

# Decent Work and Cotton

Thursday 23 June: 14:45 – 15:40 (55 min)

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## With Speakers:



**Jason Glaser**  
CEO | La Isla  
Network



**Rachel Rigby**  
Human Rights  
Lead | Rainforest  
Alliance



**Ashif Shaikh**  
Founder & CEO  
| Jan Sahas



**Chelsea Reinhardt**  
Director, Standards  
and Assurance  
| Better Cotton

## Facilitator:



# Climate change impacts on decent work

20 June 2022



*Aim of this session is to better understand how climate change affects the **HUMAN** side of cotton production – and how some of these challenges can be addressed*





**Manual**



**Hot**



**Smallholder-  
dominated**



**Vulnerable**



**Manual**

**350 million people** rely on cotton production, including **100 million rural households**

**5 of the top 7** cotton producing countries are either all manual, or partially manual production

Hot

... and getting hotter

"75% of the world's cotton-growing regions face greater exposure to heat stress (defined as temperatures above 40°C)" [Cotton2040 Report]

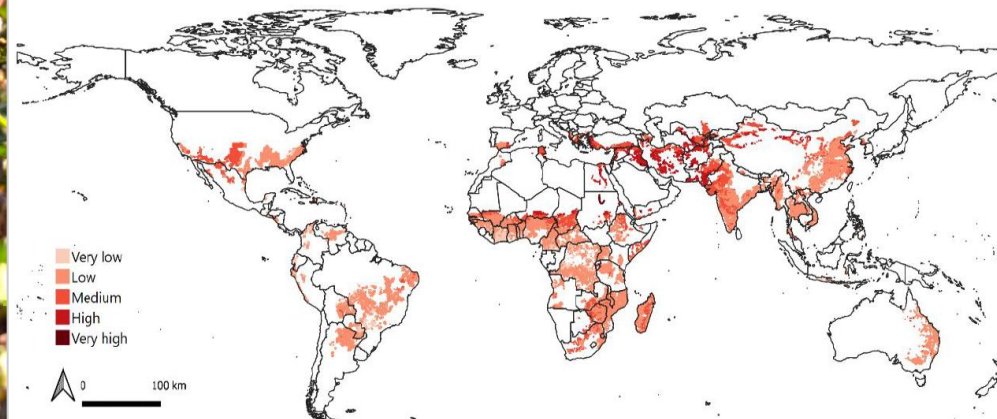
### 'We are living in hell': Pakistan and India suffer extreme spring heatwaves

April temperatures at unprecedented levels have led to critical water and electricity shortages

Cotton 2040 | Adapting to Climate Change

#### Global climate risk mapping – results

Global multi-indicator climate hazard index – Absolute risk for 2040



ACCLIMATISE  
building climate resilience  
Willis Towers Watson | PwC

FORUM  
FOR THE  
FUTURE



Delhi, India. Photograph: Manish

**Smallholder-  
dominated**

90% of the world's cotton farmers are smallholders, producing more than 75% of global cotton

Many farmers live around the poverty line, and many are in cycles of debt

Climate change is already affecting farmer yields and incomes

Poor yields keeps farmers in poverty, and make it even harder to improve worker wages or conditions



## Vulnerable

- Farm workers **lack basic legal protections** and access to social services
- Common to be in **cycles of debt** – sharecroppers especially vulnerable to risks of debt bondage
- **Women** do the vast majority of manual work and are most affected by health and safety and sanitation challenges
- Young workers, domestic migrants, and minority groups are also represented and **especially vulnerable to discrimination** or abuse



## To conclude

- Millions of farmers and workers face extremely harsh conditions already, and **climate change is making these worse**:
  - Poor yields create cycles of debt, keeping farmer and worker incomes even lower
  - Extreme heat creates unsafe working conditions, especially for women and other vulnerable groups

*Improving worker conditions and protections is an absolute priority – it has to go together with supporting farmers on climate adaptation and better livelihoods*



# Shifting toward solutions

1

## Listening, and learning from workers

- Field-based decent work research and risk assessments
- Trailing use of *Worker Voice Technology* at farm level – to get feedback and identify risks directly from farmers and workers

2

## Raising the bar through our standard revision and 2030 strategy

- Shifting towards an ‘assess and address’ approach to monitor and fix labour risks before they escalate
- New expectations for health and safety, heat stress, sanitation, grievance mechanisms and remediation

3

## Forging new partnerships and collaborations

- To better connect workers and farmers with support services and protection, and to work together on structural challenges



Thank you

# Heat Stress, CKDnt and Occupational Health

## Human lives and livelihoods



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PRESENTED BY

**JASON GLASER**

CEO OF LA ISLA NETWORK

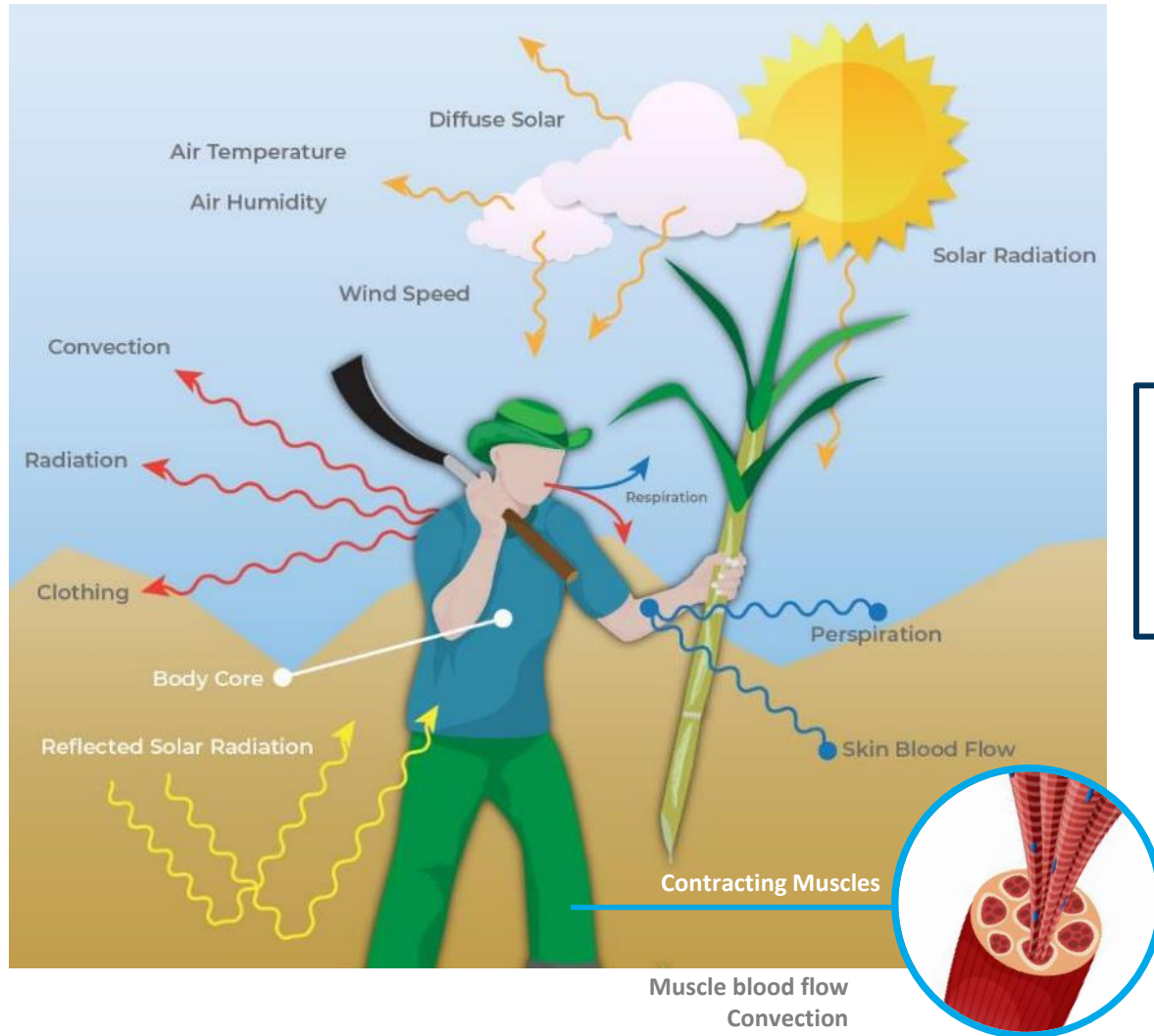
Jun 22, 2022



The  
Challenge




# Workers with highest levels of heat stress are at extreme risk in a warming world



## Heat Stress

Environmental heat  
+  
Internal heat from muscular work



- Greater physical strain
- Hotter internal body temperature

Greater health risk      Increased accident risk      Reduced productivity  
Early mortality

# CKD

Chronic Kidney Disease

# CKDnt

Chronic Kidney Disease of Non-traditional Origin

## Who Gets It?

Older people,  
both males and females



Disproportionately  
working age males



## Risk Factors

Diabetes,  
hypertension,  
obesity



Strenuous labor,  
without sufficient access to  
water, rest and shade



## How, where?



Proteinuria



Worldwide, more widespread  
in developed countries

## How, where?



Serum  
creatinine



Central America, South Asia  
and other tropical lowlands

# The Costs





93% report no formal source of financial assistance



52% of households had a child enter the workforce to replace a sick or deceased parent due to CKDnt

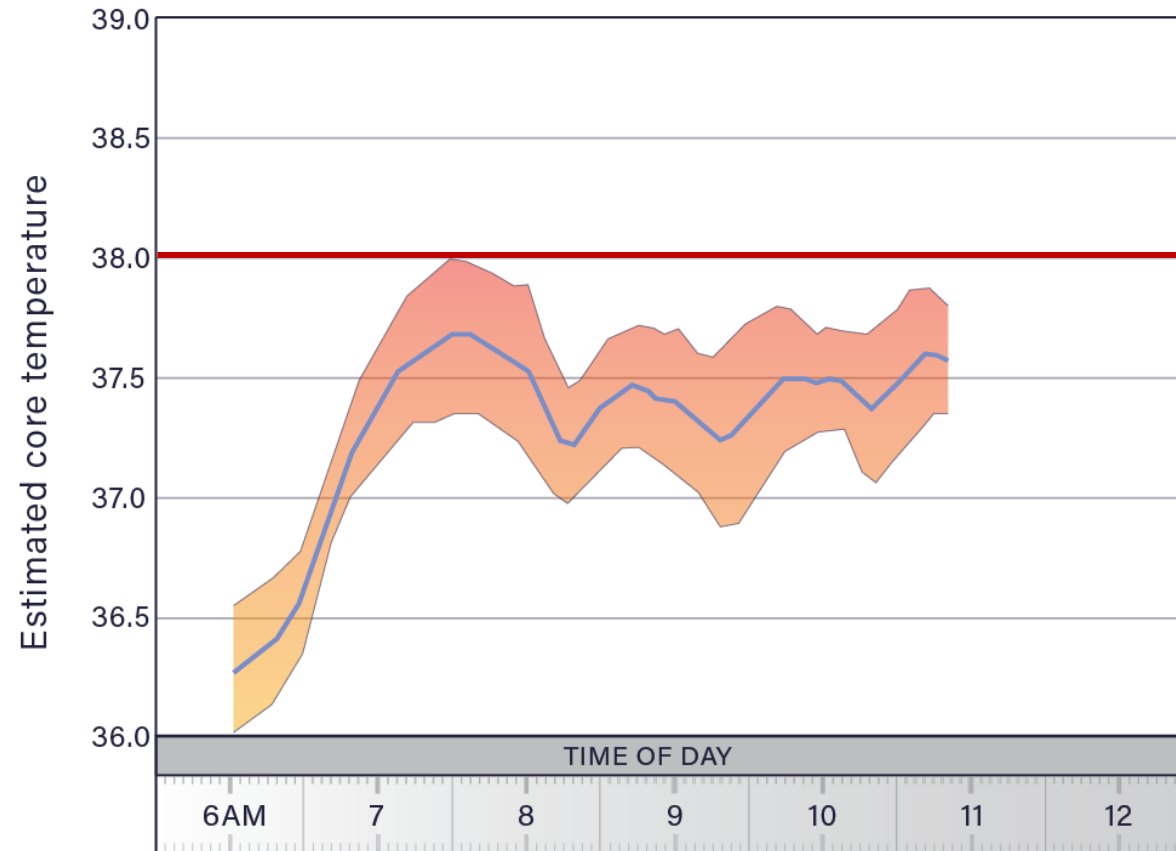


67% purchase food on credit on a weekly basis



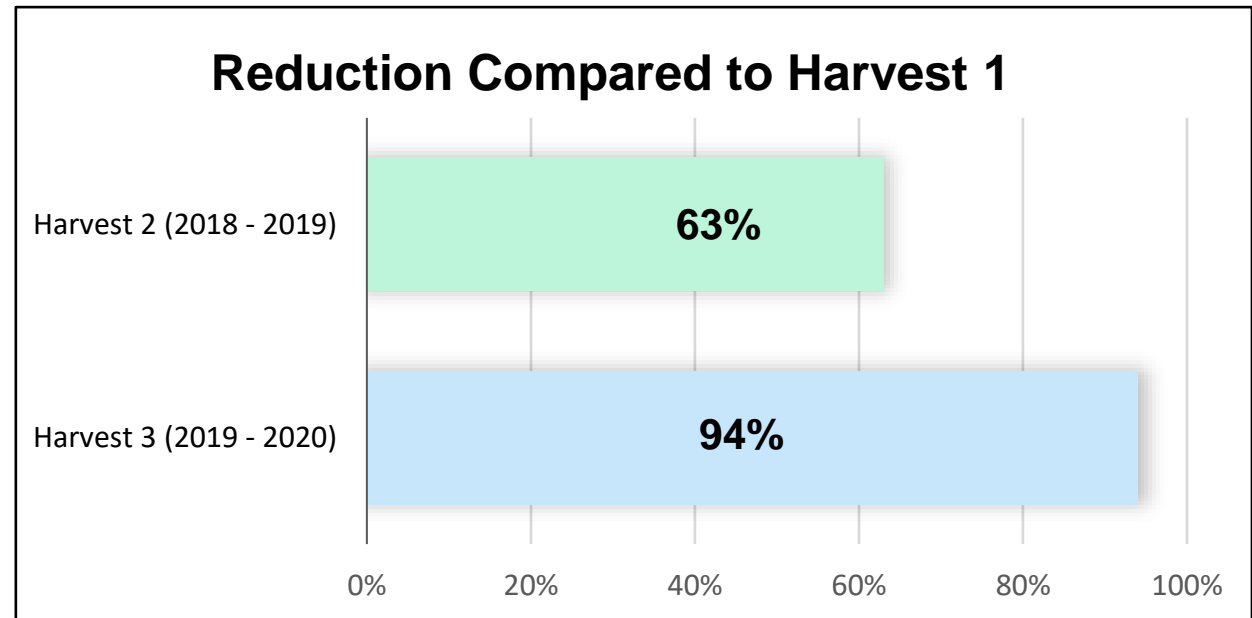
# A key response: Reducing dangerously high core temperatures

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Job	Estimated Workload	Harvest 1 2017-2018	Harvest 2 2018-2019	Harvest 3 2019-2020
		% of AKI	% of AKI	% of AKI
Cutters (Burned Cane and Seed)	High	9.4%	3.8%	0.6%
Drip Irrigation Repair + Field Support	Med/Low	3.9%	0.8%	0%



# Integrated Approach



## **Organizational Management assessment**

Workplace culture needs positive engagement to address messaging and operational gaps

## **Managing on exposures and health outcomes**

Nurture culture of health, build safety-climate, focus on exposures that can be managed in the work.

## **Communication**

Effective communication between the OSH team and all levels of organization.

# Active Programs In Response to the Problem



Related work:



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention



Pan American  
Health  
Organization



Relevance to BCI: Early CKDnt studies and reports on conditions that include child labor, forced labor, and adverse working conditions designate CKDnt and other OSH concerns as risks in cotton



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**1. Mapping studies to assess risk of illness/injuries of concern:** provides early insights into risks and help identify what communities are likely most affected that supply labor force

**2. DEGREE prevalence and cohort study in at-risk communities:** combined with socioeconomic assessments can illustrate the burden of occupational illnesses and injuries, *including CKDnt*, while identifying addressable risks.

**3. Point of care devices to assess the health and kidney function of migrant workers:** Data acquired before departure for work abroad and upon return can give insight into incidence of disease and help establish risks.

**4. Develop PREP based OSH programs with BCI and BCI membership.**



# Thank you

And thank you to the participants, the international and local research teams and all those at GIZ, DEG, BMZ, National Science Foundation, UKRI, FORTE, US Dept of Labor and Ingenio San Antonio who have made the work possible.

Together we are taking action in the face of uncertainty and attaining results by exercising agency over what we can control and act upon.



**Let's Connect**

[Jason@laislanetwork.org](mailto:Jason@laislanetwork.org)

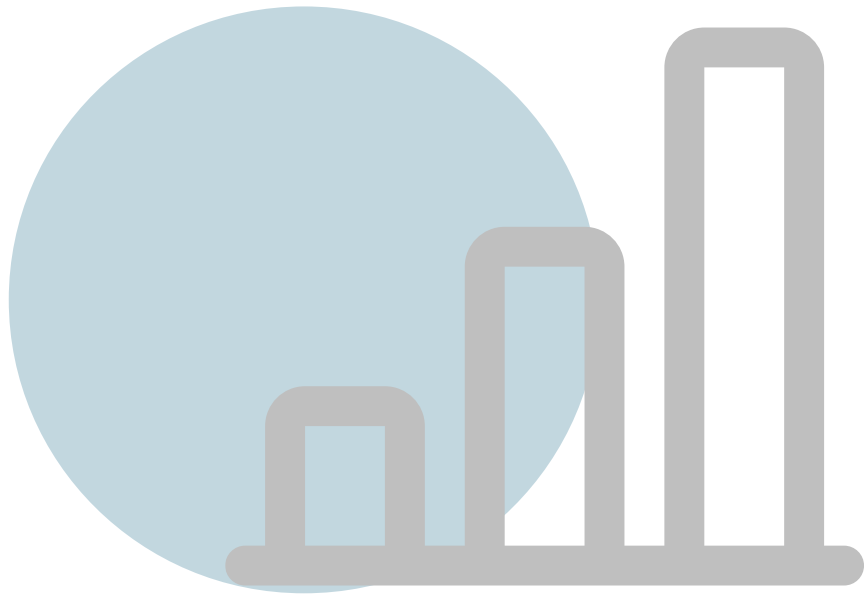
Questions: Are these programs affordable?

Can we adapt these programs to protect cotton workers?

Just how widespread/severe is this kidney disease?

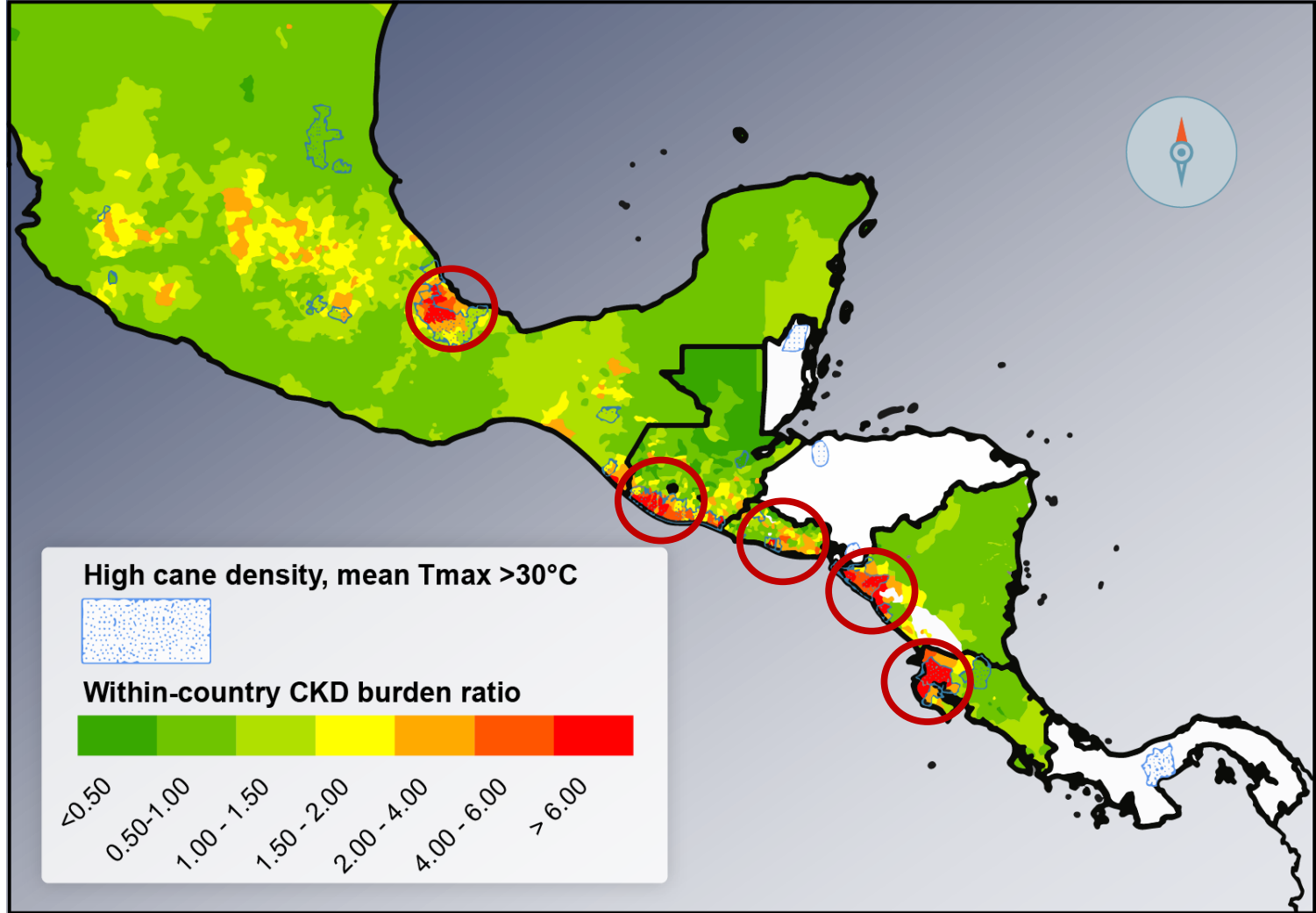
Why are we seeing this disease now?

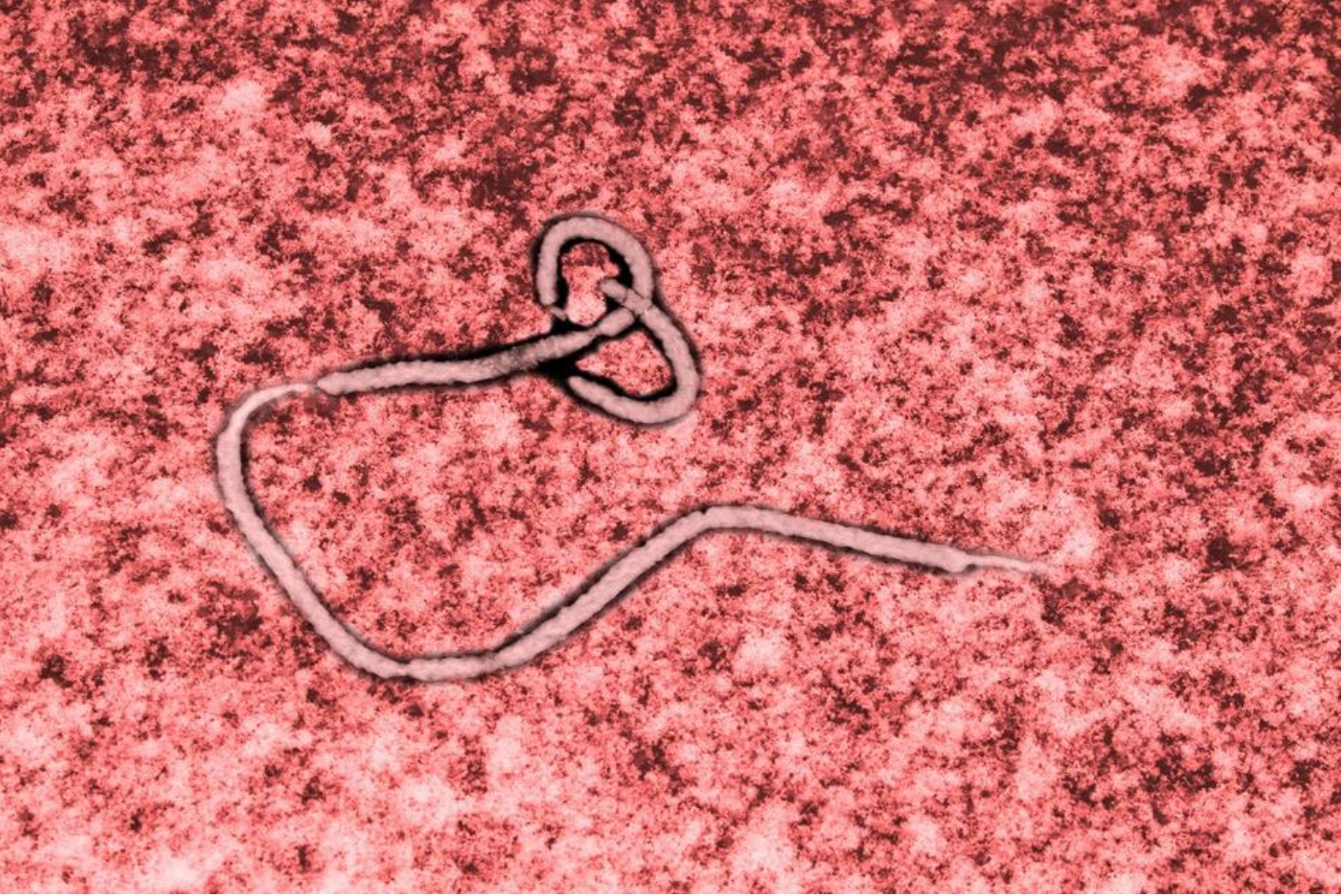
Why is LIN qualified?



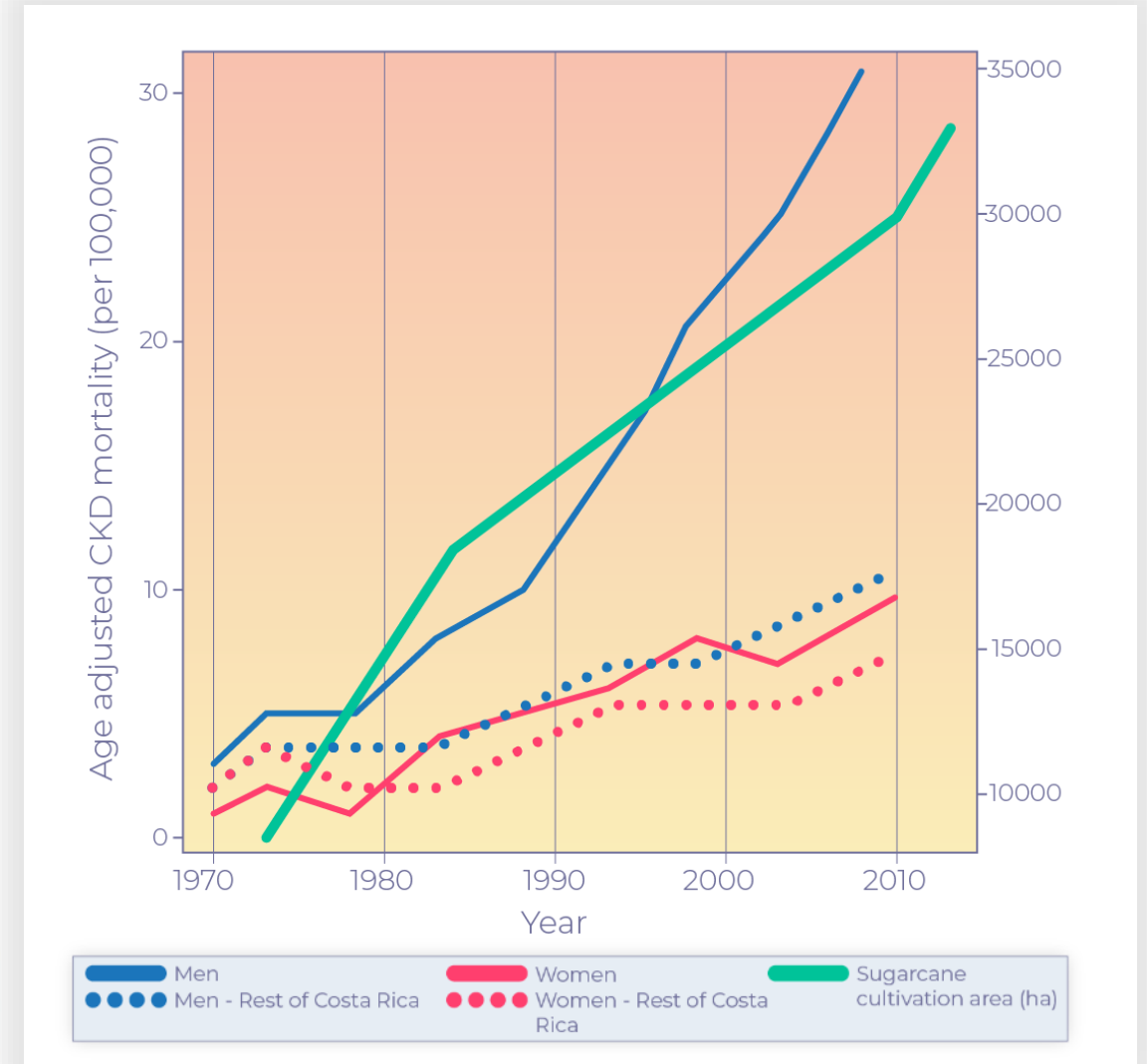
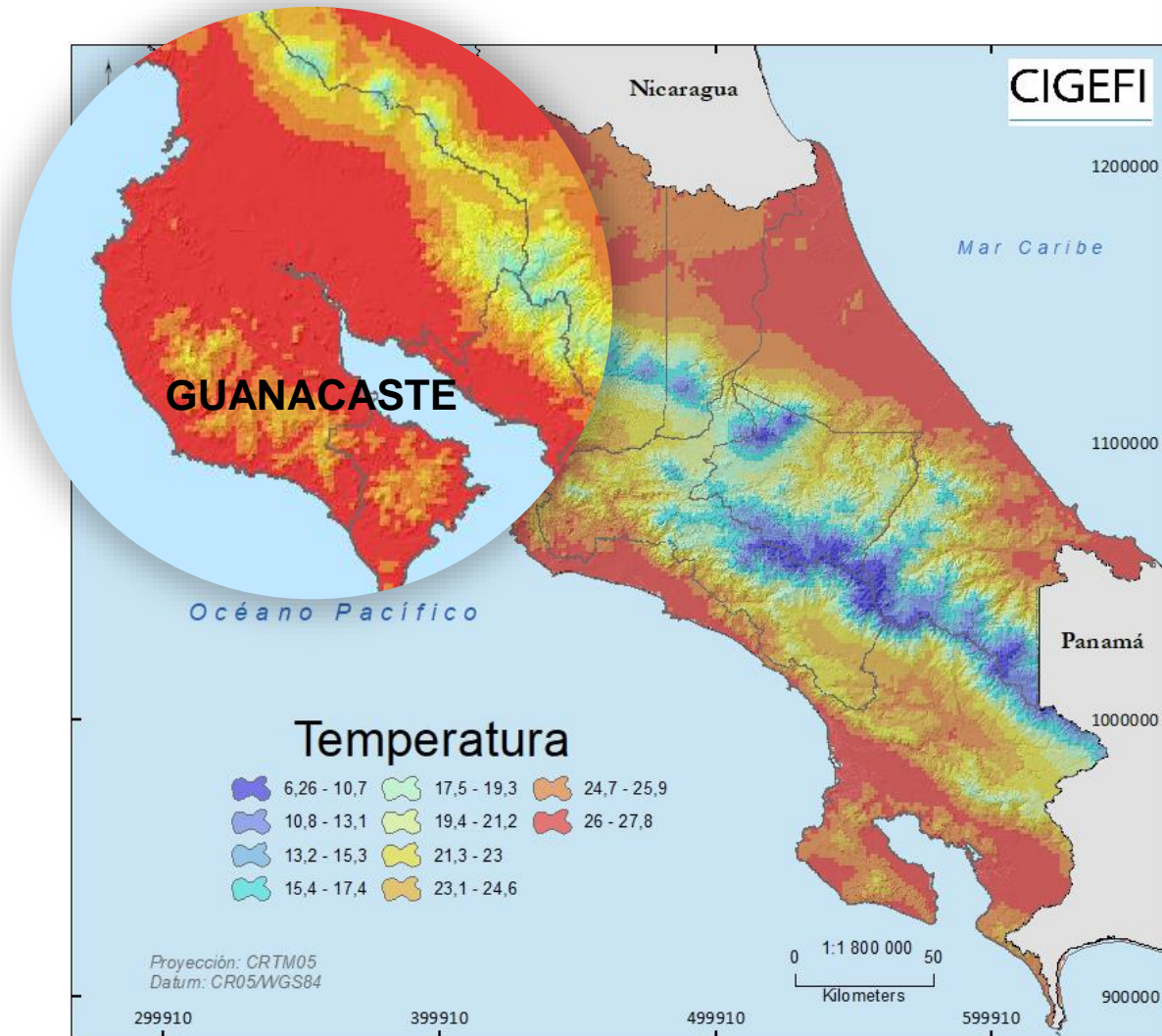
**22%-30%**

positive ROI and reduction  
in kidney injury not  
sufficient to drive change  
alone





# It's not new: Costa Rica example of CKD mortality trends 1970-2012





# Why are we talking about it now?



Industrialization of  
agriculture - rise of  
monocultures



Piece rate work



Increase in research  
and surveillance



Warming climate





# Climate change and working conditions in the coffee sector

Rainforest Alliance



We are working at the intersection of forests, agriculture and business.



We are building an alliance to:

- protect forests,
- improve the livelihoods of farmers and forest communities,
- promote their human rights,
- and help them mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis.

#### LIVELIHOODS



- Farmer incomes
- Workers' wages
- Forest community livelihoods

#### HUMAN RIGHTS



The Human Rights Logo designed by Freddy Steink

- Child labor
- Forced labor
- Workplace violence & harassment
- Working and living conditions
- Gender
- Indigenous land rights

#### CLIMATE



- Building resilience
- Mitigating climate change

#### FORESTS



- Deforestation
- Biodiversity

# Our alliance is all about changing the way the world produces, sources and consumes

We focus on:



Cocoa



Coffee



Tea



Bananas



Forest  
products



Palm oil



## Smallholders

- Globally, 60% of coffee farms are smaller than 5 hectares; smallholders produce 73% of the world's coffee (Enveritas)
- About half of the world's coffee farms are in the Americas
- Between 19-34% of coffee farmers in Central America are women (IWCA)



# Hired workers

- Tens of millions of coffee farm workers globally (SCA)
- Labor generally accounts for over 50% of a farm's total costs (ICO, Solidaridad)
- Large proportion are seasonal harvest workers

# Livelihoods & working conditions: risks in coffee

Safety and  
health



Informality  
and precarious  
work



Wages and  
income



Farmer  
and worker  
livelihoods



Gender  
discrimination  
and  
harassment





# Climate impacts on significant coffee producing regions

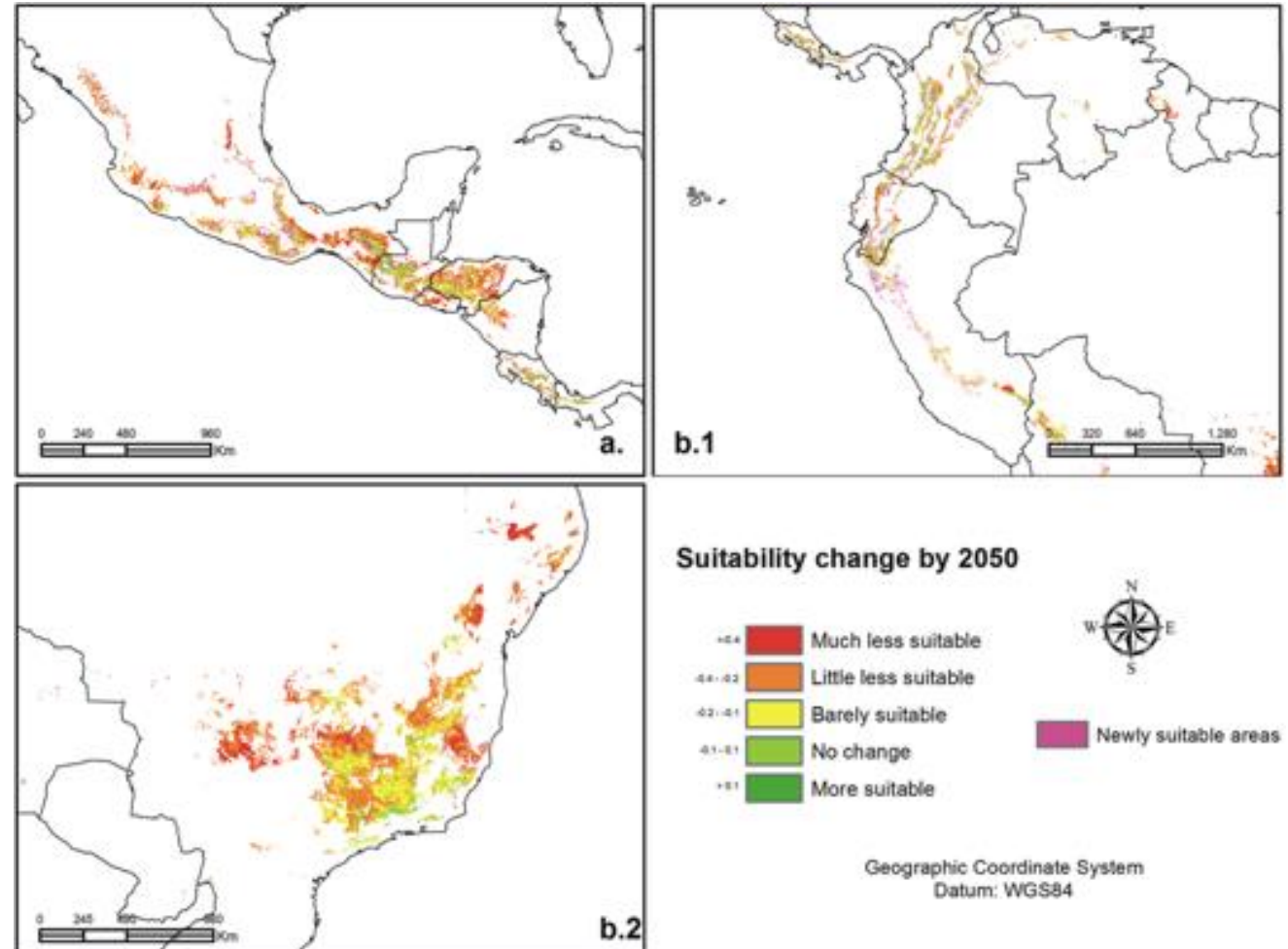
Source: Ionesco, D., F. Gemmene and D. Mokhnacheva. *Atlas of Environmental Migration*. Routledge, 2017.



Sources: IPCC (2013, 2014) © IOM (Mokhnacheva, Ionesco), Gemmene, Zoi Environment Network, 2015

# Climate impacts on significant coffee producing regions

A decrease in suitability for most coffee regions across the Americas



# Coffee leaf rust

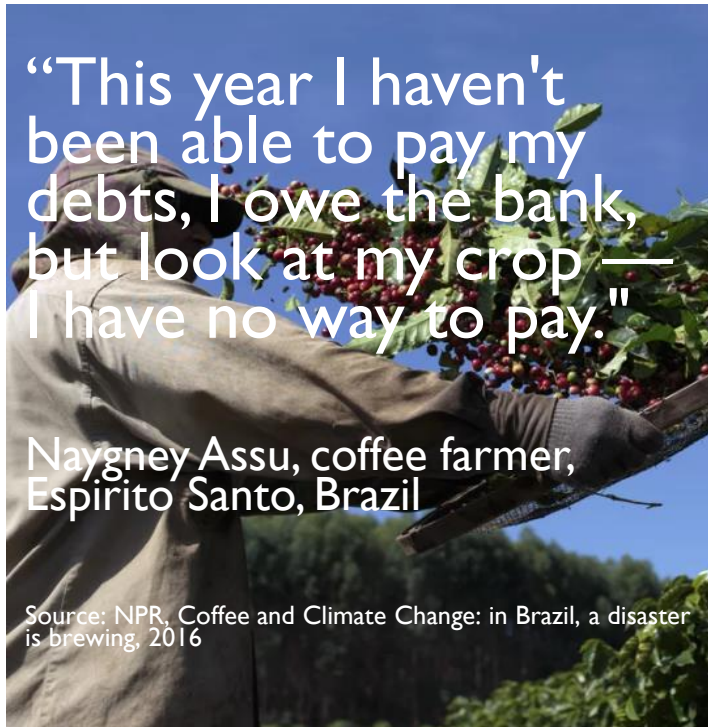
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- Coffee leaf rust affected 70% of Guatemalan coffee plants in 2014
- Coffee rust wiped half of the harvests for 30,000 farmers and the total yield for 10,000 farmers
- Higher temperatures and erratic rainfall contribute to leaf rust and other diseases



# Who in the coffee sector is at risk?

## Farmers and farming families



“I worked in a coffee farm, but each year there was less coffee to harvest and because of the low prices they let me go.”

A coffee worker from El Salvador who traveled in a “caravan” to the United States

Source: BBC, Cambio climático: la razón por la que migrarán millones de Centroamérica y México, 2019

## Farm workers and migrants



# Rainforest Alliance certification: Ensuring decent working conditions

- Protection from child labor, forced labor, discrimination, and violence/harassment
- Documented contracts/agreements between employer and worker
- Payment at or above minimum wage, on a pathway to “living wage”
- Safe and healthy working conditions
- Safe, clean and decent living quarters
- Maternity leave protections



"We have a productive farm where we conserve the environment, natural resources and biodiversity. We have improved our quality of life, our housing, we treat our wastewater, make our own fertilizers, practice organic composting methods and we have also improved our finances."

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## **Rainforest Alliance certification: supporting farmers**

