades supporting the formulation and implementation of Comprehensive Community Development Plans particularly in communities and human settlements located in its area of operation in Guatemala. Many communities have benefitted from this support which fosters peaceful and inclusive societies. A total of 421 Comprehensive Community Development Plans have been implemented with active participation of people including women from the communities especially those from the South Coast region and the highlands.

The Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry plays an important role supporting general efforts to ensure a healthy life and to promote the wellbeing of all the people and of all ages. Through the Comprehensive Community Development Plans about \$27.5 million of public funds have been mobilized for the benefit of more than 534,200 persons prioritizing water and sanitation to ensure better health conditions.

INTERLINKAGES WITH OTHER SDGs

Activities by the Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry related to the objectives of SDG 5 are strongly interlinked to other SDGs in the social dimension of sustainable development including poverty eradication (SDG 1), food security (SDG 2), health (SDG3), education (SDG4), water and sanitation (SDG6), reducing inequalities (SDG 10) and peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG 16).



CONCLUSIONS



The Guatemala Sugar Agroindustry recognizes the important role that women play in society as key actors for positive change in families and communities as reflected by the activities designed to enhance gender equality and to empower women with knowledge and skills for leadership. The social model being implemented by the Sugar Agroindustry through Fundazúcar has proved to be very successful not only in Guatemala but also in the Central American region.

REFERENCES AND SOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL READING

Asazgua (2021): Memorias de Labores 2020.
Asociación de Azucareros de Guatemala. 2021.

Asazgua (2020): Memorias de Labores 2019.
Asociación de Azucareros de Guatemala. 2019.

Fundazúcar (2018): Informe de Resultados.
Fundación del Azúcar. 2018.

International Sugar Organization (2022): "Sugar
Year Book 2022", Londres, 2022.

United Nations (2015): Transforming our World:
the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/
RES/70/1.

[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/
transformingourworld/publication](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld/publication)



SUSTAINABLE
**WATER &
ENERGY**
SOLUTIONS
NETWORK

Association of Sugar Producers of Guatemala (Asazgua)

PBX: + (502) 2215-8000

Address: 5th avenue 5-55 zone 14

Europiazza tower 3 building, level 17 and 18 / 01014

Guatemala City, Guatemala