
TRAIN 50 ZAPOTEC FAMILIES IN VANILLA CULTIVATION

JUSTIFICATION

The previous main economic activity of the Zapotec population of the northern highlands of Oaxaca was coffee cultivation. Despite their widespread abandonment, coffee plantations have a high ecological relevance, since they are catalogued as an agrosystem rich in avifauna, as reported by Bolaños-Méndez (2012) in Rincón de Ixtlán, with 34 species of birds in coffee plantations with mesophilous forest and 33 species in coffee plantations with medium forests; It also contributes to the conservation of native floristic species used for shade in the traditional cultivation system; it has contributed to keeping the advance of the agricultural frontier at bay in unsuitable lands and not less important are its ecosystemic contributions. Without a doubt, it is necessary to preserve and diversify this important activity that has won so many national and international awards and recognition, adding a compatible economic activity in space and cultivation system such as vanilla.

BUDGET REQUIRED: USD 29,350.00

Among the funding options that are visualized to be able to execute this initiative is the beginning of the funding experience with the support of organizations such as Global Gibing, as well as seeking the participation of the group of producers in calls for government programs in the rural development sector.

The economic resources, which are expected to be collected, will provide comprehensive support (training, technical assistance, inputs, tools, vegetative material, follow-up visits) to producers of coffee and vanilla, in order to seek a higher income for their work. This makes a difference compared to the occasional support of some programs (that deliver plants, tools or subsidies) without follow-up. The Mesophile Group will be following up. On the other hand, with the technical appropriation on the productive processes, harvest and market of two economic activities, the producers will become less and less dependent, at the same time that they manage to make their plots more profitable, now occupied only by coffee plantations.

ACTIVITY	USD
Workshop on the evaluation of cultivation areas, introduction to vanilla cultivation and identification of resilient coffee varieties.	1,950.00
Purchase of cuttings for the establishment of a plot of demonstrative culture and its reproduction.	2,300.00
Acquisition of seeds of resilient coffee varieties	3,600.00
Consultancy in the establishment of family coffee tree nurseries and vanilla care in a demonstration plot.	2,500.00
Training for the planning of crops in plots of vanilla and coffee producers	2,500.00

Follow-up to vanilla and coffee sowing (year 1)	6,000.00
Follow-up to vanilla and coffee sowing (year 2)	5,500.00
Follow-up to vanilla and coffee sowing (year 3)	5,000.00
Advice on the marketing of vanilla	2,500.00
Total	29,350.00

PROBLEMATICS

The situation of coffee producers in the Sierra Norte of Oaxaca, and in particular in the municipality of San Juan Yaeé, has been the growing pauperization of its population. The High Marginalidad Index of this municipality is defined by an average of almost 4 social deficiencies that identifies CONEVAL, as they are: Educational backwardness (36.8%); Health Services (43.0%); Quality and spaces in Housing (57%); Food (27.4%); Social Security (96.3%) and Basic Services in Housing (21.7%). All of this places 87.4% of the population at the bottom of the welfare line.

In the last 5 years, families that had coffee production as a source of economic income are losing it after a strong plague attack. This puts the cultivated areas at risk of deforestation, as they try to replace them with productive activities that are more aggressive with nature, because they are inadequate to the land or because they demand more land. Another latent risk is that low levels of well-being will worsen or that more people will migrate. On the other hand, there are little explored productive opportunities in the region that could replace or diversify coffee.

It is public knowledge and government agencies that the coffee crisis has worsened, especially since the fall in prices since the 1990/1991 cycle. The price of coffee in Mexico is governed by the quotations of the New York Stock Exchange, as well as by the ups and downs that supply and demand originate, propitiating that this price is constantly modified- as well as by pests and diseases such as the coffee berry borer or the persistence of the rust proper to coffee (*Hemileia vastatrix*), which resulted in the loss of plants due to defoliation and therefore, harvests are low. It is also observed that climate change is an important factor to consider since coffee cultivation is developed in specific sites of climate and vegetation (medium jungles and mesophilous forest), according to the prediction models presented in the report on climate change presented by the CIIDIR Oaxaca unit the types of vegetation where the crop is developed will show an increase in temperature.

Public policies aimed at this sector have been characterized by the decline in economic resources, significantly, and the lack of advice and the lack of shielding to the collapse of prices is nowhere seen. A current threat is the agreement signed between the federal government and the transnational company Nestlé, which intends to install a robust coffee production plant, which is a variety of low quality, but high productivity, which will place in a state of greater defenselessness to the coffee population. Although Mexican coffee culture is oriented towards specialty coffees, the quality of which depends on Arabica varieties, Nestlé's competition is in the market with monopoly power and threatening the social and economic conditions of small producers.

HOW THIS PROJECT WILL SOLVE THE PROBLEM

The project aims to restore by improving the traditional coffee cultivation system, so that even with low prices of products with higher production, it will bring some profitability to the producer. On the other hand, adding vanilla to the same space, sharing the advantages of the already established agrosystem, becomes a productive alternative with regional potential.

Natural vanilla is a product that is once again booming in the market, facing the disadvantage that its former cultivation niches are highly modified; the corner of the northern sierra of Oaxaca, where San Juan Yaeé is located, meets the natural conditions required for its production, in addition to the fact that the management of vanilla is easily appropriated. Although the demand for this product is unsatisfied in general, the purpose is to incorporate more producers, escalate the process of treatment of the product and incursion into local markets.

The project will provide comprehensive support (training, technical assistance, inputs, tools, vegetative material, follow-up visits) for the introduction of suitable vanilla varieties (provision of cuttings) and sowing, crop and shade management, incorporation of more families into production and marketing. For coffee, the selection of the most resilient varieties under agroforestry systems will be supported, and the current cultivation system will be reviewed in a participatory manner in order to intervene with opportunities for improvement.

With the technical appropriation of the productive, harvest and market processes of both economic activities, producers will become less and less dependent on external support, while at the same time making production more profitable in their respective plots.

LONG-TERM IMPACT

The families have the economic and material security that allows them to have the necessary income to satisfy their basic needs, by maintaining two commercial productive activities, optimizing the use of their plots, without altering the present natural landscape.

The families maintain their roots, at least at current standards of living, despite probable fluctuations in the market prices of the products, since it is somewhat unlikely that both products will fall at the same time.

The social cohesion of the community is encouraged, since insofar as this is community work, the majority of the population participates in the production and marketing of coffee, as well as in the search for new complementary economic alternatives.

To the extent that the whole visualizes that there is a community alternative to continue in coffee production and productive diversification in the same space, with optimal results, they will be in better organizational conditions to seek other alternatives to the multiple problems they have.

It should not be forgotten that the community assembly is the instance of greater participation and decision on the life of these communities.

Increasing incorporation of producers to vanilla planting and restoration of coffee areas, with the participation of men and women, youth, adults and seniors.

Coexistence of the people of the region in a healthy environment through the application of agroforestry techniques, duly appropriate, that allow them to conserve the ecosystems that surround them, reducing the risk of compromising food security, economic and health, among others, which enter into crisis when the ecosystems lose their balance.

CHRONOGRAM

ACTIVITY	2019	2020	2021	2022
	QUARTER			
Workshop: evaluation of cultivation areas, introduction to vanilla cultivation and identification of resilient coffee varieties.		■		
Purchase of cuttings for the establishment of a plot of demonstrative culture and reproduction.		■		
Acquisition of seeds of resilient coffee varieties	3,600.00	■		
Consultancy in the establishment of family coffee tree nurseries and vanilla care in a demonstration plot.	2,500.00	■		
Training for the planning of crops in plots of vanilla and coffee producers	2,500.00	■		
Follow-up to vanilla and coffee sowing (year 1)	6,000.00		■ ■	
Follow-up to vanilla and coffee sowing (year 2)	5,500.00			■ ■ ■
Follow-up to vanilla and coffee sowing (year 3)	5,000.00			■ ■ ■ ■
Consultancy for vanilla marketing	2,500.00			■ ■ ■ ■