**A6CF - Interview president coffee association dosquebradas - 13-7-2022**

**You can start with a short introduction.**

About the association?

**Well, first of you, a personal introduction.**

My name is [name]. I am from Neira, Caldas, a small town, half an hour from Manizales, which is the capital of Caldas, but I came to live here in Santa Rosa where I raised my family. I got married, we have two children, and, at the moment, I live on the property, here in the village of Sabanitas, municipality of Dosquebradas. One has two hearts in life. Yes, two hearts; where I was born, that I have feeling on it, and where I grew up, and where I made my professional career, which is here in Dosquebradas. Thus, I became very fond of the town. Dosquebradas is very beautiful, full of lovely people. So, in 2010, when I retired, thank God I could retire, I decided to participate in the Association of Specialty Coffee Producers, which was founded in 2010. For what purpose? In order to have an entertainment. I do this for entertainment because this does not provide me with an income, but it interests me. It gives me satisfaction. It is about sharing, for example, the little coffee, with the women, the workers, as I was telling you before. Therefore, that fulfills you. Because my father lived 93 years, and he was linked to the field. So, I see farmers, and they are the reflection of my father, or they are the reflection of my mother. So, I have my property, I try to produce specialty coffee, yes, because, unfortunately, my father did not try to produce specialty coffee, he did not have the opportunity. This is very new; this special coffee thing has been around since 2010. Before, nobody talked of special coffee. So, this is what encouraged me to be here in the association, and I am very happy. Right now, I amuse myself, we drink coffee, and I apply a very famous little phrase that Che Guevara said: "If there is no coffee plantation for everyone, there is no coffee plantation for anyone." In other words, coffee is for sharing. For me, coffee is a stop along the way, with friends. I go to a property in Pereira, I meet friends, and the first thing I say is "Let's have a *tintico*", because that's how we call it around here. So, I invite that person, we have a dialogue, we chat, we tell experiences while we drink that coffee. So, that's what binds me, it's that quality that coffee has of bringing people closer.

**May I ask how old are you?**

What did you say?

**How old are you? What is your age?**

Oh, well. That question is a very good one because in the coffee-growing union we have an average of people aged 58, over 50 years old, 56-58 years old, who are already of retirement age. Already to retire. And in the countryside, coffee growers are not old enough to retire, no, they are not. The one who retires is the one who is fed up because a farmer is not an employee. The farmer is not an employee. Therefore, by not being employed, the farmer does not have the opportunity to retire, they do not have to contribute to retire, and what the gentlemen do is to stay “poor”, although that word is not usually used by farmers. Nobody here is poor; poverty is mental. So, I am 68 years old. I am old, but age is not... It is that the years, age is in the head, it is in the attitude, age is in the strength you have.

**Thus, you said you retired in 2010, what job did you have before?**

I also love that question because I have been told: “You retired in 2010, that is, you could have worked longer”, that I was a teacher for 35 years. So, what I say to people is: “no, no, no. Thank God, I understood from an early age what the philosophy of life is.” The philosophy of life is not slavery and work because, of course, for me to work is not slavery. One of the people that more… now I tell you, sorry, that I was more satisfied with work, with this part, it was me. It was me with them; I was a friend of the boys. I was a friend. I was not just a teacher; I shared with them; I went out with them. I had a car, and in that car, I took the boys and left, when that could be done. Not anymore. So, they called me: "Let's go to […]", we used to go, and we went for sharing. I taught physical education at school, I taught philosophy, social sciences. That. Well, and that changed me, I strengthened myself by thinking about so many things, and I said, well, one has already worked, let's give the opportunity to another who comes along the road to pick up the chalk, when chalk was used, the chalk, and the blackboard. I was happy in the profession. I was happy, and I decided, well, despite being so happy, I decided that way because I wanted to be on the property. I felt like an emptiness and said, "Meh, my dad and mom, already so old”, when they were still alive, they told me: "You are rarely here", my mom was sick, so I told her: "Well, with you, I'm going to retire”.

**And now you also work on the property, do you have a coffee property?**

Well, what happened to that? What a good question because it turns out that we have a name for coffee called *Casta Labriego*. *Casta*... I loved that name from the beginning. Why? Because *Casta* is the race, caste is a cultural word, there is a bambuco called *Mi Casta*, by the poet from Risaralda, Luis Carlo González. Thus, you relate to that, and there are songs that have the caste word, bambucos. *Labriego* is a word that I love even more because *labriego* is the one who works in the field and lives from the field. Because there are people who work on a property, I know more than one, but they have a property there, and what they do is taking advantage of it, and on weekends go sightseeing, and have people working there, but they have never taken a stick of coffee, they have never picked up a roaster, a machete. […]. Hence, I love that *labriego* because he is the farmer, he is the one who is there, in possession of his property, and he makes it produce. That's it.

**Do you do it as well?**

Yes, fortunately, I am currently living on the property. I convinced my wife, who was a little suspicious because she is more urban than rural. So, I convinced her, I told her: “No, here it is... let's go there”, that women are sometimes difficult to convince. And there, we are very happy, she already understood, and she is right now… Well, I gladly invite her to my property. I have the Institute of Caldas. You arrive, have breakfast, and see the birds that fly around early, singing. So that's what holds you here. And what do I have beyond? Well, I have a coffee plantation, in semi-shade, where few grow coffee when there is sun. You know that there is monoculture of coffee, what is monoculture? It is to have a single crop; the word says so. Thus, they forget about more products, they forget that there is something else to plant, but the trees do not produce anything. Well, that is a lie since yes, it produces, it produces satisfaction. They capture CO2. In other words, that air that is polluted here because Dosquebradas is an industrial city. I also want to tell you that. What's your name?

**My name is Susan.**

In Dosquebradas they have a lot of industry, so where there is industry they emit CO2, and that CO2 goes to my property. So, those trees capture that CO2. I think the air in my property is one of the purest in this part of the village that we have right now. So, I have that idea. What are trees? They are the lodging of the birds that arrive, make their nests, settle there, sing. Therefore, I'm excited about that. From here… I think I'm not leaving here, regardless of the fact that I have a son abroad, working, and I know what it's like to have a beauty that is a property, it's for one, it’s a very important thing for one. For instance, when a European comes. Several foreigners have visited us, and they are fascinated because of seeing a way out of the contamination from within.

**How many hectares does your property have?**

Well, it's not very big. Within the organization, they are small producers. There goes a story too, which is nice. When you have a very large property, very large, you must go very skillfully, so the person, in general, comes from the town. Forced. Because the property always has a good price. So, when you have a little land, which we call *chagrita*, you live with your family, that's the beauty of coffee. You will find there the man, the woman, the children, the grandchildren working. We have a coffee anthem, which I think you... *Grinding coffee*, which is a very beautiful song and is universal. That song is all over the world. It is the reflection of what is farmer.

***Grinding coffee*?**

*Grinding coffee*. I invite you to see it and listen to the song, *Grinding Coffee*.

**So, you are the president of this association, and this association emerged in 2010, with what objective?**

What was the objective? The objective was, mainly, to produce quality coffee. You see, you produce coffee on your property, right? You produce it on your property, but what was done? Here it is, most people sold wet coffee. You know, you must make a profit from coffee. So, if you don't have a dryer, you sell it that way, and you lose money. Thus, what was thought was to address this issue so that people have their dryer, so that people know how to process coffee, that we get a differential value in coffee. So, we motivated the coffee growers, we motivated them, and we saw that in the municipality of Dosquebradas, they don't produce much coffee because Dosquebradas is a small city, but they have quality. Because the quality of the coffee at a higher altitude, is given a higher level, right? So, from here you have two types, according to the convention. At 1,000-meter height, I have lands, but there is the quality. Temperate lands. We are at 1,400 and 1,800 meters high. So, look, we are in the thickest part of coffee, that's why our coffee is of quality. We have coffee at 1,800, at 1,400, at 1,500. The property is already at 1,600, in case you want to know it, at 1,600 meters. I have it there. It doesn't produce much. All those coffee plantations do not have a lot of production, but they have quality and, as I told you, there are surrounding forests. The forests, which for me are great. You know, there is a coffee certification called RainForest. Do you know it? Hence, what is it what it wants? That the coffee gets linked with fauna, flora, to ensure the quality of the coffee.

**Where do the funds come from, the money of the association? Do you have support from the municipality or other projects? Or how is it organized?**

This question is even cooler than all the rest. No, sure, because when they say to me “Come on, talk about the history of Asocafé Manantial”, then, as I was the founder, with 49 other people, 50 of us founded the association. There is the founding document. Fifty. We said, “Okay, we're going to charge a registration fee. How much will it be? 50,000 pesos”, today it is 120,000. “We are going to charge a maintenance fee, which is 5,000 pesos per month”. Monthly. That's it. To what end? In order to sustain. It must be clear that one person has to manage all this, and someone has to pay salaries, social security, just to follow the legislation, what is in the law, but then, we couldn't stay there, buying the coffee of the peasant, of the farmer. What did we think of? Giving them advantages. At the same time, these advantages, that the farmer sells the coffee to an individual or a cooperative. In this case, a cooperative of coffee growers who are affiliated. We have a good number of affiliates that are cooperatives. So, we can do the counterweight. You already know what the counterweight is, but in coffee. Thus, this is like when you fall in love, and you tell two women that you love them. You cannot fall in love with two women, but not right here, but on the coast it's normal, on the Caribbean coast. You don't have two women; you have one and no more. Well, and in other cultures over there, I think that Arabs can have four wives, according to their pocketbook. So, I told them: “You bring the heart, distribute it. You have it distributed there, but don't forget us. When you joined, you promised to sell us coffee. It's not the whole harvest, whatever you can." Well, then what did we do? “That coffee, we have it here, find a buyer... No, no, we're going to roast it. We are going to roast it, paying an intermediary.” That is what is called the *torsion*, or the *maquila*. Then we said: “No, because...” We were making a mistake there because we didn't have the resource. What is the problem? Well, whoever roasts, whoever roasts, ensures quality, whoever roasts. I bring a good coffee, produced by our farmer, to a roaster, and there they are free to do what they want with the coffee. Instead, if we have the roaster, we control the process. And now, in the association, we have a roaster. They just gave it to us. We have a laboratory, a laboratory like this part, to control. Therefore, we have everything you see there, the *espresso*, the sample roaster, and everything that a laboratory entails. Hence, for that reason, it is because of the formation of the state, the children, the grandchildren of the coffee growers, that is what makes us proud.

**So, does the association now have 100 members?**

No, we have almost 200. Now, but that is another topic that has a lot to discuss. It has a lot to discuss, why? Well, because the farmers, unfortunately, the state has taught them wrong with the famous subsidies. So, if you don't have a job, you register here, and... And that's fine, but many people misunderstood that, and they were taught to be lazy. Let's say it like this. Our coffee growers must be moved from there. You have to get them out of there. Our coffee growers work from dawn to dusk, but they do not understand the philosophy of what an association is. Thus, they think that suddenly, since the state itself gives them a benefit, it gives them a sack of fertilizer, and so on… Then, they forget to visit. No, God gave us two hands, and very good ones: the left and the right. The right to give, and the left to receive. First, you have to give. When we start the song with that little phrase, to the coffee growers, and some of them understand, the others become bored: "Oh, this looks like a military regime, how is it going?" We have another very nice saying in the association, “Demand generates excellence”. I have had that little phrase since school, when I worked 35 years in a school, I used to say to my boys: “Oh, teacher, why do you demand all this from me?”, “you bring me this for tomorrow”, but “Demand generates excellence”. That is what one needs.

**Well, although you said coffee has many good things, like education, but there is also a challenge in the sector. Could you explain what the challenges are in the sector and, maybe, for us?**

Yes, the main one is the price. Not now because now the opportunities are all up.We have good prices, but nobody is going to deny that right now, a load of coffee is at 2,300,000 and more, as that varies every day. Well, it's a very good price, but what happens? That, you, the coffee, but do not go to the supply warehouse. Don't go there, you are already discouraged, when they tell you “A little sack of supplies is worth 200,000 pesos, sir", what does the farmer do? Bring their hands to their head. “No, that is very expensive.” So that is where the situation is, that this must be a price, but linked to the cost of living, that they lower the supplies. Now there's the thing that we have a new government, you know, so that new government, I heard around, and we have high hopes. How is lifelike! And I tell you the truth, I did not vote for Petro. Because Petro did not convince me at any time, but now I begin to understand that he had good things, for example, he talks about taking back […], in which unproductive pieces are needed. You have to start somewhere. What else caught my attention about this new government? Popular markets, put the land to produce. That, and there's the coffee. Manufacture the fertilizer at a national level, is that what is going to cost them to put... Do you know what that is? Do you know what that represents? Of course, they have to raise the supplies, and then there will be a big mess. That's the crucial part of coffee growing, the supplies. And looking at another important thing, that they don't do […], to avoid […], which a bug that you see around here. Do not do it. And the workforce. The workforce has us... I start to think, my property is fifteen minutes from Dosquebradas, ten minutes by car, it is almost alone in that place, and the worker, what does the worker do? He is a hard-working person, but if he comes to the city as a construction helper, he has his motorcycle, he has his own vehicle, he comes, and now he has a car. So, who works here? Well, very difficult.

**For instance, what salary do the workers have?**

Oh well, that's important. Well, there are two types of workers on the property. I would like to mention that now, that the property brings the family together, but since others come from outside, even if they don't do much in the property, they have to get paid, and that's where the problem comes from. This is where things get difficult. As long as the property has the person there, it is very favorable to produce the coffee, and there is a profit, but if you have to bring people from outside, you don't leave much money because you have to pay them, feed them, you have to pay them benefits, you have to pay them a salary, which is now at a minimum of more than one million pesos. Of course, in the countryside there is an advantage, the salary is not the same as in the cities. The farmers’ salary is not the same as in the city. No. For that. I tell you the truth, I can tell you that we don't pay the same price as the city, we don't, and why don't we? One, because if we do it, following all the rules and legislations, let's put it that way, we are going to have losses everywhere. We are going to always have losses. How do we compensate for that? Which is an interesting thing, how we compensate for that, with inputs from the same property. For example, the property produces bananas, they have bananas for their houses. If the property produces corn, bring them corn. Beans? Bring them beans. So, those products that are obtained on the property help to compensate for that. Or also, we give them a place to live. I have a house exclusive for these workers that come from outside the property, that we call the *agregado,* or the administrator. Thus, the administrator is free and does not need to pay rent for a house, pay some services, and all of that is considered. Therefore, there one thing is offset by the other.

**For example, the salary, is there a minimum set by law to pay workers? How do you define the price, this salary?**

How do I tell you... That is more of an agreement between the worker and the owner. It is more of an agreement. That is not because it is in the law and all that, no. Because since we are not entrepreneurs... When you are an entrepreneur, and you have some employees around you, you must pay for all that, but since we are bean growers, we cannot do that because we have two workers, or one because the properties have a maximum of two hectares. Two. They are small.

**If you could improve something in the sector, what would it be?**

That's where the good part comes, and what is the good? That we have an association where we try to improve income. That is, income. Of course, “Do you live exclusively on coffee? Get another crop aside; have a banana or have some cassava”. Cassava is a tuber, that is very good, cassava. Have another product to help you. We motivate the producer a lot: "Sell us the coffee, and you have a premium", there is a stipulation there. “Come to process the coffee because we have many brands, *Casta Labrieg*a, from us, from the association”, but the farmer is so motivated with his own coffee that they are already roasting it on their own farm. We strongly promote artisanal roasting, there is a large pan made exclusively for that, to roast the coffee. You put that in there, stir it manually, set it on fire, it could be firewood, people really like firewood. The firewood that gives a certain flavor to the coffee. Others do it with […], but there is a need there when we look at the environment part. What is that need? That there are now smokeless kitchens. Therefore, we are promoting coffee growers to go to smokeless kitchens so that it doesn't happen anymore because wood smoke is as harmful as cigarette smoke. In other words, if we have an accompaniment for that, that will be welcome because that is a priority need.

**Because you cook at home and that generates a lot of smoke and, is it something that could be improved?**

It could be improved, and I tell you, there is a lot of expectation because the appropriate trees must be planted to serve for fire. If you dump, for example, you would also be polluting nature, felling some trees for firewood. That is crime. It is a crime to fell a tree. But if you have some appropriate little trees for that, you could.

**Do you work with the members on these issues, from the association?**

We work on that, but they consequently ask where the resource is. In other words, that's worth two million, a million and a half, and if you don't have resources you cannot participate with anyone. Thus, if you don't have the resource, but you want to get involved with something, then what do we do here? We get the resource through the mayor's office, from the municipal mayor's office of Dosquebradas, through the governor's office, perhaps from CARDER, which has not provided us with much support. Unfortunately, the farmers employed by CARDER, “Oh, I don't have the knwoledge”, why? Because those people don't go if they don't get anything from you. You take some blocks to live close by, and they go and seize the block and send you to an office, so you can sign up. I mean, people have experienced that by themselves.

**Well, the topic of interest is waste. Here we have seen that they make jam from the pulp. What do you do with the waste now?**

Well, the association was also created looking at that, that the farmer realized that coffee is not only a bean, the *seed of hope*, as they call it, but that it comes with some, "waste", for example, honey. That coffee honey that they produce. And that honey was not being used properly. Some used to throw it into the water stream, contaminating the waters. So, our job, what we do is setting leachate tanks, we add it to the leachate so that they can control the samples. And that has been done by many people, but not all because there are many people who continue with the tradition, and well, they don't put much foundation to this thing. Honey. The coffee husk. Do you know the husk? So, what is done? That husk is also very useful. Thus, we use it, in what? In fertilize. Therefore, we have a pit, we throw it there, and eventually, one gets the famous Californian earthworm, and the process takes place, and the fertilizer is made, but there are not many. The truth is that there are not many who work on it. That culture of teaching people to make the fertilizer on their own property to reduce production costs is missing. Well, what other derivative of coffee? Leaves. The leaves are a very important foliage. We already know that coffee, with its foliage, is a green capture of CO2. Hence, if you capture CO2, which is the number one pollutant, which is causing this big problem, that's welcome. That they have trees, that they have foliage, but that must be studied carefully because it seems that there is a possibility of making a profit through the capture of CO2. Well, another waste from the property... Ah, the most important, the coffee stick. The stick is the trunk. It is the trunk. With the trunk, my father made charcoal, with that stick, polluting charcoal. With that stick wood is made, furniture is made.

**Like the table?**

Like the table here. So, those pieces of furniture, one knows: "Ah, it's not the trunk’s fault for mistreating by pouring coffee on it." So, we have some artists. We have some artists here. Not many. Unfortunately, there are not many. They are not many. Much needs to be done to promote coffee wood craftsmanship.

**So, are there initiatives to take advantage of waste that is not being used now?**

Yes. It is a priority need.

**Why do you think that now it is not used well?**

For many reasons. First, because the coffee grower lacks more awareness. He lacks understanding of how one does things, and how to make the most of the resources. For instance, Israel, in Israel they cultivate a desert, an unproductive area, and you see crops. But not here in Colombia, with the most fertile lands in the world. And there is a lack of support from the state, from public and private entities that say: “man, no, we are in debt with the farmers who cannot use our resources well...”. So, on the one hand, the coffee grower, who lacks more initiative. On the other hand, the lack of government support. More awareness. And in addition, a better institution, foreign, you know, is our hope, that a Dutch, or an American one will come and see the need because nowadays, that is what also calls me a lot of attention of the special coffee. That catches my attention… My son came, although he’s going to leave, but I'm happy because he's going to make Dosquebradas coffee known, from the producers. I told my eldest son, “Look, study barista.” Now there have family courses, for you to work as a barista, and that [...]. So, have a [...] here.

**I would like to show this image. It is the concept with which we work, and the idea is that in this area there are different communities that produce biomass that is not used now, for example, agricultural residues. Coffee, and cocoa residues, for instance. That can be transported to a biorefinery and now, we are researching a technology that can convert this biomass into four different products. First, it is a biocrude that can be used, for example, for the maritime sector. Another is biocarbon, which can be used again, and we also have biogas and water, which can be used at the plant. And what we want to understand from this field study is whether such a system is possible, and how it should be organized so that it is beneficial for the final producer, but also for those who produce the biomass. I would like to ask you, well, how do you see this project, what benefits should it generate for the region? What is needed? Well, I would like to talk a little about this concept.**

No, I think it's fabulous. Everything about innovation, let it be with us... [Applause]

**Yes, but we need you to decide how.**

Ah, you ask me how it is justified. Well, one of the most expensive things we have here is electricity. That's it. In other words, if you ask a farmer what his biggest expenses are on the property, he will tell you, firstly, energy, gas. For example, gas right now is super expensive. That raised. It might be because of the war that is over there. That went up. A gas bottle that was worth 70,000 pesos before and now it is 100,000, one of those big bottles. As many coffee growers have understood something about contamination by law, then many use gas because gas is an advantage for those who cook and work at home. Of course, with firewood you need a lot of patience, to light the fire, to be ventilating...

**Do you use gas as in bottle?**

In bottle or paid by direct debit. But most of the property... payment by direct debit is that it goes through a conduit, a tube. Most of the properties in the villages do not have this permit. Therefore, to make use of the land, they use canister. That can explode, and start a fire, causing deaths. Well, this system is fabulous, why? Because we are, above all, improving. Of course, those programs that normally come from Europe, over there, United Kingdom, Ireland... The things that they are doing for this, to get the world rid of fossil fuels. That's great. And we are a little behind on that here. We are late. So, this, in the field, would be an innovation and would be praised by all of us.

**Do you see a role for partnership in a new value chain?**

A space?

**Yes, do you think that the association can have a role in a new value like this?**

Yes, we would study the location because what is it that occupies... This... How did you call it?

**A biorefinery.**

That is. How much space does it occupy?

**We are looking into that too, what scale is needed, and where. Now, we think that it may be in Pereira, but it is something that we have to investigate further.**

Ah, it is at the departmental level, isn't it at the municipal level? I thought it was here in Dosquebradas.

**We also want to investigate first if smaller collection centers can be set up, in the municipalities, and from there transport it to a central point, but we are investigating that, if it is possible.**

Biomass, I understand that it is all the leaves, the leaves. I am going to tell you a little about the benefit of the coffee leaf. It turns out that the coffee leaf is beneficial. Coffee leaf. It has caffeine.

**The leaf?**

The leaf. One thinks that the caffeine is in the bean. And caffeine, you know, is a health benefit, taken in prudently. Everything prudently. What is the problem number one with coffee here in Dosquebradas? Since it rains so much, the summers are very rainy. Then, the leaves fall off a lot, and it gives them a leak. At the end, there is a leak. It goes to the ground. You enter a coffee plantation, and you see a lot of fallen leaves, there is the raw material for that.

**Now what do you do with it?**

Nothing, that is there. It remains there mixed with the soil, and there it is transformed into organic matter, but that takes a long time and there it is, and that is a total danger for the person who works there. One is always next to the coffee. So, we can have the raw material there. You tell the farmer, "Look, I want coffee, but I also dry it, bring us coffee leaves." And you're going to see a lot of coffee leaves here.

**What do you think of using the coffee pulp?**

You can also use it, the pulp. Sure, because the pulp, as I was telling you before, we don't use it as much as we could. There are many people who add it to the coffee trunk, but the pulp cannot be added fresh to the coffee trunk. Technical precision is something else. That is a technical process. So, the coffee pulp should be considered if it is dry or if it can be fresh to transform it.

**Because now, you make the jam with the pulp, and you said that you do it on the properties, or do you sometimes also produce it here?**

Good question because I will tell you the truth. What do we do? Members, which are not many, do it. Therefore, we buy it from those members and resell it here.

**Okay, you produce it on the property, it is not that the producers transport the pulp to produce it here…**

No, they do it on their own property, and there aren't many. Here we provide ourselves with much of what you consumed now, from Santa Rosa. In Santa Rosa we have a man who is an entrepreneur, and from the beginning the man realized that there was a need, and he began to process the pulp. And suddenly, nationwide. You go to Barranquilla, and there they sell you pulp from this coffee, from here in Santa Rosa. Santa Rosa is a small town that is here near Pereira, so we buy from them.

**Now the producers have the processing procedure on their property. What do you think about the possibility of, instead of transporting the parchment coffee to a collection center, transporting the cherry coffee, and processing it in a central place of all these properties? What do you think of this idea?**

Very good. Thus, the cherry coffee comes out when you pulp the coffee. If you arrive, you put the coffee in a peat, start the engine, or do it manually. Now everyone on their property has their little motor, they put the pulper to work. On the one hand, the coffee comes out, which you know, which is what is going to be dried, and, on the other hand, the pulp comes out, which we already consider as fertilizer or waste for many because they throw it into the water stream, or I don't know where, or they don't have the leachate tanks that we promote here, leachate. Of course, today, most have leachate. It is a requirement. It is a requirement, then, the coffee growers in that sense are very compliant because it is known that the CARDER is aware of that, the competent authorities, and well, that they reprimand them for those things.

**But now all the producers do their process on their properties?**

On the properties.

**And do they transport the coffee already in parchment to the association?**

Indeed.

**What do you think about making a change to this process on all those small properties? Bring the cherry coffee to the association and there, the whole process is done.**

The idea is great, why? Because that increases income. Remember that I told you now that the problem of coffee farming, what is it? If the coffee grower lives exclusively from coffee but referring to coffee as the coffee from the parchment, from the seed, and discards the other. So, we tell them: "You have an income from the same bean of coffee, taking advantage of it to the maximum". So, many will respond.

**Do you know why the system is like this, and all the producers do it on their property? Why is that?**

Due to tradition, this happens from generation to generation. I do what my dad did, and then that is actually inherited. For instance, I did not have access to the university to study. Therefore, it is a matter of culture.

**Here you are working and making a change, how do the producers receive that change? Are they open to changing their practices, or how is this process going?**

That's a process, as you said, that's a process. I'm going to tell you this anecdote, which is funny because we have a laboratory here, we tell people what their coffee tastes like, we give them quality coffee, and many farmers go to the supermarket and buy low-quality coffee. Or the most serious or, for me, that is serious, for me, they buy instant coffee that is sent to pick up by someone, which is carcinogenic. It costs me nothing, but they have studied that, that instant coffee. For example, Nescafe. My father loved Nescafe. He drank it with milk, but he didn't say: “I am going to drink the coffee from my property to see how it tastes”, he didn't worry about that. They don't care. So ,that's what happens to us today, following dad's example. So, “Alright, bring me Nescafé like my dad. I drink Nescafé like my dad”, and they do not drink the coffee from their properties.

**So, what is necessary to change?**

Support is needed, people who speak to them, courses, training. Training. For example, this now with […], I think it's great, why? Because she's doing... What she's doing, our manager. We always push ourselves from the formation. This is when they were going to give us the lab. That I do not forget that it was the governor Dr. Sigifredo Salazar, who was governor. That, then, Sigifredo called, he came, and "Well, gentlemen, I'm going to give you a laboratory, but I don't want you to have the laboratory as in many places, where they have it stored somewhere in the same boxes, I want the laboratory to work". With us, for sure we will not keep it in boxes. So that influenced that. Our taster, which you already know, Santiago Castaño, is third in the world in [...]. Thus, here boys and girls come. I would like to, and I tell you, I had a talk with the Secretary of Education many years ago, around 2013, and I told them these words: "We already have a laboratory." Well, that was later because the laboratory... it was in 2015, “We have a laboratory, we are going to make an agreement with you, but since we need income, give us money. If it is all free... We have to support ourselves, doctor”. “I write it down here, Asocafé Manantial”. There it was. That was not said. What did we want? To have here a bunch of children, from the school, from primary school, to train them.

**How is the position of young people? Are they interested in working in the field?**

Two main strengths that we have, which are already three, are one, the laboratory, one that has everything. Two, working women. That is a strength because we know that the woman who works in the field has a different value. If I take them to Holland and tell you “Look at the women from Dosquebradas, who work there on your property, they put all their love into it”, they get a different coffee, and you drink it, “Wow, what a coffee!”, but the best thing is that the women from Dosquebradas are producing it. And third, strength, the young farmers. My son has been here, and this is where he has stayed; on the property, no, he doesn't get into the roaster there. The roaster is excluded because the roaster is […], and the machete. Smell coffee, my son does not, he does not like it. So, I tell him: "In life, you must do what you like." I can't tell you, and you realize that you don’t like that, that you like other things in the coffee. Coffee has eighteen professions related to coffee. We are talking about the coffee process; that we need tasters, that we need baristas, agronomists, environmental engineers. They are eighteen. "Fall in love with one, that any of those will suit you, but fall in love", he liked the barista, already old, but there he is.

**Thus, he is not going to work in the fields…**

Ah, well, sorry, what we did with my son we do it with everyone. We have a youth association, hence the name, Asociación de Jóvenes de Asocafé Manantial. What are they doing? They do work with the field, with nature; they plant trees, they have carried out campaigns to plant trees, workshops, they call them workshops, in which they go with a car, go to a village, plant little trees. They like it. We already get the trees with CARDER, or with the Farming Secretary’s Office, that they like that. They like it. And I see a young man speaking, for example, when we have meetings on the villages, and a girl comes out, and she speaks to us appropriately about the importance of trees. Thus, one gets excited. And it's not damaging, it's winning.

**In the end, we want to understand more about the different actors that have a role in the sector now, and that may have a role in a new value chain. We want to understand their relationship to each other. Here we have a graph, with the different actors, and their position in power that they have in the sector, if it is high or low, and the interest, if it is high or low. So, the actors, here we think that they have high power and high interest, and here with high power, but low interest. I would like to ask you how you see this picture, and those actors, and their position. Perhaps, according to you, we must change something that is not correct. How do you see it?**

One by one?

**Yes please.**

From above to below?

**Yes, that's fine. For example, the national government. Here you have high power, but low interest. I don't know how you see it.**

I love this process. I love it, yes, because wherever I go... One says, “I can't hide one thing that I feel”, I say it. I have received messages for that, yes, for saying that the Departmental Committee of Coffee Growers has made mistakes, the Federation has made mistakes, and I say so, and many people do not like it. And I know that the Federation has done very good things; it built schools, highways, health posts, trained farmers... I worked in an agricultural school in Santa Rosa, and in that school, I had to do… I studied there and was a teacher there. So, when I was studying, we used to have school gardens. Therefore, I went out with my bundle of cabbage, of carrot, for my house. I'm going today... I'm not going because it makes me nostalgic to see the farmer buying, contaminated... Some factors... No, no. So, look, the national government, for me, has been very valuable, for two reasons. One, we have won two alliances. I guess you know a little bit about what a productive alliance is.

**Yes.**

Well. Coffee alliance for 114 coffee farmers in 2014. So, 114 coffee farmers, we had more than 200 back then. In the last time, some did not come to the meetings, and we warned them. So, they get bored, and they don't tell the truth, “No, I'm retiring”. Therefore, we have two alliances with the national government: specialty coffee, and now the bees. They gave us an alliance for 40 young people. Youths. We are complete, yes of course, but we also say, I am more from there than from here. It was in the first meetings: “Don't tell us that, that we're from here, and when you're taking it to the cemetery with four shovels, you're setting it on fire”. You are from here; you are not from there. So, two alliances. For me, the national government is 10.

**Does it have more interest too? Here we have it as very low.**

No, the national government is good. Good, good, sure, or excellent as you say. The regional government is very good, too, because it is the regional government, Department of Risaralda. Then, when you see the support, it's great, we are not losing the year.

**So, do you receive the support of the regional government?**

That’s it. Then, from the municipality. Here, in the municipality, there is a certain... Because there is... We can only call it the municipality of the goose that lays the golden eggs. Because if the chicken lays golden eggs, then there is business due to the wealth it generates. So, we pay the Chamber of Commerce, we pay taxes, etc. But the municipality, at the field level, does not really care. Yes, well, sometimes it gives us a little help there, some fertilizers, but a real help, and from the field, we don't have it.

**Is it mainly from the regional government?**

It is mostly from the regional government. Well, we don't have a maritime industry. Communication platforms, what does it refer to?

**A cluster or a platform that brings together different organizations and indicates what is beyond that.**

Oh, that broadcasts! Well, step by step because we have to pay money. Look, I'm going to tell you this anecdote, which I think is beautiful. One comes with the portfolio, to present, and there is a very large notice here that says, "Consume *Café Mariscal*." If we already had the coffee that is already positioned because it said: “*Consume Café Casta Labriega*”. And we spread the coffee ourselves. It could be done, but how much is it worth? *Café Mariscal* has a lot of money; it is a big company. Then, of course, the biggest one has to take the small out. Then, the municipality is with this. It supports it. It does not value origin coffee. Now it is giving it a little bit of value. Now. For example, on Monday... Last Friday there was a council, where the councilors meet, those who have directive power here. They meet there and carry out projects, which they call agreements, and then that democratic part is beautiful, and they invite people. So, it turns out, it was established there next to the Asocafe Manantial Association. So, we talked about the need to promote the countryside, and to approve a project called *Flores y Caminos*. Always for the progress of Dosquebradas. And in this Law of progress, we are going to help the villages to see flowers and coffee. So that's nice. It's. And so on. Therefore, look at the communication platforms.

**And how do you see the position of the Federation?**

For me it is good. Yes, why? Because we were born in 2010, and we had no being. Here, we met in this same venue, here, we met, but it was different. Here it is more awkward. We meet here, and where are we going to function? There we received help from the Federation, through the committee.

**Do you receive support?**

Well, they said, “No, here, stay here, wherever you can”, that we needed a space, yes, and this worked. A very large house, fortunately. So, it was separated into two spaced; a part there, which is the Committee of the Department, Municipal, sorry, and this, which is the association.

**What do you think, for example, because you are here roasting coffee and selling coffee, what is the position of the Federation in that?**

Well, the Federation today is promoting coffee a lot. Today, but they are supporting it late. They are supporting late this because it turns out that specialty coffee is very advanced in other countries. Guatemala. Guatemala sells specialty coffee, and we, the Federation, export regular coffee, not specialty coffee. Commercial coffee, that's what they export. And what do they do? That coffee is the one that reaches Europe, Germany, more than anything. Germany is the first exporting country of processed coffee. Germany. We are in fourth place in production, after Brazil, Vietnam, and well... Brazil, Vietnam and there is another country, I think Indonesia, and we are fourth. Clear is the difference, there is a difference. That's where the interest is. And we, of course, produce quality coffee. The Federation has done a great job of teaching farmers to make quality coffee, but as I told you, it is taking a little while to do so. At this moment, we do feel supported, of course we do. Before it used to buy coffee from us, there, at the headquarters. Now, with the pandemic, I don't know, the crisis, they are no longer buying from us, but we accept that.

**Where would you put the position of the association in this graph?**

Here you mean the cooperative, right?

**Yes, like this one.**

It is the cooperative of Coffee Growers of Dosquebradas. We have a cooperative, a headquarters here near the viaduct. Close there. The coffee growers take the coffee there because they are members. They get the benefit too. What I have told you, we are a kind of cooperative, in the sense that we also provide benefits to the farmers. For the merit. Because you have to look at that; the one who deserves, we help him, and the one who does not deserve, we try not to isolate him, but to bring him closer. Well, we don't have a biorefinery.

**And the position of the coffee growers? Here we have put it as a lot of interest, but low power.**

Well, it is not really high. You have to put it in the middle. Yes, because of what I was telling you before. Training is missing. Because what do I do with them? What I did at school, I am doing with them here. This is like another school for me. I retired and retired, but it is a lie; here I continue, but in another style. With the coffee growers, they started out very eager thinking that everything was free, and there, there was a time when we had to tell them the truth, that everything cannot be free, no, because we if it is, we broke. There was a time when we had to close this because we have to pay for some services, we have to pay some employees, three, with the accountant... And there is no money. Thus, many did not understand that. "And that they ask for money from us... Are you going to give us an aid?", but you have to put the money. A different culture. So, what was I doing with them? Because before I did it, and I felt very good, but the return did not. The return is exaggeratedly demanding, "no, no, the exams have to be individual". So, I said, "Okay, they will be individuals, but you have to share one's knowledge" So, I did an exercise in a workshop, "Professor, I can make a team?" “Do it, form groups of four and present me in the workshop". This is what we are talking about. If this comes from school, from kindergarten, that child has no problem joining an association at this age, and they can share. But it is a matter of there being support, and that the state wants that, that the school is made for that, etc. So, here, we can place it as medium, not high. We would like to get there, and we will arrive there, I don't know when. Senicafé, of course, high because every time we talk to anyone is because we have read Senicafé's research, and I get home, and I have internet at home. Sometimes I read here, other times I do it at home. I inform myself of the studies that are being done, which are our scientists. Academia, very good, the technological one. We have agreements with the Catholic University. I remember when I was making the *Casta Labriega* brand, they invited us there, they were studying industrial design, with coffee, and they wanted to collaborate, and we had to explain to the guys what that is, and we were going to do a *Casta* contest with them. Yes, because they tried things. It was for the brand. What *Casta Labriega* means here, and they justified it perfectly. So, academia is good, high. Biomass collectors, low, because I already told you that those take advantage of the situation. Transportation... This one is low because we have villages here. We actually have 32 villages, very beautiful, but transportation is very difficult. See, I have a lady. I was at […] on Sunday, to meet the lady because the lady works the coffee here. I'm going to have to walk a good distance on some paths. I got to the highway, but the highway could not be reached by car because there is no public transportation there. So, I had to walk on the highway until I got there. More than an hour, an hour and a half walking to go down, and then to go up. In the middle of the downpour. So, it's low. Storage companies, few, we have the cooperative, and now ourselves. But there were others that have now closed, we had one around here going to Santa Rosa, and that's over, another one going here closer, that's also over. In other words, at this moment, in storage, we suddenly have about 3, but more are needed. Well...

**Thank you very much. It was the last question. I don't know if there is anything you would like to say more on this topic.**

Well, we have high expectations, as I was saying, what do we want? We want to launch a project for the elderly. We talk about women and young people, and currently, do we older people have anything? Don't we have a chance? So, to develop a project, I don't know at what point, I would feel like the happiest man in the world, which is what a man was saying now with the coffee, “Have you never been on a plane?”. Riding on a plane is amazing, it is amazing, but you have to finance it. I think we'll go check the price. We're not going to go sightseeing or going to the beach either, no, not to take a bath, not to take *aguardiente*, not to dance, no. Go to a cultural part, that we are going to know other things, but let's get on the plane. That is a dream of mine. Or we are going to go to Europe, which today the world is close together. Who would have said that the time was going to come that I was going to go on a transport cloud. It's like […] Colombia, it's beautiful, well look at that. Traveling all over America is a dream of mine, on a plane. In the plane that exists today, the sadness that one can feel... For example, my father and my mother, who I sometimes thought that they went to Cartagena, to Santa Marta, to [...] Yes, because we, the children, did […]

**Is it not possible to retire with a pension?**

Now, with the new government, they are talking of paying a pension of 500,000 pesos to people over 65 years of age, but politics is so mean, that it is demagoguery, but we hope that with this it will not be demagoguery.

**So, until what age do they work on the property?**

You find people that are 80 working. My dad worked until he was 93 years old. No, until 90 because there was a time when he walked with a little difficulty, and he could fall... And, no, no, “where are you going to go?”, and we took care of him as much as we could. That, in the end, he left us, but he lived for 93 years. And do you know why he lived us so many years? Because he was in the field, the oxygen, the air, and the tranquility. That is valuable.

**Thank you so much for all the stories about you.**