

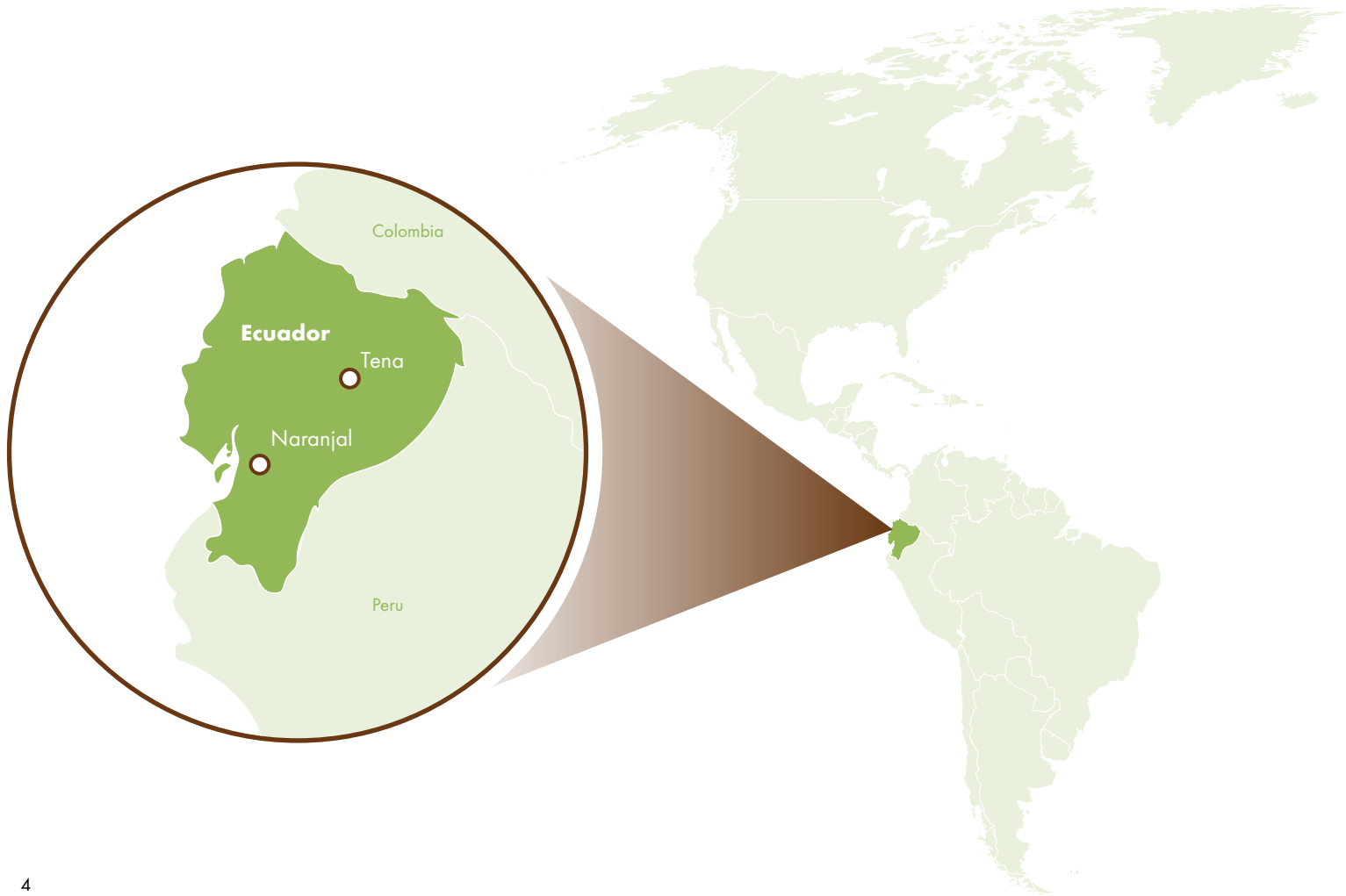
Photovoice: Ecuador

**Sustainability through the eyes of Ecuadorian
cocoa farmers**

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through the eyes
of Ecuadorian
cocoa farmers**

Ecuador

A photovoice exploration





Introduction

When most of us sit down to eat a meal, we rarely think twice about our food's journey before it reaches our fork. However, our food choices and policies have far-reaching consequences to people and planet, and even though we may not often consider them, the stories surrounding the people, places and things involved in serving our collective table could fill volumes.

This booklet provides an avenue to share some of these stories in a visual format. 43 cocoa farmers from Ecuador spent four weeks in a collaborative process using photos and written interpretations to document their local understanding of sustainability, and what they value in nature. The reader is invited to share these perspectives to better understand the needs, challenges and aspirations of those involved in producing our food. It is hoped that a shared understanding stimulates shared action to design a just food system that benefits all.



Background

The SNF-funded “Deliberative Diets” project (www.deliberative-diets.net) aims to better understand the remarkable diversity in what it means to be sustainable, to flourish and to adequately value our environment across the food system. The project focuses on the Swiss food system, which is heavily dependent on food imports to meet current consumer demand (e.g. for exotic products and year-round choice). This means that the food system expands beyond the country’s borders and “leaves behind” a substantial share of impacts on people and the planet. The food producers and local communities that bear these costs occupy distant locales and do not have a voice in our collective consumption decisions. To address this imbalance, this booklet was created to explore what it means to be sustainable and to value the countryside and nature through the eyes of local producers.

A photovoice exploration

This booklet is based on the results of a “photovoice” participatory research project. Photovoice combines the medium of photography (“photo”) with interpretations and discussions by the photographers (“voice”) in a unique collaborative process. Participants become “co-investigators” in the research and can better express their opinions, local knowledge and life experiences in relation to sustainability and values they hold for nature. Furthermore, the visual medium is powerful in overcoming social barriers by reducing the need to communicate verbally in a dominant language and providing all participants with equal opportunities to open up windows into their individual realities.

The Photovoice process was conducted over a period of four weeks with 43 cocoa farmers (21 female and 22 male) in two regions of Ecuador. A total of eight days of workshops were conducted in both regions involving photography and visual literacy training in addition to work on the main topics of local definitions of sustainability and values for nature.

Why cocoa?

Chocolate consumption in Switzerland is high in international terms, although more than 70 % of all chocolate produced is exported. Recent research has highlighted the disproportionate role of cocoa imports in driving impacts to terrestrial ecosystems within and beyond the Swiss food system (mainly through forest clearance for cocoa plantations). This is compounded by additional ecological impacts associated with irrigation water use and pollution. In particular, Ecuador receives a substantial share of the impact of Swiss chocolate production and consumption. Imports of cocoa into Switzerland have also increased over the last decade by 31 % (FAO data). Furthermore, cocoa value chains are dominated by a limited number of international buyers that reproduce systemic power inequalities for cocoa farmer communities. Addressing these large and rising impacts is thus integral to improving the overall sustainability of the Swiss food system.

The people and places

The first group of 21 cocoa farmers (10 female and 11 male) were located in the coastal region of Naranjal near the harbour city of Guayaquil. This region is characterised by more intensive cocoa production and the proximity to the cocoa export facilities around Guayaquil. As a result, it is more productive with two dominant production systems: organic and conventional. In both systems cocoa is mainly grown in unshaded monocultures (single-species tree plantations).

The second group of 22 cocoa farmers (11 female and 11 male) were in the Amazon rainforest, near the city of Tena. In this region, most of the participants belonged to indigenous Kichwa communities, which are characterised by organic cocoa production systems in small agroforestry plots with high biodiversity (the so-called “chacras”). A second group of “settlement” farmers in this region, who tend to work in more intensive commercial monocultures were also included in the study.

Because the local conditions, lived experiences and world-views of the populations of these two regions differ so strongly, the results are presented in separate chapters of the booklet. However, it must be stressed that the resulting pictures and topics that emerged also varied considerably within the regions, namely between the female and male participants and between the more extensive and intensive farmers.

The researchers

The research was conducted by a team from the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture in Switzerland (FiBL; Frick CH), the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL; Birmensdorf CH), and the Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral in Ecuador (ESPOL; Guayaquil EC). See the Acknowledgements section for individual contributors.

Structure of the photovoice accounts

The following section is divided into two chapters, one for each case study region. These chapters contain separate sections on (a) local perspectives on sustainability and (b) local values for nature. Sixteen photographs were selected for each chapter, each representing a topic related to sustainability/values that was further discussed and deliberated in small groups.

For each photograph, an interpretation by the photographer is included to provide context, including an image of the farmer’s hand-written note. The interpretations are exact translations of texts written by the farmers, and are therefore unique, sometimes free-form, and often quite poetic snapshots of local life. A short description of the topic is also provided, in addition to the farmers’ perception of the topical trends over the past five years (major improvement, moderate improvement, stable, moderate deterioration or major deterioration).

The selection of topics and photographs represents only a minority of the total themes identified and discussed and were selected based on farmers’ rankings of importance and final choice by a 4-person panel of involved researchers. The farmers retained their cameras and are still involved in follow-up research and advocacy activities to build upon the work done.

Naranjal

The coastal region of Naranjal is located near the harbour city of Guayaquil, Ecuador's economic capital and largest city. Due to its proximity to the export facilities around Guayaquil, the region of Naranjal is characterised by intensive cocoa and banana plantations. Our participants were equally distributed according to the region's two dominant cocoa production systems: organic and conventional. In both systems, cocoa is mainly grown in unshaded monocultures (single-species tree plantations).

Access to technology

Goal

Farmers obtain access to appropriate machinery and technology that facilitates their work and reduces the strain of physical labour.

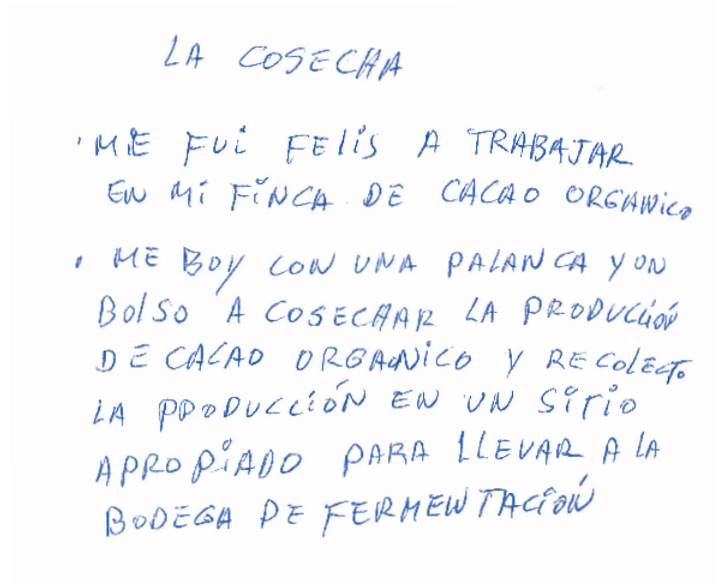
Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to moderate improvement

The harvest

- I was happy to work on my organic cocoa farm.
- I go with a long wooden stick and a bag to harvest the organic cocoa production and collect the production in a suitable place to take to the fermentation area.

Photo and Text: Ángel Remache 2022





Fair prices

Goal

Farmers receive fair prices for their products that cover the costs of production and allow for profit while respecting their customers, community, and environment.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from moderate deterioration to major deterioration

Yesterday's work

Today's satisfaction

- Fair weight and payment, it is a satisfaction of the producer.
- The quality of the cocoa beans gives us a rich chocolate.
- A poorly paid farmer is the sadness of the family.

Photo and Text: Ángel Sumba Lucero 2022

TRABAJO de AYER • SATISFACCION de HOY

- * Peso y pago Justo satisfacción del productor
- * La calidad del grano nos da un rico chocolate.
- * Un agricultor mal pagado es Tristeza de familia



Forest protection

Goal

Forests are protected through sustainable forest management, including restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and efforts increased to prevent forest degradation.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from moderate deterioration to major deterioration

My family and beautiful farm

- My plants are green, beautiful, and productive.
- I feel very happy because they produce a lot.
- I feel a lot of love because I plant 300 trees.
- It is an economic income for my home.

Photo and Text: Lucía 2022

Mi familia y finca
Hermosa

• Mis plantas son verdes hermosas
productivas

• me siento muy alegre porque
produce mucho

• siento mucho amor porque
siembro 300 maderas nombre
de ella

• es un negocio económico
para mi hogar



Care for the environment

Goal

Farmers are committing to not polluting the environment and actively engage in environmental protection.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from moderate deterioration to major deterioration

mis plantas

Las plantas son verdes

es natural sin químicos

siembra de las frutas de lo que se cosecha de la misma finca

plantas de flores y frutas

Ceñillas del sector

tengo muchas plantas de diferentes variedades

frutas de la sierra y costa

residos los envases de plástico.
para germinar las semillas.

My plants

The plants are green.

It is natural and without chemicals.

Sowing of fruits, which is harvested from the same farm.

Flower and fruit plants.

Seeds of the sector.

I have many plants of different varieties.

Fruits from the highlands and coast.

Waste are the plastic containers to germinate the seed.

Photo and Text: MIBL 2022



Generation of added value

Goal

Farmers try to engage in practices of post-harvest processing to generate added value, preserve traditional practices, and improve their revenues.

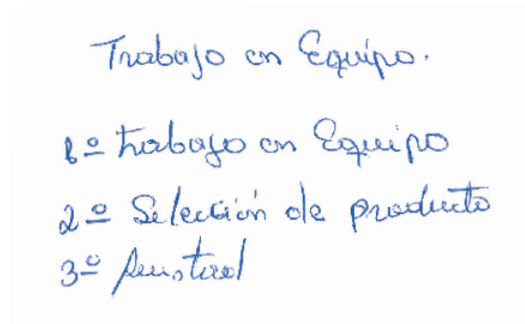
Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from moderate improvement to stable

Team work

1. Team work.
2. Product selection.
3. Friendship.

Photo and Text: Ana Luisa Alarcón Tapia 2022





Availability of public services

Goal

Farmers can count on basic public services like health care, waste removal and transportation in their rural communities.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Major deterioration

My favourite motorbike regarding sustainability

Nature, beauty, a very red colour, very beautiful.

Movement for the transport of cocoa.

Memories of my cocoa, sustainability for my family's nutrition.

Photo and Text: Miguel Ángel Fajardo Basurto 2022

mi moto favorita sobre
la sostenibilidad

Es natural la belleza
Un color muy rojo muy
bonito

Movimiento para el trans-
porte del cacao

Recuerdo de mi cacao
sostenibilidad para
la alimentación de
mi familia



Responsible use of pesticides

Goal

Pesticides are used responsibly to increase production while reducing harm to the environment to a minimum.

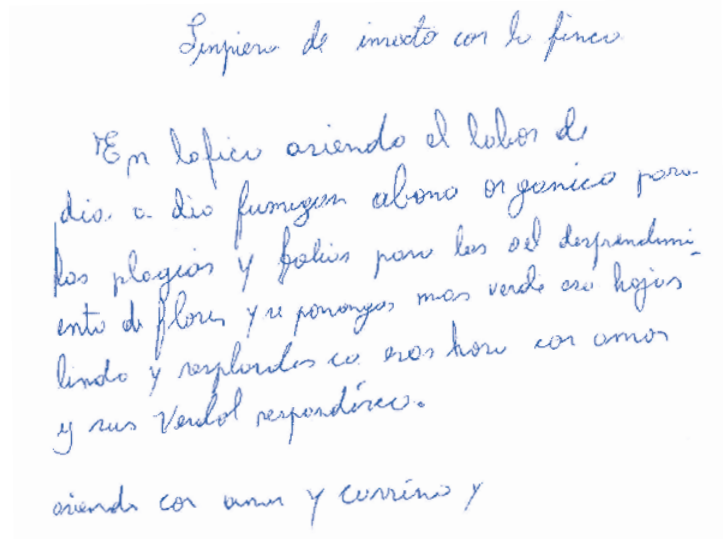
Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to major deterioration

Cleaning of insects on the farm

On the farm doing the work of spraying organic fertilizer for pests, and foliar (leaf fertilizers) to wake up the flowers. And the leaves get greener. Nice and glowing with love and green.

Photo and Text: Henry Joffre Rosado Bravo 2022





Guarantee of civil security

Goal

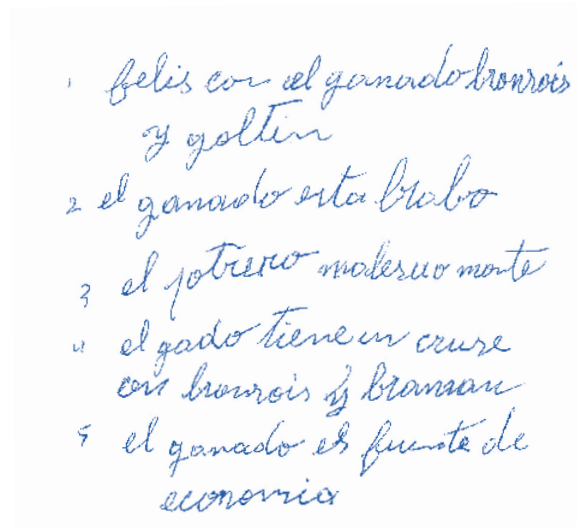
Civil security in farming communities is guaranteed and enforced so that farmers can work and children can attend school without fearing violence and crime.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Major deterioration

1. Happy with the cattle and chickens.
2. The cattle are wild.
3. The pasture, weeds and bush.
4. The cattle are crossbred with Brahman and Brownswiss.
5. The cattle are an economic source.

Photo and Text: Naranjalíño 2022





Adequate tree cover for air purification

Goal

Maintaining tree cover in the landscape to regulate the climate and purify the air.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from stable to moderate deterioration

Timber trees for water and for windbreak barriers

Trees provide us with oxygen and are an essential source for the cocoa plants so that air curtains do not form, they are windbreaks.

The sun provides nutrients for the trees and shade for the farmer.

Photo and Text: Ortencia Alexandra Chinachi Guato 2022

Arboles madenables Para la ayva de Barrera
Rompe viento

Los Arboles nos brindan el oxigeno y
es una fuente esenciales para las
plantas de cacao que no se formen
Cortinas de Aire. "Barrera Rompe viento"

el sol nos brinda calor y nutrientes.
junto a los arboles sombra para
el agricultor.



Irrigation for cropping systems

Goal

Adequate use of irrigation to maintain the fertility of the land without harming the environment or local communities by over-extraction or pollution of water.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to moderate improvement

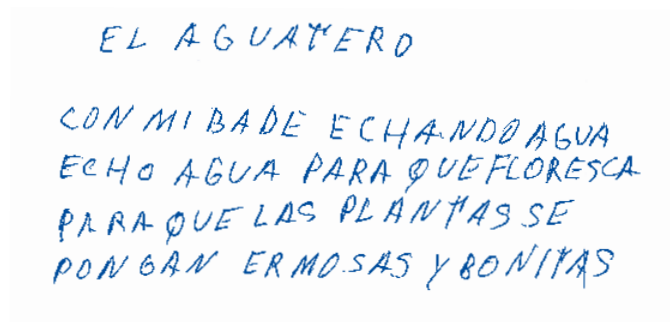
Aguatero ("The waterer")

With my bucket pouring water.

I pour water to make it bloom.

So that the plants become beautiful and pretty.

Photo and Text: Ruperto Gonzalo Calle Barba 2022





Planting cacao trees

Goal

Planting of young cocoa trees to maintain healthy tree populations and improve household welfare.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from moderate improvement to moderate deterioration

Sowing

1. I help the earth to grow plants.
2. By sowing I collaborate with the soil.
3. When we till the soil, we give it life.

Photo and Text: Ana Luisa Alarcón Tapia 2022

Siembras

1 = yo ayudo a la tierra a cultivar plantas.

2 = yo colaboro con el suelo

3 = yo ayudo al suelo le damos vida.



Love and care for plants

Goal

Provisioning of care and nurturing love to cocoa trees to enter into a reciprocal relationship and build relationships with the environment.

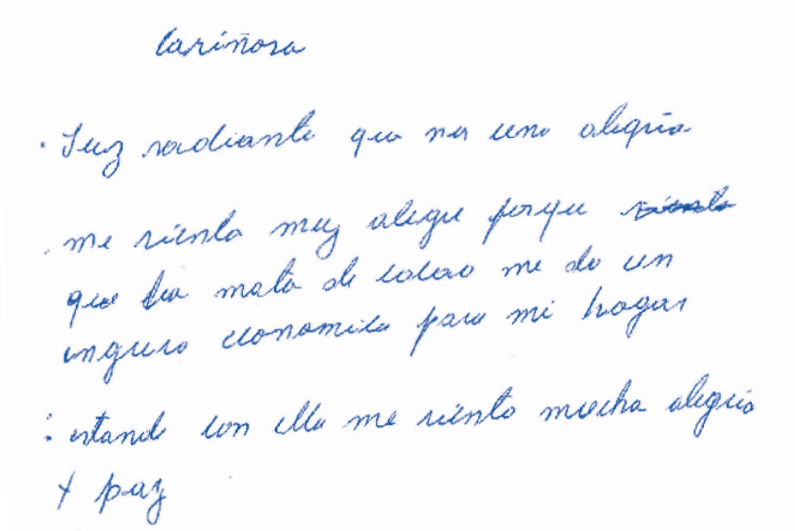
Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to moderate deterioration

Affectionate

- *Radiant light that gives us joy.*
- *I feel very happy because the cocoa plant gives me an economic income for my home.*
- *Being with it I feel a lot of joy and peace.*

Photo and Text: Lucía 2022





Source of labour

Goal

Being able to benefit from nature as a source of labour and provider of opportunities for value creation.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to stable

Working cheerfully

I really enjoy it when I pick cocoa.

I am happy when I see the product of the mature crop.

When the production increases, I feel very happy, because the economic income is better.

Photo and Text: Lidia Bravo Chica 2022

Trabaja siendo alegre

Disfruto mucho cuando recojo
cacao.

Me contento cuando veo el producto
del cultivo maduro.

Cuando sube la producción me siento
muy feliz, porque el ingreso económico
es mejor.



Enhancing soil moisture by mulching with leaves

Goal

The use of mulching techniques with leaves to enhance soil moisture and the water cycles, along with providing nutrients.

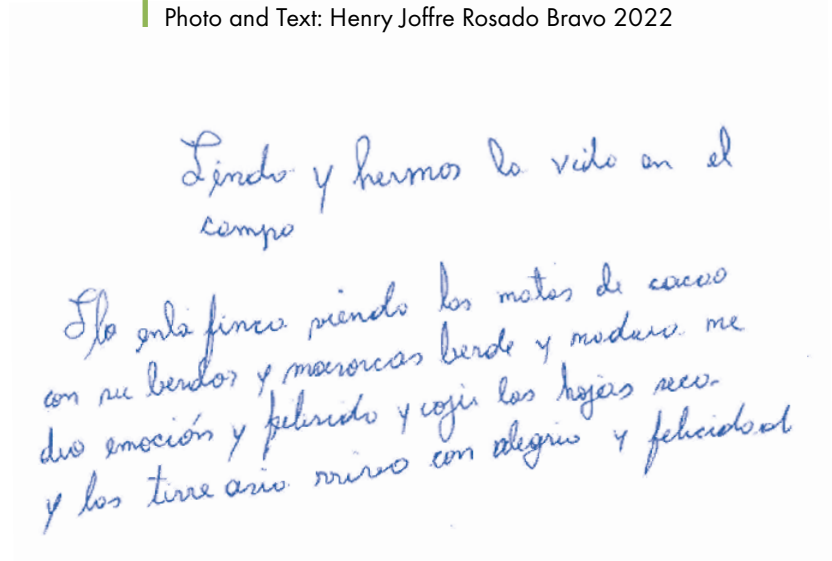
Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to stable

Nice and beautiful life in the countryside

Me at the farm seeing the cocoa bushes with their splendour and green and ripe cobs. It gave me excitement and happiness to pick up the dry leaves, and the earth with joy and happiness.

Photo and Text: Henry Joffre Rosado Bravo 2022





Applying organic fertilizer

Goal

Application of organic fertilizers (e.g. compost, manure) to improve production without applying potentially harmful substances to the soil life.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to moderate improvement

Las plantas son hermosas

Los tanques se preparan los abonos
abono que se prepara uno mismo
son líquidos bio fermento con bacterias beneficiosas
el color de las hojas de las plantas se ponen muy verdes
es natural fácil de preparar
tiempo en 40 días están listos para las plantas
localidad que necesita la planta
trabajo familiar
plantas nacional y nativas del sector
mas producción nos dan las plantas que son
abonados

The plants are beautiful

In the tanks the fertilizers are prepared, and one prepares oneself.

They are biofermented liquids with beneficial bacteria.

The color of the leaves of the plants are very green.

It is natural, easy to prepare.

In 40 days, they are ready to give seedlings.

The quality that the plant needs.

Family work.

National and native plants of the sector.

More production we get from plants that are fertilized.

Photo and Text: MIBL 2022



2/10/11
Bio Mangrove

Bio Mangrove

MA

MA

Insects for pollination

Goal

Promotion of healthy and diverse insect populations that support the pollination of crops and other plants.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to moderate deterioration

Estado de un buen trabajo

Las motas de cacao es verde

el Humano esta de cosecha
y conjeturado

y los animales los acompañan

Pequeñas motas esperanza de futuro

Suelo húmedo buena producción

aves de colorido animo de

avido

hojas seca no hay mucho

The result of a work

The cocoa bushes are green.

The human is harvesting and concentrated, and the animals accompany him.

Small plants of hope, and fertile, humid soil, with good production.

Birds of nature.

Cheerfulness of life.

Dry leaves, there is not much.

Photo and Text: Miguel Ramón Murillo Figueroa 2022



Tena

The small town of Tena in northeast Ecuador is surrounded by the Amazon rainforest and close to the Napo River. In this region, most of the participants belong to indigenous Kichwa communities, which are characterised by ecological cocoa production systems in small agroforestry plots with high biodiversity (the so-called “chacras”).

Preservation of traditional Minga practices

Goal

Traditional practices of reciprocity, such as Minga (collaborative work without monetary compensation), are actively maintained to foster networks of rural support and exchange.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

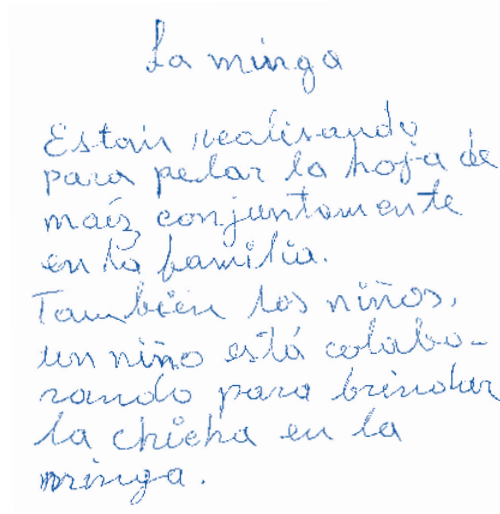
Ranging from major improvement to major deterioration

«Minga»

(collaborative work without monetary compensation)

They are peeling the corn husk together with the family. Also the children, one child is helping to toast the chicha in the minga.

Photo and Text: Mamallacta Grefa Hugo Vicente 2022





Economic prosperity of family farms

Goal

Farmers are able to maintain or increase their revenue to ensure the economic prosperity of their families.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from moderate improvement to moderate deterioration

Traditional food

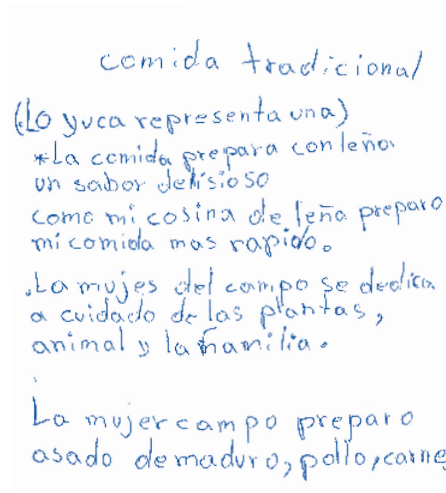
Food prepared with firewood tastes delicious.

Since my stove is wood-burning, I prepare my food faster.

Rural women are dedicated to caring for the plants, animals and family.

The country woman prepares "asado de maduro" (grilled plantain), chicken and beef.

Photo and Text: Shiguango López Rosa Marlene 2022





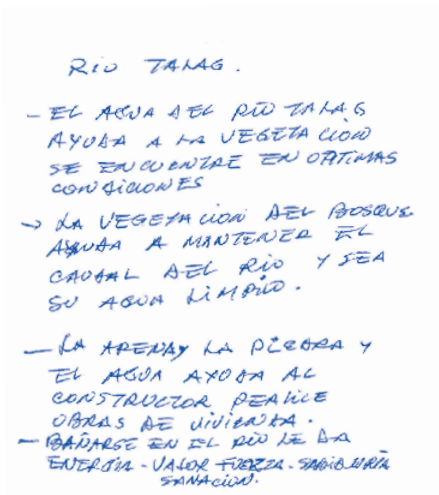
Good water protection and management

Goal

Water as a resource is shared in a fair manner within the community, and irrigation practices are applied in the most responsible way possible to reduce water loss.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from moderate deterioration to major deterioration



RIO TALAG.

- EL AGUA DEL RIO TALAG AYUDA A LA VEGETACION SE ENCUENTRA EN OPTIMAS CONDICIONES
- LA VEGETACION DEL BOSQUE AYUDA A MANTENER EL CAUDAL DEL RIO Y SEA SU AGUA LIMPIO.
- LA ARENA Y LA PIEDRA Y EL AGUA AYUDA AL CONSTRUCTOR PARA LAS OBRAS DE UNIFICACION.
- BAJARSE EN EL RIO LE DA ENERGIA - VALOR FUERZA. SABIDURIA SANACION.

Talag river

- The water of the Talag River helps the vegetation and is in optimal conditions.
- The vegetation of the forest helps to maintain the flow of the river and its water clean.
- The sand, stone and water help the builder to make housing works.
- Bathing in the river gives energy, courage, strength, wisdom and health.

Photo and Text: Benito Nantipa 2022



Commitment to crop diversity

Goal

Farmers invest sufficiently in crop diversity to increase resilience against shocks and disturbances and to promote biodiversity.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to moderate deterioration

Cacao Warmi (Cocoa Woman)

Cacao Warmi does cocoa pruning maintenance with scissors, and crowning with machete so that the cocoa plant absorbs nutrients better.

As a working warmi, dressed in pants, long-sleeved blouse, to protect from the sun and wearing boots.

Photo and Text: Mamallacta Grefa Carmela Alicia 2022

Cacao Warmi

Cacao Warmi hace mantenimiento
la poda de cacao con tijeras.
coronada con machete.
para que la planta de cacao absorba
mejores nutrientes.

Como Warmi trabajadora vestida
de ropas puestas como pantalón
blusa manga larga como para
poder proteger al sol y las uñas.



Conservation of knowledge about natural medicine

Goal

Knowledge about natural and traditional medicine is conserved and transmitted in rural communities.

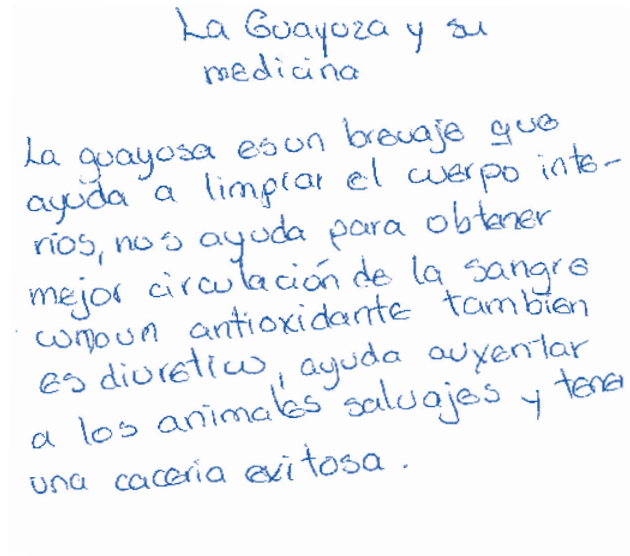
Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to stable

Guayusa and its medicine

Guayusa is a concoction that helps cleanse the inner body. It helps us to get better blood circulation as an antioxidant. It is also dietary, and helps the population to increase the sighting of wild animals to have a successful hunt.

Photo and Text: Villamarin Jipa Delfina Mercedes 2022





Support for artisanal production

Goal

Farmers maintain the production of high-quality, traditional products that require skilled manual labour and that diversify sources of income and provide labour opportunities for elderly household members.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from moderate improvement to moderate deterioration

WAMMI ANHUN ASHANGA LISAN WASCANUA
Mujer tejendo con la fibra de Llanín

La artesanía es una práctica de muchas culturas indígenas. En las regiones de la nacionalidad kichwa de nuestro amazón, el vestido que esta usando la mujer se llama Pacha en el que consiste en un vestido sencillo de una sola pieza, usualmente en el hombro puede ser de color azul, verde, rosado, Negro como arcasarios, un cinturón, collares, pulseras tejidos con la fibra de pita y con semillas del ambiente como: chambira, San Pedro, Achira, palmito rojo y Anamora, lleva una corona en su cabeza hecha con flores y hojas.

Generalmente estos tejidos suelen ser ocupados en las fiestas culturales y en lugares en donde se debe realizar alguna danza cultural o en un ritual.

- La bolsa que se muestra arriba sirve para lavar, cocer y para hacer la chicha de yuca.
- La yuca o pilche se utiliza como utensilio de cocina de la mujer Kichwa, además que se utiliza para hacer artesanías como collares, maracas, pulseras, brazaletes, etc.
- La Pata tipira que se muestra cogiendo la mujer es elaborado de la hoja de Plamo y sirve para cargar frutas, hojas, plantas cosas no muy pesadas.

Woman weaving with Lysan rope

The handicraft is a practice of many indigenous cultures, in the women of the Kichwa nationality of our Amazon. The dress that the woman is wearing is called Pacha, which consists of a simple one-piece dress knotted at the shoulder, it can be blue, green or pink. She wears as accessories a belt, necklace, bracelet, woven with pita fibre and seeds of the environment as chambira, San Pedro, Achira, palm heart and Anamora, wears a crown on his head made with flowers and leaves.

These costumes are usually worn in cultural events and in places where a cultural dance or ritual is to be performed.

The pan next to it is used to wash gold and to make chicha from yucca.

The pilche is used as a cooking utensil for women, and is also used to make handicrafts such as necklaces, maracas, bracelets, and the typical bra.

The typical bag that the woman is carrying is made from the leaf of branches and is used to carry fruits, leaves, plants, and things that are not very heavy.

The basket is made from Ashanya Wasca/Jimbira to carry local products such as bananas, yucca and plants.

Photo and Text: Vargas Tapuy Katia Yadira 2022



Improved gender equity

Goal

Farmers promote gender equity through a formal commitment to institutional and cultural change.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to stable

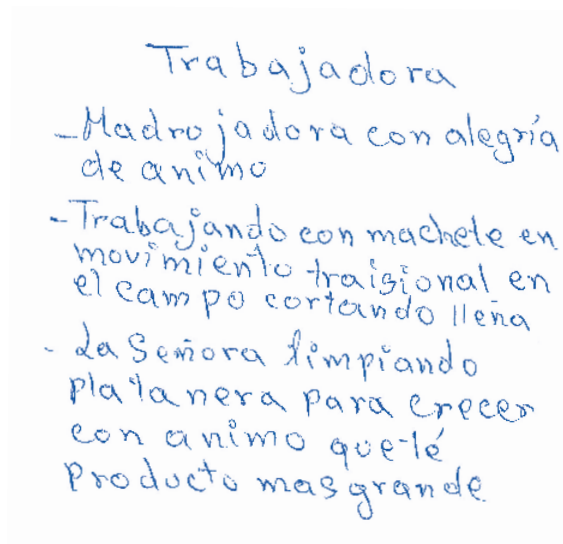
Woman worker

Early riser with cheerfulness of spirit.

Working with machete in traditional movement in the field, cutting firewood.

The lady cleaning the banana plantation to grow with more encouragement that the product is bigger.

Photo and Text: Mamallacta Grefa Hugo Vicente 2022





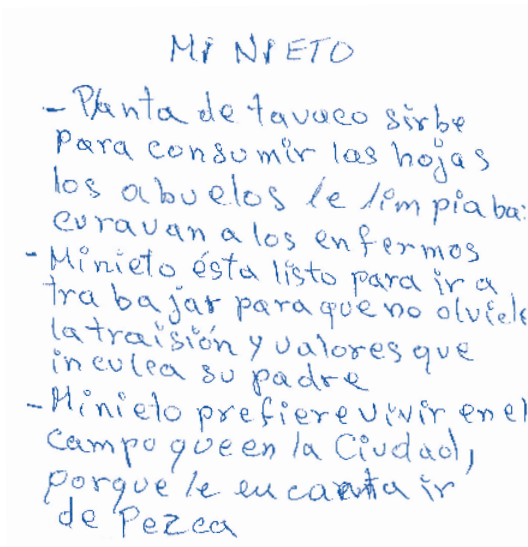
Knowledge transmission

Goal

Rural communities establish an environment where knowledge can be transmitted between and throughout inhabiting generations.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to moderate deterioration



My grandson

- The tobacco plant is used to consume the leaves, the elders cleansed with it, they cured the sick.
- My grandson is ready to go to work so that he does not forget the tradition and values instilled by his father.
- My grandson prefers to live in the countryside rather than in the city because he loves to go fishing.

Photo and Text: Mamallacta Grefa Hugo Vicente 2022



Land for cultivation

Goal

Caring for nature and the countryside provides land for cultivation and a source of value creation and livelihoods.

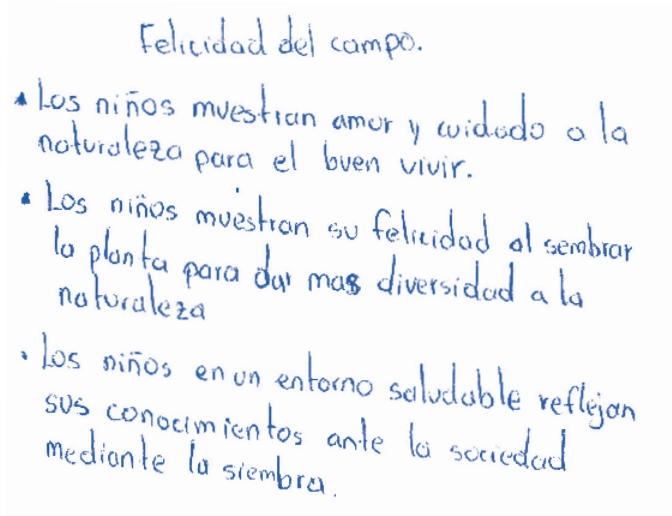
Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from stable to moderate deterioration

Happiness in the land

- Children show love and care to nature for good living.
- Children show their happiness by planting the plant to give more diversity to nature.
- Children in a healthy environment reflect their knowledge to the society by planting.

Photo and Text: Katherin Andrea 2022





Water for life

Goal

Protection of nature and its rivers, which provide clean and abundant water sources essential to all life.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from moderate deterioration to major deterioration

Felicidad en el campo con la canoa

- En la imagen se demuestra que de la naturaleza podemos obtener muchos beneficios como la madera para realizar la canoa y el palo de Pindo que se utiliza como remo y la canoa como medio de transporte fluvial.
- La canoa que se utiliza como recolector de agua para los animales que transitan por el medio pueden beber el líquido vital.
- La canoa nos brinda muchos servicios como es la de transportar productos que se encuentran en la ribera del río Napo y además que se utiliza para pescar.

Happiness in the field with the canoe

- The image shows that we can obtain many benefits from nature, such as the brush Pindo tree to make the canoe and the Pindo stick, which is used as a paddle and the canoe as a means of river transport.
- The canoe is used as a water collector for the animals that pass through the environment, and can drink the vital liquid.
- The canoe provides us with many services, such as transporting products that are found on the banks of the Napo River and is also used for fishing.

Photo and Text: Vargas Tapuy Katia Yadira 2022



Pure air to breathe

Goal

Protection of nature and the forest, which provide pure air that is essential to a good life.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from stable to moderate deterioration

El joven en medio de naturaleza

- * El joven muestra su cultura subiendo al árbol de guaba para cosechar su fruto
- * El joven al realizar esta actividad se siente motivado
- * las hojas de guaba da abono al suelo
- * las hojas de guaba es cautivadora para la naturaleza
- * la guaba sirve para consumo y para la venta

The young person is amid nature

- The young man shows his culture by climbing the guaba tree to harvest its fruit.
- The young man is motivated by this activity.
- The guaba leaves fertilize the soil.
- The guaba leaves are captivating to nature.
- The guaba is used for consumption and for sale.

Photo and Text: Evelyn 2022



Fruits for nourishment

Goal

Taking advantage of rich fruits and other food the forest offers while keeping the sources safe from overexploitation.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to moderate improvement

Chonta curó

- podemos realizar variedades tipos de alimentos como: maitos, pinchos, caldos
- Sirve como medicina natural para : asma, gripe, bronquitis
- Es un alimento saludable.
- con su color refleja la delicia de su sabor natural.
- economía familiar.

Chontacuro

(beetle larvae cultivated in palm trees)

- We can make various types of foods such as maitos, pinchos, and soups from it.
- It serves as a natural medicine for asthma, flu, bronchitis.
- It is a healthy food.
- With its color it reflects the delight of its natural flavor.
- It provides family economy.

Photo and Text: Grefa Calapucha Jessica Yadira 2022



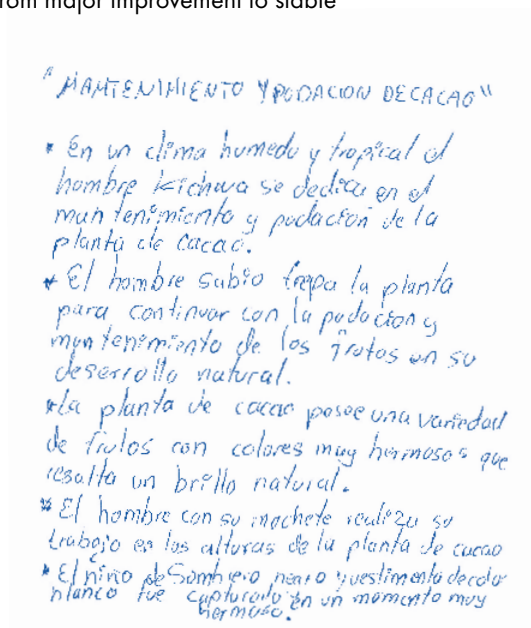
Pruning of cocoa trees

Goal

Investing care and effort in pruning cocoa trees to enhance the field production of chacra agroforestry systems.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to stable



Maintenance and pruning of cocoa

- In a humid and tropical climate, the Kichwa man is dedicated to the maintenance and pruning of the cocoa plant.
- The wise man climbs the plant to continue pruning and maintaining the fruits in their natural development.
- The cocoa plant has a variety of fruits with very beautiful colours that highlight a natural shine.
- The man with his machete, performs his work on the heights of the cocoa plant.
- The boy with the black hat and white clothes was captured in a very beautiful moment.

Photo and Text: Vargas Tapuy Alexis Jhon 2022



Chicha as the essence of our culture

Goal

Chicha is the cultural foundation, embodying the essence and heritage of the Kiwcha communities. Rituals and knowledge in relation to the preparation and use of Chicha are actively preserved and valued.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to moderate deterioration

"LUMU AZUA" (chicha de yuca)

Siembras:

Primamente para sembrar la yuca que nosotros actualmente llamamos "como chacra".

Se limpia el monte o la tierra. Luego sembramos en estacas.

La cosecha de yuca de pendiente variedades de yuca de hoy:

Yuca amarilla
Yuca blanca
Yuca morada

Todos ellos tienen su ciclo de cosecha.

Elaboración:

Se corta el tallo de yuca a una altura de 0,50 cm de altura para poder sacar a jalar.

El riego de jalar se pela la cascara se lava con abundante agua.

Se pone en una olla se cocina a candela (fuego).

Cuando ya está cocinado se machaca la yuca poniendo en un batán con un mazo "Takana Muku".

Se deja para que se enfríe cuando ya está bien fría se pone el puré o rallado de camote volviendo el mismo para que nos dé sabor dulce.

Y luego se mezcla la masa y ya está lista para guardar.

Y al siguiente día se mezcla nuevamente para que se fermente y así ya está lista para beber.

La chicha nos da energía, fuerza uno no siente hambre en la vida día en el campo y es una bebida saludable.

Lumu Azua (Chicha made out of yucca)

Sowing

First, to sow the yucca, which we currently call "Lumu Chacra", we clean the bush or grass, and then we sow in moist areas. The harvest of yucca depends on the varieties of yucca that exist: yellow yucca, white yucca, and purple yucca. All of them have their harvest cycle.

Elaboration

The yucca stalk is cut at a height of 0.50 cm to be able to pull it out.

After pulling, peel the husk, wash it with plenty of water, put it in a pot, and cook it over a candela (fire).

When it is already cooked, the yucca is crushed with a "Takana Muku" mallet. It is left to cool down, when it is already cold, add the grated sweet potato, only the juice to give us a sweet taste, and then mix the dough and it is ready for storage. The next day, it is mixed again to ferment and then it is ready to drink.

Chicha gives us energy, strength, and one feels not hungry in life, or during the day in the field, and it is a healthy drink.

Photo and Text: Rocío 2022



Care for the well-being of nature

Goal

To ensure the well-being of nature, including animals, plants and Kichwa communities.

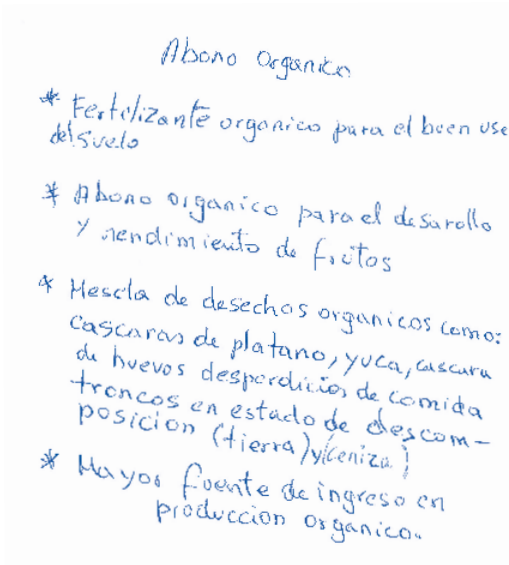
Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to stable

Organic fertilizer

- Organic fertilizer for the good use of the soil.
- Organic fertilizer for fruit development and yield.
- Mixture of organic wastes such as: eggshells, food waste, decomposing logs, soil and ash.
- Major source of income in organic production.

Photo and Text: Rocío 2022





Associations between various crops

Goal

Planting crop associations to support diverse and resilient farming systems.

Farmers' perception of trends in the last five years

Ranging from major improvement to moderate improvement

Chacra (Traditional agroforestry system) in production

1. In my chacra all kinds of organic products are produced with the help of nature.
2. Since nature provides oxygen, minerals, fertilizers for a good production.
3. And harvested with machete the product such as cocoa, banana, grape and banana.

Photo and Text: Shiguango López Rosa Marlene 2022

Chacra en producción

- 1 En mi chacra de agricultor produce todo tipo de productos orgánico con la ayuda de Naturaleza.
- 2 ya que la naturaleza brinda oxígeno minerales abonos para una buena producción.
- 3-y coseché con machete el producto, como, cacao, plátano, uva, gineo.



Reflections

This photo booklet has attempted to open a window into the realities of a diverse group of cocoa farmers from Ecuador. Through pictures, written interpretations, and intense discussion, a number of key topics emerged that helped communicate to the reader what sustainability and living in harmony with nature mean to these farmers. Their perceptions of how these topics have developed over the past five years offer insights into where the most urgent priorities lie. It is important to note that these developments show only the direction of change, not whether the situation is currently good or sustainable. Opinions among groups of farmers also differed in some cases. Despite these caveats, some common trends emerge.

A key area of concern amongst farmers was the increase in criminal gang violence and civil unrest in recent years, affecting the entire population in terms of deteriorating civil security and public services. Our participants also stated that they were severely affected by volatile cocoa prices due to competition from African countries that dominate global production and have relatively low production costs. Finally, participants emphasized the potential for conflict with industrial agriculture (huge banana plantations in Naranjal) and large-scale resource extraction (gold mining, logging and petrol extraction in Tena), which harm their environment and put pressure on small-scale farmers to abandon their livelihoods or have their land seized.

Diverse perspectives

The 32 topics presented in this booklet represent only a selection of the most important among over 110 topics identified by the farmers. More than half of the sustainability topics were related to social issues, such as justice, quality of life and gender equity. This contrasts with the scientific literature on sustainability, where social sustainability is arguably the least well-represented in current evaluation methods. Regarding values for nature, the farmers identified both the things they received from nature (e.g. clean air and water, bird songs) but also their own contributions to maintain the agricultural ecosystem and its ability to generate these values (e.g. building soils, planting trees, care work), emphasizing the two-way relationship of the exchange and the essential role of people in the stewardship of nature.

The national cocoa value chain

The 43 farmers contributing to this booklet represent just a few voices among Ecuador's approximately 190'000 cocoa farmers. The vast majority (99%) of these are small-scale subsistence or commercial farmers responsible for the majority (ca. 85%) of cocoa production. After harvesting, the cocoa beans are extracted from their pods and receive post-harvest processing (drying and fermenting of the cocoa bean). This is predominantly carried out by the roughly five thousand intermediaries that purchase cocoa from farmers and resell it to larger processors. Most cocoa ends up at large-scale processors to complete the drying and fermentation process before being sold to a handful of national and transnational agri-food trading companies for export and further processing abroad (mainly in Europe and North America). Only a small amount of cocoa (ca. 8%) is processed beyond the bean stage in Ecuador before being exported. An even smaller amount (ca. 5%) is purchased by local artisanal chocolate producers who fetch high prices on both national and international niche markets for luxury chocolate.

Global chocolate markets and the Swiss connection

The global cocoa market is dominated by a few large multinational companies, with market concentration peaking in the early 2000s when only four companies were responsible for over half of all cocoa roasting and grinding worldwide. The situation is not much different today, with the top 10 companies responsible for about two-thirds of all confectionary production and sales globally. Among these are two Swiss companies (Nestle SA and Lindt and Sprungli AG) with a combined market share of almost 10%. While demand for chocolate products in the Global North shows steady growth, cocoa producers in the Global South still only receive about 2% of the price of the final product. Because of this tiny proportion of income, farmers do not usually receive a 'living wage' for their work (i.e. an income sufficient to support a decent standard of living in the local context). It would barely make a dent in the profits of the big cocoa and chocolate companies to pay farmers enough to support a living wage.

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Deliberative Diets – Connecting producers and consumers to value the sustainability of Swiss food system scenarios

The Deliberative Diets project is being carried out by the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture FiBL, the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research WSL and the Centre for Development and Environment CDE at the University of Bern.

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The Deliberative Diets project is interested in the stories behind our food.

This photovoice exploration aims to represent the needs, concerns and aspirations of two cocoa-producing communities in Ecuador, from their own perspective.