

GUIDEBOOK 1

HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUITY IN THE BRAZILIAN COFFEE VALUE CHAIN






CATALOGUE FILE

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SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION	4
1 PROJECT ARABICA-CANEPHORA: PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY, EQUITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE BRAZILIAN COFFEE VALUE CHAIN	5
2 THE EUDR'S INFLUENCE ON THE PRODUCTION AND EXPORT OF BRAZILIAN COFFEE	6
3 HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABILITY IN THE COFFEE VALUE CHAIN	8
3.1 WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?	8
3.1.1 THE DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS	9
4 GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY AS A HUMAN RIGHT	11
5 CHALLENGES TO GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORLD OF LABOR AND IN THE COFFEE SECTOR	13
6 RISKS AND VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS ARISING FROM GENDER INEQUALITY AT WORK AND IN THE COFFEE SECTOR	15
6.1 HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE	15
6.1.1 MORAL HARASSMENT	16
6.1.2 SEXUAL HARASSMENT	17
6.2 PAY INEQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION	18
6.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY IN RURAL WORK	18
7 WORKSHOPS ON BEST PRACTICES IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER: DISCUSSIONS AND NEXT STEPS	21
8 KNOWING AND CLAIMING RIGHTS	24
8.1 RIGHTS THAT PROTECT WOMEN'S WORK	24
8.1.1 EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION	24
8.1.2 PROTECTION OF MATERNITY AND WOMEN'S HEALTH	24
8.1.3 PHYSICAL AND MENTAL INTEGRITY, AND THE RIGHTS TO INTIMACY AND DIGNITY IN THE WORKPLACE	25
8.1.4 PROTECTION AGAINST VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT, AND ABUSE	25
8.1.5 LABOR, SOCIAL SECURITY, AND HEALTH AND SAFETY RIGHTS APPLICABLE TO WOMEN IN RURAL WORK AND COFFEE FARMING	25
8.2. WHERE TO SEEK HELP AND DEFEND YOUR RIGHTS	26
9 REFERENCES	29

INTRODUCTION

This guidebook aims to disseminate and value collective learnings and experiences on **human rights and the empowerment of women** in the Brazilian coffee value chain. The content presented here was developed during the **1st Training Cycle on Sustainable Best Practices of the ARABICA-CANEPHORA Project (Project)**, carried out by the Center for Sustainability Studies of Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGVces), in partnership with the Collaborating Centre on Sustainable Consumption and Production (CSCP) and the International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA Brazil), between 2024 and 2025.

Co-funded by the European Union's AL-INVEST Verde Programme, the Project aimed to strengthen sustainability, equity and traceability in the coffee supply chain in Brazil, with special attention to smallholders and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) led by women and youth in the value chain. To that end, the initiative included several activities, including a training journey that reached nearly 200 women representing different links of the coffee value chain throughout the country, mainly in the regions of Southern Minas Gerais, Matas de Minas and Cerrado Mineiro, in the state of Minas Gerais, Chapada Diamantina (state of Bahia) and Eastern Rondônia (state of Rondônia).

With the aim of sharing the knowledge produced and the expertise built collaboratively in this journey, the Project's team is launching a series of thematic guidebooks related to the content covered during three cycles of training workshops. This guidebook addresses **Human Rights and Gender Equity** in the coffee value chain and is part of a series that also covers the themes of *Decent Working Conditions and Adaptation to Climate Change*. The content presented in this series reflects the research conducted by the Project's team (FGVces, CSCP, and IWCA Brazil) for each workshop, as well as the discussions that took place during the meetings with the coffee growers, bringing together the experiences and contributions of those who live the daily reality of coffee production, processing and commercialization.

Targeted at coffee producers, rural workers, cooperatives, associations, buyers, certification institutions, technical agencies, civil society organizations, and policymakers, this guidebook seeks to inspire a process of reflection and action. Its purpose is to disseminate knowledge and good practices that foster human rights, gender equity, and the productive inclusion of women in rural areas under fair, safe, healthy, and equitable conditions.



1

PROJECT ARABICA-CANEPHORA: PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY, EQUITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE BRAZILIAN COFFEE VALUE CHAIN

Project ARABICA–CANEPHORA aimed to strengthen the coffee value chain in Brazil, making it more sustainable and deforestation-free by encouraging the adoption of good environmental, social, and traceability practices.

Its actions were aligned with the requirements of the *European Union Deforestation Regulation* (EUDR), which establishes criteria for products and commodities traded in the European market -such as Brazilian coffee- to originate from deforestation-free areas.

Through an integrated approach, the Project combined training and capacity-building activities, the development of a collaborative voluntary agreement, business

matchmaking between producers and sustainability-committed buyers, and communication and coordination among different stakeholders in the coffee value chain.

These actions complement one another to generate fairer business opportunities, promote best socio-environmental practices, and expand the participation of women and youth in an increasingly demanding and responsible sector.

In summary, the Project seeks to demonstrate that it is possible to combine quality, transparency, and respect for human and environmental rights, strengthening Brazil's role as a global leader in a sustainable and inclusive coffee supply chain.

2 THE EUDR'S INFLUENCE ON THE PRODUCTION AND EXPORT OF BRAZILIAN COFFEE



Due to growing concerns with the sustainability of supply chains and with responsible consumption practices, the way food and agricultural products are produced has attracted increasing attention from consumers and buyers worldwide — including in international trade.

In Europe, a new regulation called **EUDR – European Union Deforestation Regulation** – will enter into effect on December 30, 2026 (and, for micro and small businesses, in June 2027). The EUDR's objective is to ensure that products reaching the European market do not originate from a production model that causes deforestation, forest degradation, and human rights violations.

Among the products that need to comply with these new rules is **coffee**, along with other commodities such as soy, cattle, palm oil, cocoa, rubber, and timber.

This means that the coffee exported to the European Union must originate from legally compliant and environmentally appropriate areas that respect the rights of those involved in its production. To meet these requirements, the entire supply chain in Brazil -from farm to export- must ensure

sustainable, transparent practices that comply with Brazilian environmental and social legislation.

Therefore, coffee producers wishing to access the European market must secure that their production is not associated with deforestation or forest degradation taking place **after December 31, 2020**. They must demonstrate the origin of the coffee and the geographic location of cultivation areas in order to guarantee product traceability.

In addition to protecting the environment, the EUDR also reinforces its commitment to human and labor rights. This means that exported coffee must be the result of working conditions that are safe, fair and free from any form of exploitation, including child labor, forced labor, and discrimination. With a focus on non-discrimination, principles of gender equality and respect for local and traditional communities should also guide production processes.

To this end, the EUDR requires companies to conduct **due diligence** processes, which involve assessing



risks, preventing negative impacts, and adopting corrective measures whenever threats or irregularities are identified. Although the legal obligation to conduct due diligence lies with exporters and importers, this process extends across all links in the value chain, including coffee growers, who must collaborate by providing reliable information and demonstrating compliance with good environmental and labor practices.

This requires close cooperation between coffee growers, cooperatives, and buying companies, since the exchange of updated records and accessible information about the production is key to enable verification of the conformity of production processes. This makes it possible to ensure

transparency and trust throughout the value chain, creating conditions for buyers and European authorities to assess compliance with environmental and social standards.

These requirements bring new responsibilities, but also new opportunities for the sector, encouraging women producers, cooperatives, companies, and workers to show that Brazilian coffee is a quality product, transparent, and committed to the environment and human rights. In this context, the adoption of these practices moves beyond a mere legal obligation and becomes an opportunity to add value, expand access to new markets, and contribute to a fairer and more balanced production model - for both people and the planet.

3 HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUSTAINABILITY IN THE COFFEE VALUE CHAIN



The EUDR reinforces that international trade must be grounded in principles of respect for human rights. By requiring that products exported to the European Union be not only environmentally compliant but also produced in a fair, safe, and ethical manner, the regulation establishes a direct link between environmental protection, decent working conditions, gender equality, and respect for the rights of Indigenous Peoples and traditional communities.

In the context of the ARABICA-CANEPHORA Project, human rights and gender equality were understood as key pillars for the consolidation of a sustainable, inclusive and socially just coffee value chain. After all, sustainability is not limited to caring for the environment: it also encompasses the people and communities who make production possible. This includes respect for labor rights and occupational safety, as well as the elimination of discriminatory practices and the recognition and empowerment of women and youth in coffee production and management.

3.1 WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

According to the Office of the United Nations' High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), human rights are **“rights we have simply because we exist as human beings - they are not granted by any State”**. They are **universal, inalienable, and indivisible**: they belong to all people, everywhere, and cannot be taken away or fragmented¹.

They range from the most fundamental rights – such as the right to life, liberty, and physical integrity – to those essential for living a dignified and fulfilling life, such as the right to work, education, food, health, housing, political participation, and protection against discrimination.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the UN in 1948, consolidated this vision and established the basis for all subsequent international treaties, recognizing that human dignity is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.

3.1.1 THE DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The history of human rights is marked by **struggles and progressive achievements**, resulting from the mobilization of peoples, social movements, and groups in vulnerable situations. The jurist **Fábio Konder Comparato** summarizes this journey by stating that "the understanding of the supreme dignity of the human person has been, to a large extent, a result of physical pain and moral suffering"². These achievements are traditionally organized into **three dimensions**, which complement each other and represent the advancement of social awareness regarding human dignity.

Right to life, liberty, and personal security



Freedom of expression, thought, religion, and association



Right to property and privacy



Right to vote, political participation, and representation



Right to due process of law, full defense, and the presumption of innocence



First Dimension - Civil and Political Rights

Emerging between the 18th and 19th centuries, in contexts such as the French Revolution and the independence of the United States, the first dimension of human rights is associated with the struggle against Absolutism and the defense of individual liberties. These rights seek to limit the power of the State and protect the individual against abuses of authority.



Right to decent work and fair remuneration



Right to freedom of association in trade unions and collective bargaining



Right to equal opportunities and non-discrimination



Right to health, food, housing, and social security



Right to education and culture

This dimension expresses the **principle of freedom**, recognizing that every human being must be protected against arbitrary interference and guaranteed the possibility of actively participating in public life.

Segunda Dimensión - Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales

Throughout the 20th century, following the extreme exploitation of labor during the Industrial Revolution and the two world wars that contributed to a global economic crisis, there was a growing understanding that freedom without real equality is not sufficient to ensure dignified living conditions for everyone. Unlike the first dimension of human rights -characterized by the non-intervention of the State in the life of the citizen- the second dimension introduces the idea that the State must take action to guarantee well-being, reduce inequalities, and ensure minimum conditions of dignity and equality for everyone.

This dimension represents the so-called **principle of material or substantive equality**, recognizing that social justice requires public policies and social

protection mechanisms capable of ensuring concrete conditions of dignity.

Third Dimension - Collective and Solidarity Rights

From the second half of the 20th century onwards, new challenges -such as environmental degradation, global inequality, and threats to peace- influenced the emergence of a third dimension of human rights, which recognizes that certain rights do not belong solely to isolated individuals, but rather to social groups or the community as a whole.

These are rights that demand shared protection or guardianship between the State and civil society, through councils, organizations, and social movements. In this dimension, the focus shifts from the individual to the collective and the planet, reflecting the interdependence between peoples, generations, and ecosystems.

This dimension reflects **the principle of fraternity and solidarity**, recognizing that human dignity also depends on the preservation of common goods and cooperation among nations and communities.



Rights of specific groups, such as women, children, indigenous peoples, and people with disabilities



Right to sustainable development



Right to an ecologically balanced environment

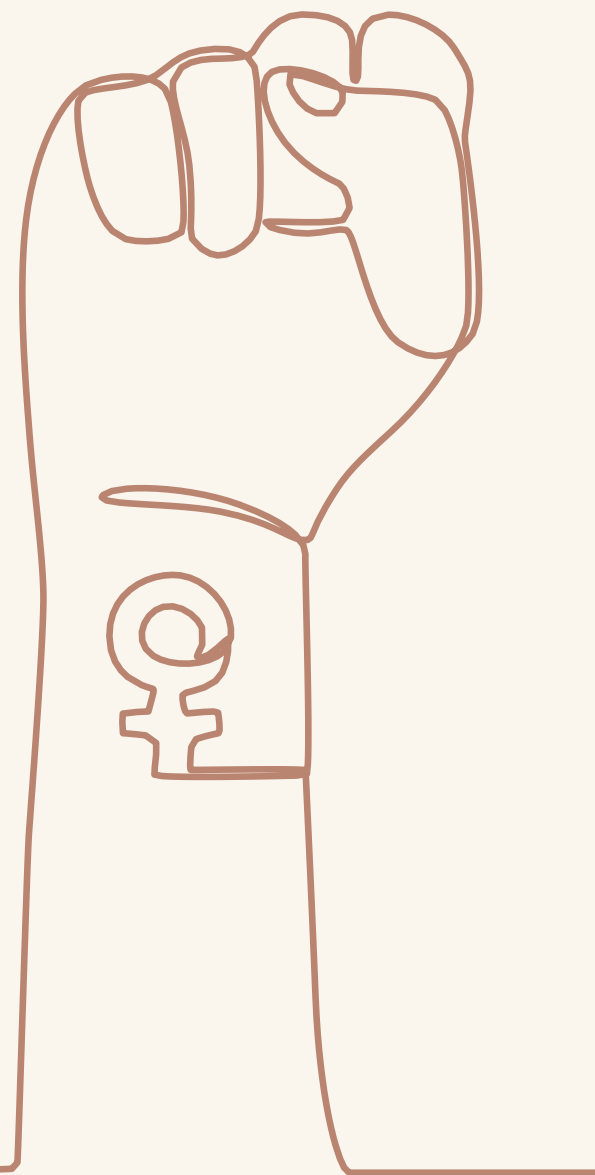


Right to peace and self-determination of peoples



Consumer rights and the common heritage of humanity

4 GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY AS A HUMAN RIGHT



Equality is one of the core principles of human rights and forms the foundation for the full exercise of all other rights. By affirming that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights (UDHR, Art. 1)³, international law establishes that no one should be discriminated against on the basis of sex, gender, race, origin, social condition, or any other personal characteristic. This commitment is expressed in several international treaties incorporated by Brazil and by most States worldwide, which recognize equality not merely as an abstract value, but as a concrete legal obligation.

In this regard, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) affirms that all persons are equal before the law and are entitled, without any discrimination, to the equal protection of the law (Art. 26)⁴. Complementarily, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) establishes that States must ensure the equal enjoyment of the rights set forth therein by men and women (Art. 3)⁵. This provision represents an important advancement in recognizing that gender equality must be present across all dimensions of social, economic, and cultural life.

However, guaranteeing this equality is not limited to the adoption of laws or policies that treat women and men in an apparently neutral manner. Experience shows that, in contexts marked by historical and structural inequalities, formally equal rules may produce unequal results. For this reason, the interpretation of Article 3 of the ICESCR, as developed by international human rights bodies, requires consideration of the **concrete effects** of norms, policies and practices on the lives of women, and it is up to States to adopt measures capable of correcting persistent disadvantages that prevent the effective exercise of rights under conditions of equality.

In this regard, the Convention on the **Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women** (CEDAW)⁶ establishes that eliminating discrimination requires concrete actions to address structural inequalities and discriminatory social practice, which means that, in certain situations, to achieve equality between women and men, it will be necessary to adopt of specific measures aimed at promoting real opportunities, and not merely the equality of treatment as declared by law.



Based on this understanding, and considering that gender inequality hinders economic and social development — whereas more equal societies become more prosperous, secure and democratic — the United Nations (UN), within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,⁷ recognized *gender equality* as one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), establishing it as a cross-cutting principle linked to the elimination of poverty, access to health, education, decent work and the promotion of peace¹, which makes gender equality a key condition for guaranteeing human rights in their various dimensions.

Despite the challenges that still exist -some of which will be addressed below- it is essential to ensure that laws, public policies, and programs contribute effectively to reducing gender inequalities. This requires identifying and overcoming structural obstacles, reviewing institutional practices, guaranteeing equitable access to resources and services, and adopting concrete actions that enable women to fully exercise their rights under real and substantive conditions of equality, ensuring their dignity, freedom, and autonomy.

¹ Data from FAO indicates that 90% of the income earned by women in rural areas is reinvested in education and family well-being, demonstrating that strengthening their economic autonomy can significantly contribute to improving the quality of life in rural territories and enhancing productive activities. It is also estimates that, if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could see a 30% increase in crop yields. Source: FAO. Dia das Mulheres Rurais - agentes essenciais no desenvolvimento da sociedade. 2018. Disponível: <https://www.fao.org/brasil/noticias/detail-events/pt/c/1157560/>. Access: Dec, 14th 2025.

5 CHALLENGES TO GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORLD OF LABOR AND IN THE COFFEE SECTOR



By establishing gender equality as the fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5), the UN's 2030 Agenda set targets aimed at eliminating discrimination and ensuring equal opportunities for the empowerment of girls and women.

However, even if all the goals and commitments undertaken are met, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), it would still take about **200 years** for gender equality to be achieved in economic activities⁷. This data reveals the depth of the abyss of this inequality in the economic and labor context.

Persistently reflected in women's participation in society, gender inequality limits access to resources, services, opportunities, and benefits. It is particularly evident in value chains, where it constitutes an obstacle to entrepreneurship and productive development, preventing women from participating and advancing on equal terms with men⁸.

Added to this is the historical invisibility of much of the work done by women, especially that associated with the social

reproduction of the family, such as education and the care of children, the elderly, and people in situations of dependency. Although undervalued, these activities are essential for the balance and strengthening of productive dynamics, especially in the context of family farming, where family members work together in the same enterprise⁹. In this regard, data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) confirm gender inequality in the organization of working time, marked by women's accumulation of domestic responsibilities, as they devote, on average, **twice** as much time as men to such activities ⁹.

This overload is reflected in the greater difficulty women face in accessing and remaining in the formal labor market. Female unemployment rates are significantly higher than those of men, and women represent the majority among those outside the formally recorded labor force. In addition, the average length of stay in the search for a job tends to be longer, especially for women with children and heads of household, whose challenges are intensified by the absence or insufficiency of public care services.

The burden resulting from the almost exclusive responsibility for care activities, which are often not shared, compromises their permanence in employment and deepens existing inequalities.

For this reason, despite representing a significant portion of the employed population, women remain underrepresented in most economic sectors, with the exception of domestic employment without a formal contract¹⁰. This data reinforces the information that, in many developing countries, there is a high concentration of women in the informal economy, including when they perform paid work, which limits their access to social protection at work and to the security system associated with formal employment, generating situations of vulnerability that tend to worsen over time.

The fact that women are subject to the worst employment rates, lower access to basic services, and a predominance of informal and low-paid activities¹¹ directly influences decision-making processes, participation in matters of public and collective interest, and

access to productive opportunities¹¹. In this context, gender inequality goes beyond the private sphere and is also expressed in the public sphere, including in the scope of public policies, resulting in inequalities in access to rights, opportunities and benefits¹². Brazil's National Program for the Strengthening of Family Agriculture (Pronaf) illustrates this scenario, since, although there is a specific line of credit aimed at women, their access remains limited, to a large extent, by the absence of land ownership and the restriction on women's economic autonomy.

Although data from the 2017 Agricultural Census in Brazil reveal advances in the productive inclusion of women in agribusiness, with the increase in female participation in the management and co-direction of agricultural establishments, full parity remains distant. **In coffee farming, in particular, women continue to face less access to services, opportunities, and benefits when compared to men.**

These asymmetries are reproduced in a similar way to what is observed in other productive sectors. In addition to situations of wage inequality between men and women, in the coffee value chain, women's work is socially undervalued and often interpreted as an extension of

family activities, being classified as "help" or "support". This perception contributes to informality, the absence of professional recognition and, in some cases, the lack of remuneration, reinforcing the need to address gender inequalities in a structured and transversal way.

In this scenario, giving visibility to the challenges faced for the effective productive inclusion of women, with guaranteed rights, is a fundamental step towards the promotion of gender equality, as it enables the formulation of institutional responses to the concrete manifestations of these inequalities in the context of work, which extend from the private to the public space, crossing the domestic environment and institutions. To this end, the following section presents some of the main risks and rights violations associated with gender inequalities faced by women in the productive and labor context, including those historically identified in the coffee supply chain.

6 RIESGOS Y VULNERACIONES DE DERECHOS DERIVADOS DE LA DESIGUALDAD DE GÉNERO EN EL ÁMBITO LABORAL Y EN LA CAFICULTURA



Gender inequalities in the world of work and in the coffee sector are also revealed in the greater exposure of women to risks and situations of violation of rights related to work. These risks are not exclusive to women, but they affect them more frequently due to structural asymmetries and unequal power relations. Some of these risks, their characteristics and manifestations are described below.

6.1 HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Even in the absence of public data in Brazil that specifically quantifies cases of moral or sexual harassment along the coffee value chain, there are documented cases of moral and sexual harassment in coffee farming, as well as in many other sectors. Coffee growing, especially in regions where production occurs on large rural properties, can be a work environment more susceptible to these practices, mainly due to unbalanced power relations, isolation of areas of production, and the informality of many labor contracts.

In 2022, the International Labor Organization (ILO), in

partnership with Lloyd's Register Foundation and Gallup, published the first global international survey on violence and harassment at work. The results show that these practices are widely disseminated and have a structural character in the world of work, since, according to the data, **one in five people has already experienced some form of violence at work**, which is equivalent to 743 million workers. The study also reveals a high degree of recurrence of aggressions, which indicates the naturalization of these practices in contexts marked by inequalities of power², especially considering that **cases of harassment disproportionately affect people who already face structural discrimination related to gender, race, ethnicity, disability, nationality or religion**. In addition to this data, there is an issue with the underreporting of cases within organizations, **since almost half of the victims did not report the aggressions**, mainly for fear of retaliation or because they did not believe in the effectiveness of the reporting channels³, which reinforces that **the most vulnerable people are also those with the least access to protection, repair and justice**.

6.1.1 MORAL HARASSMENT

Being the most frequent form of violence in the workplace, moral harassment consists of **abusive practices manifested through gestures, words or attitudes that are repeated in a systematic way, affecting the dignity, self-esteem, professional development and physical or psychological integrity of the worker.** For it to be characterized, repetition and continuity of the conduct is required, which has the effect of destabilizing the victim's emotional system¹³.

These practices can be intentional, with the objective of emotionally and professionally weakening the worker, inducing her to resign, forcing her to be removed or relocated, humiliating her, embarrassing her or subjecting her to inadequate working conditions.

However, for it to occur, explicit intention is not necessary. It may be the result of practices that express abuse of power and psychological violence in an unintentional way, which does not remove the seriousness or illegality of the conduct.

Moral harassment can occur in different hierarchical relationships, manifesting itself from superior to subordinate, from subordinate to superior, between co-workers, or even in a mixed way. Its manifestation can occur through direct actions, such as unfounded accusations of mistakes, insults, shouting and public humiliation in front of colleagues, or indirectly, such as the dissemination of rumors and the isolation of the victim in the work environment.

It is important to know how to recognize conduct that can be considered moral harassment¹⁴, as exemplified in the table:

Table 01 - Conducts that may constitute moral harassment at work.

Conducts that may constitute moral harassment at work
Abuse in the organization and distribution of work
Assigning activities that are incompatible with the person's position, function, or technical ability
Demanding the performance of tasks within manifestly unachievable deadlines
Purposely failing to assign tasks, keeping the person idle
Withholding information necessary for the proper performance of activities
Systematic disqualification and embarrassment
Contesting, in a recurring and unjustified way, the attitudes or the work done
Constantly ridicule, belittle, or embarrass the person
Making criticisms in a public, vexatious or humiliating way
Appropriating ideas, proposals, projects or works without due recognition
Isolation and professional exclusion
Despising, ignoring, or isolating the person from peers or superiors
Preventing or hindering access to events, meetings, training, or activities held in the workplace
Creating unjustified obstacles to participation in differentiated functions or development opportunities
Verbal violence, intimidation and disrespect for integrity
Verbally assaulting, intimidatingly raising the voice, or threatening
Disregarding health problems, functional limitations, or medical recommendations
Use explicit or veiled threats as a form of control or punishment
Deliberate damage to professional career
Hindering or preventing promotions, advancement or professional recognition in an unjustified way
Creating repeated obstacles to the full exercise of professional activities

Source: Prepared by the authors based on C/JF (2021)¹⁴.

6.1.2 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is characterized as any form of sexual **embarrassment in the workplace, in which the aggressor, usually in a superior hierarchical position or with some type of influence, seeks to obtain sexual advantages.** In addition, it may involve other manifestations of sexual violence that affect professional activity, regardless of whether or not there is an explicit use of hierarchical power. Among the most frequent situations are **flirting, recurrent insinuations, jokes with a pejorative content,** whether clearly or subtly, verbally or written.

Sexual harassment violates fundamental principles such as human dignity, freedom, intimacy, private life, honor and the right to a safe work environment. It is also a **crime** provided for in article 216-A of the Brazilian Penal Code, when committed by a hierarchical superior or person with functional ascendancy over the victim¹³.

Unlike moral harassment, sexual harassment can be characterized even when it occurs in a single episode, even if the sexual favor intended by the harasser does not materialize. In other words, a simple attempt, even if not successful, is already enough.

The first national survey on sexual harassment in professional environments, conducted in 2020 by a joint initiative of Think Eva and LinkedIn, shows that **women are the main victims, with a more pronounced impact on black women and those in lower income groups, demonstrating that gender, race, and socioeconomic status combine to increase exposure to harassment and reduce the possibilities of protection**¹⁵.

The survey also indicates that income has a direct influence over the visibility and the way the issue is addressed in the professional environment. The higher the family income, the greater the frequency of dialogue about sexual harassment at work, which suggests that economic **inequality operates as an additional silencing factor among workers in situations of greater vulnerability.** In situations of violence, there is a prevalence of individual and informal strategies, such as reporting the event to people close to the victim or not taking any measures, while the use of institutional reporting channels remains limited¹⁵.

The low rate of formal complaints is attributed to impunity and the ineffectiveness of organizations' internal policies. In addition, the victim's silence is often linked to the fear of retaliation, of not being believed, of suffering undue exposure, of losing a job, among others. This scenario demonstrates that, in the absence of safe, transparent, and trustworthy environments, sexual harassment tends to be reproduced, affecting more intensely those who already face historical inequalities in access to rights, protection, and justice in the world of work¹⁵.

Informality makes it difficult to prevent and repair victims

Regarding coffee culture, there have been efforts in different regions to improve working conditions, including the development of policies to combat harassment and foster safer and more respectful work environments. Organizations, unions and NGOs have worked to sensitize employers and workers about the rights and responsibilities in the workplace. However, the informality of many labor relations in coffee farming, especially on smaller farms, can make it difficult to implement more effective practices to protect against these types of abuse.

The importance of prevention

The most effective way to combat violence in the workplace is through **prevention.** As a primary intervention, which occurs before the emergence of a problem, prevention favors the development of a healthy environment, based on dialogue and mutual respect. It involves the adoption of policies for zero-tolerance for violence, commitment to structural and behavioral changes, provision of information and training, building awareness among employees, practicing active listening, and implementing effective mechanisms for reporting and supporting victims¹⁵. These actions are crucial to combat these issues that hurt dignity and leave permanent effects in those who suffer this type of violence.

6.2 PAY INEQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION

Wage inequality occurs **when women and men performing the same job or function receive different remuneration**. This disparity is the result of persistent discriminatory practices and the sexual division of labor, which historically assigns to women the responsibilities of social reproduction -such as caring for the home and for dependents- while devaluing their participation in paid economic activity¹⁶.

This logic is also expressed in the segmentation of activities within the labor market based on gender. Tasks considered more technical, heavy or strategic are mostly assigned to men and associated with better salaries, while women are assigned activities seen as complementary, even if they require specific skills and experience. Such distribution reinforces gender hierarchies and contributes to the naturalization of pay gaps.

Added to this picture are the effects of the **double working hours**, which combines productive and reproductive activities and limits the possibilities of professional

qualification, occupational advancement and maintenance of women in the labor market. Together, these factors act in an articulated way, perpetuating wage inequalities and patterns of gender discrimination that restrict the full recognition of women's work.

In Brazil, data from the Ministry of Labor and Employment (Ministério do Trabalho e Emprego) reveal that **women earn, on average, 20% less than men. Among black women, this inequality is even more pronounced, reaching 50%**, which highlights the overlapping inequalities of gender and race. In senior management positions, such as directors and managers, the wage gap also remains high, with **women receiving 26.8% less than their male counterparts**. Even when they have completed higher education, they continue to receive less: the difference reaches **31.5%** in relation to men with the same level of education¹⁷.

Regarding the coffee value chain, statistics confirm this pattern: a report by the International Coffee Organization indicates that **women receive about 82% of the salaries paid to men on coffee farms**, in other words, around 20% less. Although women represent approximately 70% of the workforce in production, only between 20% and 30% of farms are owned by women¹⁸.

In order to address inequalities in the workplace, Law n^o. 14,611 was created in 2023 to deal with equal pay between men and women¹⁹. By strengthening

mechanisms to combat the gender pay gap, the law ensures women's fundamental human rights, ensuring that they receive equal pay for work of equal value. With this, women and society as a whole benefit, since equal pay, in addition to promoting women's economic autonomy, also contributes to the reduction of poverty and the advancement of economic and social development, stimulating productivity and innovation.

6.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY IN RURAL WORK

Health and safety at work is a fundamental principle and right of women rural workers. In the context of coffee growing, this right is especially relevant in view of the specific conditions of work organization in the field, the seasonality of production, and the structural gender inequalities that mark the division of tasks, access to social protection, and exposure to risks.

In the coffee sector, women may be subject to different types of hazards in their workplaces, the impacts of which may manifest themselves immediately or over time. While some risks cause rapid damage, such as cuts, falls, or acute intoxication, others produce cumulative and silent effects, such as respiratory diseases, cancers related to chemical exposure, and chronic musculoskeletal injuries. For this reason, all hazards must be taken seriously, including those that do not have immediate visible effects, as they can significantly compromise the health and working capacity of workers throughout their lives.

These dangers take on different natures. On the one hand, there are **physical risks**, usually related to the organization and work practices, such as **inadequate conditions of cleanliness, physical arrangement and maintenance of workspaces**. Disorganized, poorly lit or unhealthy environments increase the risk of accidents, such as slips, trips and falls, in addition to favoring exposure to harmful agents. The cleanliness and organization of the workplace, in this sense, are not only operational requirements, but core elements for the safety, health and dignity of workers.

During harvest periods, these challenges are intensified. The hiring of a large contingent of temporary workers makes it common for the employer to offer accommodation and sanitary facilities. In this context, inadequate infrastructure conditions can represent not only health risks, but also **concrete situations of violation of women's rights**, especially when basic security, privacy, and gender protection measures are not ensured. The lack of separate bathrooms, lockable doors, adequate lighting, or safe distances between housing and restrooms exposes workers to

embarrassment, humiliation, and greater vulnerability to harassment and violence.

In view of this, the conditions of housing and use of sanitary facilities in coffee farming must be understood as an integral part of the protection of the health, safety and dignity of women workers. In addition to hygiene and a sufficient number of units, it is vital to ensure separation by sex, privacy, access control and adequacy to the specific needs of pregnant and breastfeeding women. These measures are essential to promote safer, more inclusive, and more respectful work environments.

In addition, psychosocial risks are key in the analysis of women's work in the coffee chain. These risks relate to factors that affect emotional well-being and mental health, such as moral harassment, bullying, gender discrimination, insecurity at work, salary delays, long hours, isolated work, and exposure to violence in the workplace. Such conditions overload individual coping mechanisms and compromise the ability of workers to perform their activities in a safe and healthy manner.

In coffee farming, these psychosocial risks tend to be aggravated by structural factors, such as the social devaluation of women's work, occupational segregation, and the overload resulting from the double shift, which

combines productive work with almost exclusive responsibility for domestic and family care. Added to this is the distancing of women from decision-making and leadership spaces, which contributes to feelings of invisibility, frustration and less professional recognition. The economic and symbolic dependence on male figures, in many contexts, also limits the autonomy of female workers and restricts their full participation in the work environment and community life.

² According to data from the survey, a third of the victims were subjected to more than one form of violence and three out of five were victimized repeatedly.

Source: SINDICATO DOS PROFESSORES DE SÃO PAULO (SINPRO-SP). Assédio moral e sexual no trabalho: conhecer para combater. Cartilha. São Paulo, 2025. 44 p. Disponível: https://www.sinprosp.org.br/upl/arq/MOBILE_cartilha-assedio-trabalho.pdf. Access: Dec. 14th 2025.

³ According to data from the survey, "45.6% of victims of violence at work stopped sharing their experience, explaining their silence for fear of affecting their reputation or the perception that it would be a waste of time to talk about it.

Source: SINDICATO DOS PROFESSORES DE SÃO PAULO (SINPRO-SP). Assédio moral e sexual no trabalho: conhecer para combater. Cartilha. São Paulo, 2025. 44 p. Disponível: https://www.sinprosp.org.br/upl/arq/MOBILE_cartilha-assedio-trabalho.pdf. Access: Dec. 14th 2025.

7 TALLER SOBRE BUENAS PRÁCTICAS EN DERECHOS HUMANOS Y GÉNERO: REFLEXIONES Y PRÓXIMOS PASOS

Between March and April 2025, within the scope of the ARABICA-CANEPHORA Project, the 1st Training Cycle on Sustainable Best Practices took place. This initial cycle included in-person workshops in five key coffee regions in Brazil -Sul de Minas, Matas de Minas and Cerrado Mineiro (in the state of Minas Gerais), Chapada Diamantina (in the state of Bahia) and Leste Rondoniense (in the state of Rondônia)- in addition to a virtual workshop that brought together coffee growers from other locations in the country, such as Espírito Santo, Paraná, Distrito Federal and Rio de Janeiro. These workshops focused on the theme of **Human Rights and Gender Equity** in the coffee value chain.

In addition to the presentation of the research developed by the Project's team, the meetings were marked by participatory moments of dialogue, exchange of experiences and collective discussion among women from the coffee value chain, valuing the contributions of those who experience coffee production and activities on a daily basis. The insights resulting from this process are presented below.

Insights and experiences on gender and human rights in coffee

The coffee value chain in Brazil is closely connected to the work of both men and women. Despite that, historically, women's role in coffee growing has been underestimated or made invisible. In recent years, however, there has been a consistent movement to strengthen the role of women, who have begun to assume central roles in the introduction of new agricultural practices, in the testing of cultivation systems, in the management of properties, as well as in complementary activities such as handicrafts, cooking and the organization of social groups. In this context, women also play a fundamental role in community articulation in rural areas, connecting family, neighborhood and community, often mediated by cultural and religious ties, and driving changes in habits and practices.

Throughout the history of Brazilian coffee growing, women have always been present at different stages of the production chain -from crop formation to harvest, from post-harvest



to research, from management to marketing. More recently, they have increased their visibility as agronomists, administrators, landowners, rural workers, sharecroppers and tenants. Despite this growing and diversified participation, **structural barriers** persist that hinder the full recognition of their contribution and equitable access to decision-making spaces, both at the domestic level and at the productive, community and political levels.

In this scenario, women who work in the coffee value chain demand **recognition and equal opportunities**. The promotion of gender equality is not limited to a matter of social justice, but directly contributes to the development of coffee growing in its social, economic, financial, and environmental dimensions, in addition to positively impacting the productivity, sustainability, and competitiveness of Brazilian coffee in the international market. Even so, **many women continue to perform relevant activities without participating in strategic decisions**, remaining anchored in male figures of reference, which makes it difficult for them to be seen, heard and respected as fundamental agents for the future of the sector.

This invisibility is expressed in the recurring perception that women "only help", even when their actions are continuous and essential. Reports indicate that, although they are present in the daily reality of coffee production, many do not recognize themselves as workers, which weakens their professional identity. An emblematic case is that of women who face serious **difficulties in accessing social security rights** after the death of their partner, because they are unable to formally prove the work done throughout their lives. These situations show how the denial of women's work generates concrete, deep and lasting consequences.

Gender pay gap remains another relevant challenge, especially in the payment of daily allowances (per diems). Arguments such as the supposed physical limitation of women are still used to justify differences in pay, disregarding the diversity of functions performed along the supply chain and the effective value of the work performed. This asymmetry is also reflected in leadership spaces: while female participation tends to be more recognized in segments such as specialty coffees, in commodity coffee it is still reduced and undervalued.

The challenges related to the **succession of rural properties** must also be highlighted. Many young women wish to continue their family businesses, assume leadership positions and incorporate technological innovations, but they face cultural barriers, as well as



bureaucratic and documentary obstacles that hinder this process. In addition, there is a recurring demand for greater access to training opportunities that go beyond technical aspects. These opportunities should include training processes aimed at strengthening self-confidence, recognizing one's own role, and promoting female leadership.

Discussing gender and human rights in the coffee value chain, therefore, means talking about the daily reality of rural properties, family relationships, invisible work and the possibilities of transformation. In this context, it is essential to also involve men - especially husbands and family members- in discussions on gender equality, recognizing that the promotion of equity is not an exclusive agenda of women, but a **collective responsibility**.

Despite persistent challenges, there are clear signs of women's organization in coffee farming being strengthened. Initiatives by women collectives, such as the International Alliance of Coffee Women in Brazil (IWCA Brazil), have played a strategic role in expanding support networks, promoting

the exchange of experiences and leveraging female representation in the sector. The feeling of belonging and mutual recognition is expressed in the testimonies of the women who participate in these collectives, reinforcing that these networks not only drive individual trajectories, but also build collective bases for structural transformations in the coffee value chain.

Another initiative that should be highlighted is the current discussions for the development of a National Policy for Women in Coffee. A few years ago, a group of researchers associated with organizations such as IWCA Brazil, EMBRAPA Coffee, the Agricultural Research Company of Minas Gerais (EPAMIG), the Federal University of Lavras (UFLA), EMATER, Cocatrel, and Federal Institutes of the South and Southeast of Minas Gerais began debates for the formulation of a national policy for strengthening women in the Brazilian coffee chain, aiming to reduce the barriers that prevent the full participation of women and youth through actions that favor equal opportunities and benefits within the coffee sector.

The movement has been gaining traction, with more relevant organizations joining the discussions. In addition, during the Project's workshops, participating coffee

growers also expressed the desire to have more spaces to debate the formulation of the policy and make this initiative advance. This is a fundamental step towards addressing the challenges that still persist for women in coffee farming and creating conditions that facilitate and value their work in the sector.

Reflecting on gender and human rights in coffee farming, therefore, is to recognize historical inequalities, question consolidated structures and, above all, bet on the development of a fairer future, in which women are fully visible, valued and protagonists of their own stories.

8 KNOWING AND CLAIMING RIGHTS

Despite the broad legal framework that protects the rights of working women, the implementation of these guarantees still faces obstacles related to informality, misinformation, gender inequality, and the invisibility of women's work. Therefore, knowing the rights and knowing where and how to claim them is a fundamental step for the effectiveness of the laws and for the empowerment, strengthening of autonomy, protection and appreciation of women in coffee farming.

8.1 RIGHTS THAT PROTECT WOMEN'S WORK

Women's work is protected by a set of rights that aim to ensure equality, dignity, health, safety and permanence in employment, both in rural and urban areas. These rights range from the prohibition of discrimination and wage inequalities to maternity protection, the guarantee of adequate working conditions and the prevention of situations of violence, harassment and abuse.

This section presents the main rights that support women's work, organized by thematic axes, with emphasis on their application in the context of coffee growing, including seasonal activities, rural work and situations of greater vulnerability. The objective is to strengthen knowledge about these legal guarantees and contribute to their effective implementation in daily work.

8.1.1 EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

These are rights that seek **to ensure that women and men have the same opportunities at work**, with equal pay and benefits for equivalent functions, and that **prohibit any form of discrimination** on the basis of sex, pregnancy, marriage or maternity.

8.1.2 PROTECTION OF MATERNITY AND WOMEN'S HEALTH

Set of rights aimed at **ensuring the permanence of women in employment during pregnancy and after**

Table 2 - Equality and non-discrimination rights

Equality and non-discrimination rights	
Right	Legal provision
Equal pay and benefits for women and men in the same or equivalent jobs	- Federal Constitution, art. 7, section XXX - Brazil's Labor Laws (CLT), art. 461 - Law nº 14,611/2023
Prohibition of discrimination at work on the grounds of sex, pregnancy, marriage or maternity	- Federal Constitution, art. 3, IV, and art. 7, XXX - Brazil's Labor Laws (CLT), art. 373-A, sections I, II and III - Law nº 9,029/1995 (prohibits discriminatory practices for the purpose of accessing or maintaining the employment relationship)
Prohibition on loss of employment or restriction of rights due to pregnancy or marriage	- Brazil's Labor Laws (CLT), art. 373-A, sections II and III - Law nº 9,029/1995

Source: Prepared by the authors (2026).

Table 3 - Women's maternity and health protection rights

Maternity and women's health protection rights	
Right	Legal provision
120-day maternity leave, inclusive for adoptive mothers	- Federal Constitution, art. 7, XVIII - Brazil's Labor Laws (CLT), arts. 392 e 392-A
Job stability from confirmation of pregnancy to five months postpartum	- Transitional Constitutional Provisions Act (ADCT), art. 10, section II, paragraph "b" - Precedent n° 244 of the Superior Labor Court (TST)
Breastfeeding breaks (two daily 30-minute breaks)	- Brazil's Labor Laws (CLT), art. 396
Temporary change of function during pregnancy when necessary	- Brazil's Labor Laws (CLT), art. 392, §4, I
Two-week paid rest in the event of miscarriage or abortion permitted by law	- Brazil's Labor Laws (CLT), art. 395
Exemption for cancer preventive exams	- Brazil's Labor Laws (CLT), article 473, section XII (included by Law n° 13,767/2018)

Source: Prepared by the authors (2026).

childbirth, protecting their health and that of the baby, guaranteeing the right to maternity leave, breastfeeding and working conditions compatible with pregnancy and childcare.

8.1.3 PHYSICAL AND MENTAL INTEGRITY, AND THE RIGHTS TO INTIMACY AND DIGNITY IN THE WORKPLACE

These are rights that aim **to ensure safe and respectful work environments, with adequate conditions of hygiene, rest and privacy**, protecting women against humiliating or embarrassing practices.

8.1.4 PROTECTION AGAINST VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT, AND ABUSE

Group of rights that seeks **to ensure a work environment free of violence, moral harassment and sexual harassment**, in addition to ensuring protection for women in situations of domestic violence, without prejudice to labor rights.

8.1.5 LABOR, SOCIAL SECURITY, AND HEALTH AND SAFETY RIGHTS APPLICABLE TO WOMEN IN RURAL WORK AND COFFEE FARMING

The labor, social security, and occupational health and safety rights guaranteed in the Brazilian legal system apply

indiscriminately to workers, both in urban and rural areas. However, in the coffee supply chain, women face greater obstacles to having these rights recognized and enforced, due to informality, the sexual division of labor, the invisibility of their productive activities, and the barriers to accessing information and social protection. For this reason, this item highlights rights of general application that must be fully guaranteed to women in rural work and coffee farming, with attention to the gender specificities that impact access to health, safety, social security, and the recognition of women as workers and farmers.

Table 4 - Rights to physical and mental integrity, intimacy and dignity in the workplace

Rights to physical and mental integrity, intimacy and dignity in the workplace	
Right	Legal provision
Privacy in the changing rooms, with individual lockers when changing clothes	- Brazil's Labor Laws (CLT), art. 373-A, VI - Regulatory Standard n° 24 (NR-24) - Sanitary and Comfort Conditions in the Workplace - Regulatory Standard n° 31 (NR-31) - Safety and Health in Rural Work
Prohibition of intimate searches or embarrassing practices	- Brazil's Labor Laws (CLT), art. 373-A, VI - Law n° 13,271/2016

Source: Prepared by the authors (2026).

Table 5 - Rights to protection against violence, harassment and abuse

Rights to protection from violence, harassment and abuse	
Right	Legal provision
Right to a work environment free of violence, moral harassment and sexual harassment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convention n° 190 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) - Law n° 14,457/2022 (Emprega + Mulheres Program, harassment prevention measures) - Penal Code, art. 216-A (sexual harassment)
Temporary leave from work in situations of domestic violence, without loss of rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law n° 11,340/2006 (Maria da Penha Law), art. 9, §2, section II

Source: Prepared by the authors (2026).

Table 6 - Women's rights also guaranteed in rural work and coffee farming

Rights also guaranteed to women in rural work and coffee farming	
Right	Legal provision
Application of labor rights to women in rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Federal Constitution, art. 7 (applicable to urban and rural workers) - Law n° 5,889/1973 (Rural Labor) - Decree n° 73,626/1974
Health and safety in rural work, with a gender perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulatory Standard n° 31 (NR-31) - Regulatory Standard n° 24 (NR-24) - Federal Constitution, art. 225
Access to social security and social protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Federal Constitution, arts. 194 and 201 - Law n° 8,213/1991 (Social Security Benefits) - Law n° 8,212/1991 (Costing of Social Security)
Recognition of women as rural workers and farmers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Federal Constitution, art. 7 - Law n° 11,326/2006 (National Policy on Family Farming)

Source: Prepared by the authors (2026).

8.2. WHERE TO SEEK HELP AND DEFEND YOUR RIGHTS

Knowledge of rights is an essential but not sufficient step to guarantee their effectiveness. In the face of situations of violation, discrimination, violence, harassment, or denial of labor and social security rights, it is essential that women know **where** to seek guidance, support, and protection. Therefore, this item presents entities that work in the defense of workers' rights, offering support, information, referral and formal mechanisms for reporting and accountability, contributing to protection, strengthening autonomy and to effective access to justice.

1. Labor issues (salary, registration or contracts, working hours, working conditions)

➤ **Ministry of Labor and Employment (MTE)**

This ministry inspects whether labor laws - such as formalization of employment, correct payment of wages, working hours, accommodation, bathrooms and safety in rural work - are being complied with.

☎ Reporting channel: Disque 158
gov.br/trabalho
<https://ipe.sit.trabalho.gov.br/>

↘ **Regional Labor Superintendencies (former Labor Delegations)**

These superintendencies work in the states and may receive complaints of informal work, poor working conditions and non-compliance with safety standards.

↘ **Trade unions**

Trade unions defend the rights of women workers in the category. They can guide, support complaints, monitor negotiations and help in the resolution of conflicts with employers.

2. Moral harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination at work

↘ **Public Prosecutor's Office for Labor (MPT)**

This office receives complaints of harassment, discrimination, wage inequality and other collective violations of rights at work.

☎ National channel: 0800 702 3838
🌐 www.prt.mpt.mp.br

↘ **Labor Court**

The labor courts judge individual or collective labor lawsuits. They can be actioned to claim damages, unpaid wages and compensation for harassment or discrimination.

↘ **Dial 100 - Human Rights**

This channel receives complaints of human rights violations, including in the workplace. It is open on a daily basis.

3. Violence against women (including when it affects work)

↘ **Women's Police Station or General Police Station**

Records occurrences of domestic, sexual or psychological violence.

↘ **Dial 180 - Women's Support Center**

Ofrece orientación, apoyo y remisiones a la red de protección. Funciona las 24 horas del día, de forma gratuita.

↘ **Reference Centers for Women's Care (CRAM)**

These centers offer psychological, social and legal support for women in situations of violence.

4. Free legal guidance and social security rights

↘ **Public Defender's Office**

This office provides free legal assistance to those who cannot afford the services of a lawyer. It works with causes involving labor, social security and protection against discrimination and violence.

↘ **Brazil's National Social Security Institute (INSS)**

Responsible for social security benefits, such as maternity pay, retirement and sick pay.

☎ Central 135
🌐 meu.inss.gov.br

5. Support, information and empowerment of women

↘ **Civil society organizations and women's associations**

They work in the guidance, training and defense of women's rights, especially in rural areas. They promote collective support, exchange of information and strengthening of female autonomy.

↘ **Women's Rights Councils**

Spaces for social participation that help to address demands and strengthen public policies for women.

▼ Nossa Voz

Nossa Voz is a helpline aimed at rural workers - especially in the coffee chain - which works as an early warning channel for human and labor rights violations.

Companies, cooperatives or farms can join Nossa Voz to adopt this channel. After joining, workers receive training and communication campaigns to learn about their rights and how to use the helpline.

When a worker decides to report a problem - such as a labor irregularity, a risk of degrading work or a doubt about a contract - he or she can do so for free and confidentially. Based on the complaints or reports, Nossa Voz proposes corrective action plans and mediation. More information is available on the initiative's website:

 <https://nossavoz.org.br/>

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