



# Accelerating Women's Empowerment

## Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment in Program Sectors

About 80% of volunteer assignments in the Accelerating Women's Empowerment (AWE) program are carried out in the following sectors: **agribusiness, agroforestry, tourism and hospitality, and health and nutrition.**

### Agribusiness

Agribusiness is one of the largest contributors to economies in vulnerable communities around the world. While paving the way for food security, it is also a major source of employment. Women play active roles as traders, processors, laborers and entrepreneurs, but their roles are largely unrecognized. Women are often involved in small-scale low-returns marketing and they trade only particular commodities, such as perishable fresh produce for domestic markets. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to be involved in trading for international markets. Around the world, women continue to face barriers in the agribusiness sector, including access to land, education, livestock, financial services, technology and formal rural employment.

Closing the gender gap and giving women equal opportunities in this sector is crucial to generate positive gains in economic and social welfare and food security. It has the potential to lift 150 million people out of hunger around the world. A focus on gender equality and women's economic empowerment (GE/WEE) in the agribusiness sector can create a lasting, positive impact, and Catalyste+ aims to harness this potential through the AWE program by curating assignments that enhance women's access and agency and create an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment.



### Health and Nutrition

Rural women and girls in low-income countries play an important role in maintaining household food and nutrition security. Gender equality and women's empowerment are crucial for nutrition because they have an important influence on its three underlying determinants: food security, care practices and health. The provision of sexual and reproductive health services, including maternal health care and gender-based violence related services, are central to the health, rights and well-being of women and girls.

International evidence confirms that GE/WEE is central to tackling malnutrition. By supporting partners in the health and nutrition sector while enhancing GE/WEE among beneficiaries, Catalyste+ Advisors are contributing to lasting, positive impact.



## Tourism and Hospitality

The tourism and hospitality sector is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, providing employment opportunities, generating income and helping transform communities. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the participation of women in the hotel and restaurant service industry is approximately 55.5% globally, and reaches 70% in some regions, both in formal and informal jobs. For example, in Latin America, 51% of tourism businesses are managed by women; this is more than double the proportion in other sectors. In the Philippines, 58% of workers in the accommodation and food industries are women.



Women are often concentrated in low status, low paid and vulnerable jobs in tourism and hospitality, and they are not well represented in higher levels of management and employment, mostly due to a lack of access to education, training and resources. Women also tend to earn less money than men for equivalent work in tourism positions. According to the UN Global Report on Women and Tourism 2019 by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and UN Women, tourism provides better opportunities for women's participation in the workforce, women's entrepreneurship and women's leadership than any

other sector of the economy.

The AWE program aims to strengthen GE/WEE in tourism and hospitality with the goal of contributing to beneficial and positive societal change and improving the lives and well-being of individuals in this sector.

## Agroforestry

Women are active agents of conservation and restoration of natural resources, as their caregiving responsibilities and livelihood activities are often highly dependent on these resources in developing countries. Evidence shows that empowering women in local decision-making with respect to the conservation of forests and fisheries leads to better resource efficiency and conservation. Despite women's significant contribution to the agroforestry sector, their roles are often undervalued and overlooked. Women experience gender-specific challenges in agroforestry, including a lack of education, access to resources and technology, and informal employment.

Additionally, gender role stereotypes act as a barrier for women to reach their full potential in the agroforestry sector, as certain jobs with more authority and control are commonly reserved for men, leaving women with less opportunity and less decision-making authority. Due to the importance of forests in broadening development, protecting threatened Indigenous and traditional cultures, and stabilizing the biosphere, this sector is crucial in sustainable economic development. Agroforestry has great potential to offer substantial benefits for women, therefore Catalyste+ aims to design assignments with the purpose of increasing women's access and agency and creating an enabling environment for women that challenges gender norms in agroforestry.

### Sources

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