

ROTTERDAM SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT
ERASMUS UNIVERSITY

THE PARTNERSHIPS RESOURCE CENTRE

*“HOW WE HAVE
EXPERIENCED THE PUBLIC
PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP”*

Reflections from Nariño's Coffee Growers





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The Partnerships Resource Centre is an open centre for academics, practitioners and students to create, retrieve and share knowledge on cross-sector partnerships for sustainable development. The centre carries out and commissions fundamental research, develops tools and knowledge-sharing protocols and delivers web-based learning modules and executive training. Most of these activities are available to the general public and are aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of partnerships around the world. The Centre's ambitions are to have a high societal as well as scientific impact, resulting in citation scores in academic and popular media. The Centre functions as a source of validated information about cross-sector partnerships, as a platform for the exchange of information, and as a source of inspiration for practitioners around the world.

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GIVING BENEFICIARIES A VOICE

Cross-sector partnerships for development (CSDPs) – understood as collaborations between companies, government and civil society – are aimed at addressing social and development issues. As such, CSDPs are considered mechanisms for collaborative value creation at the societal, organisational and individual level¹. Value created for partnering organisations ranges from public legitimacy gains to business model improvements. From the beneficiary communities' perspective partnership value translates into improved quality of life and living standards through e.g. capacity building, job creation, income increase and social development.

However, a criticism of these types of multi-stakeholder approaches is that many times, beneficiaries – a crucial stakeholder – are merely at the receiving end of the value creation process. The contribution of beneficiary groups is too often overshadowed by the contribution of the more active organisational partners². At its core, CSDP value is ultimately channelled towards target beneficiaries. In this sense, CSDPs are formed with beneficiary needs as a starting point. However, this

emphasis on beneficiary needs calls for such target stakeholder group to play a role from the start of the value creation cycle through the communication of such needs. In the same line, as partnerships attempt to assess the progress and success in addressing the issue, beneficiary groups stand to contribute along the implementation of the project as well.

The concept of 'beneficiary voice' highlights that "beneficiaries have the responsibility to communicate openly and explicitly in order to facilitate understanding" for the partnership³. Through the involvement in ongoing dialogues, beneficiaries can be regarded as committed participants in enhancing project impact. Simultaneously, providing them a voice further contributes to the capacity building and empowering process in communities⁴, which could facilitate sustainability of project outcomes.

This publication is a compilation of beneficiary stories from the Sustainable Development Programme for Nariño's Coffee Growing Families, implemented as a CSDP in Colombia. The Partnerships Resource Centre (PrC) sat down with a number of coffee growers in 2013, who participated in the programme to learn about their needs, their experiences and challenges throughout the project and the value they have acquired from being part of such efforts. As such, it constitutes an attempt to contribute towards realising the importance of giving beneficiaries a voice.

¹ Austin, J., Seitanidi, M. (2012). Collaborative Value Creation: A Review of Partnering Between Nonprofits and Businesses. Part 2: Partnership Processes and Outcomes. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. Vol 41(6) 929-968

² Le Ber, M., Branzei, O. (2010) Towards a Critical Theory of Value Creation in Cross-Sector Partnerships. *Organization*. Vol 17(5) 599-629

³ Idem

⁴ Pfisterer, S. (2013) *Development Partnerships with the Private Sector at Work: Insights from Partnerships with the Private Sector Facilitated by the Dutch Embassy in Colombia*. Partnerships Resource Centre: Rotterdam

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR NARIÑO'S COFFEE GROWING FAMILIES

The department of Nariño in Colombia is affected by armed conflict, cultivation of illegal crops, and a high level of poverty and migration. In the light of these development challenges, Empresas de Nariño (ENA), Starbucks Co., International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the Carcafé Foundation and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands joined forces to foster sustainable development of coffee growing families in Nariño. The project ran from 2004 to 2007 as a multiple-impact programme focusing on vulnerable coffee-growing communities with a high rate of displacement and risk of forced migration. A second phase with the financial support of USAID Colombia was implemented between 2009 and 2012. By implementing a social, economic and eco-friendly development strategy, both partnership projects allowed a total of 1,960 small coffee-growing families to improve their position in the coffee value chain, preserving the local coffee-growing culture and preventing forced migration and displacement of coffee growers in Nariño.



REFLECTIONS FROM THE ERAZO- GRIJALBA FAMILY

“Before Empresas de Nariño came to us, our farm was far from organised, we did not recycle, we did not consider the environment. More importantly, there was no coffee quality to speak of. We had to spread some cloth on the floor, on top of which we would let the coffee dry, but the humidity of the ground would actually damage the beans. The price for our coffee was very low; it was barely providing us with sufficient income, so we did not have the money to invest in an appropriate drying patio.

We had heard that ENA was visiting different places in this area. One day a representative came to our farm and talked to us about some projects they wanted to implement in the community. They told us they were thinking about building some processing infrastructure, some drying patios, some kitchens and water tanks.

“We were thankful and we wanted to show it by collaborating wholeheartedly.”

We thought this would be something good if it eventually happened but we didn’t believe it would. We were very sceptical because nobody had ever given us anything. Some time passed and we didn’t see anything coming, so we thought that again nothing was actually going to happen. But one day saw some trucks coming down the road, honking as they came closer. We immediately realised it was the project that had been promised. Every time as we heard them, everyone in the vicinity would run off to see and follow them. You could hear everywhere farmers saying “come to me first”, but we were always assured that there was something for everyone. And then



finally the day came: a truck came to our farm, left us the cement, the tools, the materials, everything to get started. The only thing we could do was be thankful; this was the first and only time we have received these kinds of things without being asked for something in return.

For us this was really significant and filled our hearts with joy. We know the costs of building a drying patio, so we decided we could not take it without trying to improve ourselves and our practices. This motivated us to want to change the way we worked and participate in the project. It was then that we started seeing lovely things. When the trucks arrived everyone in the neighbouring farms helped each other with unloading materials, carrying them on our shoulders down the road, and preparing the place where infrastructure was to be built. We also helped, happy to participate in whatever needed. It was all voluntary; we were grateful and wanted to show it by collaborating wholeheartedly.

The project did require our presence in the training sessions, and so we attended them all. This is when we got to know IOM as well as ENA. Sometimes we spent full days with their engineers. They brought videos with them about what other neighbourhoods were doing and made the sessions really dynamic and active. We were trained to grow different types of trees on our farms for reforestation, we learned about garbage separation, recycling and organic composting. We did not want to miss a single session, so there was always one member of our family present. We needed to

The Erazo-Grijalba Family was part of the first PPP. Six years after their participation they share with us their story and experiences.



attend this training because we saw that it was working. The sessions opened our minds and had an impact on our consciousness, on how we work the farm.

We started to become more unified with our neighbours; we realized we needed each other's help with the infrastructure work and through the training sessions we became even closer so we decided to form an association. We would work together to gather the coffee of everyone in the association and sent it in trucks to the mill. We had decided this would be the best way of becoming more united.

"So we decided to form an association...this would be the best way of becoming more united"

Throughout the project, many people came to see our farm. We had visitors from different places and we were very happy to see their faces. It made us realise that we were going through a unique experience; we were honoured by their visits.

The impact of this experience was clear to them, but it was even clearer to us. We are conscious that if our coffee is being bought at higher prices, we can distribute our resources better. Before the project we only knew that ENA was buying our coffee; after being involved in this we came to know where our coffee is actually heading, that ENA sells our coffee to Starbucks. We are delighted that our coffee can be enjoyed all over the world, and that they like it. This is our interest day after day: the more they like it, the better. And so, our lives have improved. We were educated and realised that we need to walk a path of continuous self-improvement.

We have started growing other crops and can afford things for our family and for our children. In a rural area it is difficult to send our children to study, to pay for tuition fees, food and transportation. With the lessons learned from this project and now being able to sell our higher quality coffee at higher prices we can afford our children's education.

After the project we found ourselves more motivated to work. We had started building a house before the project but had left it unfinished. Being involved in this experience helped us become enthusiastic about finishing what we started. We looked for sources of additional funds and completed the building of our home. Moreover, our children have grown up to appreciate not just the farm on which they live but also the environment and one of them has decided to study agronomy to further improve the farm.

This experience gave us the strength to keep moving forward, to continue improving our quality of life. ENA and IMO have lent us a helping hand, accompanying us through this change, to benefit ourselves and our neighbours with whom we have been able to further integrate as a community."

Carlos Erazo, Amparo Grijalba

REFLECTIONS FROM THE ROSERO- QUISTIAL FAMILY



“Before the project came to our neighbourhood we had already been working as coffee growers and we scheduled our work so I could help my husband in the plantation from time to time. At that time we used to collect the coffee, wash it and throw it wherever we could find space to leave it to dry. We would have to wait days for the drying process to finish and even then the coffee would be damaged and be of low quality because of the way we treated it. Added to this, here in the country we are always struggling with water. In the summer water is scarce, affecting our home and the coffee business. I have been running a child day-care centre from home for about 25 years where I attend to the children’s daily needs but teach them values as well. Before the project I only had a mud brick house, which was not ideal for the children, but we did not have enough resources to make improvements.

One day a representative from ENA came to our area and invited us for a meeting, which we attended out of curiosity. They introduced themselves as being from ENA, IOM, and the Netherlands, and they talked about the how agreements worked. This is how it all started; they initiated a project not only for our farm but many other farms around us. It was challenging in the beginning. We had a rough time bringing ourselves to believe, because so many others had come, making promises but leaving nothing except those promises. At first people tried to talk us out of writing our names down for the project. In our family it was I who put down our names even though my husband did not see the point in it, truly believing it would not go through in the end.

The Rosero-Quistial Family was part of the first PPP. Six years after their participation they share with us their story and experiences.

I just refused to take us off the list, and fortunately it was not long before he saw that the trucks with the infrastructure material were indeed coming. We started seeing that things were actually going forward and we saw things changing. We were finally convinced that it was happening for real. In fact, when the project was running we also started more people wanting to join. This filled me with joy.

Representatives of ENA organised meetings where we were told we would be provided with processing infrastructure, patios and bathrooms. The project also built a new house for us, which we now use for the day-care. This house has been a blessing for the whole community and for me because the children feel good here. IOM visited us as well and gave us big water tanks which solved our water shortage problem.

Besides the infrastructure, the project also provided us with training. They told us this project had a special focus on the environment. We were taught how to work with with the environment: about garbage collection and how to change the habit of throwing garbage anywhere. We learned to separate glass and plastics, to recycle, and to identify what can be set aside for compost so we could use it for the coffee plants. Training also included sessions on how to use the infrastructure we had been given so we could learn how to better process our coffee in an environmentally friendly way.

During the training sessions we were taught how to work together, and as such both my husband and I attended the workshops. In fact, most farmers went as a family. We



“The project showed us the path of self-improvement and we now walk the path ourselves.”

when we are gone. The technicians gave us practical homework and were strict about it being done well, which was good because this helped us do things right and learn better. The sessions took place in the community schools and we had both individual and group sessions. On the way to the school we would meet with our neighbours and arrive as a group. The atmosphere was filled with excitement and improved communication between us. Each neighbouring family was busy with things on their own farms, but worked together as well; helping and learning from each other.

This project has changed everything within our family. Economically, it has allowed us to continue working and increase our income. Before the project, we knew ENA purchased our coffee but we didn't know where it went after that. Now we understand the whole exporting process. Not only do we realize where the higher coffee prices come from but we also know that what we are cultivating here will be enjoyed by you in other places. I have also been able to keep my day-care open. Had it not been for the house we received, I would have had to close since I did not have the resources to improve the conditions of the place and meet government requirements. Even the parents feel more secure sending their children here. Because of the increased income we were able to send our daughter

didn't want to miss out on any of this training, not only because they were good for us but also because our children had to learn so they can continue

to university in Pasto purely with the income we get from our coffee, without the need for taking out a loan.

Emotionally, it made me happier and more content with working. My children know now how things work; they learned about the things they could help out with and got more involved, which strengthened the values within the family. I feel there is more respect and equality in our home. We now listen to our children's opinions and suggestions as opposed to being authoritative towards them. This also translates into the community life. Women participated in the training sessions and got involved in the activities. The level of machismo has diminished a lot and the improved communication has made the community stronger.

I am always grateful for this project and we try, as does everybody around us, to keep doing things the way we were taught. The project showed us the path of self-improvement and we now walk the path ourselves. We have improved our home, building a new bathroom by ourselves. Even our daughter, now a graduate in Agronomy, is planning to come back and put into practice what she learned. This experience has stayed with us and we hope it endures so that we can keep teaching others in the future.”

Socorro Quistial

REFLECTIONS FROM PALO VERDE COFFEE ASSOCIATION

“We have been living in this area all our lives and have been involved in coffee growing since childhood. Before the project, we were tied to and dependent on irregular trading with the National Coffee Federation of Colombia (FNC). We didn’t have any technical assistance, and felt somewhat abandoned because we had no future direction. We didn’t know exactly what our farms’ yield was and we focused only on growing, harvesting and selling our coffee in town.

One day we saw trucks coming to our area bringing water tanks. We were told we were going to be beneficiaries of a project, and we were very happy. We never had something of that magnitude happening here before. Eventually we understood this was being brought to us by ENA, IOM and other entities that had thought of a project for our community. Towards the end of 2004 trucks returned with material for infrastructure that people really needed. There was no doubt that something good was going to happen. We were excited and helped with the unloading and moving of things. You could also see that some people were unhappy because the community consists of 118 families and the project reached out to only 19 of us. In the beginning we didn’t believe what was happening; we had never received such things. Soon, however, it became a source of motivation for all the local coffee farmers. Wanting to participate in the project was the spark that pushed us to take the first steps to grow as a group and form an association. We were trained to manage our farm as a business, protect the environment and improve coffee processing. Our wives and

The Palo Verde Coffee Growers Association is one of the associations formed during the first PPP. Six years after their participation they share with us their story and experiences.



children participated as well and got fully involved in the implementation of the strategies we learned.

We received micro-entrepreneurship training and developed the competence to form this association. When gathered the courage to elect our first board, we were helped to open a bank account for the association and learned about bookkeeping. There were some challenges: doubts and fear from the leaders so we had to work a lot on trust-building and self-confidence. By the end, we felt ready to do things on our own. Now the association continues and we know that creating something is much harder than dropping it. We value what we did: the sacrifices, the doubts, and the criticism, and are aware that being united is a blessing and a good opportunity to learn. Our association was formally constituted in January 2007 and now has 63 members. We were one of the three associations in this area formed during the project.

The project had clear economic benefits for us. We now have more shares of the profit because we didn’t sell to an intermediary. Instead, we had developed a direct relationship with ENA and prices improved, translating into more income. For our families, this meant more financial freedom. Our children’s education for example, whose future we want to support, is one of our responsibilities. We want them to focus on and finish their studies, so they can also dedicate themselves to coffee-growing. Being in an association has enabled us to keep this commitment to our children. The association has stimulated us to look for new market opportunities, and we have



become aware that working in a group improves our profitability.

We now understand the consumer market for our coffee. Before the project we were only aware that our coffee was bought in La Union. We now know ENA exports to Starbucks, of whom we have a good impression. We have learned about the process at the mill and about the coffee quality standards required by Starbucks' market. This helped us to better identify good quality in the coffee brought in by association members and we know what prices to expect. We are now very proud of producing our coffee: whenever we go to the city we are recognised as having good quality coffee. This fills us with pride. Producing good quality changed the way we work on our farms. It motivates us to be more organised and mindful during processing. It also helped us improve communication in order to promote our coffee. Before, we were very shy and couldn't speak when in large groups. This experience has allowed us to build friendships with other entities such as banks which can help our association further.

The project has also brought about change within our families. Our children have developed a philosophy of environmental conservation, they have become more collaborative on the farm and more conscious of the work we do. This has changed family dynamics: trust is built, we can work together as a family and we collaborate and share with the community. Women are participating a lot more in the community as well. The situation was very different before, when the mentality

revolved around the belief that women's time spent outside of the home was lost time. Community leadership has also developed and in Palo Verde we have strong leaders who have developed a strong sense of responsibility. The association benefits from a stronger community but the community benefits from the association's work as well.

From the earnings of the first year we were able to rent a warehouse. This way, the coffee could have a fixed place for collection. After the project, we got involved in bigger projects and we came up with a project of our own: improving the irrigation system. We have had a good experience with this irrigation project, and have been invited to other communities to share what we have learned. It is proof that together you can achieve more than you can alone. We hope to build our strength in order to participate in the conception and design of projects and to eventually be able to join discussion tables. In the future we hope to grow in the number of association members but more importantly in the number of projects, because they create an impact. This project has been like a dream come true; it opened up a door to the future for us and enabled us to wake up to the reality of our coffee business. We want to move forward because for us this is just the start of beneficial collaborative work for the association."

Ricaurte Grijalba, Martin Ojeda, Jose Cordoba

REFLECTIONS FROM THE NUEVA ESPERANZA COFFEE ASSOCIATION



“Four years ago we had no knowledge of how to prepare and select the coffee to sell directly to exporters. We were very dependent on intermediary parties. Then some representatives of ENA came to have a look at their coffee supply and they invited us to some meetings. Out of curiosity we decided to go. We liked how they greeted us and how they presented themselves. They told us to form groups of farmers in order to sell coffee collectively at a better price and to intermediaries so as to get more profit from our own work. It can be a bit difficult to embrace these initiatives because there have been many people, with political agendas, making promises that are not kept. But we went with it and we were invited to a second meeting where 60 families were gathered. There, we finally decided to form the association. We appointed the board and now have 31 members and been active for four years.

Later, the training started and people liked it even more. Before, we didn't know what happened to our coffee after we sold it to ENA. In the training sessions they showed us videos and took us to the mill to explain the rest of the coffee trading process. Because of that we now know our coffee is exported to different countries and different markets. That same year we had our first harvest and sale as an association, and the new challenges became clear. Our lack of experience made sales difficult: it was the first time we worked directly with a company. We had challenges while getting used to things like paperwork and accounting, invoicing, keeping track of how much coffee we received from different association members and how much they

could expect to receive for it. Also at that time our association didn't have much equipment. For example, we had to borrow scales to weigh the coffee, but an interest in improving motivated us to persevere.

In 2010, we were involved in the Carrera Cafetera: a series of training sessions and capacity-building in an effort to get Sustainable Coffee certifications. The Carrera Cafetera awarded benefits to associations who successfully accomplished stated objectives. We were the first of the associations participating in this project to win. We had the privilege of being the best association and as such, the initiators of an improvement process in our region. Because of this, we then received another visit from ENA, IOM and USAID who came to see our sacrifices and accomplishments and rewarded us with processing infrastructure: parabolic dryers and drying patios for the individual farms, and tools for the association as a whole. They gave us the equipment required to have better resources and to function as association.

This has not been an easy process and we have had difficulties. The number of members went down from 45 to 31 within a year. This is because there has been pressure from other coffee companies telling them to make a choice between staying in our association or staying with them and receiving some benefits they are offering. So some members feel forced to leave. Also, we have had to emphasise development of responsibility among members, e.g. by developing rules to motivate attendance and punctuality to the meetings. But on the other hand we have had to develop trust in the leaders of the

The Nueva Esperanza Coffee Association is one of the associations formed during the second PPP. One year after their participation they share with us their story and experiences.



association as well. There tends to be a lack of trust because members hear about other associations where leadership has been disappointing. So we have tried to build trustworthy leadership. In our association we have not only trained ourselves as a group but also as individuals, because an association can only work through individual commitments.

“The project has brought many benefits, including better coffee prices and a coffee that is recognized and sold as specialty coffee.”

The project has brought many benefits, including higher coffee prices and coffee that is recognised and sold as specialty coffee. Our association has been able to initiate and carry out our first improvement project: we built and equipped our very own warehouse. We saw that we were receiving all these materials and machines from the project and we realised we needed a special place to store them. We found such a place and were finally able to buy it in 2012. This shows that the project motivated us to initiate other projects on our own.

In the surrounding neighbourhoods only two associations were formed: us and the Duarte Association. We have learned not only cooperation among individual farmers but also between associations. We often share information with the farmers from Duarte. If workshops are being organised we share the invitation with each other. When we need a car to transport things, sometimes we get together to rent transportation and deliver supplies. It is good to sit with them and see what we can do together. This collaboration is not only at the association level: the relationships in the neighbourhood have changed and you can feel it. We

communicate a lot more with each other, even outside the association meetings. What we learned for our farms and associations, e.g. garbage collection, we also implement in the common spaces outside our own farms. The association also helps women in the community since they get the opportunity to work as equals. There are nine women participating in our association and it is valuable for them to have their voices heard equally.

Before the projects there was a lot of illegal cocaine growing. Even though there is still a lot of this happening and there is still a problem with criminality, ENA, IOM and USAID contributed to the work other entities had already been doing in the area of peace-building. This project motivated us to work on growing coffee instead of cocaine. They gave us what we needed to focus only on the business of growing coffee.

Now we have a new objective: we would like to our association to have truck of its own. That way, whenever we want, whenever we need, we can load it with coffee and bring it to ENA. And whenever we need, we can use it to bring supplies back to our association. Hopefully in the future maybe we can also improve our irrigation system. There is a long way to go, but it is good to have vision.”

Jose Hernei Ahumada, Maria Machabajo, Jose Enrique Criollo, Franklin Burbano, Luis Cana

REFLECTIONS FROM THE DUARTE COFFEE ASSOCIATION



“Up until 2009 we didn’t know a lot about ENA, although we had heard it was an exporting company that purchased coffee in large quantities. At that time, farmers were unstructured in their activities, farms were not productive enough and the community was very fragmented. In 2010, we heard there was a plan to form associations with the help of ENA and other entities in a project for us, the small farmers. We were called to meetings where they introduced this project. After this meeting we formed our association of 25 farmers. Now we are 92 members strong.

The project started with training, through which we gained experience on how to better process our coffee, how to better sell it and how to identify good quality. The training we received as an association have helped our families as well. They taught us to better work on our individual farms and we learned about recycling and garbage collection. We realised this should be done not only on the plantations, but that we should try to keep our living areas clean as well. Afterwards, ENA committed to helping us with drying patios and other infrastructure, which for us, farmers who hadn’t been able to sell any coffee at all that year, was really good.

But we soon saw challenges. Some of the farmers in our community were given a choice to either stay with another coffee company offering them incentives or be part of our association and commit our sales to ENA. Understandably, many farmers decided to leave because the other company was offering loans for purchasing fertilisers, which is very attractive to farmers as fertilisers are very expensive. Later, we

encountered another challenge in selling the coffee: unfortunately, when association members come to deliver their coffee we can’t pay them immediately because we are still not at a point where we can afford to keep cash reserves on hand. We need to wait until we have enough coffee to sell to ENA and only then can we pay our farmers.

So, in general the association has had ups and down: some really good moments and others not as good. Despite this, our association has continued working, learning to become more organised and now the association is on an upswing again. We still don’t have a place to store the scale and the instruments we need to evaluate coffee quality, but we have identified a piece of land where we would like to build our warehouse. Although we still don’t have enough money to buy it, we are doing our best and are now evaluating our options. We think the project has helped us implement initiatives that help the area and the municipality, giving us the confidence to further explore improvement possibilities, e.g. the acquisition of a better irrigation system.

We also see an effect on our children: they are now motivated to strive for economic stability. It has helped them realise the importance of having more than one option for income, and they are planning to continue with their university studies. At the same time, having learned together about processing and selling coffee, they are also motivated to keep our coffee-growing tradition alive when they grow up. Learning has been shared with the rest of the community, even those who do not actively participate in the association. They learn

The Duarte Coffee Association is one of the associations formed during the second PPP. One year after their participation they share with us their story and experiences.



from our experiences when we talk to them and when they see us working. The project has helped women better integrate as coffee growers and stimulates them to come up with ideas themselves. It is nice because they are treated as equals but at the same time offer different perspectives. We realise it is important to have a joint vision.

In the future we would like to see our association still alive and growing. Even though we have recently gone through a rough time, we managed to elect a new board, so our wish is to become better organised as a stronger group. There is still work to be done in strengthening our organisation, but in the end we are very thankful to the project.

Reinero Ortega, Segundo Hernandez, Adriana Fajardo, Esteban Hernandez

“The project helped women integrate better as coffee growers and stimulates them to come up with ideas themselves”.

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