

bean voyage

Farmer School

México & Colombia

Pilot Report 2025

In Partnership with



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1. Context

**Mission and
Problem Statement**



MISSION

**Building Thriving
Businesses with
Smallholder Women
Coffee Farmers**

**7 in 10 hands that
farm coffee belong
to women.**

Yet women earn less than **1 in 10 dollars**
from the \$200B coffee industry.

**The gap isn't just
inequity, it's
intergenerational
poverty.**

Food insecurity, no safety net, and
zero resilience against climate change.

**It doesn't have to be
this way.**

Bean Voyage supports women farmers across the value chain.



ENROLLMENT



TRAINING



SEED CAPITAL



PEER MENTORSHIP



MARKET ACCESS



Farmer School, Mexico participants during the second bootcamp in Veracruz, Mexico.

Journey to date

2016–2025



+2,100

Smallholder Women
Farmers **Enrolled**



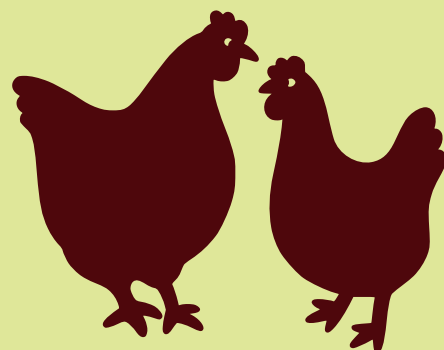
\$460,000

generated from \$151k
distributed in seed funds
since 2019



1:4.4

Social Return **on**
Investment



+7,980

Community members
reached in **Costa Rica,**
Mexico, Colombia and
Honduras



Most workshops are held in circular manner to invite conversation, sharing, and collaboration / photo from Farmer School Colombia

2. Project Overview

**2024–25 Pilot of
Farmer School**



Farmer School Pilot

In 2024–25, we sought to understand how Farmer School could scale to new countries and communities while maintaining impact. We tested two models:



1. Group Model & Affiliation

working through associations and cooperatives

Where?

Colombia (Tolima): Group model – two women’s associations in partnership with Siruma Coffee

Who We Worked With

- 68% own <3 hectares
- Average age 46
- 41% indigenous, 4% no formal education
- 100% members of associations
- 77% report husbands manage the farm
- 32% say coffee income does not sustain them
- 38% have smartphones

2. Direct Recruitment Model

engaging individual smallholder farmers directly

Where?

Mexico (Veracruz): Direct recruitment of individual smallholder women coffee producers

Who We Worked With

- 89% own <3 hectares
- Average age 41
- 18% indigenous, 8% no formal education
- 62% applied individually, not in cooperatives
- 37% rely solely on coffee; 76% say farm income is insufficient
- 86% have smartphones

What We Did – Project Timeline

2–3 Months



Recruitment & Diagnostics

- Recruitment via partnerships and open calls
- Collected demographics to design curriculum

5–7 Months



Training

- In-person bootcamps + Async learning on
- Gender
 - Climate Change
 - Adaptation
 - Food Security
 - Leadership & Entrepreneurship

3–4 Months



Seed Funds & Project Implementation

- Submission of project proposals (group proposals in Colombia, individual in Mexico)
- Training and funding app received on the following business ideas:
- **Income diversification:** Hen keeping & beekeeping
- **Farm Improvement:** Renovation & Nursery
- **Market Access:** QC lab & purchasing point

2–3 Months



Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning

- Tracked attendance, learning, and project completion;
- celebrated graduation

Outputs

BETWEEN MAY 2024–AUGUST 2025



93

Farmers enrolled

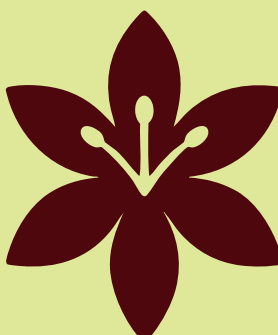
In Colombia, we recruited two women’s associations with 47 producers. In Mexico, we recruited 46 producers through a direct enrollment (open call).



73%

Bootcamp attendance

In Colombia, we hosted two 3-day long bootcamps with monthly follow-up and in-person meetings. In Mexico, we hosted three 2-day long bootcamps with weekly follow-ups and virtual masterclasses.



\$22,600

Seed Funds Distributed

Two association-level projects on purchasing point & QC lab were supported in Colombia with a total of \$8,200.. 31 Farm-level projects such as beekeeping, henkeeping and plant nursery were supported in Mexico with a total budget of \$14,400.



33

Projects supported

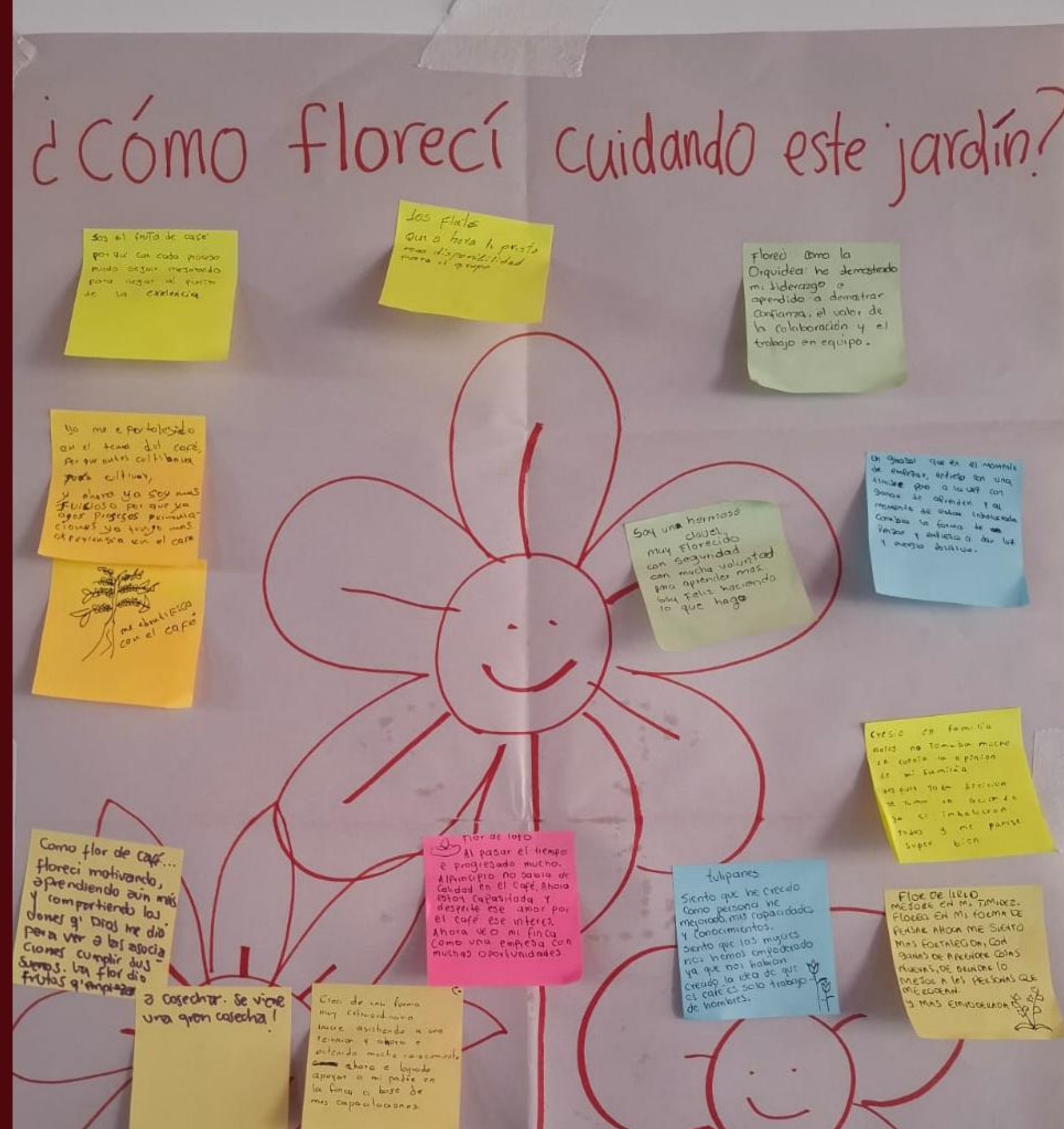
The projects varied from income diversification (hen keeping, bee keeping, home gardens) to coffee processing (QC lab and purchasing point) and farm renovation (plan nursery).

Fabiola , with her newly established hen coop in Veracruz, Mexico. As part of her seed fund project, Fabiola created a project to build a hen coop and sell eggs to diversify income for her business.



3. Results

Lessons Learned from Pilot



Key Performance Indicators

Indicator	Colombia	Mexico
Knowledge Growth (Gender)	36.40%	27.50%
Knowledge Growth (Finance)	33.30%	23.10%
Program Effectiveness (rating)	4.9/5	4.8/5
Net Promoter Score	81.1	95
Monthly Income Increase (USD)	\$50.55	\$62.63
# of Months of Increased Income (per year)	6	7.5
Annual Income Increase (estd.)	\$303	\$470
Income vs Minimum Wage	7.20%	9.10%

After Action Review COLOMBIA

The following responses are based on **two** after-action research workshops hosted **with a total of 48 women coffee farmers** that were part of the pilot program in Tolima, **Colombia**.

The Bean Voyage team gathered the inputs **via conversations**, hosted in-person feedback sessions, took **sticky notes**, and then converted them into a full document consisting of these notes verbatim.

What were our intended results? What was the plan?

- Establish a **community collection center** serving two associations (AMUCAFLOME & Cafe Agrario) for coffee transport, storage, and export logistics.
- Encourage **collective decision-making**, unity, and mutual support among members of the two associations.
- Build **strong leadership**, especially supporting women in key roles and engaging youth in coffee farming activities.
- Generate **new knowledge** and strengthen coffee farming practices through training / bootcamps.
- Develop a recognized collective coffee brand and **expand commercial opportunities** globally for the associations.

What were our actual results? What really happened?

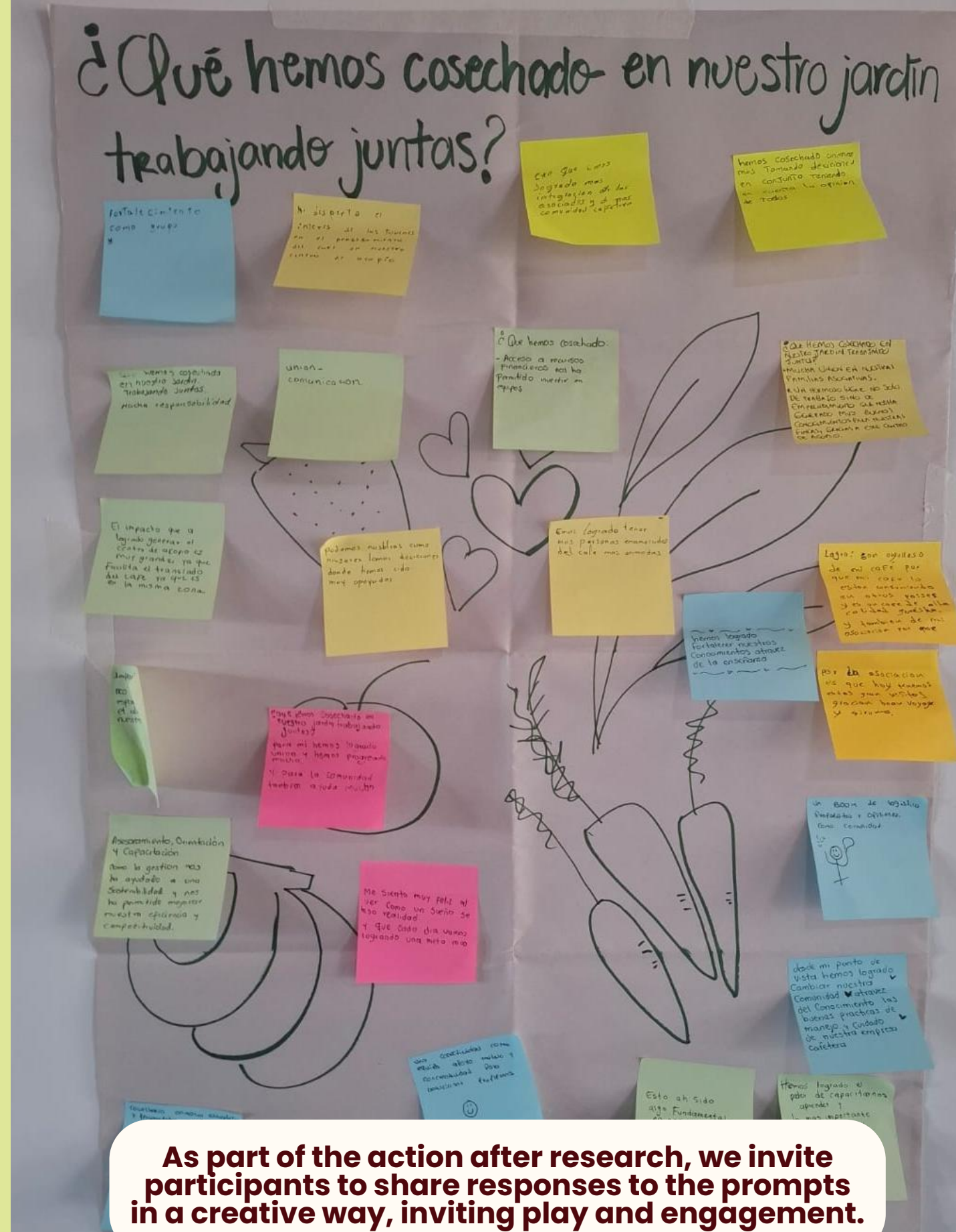
- Improved **integration, communication**, and **collective decision-making** with respect for diverse opinions.
- Strong **unity** and **mutual support** among associative families.
- The **collection center** facilitated coffee transport, storage, and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Increased **enthusiasm for coffee**, with youth engagement and training beginning.
- **Recognition of coffee quality** including export of high-quality Geisha coffee.
- Development of **leadership opportunities for women** acknowledged by the community.
- Access to **financial resources** enabled equipment investments.
- Strong **leadership** and **teamwork** developed, with improved patience and commitment.
- The center is a **valued community asset** improving quality of life.
- Growth in **public speaking**, technical coffee **knowledge**, and community **pride**.

Why was there a difference between what we expected and what happened?

- Need for stronger, **unconditional team support** and more active participation.
- **Underutilized workshops** and **limited shared learning** opportunities.
- Insufficient **youth training** and **involvement**.
- **Lack of critical infrastructure** like drying silos; need to seek external funding and partnerships (beyond the seed capital).
- **Gaps in business skills** (accounting, marketing, IT, English, international trade).
- Coordination, communication, and **teamwork** require improvement.
- **Gender roles evolving**; more educational efforts necessary in the community.

What can we do better next time?

- **Increase participation** in workshops among more members of the community.
- **Expand youth training** and create tailored leadership opportunities for youth in the communities.
- Prioritize **securing drying beds** and necessary equipment through stronger partnerships.
- Enhance **teamwork culture, communication, and soft skills development.**
- Build capacities in **business management** (accounting, marketing, IT, English).
- Expand training in **sensory analysis** and **quality control.**
- Organize fundraising community events and grow infrastructure (larger center, lab, kitchen, agrotourism).
- Scale **commercial reach** nationally and internationally, aiming to buy 50% of the regional coffee in 1 year, 100% in 2 years.
- **Promote gender equity** and **intergenerational** knowledge transfer.
- Develop a strong, recognizable coffee brand and **mentor other associations.**
- Encourage **sustainable environmental practices** and **biodiversity** stewardship.



As part of the action after research, we invite participants to share responses to the prompts in a creative way, inviting play and engagement.

After Action Review MEXICO

The following responses are based on **one** after-action research workshops hosted with a total of **23 women coffee farmers** that were part of the pilot program in Veracruz, Mexico.

What were our intended results? What was the plan?

- Strengthen women's **confidence, self-efficacy, and leadership** in agricultural projects.
- Support participants in developing their own **small-scale projects** (coffee, honey, poultry, horticulture).
- Foster **knowledge exchange** and **skill-building** through practical workshops and mentorship.
- Promote **collaboration, community networks**, and **peer-to-peer** support.
- Encourage **sustainable practices** and the **conservation of local biocultural** heritage (e.g., meliponas).
- Enable participants to **diversify their income** through new enterprises.
- Build a foundation for **ongoing mentorship**, project continuation, and intergenerational knowledge sharing.

What were our actual results? What really happened?

- Participants gained **confidence**, felt **empowered**, and reported **increased self-efficacy** in project management.
- Several women successfully **designed and implemented personal projects**: coffee nurseries, honey production, poultry management, and small-scale horticulture.
- Knowledge **exchange** and **mentorship** strengthened, with participants sharing experiences and **learning from peers and mentors**.
- **Increased family** and **community engagement** in agricultural activities.
- Recognition of the value of **teamwork, empathy**, and **peer support** in achieving individual and collective goals.
- Participants developed **practical skills** in project planning, budgeting, and sustainable agricultural practices.
- Emotional and motivational growth: participants expressed **pride, optimism, gratitude**, and a **stronger sense of purpose**.
- Creation of **networks** for ongoing communication, collaboration, and **collective learning**.
- Emerging leadership, especially among women who are initiating new projects and sharing knowledge with others.

Why was there a difference between what we expected and what happened?

- Initial **fear, lack of confidence**, and **uncertainty** slowed some participants' engagement.
- **Conflicting advice from mentors** sometimes caused confusion.
- **Environmental factors** (rain, climate, water availability) impacted project timelines.
- Logistical challenges: **access to materials, equipment, distance**, and **connectivity issues**.
- Limited financial resources and difficulties in securing additional inputs for projects.
- Need for **deeper knowledge** in areas like melipona care, poultry management, project planning, and financial literacy.
- **Time constraints** and **family responsibilities** limited participation for some.

What can we do better next time?

- Provide **additional guidance** for project planning and step-by-step support to reduce initial fear and confusion.
- Increase **hands-on mentorship** for technical skills: melipona care, poultry, coffee nurseries, and sustainable practices.
- Strengthen **financial literacy** and **project management** training.
- Adapt **scheduling** and **workshops** to account for climate, distance, and participants' family responsibilities.
- Facilitate **easier access to materials, inputs**, and **resources** for project implementation.
- Encourage more structured **peer-to-peer sharing** to amplify learning and collaboration.
- Support scaling up trainings, including **branding, marketing**, and **income-generating strategies**.
- Maintain and expand **networks** for ongoing mentorship, collaboration, and community-building.

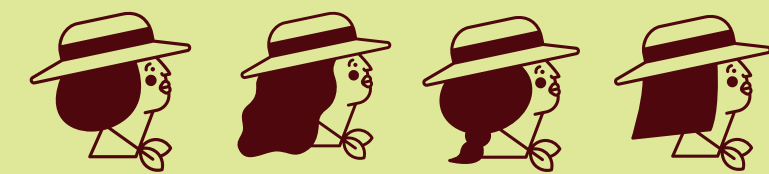


As part of the graduation, participants work together to build out hand crafted gifts for each.

Financial Report

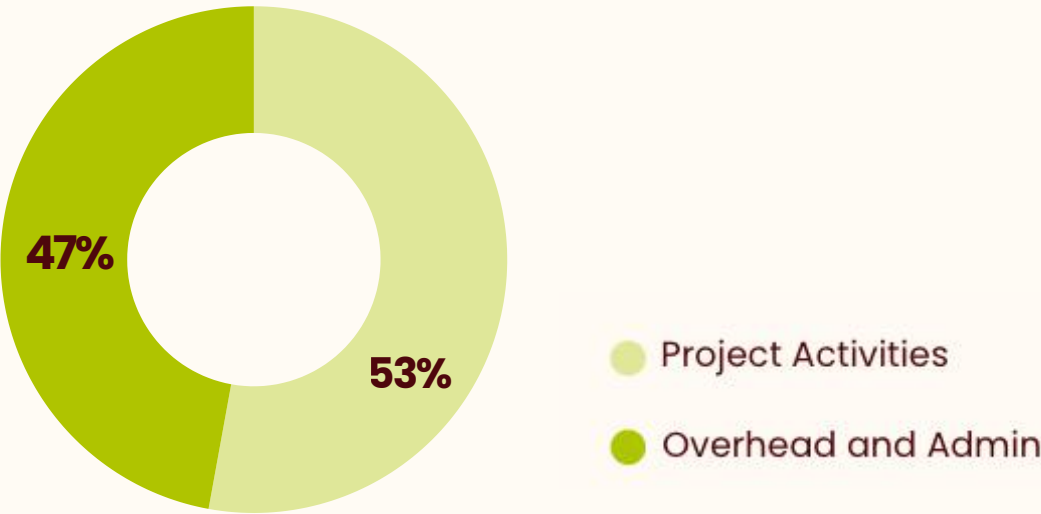
by country

between May 2024 – August 2025

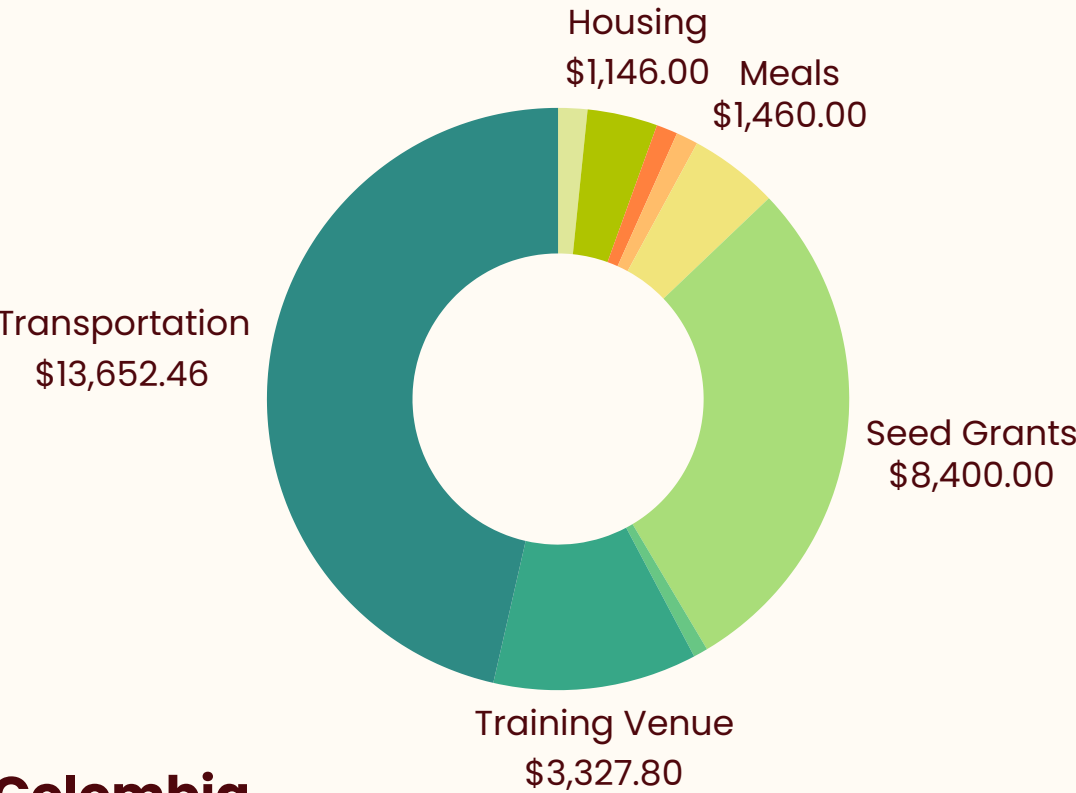


The project had a per participant cost of **\$900**, which included the costs of bootcamps, the seed fund distribution, and the administrative costs of running of the program.

Total project expense: \$87,303

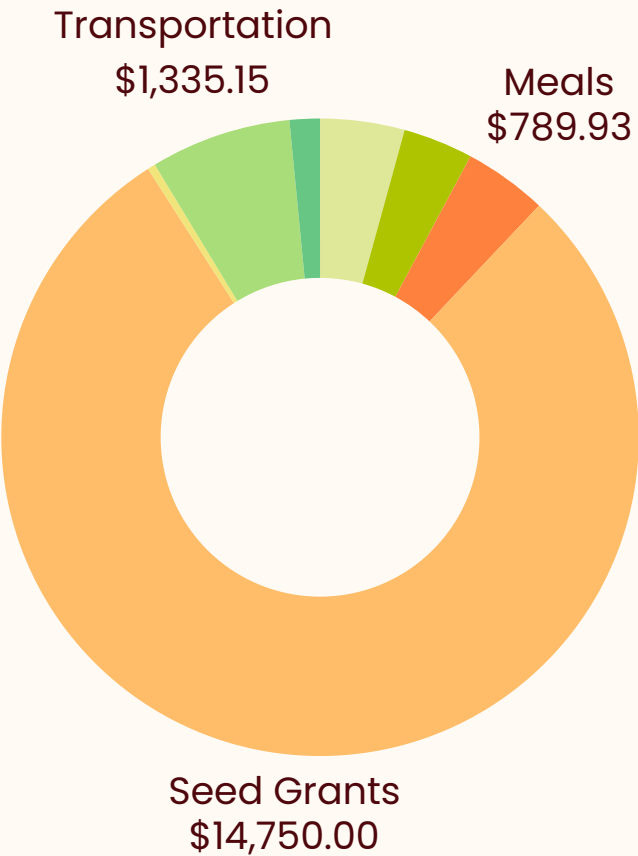


program expense: \$29,406.31



Colombia

program expense: \$18,701.38



México

WHAT WORKED BEST

While both models had strong engagement and completion rates, the Mexico direct recruitment model proved more effective in increasing participants' incomes, confidence, and project implementation. Participants successfully launched individual projects, diversified income, and strengthened peer networks. This may be the result of direct implementation (and our team's constant presence in the community) vs. affiliation model.



**Doña Cleofas with her newly established nursery in Veracruz, Mexico.
As part of her seed fund project, Cleofas created a project to revive her small coffee farm
to improve productivity and resilience to pests.**

4. Next Steps

Scaling Farmer School



Next Steps

Building on the pilot's success, we are expanding the Mexico Farmer School in 2026:



Power farmers to increase productivity, quality & resilience

- Train **250** farmers in 2026
- Build **3** local training partnerships

Catalyze farmer-led innovation

- Disburse **\$50K** seed funds in 2026
- Support 150 farmers through farmer-led projects (80% improve yield/quality)
- Train all regional leads for follow-up support

Grow WPCC as a sustainable sales channel

- Sell **100** tonnes of coffee in 2026
- Finance **75%** of contracts

The Farmer School program will solely focus on Mexico for 2026, **deepening our work in Veracruz and Chiapas.**

Thank you!

We are grateful to the following organizations for their trust and support of this initiative!



Coffee Vision Fund I helped us launch this pilot in both Colombia and Mexico, and provided thought partnership in designing and executing the project.

MINOR FIGURES

Minor Figures supported with funds to provide seed capital to producers in Mexico

SIRUMA

We are grateful to Siruma for being our thought partners and execution partners in Colombia.



We are grateful to UAAAN for supporting us with five regional leaders who helped provide 1:1 mentorship to the Mexican cohort.



We are grateful to the Colegio de Posgraduados in Veracruz, Mexico for their in-kind support and thought partnership of the project.



As part of our closing activities, we invite participants to share one takeaway and then pass the thread to another participant, which invites everyone to create a weaving of knowledge and connections among participants.

bean voyage

Building Thriving Business **with** **Smallholder** **Women Farmers**

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