

EXPORT TO CANADA NEWS

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CSR AND YOUR BUSINESS

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MONDAY
June
27

Corporate
Social
Responsibility



STEVE TIPMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
TFO CANADA

Corporate Social Responsibility is Good for Your Business

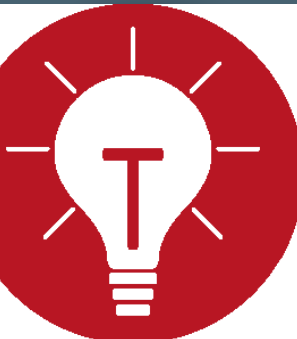
The theme for this edition of TFO Canada's newsletter is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and what it means to your business.

First, let's provide some context on what CSR means. According to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), "CSR is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. CSR is generally understood as being the way through which a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives ("Triple-Bottom-Line- Approach"), while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders."

In Canada, and around the world, consumers are increasingly interested in buying products and services that are produced in socially and environmentally responsible ways. Governments also have an obligation to ensure that imported products comply with regulatory requirements related to environmental issues such as toxic substances, and social issues like worker health and safety. This means that exporting small and medium sized companies need to be aware of how importers and regulators of the products they sell are defining and evaluating social and environmental performance. It is imperative to meet their expectations to ensure continued access to international markets.

The case for CSR is very clear: It is good for your business. In fact, according to a survey conducted in the USA by Clutch that was published in January 7, 2019, people expect more responsibility, action, and accountability from businesses and tend to shop at companies that share their values. By extension, this would apply equally to the products they import and sell. Furthermore, UNIDO states that "A properly implemented CSR concept can bring along a variety of competitive advantages, such as enhanced access to capital and markets, increased sales and profits, operational cost savings, improved productivity and quality, efficient human resource base, improved brand image and reputation, enhanced customer loyalty, better decision making and risk management processes."

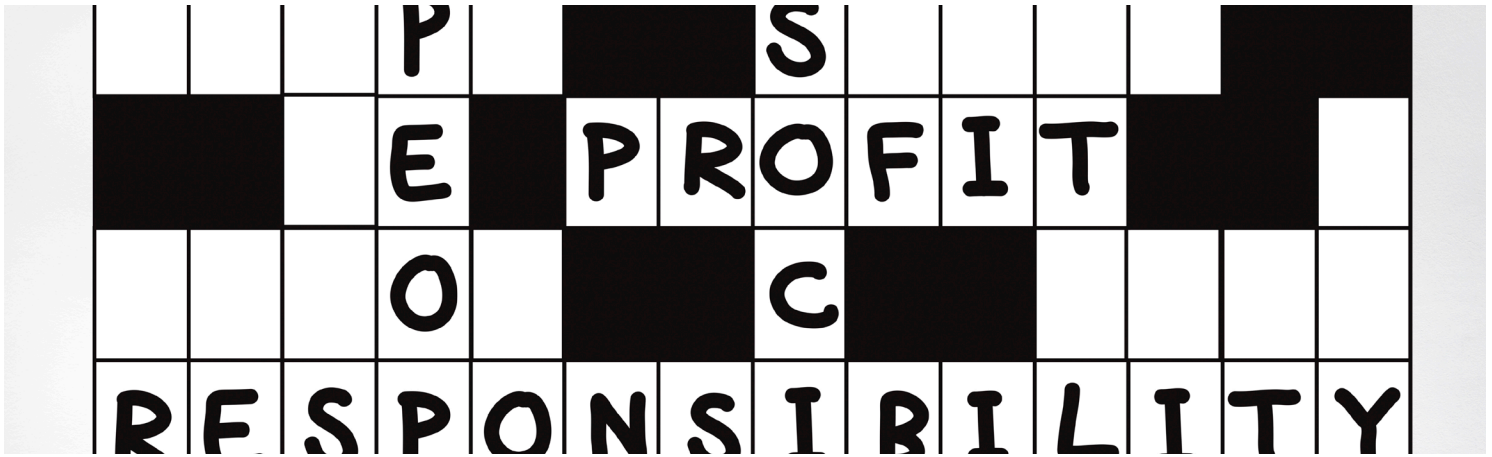
As a leader in improving lives through facilitating sustainable international trade opportunities for small and medium enterprises in developing countries, TFO Canada has tools available to support in the development of your CSR strategies and plans.



Tipman's Trade Tip

Increasingly, consumers believe it's important for businesses to demonstrate social responsibility and take stances on current social movements. In fact, they often behave in a manner whereby their buying decisions are a demonstration of supporting the issues they care about.

CSR AND YOUR BUSINESS



By Daphna Lewinshtein
TFO Canada Corporate Social Responsibility Advisor

Corporate Social Responsibility has been steadily taken up by businesses over the past two decades. The pace and intensity with which companies engage in CSR - and consumers demand that they do so - have both accelerated since 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global movement for racial justice, and the economic upheavals of the past year. These upheavals not only exacerbated social injustices but also highlighted structural inequality in the international system.

Corporate Social Responsibility asks us to go beyond local employment laws and local environmental laws. CSR is about structuring your business model around really caring for your employees' wellbeing and your impact on the environment and your community. In Canada, and around the world, consumers are increasingly interested in buying products that are produced in a responsible way and that are good for the planet. CSR efforts also help foster a more productive and positive work environment for employees.

With globalization, the competition today is stiff and it can be challenging for a company to set itself apart in the eyes of its customers. CRS can help set your business apart; implementing social responsibility initiatives can help people see your company as a positive force for good. CSR is also important when it comes to your brand's identity. To keep long-term customers, businesses must create trust with their target audience, showing that you have a good CSR strategy can help build a good reputation, earning trust and long-term clients.

Corporate Social Responsibility is central to the implementation of many key priorities for the government and the people of Canada: respect for human rights, action on climate change, inclusive trade and development, the rights of Indigenous peoples, and the impact of our feminist international assistance policy.

Canadian consumers are paying more attention to the way that companies treat their employees, and to issues of environmental sustainability, when making decisions about what to buy. Companies with good corporate social responsibility tend to make more money, attract, and retain higher quality staff, and see their reputations improve as their consumer base expands.

Corporate Social Responsibility is going mainstream — it's the new normal and it's here to stay!

NEW STAFF



Kristin Marinacci
Program Director, Africa

Kristin Marinacci joined TFO Canada as the Program Director for Africa in September 2021. Kristin is responsible for providing leadership in the implementation of a multi-region program aimed at increasing the number of women exporters from developing countries involved in international trade. She also provides strategic oversight to the Ottawa-based team who work hand in hand with trade support institutions in Africa to facilitate more inclusive economic growth.

Kristin has a background in urban planning and has more than 25 years of project/program management experience in the international development field in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Kristin brings practical experience to the team in institution strengthening having worked with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for over 20 years. Areas of expertise include local governance, organizational effectiveness, multi-stakeholder engagement/public participation, good governance, strategic planning, performance measurement, and capacity building.

NEW STAFF

Carlos E. Umaña
Project Officer, Latin America and the Caribbean

Carlos E. Umaña is the Project Officer for Latin America and the Caribbean. He supports the Director and Program Manager in the implementation and monitoring of trade-related technical assistance and capacity building projects and activities within this region.

Prior to joining TFO Canada, Carlos worked as a career diplomat at the Embassy of Costa Rica in Canada, where he recognized the relevance of TFO Canada for SMEs in developing countries. He also was a trade negotiator and advisor with the Ministry of Foreign Trade of Costa Rica, where he participated in multiple Market Access negotiations on trade in goods. Carlos has extensive research experience in international trade and public policy. This includes working in projects with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), and at the think tank Academia de Centroamerica. The documents generated by these projects became a reference in the discussion of public policies in Costa Rica.

Carlos speaks English, French and Spanish. He holds undergraduate and MSc degrees in Economics from the University of Costa Rica, and a LL.M. in International Economic Law and Policy from the University of Barcelona.



CSR Market Information Paper



We are pleased to announce that we have updated our Market Information Paper (MIP) on Corporate Social Responsibility. This guide includes information on how Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) can incorporate socially responsible practices into their business. The full guide is available on our [website](#) in English, French and Spanish. Please ensure you are [registered](#) with us to access the full document.

Executive Summary

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is defined by the Government of Canada as the voluntary activities undertaken by a company to operate in an economic, social and environmentally sustainable manner. In Canada and around the world, companies, governments, and consumers are increasingly interested in buying products and services that are produced in socially, culturally, and environmentally responsible ways.

CSR is a business model that supports companies in becoming more socially and environmentally responsible to its employees, stakeholders, and the public. CSR moves the business focus from solely profits to incorporate more socially beneficial outputs.

Some of these socially and environmentally responsible outputs include:

- Decreasing greenhouse gas emissions or the carbon footprint of a company
- Providing a safe work environment for all employees
- No discriminatory policies
- Providing living wages
- Ensuring equal rights for marginalized groups and much more

These issues are influencing how governments, companies and consumers are making purchases. Both retailers and consumer goods companies are evaluating suppliers and partners to ensure that they are operating in environmentally and socially responsible ways.

Small and medium sized companies (SMEs) exporting to Canada should be aware of how purchasers are defining and evaluating a company's social and environmental commitments and performance. By incorporating CSR into their business models and fulfilling their CSR targets, SMEs, can demonstrate a commitment to social, cultural and environmental changes that can lead to meeting more buyer requirements and reaching a larger consumer base.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Asia and the Middle East



Under the Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth (WIT) project, the Asia team continues to work actively with partners, local technical experts, and local coordinators to effectively implement the next program activities in the region. This includes ongoing development of Trade Support Institutions' (TSIs) gender action plans (GAP) and capacity building for TSIs to deliver gender-sensitive export readiness services to SMEs.

The Asia team also conducted a virtual Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) workshop in August 2021: A total of 17 (16 women/1 man) senior management staff and board members from 6 TSIs in Vietnam. were trained. In addition, two local gender-sensitive market research activities were undertaken in

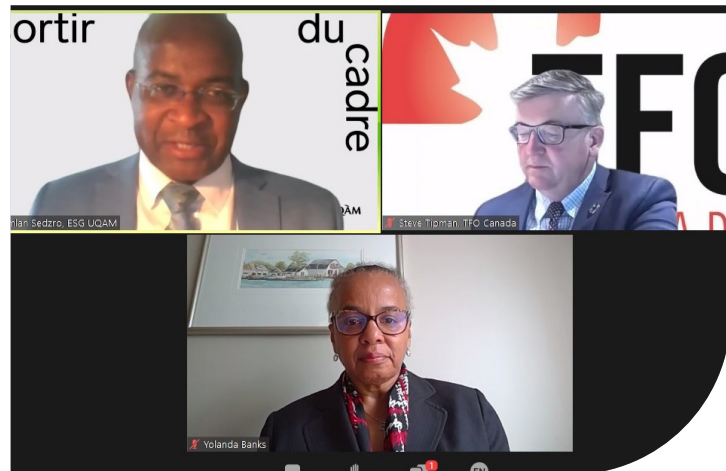
the region: one completed in Indonesia (July 2021) and one initiated in Vietnam (July 2021).

A capacity-building (Training of Trainers - ToT) session was carried out for TSIs on exporting to Canada and other international markets, including information on consumer demand, CSR, climate-smart business practices, regulations and export-readiness. A total of 47 (37 women/10 men) representatives from 5 TSIs in Jordan and 7 TSIs in Indonesia were trained.

Under the [Women in Trade knowledge platform to boost inclusive and sustainable growth project](#), TFO Canada, in collaboration with its regional partner - the Mekong Institute (MI), conducted an online SME survey that took place during July-September 2021. The WIT Knowledge Platform will contain solutions to enable women-led SMEs from developing countries to benefit from international trade opportunities which can be used by both the private and public sector at country, regional and global levels.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Africa & Haiti

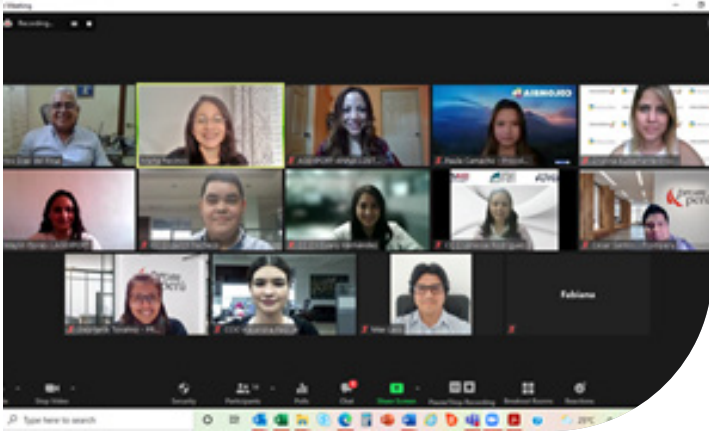


One of the highlights in the Africa region since the last quarter has been the completion of the VIRTUAL SALON ON MALI PRODUCTS AND SERVICES 2021, from July 8-13. This event was coordinated with the Mali Embassy in Canada, TFO Canada and TFO Canada associates. The event opened with speeches from distinguished guests from the Malian and Canadian diplomatic corps, government ministers of both countries, and TFO Canada's Executive Director. The virtual salon included Business to Business meetings between Canadian buyers and Malian companies in the agri-food products sector, such as shea butter, baobab oil, and Arabic gum, among others.

The implementation of the Women in Trade (WIT) project in the region is now in its third year and we are set to begin the most exciting activities of the project in terms of impacts on SMEs' export readiness. Successful Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) workshops have been carried out in most of our partner countries. The latest GESI training completed was in Benin for the senior management of the Chambre de Commerce et de l'Industrie du Bénin (CCIB). The training took place from July 5- 8, 2021, and was joined by 27 participants in total, among them 16 women. We are currently planning the training of trainers on export readiness services for the training staff of our partner TSIs.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Latin America & the Caribbean



Under the WIT project, between July and September, the Latin America team developed work plans with the TSIs' implementers in Colombia, Peru, Guatemala and Honduras. TFO Canada's local gender experts delivered technical assistance to each TSI to finalize their Gender Action Plans (GAP) and accompany their internal approval process.

In July, the Latin American team also implemented the Training of Trainers (ToT) Program in export support services, which aimed to build the capacity of TSIs to increase their engagement with women exporters and to offer services that respond better to their needs. A total of 17 representatives from the 4 TSIs

attended the training. The ToT included the following modules: assessing SMEs' export readiness, building an export plan, identifying your target market, market access strategies, costing and pricing, customer communications, gender equality, negotiations, and export documentation. Furthermore, TFO Canada's local expert delivered special technical assistance to the Camara de Comercio e Industrias de Cortes from Honduras to develop their capacity to design and deliver the training to SMEs in export plan development.

In August, a team of local environment/CSR experts was hired to prepare and deliver a ToT program in environment and CSR in international trade. The local consultants were trained by the Canadian experts. The ToT program was implemented in September in the four countries where a total of 21 (14 women and 7 men) were trained.

TSI partners from Colombia, Peru and Honduras sent invitations to SMEs to participate in the project's training program. PROCOLOMBIA started the implementation of this program in September.

TFO CANADA ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2020-2021



TFO Canada is proud to present its first Annual Impact Report. Although the year 2020-2021 has been shaped by the impacts of COVID-19 we have still been able to pursue our mission of improving lives through the creation of sustainable trade partnerships for exporters from developing countries with Canadian and foreign buyers. Regardless of the collective and individual challenges we have all faced, at TFO Canada we learned to adapt to these changes and remained committed to our mission. Working remotely and online only motivated us to do more in reaching our partners and beneficiaries, this can be seen through the report as we adapted to virtual trainings, webinars and the online resources produced.

The TFO Canada Impact Report 2020-2021 highlights our enthusiasm, commitments, and achievements towards our mission, while supporting the most vulnerable (specifically women and marginalized groups) in accessing the Canadian and International Markets.

[Happy reading!](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON TFO CANADA ACTIVITIES

Mali Canada Economic Forum

July 28, 2021

A delegation of four participated in the virtual exhibition on Mali's products and services which brought together 150 participants. Steve Tipman, TFO Canada's Executive Director, presented an overview of the Canadian market and Hery Ramiarison, TFO Canada's project officer, presented on TFO Canada's online tools and services to guide SME exporters and TSIs on how to access the Canadian market.

What's Next: Future Consumption Trends in Canada

Susan Baka, Regional Representative Report

August 26, 2021

The pandemic has had a profound impact on consumer habits and behaviours that will likely influence change for years to come. This has important implications for the food industry which must be future focused and have adaptable, flexible action plans. Ipsos has leveraged machine learning to create a future casting model - a strategic planning tool to show what the future can be – that was outlined in this webinar. The model includes study data that evaluated behaviour in retail and food & beverage services for 50,000 Canadians annually. It goes beyond a numeric forecast by allowing change signals to be identified and future changes measured. This allows food producers, retailers and the industry to focus on core signals, to shape their marketing, to apply innovation by understanding behavioural stickiness, and to improve growth overall.

For more info: Elen.Alexov@ipsos.com

The Ipsos annual trend report is coming soon.



Sustainable and Inclusive trade in Apparel, Home Décor and Handicraft sectors

September 16, 2021

Our executive director Steve Tipman moderated the panel discussion on Sustainable and Inclusive trade in Apparel, Home Décor and Handicraft sectors. The panel featured speakers from around the world including Nigest Haile, Founder and Executive Director, Centre for Accelerated Women's Economic Empowerment, from Ethiopia; Marcia Mendez, Trade Counselor of the Embassy of Guatemala in Canada; and Do Thi Thu Huong who works with the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Vietnam.

Apparel Textile Sourcing Canada

Susan Baka, Regional Representative Report

September 15-16

Some highlights from the apparel and textile sourcing show are below:

- The apparel industry lost 25% of its sales last year. The companies that did well were those operating with agility and speed.
- The pandemic did not necessarily decrease – or increase - the sourcing of apparel and textiles from developing countries. Brands like Roots feel it's more about reinforcing how they work with suppliers and doubling down to deal with those who operate according to its core values.



SPOTLIGHT ON TFO CANADA ACTIVITIES



SIAL Canada

*Susan Baka, Regional Representative Report
September 21, 2021*

Some highlights from SIAL Canada are below:

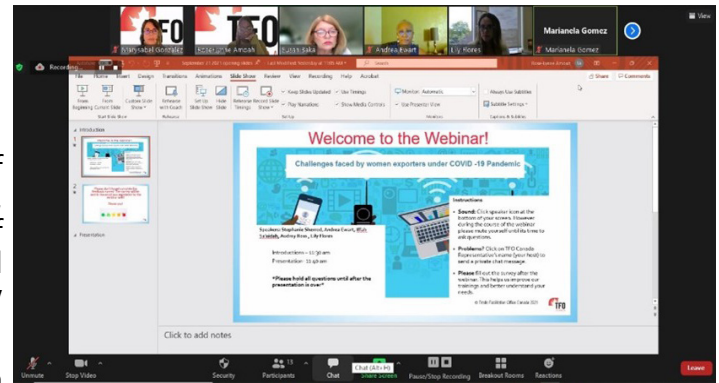
- Despite shifting food consumption patterns, disrupted supply chains, climbing commodity prices and labour shortages, product innovation and a focus on quality – which drive success in the food industry - are continuing and the outlook is positive.
- SMEs will lead innovation in the food supply chain.

- Three major trends are consumers' desire for convenience, health and wellness (eg healthy snack foods; growth in keto, gluten-free and vegan proteins) and sustainability.
- Vegan will continue to grow and become more mainstream.
- Only 25% of Canadians look for local products in grocery stores.

Webinar on Challenges faced by women exporters under COVID-19 Pandemics

September 23, 2021

The webinar featured key speakers Stephanie Sherrod - VP of Programming OWIT; Andrea Ewart - Global Law Expert, customs, and trade; Iffah Sa'aidah - Commercial Attaché, Embassy of Indonesia; Audrey Ross - Logistics & Customs Specialist, Orchard Custom Beauty; and Lily Flores - Director of Procurement - New Alasko L.P.



The webinar was attended by 24 participants 22 women, 1 man and one person preferred not to identify. The speakers discussed how 80% of women are engaged in cross border trading around the world. This is an informal sector and are often not protected by law and policy further leaving women out of the trade system. The speakers focused on some ways that trade facilitators can assist some of the challenges that women exporters face including those in the informal sector. Additionally, the speakers discussed the complexity and challenges women face while exporting under the COVID-19 pandemic and how women can minimize the risk and navigate easier.

The full webinar can be found on our website [here](#).

My Private Brand Innovation Summit

*Susan Baka, Regional Representative Report
September 22-23*

Some highlights from the Private Brand Innovation Summit are below:

- Supply chain disruptions during COVID caused consumers to try something different which was very good for private brands.
- Listening to customer needs is key for innovation; research shows private brand can take the innovation lead.
- Consumers no longer choose private brand based solely on price, but also on ingredients and unique packaging.
- The health and wellness trend has shifted from niche to mainstream (eg. kale popular).
- Opportunities include less sterile looking products and packaging for seniors, more varieties in nutritional drink supplements.
- 'Private' is an unnecessary qualifier now since the best retailers talk about 'our brand'.

PROCOLOMBIA, PROACTIVE, PRO GENDER EQUALITY

During the months of March to June 2021, TFO Canada conducted Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) trainings under the Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth (WIT) project for beneficiary country Trade Support Institutions (TSIs). The training aimed to raise awareness on the value of women in leadership positions and develop strategies for equitable participation of women-led SMEs in international trade so that the TSIs can provide appropriate gender-responsive export readiness services to women-led and men-led SMEs.

In the Region of Latin America, TFO Canada has trained 4 TSIs. In Colombia the GESI training lasted 5 days and was attended by 17 staff members, 12 of which were women and 5 were men. Additionally, TFO Canada delivered technical assistance to support the elaboration of [PROCOLOMBIA](#)'s GESI Action Plan. The training has been a success and partner TSIs have shared enthusiasm with the TFO Canada staff about the aftermath and its impacts. TFO Canada was able to discuss the impacts of the training in further details with Flavia Santoro Trujillo, President of ProColombia, our partner TSI in Colombia.

Flavia tells us *"Prior to the GESI training we didn't have a gender policy, we had never had a GESI training either, because at ProColombia we have a strong presence of women in leadership. In management we have approximately 70% of women in leadership positions. Gender equality has been naturally at the core of how we function and it's something that makes us very proud"*.

The training has allowed us to raise awareness about the importance of having gender focused programs and it has motivated us to further implement initiatives that promote gender equality."

As a result of the GESI training, ProColombia wasted no time in implementing new strategies. Flavia told us *"Prior to the GESI training, ProColombia did not have a gender policy, this is in part because of the heavy presence of women at the organization. Since the training ProColombia has been looking into implementing a gender policy and applying some of the newly learned strategies to improve internal process that will continue to benefit of all staff, specifically the women at ProColombia in all positions."*

Additionally, we are conducting a survey intended to gather information on women led companies. The results of the survey will allow us to better classify companies based on: if they are women led, if they employ large numbers of women, and/or if women own the company."

Simultaneously, we are launching a pilot program called 'Mentora Exportadora' (woman exporter mentor program) focused on having women led companies, mentor other women led companies. This program seeks to promote a successful exchange of information and experiences directly related to increasing exports, amongst companies managed by women."

For many businesses, these last two years have been a challenge because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, especially for small business which have felt some of the heavier impacts. At ProColombia they are focusing on a *"brighter future!"*. Flavia tells us *"After the trainings we received from TFO Canada and the pilot programs we plan to carry out, we hope to offer the companies more support in order to close the gender gaps, increase commercial opportunities and minimize the impact of the pandemic"*.

Overall, the GESI training has proven to be vital to the TSIs we have supported during this time. TFO Canada is happy to see the implementation of the strategies provided during trainings. We are committed to gender equality through our work by creating sustainable trade partnerships for exporters from developing countries. We would like to thank Flavia Santoro Trujillo, President of ProColombia for sharing their experiences.



FLAVIA SANTORO TRUJILLO
PRESIDENT OF PROCOLOMBIA

TFO Canada improves lives through the creation of sustainable trade partnerships for exporters from developing countries with Canadian and foreign buyers. We facilitate access to the Canadian marketplace and share Canadian trade expertise for the benefit of smaller male and female owned/managed exporters from developing countries and for the men and women they employ.

Founded in 1980, TFO Canada is a non-governmental, non profit organization.

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