

# Co-creating a vision of La Montañita 20 years from now: a territory of food, biodiversity and hope.



INITIATIVE ON  
Low-Emission  
Food Systems

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# Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Workshop objectives:.....	5
Participants .....	6
<b>Objective 1: Identify the values that describe community’s priorities 6</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Objective 2: Create a vision for a desirable future .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Women’s visions .....	10
Men’s visions .....	12
Vision statement.....	14
<b>Objective 3: Develop scenarios and actionable steps to achieve the vision .....</b>	<b>16</b>
1. Steps and actions.....	16
2. Necessary changes.....	17
3. Necessary resources and stakeholders.....	20
<b>References .....</b>	<b>25</b>

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# Introduction

The development model adopted in Caquetá, Colombia, has led to deforestation caused by extractivist policies and land use dynamics in the territory. According to IGAC (2014), 13% of the department area is overused or misused, particularly for livestock production. In fact, IDEAM et al. (2016) identify Caquetá as the third largest producer of CO<sub>2</sub> in Colombia. However, most of the territory (72%) remains conserved as forest (FAO & ADR, 2021), which is protected under different conservation institutional frameworks such as National and Regional Parks and Indigenous lands. Importantly, Garrett et al. (2023, page 4) state that “Indigenous land occupy 27% of the area in the Amazon (looking in particular at Bolivia, Brazil and Colombia), and deforestation in these areas is half the rate outside them”.

A new development approach being implemented in other Amazonian countries, in particular Brazil, may respond to the needs of the territory and its inhabitants for sustainable use of ecosystems. According to Garrett et al. (2023) socio-bioeconomies “include a combination of activities that maintain productive and conserved multifunctional landscapes and cultural diversity, while promoting economic and social added value to the Amazon’s biodiversity and agrobiodiversity, including: the provision of numerous ecosystem services through the conservation and restoration of forest and aquatic ecosystems and the diversified production and processing of native plants (i.e., fruits, nuts, medicines), fish, and others”. Central to this approach is ensuring sustainability, equity, and justice especially for women and youth.

For our purposes, we define socio-bioeconomy as place-specific, user-inspired ways of sustainably managing renewable biological resources (from land, air, and water) to produce food, goods, and energy, while decoupling development from emissions and degradation (Rodríguez et al., 2019). It is crucial to recognize that Indigenous peoples and traditional communities in the region have been practicing sustainable resource management of high-value tradable resources at regional and global scales. These place-based solutions, founded on local knowledge, and family-based livelihoods, have been underestimated in scope and overlooked by mainstream development policies. However, these food systems are of a great importance in the Amazon region, including Caquetá. Their potential value has yet to be fully investigated, but studies suggest they offer viable paths to simultaneously reverse forest degradation in the Amazon and improve livelihoods for its peoples while preserving social and cultural diversity (Brondizio et al. 2021).

In previous reports of the work developed in the frame of the OneCGIAR initiative on Low Emission Food Systems (Mitigate +), using participatory rural appraisal tools in La Montañita (Maya et al., 2024), we identified that while livestock is crucial in the food system, families also grow a variety of other crops for both self-consumption and commercialization. These include sacha inchi, sugarcane, pineapple, cocoa, plantain, cassava, coffee, orchard fruit trees, livestock, and beekeeping, as well as other Amazonian fruits like chestnut, copuazú, açai, and canangucha. Maya et al. (2024) conclude that “most of these products generate modest income but have high value for domestic consumption, which contributes to family savings and food security”.

Livestock is not only the primary source of household income but also the economic activity that has enabled families to save money, which is used then used to buy land and invest in other economic activities within the farms (Maya et al., 2024). Nevertheless, for participants in the different activities of the participatory innovation labs, it is clear that changes need to be made in the production systems to make them sustainable, requiring changes at different scales.

### What do we need to have a sustainable agri-food system?

- Well-being at home, having the ability to cultivate, ensuring food security, and income.
- Access to seeds to produce quality and environmentally sustainable crops.
- Access to knowledge and implementation of good production practices with technical assistance and support. Technical assistance was a recurring aspect, especially in Montañaíta.
- Diversification of crops and implementation of sustainable practices, such as organic fertilizers, recycling, and reuse of resources.
- Conservation of biodiversity, including species that can be used for consumption.
- Public policies that benefit rural men and women and promote and value conservation actions.
- Public investment in aspects such as risk systems, community nursery gardens, and infrastructure.
- Community organization.
- Environmental education and awareness.
- Adequate market conditions, stable and fair prices, and the consolidation of rural markets.

Source: Maya et al. (2024)

### What difficulties do we face in achieving sustainable food systems?

- Lack of knowledge and information.
- Little support and visibility for women's groups.
- Low appreciation of the importance of food security.
- Weaknesses or absence of technical assistance.
- Limited economic resources and low added value to products.
- Scarcity of suitable land for cultivation and limited access to native seeds.
- Little government support and inefficiency of public policies for farmers.
- Lack of strategies to address climate change (adaptation and mitigation): land planning strategies and local capacity to manage projects.
- Impact of cooperation projects that do not recognize the region's social, political, economic, and environmental features.
- Few roads, most of which are in poor condition.
- Difficulties in marketing and in accessing new and specialized markets.

Source: Maya et al. (2024)

Crucial to the socio-bioeconomy is establishing inclusive and participatory methods to identify how it can be achieved, considering communities' knowledge and the challenges they may face in developing this. It is also imperative to recognize that "Amazonian countries inherited a flawed external—and internal-colonial vision that development comes from converting socio-biodiversity wealth into deforestation-causing homogeneous commodities in a global market" (Garrett et al. 2023, page 4).

The work already done in La Montañaíta provides insight into the family production system existing and some of the products grown on their farms that could potentially be part of a socio-bioeconomy system, such as cocoa, sacha inchi, copuazú and açai. The production of these products could follow the four guiding principles for socio-bioeconomy development proposed by Bergamo et al. (2022): zero deforestation; diversification of production methods; strengthening Amazonian traditional practices; and equitable benefit sharing.

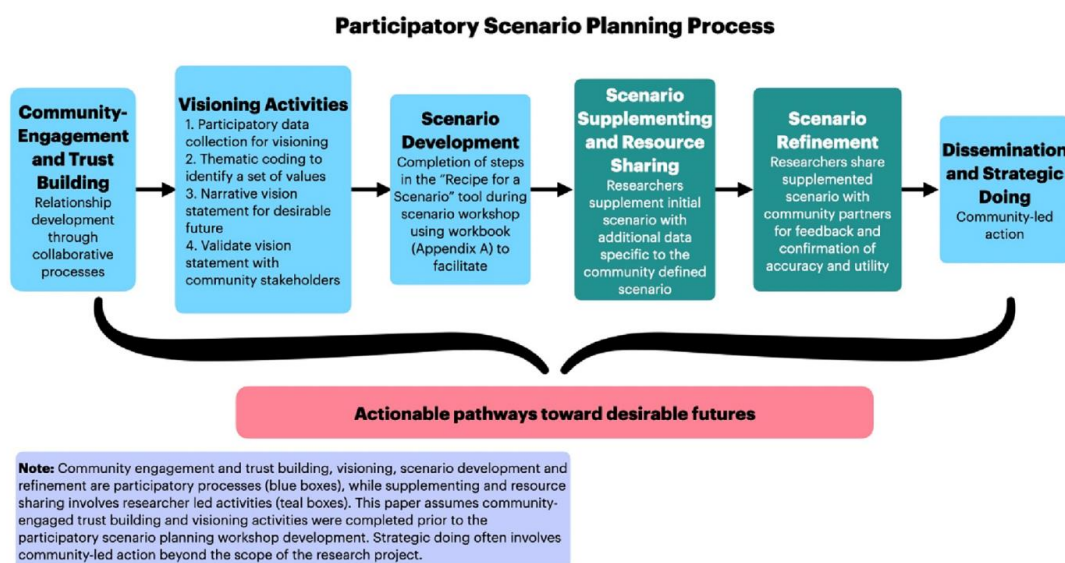
To facilitate a conversation around socio-bioeconomy in the department of Caquetá, Colombia, within the framework of the OneCGIAR initiative on Low Emission Food Systems (Mitigate +), a visioning exercise was conducted with the participants of the Participatory Rural Innovation Lab. This exercise aimed to co-create a vision for the food system in La Montañita and identify the actions needed to achieve the desired future. The goal was to imagine and co-create a vision of a desirable future for La Montañita 20 years from now, in which bioeconomy could play a crucial role, particularly in the production and distribution of products from the participants' perspectives, and to formulate actionable steps to get there.

## Methodology

We used scenario planning as a methodology that facilitates the discussion of positive change towards just and sustainable futures. Authors such as Waylen et al. (2015) have applied this methodology in the context of rural Colombia. This scenario planning aligns with the objectives of the Low-Emission Food Systems OneCGIAR initiative to transform the food system in a participatory manner while improving local development initiatives (Vanegas-Cubillos et al 2023).

To begin, we defined scenarios as described by Lembi et al. 2024 (page 93): “plausible and desirable descriptions of future trajectories of a system with specific, associated steps to achieve a desirable future that should be co-created with stakeholders and draw on evidence-based research.” For this scenario planning process, we aim to engage different stakeholders and voices in the co-creation of this future. In particular, we aim to foster the participation of women and youth. An important consideration in terms of participation to the workshops, according to Lembi et al. (2024), is: “Ensuring a diversity of perspectives within the community, being attentive to power dynamics, and validating findings with other community members is important in generating a vision and ultimately a set of scenarios that are inclusive and attractive to a variety of stakeholders”

Participation in the workshop leading to the vision and scenario planning aims to empower participants by ensuring equitable participation. The values, vision construction, and scenario planning outlined below follow Wentworth et al. (2022) and Lembi et al. (2023) in their description of the “recipe for a scenario” tool.



Source: Lembi et al. (2024)

The figure above, provided by Lembi et al. (2024), outlines the necessary steps for conducting a participatory scenario planning process through a workshop. In this case, the work is built upon the engagement and trust relationships that the Initiative on Low emission food systems team from Universidad Javeriana has built over the years with the different communities in Caquetá. The workshop had the following objectives:

### Workshop objectives:

1. Identify a set of values that describe the community's priorities for the productive system of La Montañita, ensuring that the values and perspectives of both men and women are considered and integrated.
2. Co-create a vision for the territorial system of La Montañita, that outlines a desirable future for all community members, with a particular emphasis on the needs, aspirations, and roles of women in shaping this vision for the system in 20 years.
3. Develop scenarios that present actionable steps toward achieving a transformative vision.

**Step one** in the visioning activities is the development of a vision. As described by Falk et al. (2021) "Special emphasis should be placed on a clear delineation of the system and its contextual boundaries and identifying the most important stakeholders in the system". For the vision, we used a storyline that does not specifically focus on socio-bieconomy but rather considers the municipality 20 years from now, where current deforestation rates have ceased. This future envisions steady production and commercialization of native species, including fruits and nuts. Primordial to this vision is the presence of social organizations, such as cooperatives, that can support farmers and are led by both men and women.

**Step two** focuses on identifying the community values: What elements are essential when considering the municipality's future? **Step three** is the validation of the vision, ensuring it includes the three most important values identified in step two. **Step four** involves scenario planning, which aims to transition from the vision to actionable pathways for achieving that vision over the next 20 years. We conducted scenario planning in two groups to ensure we capture the steps that both men and women believe are necessary for reaching the vision. Wentworth et al. (2022) describe this process as "cooking a scenario together".

The scenario planning outlined below follows the "recipe for a scenario" tool developed by Wentworth et al. (2022) and Lembi et al. (2024):

1. There are many ways in which one can get to the vision, where will you start?
2. We are considering the municipality for the vision, but to achieve this vision, we may need some changes either at a smaller scale (your farm, a cooperative) or larger scale (policies).
3. Time frame. The target date for achieving this scenario will be 30 years in the future. This should provide time for significant change, while still focusing on actionable results in the foreseeable future.
4. Resources and stakeholders
  - a. 4.What resources are needed to complete these actions? Money is central for change, but we want to identify other resources such as training, technical assistance, and credit that may be needed to achieve the scenario goals.
  - b. Who are the community partners and organizations that are needed to achieve this?
  - c. Are there any organizations that may be impacted by the implementation of these actions?

5. Summary of the scenario building. 3- 5 sentences that illustrate how to get to the vision (add a picture, drawing that illustrate the future).

Participants in the visioning activity are those people that have been participating in the participatory rural innovation lab (PRIL) hosted by Agrosolidaria. The invitations to the workshop were done through Agrosolidaria and included people from the participant organizations and also people working for the local government such as the Municipal Unit of Technical Assistance (UMATA for its initial in Spanish). In the invitation process, we intentionally invited both men and women, as well as representatives of youth organizations.

## Participants

Nineteen participants attended the workshop: 11 women and 8 men. Women's average age was 38.9 years old (minimum= 20; maximum=59); men's average age was 56.4 (minimum = 26, maximum = 76). They represented the following organizations that are part of the Participatory Rural Innovation Lab (PRIL) developed as part of the OneCGIAR initiative on Low Emission Food Systems (Mitigate +):

- AGROSOLIDARIA
- Asociación agropecuaria Emprendedores del Triunfo (ASOGROEMPT)
- Asociación de Mujeres Emprendedoras Generadoras de Oportunidades (ASMEGO)
- Asociación de Mujeres Fénix de la Cordillera (ASMOFEN)
- Asociación de productores de caña (ASOPROCAPA)
- Juventudes (JEP) - Youth representatives
- Santuario Travel
- Unidad Técnica Agropecuaria (UMATA) - Municipality's technical assistance office.

In the next section, the results of the visioning exercise developed in La Montañita are presented according to the three objectives of the workshop:

Objective 1: Identify the values that describe the community's priorities

Objective 2: Co-create a vision that outlines a desirable future for the La Montañita territorial system in 20 years.

Objective 3: Develop scenarios that present actionable steps toward achieving a transformative vision.

# Objective 1: Identify the values that describe community's priorities

Values are understood as "patterns of priorities," and therefore, we aim to identify values at the community level to find the different priorities that community members have with regard to the territorial system they live in. To do so, we split the group into two: one for women and the other for men.

We asked the following questions to each one of the groups:

- What do you appreciate about the production system in LA Montañita?
- Why are those the things that you appreciate?

- Are there things you feel proud of living in Montañita?
- Is there something you wish you could change about the production system in Montañita right now?
- Are there other goals that motivated you to get involved with the producer associations?

In Tables 1 and 2 we present the values expressed by the group of women and men, respectively, regarding what they consider most important at La Montañita.

**Table 1. Values defined by the group of women**

<b>Value</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Innovation</b>	The products grown in Montañita are Amazonian, with added value that reflects their natural origin. They are organic and handcrafted using local ingredients such as exotic fruits, seeds, and plants from the region. Each product follows sustainable practices and contributes to the preservation of biodiversity.
<b>Organic production that cares about health and the environment</b>	Farmers have decided to produce ecological and sustainable products. This initiative aims to promote naturally grown products that have no negative impact on the ecosystem or on those who producing or consuming them.
<b>Sustainable and silvopastoral livestock farming</b>	Livestock farming in La Montañita stands out from others due to the use of sustainable farming practices and silvopastoral strategies. Women have strongly and empowering entered the field of livestock farming in La Montañita. ASMEGO Women's livestock associations are dedicated to milk production and the processing of milk into dairy products.
<b>Women empowerment</b>	La Montañita is one of the regions with the highest number of active women's associations in the productive sector. Many women find that by managing their activities independently, they have more opportunities to grow and contribute to the development of their communities.
<b>Biodiversity</b>	The women producers take pride in living in these areas because they have access to clean water, beautiful landscapes and diverse natural habitat.
<b>Environmental caretakers</b>	On most farms in the hills, efforts are made to care for the environment. For example, forests are no longer cleared.
<b>Determination</b>	Women in the region fight to maintain their autonomy and manage their lands. They implement strategies to make the most of their production inputs.
<b>Environmental education</b>	Environmental education is being promoted in schools, integrating topics on conservation and environmental care of ecosystems. This education not only impacts younger generations but also reaches the older ones.
<b>The youth</b>	There are several youth environmental movements that aim to promote environmental care. Among them are young people from the region who, despite the challenges they face, choose to stay and work within their own community. Some seek to change certain realities in the area, striving to move forward, confront the challenges of armed conflict, and foster the region's potential. They are determined to tackle the issues that affect the youth populations in Montañita and face the challenges of development in their community.
<b>Producer's associations</b>	Joining an association facilitates greater opportunities for receiving support and managing resources compared to individual production. Working together allows women to increase their income and contribute more significantly to the family's budget, access to training in productive topics, and the opportunity to enhance their quality of life through collective work

Source: Own elaboration

**Table 2. Values defined by the group of men**

<b>Value</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Territory</b>	The territory is not just something that provides us with economic well-being; it is our very life. It involves everything social, economic, and organizational.
<b>Organizations</b>	Organizations are a way of interconnecting humans and nature, and they represent strength when working together and in unity.
<b>Biodiversity</b>	It is our wealth and the fundamental foundation for reclaiming the roots and resources that, due to poor management and ignorance, we have destroyed. It includes natural resources, water, and animals—everything encompassed by biodiversity
<b>Human capital</b>	It allows us to train, exchange opinions and ideas, access different technologies, and benefit from the knowledge and experience within the community itself.
<b>Knowledge</b>	It is everything that allows us to build social fabric and innovate. It includes learning in two directions, meaning both scientific knowledge and empirical and/or ancestral wisdom. There must be a balanced relationship between them.
<b>Legacy</b>	It is everything that will be passed down to future generations. For example, nature, flora, fauna, and soils of good quality to ensure the production of food and guarantee food security.
<b>Youth and childhood</b>	They are a transformative and creative force capable of bringing new ideas. They are the ones who will protect and improve this territory, rather than destroy it, because they are the ones who will shape the future
<b>Restoration and recovery</b>	Restoration is a tool for regaining balance, as biodiversity has become unbalanced due to our misuse of it. Recovery, on the other hand, involves the social, biological, and agroecological aspects, addressing not only the environment but also the well-being of communities and sustainable agricultural practices.
<b>Attachment (connection)</b>	It means being people who, not with words or intentions, but through actions, deeply cherish their land.

Source: Own elaboration

It is interesting to note that while women’s values are more centered in the productive dimensions of the system, including innovations, and on the importance of women’s empowerment, women’s organizations and their role as environmental stewards, men’s values are more general, focusing on topics such as the territory, knowledge and legacy. Both groups coincide in the importance of social organization, of integrating the youth into the decision-making processes, and of protecting biodiversity. However, the role of social organizations is defined differently for both groups: for women it is more in line with their empowerment and a way to access resources, while for men social organizations help to structure human-nature and human-human relationships.

The group of women also discussed some of the problems Montañita is facing nowadays (Table 3), along with the specific needs and priorities that require attention to support the municipality’s sustainable development. These challenges reflect the complex interplay between limited resources, infrastructure gaps, and the need for stronger institutional and governmental support. Importantly, the issues also highlight the significant barriers faced by young people, especially in rural areas, where limited opportunities often lead to high school desertion and increased vulnerability to recruitment by armed groups.

**Table 3. Problems faced by the municipality, discussed by women**

<b>Lack of institutional and government support</b>	For the producer community in Montañita, it is challenging to move projects forward without the necessary support. Although they have some resources, the continuity and sustainability of that support are essential. Often, initial support is available, but it fades when the budget runs out or when the project comes to an end
<b>Commercialization</b>	The producers express the need for a guarantee on the sale of their products. They want to be able to take their goods out of the region and sell them at fair prices. For example, the creation of a farmers' market where all their products can be sold would be a solution.
<b>Poor transportation and deficient road conditions</b>	The poor road conditions in Montañita significantly impact the earnings of producers, as a large portion of their income is spent on transporting goods. In the Cordillera, road infrastructure is limited: only precarious paths exist, which makes both access to and exit from these territories difficult.
<b>Climate change</b>	The effects of climate change have impacted production methods in Montañita, particularly affecting the community gardens. As a result, producers have chosen to continue working on the community gardens but also seek alternative sources of income, such as raising chickens. However, there is a shortage of chickens, and there are no places to buy them.
<b>Finding opportunities for young people</b>	In Montañita, an important percentage of the population is youth, with more young people in the rural areas than in the urban areas. The dynamics in both sectors are different and are deeply influenced by their respective social contexts. In rural areas, school desertion rates are high, as many young people leave their studies to work in agriculture or, in some cases, join armed groups or are recruited by them. For some, these groups represent one of the few alternatives in the face of the difficult conditions of vulnerability in which they live, highlighting the urgent need to provide more opportunities and support to change this reality. Young people who manage to access higher education often do not want to return to rural areas, as they do not see development opportunities in their communities. However, others seek alternatives to stay and contribute to rural progress, emphasizing the importance of creating viable options for young people to remain in the countryside.
<b>From workshops to reality</b>	It was emphasized that workshops and training should not remain purely theoretical, but instead be focused on helping people in the region apply the knowledge in practice. This approach will allow for tangible changes in their territory and foster a positive and lasting impact on their communities.

Source: Own elaboration

Additionally, the producers in Montañita face practical difficulties that hinder their economic development, including challenges related to commercialization, poor transportation infrastructure, and the growing impacts of climate change on agricultural productivity. The community has expressed a strong desire for more hands-on training and workshops that go beyond theoretical knowledge and can be applied directly in their daily practices.

## Objective 2: Co-create a vision for a desirable future

In order to develop the vision, we split the group once again in between men and women, and we asked them to engage with the following prompt:

*“Let’s think about the municipality in 20 years from now, in 2044. Imagine all of our hopes and dreams for the production system of the municipality have been realized. What does the future look like? How is it different from today? What types of products will you grow in that desirable food system? What values do your vision prioritize?”*

Each participant wrote his/her vision in a piece of paper, then we socialize all visions and based on them, we build a collective statement that we discussed and validated with the participants.

### **Women’s visions**

The following four visions follow under the values of “organic production” that cares about health and the environment, “innovation” and “sustainable and silvopastoral livestock farming”.



The following two visions follow under the values of “innovation” and “sustainable and silvopastoral livestock farming”.



The following three visions follow under the values of “the youth”, but also connected to some of the problems the group identified.



The following three visions follow under the values of “the youth”, “environmental caretakers”, “producers associations”, and “biodiversity”.



The following two visions follow under the values of “women empowerment”.

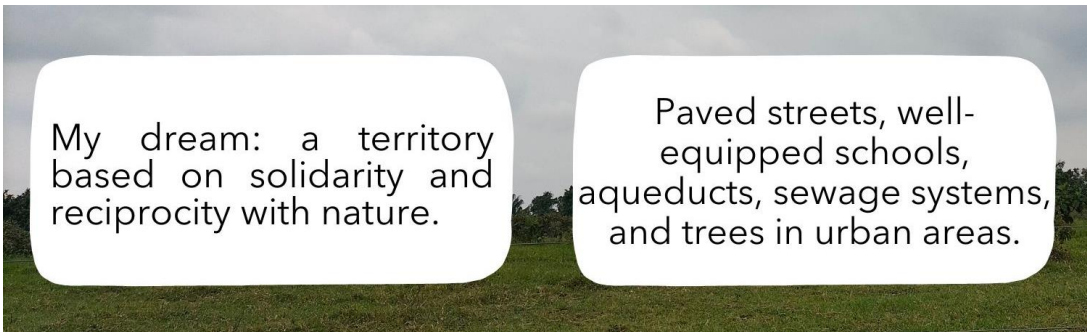


Tackling some of the problems they identified they have these two visions



### Men's visions

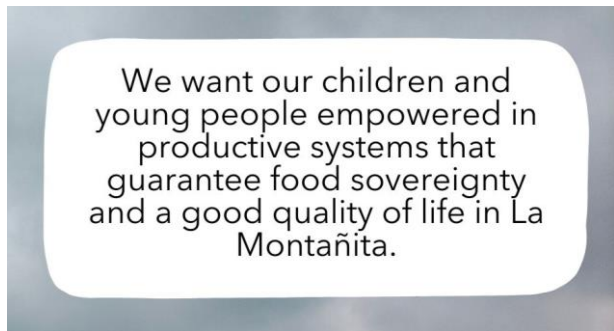
Under the value "territory", they mentioned these two visions.



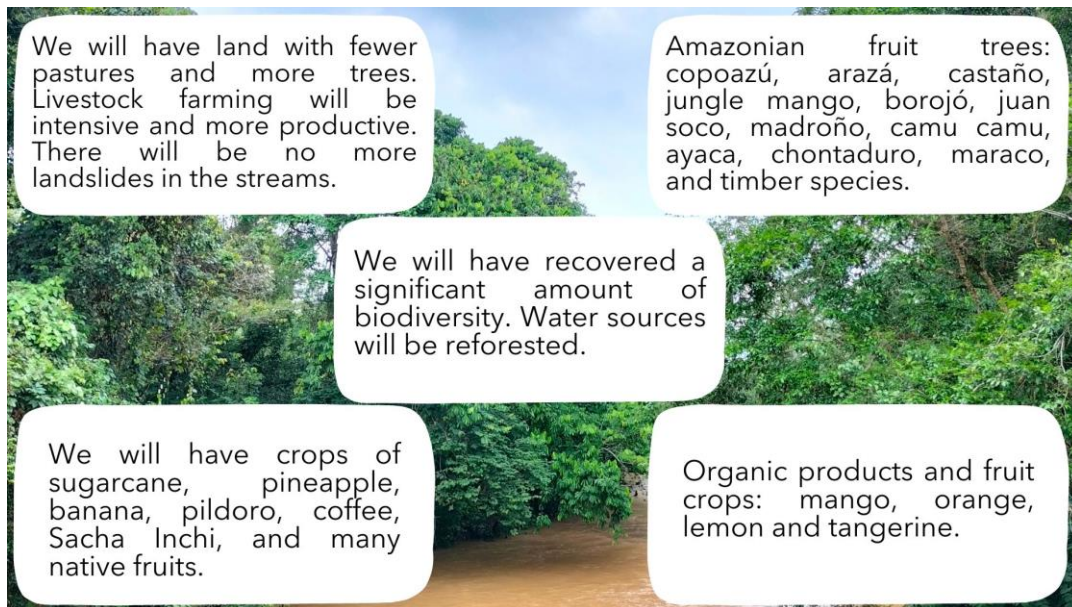
Under the value "organizations", they identified the following vision



Under the value "attachment" they mentioned this vision



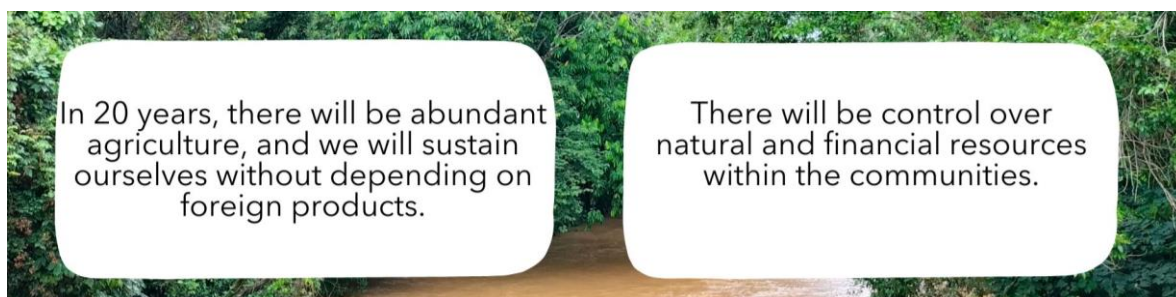
The following five visions follow under the values of "legacy", "restoration and recovery", and "biodiversity".



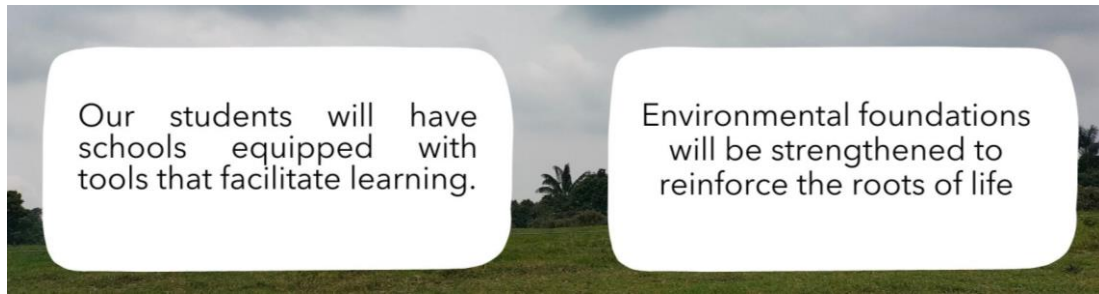
The following three visions follow under the value of “biodiversity”.



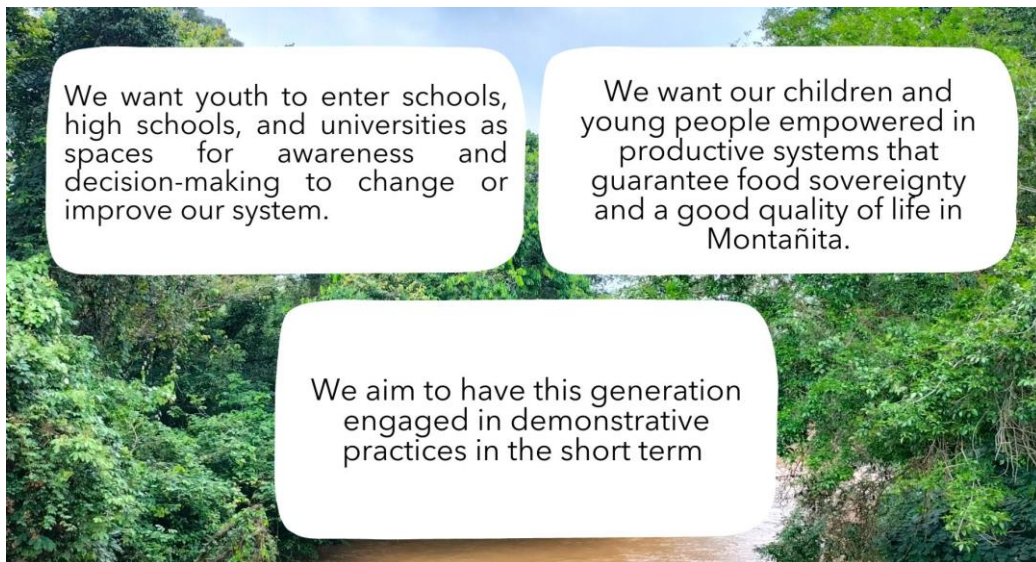
The following two visions follow under the values of “territory” and “legacy”.



The following two visions follow under the values of “youth”, “legacy”, and “knowledge”.



Under the value “youth and childhood”, the group identified three visions.



### Vision statement

After that, the facilitators drafted a vision statement for both groups.

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**In 20 years, Montañaíta will be a solidarity-based and biodiverse territory, founded on innovative, sustainable, and diverse farming systems that ensure food sovereignty. The land will be reforested, and water sources will be protected. Productive systems will include the transformation of local agricultural products and the use of the territory for ecotourism. A collection center will ensure the commercialization of a rich variety of products, ranging from bananas and sacha inchi to Amazonian fruits, derivatives of coca leaves and cacao. The organizations, including women’s groups, will be strengthened and have the resources to carry out their activities. Youth, women, and children will be empowered and deeply rooted in the territory, with opportunities to develop their life projects. Education will be practical and relevant. Both urban and rural areas will have adequate infrastructure (rural aqueducts, energy sources, roads, sewage systems) and the technology necessary to access markets and knowledge (e.g., internet).**

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While the facilitators were summarizing the vision, participants were asked to draw on a piece of paper their vision for Montañaíta 20 years from now. The two draws below show the results.



# Objective 3: Develop scenarios and actionable steps to achieve the vision

This step aims to move from the vision to the actionable pathways to achieve the vision in 20 years. We plan this scenario in two groups to ensure we gather the steps that both men and women believe are needed to achieve the vision.

## 1. Steps and actions

The developed vision has many different aspects and dimensions and there are many ways to achieve it. How can we start this process?

### Group of women

- **Caring for the environment:** Protecting water sources, planting trees, avoiding burning or cutting down trees, and promoting waste collection.
- **Training and environmental education:** Providing education to raise awareness about environmental protection.
- **Land for youth:** Empowering young people, supporting their entrepreneurial initiatives by implementing a "seed plan", and offering incentives.
- **Community work:** Strengthen community action boards (juntas de acción comunal, J.A.C.), enhance local associations, and improve school conditions.
- **Improving quality of life:** Addressing basic needs and improving living conditions for all.
- **Improving agroecosystems and implementing sustainable production practices:** Plant native seeds, avoiding using chemicals, promoting local producers, and showcase sustainable cultivation practices.
- **Supporting local products:** Buying local goods, supporting local businesses, promoting ecotourism, and providing training.
- **Scholarships for young people:** Offering scholarships to support higher education and personal development for youth.
- **Creating a collection center:** Seeking support from the local government, offering training on product transformation, and acquiring machinery for product processing.
- **Engaging in politics:** Organizing to choose better candidates, participate in political decision-making, and establish oversight committees.

### Group of men

- **Organizing and training:** In topics such as soil improvement, silvopastoral systems, enhanced production, better agricultural and livestock practices, to raise awareness and foster commitment.
- **Project formulation:** For example, for the creation of a collection center.
- **Involving children in social work:** by engaging them in decision-making and the commitment to recovering our roots.
- **Respecting the opinions of others and encouraging dialogue.**
- **Inviting young people to join organizational processes** to ensure their active participation.
- **Giving responsibilities and decision-making power to youth** in productive systems to foster leadership and initiative.

- **Involving women in decision-making** and recognize their contributions to community and economic development.
- **Recovering native seeds and promoting seed exchanges** to preserve local biodiversity.
- **Avoiding cutting down and burning trees**, focusing on restoring damaged ecosystems (restoration efforts).
- **Transferring technology rationally and in an environmentally friendly manner** to ensure sustainability.
- **Knowledge exchange**: Fostering sharing of local knowledge and best practices.
- **Local research**: Recovering native species, analyze soil quality, evaluate production yields, assess ecosystems, study water quality, and conduct household surveys to strengthen community organization.
- **Collaborate with authorities** to improve infrastructure and basic services.
- **Seeking commercial allies and promoting the consumption of local products**; strengthening the network of local vendors.
- **Improving the transformation and presentation of food products** to add value and market appeal.
- **Incorporating the importance of solidarity economy** into educational curricula.
- **Managing the operation of a food processing plant** to add value to agricultural products and create more sustainable livelihoods.
- **Building local associative networks** for conscious, responsible, and solidarity-based consumption.

The steps and actions outlined by both the women’s and men’s groups reflect a shared commitment to fostering a more sustainable, equitable, and empowered community. While each group emphasized different priorities, both groups highlighted the importance of education, local empowerment, environmental protection, and community collaboration. Both groups highlighted the importance of collaboration with local authorities, community-based decision-making, and active participation in politics to bring about the necessary changes.

## 2. Necessary changes

We are considering La Montañita for the vision, but to achieve this vision, we may need some changes either at a smaller scale (your household, farm, association) or larger scale (municipality, department, policies). Identify actions and the scale in which they take place to discuss how to achieve the vision.

### Group of women:

#### Changes at the household level

- Shifting husbands’ mindset regarding who is in charge of caring activities.
- Seeking support for innovation.
- Sharing roles and responsibilities within the household
- Engaging in dialogue with the entire family about the importance of household sustainability.
- Valuing the work of women.
- Raising awareness about not leaving trash behind.

#### Changes at the farm level

- Continue progressing with home gardens.
- Planting trees.
- Using organic fertilizers.

- Support to obtain trees.
- Support for labor.
- Financial resources.
- Low-interest loans.

### **Changes at the associations' level**

- Accountability to ensure resources don't always go to the same people.
- Include young people.
- More training on how to write and execute a project.
- Financial support.

### **Changes at the municipal and regional level**

- Improve roads, communication systems, and water supply.
- Build a collection center and ensure transportation of products.
- Provide education and job opportunities for young people.
- Ensure transparency in who works with the mayor.
- Contribute trees to the rural communities (veredas).

### **Changes at the political level**

- Support producer organizations.
- Amend to the Law 2<sup>nd</sup> which restricts productive uses of land in areas already inhabited by peasants.
- Implement mechanisms to ensure accountability.

## **Group of men:**

### **Changes at the household level**

- Involve all members in decision-making for both the productive system and the household.
- Promote teamwork to prevent individualism.
- Give children and young people the opportunity to experience other realities and/or experiences.
- Allow and listen to the needs and opinions of all household members.
- Discuss the importance of ecosystems and species within the household.

### **Changes at the farm level**

- Implementing information campaigns to protect what we have and introduce new ways to restore what we've damaged
- Restoring ecosystems and respecting species.
- Conserving and protecting nature.
- Land planning for rural areas: farm planning, understanding what can be produced on the land, and determining the best use of available soil (soil studies).
- Rational use of resources, maximizing and recycling within the system (e.g., organic fertilizers).

### **Changes at the associations' level**

- Strengthening community and family participation arenas (including children, women, and youth) in both rural and urban areas.
- Acknowledging the different people who are part of the association, whether directly or indirectly, as

the work we do impacts these individuals.

- Strengthening horizontal governance spaces within organizations based on democratic principles.
- Supporting the development of good governance.
- Recognizing and strengthen the territory.

### **Changes at the political level (including municipal and regional)**

- Relevant research by the state to better understand rural production systems
- Research that respects local knowledge and realities, rather than treating communities as mere subjects of study.
- Recognition of agricultural service (training, recognition, and salary) as a form of national service, so young people can remain in rural areas while receiving compensation for their work.
- Strengthening democratic and civic skills to better elect representatives.
- Commitment to ensuring citizen oversight bodies (veedurías ciudadanas) actually function.
- Valuation and recognition of the territory by leaders or representatives.
- Updating territorial planning in a participatory manner that reflects the reality of the territory.
- Political education and training.

As we observe in the tables above, through the workshops, both men and women identified key areas where changes are needed to achieve a sustainable and prosperous future for La Montañita. These changes span across various levels—from the household to the political sphere—and emphasize collaboration, inclusion, and a deep commitment to the local environment and community well-being.

#### Household Level:

- Women emphasized the need to shift gender roles within the household, specifically changing mindsets about who is responsible for caring activities and encouraging shared roles and responsibilities. Raising awareness about the importance of sustainability and valuing women's contributions to household work were also identified as key priorities.
- Men focused on involving all household members, including children and young people, in decision-making. Promoting teamwork, listening to all opinions, and discussing the importance of ecosystems within the family were also recognized as essential for fostering a culture of cooperation and sustainability.

#### Farm Level:

- Women focused on the development of home gardens, changing production practices and the necessary resources to undertake such transformations.
- Men highlighted the importance of restoring ecosystems and protecting water sources, the recycling and rational use of nutrients within the farm and the implementation of soil studies.

#### Associations Level:

- Women emphasized the need to integrate young people on the associations, the importance of accountability, training and financial support.
- Men stressed the importance of all family members participation (women, youth, children) in organizations and improving the governance of organizations supported on democratic principles.

#### Political Level:

- Women highlighted the need to improve accountability, the necessity to invest in proper infrastructure (e.g., roads, communication systems, water supply systems), the need to make restrictions on land use more flexible in lands under certain restrictions and provide training and job opportunities to the youth.

- Men focused on the importance to improve research on rural production systems that better respond to the needs of local people, strengthening democratic and civic capacities of communities, as well as updating local planning instruments in participatory manners.

### 3. Necessary resources and stakeholders

- What resources are needed to complete these actions? Money is central for change, but we want to identify other resources such as training, technical assistance, and credit that may be needed to achieve the scenario goals.
- Who are the community partners, stakeholders and organizations that are needed to achieve this.
- Are there any organizations that may be negatively impacted by the implementation of these actions?

Necessary resources and stakeholders were classified according to the steps and actions identified by the participants: 1) recovering and conserving ecosystems, 2) agri-environmental training and capacity building, 3) incentives for young people to stay in rural areas, 4) institutional strengthening of organizations and youth integration, 5) improving education, 6) meet basic needs of communities (roads, water supply systems, sewage systems), 7) local-driven research agenda, 8) women’s empowerment, 9) local consumption network, 10) transformation in the presentation of local products.

**Table 3. Resources and stakeholders for action 1: Recovering and conserving ecosystems (water sources, forests, native seeds)**

Resources needed	Partners (stakeholders and organizations)	People negatively impacted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental awareness</li> <li>• Training on the importance of ecosystems</li> <li>• Work directly with reforestation strategies</li> <li>• Educational programs on where these actions are taking place</li> <li>• Access to research and studies</li> <li>• Connect with associations and Community Action Boards (JAC)</li> <li>• Strengthen the JACs</li> <li>• Training and capacity-building for environmental committees</li> <li>• Financial support</li> <li>• Improve the dissemination of resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• President of the Asojuntas</li> <li>• Juntas de Acción Comunal (JAC) - Action community boards.</li> <li>• Environmental committee of the JACs.</li> <li>• Local Mayor's Office</li> <li>• Agrosolidaria members</li> <li>• Collaborations with the Montañita community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armed groups</li> <li>• Political issues and partisanship sometimes block certain processes.</li> </ul>

**Table 4. Resources and stakeholders for action 2: Agri-environmental training and capacity building**

Topics for training and capacity building: 1) community-based tourism, 2) soil improvement, 3) silvopastoral systems, 4) food transformation and handling, 5) best practices in productive techniques, 6) project formulation and management.

Resources needed	Partners (stakeholders and organizations)	People negatively impacted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a service portfolio and routes to attract tourists.</li> <li>• Identify different locations or products with tourism potential (e.g., bird watching) and keep materials updated within Agrosolidaria.</li> <li>• Provide training sessions.</li> <li>• Project formulation.</li> <li>• Learn from the successful experiences of Agrosolidaria such as those of the farms Pekín and Chaira.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialized professionals in regional tourism topics (e.g., bird watching)</li> <li>• Universidad Javeriana</li> <li>• Siembra Viva</li> <li>• Finca Pekín</li> <li>• Agua Bonita</li> <li>• Agrosolidaria Confederation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armed groups.</li> <li>• Other individuals work in tourism.</li> </ul>

**Table 5. Resources and stakeholders for action 3: Incentives for young people to stay in rural areas**

Resources needed	Partners (stakeholders and organizations)	People negatively impacted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide land to young people with restrictions on selling it, by promoting a community-based model.</li> <li>• Supporting young people in starting their own businesses.</li> <li>• Helping them to become entrepreneurs.</li> <li>• Implementing a "seed plan" (capital semilla).</li> <li>• Including young people in decision-making processes (at the farm and community levels).</li> <li>• Organizing intergenerational meetings to foster knowledge exchange.</li> <li>• Creating specific programs that offer these young people viable opportunities to rebuild their lives in their rural territories.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agencia Nacional de Tierras (ANT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Armed groups.</li> <li>• Parents because of their fears that their children can be recruited. As a result, they send them to cities to avoid recruitment.</li> </ul>

**Table 6. Resources and stakeholders for action 4: Institutional strengthening of organizations and youth integration**

Resources needed	Partners (stakeholders and organizations)	People negatively impacted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting environmental awareness and education in schools and universities.</li> <li>• Participation in local decision-making arenas such as the Municipal Youth Councils (Consejos municipales de Juventud).</li> <li>• Financial resources to support local initiatives of empowering and innovation.</li> <li>• Leadership by encouraging leadership roles and developing effective leaders.</li> <li>• Training and capacity-building.</li> <li>• Improving in the infrastructure of the associations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finca Paz</li> <li>• OIM</li> <li>• SENA</li> <li>• Universidad Javeriana</li> <li>• Rutas PDET</li> <li>• Caritas Noruega</li> </ul>	

**Table 7. Resources and stakeholders for action 5: Improving education (scholarships, curriculum, facilities)**

Resources needed	Partners (stakeholders and organizations)	People negatively impacted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building universities closer to the communities, with greater access and a wider variety of programs or careers.</li> <li>• Teachers should recognize and instill value and attachment to the territory.</li> <li>• Specialized teachers in various fields of knowledge.</li> <li>• Training in rural areas, close to where people live.</li> <li>• Proposing educational programs to the local administration that respond to the needs of the territory.</li> <li>• Partnerships with schools to strengthen educational initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SENA</li> <li>• Major's office (Alcaldia)</li> <li>• Governor's office (Gobernación).</li> <li>• Schools and universities.</li> </ul>	

**Table 8. Resources and stakeholders for action 6: Meet basic needs (roads, water supply systems and sewage systems)**

Resources needed	Partners (stakeholders and organizations)	People negatively impacted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects with Juntas de Acción Comunal</li> <li>• Engage in dialogue with the mayor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action Community Boards (Juntas de Acción Comunal -JACs).</li> <li>• Major’s office (Alcaldia)</li> <li>• Governor’s office (Gobernación).</li> </ul>	

**Table 9. Resources and stakeholders for action 7: Local-driven research agenda**

Topics for the local research agenda: 1) recovery of native species, 2) soil analysis, 3) production systems’ yield, cost and profitability assessment, 4) ecosystems’ diagnosis, 5) market studies, 6) organizational studies - survey of associative groups.

Resources needed	Partners (stakeholders and organizations)	People negatively impacted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify other foundations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)</li> <li>• Training in soil management.</li> <li>• Knowledge transfer between producers.</li> <li>• Getting resources to build and follow a local research agenda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corpomanigua</li> <li>• Siembra Viva</li> <li>• Agrosolidaria</li> <li>• Universities.</li> </ul>	

**Table 10. Resources and stakeholders for action 8: Women’s empowerment**

Resources needed	Partners (stakeholders and organizations)	People negatively impacted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training/knowledge and capacity building</li> <li>• Innovation</li> <li>• Involving women in decision-making</li> <li>• Shifting the mindset of men regarding women’s ability to start businesses, innovate, and work</li> <li>• Sharing household responsibilities</li> <li>• Supporting to empower women and help them move forward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major’s office (Alcaldia)</li> <li>• Governor’s office (Gobernación).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In some cases, their partners.</li> </ul>

**Table 11. Resources and stakeholders for action 9: Local consumption network → supporting regional entrepreneurship, establishing a collection point, building commercial partnerships.**

Resources needed	Partners (stakeholders and organizations)	People negatively impacted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A space/place to sell the produce.</li> <li>• Establishing solidarity supply points to ensure commercialization.</li> <li>• Producers' organization.</li> <li>• Building relationships with supermarkets.</li> <li>• Developing digital sales channels.</li> <li>• Improving product marketing.</li> <li>• Participating in business meetings (ruedas de negocios).</li> <li>• Being able to sustain products in the market (e.g., by planning planting cycles).</li> <li>• Opening new markets for new products and product presentations</li> <li>• Promoting self-consumption</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• D.P.S. (Departamento de Prosperidad Social)</li> <li>• Asopanela</li> <li>• Public schools' nutrition program (Programa de alimentación escolar - PAES).</li> <li>• USAID</li> <li>• Mayor's Office (Alcaldía)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middlemen.</li> </ul>

**Table 12. Resources and stakeholders for action 10: Transformations in the presentation of local products.**

Resources needed	Partners (stakeholders and organizations)	People negatively impacted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processing plant, machinery, labor and technology.</li> <li>• Knowledge about food safety standards and handling.</li> <li>• Biodegradable packaging.</li> <li>• Financial resources/capital.</li> <li>• Biofertilizers and biofactories.</li> <li>• Knowledge transfer between producers.</li> <li>• Demonstration plots.</li> <li>• INVIMA registration</li> <li>• Certifications</li> <li>• Highlight added value on packaging (e.g., features of being Amazonian products, organic products)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Siembra Viva</li> <li>• Agrosolidaria Florencia</li> <li>• Instituto Colombiano Agropecuario (ICA)</li> <li>• Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The industry.</li> </ul>

It is important to mention that the activities and resources identified are in line with those proposed as part of the “innovation pathways” in the participatory innovation lab, that include the improvement of the agroecosystems (soils and ecological connectivity) as well as those related to access and development of strategies to fair and sustainable markets. Activities such as recovering and conserving ecosystems, agri-environmental training and capacity building and the development of a local-driven research agenda are central to the improving agroecosystems sustainability based on local knowledge and resources. On the other hand, structuring a local consumption network and improving the presentation of local products contribute to reaching better, sustainable and fair markets. Finally, women’s empowerment, incentives for young people to stay in rural areas, institutional strengthening of organizations and youth integration are transversal to reaching both the purposes of the vision and of the participatory innovation process.

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