



FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVE

to Support 100 Smallholder Farmers
in Costa Rica

Mid-term Report
2021

Published in November 2021

bean
voyage



Bean Voyage is a feminist non-profit social enterprise that provides a bundle of services consisting of training, financing, market access, and mentorship to smallholder women coffee farmers.

Vision

To eradicate the gender gap in farming communities.

Mission

To partner with 2,500 coffee producing communities in 5 countries, supporting 2 million smallholder women and their families around the world by 2030.

Values

CARE - Compassion, Agency, Resilience and Equity.



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Summary & Context of the project

In collaboration with **The Starbucks Foundation** and **The Coffee Institute of Costa Rica (ICAFFE)**, Bean Voyage is spearheading the Food Security Initiative for 100 Smallholder Coffee Farmers in Costa Rica.

The project aims to closely work with **smallholder women coffee farmers in Costa Rica** and **alleviate issues around food insecurity in their families**. The project provides monthly food baskets, access to training on productive farm practices, and business skills to each participant. The goal is to equip coffee farmers with skills to diversify their farm produce and income as they secure their access to food throughout the year. The project concludes with each farmer receiving a stipend of \$150 to implement these productive ideas at a farm level.

The farmers were identified through a survey to map the needs of smallholder coffee farmers whose income was impacted by COVID-19, and the anticipated impact of this project is to foster food sovereignty while providing an avenue towards healthier and stable household lives for the 100 smallholder farmers and their families. As of this writing, the project has fulfilled all of its key objectives (mid-term), providing food baskets and training on key topics such as bee keeping, home gardening, hen keeping, and bio-fertilizers -- all of whom serve as alternative income sources for smallholder coffee farmers. Due to the ongoing pandemic, we've hosted all of the workshops online.

Between December 2021 and February 2022, farmers will build on this knowledge and be supported by mentors to write their own business plans, with the possibility of receiving a \$150 stipend to invest towards their business ideas.

KEY IMPACT METRICS

August - November 30, 2021:



2,400.57 KG

OF FOOD BASKETS PROVIDED

612 LITERS

OF MILK

530 KG

OF HYGIENE PRODUCTS

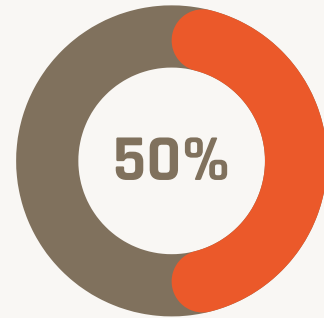


100

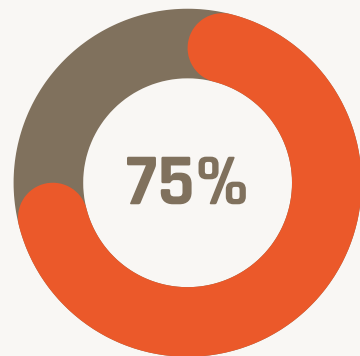
HOUSEHOLDS SUPPORTED

480

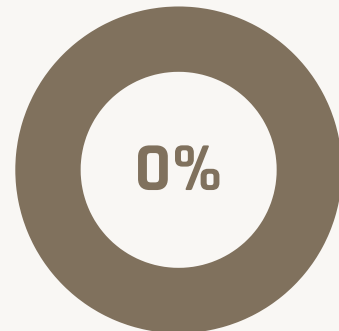
INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED



PROJECT PROGRESS



TRAINING
ATTENDANCE RATE



ATTRITION RATE



USD 10,166.75

INCOME GENERATED
IN LOCAL ECONOMY*

* All the food baskets have been purchased in local supermarkets in each region. The income generated in local economy has been calculated based on the direct amount spent in these communities.



DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF PROJECT ACTIVITY & PROGRESS TO DATE:

Activity 1: Application Process (August 2021)

In order to initiate the selection process, Bean Voyage created a simple form, with 28 questions and 10 business days to apply. We used various mediums such as Facebook, WhatsApp blurbs, and local media to raise awareness about the project. We also received the support of ICAFE to further spread the word about the application process. By the end of the application period, we received a total of 142 applications from across the country.

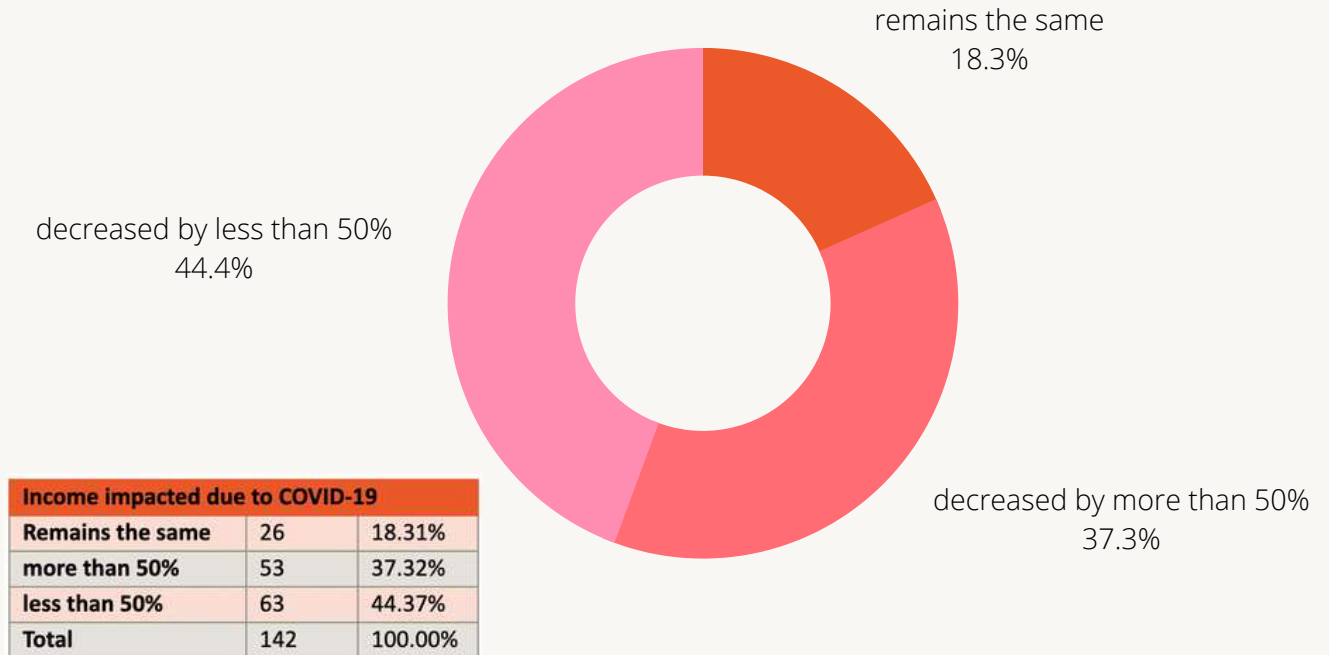
Below is the breakdown of the applicants based on key demographic information:

Distribution by sex		
Sex	Quantity	Percentage
Men	32	22.54%
Women	110	77.46%
Total	142	100%

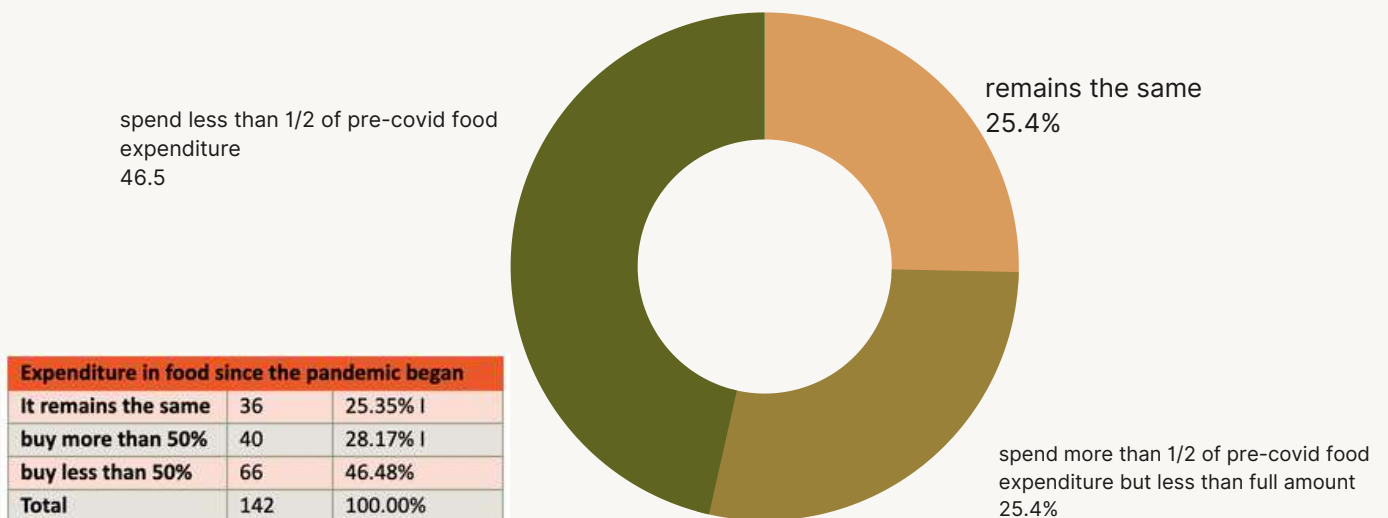
Geographical distribution		
Region	Quantity	Percentage
Central Valley	33	23.24 %
Tarrazú	48	33.80%
Orosí	3	2.11%
Turrialba	9	6.34%
Brunca	41	28.87%
Valle Occidental	7	4.93%
Tres Ríos	1	0.70%
Total	142	100.00%

In addition, we requested for data on the impact of COVID-19 on their livelihoods. Below are some major data points:

Income impacted due to COVID-19



Expenditure in food since the onset of COVID-19



Activity 2: Selection Process

(August-September 2021)

In order to develop a quantitative selection process, our team developed a two-fold system consisting of a risk matrix and scoring system, using the responses from application and a follow-up interview to further evaluate each applicant's socio-economic situation.

The risk matrix tools evaluated the level of risk that each participant was facing based on the areas of: vulnerability, food security, income and poverty. The scoring system then classified each participant according to the points obtained in the matrix.

As a result of this selection process, the project was provided with valuable information that has further shaped the project. Below is a summary of the key data points that were gathered from the selection process:

On AGE

On average, the participants were in the age range of 40-59 years old, with the youngest participant being 23 years and the oldest participant being 73 years old.

40-
59

This data was crucial not only for the initial diagnostics, but also allowed us to further prepare our training program (which was held virtually due to COVID restrictions) so that we could further adapt to the learning needs and pace of our participants.

In addition, the participants profile provided the project with some crucial data which has been summarized below:

On REACH

480

Of the selected 100 participants, 51 people have more than 4 dependents, whereas 85 people have more than 3 dependents.

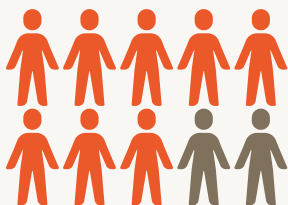
On average, the project has an overall reach of 480 people.

On GENDER



Of the selected 100 participants, 72 participants are women, out of whom, 45 women are heads of household.

On INCOME



81 of the participants have a monthly family income of between 0 and 150 thousand colones (\$235 per month - **USD 1.83/day/person**).

The lowest income is concentrated in the Brunca region, while the region where there is an income greater than 251 thousand colones (\$390 per month) is Tarrazú.

On INCOME SOURCES

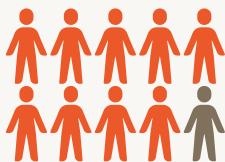


Of the selected participants, 83 of them depend on productive activities related to: coffee cultivation, agriculture and activities carried out in the informal sector.



13 participants depend on some type of state subsidy as their main source of income.

On COVID-19'S IMPACT



Of the selected participants, 88 of them saw their income reduced to a greater degree as a result of the pandemic.



In addition, 37 participants expressed that they are the only income source in their families.

Additionally, as part of the project, we collected various other demographic data which can be found in the **Appendix Section** of this report.

Activity 3: Food Basket Delivery

(September-November 2021)

After the selection process, our team collaborated with the regional offices of **the Coffee Institute of Costa Rica (ICAFFE)** to map the farmers and identify local food providers.

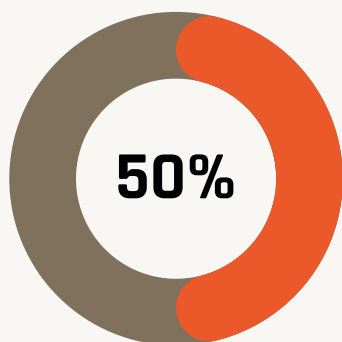
In a couple of weeks, our teams of distributed suppliers were able to deliver food baskets to all of the participating smallholder coffee farming families across Costa Rica.

In the month of September, we delivered a total of 106 food baskets, followed by 100 food baskets in October and November.

The food baskets were purchased thanks to the generous financial contribution of The Starbucks Foundation.



Project update & progress:



So far in November 2021,
we have successfully delivered:

**2,401 kg of food,
612 liters of milk,
530 kg of hygiene products**

to **100 smallholder coffee farming families,**
reaching **480 people.**

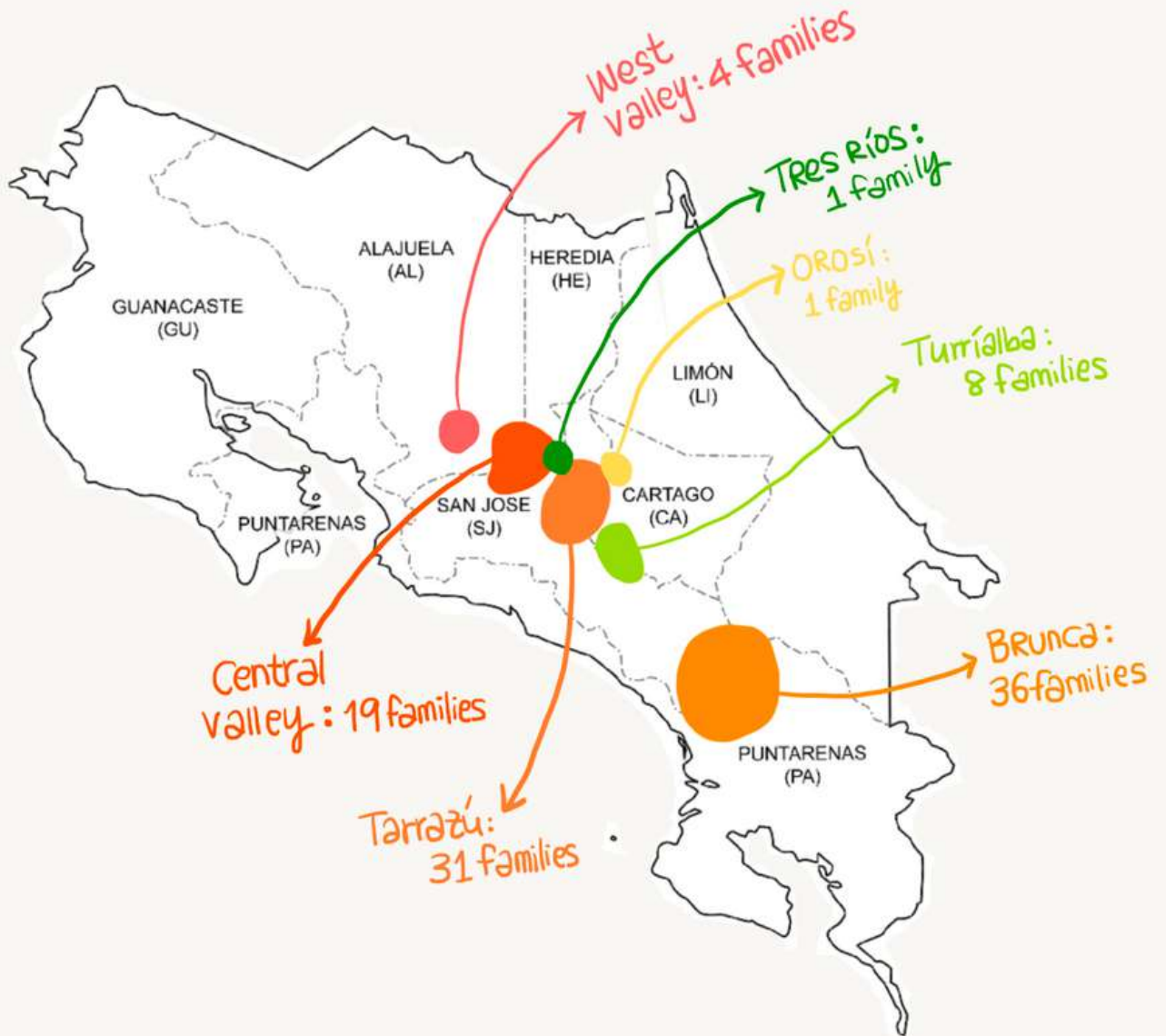
In the months of September, October and November 2021, with remaining food baskets to be distributed between December 2021, January and February of 2022.





In the survey conducted with 202 smallholder women coffee farmers in June 2021, we learned that 49% of the farmers in our network buy the majority of their food from big supermarkets, while 33% purchase the majority of their diet from local markets. The reason is because much of their current diets consist of products such as rice and beans that they do not have the capacity to grow in the short term. Additionally, it's difficult for farmers to have access to cash (and finance) to afford daily necessities during the off-harvest season. It makes it hard for them to purchase things such as pads, toilet paper, dish soap and cooking oil, that are essential to living. The Food Baskets have been designed to address these needs.

Map of distribution in Costa Rica



More on food basket distribution available on Appendices

Activity 4: Adaptation Training

(October-November 2021)

While the food distribution process was underway, our team built alliances with local subject matter experts on various topics to provide training on productive ideas and diversification strategies for smallholder coffee farmers.

Many of the farmers in the program rely on coffee for primary household income. As coffee generates cash flow (household income) only for 3 months of the year, increasing their access to cash throughout the year could alleviate issues around seasonal hunger. Moreover, utilizing land available on farms to grow food will directly contribute to farmers' access to food.

The following modules have been identified as of importance after literature review of project executed successfully in Central America. The goal is to foster resilience of farms and farming families.

These trainings are presented as examples of complementary business activities to their coffee farms, and we will provide additional training on business development and management in the next phase of training to support successful implementation on farm-level.

In the months of October and November, we collaborated with various organizations to provide virtual workshops on the following modules:

- **Beekeeping:** during this training, farmers learned about the basic aspects of setting up a bee garden and the basic finances required to do so. The training was provided by **Pollen Keepers**.
- **Hen Keeping:** during this training, farmers learned about the basic aspects of setting up a hen garden and ways to maintain the hens for long term business purposes. The training was provided by **Ecogranja San Lucas**.
- **Home Gardening:** during this training, farmers learned about the importance of having their own gardens and examples of simple set up gardens and composting methods that farmers can introduce. The training was provided by **Huerta Donde Sea**.

- **Bio-Inputs in Coffee Farms:** during this training, farmers learned about soil health and basic recipes to create bio-inputs with farm materials. This training was provided by **Johnny Castro Perez, a bio-inputs specialist.**
- **Empowerment and Personal Brand:** during this training, farmers learned how to build their own brand to further diversify sources of income. This training was provided by **Andrea Cuevas, Silvia Lopez and Steph Araya at Western Union.**
- **Personal Finance:** during this training, farmers learned how to manage incomes and savings, and deepened their understanding of loans and credit risks. This training was provided by **Erick Brenes and Andrea Cuevas at Western Union.**
- **How to start a project:** during this training, farmers learned the basics of designing and planning a project for sustainability. This training was provided by **Adriana Vásquez at Bean Voyage.**
- **Finances for project:** during this training, farmers learned how to develop a credit plan for their businesses. This training was provided by **Sergio Alvarado at Western Union.**
- **Innovation:** during this training, farmers learned about tools that are available for farmers to further develop efficient systems. This training was provided by **Natalia Araya, Alejandra Brenes and Carlos Araya at Western Union.**
- **Network management:** during this training, farmers learned about how they can use social media to expand their farm presence to attract more buyers. This training was provided by **Steph Araya at Western Union.**

Recordings of these workshops can be accessed through [this platform](#), which will be provided to the farmers for future learning as well.

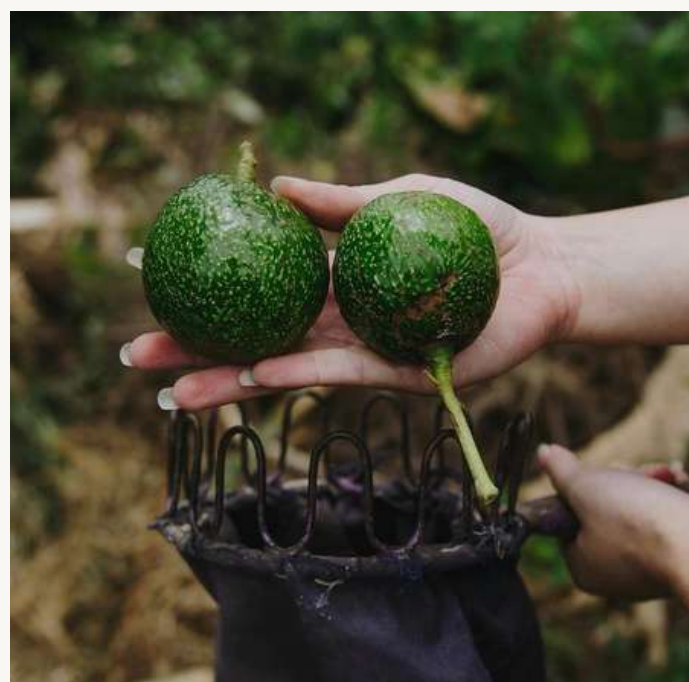
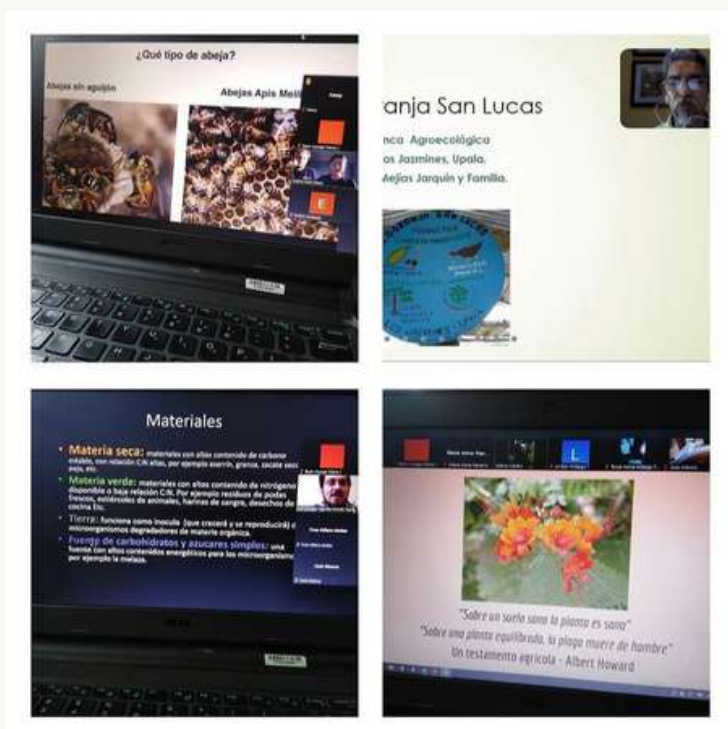
Project update & progress:

Training of Productive Ideas to Promote Diversification of Income



On October 16, 2021, we delivered **virtual training programs in collaboration** with Pollen Keepers, Huerta Donde Sea, and Eco Granja San Lucas on projects that can be replicated by smallholder farmers with a low budget and limited space capacity.

The training provided farmers with an opportunity to learn from subject matter experts and further clarify logistical questions around starting these projects as complementary farm activities at their own farms, ensuring their potential for increasing household income and farm resilience.



Project update & progress:

Training on Project Management & Business Tools

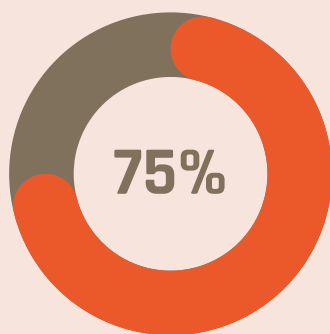


On November 15 and 25, 2021, in collaboration with Western Union and Professor Oscar Chavarria - an Entrepreneurship specialist -, Bean Voyage organized a workshop on project management and business tools, including workshops on proposal writing and one-on-one mentorship for the farmers to further develop their business ideas.

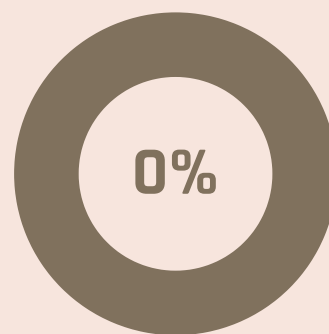
In these workshops, producers gained key tools and knowledge to implement complementary business activities to their coffee farms to increase their household income and access to food.



IMPACT METRIC FOR TRAINING



TRAINING ATTENDANCE RATE



ATTRITION RATE

Activity 5: Proposals & Micro-grants

(December 2021 - February 2022)

Between December 2021 and February 2022, our team will complete the process of delivering the remaining 3 installments of food baskets to the farmers, in addition to hosting mentorship sessions for the farmers to continue developing their business plans.

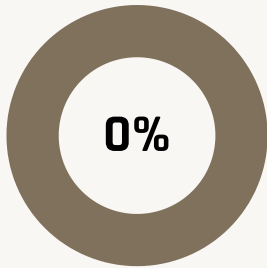
The deadline for the participants to submit their proposals is set at December 14, 2021, at which point, we will send these proposals to the members of the selection committee.

The selection committee consists of subject matter experts in the field of business, coffee, and a few select trainers in diversification along with reviewers from ICAFE, The Starbucks and Bean Voyage.

Based on the review of the experts, projects will be awarded a grant of \$150 (on average) per producer on January 22, 2022.

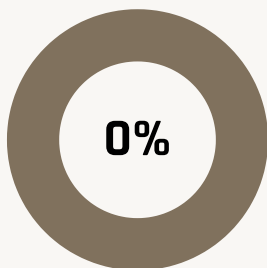
More on what's next:

PERSONALIZED MENTORSHIP FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PROPOSALS



Between December 2021 and January 2022, farmers will receive additional mentorship offered by Western Union and Professor Oscar Chavarria, an entrepreneurship specialist to further develop their budgets and a timeline for their business projects. The final deliverable for farmers will be a short 2-3 page proposal that they will submit to qualify for a micro-grant at the end of this project.

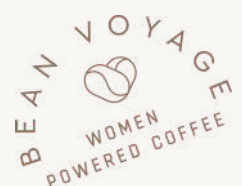
GRANTING OF SEED CAPITAL TO APPROVED BUSINESS PROPOSALS



In February 2021, Bean Voyage will award \$15,000 in seed capital to the farmers that successfully submit a business proposal. The average grant amount is expected to be \$150 per farmer, however, the final number will depend on the total number of participants that submit a proposal.

LAUNCH OF THE FINAL REPORT OF THE PROJECT

Scheduled for February 15, 2021





KEY FINDINGS

In addition to some of the demographic findings shared above, there were a few qualitative learnings from this part of the project as outlined below:



On EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

As this program combines relief efforts and rebuilding efforts (food baskets and adaptation training), we have witnessed a **correlation between educational levels and vulnerability in food security**.

Therefore, when it comes to the training, our team had to further work with the trainers in advance of the workshops to ensure that content materials were using more images and infographics, and reducing the burden on reading and writing during the workshops.

Even for the proposal writing process, we have identified mentors who are co-creating proposals so that farmers who do not have high levels of educational achievements are not missing out on the opportunity to receive a micro-grant.



On GENDER ROLES

As this program has a high level of participation from smallholder women, we are receiving additional data on gender roles and its impediment to success for women coffee farmers.

For example, **smallholder women face the double burden** of having to take care of their home and farms. Oftentimes that poses a barrier in their ability to participate in the training. As a result, we have ensured to create a platform that farmers can access in the long run to continue the learning process.



On ACCESSIBILITY

Due to the age group of our participants being mostly above the age of 40, we faced significant challenges with farmers not having access to the tools and wifi to attend the virtual training sessions.

Although Bean Voyage originally planned to host in-person training, due to a rise of COVID cases, we received advice against hosting an in-person workshop. **This affected the attendance rate of our training to an average of 75%, which is below our target of 90%.**

Having said that, we are hosting in-person visits to farms and training in-person will resume early in 2022 which will allow us to make up for some of the participants who might have missed the virtual sessions.

In addition, we have uploaded all of the content in short form into a learning platform that farmers can access at all times. We also have one participant who is not able to hear and is attending with his wife to further understand the training materials.



On ALLIANCES

During the design stages of this program, we learned that there are many organizations that offer technical assistance and training on topics that can further help reduce food insecurity in coffee communities, however, these organizations had not received one platform to come together and provide these tools to the farmers directly.

The sourcing of locally based subject matter experts means that farmers will have access to these tools and mentorship in the long term.



Two pots of cooked vegetables / Fernanda Carrillo Chacon

THE PROJECT IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY:



THE
STARBUCKS[®]
FOUNDATION

IN-KIND SUPPORT FROM:



We would like to thank the following organizations and people for their partnership in this initiative.

Pollen Keepers

Huerta Donde Sea

Ecogranja San Lucas

**Professor Oscar Chavarria,
Entrepreneurship Specialist**

**Johnny Castro Perez,
Bio-Inputs Specialist**

MEDIA & OUTREACH

The project has garnered some local and international news for the timeliness and innovativeness in tackling food insecurity in coffee producing communities.

Below are a few outlets and events where our team has published and shared the story about this project:

Daily Coffee News

Barista Magazine

Manchester Coffee Festival / Manchester, UK

Felt Coffee - Event / Seoul, Korea

MTL COFFEE - Event / Seoul, Korea

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The success of this project would not have been possible without the guidance and support of our colleagues at **The Coffee Institute of Costa Rica**, and the generosity of **The Starbucks Foundation**.

In addition, we would like to acknowledge the support of **Pollen Keepers** (Maria Jose Mena-Alberto Saénz), **Ecogranja San Lucas** (Luis Mejias), **Huertas Donde Sea** (Alejandro Arango), **Western Union** (Andrea Cuevas, Silvia Lopez, Stephanny Araya, Erick Brenes), Professor Oscar Chavarria (Entrepreneurship specialist) and Johnny Castro Perez (bio-input specialist) for their thought partnership and guidance.

Finally, we would like to thank all of the participating farmers who have been generous in their communication and continue to work towards a sustainable future for the coffee industry and their communities.

CONTACT

For any questions/comments,
Please get in touch at hello@beanvoyage.org.

You can also learn more about our other initiatives on www.beanvoyage.org



A pot of rice and beans /Alexa Romano

APPENDIX I: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ON PARTICIPANTS



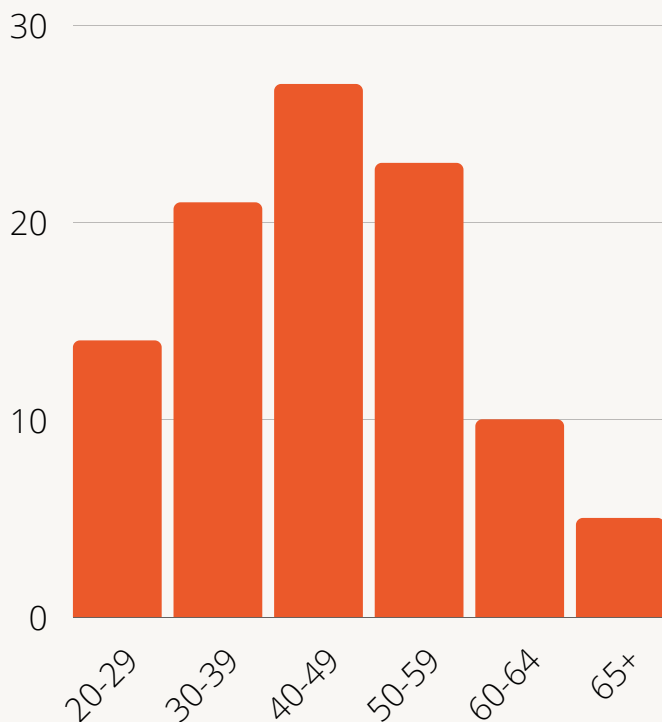
Distribution by Sex

men : women

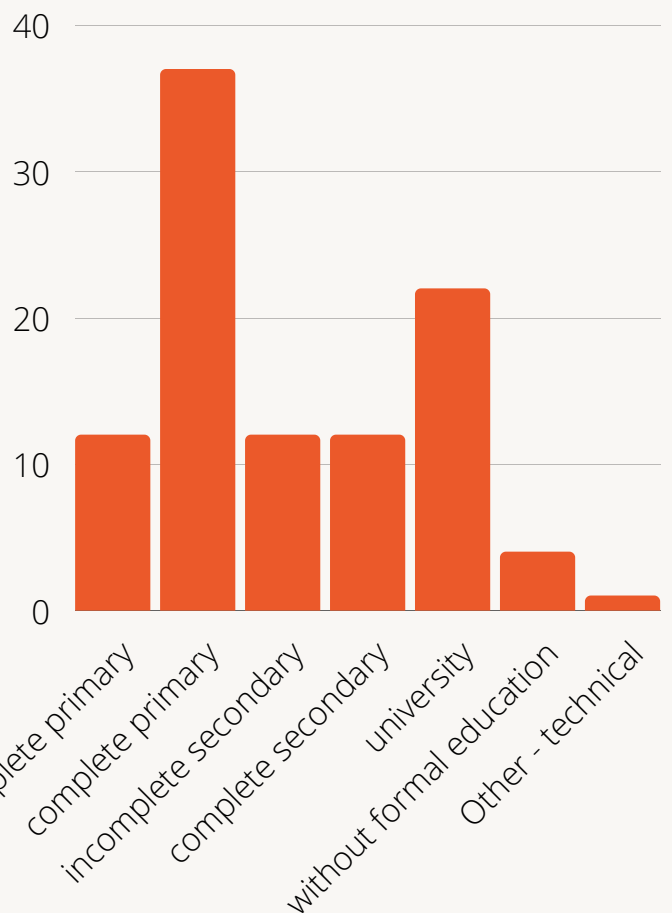
28 : 72

While Bean Voyage's work primarily targets smallholder women coffee farmers, upon recommendation from The Coffee Institute of Costa Rica (ICAFFE), we've broadened the target audience to also work with male coffee farmers for this project, as representative from their farms.

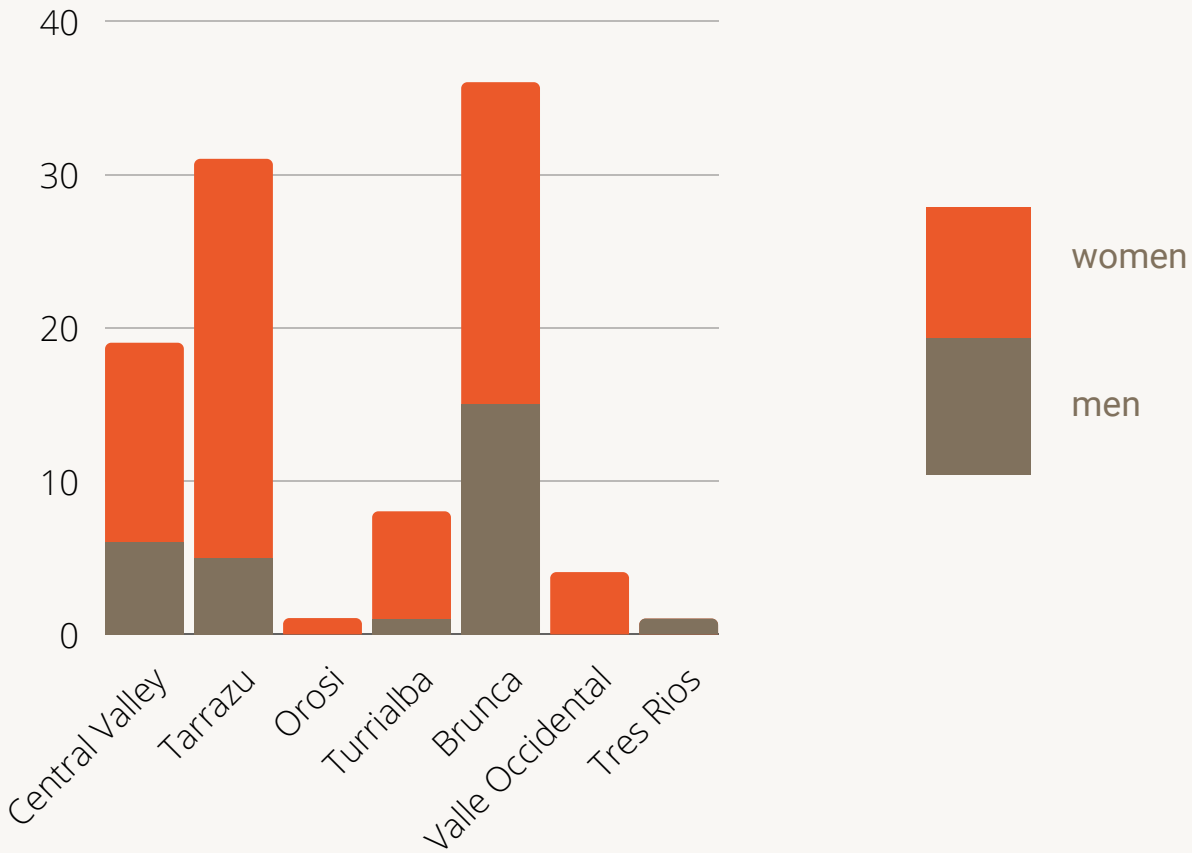
Participants by Age



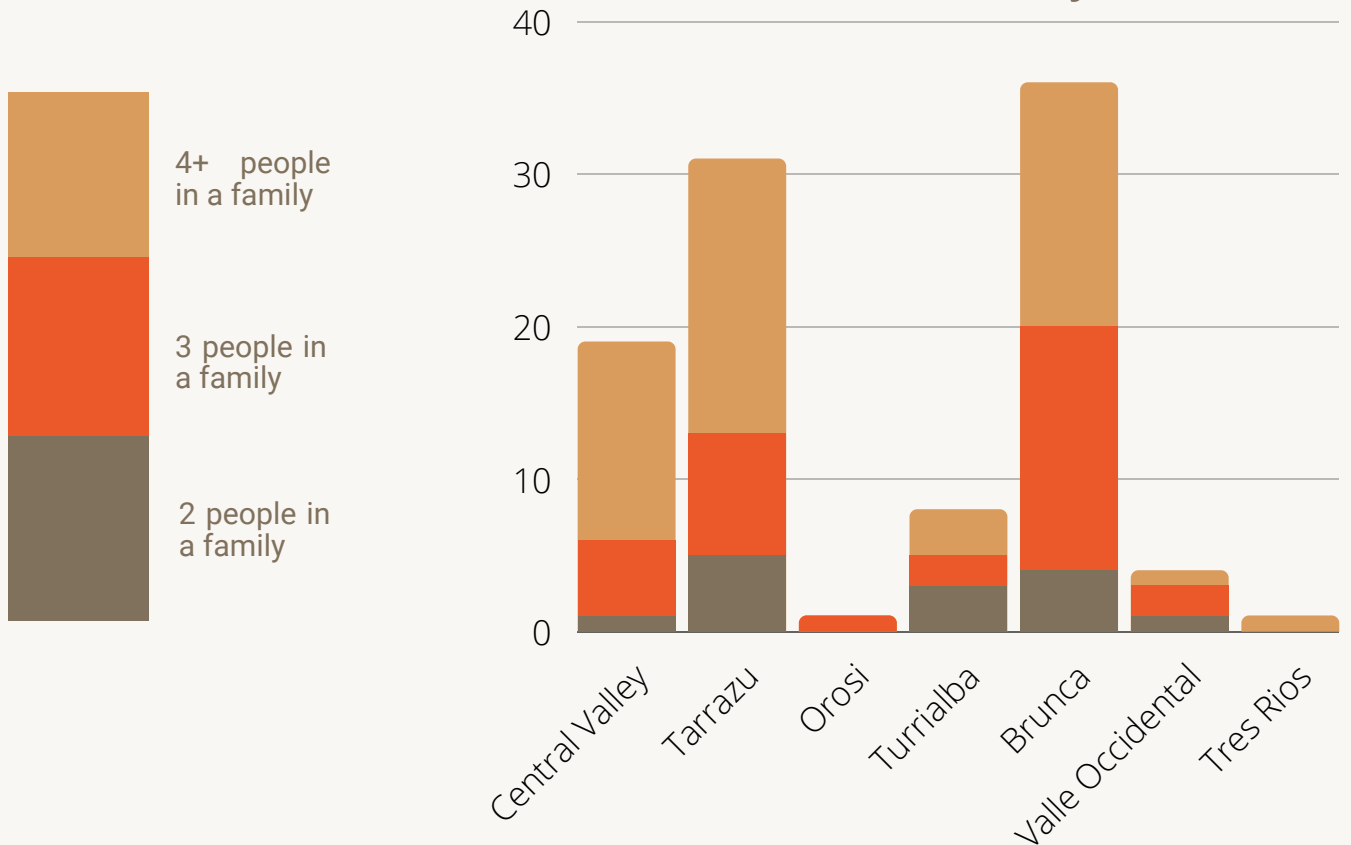
Participants by Educational level



Distribution by region and sex



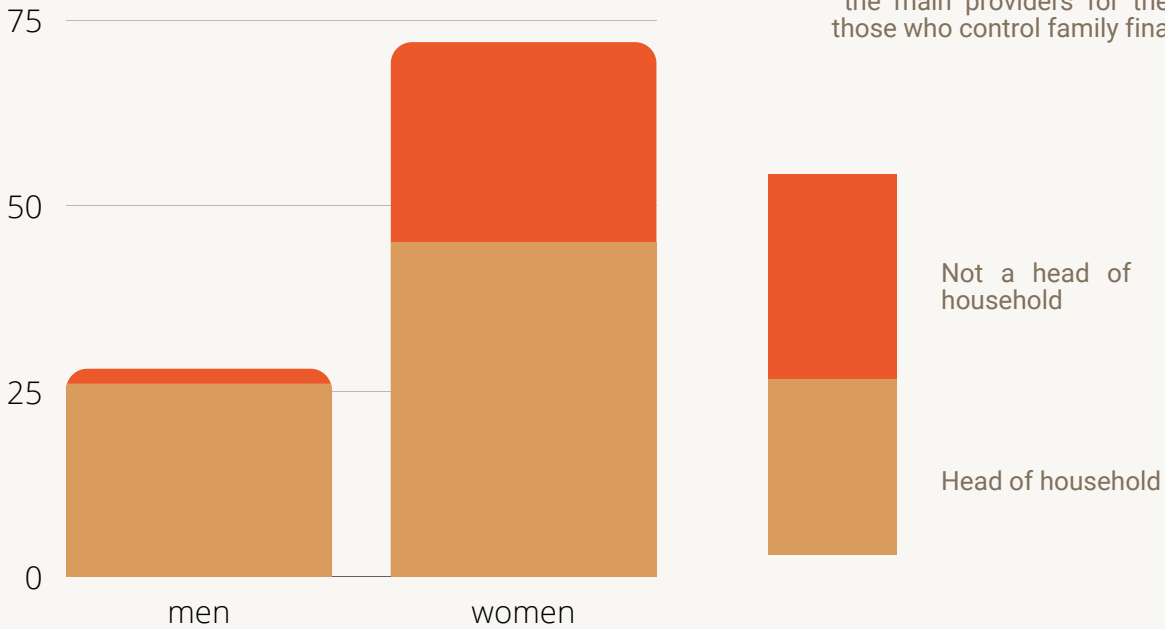
Distribution by region & number of family members



Family member distributions according to particularity (vulnerability)

Family member distributions according to particularity (vulnerability) Vulnerability				
Conditions	2 members	3 members	4 + members	Total
Baby	2	4	5	11
Menstruating woman (MW)	1	5	14	20
Person with disability (PD)	2	2	4	8
Older adult (OA)	4	3		7
All are adults	3	10	6	19
Baby and menstruating woman		4	14	18
Bebe and PD		1		1
Baby and OA			2	2
MW and OA		1	1	2
MW and PA	1	1	1	3
PA and OA		1	1	2
BB-MW-OA	1		2	3
BB-MW-PA		1		1
MW-PA-PD		1		1
BB-MW-OA-PD			2	2
Total	14	34	51	100
FAMILIES WITH AT LEAST 1 member with higher vulnerability	80			

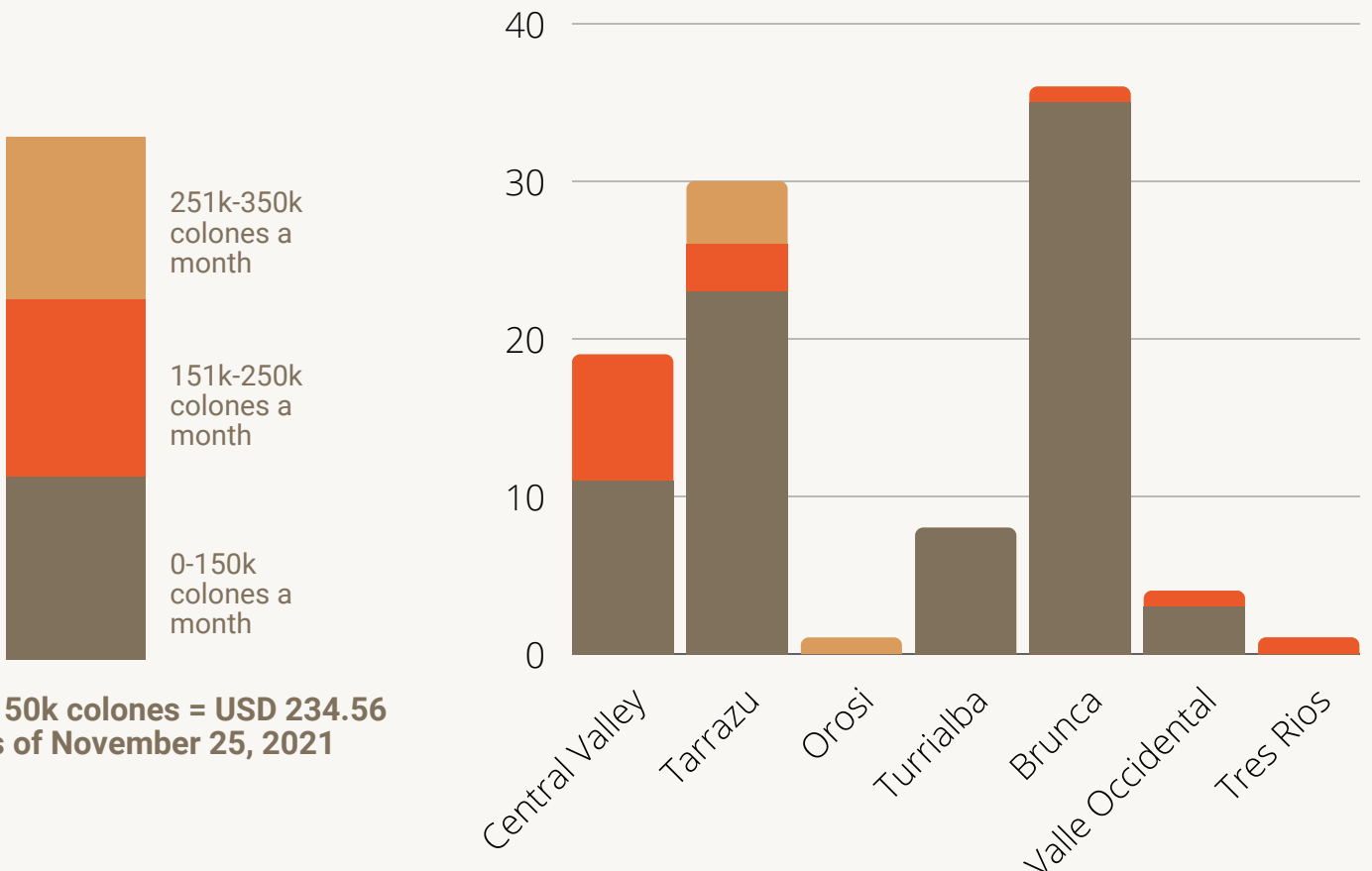
Distribution of head of household* by sex



APPENDIX II: HOUSEHOLD AND INCOME

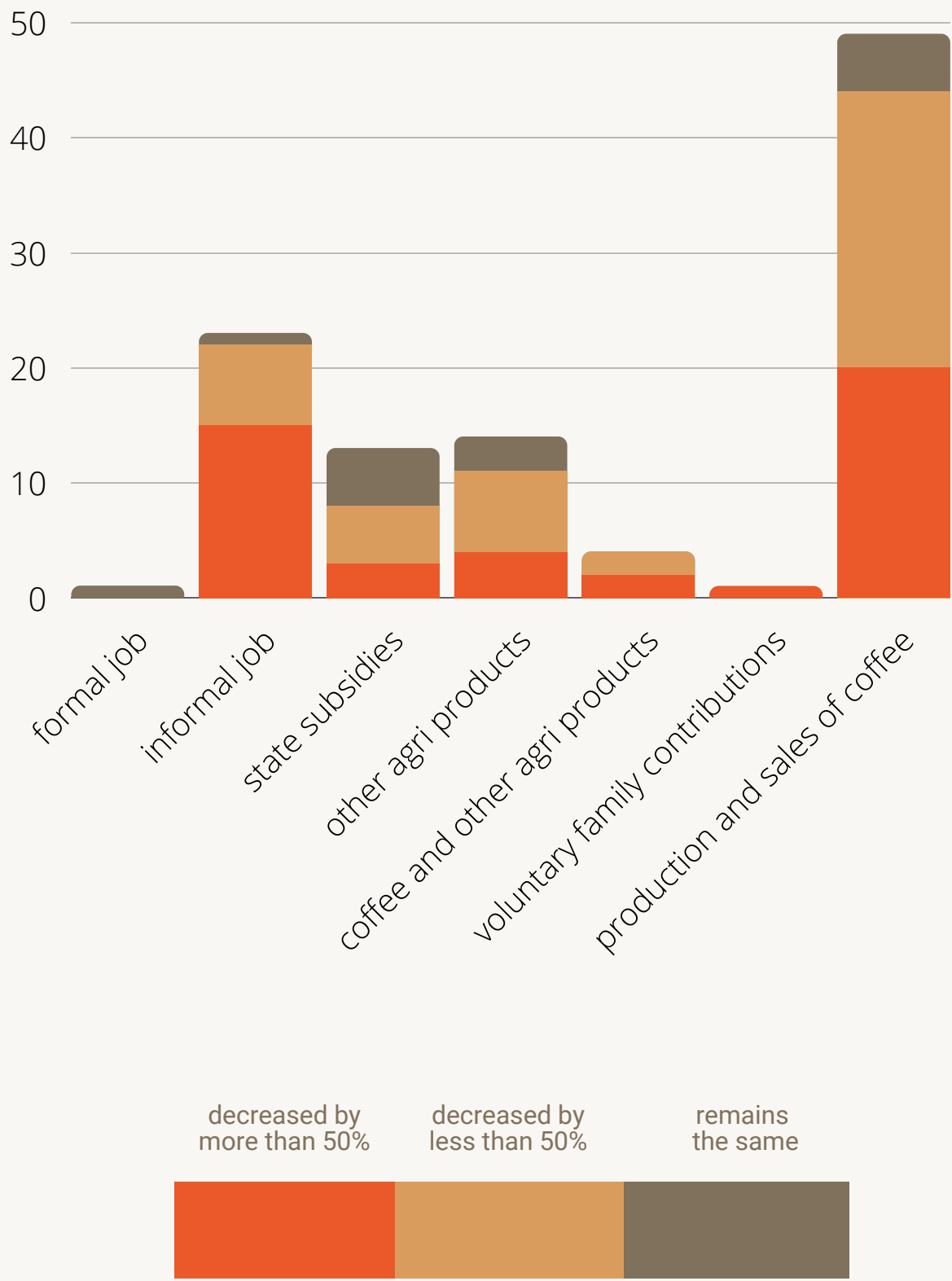
*Head of household has been defined as the main providers for their families and those who control family finances

Distribution of monthly family income according to region

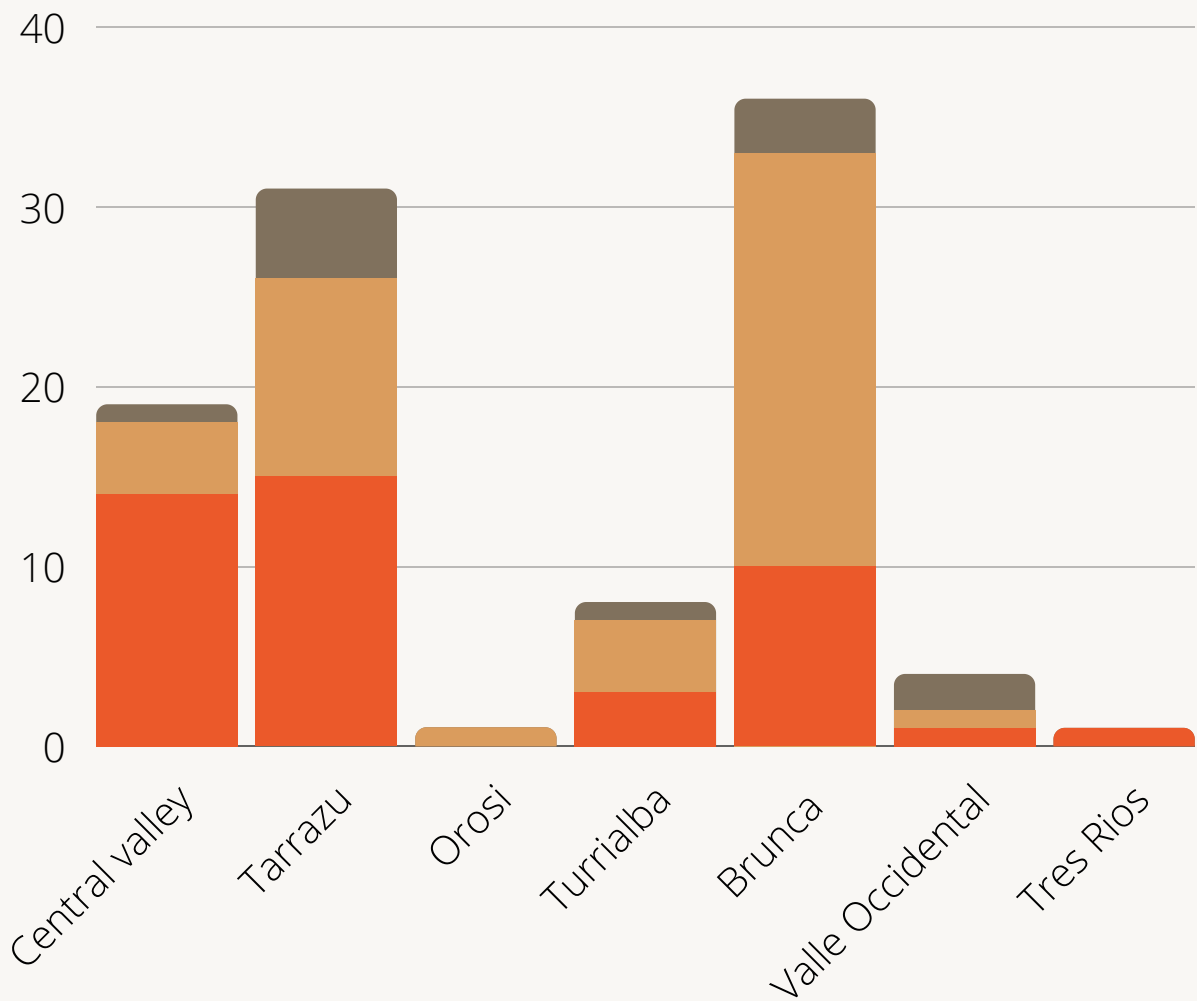


*150k colones = USD 234.56 as of November 25, 2021

Distribution of impact on income by primary source of income



Impact on Income due to COVID-19 by region



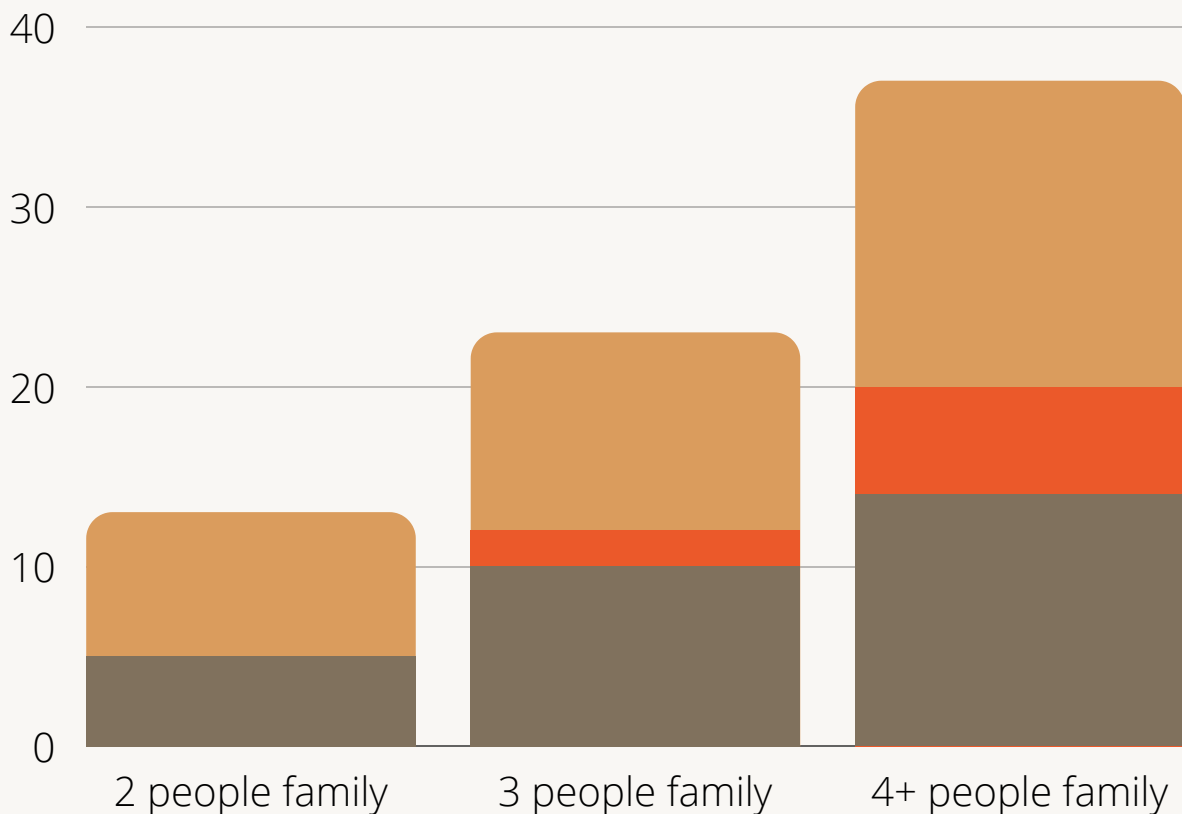
decreased by
more than 50%

decreased by
less than 50%

remains
the same

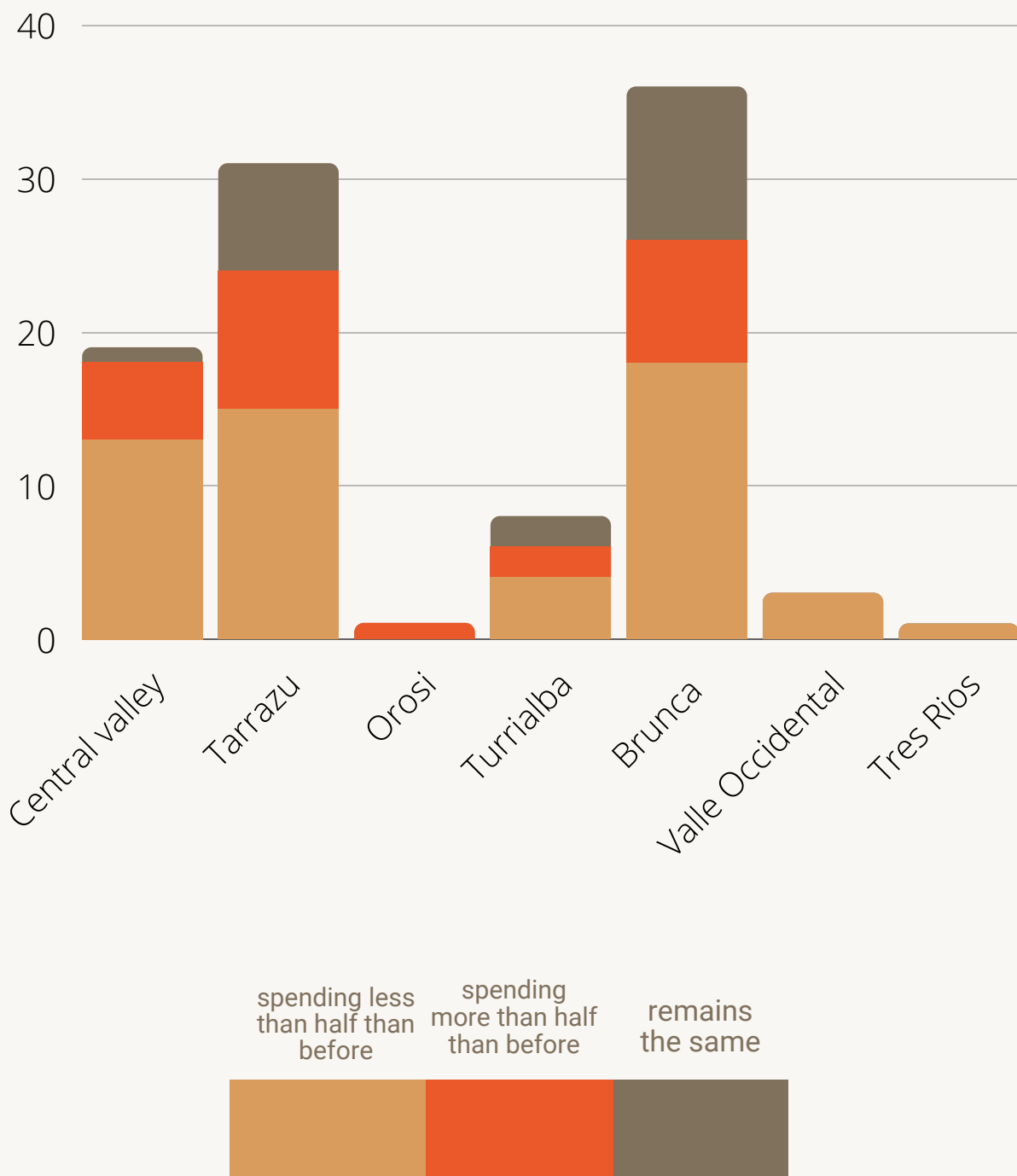


Distribution of people who contribute *financially* to the household (other than respondent)

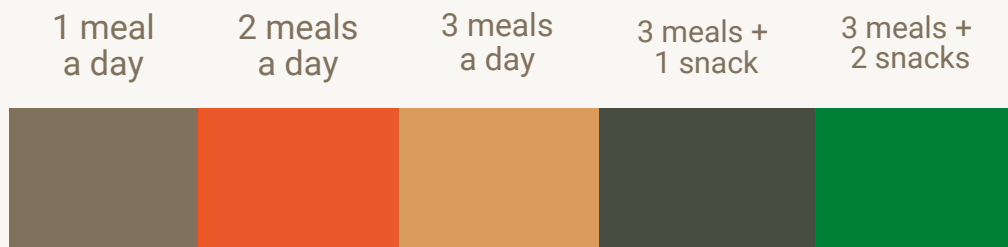
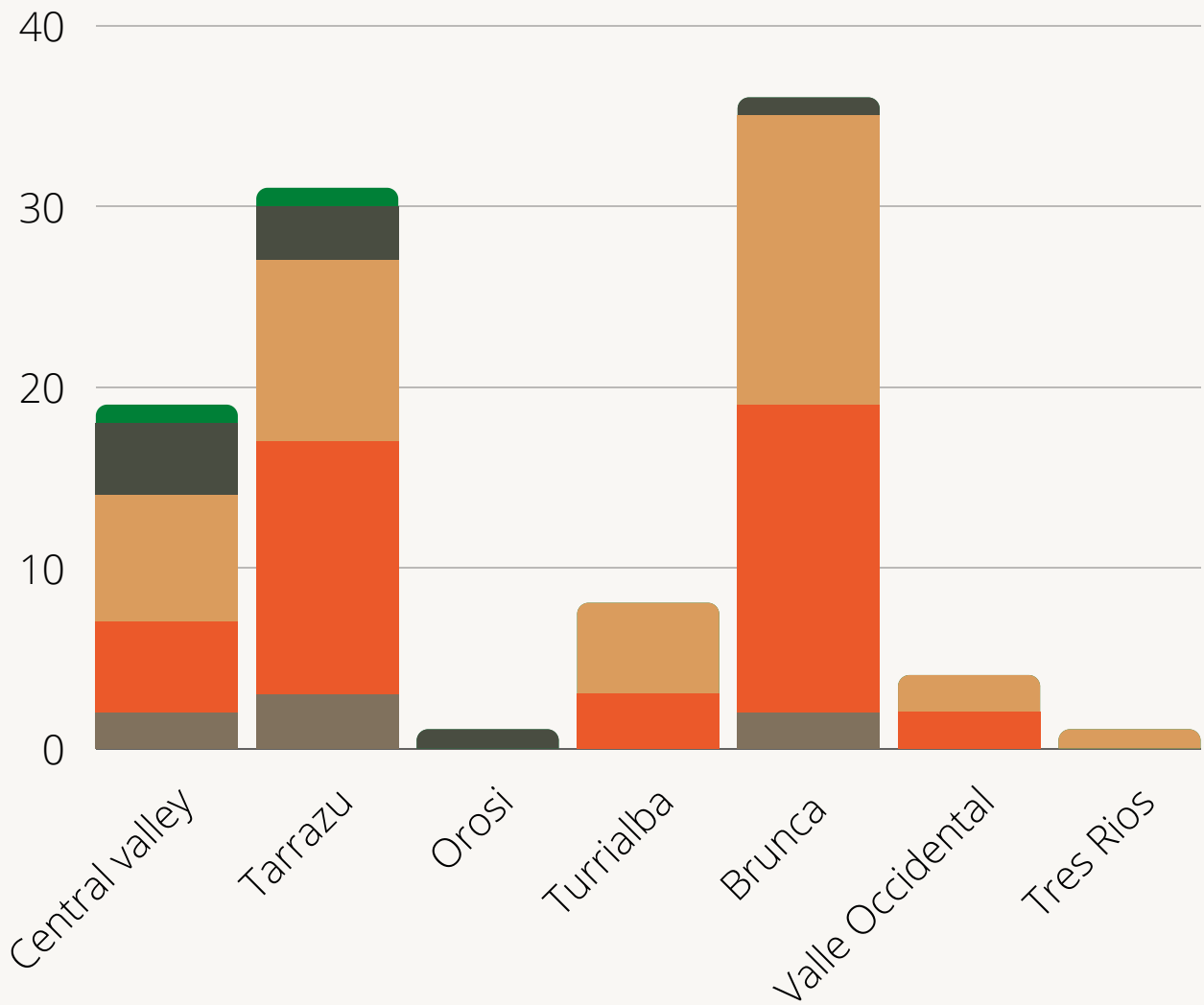


APPENDIX III: FOOD SECURITY & POVERTY

Distribution spending on food since COVID-19 by region



Number of meals per day by region





A chicken / Fernanda Carrillo Chacon