**F15CF - Interview farmer #15 - Male, Mistrato, 28 - 15-7-2022**

**Specialties/difficulties:**

* **Cooperativas – I translated them as “cooperatives” but I am not sure if there´s another term for them**
* **Some local expressions (such as “abrir de patas”) were tricky**
* **Empalme Generacional – I left the name in Spanish as I believed it to be the name of the group**

**Well,** unintelligible **, thank you very much. First of all, I will tell you a little bit about the project like we mentioned to you this morning. Basically, it involves the identification of waste harnessing. So, firstly, who are you? What do you do?**

Well, my name is [name], I am an entrepreneur, I am a coffee farmer and beekeeper as well. I´m from the Mistrató, Risaralda municipality and I´m willing to participate and to learn.

**As a coffee farmer, how many hectares do you own?**

I have very few: 0.3 hectares. That is 1200 trees, 70 banana plants and 15 beehives.

**15 beehives.**

Yes

**Why do you say that you are an entrepreneur? What do you have?**

I have a business in the municipality. It is called “Tierra Fria” and in there we commercialize a lot of the products that are developed here in the coffee farm. Among them coffee, which is the one we are the most interested in selling. It is the one we have the most.

**Within the association, what is your link to them?**

I am part of the Youth Committee, in the“Emplame Generacional” group. Within the committee I have several roles: to participate and generate activities to foment the collective development of the association and of the group itself.

**Can you participate in the association? Is your voice heard?**

Our voices are heard, we have a voice but not a vote.

**Why?**

Because our grandparents are the ones who are visible within the association. They are subscribed and pay the membership to the association. We are part of the committee and within it there are some people who are part of the Board of Directors, and they are our voice.

**Among these activities, what are the biggest challenges that you have found working with coffee? What challenges have you found?**

A lot of challenges. First is getting people together: this is the main problem because it is very hard to get everyone together towards a goal.

**How many people are in the association?**

The association has 155 people, approximately. In the Youth Committee there are 18 people give or take. Sadly, the number of people that work (together?) is diminished because, like I said, it is very hard to get everyone to participate as they should. I think that has been the greatest challenge. To find people that really cares and wants to do something.

**If you could improve something in the sector, in your life, what would that be?**

Right now, I´m concerned about improving the processes of coffee transformation. The processes related to the processing plants, which I believe is the most immediate shortcoming that we have. Because in our venture we are already talking about commercialization and to formalize our brand. Now we must work on the processes to guarantee traceability so that our product is always the same. I think that´s the most immediate need.

**Which are the biggest challenges that you have found?**

The “Empalme Generacional”

**Which is?**

It is the connection that must exist between our parents and grandparents or uncles in this case. And between us as young people that want to start generating activities here in the coffee farm.

**Is that difficult?**

A lot of times yes because we come with a lack of knowledge or with a lot of ideas that we have heard somewhere else and that we want to implement. Telling that to our elders like “Let´s do this, it works” has certain limitations.

**How can you overcome those limitations?**

In my case in specific, I am now managing my own plot. I hope that it can be very profitable, something big so I can demonstrate them that things can be done considering other people´s views.

**In which programs have you participated? Which trainings? Which projects have you participated in?**

We began with an organization called “Solidaridad Latinoamericana”. They gave us training in entrepreneurship. They were the first organization with which we had a link. Then we were with Starbucks. We got some training in management of applications, shadowing, about soil analysis. Right now, we are with the Tecnologica de Pereira, with the program unintelligible, which is the most recent program where we are fully committed and willing to help as much as we can.

**To keep the sustainability of what you have, of your company, what do you do? Certifications? Organic waste management? Like what different things have you done?**

So far, we have not received any kind of certification. We are just going to go formal. The first thing was that we realized about the need of all this. Because before we could say “Let´s roast the coffee from the coffee farm and that´s it”. But now we understand the importance of formalizing the company, of the labels, of taking into account the environment, considering the waste manangement, the use of water: a lot of activities that can give an added value to the product.

**Have you heard of any project related to coffee residues that has to do with energy?**

Actually, 2 months ago we were talking with a friend that represents another brand -with Edison of Café Bodio. We were talking about biodigesters.

**How does the biodigester work?**

He was more or less explaining it to me, there are some out of plastic and other made with more resistant material. The idea is for all the pulp waste to be placed there and that is then converted into gas and the gas is used for the household. That was very cool.

We were talking about poop because we were talking about the Ecomill.

**What is the Ecomill?**

It is a system to process coffee. It allows us to make efficient water use and to guarantee traceability in the product.

**The overall idea is this. The proposal is called Bio Hubs. We are looking for a win-win situation. We are looking to build a supply chain where everyone has an option. This green circle represents the mass providers, like the coffee farm or the association. We would recollect it in a place that could be like a factory. A bio factory. In this factory we would have 2 products. The first one would be a fuel, a biofuel that could be used in ships. The second would be a biochar that could be used as fertilizer in the farm itself as an organic improver or for energy purposes or for water treatment. So those residues could be used -agricultural residues, from the forest, urban waste, invasive species-.**

Sheds

**Yes, for example. So, all those residues could be used to make these 2 products. What do you think about this?**

Excellent. It is what we are looking for, to be able to harness that waste.

**As a producer or participant in the supply chain, could you participate?**

Of course. I would love to.

**How do you see yourself participating?**

I see myself in the receiving part after the processing of the coffee, the handling of the pulp is elemental because what we are doing right now is archaic. It is what is done traditionally. So, we could handle the preparation of the raw material for it to go to the factory. To deliver it with certain characteristics. That will depend on the requirements.

**What would be the challenges? In this model, which challenges do you see?**

The challenges specifically for this coffee farm would be first: the improvement of the processing. Because we use a lot of water for the processing of coffee. The second challenge would be the disposal of the pulp, to have a proper space to dry it and to handle it. It should be comfortable to the family and to the farmer because there are a lot of drawbacks because of infrastructure.

**So you are saying that it should not represent more work.**

It can be work but it should be comfortable.

**What could we do for people to want to participate? What could motivate them? What do you think?**

Definitely people are motivated by money. There has to be proof and a guarantee that there will be benefits. Even if it’s not money, it could be saying to the farmer something like “If you produce the pulp or handle it like this, you will use less fertilizer”. To save money. Or “If you use the biodigester, you will have gas”. Gas today is very expensive, so talking about stuff like that would be the best way to go.

**Do you think this would be aligned to the current value chain of coffee?**

Yes, because coffee can be harnessed fully, it is just that we do not know how, or we do not care.

**Why do you think that this kind of projects have not been done? Or why do you think that so far there has not been a massive harnessing for those ends?**

Because we had not had the problems that we are having nowadays. Like water pollution. By not harnessing those pulps and by using water, all that waste and leachates go directly to the cañadas. Today we need to save water, so if I have the pulp, what can I do to use it so that it is not contaminating the water? It´s a very important need. Also, the market itself says stuff like “They are selling pulp and winning money, are we losing money?”. So, the needs of the market and climate needs is what has made us to start to ask ourselves what to do with the pulp, what to do with the waste

**For example, here what is done with the waste?**

They go to a pit, not even a pit, they go to that plot, below the guadual. The guadual makes the absorption and retains it.

**So they throw it there and that´s it?**

That´s it. Nothing more.

**The neighbors do the same?**

Most of them. Most of them may have some pits that have been given to them by the Coffee growers committee. But not all of them do the shoveling and drying, then driving and delivering the coffee. Most of them do not do it. There are some people that do it but it´s not a considerable amount of them.

**Well, we built this matrix. It was done in the Netherlands. What we are looking for is the relation, within the coffee sector that you know so well, of how much power and how much interest can someone have in participating in these type of value chains. For example, there´s the federal government, the regional government, the municipality, the maritime industry which would be the client, communication platforms, transport, the biomass collectors which would be us, academia, coffee growers, Cenicafé, the National Coffee Growers Federation, the biorefinery which would be this transformation plant, the cooperatives and technology providers. Which stakeholder do you think is missing? That you would say that is involved in the coffee sector but we didn´t put it there. Who do you think?**

We were also talking about this the other day, there´s a sector that could be stakeholder, it plays a very important role: informal selling of coffee.

**What is informal selling?**

For example, the cooperative has its points of sale where coffee is bought. Towns make external shopping…

**The agencies?**

That´s right, the agencies. I was wondering, how can we start to connect with those people? Because most producers sell in agencies.

**Where would they be in this matrix?**

They should be somewhere. Because the coffee growers stop producing or making processes with good quality because when selling they are paid the same. It doesn´t matter if I do it or not, I get paid the same amount. I can even get a better payment since there are no regulations, they pay. No one knows how that is handled.

**Where would you put them? Do they have a lot of power? How interested are they in participating in this kind of value chains?**

Interest could be very low and power in the middle. It is the only stakeholder that I think is very visible, mostly in towns, but we put them apart because we them differently and perhaps even they put themselves apart because their dynamic is different. But they are an important part of the coffee industry.

**Which other stakeholder do you think could be missing? That you would say is related to the coffee industry but we didn´t put it there.**

Right now, I think all of them are there very well placed.

**Which one would you move? Or do you think they are well placed where they are?**

I think they are okay.

**Have you participated with any of these institutions in some project? Like with a cooperative, municipality?**

With a cooperative, with the government with entrepreneurship stuff, with other public entities such as “La Che”

**How was it with “La Che”?**

We had a university program -a partnership between the Universidad de Caldas and La Che- they gave us the study for free, an environmental sanitation technician. Other than that, they gave us the opportunity to create a productive project for the farm. I did it with bees.

**That´s where the project came out from?**

That´s where the bee project came to be. Later I got money from elsewhere and I bought a POS system for the business. So with them.

The government in the beginning also helped us with a machine to start with our venture. They also made some videos. With the municipality unintelligible. And “Solidaridad” has also been involved in the trainings, they are an NGO, they work with Nestle. We do not say no to anything because we want to learn and know our limits. It´s not like we are going to go all the way in, but we do want to take advantage of anything that is offered and to give anything we can give, because we know we have the perspective from the field, which is also important.

**Something else that you would like to add? What do you think?**

I think it´s very important, I think this is what we need to make the change that we strongly want. We have the farms, the land, we need support and this kind of initiatives to be able to work together and something cool comes out.