

bean
voyage

Building Thriving Businesses with Smallholder Women Coffee Farmers

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE: A REPORT





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Cover photo: women from Pérez Zeledón and Coto Brus region during a field trip. Taken by Fernanda Carrillo

Table of contents photo: SCI participant during a monitoring & evaluation visit. Taken by Fernanda Carrillo

A note from the Project Leads

We are pleased to share this report on the successful completion of the Sustainable Communities Initiative: a program designed to support smallholder women coffee farmers from 7 different coffee-producing regions in Costa Rica.

During the initiative, we provided training and mentorship to **150 smallholder women coffee farmers** in various regional groups of Costa Rica. This collaborative approach allowed the participants to leverage each other's strengths and experiences to build stronger businesses and communities.

In addition, we financed **45 new income diversification projects** that have started to show promising results. These projects, while small, are an important step towards building more resilient and diverse local economies in the region.

As we reflect on the success of this initiative, we want to emphasize the importance of networks. By bringing together women from different regions and backgrounds, we were able to **create a supportive environment** that helped to foster the growth of small businesses. The positive impacts of these efforts are already being felt within families and communities, and we believe that they will continue to multiply over time.

Thank you for your continued support of this project, and we look forward to sharing more successes with you in the future.

With love,
Fernanda Carrillo and Maria Jose Monge
Initiative Co-Lead, Sustainable Communities Initiative



Fer and Majo during a monitoring and evaluation field trip



CR team during a field trip

About bean voyage

Bean Voyage is a **feminist** non-profit social enterprise on a mission to **build thriving businesses with smallholder women coffee farmers.**

We identify the following big gaps facing smallholder women coffee farmers:

- **Tools:** limited access to knowledge on climate adaptation, food security, and quality improvements
- **Finance:** exclusion from financing opportunities to develop thriving businesses
- **Markets:** access to high-paying customers.

Bean Voyage addresses all three gaps through the Care Trade Model: a bundle of services consisting of **training, seed grants, mentorship, and market access** to smallholder women coffee farmers.

We aim to ensure thriving income for **10,000 smallholder women** and their families around the world by **2030.**

Sustainable Communities Initiative: At a glance



 **7**
number of coffee producing regions reached in Costa Rica

 **150**
number of smallholder women farmers recruited

 **55**
hours of training delivered

 **45**
diversification projects funded

 **\$26,630**
funded in seed grants

* The larger the circle, the greater the number of participants from that region.

Project Methodology: The Care Trade Model



Step 1: Smallholder women coffee farmers enroll into the program, receiving training and mentorship on topics such as: gender, climate change, food security, leadership, and entrepreneurship modules.



Step 2: Projects are implemented to diversify farmers' and their families' income. Participants could choose from five project topics: hen keeping, beekeeping, bio-inputs, home gardens, seedlings for agroforestry systems, and rural tourism.



Step 3: Upon completion of the training modules, participants can apply for "seed capital" financial support to advance their business ideas, with facilitator guidance in developing comprehensive project proposals.

Project Timeline: May 2022-April 2023



Recruitment
[May - June, 2022]



Training
[July - November, 2022]

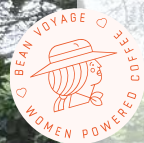
gender | climate change adaptation |
food security | leadership and entrepreneurship



Seed Funds
[November 2022- February 2023]



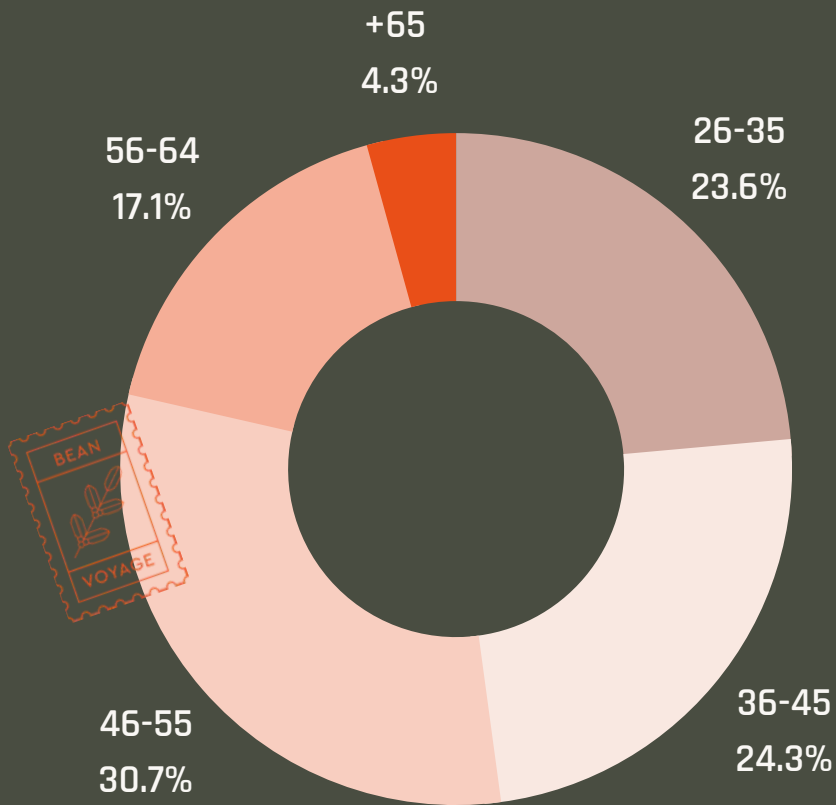
Monitoring & Evaluation
[February - April 2023]



Participant Demographics



Participant Demographics



52% of the participants are 46 years old or above.

33% of the participants legally own their farms.

40.5% of the participants report completing high school as their last academic grade.

65% of the participants state that the income from coffee production does not meet their household needs.

83.4%

Reported experiencing financial stress within the past year.

47.7%

Expresses dissatisfaction with the price received for their coffee sales, feeling that it is unfair prior to joining Bean Voyage.

52.9%

The livelihoods of both the participants and their families depend entirely on the income generated from coffee production.

35.0%

Participants are heads of households and have to support 4 or more people with their income.

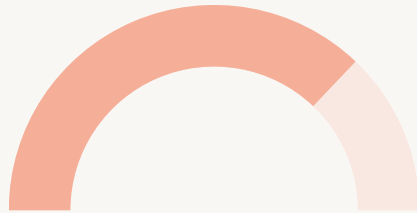


Impact



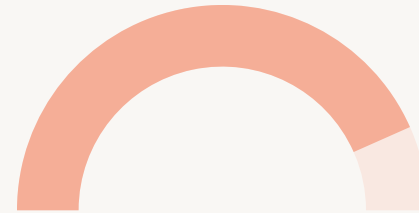
Producers during a focus group in Frailes

Project Impact



74.2%

report an improvement in their ability to overcome obstacles and challenges related to their farm businesses.



85.7%

consider that their leadership within the coffee industry has increased after the program.



100%

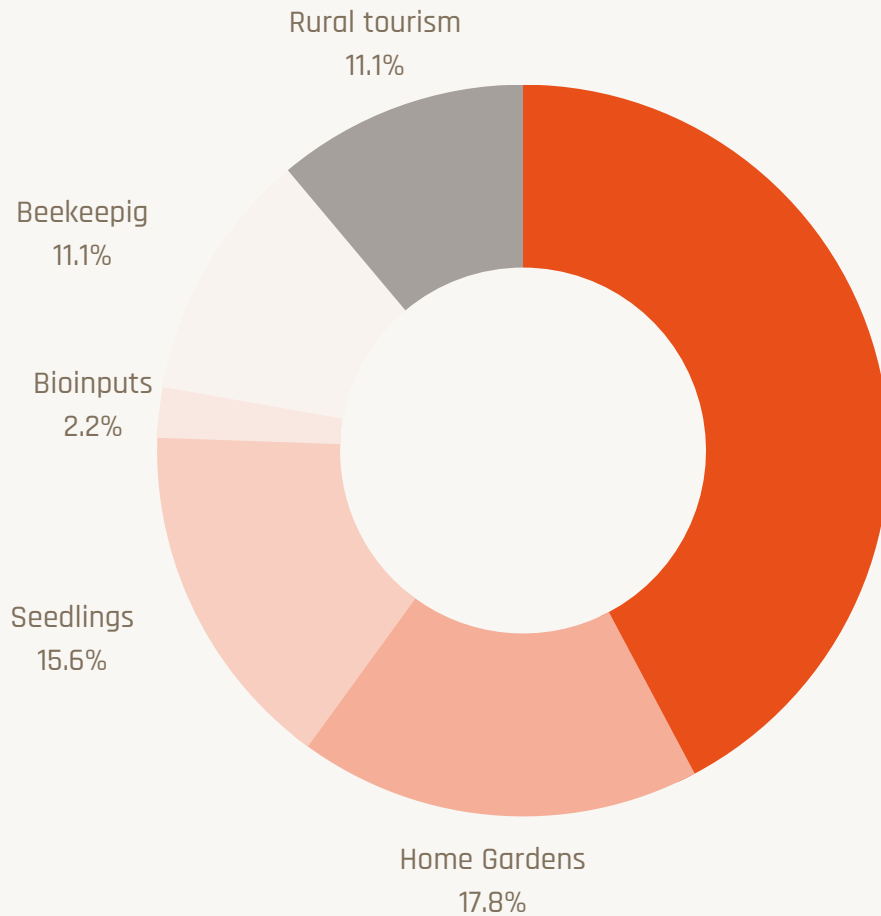
of the participants would recommend the Sustainable Communities Initiative to other women coffee farmers.



100%

of the seed fund recipients report that they had a low chance of starting their income diversification project without financial support and guidance from Bean Voyage.

Distribution of Projects Funded

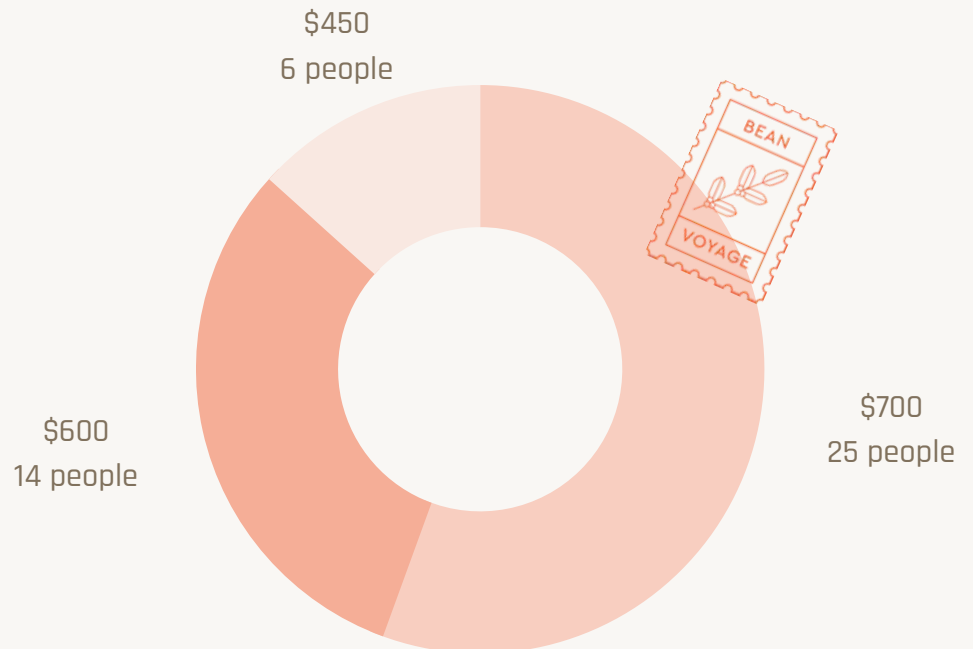


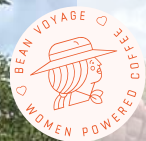
Seed Fund Allocation

The proposal review committee consisting of subject matter experts from The Coffee Institute of Costa Rica, Bean Voyage Costa Rica board of directors, and independent consultants reviewed the proposals submitted by participants.

The fund recipients were divided into three categories to determine the amount of funding they would receive, as follows.

Hen Keeping
42.2%





Voyage Stories



Ana Lourdes Acuña



Ana Lourdes kindly received us at her farm, where she told us about her motivation to apply for the seed grant. She shared with us about the "pinzón cafetalero," a bird that only appears in coffee farms in the Central Valley, and its decreasing presence.

We then visited her seedlings and listened with admiration to her excitement about soon being able to market them within the community.

After the visit, she invited us to her farm again, where we were surprised to see that she had implemented one of the recommendations studied in the training: integrating the planting of coffee with tomato and installing a fertigation system that supplied both crops.

This inspiration was taken from one of the instructors in our training program. Ana Lourdes had her first harvest and was very happy to share the great quality of her new crop and the satisfaction of putting new products on the table that were also produced on her farm.

Verenice Leiva



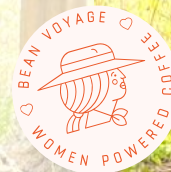
Verenice Leiva Gómez is a Boruca indigenous woman who lives in the San Joaquín de Boruca area in Buenos Aires, Puntarenas. In addition to producing coffee, Verenice and her family have a local crafts business where they make traditional masks from their community and paint them.

Through the ICS program, Verenice increased her knowledge about coffee and received seed capital to invest in her cabin's equipment. This enabled her to start an "adventurous" rural tourism project that allows them to receive national and foreign tourists to share the history, process, and production of coffee in indigenous territory. She also shares other customs and ancestral knowledge as part of the Boruca people.

Her project's objective is for people to have an approachable experience to learn not only about coffee but also about a fundamental part of the history of Costa Rica, such as our indigenous peoples.

For Verenice, it is vital to preserve their customs and traditions, which is why part of her project includes allowing visitors to observe and taste traditional Boruca foods while learning their historical significance, as well as some fundamental customs such as the Fiesta de los Diablitos.

Participant Testimonials



Vivi and Lou during a monitoring and evaluation visit, taken by Fernanda Carrillo

"I had a great experience and felt comfortable with the facilitators' teaching. I loved it."

2022 SCI Participant
Annual Impact Survey

"I am grateful for the seed fund and the kind support of the team during this much-needed time."

2022 SCI Participant
Annual Impact Survey

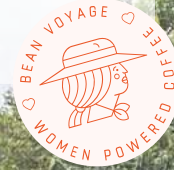
"Everything you teach is important:
how to organize ourselves and carry
out different activities as an
entrepreneur and how to manage
climate change for coffee."

2022 SCI Participant
Annual Impact Survey

"Agriculture, especially coffee, needs a lot of people, otherwise the product will disappear....The government has a great challenge. Organizations like this motivate us to continue."

2022 SCI Participant
Annual Impact Survey

Lessons Learned



Group of producers during a field trip

3 Wins



Group of producers during a field trip visit to ICAFE, taken by Fernanda Carrillo

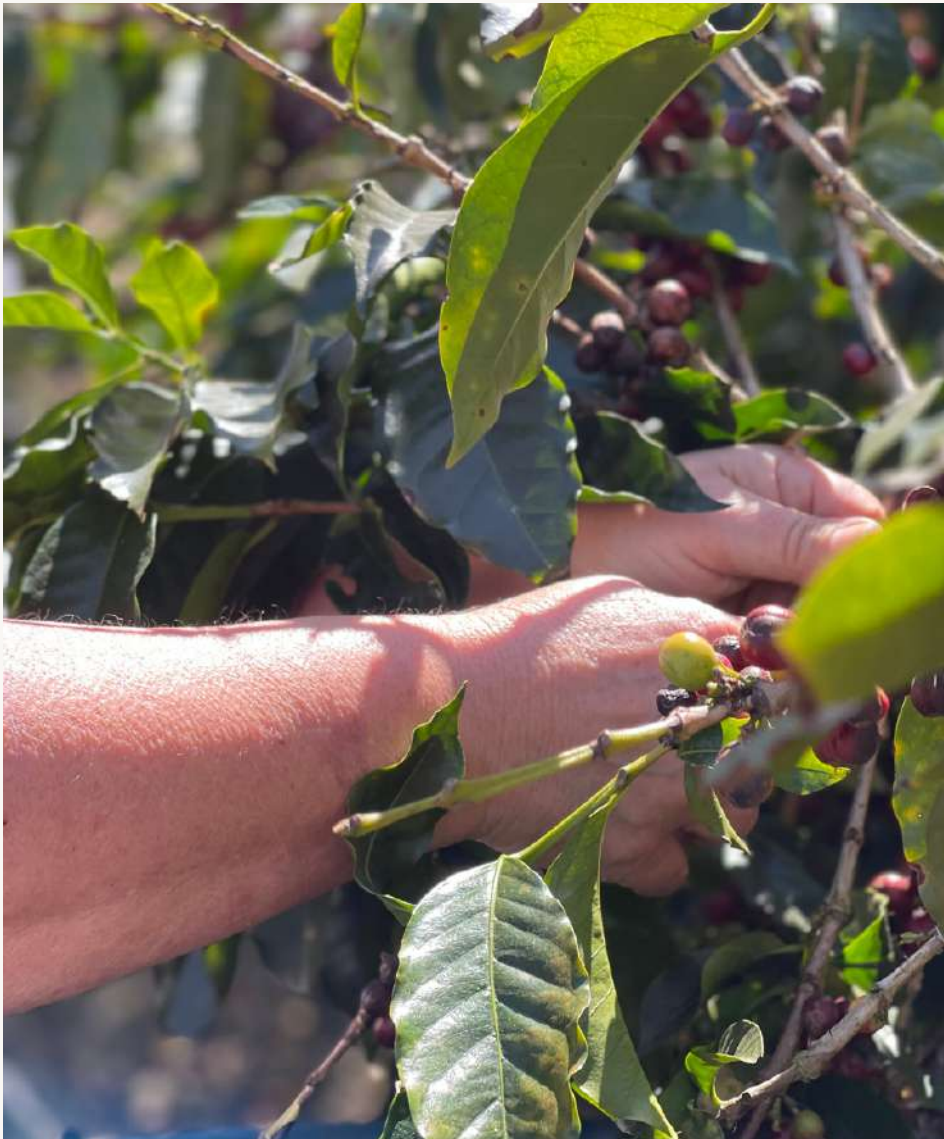
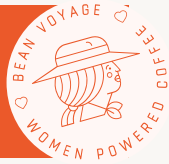
Potential of Collectiveness: The creation of in-person spaces for participants to interact with peers and provide feedback on their processes proved successful. This collective approach allowed for a more **dynamic and collaborative** learning experience that participants found valuable.

Synchronous Sessions Increase Engagement: The weekly synchronous sessions were effective in refreshing content and providing a consistent learning experience for participants. They were able to interact more fluidly with their peers, which helped increase their **engagement and motivation** in the program.

Trainings Foster Innovation and Growth: The participants reported that the training helped them incorporate new practices and activities that improved their coffee businesses. This, in turn, contributed to the daily management of their farms and **increased their confidence** in implementing new ideas. The support they received from their families during the process was also a major win for the program.

*The data was collected from the focus groups conducted with the participants, both via Zoom and in person.

2 challenges



Producer harvesting the last coffee cherries. taken by Fernanda Carrillo

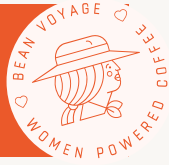
Overcoming Geographic Barriers for In-Person Sessions:

The first challenge was to increase the number of in-person sessions to make them better adapted to the participants from each of the coffee-growing regions. While all the participants showed a great deal of motivation to attend these sessions, some of them had to travel long distances, which made it difficult for them to participate due to logistical uncertainties. In order to address this challenge, we had to work closely with the participants to find ways to minimize these logistical challenges and make the in-person sessions more accessible to everyone.

Balancing Virtual Methodologies with Connectivity Challenges:

The second challenge that we faced was to find a virtual methodology that involved various platforms. While some participants were interested in having synchronous sessions through platforms such as Zoom, which allowed them to interact in a more fluid way, others faced connectivity challenges that made it difficult for them to participate. To address this challenge, we had to identify alternative platforms that were more accessible to all the participants, and work with them to ensure that they were able to access the content and participate fully in the sessions. Despite these challenges, we were able to successfully implement the project and achieve our objectives.

1 Major Goal for 2023: Local Marketplace

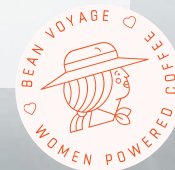


In 2023, we are looking forward to incorporating a local market as a new goal for the project. This market will provide a space for seed fund winners to showcase and sell the products they have generated as a result of their projects. While many participants were able to sell their products in their communities, a local market will offer a more formalized and accessible space for community members to learn about the ventures of the participants and purchase their products or services.

Furthermore, the local market will allow participants to practice their business pitch and receive feedback in a supportive environment. This will help them to further develop their entrepreneurial skills and build confidence in their products. We believe that the local market will provide a unique opportunity for participants to connect with their communities and potentially expand their customer base. We are excited about this new goal and the positive impact it will have on the participants and their communities.

Producers showcasing their products after receiving seed grant. Taken by Fernanda Carrillo

Team and Partners



CR team during a team building field trip

Project Team

Lead



Fernanda Carrillo Chacón
Programs Manager



María José Monge Valverde
Operations manager

Facilitators

The facilitators underwent training from May to June 2022, studying content for the synchronous sessions and preparing to closely monitor seed capital applicants.



Laura Gómez Cordero



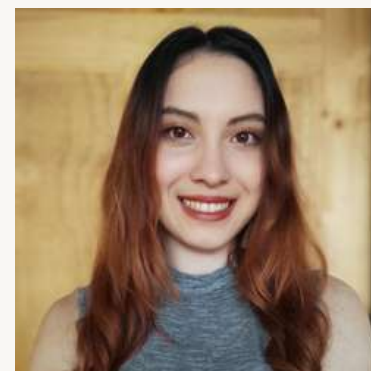
Viviana Gómez Cordero



María Delfina Porrás Solís



José Carlo Granados Umaña



Ashley Torres López

Partners

This initiative was made possible through the kind and generous funding provided by



THE
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FOUNDATION

with **support** from



The Starbucks Foundation's Impact To Date

Our partnership with The Starbucks Foundation has been instrumental in the growth of the Care Trade Model in Costa Rica. In 2022, their financial and thought partnership allowed us to reach 150 new farmers (250 farmers to date).

We are proud of the growth and evolution of our partnership over time, and we look forward to continuing to build on our shared vision of building thriving farms around the world.

250



Smallholder Women Farmers Enrolled

\$41,630



in Seed funds resulting in 4x income within 12-months

1 : 4.4



Social Return on Investment

1,100



Community Members Reached in Costa Rica

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the following organizations and individuals for their generous contribution and support in the successful execution of this initiative.

Foundations

The Starbucks Foundation
United Nations Development
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In-Kind

Instituto del Café de Costa Rica
(ICAFFE)
Centro Agrícola Cantonal de
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Local Organizations

CoopeTarrazú
Volcafé
Starbucks Farmer Support
Center

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Alberto Sanz, Pollen Keepers
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Alejandro Arango Berrocal, Huertas Donde Sea
Johny Castro Pérez, Consultor Independiente
Laura Gómez Cordero, Consultora Independiente
Viviana Gómez Cordero, Consultora Independiente
Silvia Gómez, Western Union
Andrea Cuevas, Western Union
Erick Brenes, Western Union
Steph Araya, Western Union
Adriana Vásquez Rodríguez, Consultora Independiente
Óscar Chavarria Salazar, CH Asesorías

Seed Fund Review Committee

María Paz Lobo
Natali Venegas
Antony Marten
Óscar Gómez
Óscar Chavarria
Andre Barrantes
Félix López
Freddy Méndez
Randall Quesada



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Get in touch with us:
hello@beanvoyage.org

www.beanvoyage.org