**A7CF - Interview youth group coffee association dosquebradas - 13-7-2022**

**Well, first, thank you very much for the space. It really is super important everything you have to tell us.**

With pleasure.

**If you want, we can start with an introduction of yourself; what do you do, what's your name... Everything**

Of course. My name is [name]. I am an environmental administrator at the Technological University of Pereira. I was in Australia. I lived in Australia for 4 years, a place where I learned English, where I was enriched by Australian culture, where I had an experience. I have worked with CARDER on environmental projects, and currently I am very focused on the subject of the association, immersing myself in the coffee issue, learning a lot about this stuff, about being barista, tasting, associativity, how the coffee industry is evolving in these last few years, and I am very passionate about this. Especially now with the barista. I mean, that's in what I am directing all my efforts into, and what I really like and am passionate about.

**Are you the son of a coffee grower?**

I am the son of a coffee grower, yes. My dad has been... My dad is a coffee grower, my family has been a coffee grower for many generations. My grandfather was a coffee grower. We currently live on a coffee property, which is where my grandparents lived, and they cultivated the same coffee plantation for many years. So yes, coffee is in our veins, in our DNA.

**Why do you say that the coffee model is changing? What do you mean with that?**

Well, let's see, the coffee model, well, let's say that since there is so much science around coffee, and special coffees are getting so much attention, which is what we are working on here from the association. Thus, we are moving from the focus of the *pasilla*, the consumption of *pasilla*, and all this, to giving a real value to coffee; from the cultivation, the processing, what is taught to the coffee grower, all this subject of sensory aspects that years ago was not relevant, and now we can already say that the science of coffee is gaining much strength, and that is very valuable because thanks to that, we are making ourselves known in the world, and the coffee growers are obtaining a premium, despite the fact that coffee farming is still a difficult business, that we have to be very patient so that we can really make money, make profits, but in we are working on that. On extending the coffee chain, on the science of coffee, and on giving that added value that we so much need.

**Where did you learn all this about coffee? Here in the association?**

Here at the association. And through my family, who have been coffee producers all their lives. I have been in contact with coffee since I was a child, but for just the last three years, it's that I got this passion, learning much more, getting involved, putting a lot of effort on it.

**Cool! What are the challenges? As you say: "I saw these challenges in the coffee industry", as you have seen... What challenges, limitations...**

Well, the main challenge here, just in our region, a very important challenge is education. Education, teaching people what coffee actually is, what coffee is, how to consume coffee, and how to treat it correctly. Therefore, a very important challenge is to educate people in the consumption of our coffee; that they stop buying foreign coffees, or imported coffees, or super-processed coffees, to start consuming coffee from our region. Special coffee, a beneficial coffee. That is a challenge, education. In other words, the challenge lies in education, in creating conscious consumers of coffee. That is a very big challenge, and it is the challenge we have.

**Now, if you could change anything, what would you change? What would you improve about this process that you know about coffee and all this?**

What would I improve? Let's see... Well... I would improve many things.

**Which ones?**

I would try to improve many things, but let's see, something important is the way, let's say, how coffee growing is carried out, or how coffee production is taught to the youngest, which is something called generational change. I would say finding a way for young people to become more interested in coffee growing, to become more involved in the process so that they can continue with this coffee heritage that belonged to our grandparents and parents. In other words, finding ways for more young people to be passionate about this topic. It is something that can be improved. Something that, I think, can be improved a lot. And, in every aspect of coffee, there will always be things to improve. Specifically, from the property, the processing, that the processing can always be done properly to get specific quality standards with coffee. I mean, all of that; from how it is collected, how it is dried, how it is washed; how it is pulped... Teach in a more technical way, with a deeper education. To begin to leave behind the informality of many farmers, of many coffee growers, who have carried out the process as they have always learned, but then the idea is to teach them that it can be done in a better way.

**And regarding this process of sustainability, of maintaining sustainability in the sector, what initiatives do you have? Training, certifications... What do you know about it in this area, for example?**

From that area, I still think it is about education. We can strengthen certification issues, yes, properties, but we can also certify people, and start educating, training tasters, baristas, starting to train a new generation, for example, of agronomists. In other words, changing the model in which coffee production has been working, and in this way, after a few years, we can have a different coffee production.

**Our focus is to study the residues. Thus, what do you know what you are currently doing with the waste?**

Oh, well. On the issue of waste, there is an initiative that is being worked on from the departmental cluster of specialty coffees. The cluster is basically a group that brings together associations at the departmental level. Not only coffee, but also members of other guilds, such as fruit, corn, blackberries, vegetables, bananas... Well, here in the departmental cluster, what is sought is to manage this type of waste through something that it is called circular economy. Circular economy, which is basically supporting each other, to reduce this waste. Or well, not reduce, but give a new use to the waste that comes out. For example, an example of circular economy, let's suppose, let's suppose that within the coffee production process I am removing coffee grounds. The coffee grounds, which is the product that comes out after preparing. So, that sludge, in a linear economy model, that sludge is garbage, and that sludge can serve as fertilizer, or it can also be a pollutant. Then, within the circular economy, those coffee grounds would be taken by another actor in the chain, who could transform that coffee grounds, for example, into soaps, and give those coffee grounds a new value, a new product and a new business model.

**Until now, those initiatives that you know, are they being carried out? Are they being investigated?**

No, well, with the coffee grounds thing, well, the issue of cosmetics. Coffee pulp, for example, which is also another by-product of coffee, which is also highly polluting. It can become very polluting. Sweet jams are being made from that pulp. So, look, something that was going to be a waste is transformed into a new product within the economic model, and that product is now part of the chain again.

**Those jams, for example, do you already produce them here?**

In the association, of course, and we have people who produce them, and here we sell them.

**Does that get popular? In other words, does everyone in the association do it or is it very specific?**

No, no, it's just a few producers in particular.

**Why? Why not popularizing this initiative?**

Well, we are in that task of being able to educate people on how to generate coffee by-products. What happens is that those who produce coffee jam, for example, from the pulp, are producers who already have the infrastructure. The infrastructure to do it; they have the capital to invest, and they have the knowledge. So, we must take that to other producers so that it becomes widespread, and not only with the pulp, but with other products as well. For example, here I will tell you that within the association, we have already created a group of young people, that we have created a separate, independent brand called Decafé, which are by-products of coffee, derivatives. Thus, what do we do there? We are making coffee cakes, coffee cookies, coffee desserts, cream, which has been our flagship product, which is whiskey and coffee cream. It's a Baileys-type cream, but made of coffee, delicious. So, we are doing an effort to diversify coffee.

**Where do you sell those products?**

Here, at the association.

*And at fairs or something like that too?*

Also. We also take them there. In fact, this Sunday, July 17, we are going to have a stand in Apía, because in Apía there is a special coffee fair, and we are going to take the creams there, to Apía. Therefore, we are trying to take advantage of all the fairs, all the events, to become known. To make ourselves visible as an association, and as producers of different coffee products.

**Great! Regarding the proposal that we are trying to create, this is the image of what we have. We call it BioHub, and what is sought is a win-win. So, what is the aim of the proposal and the project? These are waste generators, for instance, villages, properties, around coffee. Bearing in mind that forest and agricultural residues, which could even be urban, are going to be used. What you were saying right now, try to diversify. Thus, this waste would be taken to a transformation plant, to a biorefinery to change it. It could be turned into a biofuel that can be used in the maritime component, and apart from that, a biochar could also be produced, which would be an organic enhancer as well, which could return here to those who are giving us the material.**

To the crops, the producers, for instance.

**Exactly, indeed. What do you think of this model?**

Well, look, I find it very cool, and it fits very well with the model that we have been working on in the cluster for some time, which is the circular economy model. I see it as very similar to the circular economy, where all that waste is being given a new use to minimize waste as much as possible and make use of it. Very interesting.

**Do you think that perhaps you as coffee growers or the association could participate in projects like this?**

I would think so, of course.

**How?**

We could work, for example, providing biomass, even providing human capital, people who want to be educated and trained in this, and who find other solutions, other alternatives that fit the model. Yes, of course.

**Regarding this, which benefits do you think you could have if they participate in this chain?**

Well, we could generate products, and some by-products, and generate more income. Increase our income from the generation of new products.

**Would that be one of the reasons to participate?**

It would be one, to improve the income of the association. Environmentally, well, the reduction of waste, and let's say, focus on a new field of training, which would be on this topic of BioHubs. Learn more and get more involved, but issues, for example, of certifications for producers, who meet certain goals, certain indicators that can be certified for doing the job well.

**Indeed. And here comes the next question. To keep them motivated and participate in these projects, what can you think of?**

Well, let's see, the coffee grower, the economic incentive. That is a thing that moves masses and will move masses. The economic incentive. Find a way in which the farmer who works on it has an incentive, in some way. Or that the business model expands, the generation of new services, or products... But basically that, an improvement in income. Fundamental.

**Why do you think this type of initiative is important?**

First, because of the environmental factor. In other words, the benefit to the environment that is being made, to the reduction of waste, is fundamental. Other industries are also benefiting, for example the biofuels industry. Another thing is that it is being given a way out, for example, we already know that fossil fuels are on the verge of extinction. So, here we are giving it as a new alternative that is a change of model. That change of model from fossil fuels to more renewable energies. In this case, biofuels, for example, and biochar. First time I hear that term, biochar. I find it very curious. There we could improve.

**What is intended, in general, is to take advantage of all these residues, and here it is, for example, what you said about coffee grounds, cherry coffee residues, and even other residues such as cacao and others, take them to this biorefinery plant and use either this biofuel, or this biochart, which is what we could use as fertilizer. This biocrude could also be used in paints, in fertilizers, it could be used for maritime purposes, or it could be used for different things. Thinking about that, why do you think that these types of projects have not been generated?**

Well, firstly, for those projects you need the will of many actors. The responsibility cannot fall solely on the producer because it would be an incomplete process. In order for this BioHubs model to be carried out, for example, which is a win-win system, which is what is sought in the circular economy, a win-win, all the actors need to be committed. And very important, the strengthening of associativity. Strengthen associations so that they can improve their processes and that finally materializes, it can materialize. That new products or services can really come out of this initiative, that can really strengthen associations, that bring them more income, that people commit, become passionate, but then that, if it is a win-win, it comes together with the incentives. How is the person going to benefit if we are going to make this effort?

**Do you know any research or proposals that focus on energies or something like that? Have you heard it related to this coffee thing?**

Energy? Energy generation, not really. Coffee wood is a very good fuel, but I don't know to what extent it is actually being used as fuel.

**Do you think that this type of proposal or this type of chain could affect what is now in the world of coffee?**

Of course, it can generate an important change, of course. In the world of coffee, it can even change a paradigm that has been repeated for many years, the paradigm of the linear economy basically. That no use is made of the waste, and basically that ends up as waste, that it is not given any use, polluting because many coffee by-products are polluting. Thus, it would be a paradigm shift, but this requires a lot of commitment and years of work.

**Speaking of the actors like you mentioned just now and taking advantage of all the knowledge you have of coffee, we made this matrix where we seek to relate how much interest there is at the moment in participating in this type of value chain, and how much power they could have. Both power and interest. So, we involved different actors. There is the national, regional, or departmental, and municipal government, communication platforms, transportation, collectors, academia, coffee growers, Senicafé, the National Federation of Coffee Growers, cooperatives, and technology providers, which we believe they have to do, that they are related to coffee. What do you think it may be missing there? What organization or institution would be missing?**

Let's see, we could involve... Well, there are the governmental organizations... Well, because of the work that we, the associations, do. I would include associations.

**Where would you locate them?**

In this graph...

**Relating power and interest....**

Power and interest... A high interest of the associations, but a medium power.

**Where is the maritime industry, or where, more or less?**

Like around here, no, higher interest. It would be higher interest.

**Like, for example, Senicafé.**

Around where Senicafé is, more or less, but here, next to it, the associations.

**So far, which another actor do you think could be missing there that we can also consider, but that we missed?**

Another actor, let's see, well… Let's say, in fact, on the subject of coffee growers there is a lot to break down because there are also roasters, there are producers. We should make a difference because each one can play a different role.

**For example, roasters, where could we place them?**

The roasters at a medium interest, and a medium power, around here, in the middle they could be.

**What other actors could we include?**

Another actor? For instance, the whole issue of academia. Ah, the academia is already.

**And is it well located?**

I would think so; it has a lot of interest, but its power is not that high. The issue, for example... I mean, it's all the actors who play a role in the coffee. For example, an actor, but it is already far above all this, would be the New York Stock Exchange.

**Could that influence?**

The stock market determines the international price of coffee per pound.

**So, for example, where would that price regulation go?**

For example, they have very high power, but perhaps low interest. So, I would place it here, at the same level as the national government, and even higher. Stock market issues... The stock market influences the price of coffee and has a direct influence, internationally.

**Regarding the location of these actors that we identified, who would you move? Who do you think can be changed, or would you leave them like that with the position they are in?**

No, I think that's fine.

**You who work with the barista and all that, and with the association, with whom do you have more relationships?**

Us? As an association?

**Yes.**

In this case, with Senicafé we have a close relationship, with the cooperatives as well, a very close relationship, the Federation is like the national order, so also a little bit, and the associations with government entities.

**Do you have a close relationship?**

Yes, of course. For example, in terms of projects, alliances, we work, we are working together on that.

**For example, with Senicafé, what kind of relationship do you have?**

Senicafé is for the issues, for example, with producers who want to renew crops, they can lend them the new coffee sprouts. The material. That is. In terms of fertilizers, material, also new varieties of coffee that you want to implement, technical advice with Senicafé.

**Do you want to add anything. How did you like the idea?**

The idea is great because, for example, here the future still looks in a very different way, and that is, it can reach more people by showing it this way. I think the initiative is excellent, being able to put all the actors of the coffee on the table, and how these actors interrelate, and how we can improve. What is the end goal? Basically, this whole coffee thing. I would divide it into two, which is to appreciate better the coffee we have, to educate more about coffee, that is, to become more passionate about the subject of coffee, and ultimately, an economic incentive. When the producers begin to see more money, believe me that the commitment increases, and a lot.

**Does that influence?**

Of course, quite a lot, but also not everything is money, also passion, what you like about coffee, what motivates you, which in my case is barista, being able to learn how to prepare a good coffee, learn techniques, methods, preparations, I don't know, it's hard to explain, but it's a passion that comes from the drink itself, from this context. Each person is passionate in a different way, but everything starts from there.

**Alright. Finally, is there something else you want to discuss, about the topic? That you think we can consider in the future, what comes to mind?**

In the future, well, let's see, starting to manage the bases of the circular economy applied to this model because I see it very much as a circular economy. I see it very similar, but the fact is that the circular economy has many more points. So, to begin to involve that here, to align it, that a much more comprehensive, more complete model or proposal can be formed.

**Anything else you need to add?**

No, that's fine, thank you very much.

**To you. Thank you very much.**