MISSION: To create economic opportunity for coffee communities.

VISION: We envision a coffee industry that is equitable and inclusive, that enables small-holder farmers to earn a dignified income and live prosperous lives, that facilitates authentic relationships between coffee producers, buyers, and consumers, and that meets economic, social and environmental needs of everyone involved.

CORE PROGRAMS

1. Direct trade coffee business
providing market access with better and more stable prices, averaging over 20% higher than farmers’ next best options
Service learning participants contribute to understanding the intricacies of the coffee industry and become advocates for products that ensure producers earn a fair wage

2. Cooperative assistance
building farmer and cooperative capacity through training and investment Program fees contribute to maintaining the cooperative assistance programs

3. Community tourism
creating cross-cultural connections through coffee and diversifying community incomes Here’s where service learning participants make the biggest impact!

OUR VALUES

Respect & Openness
It takes collaboration between many people with different sets of skills, cultures, and languages to build a better and more inclusive world. We show respect for different world-views and experiences, remembering that we can all learn from each other.

Transparency
The coffee world can be opaque, making it hard to know who benefits and who doesn’t. By being transparent with farmers, team members, customers, and participants, we shed light on the industry and keep ourselves honest.

Empowerment
We are mindful to avoid as much as possible replicating historical power imbalances. By ensuring that our partners have meaningful participation in our work and have their voices heard, we create more equitable relationships.
SERVICE LEARNING can take many forms. The definition from the National Service Learning Clearinghouse states that it aims to “integrate meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities”. DLG Service Learning Trips intend to do just that. Our goal is to transform participants into advocates of social change.

SERVICE

DIRECT SERVICE

**Service projects** - Participants spend time working alongside cooperative members on farmer-proposed projects such as improvements to housing or coffee processing that improve livelihoods and quality of life.

- Community-based projects means that direct needs are met and are often more successful than other approaches
- Program fees cover the majority of project costs, but to ensure stakeholder buy-in farmers contribute their time and a small monetary amount

**Coffee work** - Individuals experience first-hand the hard work of coffee farming by partaking in hands-on agricultural work in the fields and coffee processing in farmers’ homes.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Service isn’t just about physical labor, but also about providing opportunities for others. Every participant contributes to local economic development and income diversification by partaking in service learning activities, from their coffee day to artisan workshops to meals with cooperative members.

**De la Gente pays fair, above-average compensation to community providers averaging 2-3 times the local hourly wage.**

**$22,479.66** payout to farmers and family members for service learning activities in 2016.
LEARNING

INFORMED CITIZENS

Service learning experiences encourage critical thinking and can be transformative in shaping participants’ views, attitudes and values and instilling civic responsibility.

By participating in service learning trips, we hope that participants leave with an expanded perspective on global issues, share what they have seen and learned with others, are empowered to elicit change, and stay connected with De la Gente and coffee growing communities.

FORGING RELATIONSHIPS

Immersive experiences allow participants to get a glimpse of local life through interacting with community members in meaningful activities, eating local food and gaining an in-depth appreciation for the lives and challenges of small-scale producers and rural communities.

Ask any farmer what their favorite part of hosting visitors is and they’ll say sharing cultures, stories, and laughs. Service learning experiences promote cross-cultural exchanges for both visitors and community members.

“I like to share Guatemalan culture and teach volunteers about all the different aspects of coffee production.” – San Miguel farmer

“This was one of the most life-changing experiences I’ve had thus far. It opened my eyes to how other people live.” – Student participant