

#GLFBiodiversity



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Biodiversity
Digital
Conference

Promoting smart biodiverse farming for agricultural sustainability in remote communities

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White paper

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Business, the environment and society need to be addressed simultaneously if we are to achieve economic and ecological restoration and balance in the future. The GLF Biodiversity Digital Conference 2020 session hosted by [CARICO Cafe](#) discusses the value of holistic triple levers to address the challenge of restoring biodiversity and reversing its decline. This topic is explored through considering challenges and opportunities in smallholder coffee farming in remote, high-altitude regions of eastern Uganda.

Smallholder coffee farming in Eastern Uganda: challenges and opportunities

Coffee is a highly traded commodity. Uganda, the world's 6th largest exporter, is home to almost 20% of the world's coffee smallholding farmers. In Bugisu, on Mount Elgon, farmers live remotely at high altitudes, adjacent to a UNESCO Man & Biosphere Reserve. There, a spiral of worsening deforestation is occurring in tandem with aggressive climate events including increasingly frequent flash floods and landslides. These events threaten coffee farming – the last viable economic activity in the area.

Organic certification and consumer behavior changes are often offered as solutions to support more sustainable livelihoods. However, for remote farming communities located at high altitudes, organic certification can add significant production effort and compliance cost. These costs can ultimately increase the carbon footprint of their farming. Meanwhile, lack of information about meaningful actions and the separation of roles along global value chains has led to consumers wanting to make a difference, but being unable to contribute towards change.

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Despite these challenges, there are several promising pathways to supporting local economic and ecological conditions.

There is significant value in coffee farming methods that focus on building biodiversity to enrich soil and provide shading which in turn reduces the necessity for fertilizers and pesticides. This means smallholdings have a lower carbon footprint than conventional methods – yet still produce excellent coffee. A number of small businesses, such as CARICO Cafe, are currently experimenting in business models that support these kinds of methods, and similar systems such as agro-forestry. At the same time, CARICO has been working holistically with communities in Bugisu to improve their social, ecological and economic conditions through coffee production. Despite persisting challenges to local economic livelihood security created by environmental changes, the initiative has helped improve quality and yield, and improved end-consumer knowledge of the product's origin, enabling incremental improvement of rural conditions. Meanwhile, the more natural farming practices assist the ecological balance of the area.

CARICO Cafe's GLF Biodiversity Digital Conference 2020 session highlights the ability of consumers to make a difference, and calls for businesses to be ready to demonstrate why and how consumers can participate. CARICO's session also contributes to growing dialogue between local, national and international actors as a means of including others in their efforts to maximize impacts.

Proposed milestones for implementation of solutions

CARICO remains committed to sharing its success stories, which go beyond taste, and not only advertises the coffee product, but just as importantly tells the bigger story, describing in images and narratives this coffee's origin and the ecological and social situations impacting the farmers – and inviting consumers to consider the long term impact of inaction. In addition, CARICO seeks to build partnerships with enterprises with similar goals, so as to build the influence and resources to engage a wider audience.

Remaining open question

How might small businesses such as CARICO Café better communicate their impact and contribute to scaling solutions?

Please provide one action-oriented recommendation to contribute to the GLF Biodiversity Policy Brief

- global: this is not a 'wealthy' problem
- early: involve women and mothers so that education starts early

Priorities in less developed countries often focus on education ('numbers & reading'), health, rights etc. but not on educating about the environment. The environment is as important in poor countries as it is in wealthy ones. To achieve timely and longer lasting engagement in this area, it is essential that women and mothers are properly involved, so that education starts early and that it is taught with the same importance as other core subjects.

Participating organizations

GLF Biodiversity Digital Conference 2020 would not be possible without the support and participation of the following hosts, partners and organizations. For a full list of everyone involved, please visit:

events.globallandscapesforum.org/biodiversity-2020/partners

Global Landscapes Forum

The **Global Landscapes Forum** (GLF) is the world's largest knowledge-led platform on integrated land use, dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement. The Forum takes a holistic approach to create sustainable landscapes that are productive, prosperous, equitable and resilient and considers five cohesive themes of food and livelihood, landscape restoration, rights, finance and measuring progress. It is led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), in collaboration with its co-founders UN Environment Programme and the World Bank and Charter Members.

Charter Members: CIAT, CIFOR, CIRAD, Climate Focus, Conservation International, Crop Trust, EcoAgriculture Partners, EFI, Evergreen Agriculture, FSC, GEF, GIZ, ICIMOD, IFOAM - Organics International, ILRI, INBAR, IPMG, IUFRO, Rainforest Alliance, Rare, RRI, SAN, UN Environment Programme, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, part of Wageningen Research, WFO, World Agroforestry, World Bank Group, WRI, WWF International, Youth in Landscapes Initiative.



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