

Lessons of peace and the Productive sector

Lessons from the experience of Confecciones la Montaña, Selva
Nevada, Mesa Nacional de Café and Impulse Travel



WITH THE SUPPORT OF:



Lessons of peace and the productive sector

COMPAZ FOUNDATION

IDEAS FOR PEACE FOUNDATION (FIP)

Paula Gaviria

Executive Director Compaz Foundation

María Lucía Méndez

Business and Peace Building FIP' Director

Authors:

Research:

Harold Martínez
Paula A. Gutiérrez
María Paula Chavarro
Luisa F. Contreras
Sandra Moreno Hernández

Support team:

María José Romero
María Alejandra Ramírez
María Andrea López

Edition and proofreading:

Martín Franco Vélez

Photography:

Felipe Suárez Hurtado

Design and layout:

Vanessa Contreras Rodríguez

Compaz Foundation

Calle 75 # 5 - 59 3rd Floor
www.fundacioncompaz.org / e-mail: info@fundacioncompaz.org

This document was prepared within the framework of the project “Sustainable peace lessons: strengthening local capacities, peaceful and inclusive communities” developed by Compaz Foundation, Peace Resource Center, with the support of the United Nations (UN) and with funding from the Swedish Embassy.

The claims made in this publication are product of the research conducted and are intended to make peace lessons visible and to communicate them. In this sense, it do not represent the position of Compaz Foundation, or the United Nations (UN), nor the Swedish Embassy.

BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA
JANUARY 2021



Index

Research context4

Introduction5

Methodology.....7

Case studies9

 Confecciones La Montaña9

 Selva Nevada 12

 Mesa Nacional de Café 15

 Impulse Travel 18

Peace lessons22

 1. Recognize belonging to the territory, a first step towards generating shared value.....22

 2. Territories are diverse: identifying their characteristics is key to sustainability.23

 3. Community know-how: raw material for entrepreneurship.....24

 4. Market signals: an opportunity for entrepreneurship and innovation.....25

 5. The impact is greater when working with partners 26

 6. Contributing to peace building is a decision, not an externality27

 7. Growth according to capacities 29

 8. Building and positioning a new narrative, a determining factor..... 30

 9. Organizational culture and leadership: essential for success 31

 10. Gender gap: a pending issue.....32

Concluding thoughts34



Research context

The signature of a Peace Agreement that has a focus on sustainable and inclusive territorial development has brought the hope of advancing towards a new culture that allows us to talk, share our experiences and build from different perspectives to find alternatives to resolve the differences that we have historically turned into armed confrontations. In this context, for Colombia as well as for other countries, it is of utmost importance to identify and systematize the efforts that allowed - and still allow - the construction of peace in our country.

This systematization will allow us to consolidate experiences, identify lessons learned, and build synergies to promote peace both in Colombia and in other corners of the world. Identifying these efforts will make it possible to promote the collective recognition of those who work for peace in Colombia, to facilitate support for these types of initiatives, and to identify opportunities from the point of view of proposals, bringing together diverse actors and sectors in the construction of peace. Making visible individual efforts for this construction from different spheres of society can also help to create a social consensus on the need to make individual contributions.

In this context, the Ideas for Peace Foundation (FIP) and the Compaz Foundation signed an agreement with the objective of jointly elaborate a line of lessons on peace building and the productive sector in Colombia (with emphasis on reincorporation), which will illustrate evidence on how the productive sector can contribute to processes of this type in the territory, including the voices of different actors such as victims of the conflict, ex-combatants, women, youth, environmentalists, journalists, academics and businessmen.

This agreement was signed recognizing the trajectory and relevance of the FIP in the field of business and peacebuilding. It also seeks to contribute to an understanding of the conflicts in our country, exercising the necessary leadership to mobilize citizens, public servants and business people around the common goal of building a peaceful society.

All of the above falls within the framework of the project "Sustainable Peace Lessons: Strengthening Local Capacities, Peaceful and Inclusive Communities", developed by the Compaz Foundation: resource center for peace, with the support of the United Nations (UN) and with funding from the Embassy of Sweden.

Introduction

The peace building process in Colombia must involve all sectors of society in order to be successful and sustainable. Among these actors, one of the most strategic is the business and productive sector because of its ample capacity to generate wealth, human capital, knowledge and employment in the post-conflict scenario. It can also foster environments of governance, trust and coexistence from a social, cultural, economic and environmental perspective that will have a positive and long-term impact on the territories¹.

Its participation in the peace building process brings benefits in various areas, which are enshrined as moral, political and economic principles². In the face of the first, the company must assume an active role in society that transcends mere compliance with the law and assumes the commitment - like any other actor - to do good³. In the face of the political argument, it is argued that the peace building process will not only acquire greater legitimacy with the participation of the business sector, but that companies, in turn, will be able to obtain benefits in terms of generating trust and reputation. Their participation in peacebuilding processes will allow them to acquire certain social licenses needed to operate⁴. Finally, the private sector benefits from investing in peacebuilding programs as it can be freed from the direct and indirect costs of armed conflict and violence⁵. This can be seen in the Better Business Better World study, which states that the burdens that most affected the development of the current economic model were mostly social, the first of which was violence and armed conflict⁶. Furthermore, according to the World Economic Forum, the risks for companies have evolved in recent years: from economic and financial to social, environmental, geopolitical and technological⁷. In short, companies are more profitable if they are in healthy environments⁸. Likewise, their contribution can attract potential consumers and generate rewards in terms of good will⁹.

Society, in turn, receives the benefits of a committed sector: human capital is strengthened, good governance is promoted, good practices for public responsibility are disseminated, social cohesion and tolerance are built, and economic growth and development are stimulated¹⁰. Within this last point are the inclusive businesses, which generate a great impact in their search for shared value for the company and the beneficiary stakeholders¹¹.

1 Fundación Ideas para la Paz y Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá. (2017). The business contribution to peace and sustainable development: Challenges and opportunities. Retrieved from: <http://empresaspazddhh.ideaspaz.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/El%20aporte%20empresarial%20a%20la%20paz%20y%20al%20desarrollo%20sostenible.pdf>

2 Otzle, J., Westermann-Behaylo, M., Koerber, C., Fort, T. L., & Rivera, J. (2009). Business and Peace: Sketching the terrain. Forthcoming, journal of business ethics.

3 Rettberg, A., & Rivas, Á. (2012). El sector Empresarial y la Construcción de Paz en Colombia: entre el optimismo y el desencanto. In A. Rettberg, Construcción de paz en Colombia. Unidades.

4 Rettberg, A., & Rivas, Á. (2012). El sector Empresarial y la Construcción de Paz en Colombia: entre el optimismo y el desencanto. In A. Rettberg, Construcción de paz en Colombia. Unidades.

5 Otzle, J., Westermann-Behaylo, M., Koerber, C., Fort, T. L., & Rivera, J. (2009). Business and Peace: Sketching the terrain. Forthcoming, journal of business ethics.

Rettberg, A., & Rivas, Á. (2012). El sector Empresarial y la Construcción de Paz en Colombia: entre el optimismo y el desencanto. In A. Rettberg, Construcción de paz en Colombia. Unidades.

6 Business Sustainable Development Commission. (2017). Better Business Better World.

7 World Economic Forum. (2019). Risk of Doing Business 2019. Retrieved from: <https://reports.weforum.org/global-risks-report-2020/survey-results/global-risks-of-highest-concern-for-doing-business-2020/>

8 Otzle, J., Westermann-Behaylo, M., Koerber, C., Fort, T. L., & Rivera, J. (2009). Business and Peace: Sketching the terrain. Forthcoming, journal of business ethics. Rettberg, A., & Rivas, Á. (2012). El sector Empresarial y la Construcción de Paz en Colombia: entre el optimismo y el desencanto. In A. Rettberg, Construcción de paz en Colombia. Unidades.

9 Otzle, J., Westermann-Behaylo, M., Koerber, C., Fort, T. L., & Rivera, J. (2009). Business and Peace: Sketching the terrain. Forthcoming, journal of business ethics.

10 Cortright, D. (2017). Construyendo paz a través del desarrollo del sector privado. Fundación Ideas para la Paz. Retrieved from: <http://empresaspazddhh.ideaspaz.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/Construyendo%20paz%20a%20trav%C3%A9s%20del%20desarrollo%20del%20sector%20privado.pdf>

11 Fundación Ideas para la Paz. (2017). ¿Qué son los negocios inclusivos? Retrieved from: <http://www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/1544>

In this model, companies involve entrepreneurs in contexts of conflict or in transition to lawful and peaceful models in the processes of production, consumption, distribution, entrepreneurship and social participation, among other activities. Similarly, they prioritize the development and purchase of local products adding value through processes of transformation, technification, digitalization and other innovation activities, and promote the creation and strengthening of local distribution and marketing networks that contribute to the integration of territories historically isolated and affected by violence to regional and national markets¹². These types of actions contribute to the construction of peace because they improve the living conditions of the populations and help to reduce poverty and the lack of economic development, problems associated with the armed conflict¹³.

For this reason, it is fundamental in the current situation of implementation of the Peace Agreement between the Colombian Government and the FARC-EP, to promote these type of actions by companies towards new enterprises and productive projects that emerged during the implementation of the Agreement, and that are focused on promoting economic development and reconciliation in the territories most affected by the conflict.

The interest of this document is to investigate the emergence of “bottom-up” productive initiatives and projects in peacebuilding contexts, emphasizing reincorporation processes, and to understand the role of alliances with other business actors.

The selected initiatives are Confecciones La Montaña, Selva Nevada, Mesa Nacional de Café and Impulse Travel, two of which are led by former FARC combatants. Throughout the documentation process, their contributions to peacebuilding were identified, as well as the challenges and success factors that have allowed for the extraction of lessons learned.

This process of documentation and analysis allowed us to ratify that it is indeed possible to generate decisive contributions to territorial transformation and peacebuilding from the productive sector. Furthermore, it showed that the strengthening of local markets in territories highly affected by the conflict, necessarily goes through the strengthening and dynamization of these types of enterprises. However, we also noted that achieving the sustainability of this type of initiative is still a challenge that depends on multiple variables.

This line of research is a novel contribution to the research approach that the management of Business and Peace of Ideas for Peace Foundation and Compaz Foundation are working on. While the knowledge and background of these two foundations were vital in guiding this work, their findings became a learning experience for both foundations.

12 Fundación Ideas para la Paz. (2017). ¿Qué son los negocios inclusivos? Retrieved from: <http://www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/1544>

13 Fundación Ideas para la Paz y Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá. (2017). El aporte empresarial a la paz y al desarrollo sostenible: Desafíos y oportunidades. Retrieved from: <http://empresaspazddhh.ideaspaz.org/sites/default/files/2019-06/El%20aporte%20empresarial%20a%20la%20paz%20y%20al%20desarrollo%20sostenible.pdf> Cortright, D. (2017). Construyendo paz a través del desarrollo del sector privado. Fundación Ideas para la Paz. Retrieved from: <http://www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/159>



Methodology

As a starting point for the research, the universe of initiatives under study was defined: it was established that the type to be documented would be those productive initiatives led by population or communities sensitive to the armed conflict where there was articulation and involvement of business actors. In a broader definition, an attempt was made to address initiatives where business actors in their diversity (micro, small and medium enterprises, large companies, unions, chambers of commerce or business foundations) provide support to productive processes and initiatives of the population sensitive to the conflict, such as people in the process of reintegration or reincorporation, victims of the armed conflict, peasants in voluntary processes of substitution of illicit crops, peasant communities in PDET territories (Development Programs with a Territorial Focus), women and youth. Support can be provided through different actions such as the strengthening of technical and productive capacities, the linkage to value chains and financing.

The following resource was used to initiate an initial pre-selection of initiatives:

Database: Database of initiatives previously consolidated by Ideas for Peace Foundation and COMPAZ Foundation. The initial base was composed of 495 initiatives that contribute to the construction from the social, cultural, productive and environmental. On this basis, a pre-selection was made of those enterprises and projects that applied to the definition of the universe of this research; that is, that incorporate productive initiatives led by population sensitive to the conflict, that include business actors and that are framed in PDET territories.

Once the universe of initiatives was limited, a base of 91 initiatives was consolidated. Then selection criteria were established to choose those to be documented, according to the information available a priori. Thus, the following criteria were defined:



Universe of initiatives	Criterion	Definition
Productive initiatives led by population or communities sensitive to the armed conflict, where business actors are articulated and involved to support them.	Successful initiatives	Active initiative, formalization, capacity to generate alliances. It is linked to a productive chain. Active initiatives
	Territory	Regional preferences: PDET sub-regions. However, initiatives outside these subregions are taken into account to diversify their location.
	Economic sector	Emphasis on the productive sectors prioritized by Compaz Foundation: tourism, textiles, agriculture, among others.
	Beneficiary population	Population sensitive to the armed conflict (people in the process of reincorporation, population victims of the armed conflict and population in voluntary processes of substitution), women, youth and rural communities.

A quantitative selection instrument was then designed to qualify each of the 91 initiatives under the previously structured selection criteria. Each of the criteria could be assigned a value from 0 to 2, where 0 was the lowest score and 2 the highest. This score was assigned depending on whether or not they met the criteria. The scoring process was carried out by both organizations.

After applying the instrument and weighting the results, both organizations selected the 13 initiatives with the highest scores in a joint work day.

After this prioritization, the leaders of each of the pre-selected initiatives were contacted to find out their current status, identify their interest and willingness to participate in the documentation process, and collect key information for the final selection. After discussions with the leaders of the 13 initiatives, four were selected that fully met the requirements and expressed their willingness to participate in the process. These were:

- Mesa Nacional de Café
- Impulse Travel
- Confecciones La Montaña
- Selva Nevada

Once these four initiatives had been selected, four rounds of interviews were held with the different actors involved in these projects (leaders, partners, business allies and members of surrounding communities), in order to learn about the different visions of the impact of the projects in their regions and on peacebuilding. These interviews were systematized and are the main input for this document.

Another relevant methodological element is the approach to initiatives based on the Business Management for Peace Model¹⁴ developed by FIP which categorizes business actions and initiatives focused on peace building. At its core is the Strategic Management for Peace dimension, which contains the essential minimums -such as respect for human rights- that a company must comply with if it wants to contribute to peace. Similarly, there are five dimensions with voluntary and discretionary business actions: Inclusive Socioeconomic Development, which seeks to promote economic development in the areas most affected by the conflict; Socioenvironmental Sustainability, which understands that care for the environment and natural resources as fundamental elements to avoid the generation of conflicts; Human Capital, which seeks to develop skills in the communities of interference; Institutionality and Participation, which seeks to strengthen public institutions and citizen participation; and Reconciliation and Coexistence, which focuses on actions developed to generate a culture of peace¹⁵. Each of these dimensions, in turn, details a series of activities and initiatives. Thus, the contribution to the construction of peace of these initiatives was analyzed under this model.

To finish-and based on a horizontal analysis of common elements present in the different initiatives studied- 10 lessons were established that are considered key to the sustainability of a productive initiative or enterprise that contributes to building peace and transforming the territory.

¹⁴ Fundación Ideas para la Paz How to build peace from companies? in: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb882ac88a.pdf>

¹⁵ Fundación Ideas para la Paz How to build peace from companies? in: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb882ac88a.pdf>



Case studies

Confecciones La Montaña

Confecciones La Montaña is a productive project that belongs to the Cooperativa Multiactiva para el Desarrollo Económico y Social del Norte de Antioquia (COOMULDESNA), located in the Antiguo Espacio Territorial de Capacitación y Reincorporación (AETCR) Jhon Bautista de Anorí (Antioquia). This cooperative was founded by 80 ex-combatants after the signing of the Peace Agreement between the National Government and the FARC-EP, who joined together at the end of 2017 to create a form of solidarity economy that would allow them to sustain themselves economically and continue their process of reincorporation. COOMULDESNA is affiliated with ECOMUN, the second level cooperative that groups together the associative forms constituted by ex-combatants in the process of reincorporation at the national level.

Currently, COOMULDESNA has 125 members; as it is a multi-active organization, it develops multiple productive activities such as raising laying hens, fish farming, honey production (Miel La Montaña) and soap production

(Esencias de La Montaña), a bakery (Delicias Farianas) and a tourism initiative (La Casa de la Vida), among others.

Among these productive projects is Confecciones La Montaña, which was announced in early 2019 and is made up of 24 associates. This project takes advantage of the knowledge acquired by the former combatants during the confrontation, since its members belonged to the tailoring shop of the 36th front of the FARC that produced uniforms, bags and other high quality implements to meet the needs of the armed group. When the process of laying down arms was completed, and in view of the delays in approving and disbursing seed capital for productive projects¹⁶, they decided to take advantage of this knowledge and turn it into a source of income that would allow them to continue with the process of reincorporation. Their initial commercialization channel was the local market in Anorí; their clients, in turn, were the farmers who went to the workshop and bought the products.



Stock photography Confecciones La Montaña

¹⁶ These resources are economic benefits granted to people in the process of reincorporation destined for the undertaking or strengthening of productive projects. Each person is granted a unique amount of \$8 million pesos to leverage an individual business unit, develop an initiative linked to an associative organization or acquire, build or improve housing. Agency for Reincorporation and Normalization. (n.d.). Income generation. Retrieved from: <http://www.reincorporacion.gov.co/es/reincorporacion/generaci%C3%B3n-de-ingresos>



During the creation of the project, they were assisted by various actors, including international cooperation agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which supported the management for the use of the available machinery that was part of the goods reported to the Government¹⁷ for use in Confecciones La Montaña. This agency provided them with seed capital to acquire inputs for making quick-drying pants, bags and fanny packs, among other products. They also had the support of entities such as SENA and various public and private universities, which provided them with technical and administrative training, and the help of people committed to the country's peace building process. This was the case of an accounting student from the University of Antioquia who volunteered to train the treasurer of the cooperative in financial matters for a year and who was later hired to carry out training processes for other members of the cooperative.

Today, they have four work areas: a production area, located in the AETCR and responsible for making the products; another marketing area, located in Medellin and responsible for product distribution and customer service; another area for workshop administration; and finally, the management area, which plays the role of management and relationship with different actors.

“They as an associative group are very strong. There is social cohesion, teamwork, and strengthened technical capacities and competencies. They already have a technical knowledge of how to move their business forward. A very strong, very clear work model: each one plays an important role, gets involved and carries it out with commitment and responsibility”

Piedad Pérez, UNDP Sustainable Rural Development professional, partner of Confecciones La Montaña.

Confecciones La Montaña has managed to position itself as a national reference in the field of business for peace. So much so that, with the support of Inexmoda, they participated in the 2020 edition of Colombiamoda, one of the most important fashion events in the country. This positioning is due to the reception of their products in social networks, their main commercialization channel: by November 2020, they had more than 9,000 followers in their Facebook page and more than 16,000 in their Instagram profile. At the same time, their marketing strategy is the result of the previous knowledge of the leader of the initiative, Martin Batalla, in communication issues, on account of his participation in magazines, websites and radio programs during the confrontation period.

The social networks served to expand their sales beyond Anorí: since 2019, they began to market their products nationally and internationally. This has allowed them to obtain greater income, which has not only benefited the project, but AETCR in general: with the resources, they finance general maintenance issues in the space.

¹⁷ According to the Final Agreement for the End of the Conflict and the Construction of a Stable and Lasting Peace, during the time that the FARC remained in the Transitional Vertical Normalization Zones (today AETCR), the goods and assets belonging to the group were to be inventoried by representatives of the FARC and the National Government.

One of the main challenges identified is that their production capacity does not meet the demand for orders. Therefore, they have the need to grow as a productive project and are devising an alliance with other ex-combatant clothing workshops in the country to generate a national plan in the clothing production line.

Another challenge is that, being located in the rural area of the municipality, the project presents high transportation costs, both in the acquisition of inputs and in marketing: not only must they buy the fabrics and other clothing implements in Medellin, but also take them to the workshop, located in the AETCR, and send the products back to Medellin for delivery to the client. According to Martín Batalla, although production is made more difficult by the fact that it is not located in an urban area with greater access to market, the intention of Confecciones La Montaña is to stay producing in Anorí to give an economic boost to the region, linking communities to the project. An example is the alliance they made with an organization of rural women from the village of San Isidro:

“When the pandemic started, we started designing face mask with all that it took to learn how to make this item and to bring the fabrics. In San Isidro, some peasant women had a clothing project and we worked together to teach them the technique and transfer the fabrics to them so that we could end up working together”.

Martín Batalla, Confecciones La Montaña

For all the above reasons, the project considers that they are making a contribution to building peace. For Martín Batalla, peace means solving the structural causes that gave rise to the armed confrontation, such as access to land, stigmatization and political participation, among others. From Confecciones La Montaña they are contributing to this issue because they generate conditions for a successful reincorporation, as well as for the economic development of the region and to create economic alternatives for the territories affected by the conflict.

“We are contributing greatly to the construction of peace. One, because we are very unprotected in this process and fighting against an elite that does not want peace to be consolidated in Colombia (...). Today we are almost in

direct confrontation with them, logically unarmed, but talking about peace and building it in the territories. And the other thing is that the experience that we have had in the cooperative already speaks of the construction of peace with a concrete surname: giving employment, dignified work opportunities to the peasants who did not have them, creating alternatives and/or different economies in the territories most affected by the conflict, helping all these people who were in the rural areas - who have been removed, relegated and forgotten -, to be part of the economic, social and political development of the country. So, I believe that we are indeed building peace, we are committed to building peace in Colombia”, says Martín Batalla.

According to FIP¹⁸ Model of Business Management for Peace, this initiative makes contributions to peace from different areas. First, it presents actions in the dimension of Strategic Management for Peace, since from its origin it has an explicit commitment to building peace at all levels and in all practices that the company carries out.

Second, Confecciones La Montaña contributes to peace building from the dimension of Inclusive Socioeconomic Development, because it carries out actions focused on providing employment opportunities to people affected by the armed conflict and strengthening the dynamics of the regional market. They do this by keeping their production plant in a place away from large markets, and by sharing their knowledge with local businesses in order to promote their development¹⁹.

And thirdly, the achievement of alliances to train the members of the project is an action that can be framed within the dimension of Human Capital of the model, because it contributes to the development of professional skills of vulnerable population²⁰.

18 Fundación Ideas para la Paz. (s.f.). Practical Guide: How to build peace from companies? Retrieved from: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb882ac88a.pdf>

19 Fundación Ideas para la Paz. (s.f.). Practical Guide: How to build peace from companies? Retrieved from: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb882ac88a.pdf>

20 Fundación Ideas para la Paz. (s.f.). Practical Guide: How to build peace from companies? Retrieved from: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb882ac88a.pdf>

Selva Nevada



Stock photography Selva Nevada

Selva Nevada is a company that rescues the biodiversity of the Colombian rainforest through the commercialization of ice cream, milkshakes and pulps of Amazonian and tropical fruits. It was created by the brothers Catalina and Alejandro Álvarez and their partners, Antonuela Ariza and Mario Fernando Rojas, as an idea to take advantage of the previous experiences that the Álvarez brothers had acquired in their personal and professional lives. The trips to remote territories where they accompanied their father in his work as geographers, in addition to their time in the public sector in international cooperation work for rural development, allowed them to get to know many of the regions and rural production associations, and to identify the main challenges and opportunities they had with their products.

In 2000, the first contacts were made with associations that were unable to market their products because of the precariousness of the roads and the buyers, or because they were in the midst of the dynamics of the armed conflict. The partners identified the need for a market for rural fruit pulp enterprises and began to market it, initially with restaurants in Bogotá. Seven years later, in 2007, Antonuela Ariza - a partner in the initiative and chef at the Minimal restaurant - suggested the idea of experimenting in the creation of products such as ice cream and milkshakes based on fruit pulp produced by the communities. From that moment on, they stopped being exclusively commercializers of fruit pulp and legally constituted themselves as Selva Nevada, having a commercial line of pulp and an offer in derived products such as ice cream, milkshakes and others that were commercialized in three physical points of sale located in Bogotá.

Selva Nevada's objective is to articulate the offer of the regional fruit pulp producing associations with different buyers in Bogotá, under the principles of social responsibility and environmental sustainability. Products such as camu camu, açai, arazá, copoazú and corozo, are derived from commercial agreements that the company has consolidated with productive associations in Amazonas, Putumayo, Caquetá, Guaviare, Chocó and Sucre, among others.

The methodology to establish the commercial agreements starts with a previous identification of the fruit and the territory where it is grown. Then, a formal approach is made between the partners or their delegates with the grower associations in which the volumes, final price and quality of the production to be marketed are agreed upon. Finally, a commercial agreement with a long-term vision is made between the farmers' association and Selva Nevada, in which the latter agrees to buy the fruit pulp and train the growers in the requirements it demands.

This long-term vision has been an ingredient for the sustainability of the alliances between Selva Nevada and the associations, which emerged from the experience gained by the Alvarez brothers in international cooperation work for rural development. With the annual purchase agreements, training for optimal processing of the pulp and horizontal relations between the parties, Selva Nevada seeks to mitigate the risks they identified in these programs, where the productivity of the associations ceased in parallel with the completion of the terms and their financing. Usually, in these partnerships, the community is not asked to start a project with an entirely new product; however, even though the associations have prior knowledge of the handling and use of the fruit, they do not have the machinery, location, or energy and water services to pulp the fruit. Therefore, Selva Nevada applies to international cooperation projects or those of the National Government in order to strengthen the capacities of the communities.

Selva Nevada deducts a percentage from the payments to compensate for the provision of new machines or cold rooms, because it understands the communities not as beneficiaries but as partners of the company. Thus, it seeks to establish a relationship of equal partners with the associations, in which all those involved in the value chain risk and win equally. With this philosophy, not only are the traditional relationships that the associations had with programs where they were in the position of beneficiaries modified, but by becoming partners, the imaginary of how they perceive themselves in their obligations and benefits, and how the community perceives their work, is transformed. They have also tried to make the partnerships sustainable on their own by getting them other clients, so that they do not depend solely on the purchases made by Selva Nevada.

In terms of environmental sustainability, Selva Nevada generates incentives for reforestation with the purchase of non-timber products, which contributes to the number of forest and trees growing on the farms of its associates. In addition, the ways in which the fruit is obtained in the territories is guided by good practices in terms of sustainability in order not to alter the balance of the land or the fauna that feeds on the fruit.

Organizationally, Selva Nevada is a S.A.S.²¹ with a shareholders' meeting in which its four founding partners and the Acumen investment fund (which bought shares in the company in 2017) participate. There is also a board of directors with three principal and three alternate members. The General Manager is Alejandro and Catalina is the Administrative Manager. She is responsible for the administrative, operational, logistical and financial aspects of the company, while he is in charge of the commercial part of the product: finding clients, new channels and working with associations. However, if one of the two is not available, the other assumes the tasks of both.

“Now the company is focused on facilitating the installation of renewable energy in the communities: we realized that one of the most significant bottlenecks in the regions is energy, because of its stability and high costs. This represents a very high-risk level for us also in terms of maintenance of machines and cold rooms”.

Catalina Álvarez, Selva Nevada.



Stock photography Selva Nevada

21 An S.A.S. is a simplified stock company, constituted by one or several natural or legal persons who are only responsible up to the amount of their respective contributions. In it, the shareholders are not responsible for the labor, tax or any other kind of obligations incurred by the company. Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá. (s.f.). ¿Qué son las sociedades por acciones simplificadas? Retrieved from: <https://www.ccb.org.co/Preguntas-frecuentes/Registros-Publicos/Que-son-las-sociedades-por-acciones-simplificadas>

There are two fundamental reasons behind marketing fruit pulp and not fresh fruit: The first is that the demand for pulp forces growers to form associations thanks to the different requirements for pulping, washing, refrigeration and packaging (in the rural environment, these inputs and procedures are almost always impossible to obtain for a single grower); and the second is related to environmental sustainability, by allowing the pulping process to take advantage of the peels and seeds to fertilize the land, preventing the latter from reaching the cities in the form of waste and increasing the problem of garbage.

With respect to fruit suppliers, Catalina says Selva Nevada works permanently with eight associations and others on an intermittent basis. The ones that have been working for the longest time are the associations of ASOCOPOAZU in Caquetá - with its copoazú and arazá products - and ASOPROCEGUA in San José del Guaviare, with açai. They also work with vanilla associations in Alcalá-Valle del Cauca; with ASMOCUTAR, an organization of indigenous women in the Amazon, who harvest camu camu; with CORTEPAZ, in Tumaco, producers of cacao and in transit to diversify their crops with vanilla; and with ASOPARAÍSO and ASOAGROCAMUCAMU, both in Putumayo, with açai and camu camu, respectively.

However, depending on the institutions and needs, other partnerships are created. For example, with the Sinchi Institute, the Amazon territory has been valued -especially in Guaviare- which clarifies the supply of fruit products in the territories. Another example occurred in early 2020 and was related to the closure of airports. Due to road conditions, air transport is often the only way to get the pulp to Bogotá. With the pandemic and the airports closed at the height of the harvest, they resorted to an alliance with the Army to fly the pulp to the capital.

Before the pandemic, there were 146 business alliances between hotels and restaurants in Bogotá; however, approximately 20% of them did not survive the confinement phase. Also, before covid-19 they had five points of sale in Bogotá, but today the number has been reduced to three, and they had a staff of 15 people or more (8 women and 7 men), but now the number has been reduced to 10 (5 women and 5 men). According to Catalina Alvarez, the balance between men and women has been part intentional and part fortuitous, not to make it sound politically good, but to seek to link people's physical and emotional abilities to take on the positions.

“What one realizes is that, for a company to function well, it must always have that balance, not only in knowledge, but also in gender, because there are precisely some qualities that complement each other”. Catalina Álvarez.

With regard to the contribution to peacebuilding, Catalina emphasizes the incentives that exist to get involved in businesses associated with the armed conflict in the absence of rural alternatives. Selva Nevada seeks to generate other alternatives for the communities by promoting work in fruit production and making it a life goal, achieving sustainability.

“Many people end up in war because they have no other motivation or dream to fulfill. When one creates and builds a company from these fruits, what the communities want is peace so that this can be maintained”. Catalina Álvarez.

In this sense, the company makes contributions to the dimension of Inclusive Socioeconomic Development, according to the Business Management Model for Peace of FIP. By maintaining stable purchase agreements with the associations, it promotes the employability of the population, which was previously linked to the planting of illicit crops, and is part of the logic of inclusive business, since it generates shared value for the company and the producers. It also makes it easier for producers to acquire machines to produce pulp and provides them with training aimed at business sustainability, which promotes innovation in the territories. Selva Nevada also implements measures that strengthen regional market dynamics, since it connects these producers with other business actors, which favors the sustainability of the associations²².

Its environmental strategy contributes to the construction of peace, specifically to the dimension of Environmental Sustainability, thanks to its work with local associations with production models that avoid the deterioration and unbalanced exploitation of ecosystems, and promote the use of organic waste in the process of depulping the fruit, which favors the conservation of the natural forest of the territories. This prevents the generation or exacerbation of conflicts related to environmental issues²³.

Finally, Selva Nevada contributes to the reconciliation and coexistence of the regions by promoting a culture of peace, by fostering an organizational climate of coexistence within the associations so that they can stand on their own feet and continue producing, even with the misunderstandings that may occasionally arise among their members²⁴.

²² Fundación Ideas para la Paz. (s.f.). Practical Guide: How to build peace from companies? Retrieved from: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb882ac88a.pdf>

²³ Fundación Ideas para la Paz. (s.f.). Practical Guide: How to build peace from companies? Retrieved from: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb882ac88a.pdf>

²⁴ Fundación Ideas para la Paz. (s.f.). Practical Guide: How to build peace from companies? Retrieved from: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb882ac88a.pdf>

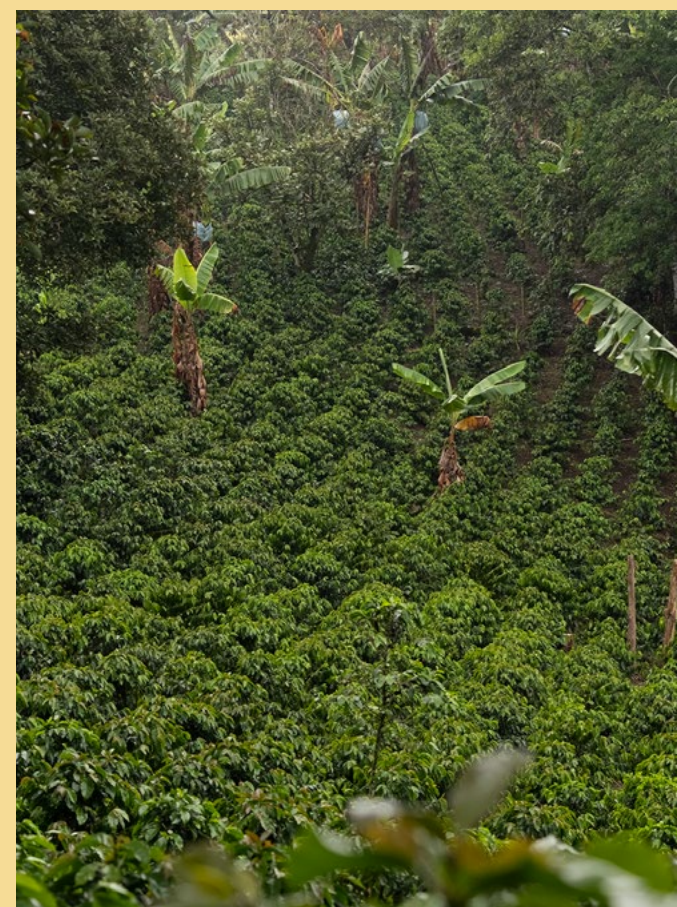
Mesa Nacional de Café

Mesa Nacional de Café is a space for the articulation of men and women in the process of reincorporating the FARC-EP who have been betting on collective or individual productive projects through coffee in any of its lines. The initiative involves 35 coffee cooperatives at the national level, most of which are formally linked to ECOMUN. The Roundtable was created with the aim of guaranteeing the reincorporation of ex-combatants and their families in the long term, through the creation of a figure that unifies and brings together the needs of the regional coffee cooperatives, commercially linking the products of each one with commercial allies.

The space had its origins in 2017 in the Department of Cauca, where four cooperatives were carrying out coffee planting and processing processes in the municipalities of Buenos Aires, Miranda, Argelia and Caldono. During the process, the ex-combatants created a figure of coordination and articulation of the cooperatives of the department; by 2018, the Mesa managed to position itself in 10 departments: Valle del Cauca, Cauca, Nariño, Cundinamarca, Tolima, Huila, Antioquia, Meta, Cesar and La Guajira. It is worth mentioning that Mesa Nacional de Café has not yet been formalized as an associative figure; however, it has managed to generate spaces for coordination among the 35 cooperatives linked to it.

In recent years, the Mesa has facilitated the export of 600,000 kg of green coffee to Italy by the linked cooperatives. Thanks to the quality of the bean, they won the Ernesto Illy award for the best coffee in Colombia among 60 samples and for the best coffee in the world among 14 others in 2019. That same year they were recognized as the sixth best cupper in the country with the participation of three former combatants affiliated with the Mesa. The Ernesto Illy award has been the greatest impulse that the initiative has received in terms of visibility and commercialization; when investigating the specific characteristics in quality that allowed to reach this achievement, Antonio Pardo, director and representative of Mesa Nacional de Café, alludes to the rescue and use of the ancestral knowledge of the local afro and indigenous communities in times and techniques of sowing and harvesting, privileging them over traditional techniques.

La Mesa is a figure that works under a cooperative logic, moving away from the classic business models, in order to have a more significant impact on the associates, their families and the territory where they operate. Under this logic, each linked cooperative defines its own profits, personnel hiring and payments, among others, depending on the capacities and statutes of each one.



In the specific case of Cauca, with the Cecoespe cooperative, 100% of what it produces is divided in half: 50% is distributed socially (20% in member education, 20% in health and 10% in recreation and culture), and the other 50% is defined in an assembly of members, the most recurrent being reinvestment in the cooperative to strengthen capacities. The leaders of the cooperatives do not receive a salary, but they do receive health and education guarantees for themselves and their families.

In organizational terms, it is made up of a Board of Directors to which Antonio Pardo, the national representative, belongs, and representatives from each of the departments where the initiative has a presence: a conglomerate of 11 people. The organizations are structured in departmental committees, each under the direction of a coordinator in charge of articulating the volumes of production and quality standards of coffee with the cooperatives in the territory. In addition, the organization has a technical team that provides training to growers and those involved in the territory.

On the other hand, the brands of roasted coffee that are commercialized nationally are related to the four regions where the Mesa began its operation: Cauca (Café Sabor La Esperanza); Antioquia (Café Paramillo); Tolima and Huila (Café Tercer Acuerdo and Café Marquetalia); and Meta (Café Marú). When they began the process of exporting green

coffee to Italy, their product was called Café Espíritu de Paz; however, this name was replaced by Café Cosecha de Paz, the same one that is currently managed for export with Illy Café through a harvesting process from the different cooperatives in the regions.

Among the general elements to highlight of Mesa Nacional del Café, three stand out. The first is related to the logic of cooperativism: none of the members of the Board of Directors receive a fixed salary, but all profits circulate equally in the 10 committees. The second is the capacity to build commercial alliances that guarantee the purchase of coffee in the long term. And the third, according to Antonio, is the significant way in which this initiative contributes to the construction of peace in the regions where it operates, achieving, on the one hand, that the peasants generate feelings of belonging to the countryside by producing quality coffee (which strengthens the component of peasant identity), and on the other hand, the trust that is generated as a result of integrating ex-combatants and communities around the same project.

Antonio Pardo points out that having strategic alliances has been vital to position oneself in the market and to achieve such significant achievements as the Ernesto Illy of 2019. Among the most important actors are Eduardo Montenegro, director of the Cauca Coffee Growers Committee, and in the alliances the Cauca Government of the period 2016-2019,

who facilitated the conditions to advance in the development of the initiative, among other things with the prioritization of a project for the planting of coffee in 552 new exclusive hectares for people in the process of reincorporation.

In 2018 they began their alliance with Ascafé, the most important with a private actor since it is the company with which they manage to materialize the process of exporting green coffee to Illy Café in Italy. In this alliance, the Mesa commits itself with volumes and quality of the grain, Ascafé works as an intermediary and Illy Café is in charge of guaranteeing the agreement for five years. In addition, Illy buys at prices above the market and provides support in training processes for the personnel linked to the initiative.

At present, 90 people who are part of the cooperatives linked in Antioquia, Cauca, Tolima, Huila and Cundinamarca are carrying out training processes in coffee techniques given by Tecnicafé



Stock photography Mesa Nacional de Café

and SENA under the financing of IOM. These exercises are coordinated by the Roundtable with the purpose of strengthening the initiative, where the participation of men and women is equitable, and where young people also participate and who, after reaching the age of majority, can formally join the alliance. With the implementation of these exercises and regional leadership, not only are the technical capacities of the Roundtable strengthened, but they also contribute to building human capital on two fronts: first, by developing the professional skills of young and vulnerable people; and second, by developing local leadership capacities that are fostered together with the 10 departmental leaders and the representatives of the 35 cooperatives²⁵.

The main challenges that the Mesa has faced are related to the security of ex-combatants affiliated with the initiative and the lengthy bureaucratic processes for allocating land for cultivation. Also pending, is the formalization of the Mesa as a space for articulation and coordination, although it has made great strides amidst their informality. This formalization process implies a specific definition of the responsibilities and roles of both the Mesa and its committees, which are necessary conditions to enhance its impact with the linked cooperatives. However, due to the limitations to mobility in the context of the pandemic, travel to the territories could not be carried out.

Despite the obstacles, “this process has been very beautiful and full of learning that has contributed to generating very close relations in the post-conflict with the communities that accompanied them before the conflict. In the areas of Cauca there have been stable relationships that have facilitated collaborative processes, the construction of trust in the territory and disincentives to the cultivation of illicit crops”.

Antonio Pardo, Mesa Nacional de Café

Like Confecciones La Montaña - and according to the Business Management for Peace Model - this initiative, led by former combatants, has an organizational commitment to peace because at all levels there is an explicit responsibility to work and implement actions to build it.²⁶.

Similarly, it carries out actions that can be framed in the dimension of Inclusive Socioeconomic Development, by strengthening regional markets and the economic capacities of communities in areas affected by the conflict through cooperative work with affected populations and the coordination of technical training for ex-combatants, which promotes their vocational growth²⁷.



²⁵ Practical Guide FIP: How to build peace from companies? Available at: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb882ac88a.pdf>

²⁶ Fundación Ideas para la Paz. (s.f.). Practical Guide: How to build peace from companies? Retrieved from: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb882ac88a.pdf>

²⁷ Fundación Ideas para la Paz. (s.f.). Practical Guide: How to build peace from companies? Retrieved from: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb882ac88a.pdf>



Stock photography Impulse Travel

Impulse Travel

Impulse Travel is an impact tourism company resulting from the transformation of Destino Bogota, which emerged in 2008 to fill the gap in the supply of tours for foreigners in the capital. In 2016, with the victory of the “No” vote in the plebiscite on the Peace Agreement, the members of the company began to question their role as entrepreneurs and citizens.

“We realized that tourism was a very powerful tool that, if framed within a strategy of impact and a theory of change, could begin to energize certain processes and be the ally of communities that are in a process of transformation”.
Rodrigo Atuesta, CEO of Impulse Travel.

Thus, in 2017, Destino Bogota became Impulse Travel. The name change was only the symbolic part of the redirection of a business model that now includes a very clear impact strategy within its structure: its business is based on offering tours to small groups (of maximum 20 people) that have a social impact and that stimulate employment opportunities in the communities.

In addition, they realized that income generation was only one part of community-based tourism, but that behind it there were several complex dynamics that conditioned the success of the impact strategy. So, they began working with the communities on issues of leadership and partnership so that the projects would work well internally and be independent of Impulse. According to Rodrigo, *“the idea is for them to become strong, profitable community enterprises with impact, leadership and growth”.*

Its organizational structure is divided into several working groups that are responsible for designing, operating and marketing the tours. In this logic, there is the Create team, in charge of developing the product; the Commercialize team, in charge of communicating the products to the different types of clients; the operators, in charge of coordinating the logistic aspects of the tours, both in the field and in the offices; and finally, other people in charge of the operation of the company in human resources, administrative and legal matters, among others.

Among the products they offer, we find those under the name of HEART. The H refers to human beings, who are the center of travel experiences: the local community and the traveler. The E has to do with the economic opportunities that they facilitate and the income that other businesses in the communities obtain from the arrival of travelers

through the tours. The A refers to authenticity, since Impulse's tours are unique: *"there would be no other way for you to have that experience if it weren't through Impulse, since we have been building relationships for many years that allow us to access certain types of information and unique experiences,"* says Lizeth Riaño, of Impulse Travel. The R comes from "regenerative" experiences, which the team reformulated under the concept of "regenerative", since the tours are designed to transform the narrative about the country linked to violence and drug trafficking, and focus on issues of resilience and social transformation. Finally, the T refers to the concept of "Top Notch", which means that the products are of very good quality; since it is a service for which the tourist is paying, the experience has to be perfect in all its phases, from the purchase to the post-tour.

In this way, they work directly with 21 community projects in different parts of Colombia, including Caguán Expeditions, Breaking Borders, Mangle, Moravia Tours, Nina, Son Batá, Unión Latina and Sonidos Enraizados. The alliances with these projects have occurred in very different ways: sometimes they have been contacted through foundations that work with them, but other times they have been through meetings and searches for allies.

For Rodrigo, the relationship with the communities has been one of 'learning by doing': *"I have seen thousands of cases where projects are done with international cooperation in capacity building, training and gastronomy, and where the communities are happy, but then the program ends and the tourists don't come. We have taken a slightly different approach: we think more about how we begin to work together, and on each tour we learn."*

Among the lessons learned from working with the community projects, the importance of the role of women in articulating work teams and generating association among the members of the initiative is highlighted. In addition, women have been fundamental in building the new resilience narrative of the country that Impulse Travel seeks to offer both in Colombia and in other countries, since *"they tell a part of the story that has not been told and they are the articulators of community processes, uniting the different actors that exist in the community"*, according to Lizeth Riaño, of Impulse Travel.

While working with the communities, they realized that they were not the only ones who could contribute, but also that their allies had much to teach them. Impulse Travel does not seek to "sponsor" a project but simply to be an ally and work together for a common goal. Being on the same level with the community projects has been key to generating relationships of trust.

"Impulse Travel is totally sustainable, because they have constantly worked with the communities. They have been accompanying them from the beginning, with training, so that at a certain point they can stand on their own two feet".

Adriana Gómez, Colombian Journeys, commercial partner of Impulse Travel.

They have also carried out exchanges of impact experiences with community projects. One of these was the visit of the Breaking Borders group to the Comuna 13 and Moravia projects in Medellín; another was the visit made by the ex-combatants of El Caguán to Breaking Borders in the Egipto neighborhood in Bogotá. According to Impulse members, these meetings allow the community projects to dialogue with each other and share lessons learned, which in turn improves the quality of the experiences.

In 2019, Impulse Travel had 24 people on its team, but because of the pandemic it now has nine. In order to continue to generate an impact on the communities, they are restructuring the company, dividing it into two lines: one focused on selling the tours and the other on working with community and non-profit projects.

During the covid-19 pandemic, Impulse Travel implemented "Leaders of Change", a program financed by different actors in which they have strengthened 15 leaders of the communities located in Bolívar, Caquetá, Antioquia, Boyacá, Cauca, Cundinamarca, Atlántico and Nariño on two fronts: on the one hand, they provided them with training in emotional management during crises, social entrepreneurship and biosecurity; and, on the other, they gave them economic support for food, housing and health issues. The choice to work with leaders was made because they are the ones who replicate the knowledge to the whole community; some of them even managed to amplify the economic resources to more people. Another fact to emphasize is that more than half of the program participants are women, something that for Impulse's members has been very revealing, since this leadership has naturally developed in the territories.

The resources of this program were destined to help maintain and reinforce the capacities of the 15 community projects, so that they would emerge strengthened after the quarantine. At this point, the program moved to another support phase that seeks to invest in the projects and that is why Impulse provides different amounts of money as a form of financing, depending on the results obtained by each project.

"Impulse Travel did not leave us in the lurch during the pandemic, both in terms of the economy and training. With them we have a strategic and commercial alliance to promote our territory as an insurance and biosecurity company". Cielo y Ángela Holguín, Moravia Tours, partner of Impulse Travel.

"Tourism can stop, but social transformation cannot"

Lizeth Riaño, Impulse Travel.

In terms of partnerships, a key player in the growth of Impulse Travel was Booking.com, which in 2019 won the Booking Booster Award, a program to accelerate sustainable tourism enterprises. Impulse received financial resources and support to accelerate its impact strategy. A year later, in 2020, they also won a Booking call for projects to mitigate the impacts of covid-19 on communities. The money they received there is what has allowed the (non-profit) impact strategy to remain in place this year.

In 2019 they were also finalists in Procolombia's National Tourism Awards, in the sustainability category. They have worked with this entity for several years to position community-based tourism on the large planning map and to create the legal conditions that favor this type of tourism.

Impulse Travel also maintains alliance relationships with other community-based tourism companies that belong to Acotour, Colombia's responsible tourism association. One example is the alliance they have with Awake Travel - another company similar to Impulse Travel - responsible for a training session for the "Leaders of Change" program, which helped Impulse enter the Booking Booster competition.

Regarding the characteristics of Impulse Travel, Adriana Gómez, Product Manager at Colombian Journeys, one of its business allies, mentioned the following:

"They are constantly renewing their products and that is something that we at Colombian Journeys are looking for: new products, new programs to offer our clients. In addition, having that measured social impact, that we can assure the client that with this tour they are buying in Bogota they are part of the people who are supporting a certain community, and that that community has been able to bring out so many people through training in tour guiding and other topics, is something totally key".

At Impulse Travel, peace is conceived as inclusion, bringing the shores of a divided country closer together. Starting from this point, they believe that from Impulse they contribute to the construction of peace.

"We create mutual understanding. We realize that the things that really divide us are inherited mental structures, ideas that are not necessarily our own. We ask ourselves how we can start building from the collectivity". Rodrigo Atuesta, Impulse Travel.

Based on FIP' Business Management Model for Peace, Impulse Travel makes contributions to peace building from a focus on Reconciliation and Coexistence, and specifically from memory, because it seeks to generate new narratives about the country, focusing on the stories of historically silenced sectors and highlighting the resilience of communities affected by the conflict²⁸.

In the same way - and like the previous initiatives - Impulse Travel contributes to peace in the dimension of Inclusive Socioeconomic Development by supporting community projects in the regions and connecting them with foreign clients, which favors the dynamization of the economy of these territories. It also provides them with financing modalities for projects that are part of their value chain, in order to keep them standing in crisis situations like the current one²⁹.

Finally, the company contributes to the Human Capital dimension by providing training that promotes the growth and vocational learning of community leaders, which results in a better organization of projects and a strengthening of the social and emotional skills of its members³⁰.

Stock photography Impulse Travel



28 Fundación Ideas para la Paz. (s.f.). Practical Guide: How to build peace from companies? Retrieved from: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb-882ac88a.pdf>

29 Fundación Ideas para la Paz. (s.f.). Practical Guide: How to build peace from companies? Retrieved from: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb-882ac88a.pdf>

30 Fundación Ideas para la Paz. (s.f.). Guía Práctica: Practical Guide: How to build peace from companies? Retrieved from: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb882ac88a.pdf>



Peace lessons

1. Recognize belonging to the territory, a first step towards generating shared value

A common element in productive initiatives that contribute to peace building is that they are seen as an integral part of the territory in which they operate or where their operation has an impact. In this sense, they understand and identify with the culture and the vision of development that the communities they work with have. An enterprise that contributes to and has an impact on the construction of peace and the transformation of the territory is fully aware that, in order to be competitive and sustainable, it depends directly on the well-being of its surroundings. It has a long term vision, and makes the well-being and sustainability of the environments a company objective, with the full conviction that, in doing so, it generates shared value.

“When we worked with international cooperation projects, we realized that the productivity and unity of the partnerships ended almost simultaneously with the completion of the project and its respective financing. There we saw that something was not working and we thought of a different strategy with two main guidelines. The first was to build long-term projects where accompaniment was permanent; and the second was to transform the way we related to the community, abandoning the role of the latter as the beneficiary of the project (which made a difference in how one perceived the people and how the community was perceived in the regions). There is an inequality there that is evident. On the contrary, if you are a partner of the people, they see you as an equal, and the treatment changes. This is the way to do business: betting on the long term and distributing responsibilities and challenges in a horizontal way where both risk and benefit”. Catalina Álvarez, Selva Nevada’s administrative manager.

One of the characteristics of the companies that build peace is their *“high sense of belonging to the municipalities, regions and departments in which they operate, and to understanding themselves as part of the territory, identifying with their culture and geography, as well as their needs and projections”*³¹. The recognition of an enterprise as an integral part of the territory - responsible for its well-being and development - triggers a series of factors that are favorable to everyone, strengthens the relationship between enterprises and communities, and modifies the way of addressing conflicts and problems associated with the business activity.

The productive initiatives studied generate processes of development and well-being of the territory from different angles: Impulse Travel, through the strengthening of capacities and the access to markets of community tourism initiatives in rural and urban environments; Mesa Nacional de Café, generating processes of articulation between different coffee producers - both ex-combatants and non-ex-combatants - in the environments of the areas of reincorporation, which allows them to access better market conditions for the sale of their production; Selva Nevada, by enabling access to markets for Amazonian fruits produced by producers’ associations in regions of high conflict, while generating processes to strengthen the technical capacities of these associations; and Confecciones La Montaña, by taking on the challenge of strengthening a local market in a region highly affected by the armed conflict, with the objective of generating a process that improves the quality of life of the ex-combatant population in Anorí, initially, but with the firm expectation that this development will reach communities in the area of reincorporation.

“The experience we have had in the cooperative is to provide employment and decent work opportunities, creating alternative economies in the territories most

³¹ Fundación Ideas para la Paz How are the companies that build peace? Retrieved from: <http://www.ideaspaz.org/publications/posts/1484>

affected by the conflict, helping all these people who were in the rural areas, who have been forgotten and marginalized, to be part of the economic, social and political development. In that sense, we are committed to the transformation of the territory”. Martín Batalla, Confecciones La Montaña.

“One of the rules of community tourism is that the community needs to want tourism, and the second is that it should bring benefits not only to one or two smart people, who are the ones who take advantage, but make an effort to involve more community members, even if they are not the most fluent with the narrative or other aspects”.

Rodrigo Atuesta, Impulse Travel.

To conclude, from the experience of FIP it has been possible to evidence that those companies that are born or incorporate a sense of belonging to the territory achieve a better relationship with their stakeholders. If it is based on dialogue, this leads to a better quality in decision making and the strengthening of cooperative and win-win relationships.

2. Territories are diverse: identifying their characteristics is key to sustainability.

The territorial variable is fundamental for productive initiatives: there are many environmental factors that the company cannot control and that can affect its results³². That is why it is necessary that the initiatives know and incorporate in their planning and operation specific variables of the context.

It is crucial to identify and take into account these external factors that can affect the operation of the initiative. For the cases studied, elements such as the recognition of the territory’s productive vocation and the knowledge of its inhabitants; the gaps in available public goods and services, and the security or environmental conditions, can be determining factors in the consolidation and sustainability of an initiative and its contribution to the sustainability of the environment.

From an integral reading of the context, it is possible to identify elements that, from the productive vocation, strengthen the development of the initiative. This is the case of Mesa Nacional de Café, or even Selva Nevada,

which read the productive potential of the territory and, based on these vocations, they strengthened alliances and productive models that contribute to the sustainability of these initiatives and the environment.

“What generated the initiative of the coffee production project was the need for economic, social and productive alternatives with the people we were surrounded by. The map of crops in these regions is coffee, coca, marijuana and poppy. That is Cauca and Nariño and many other regions of the country where the conflict was very aggressive because of the oblivion of the State. What we saw around the ETCRs, the spaces where we were, was that the legal crop, which generates roots, was coffee. In that logic, to strengthen the relations with the communities, and to generate our own productive initiatives and strengthening of the social fabric, we decided to bet on that issue”. Antonio Pardo, Mesa Nacional de Café.

This territorial reading contributes in a double way. In the particular case of Mesa Nacional de Café, it has allowed, on the one hand, to strengthen the productive capacities of the territory, generating greater incentives for ex-combatants and communities to advance and strengthen productive projects within the law; and, on the other hand, it has favored processes of reconciliation and generation of trust through collaborative work between ex-combatants and communities in the areas of reincorporation at the national level. Examples such as this are manifested in the different initiatives studied: in Selva Nevada the vocation and productive dynamics of the communities around the Amazon fruits were recognized, and Impulse Travel identifies and promotes the possibility of establishing tourist routes led by communities sensitive to the conflict.

“When Breaking Borders was created, there was a tourism cluster in La Candelaria with the support of the local mayor’s office and the Externado. The cluster was full of hostels, and there were already several agencies working with them, but Impulse Travel did put a lot of promotion into the Breaking Borders tour and has moved around quite a bit, being a supportive companion”. Sebastián Rojas, Breaking Borders, partner of Impulse Travel.

On the other hand, reading the context can also pose challenges for sustainability: as we mentioned earlier, in environments of reincorporation and regions highly affected by the armed conflict, there are large gaps in access to public goods and services. But in the current situation, security in the environments where the enterprises operate can also threaten their sustainability. In this sense, it is important to incorporate the costs associated with these elements of context from the operation of the initiatives, as well as to establish protection mechanisms that allow them to operate with these variables in mind.

³² Instituto de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores de las Ciencias Administrativas de la Universidad Veracruzana The importance of the general environment in companies. p1,2 Obtained from: <https://www.uv.mx/iiesca/files/2013/04/06CA201202.pdf>

“These projects, as well as the economic development they generate, are a fundamental driver of peace, but it must also be clear that this is not enough. We can sell many bags, Confecciones La Montaña can be a very successful project, but if the workers are killed there is no company that resists a genocide, as what is happening again in Colombia. This project is an engine of peace, yes, but we must do many more things”.

Martín Batalla, Confecciones La Montaña

3. Community know-how: raw material for entrepreneurship.

Recognizing the previous knowledge communities have is a factor that expands the possibilities of success of a productive initiative. This learning arises as an extension of the readings of the context and the territory: recognizing the knowledge and the existing capacities in the communities or the people who undertake and take part in the productive initiatives, the costs of learning are significantly reduced, a productive vocation of the people is strengthened and the possibility of consolidating a sustainable initiative from the knowledge is opened.

These prior knowledges have many ways of manifesting themselves. They can be technical knowledge that turns into a business, as is the case of Confecciones La Montaña or the National Coffee Board, who knew how to take advantage of previous learnings and practices by ex-combatants and communities in the environments where the initiatives operate: the making of clothing for ex-combatants and the knowledge of the communities about coffee cultivation in the environments of reincorporation. But they also took advantage of organizational and leadership capacities within their collectivity to mark out and carry out productive initiatives in complex environments.

“Confecciones La Montaña is a project that came out of the confrontation, it was not that the laying down of arms ended and we sat down to think about what we were doing; that trade of clothing within the FARC has been an almost cultural issue, that has been learned for a long time and has been developed to supply some needs within the confrontation: the uniforms, the quartermaster, the hammocks. All this to mention that it is a productive task that has made the transition process with us”, says Martin Batalla, Confecciones La Montaña.

In both Impulse Travel and Selva Nevada, previous experiences of their leaders stand out, and led them to approach the value chains on which their ventures are based today.



“There are some projects that when we approach them are already community tourism projects, such as Breaking Borders or Caguán Expeditions. When they already have routes and they consider themselves guides, we start to say: ‘You already have this project, how do we make a HEART product together? It’s a mutual learning process: they learn from Impulse what a successful travel experience looks like, what the traveler is interested in and how much their work costs, among other things, and we receive from them how they imagine the experience. And so, together, we build a HEART product’”

Lizeth Riaño, Impulse Travel.

4. Market signals: an opportunity for entrepreneurship and innovation.

For any type of business, identifying the opportunities and conditions of the markets -local, regional or national- is a fundamental factor in the consolidation of a venture. For the initiatives studied, the market has played an important role in their consolidation and potential sustainability.

In the case of Impulse Travel, an important milestone that led to its construction was the gap in the market for tourist routes for visitors in the city of Bogotá, which, with the signing of the Peace Agreement with the FARC, opened up the possibility of generating routes in areas where it was previously not possible to carry out these activities and, moreover, contribute with a positive impact to the process of transformation of the territories affected by the armed conflict

“With Impulse, we were initially called Destino Bogota. We were created in 2008 with a very clear vision and an opportunity in the market: the lack of tour offerings for foreigners in Bogotá (...) We wanted to offer our visitors a special and unique experience that would highlight our Colombianness through gastronomy and soft adventures near Bogota. (...) We were growing and in 2016, with the Peace Agreement and the victory of the No in the plebiscite, I asked myself what my role was as a citizen and businessman. We realized that tourism was a very powerful tool that, if it was framed in a strategy of impact and a theory of change, could begin to energize certain processes and be the ally of communities that are in a process of transformation”. Rodrigo Atuesta, Impulse Travel.

Selva Nevada, which has been a pioneer in making visible and opening new markets for the consumption of Amazonian fruits through the sale of ice cream, identified an opportunity in the market of the main cities where there was no similar offer. From there, they also built a model that would generate value and improve the quality of life of production associations in areas of high conflict.

Mesa Nacional de Café, for its part, was aware that coffee was a product of consumption and regular demand with which it could open space in an international market by building a solid narrative (a coffee that was the result of peace), and generate value with its quality. A very similar case is that of Confecciones La Montaña, which also managed to connect a collective know-how thanks to an increasingly high demand for products with a meaning and a narrative of contribution to the construction of peace and territorial transformation that, in addition, is of massive and daily consumption.

There are no magic recipes that guarantee a space in the market, nor the sustainability of an initiative. However, it is strategic to identify the opportunities that it presents on the road to sustainability. A fundamental element in the consolidation of productive initiatives that contribute to peace is to analyze the dynamics of consumption that have been materializing in recent years, as well as the levels of trust and credibility that businesses can generate.

Based on the lack of studies on this subject in Colombia, it is worth highlighting one conducted by Sustainable Week in 2015, related to consumption habits, which revealed that 14% of those surveyed believed that war and the absence of peace were urgent problems in Colombia; 44% considered that buying and using products that reduce environmental damage contributed to obtaining a balance with nature; and 33% believed that buying and using products from companies committed to social welfare helped to obtain social justice³³.

Although there is still a long way to go to have a qualified market, there is an important and representative segment of the population that is willing to base its consumption decisions on the impact companies have in terms of sustainability and social welfare. And that is where these types of initiatives can have a greater opportunity to open up a space in the market.

³³ Tell me what you buy and I'll tell you what you believe. Retrieved from: <https://sostenibilidad.semana.com/medio-ambiente/multimedia/consumo-responsable-en-colombia-primera-encuesta-nacional-dime-que-compras-y-te-dire-quien-eres/33535>



5. The impact is greater when working with partners

Establishing partnerships at all levels, according to the needs of the productive initiatives, is fundamental to enhance their impact in terms of sustainability. Knowing the needs of the initiative or enterprise in the different phases of the value chain is a key variable when it comes to consolidating the partnerships that really enhance it.

The potential of generating and consolidating partnerships for a productive initiative is often unknown, especially the fact that these can permeate and strengthen the different moments of the value chain of an enterprise, from the logistics, operational, production, marketing and sales aspects, to technology or human resource management in terms of infrastructure. In several of the initiatives we find diverse actors that strengthen their technical capacities, as is the case of the National Federation of Coffee Growers with Mesa Nacional de Café, which has accompanied it particularly in Cauca during the process of production and transformation of coffee, or the SENA with training spaces for Confecciones la Montaña.

In the particular case of Confecciones La Montaña, the need to strengthen its productive capacity is evident, a clear example of the need and potential that can be reached by establishing alliances to guarantee the sustainability of the enterprise:

“... What happens is that we have a knot to untie in Confecciones La Montaña, and for that we need the support of international cooperation, the private sector or other actors. Confecciones La Montaña is a project that today remains small in front of the great demand it has. We receive orders today, and we deliver them in 2 or 3 months, because we already have a full production capacity. We have analyzed within the cooperative the need to grow as a productive project in conjunction with other actors, including other clothing factories nationwide”.

Martín Batalla, Confecciones La Montaña.

On the other hand, the alliances also allow to direct the impact that a productive enterprise or alliance can have in the processes of transformation of the territory and the construction of peace. This is the case of Impulse Travel, which, through alliances with community initiatives in sectors sensitive to the conflict, generates an impact on the quality of life and economic sustainability of these communities, preventing an increase in violence or illegal activities. Impulse Travel also makes alliances with other actors in order to strengthen this impact on community projects:

“Our allies enter into the generation of opportunities for the communities. We generate other types of opportunities such as education, training and capacity building. Allies such as the government, NGOs, and private companies enter into this process. These strategic alliances allow us to generate impact. In the future, we want to have more alliances, strengthen the relationship with private companies

so that they get involved in these issues and include sectors such as international cooperation”. Lizeth Riaño, Impulse Travel.

A similar situation exists in Selva Nevada, where long-term commercial alliances with forest fruit producer associations not only generate dynamics of access to new markets and income for these communities, but also strengthen technical capacities and access to the necessary infrastructure that allows them to respond to effective demand with these products.

It is clear that there is a broad panorama for the potential that partnerships can have in a productive enterprise or initiative that seeks to have an impact on the transformation of peace. However, this type of alliance that strengthens the enterprises and the process of territorial transformation is also the result of preliminary processes that involve other of the lessons learned here. Elements such as the sense of belonging to the territory, the strengthening of dialogue as a strategy for relating to actors of interest, the positioning of cooperation as a way to establish relations and, of course, the strengthening of trust between different actors. All of them favor the consolidation of strong and sustainable alliances.



6. Contributing to peace building is a decision, not an externality

The contributions to peace building are diverse. However, to contribute from an enterprise to the transformation of the territory and to the relations looking for a peaceful environment and of well-being, it passes through a conscious decision and an attentive planning that is materialized in productive models; in the constitution of alliances that benefit the population sensitive to the conflict and that empowers the communities; in the conscious care of the environment, and in an attentive management not to exacerbate conflicts or to generate action with damage. Those initiatives whose purpose is to contribute to the construction of peace and the transformation of territories are aware that their operations must be implemented and have an impact on remote and conflict-affected areas.

All this is evident in the actions implemented by the initiatives and can be supported in the Business Management Model for Peace of the FIP. On the one hand, companies contribute to peace as a conscious decision and their contribution is a commitment that is at the heart of the organization. This decision is reflected and is part of each of the processes and activities implemented for their development, as proposed in the dimension of Strategic Management for Peace, which should reflect the commitment of the organization to peacebuilding. In each of

the initiatives it has been recognized that peace is something that goes beyond the signed Agreement: it is a broad process that requires and involves - in different ways - people and companies in the territory.

But it is in the dimension of Inclusive Socio-Economic Development where most of the work and contribution of these four initiatives has been concentrated. Generating opportunities in those territories that have been submerged in poverty, violence and lack of opportunities, as well as promoting access to public goods and services, is a first step towards building peace.

“The war has taken place more than anything else because people have no alternatives. Creating economic opportunities helps people not to want to be in war. When communities begin to build new things, the first thing they want is peace so that the project can continue. When a person has an alternative not to be in the war, they are not going to be”. Catalina Álvarez, Selva Nevada.

There are various activities and strategies that can be undertaken in the territories hand in hand with the communities to generate opportunities and promote inclusive socio-economic development. Some of these are related to designing and implementing market and distribution schemes that favor clients and consumers in places far from the economic dynamics; implementing policies and alliances for hiring victims, ex-combatants and people affected by the armed conflict; developing plans and strategies to link local projects to the company's productive activities; developing technical training; facilitating access to financing modalities and the formalization and promotion of cooperative work, among others³⁴.

"We are farmers producing in our area, we want to stay there and promote the growth and productive development of the area where we are. We want to show that it is possible to build an alternative economy in rural areas with communities and peasants, and we want to fulfill a fundamental approach of the Agreement, which is the territorial one. Peace has to be built in the territories". Martín Batalla, Confecciones La Montaña.

Contributing to socio-economic development can also have an impact on the consolidation of safer spaces, if actions are implemented under a peace focus and with continuous accompaniment.

"Generating economic opportunities contributes to reducing the chances that communities will remain linked to activities and dynamics that were based on war. Generating opportunities improves security conditions, as well as having safer and more peaceful places has a direct impact on the flow of tourists and a greater flow represents greater income and stability for the territories. It is a virtuous circle". Lizeth Riaño, Impulse Travel.

In addition to generating economic alternatives and opportunities, peacebuilding involves strengthening trust, reconciliation and rebuilding the social fabric. This is reflected in the dimension of Reconciliation and Coexistence, which includes the development of activities that promote interactions and build relationship between actors who have been divided because of the war, as well as the generation of spaces for dialogue to overcome antagonisms and rebuild interpersonal ties.

"The coffee exercise has allowed us to generate very close relationships, already in peace, with the communities that accompanied us in the conflict. Thanks to this initiative, the community began to discuss with us which crop should be predominant in the territory, whether to continue betting on illicit cultivation as the only source of income or on new crops in alternation that bet on peace. Generating such conversations is a great achievement in the territories". Antonio Pardo, Mesa Nacional de Café.

Implementing initiatives led by ex-combatants in coordination with the community - as is the case of the National Coffee and Clothing Table La Montaña - allows the strengthening of relations, improves communication between these actors and shows a new face of those who participated and became part of the conflict.

"The ex-combatants of the cooperatives were able to show the communities that the coffee project was something they could benefit from, they sat down and began to socialize with the more traditional and skeptical coffee organizations. At first there was a lot of mistrust and no possibility of getting involved, but this changed over time and a process of reconciliation began. These dynamics vary depending on each region. In Caldon, for example, the town council allocated a significant portion of land so that the ex-combatants' cooperative could begin its productive project; in other words, they trusted them from day zero". Carlos López, Ascafé.

These spaces and interactions have allowed us to change the imaginaries of war for spaces of dialogue and reconciliation.

"Peace is inclusion and bringing the shores of such a divided country closer together. What could be more symbolic than for me to give my life to tourism projects with ex-combatants like Caguán Expeditions? This was my greatest fear in life; I remember having nightmares about guerrillas and now I am giving you my life and telling you: look I am trusting you so much that we are going together in this same boat and rowing in the same direction". Rodrigo Atuesta, Impulse Travel.

In addition, initiatives can contribute to building peace through the responsible and sustainable management of environmental resources. This, in turn, will help prevent the emergence of new conflicts and consolidate peaceful environments by strengthening the skills and capacities of stakeholders and promoting participation in the formulation of community plans. This participation falls both on the leaders and collaborators of the initiatives, as well as on the communities.

34 Practical Guide: How to build peace from companies? Available at: <http://cdn.ideaspaz.org/media/website/document/590fb882ac88a.pdf>

7. Growth according to capacities

The initiatives expressed the need to work on strengthening technical and technological capacities to achieve growth, market positioning and their own sustainability. Being at the forefront of knowledge and techniques, as well as innovating and having the necessary technology for the development of activities, is not something that should only be worked on at the beginning and during the creation of the initiative, but throughout its existence. The initiatives have achieved this strengthening, mainly, with the support of other entities and allied institutions, as well as with international cooperation resources and the support of the National Government.

“We have executed projects with the Government and with cooperation that seek to help associations in regions. Thanks to them, we have been able to buy machinery, build production centers, cold rooms, and innovate with renewable energy, among others. We also give them training, with the projects we always leave resources to be able to travel and teach people how to pulp each fruit and how to use the machinery”. Catalina Álvarez, Selva Nevada.

To initiate a process of capacity building it is necessary to start from the needs and aspirations of the stakeholders. As mentioned by the consulting firm McKinsey & Company, this process must begin with a comprehensive diagnosis that allows us to understand where the initiative and/or company is located, and where it is headed³⁵.

Strengthening technical and human capacities allows for the sustainability of the initiative; at the same time, it contributes to promote a dignified life for the communities and contributes to the transformation of the territories. There is a direct relationship between the development of capacities and the development of the territory. According to the Indian economist Amartya Sen, development is the result of the activation of capacities in individuals³⁶.

McKinsey argues that companies have a greater chance of success if they invest and work on capacity building. “Companies that implement effective capacity building programs as part of their transformation process reverse the odds: their transformations are 4.1 times more likely to succeed and achieve 2.2 times greater benefits from income, before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization compared to their peers’ odds”.³⁷

In order to maintain the sustainability of the initiatives, it is important that their growth is in line with their logistical, technical, production and marketing capacities, always keeping a balance between supply and demand.

“Selva Nevada’s hardest work is trying to create a supply in the regions and balance it with a demand in Bogotá. There is no point in telling producers and associations to produce fruit pulp if there is no way to sell it in Bogotá or other markets. That is why the trade agreements with producers at the beginning of the year are so important: they serve to have a projection of

³⁵ Investing in capacity building: the key to successful transformation. McKinsey & Company, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/operations/our-insights/to-make-a-transformation-succeed-invest-in-capability-building/es-es>

³⁶ Sen, A (200). Desarrollo y Libertad. Madrid. Editorial Planeta

³⁷ Investing in capacity building: the key to successful transformation. McKinsey & Company, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/operations/our-insights/to-make-a-transformation-succeed-invest-in-capability-building/es-es>

how much pulp can be sold”. Catalina Álvarez, Selva Nevada. Initiatives that are aware of their limits but that work on their growth and are projected into the future have a greater chance of being sustainable.

“We still do not have large commercial alliances at the national level, and we have not aspired to them at this time either because we still do not have assured production. Tomorrow we will be able to assure a production with good quality standards, have laboratories, plants for the transformation of coffee and others, and then we will make big alliances for commercialization”. Mario Rodríguez, Mesa Nacional de Café.

8. Building and positioning a new narrative, a determining factor

The motivation, story and narrative that is built around the initiative contributes to its impact and sustainability.

“In Bogotá there is a high percentage of the population that already knows the fruits, appreciates the product, understands the value behind it, and recognizes the importance of its commercialization. Many of Selva Nevada’s clients are those who care about the environment, and economic and social development in other areas of the country”

Catalina Álvarez, Selva Nevada.

Today, the consumer is in the process of qualification and there are multiple factors involved in a consumption decision. An initiative or enterprise that seeks to generate impacts beyond profits, has sufficient elements to position a narrative that will favor its position in market segments.

“Cosecha de Paz” should be the brand that represents us internationally. The coffee that arrives in Italy has to give faith that it was made by people in the process of reincorporation and by regions that are victims of the armed conflict, with which we are working today to strengthen the social fabric”. Mario Rodríguez, Mesa Nacional de Café.

Knowing the purpose, the sustainability practices and the impact that the initiatives have in the social, economic and environmental aspects, attracts the interest of the client and/or consumer and creates emotional bonds. In addition, these narratives facilitate and contribute to brand recall. More and more consumers are taking a critical stance towards products and consumption is gradually beginning to become a more conscious and informed act.

According to the Ideas for Peace Foundation (FIP), Corporación Reconciliación Colombia (CRC) and USAID and ACIDI/VOCA Alliances for Reconciliation (PAR in Spanish) program, the world is having new agreements related to environmental care, community relations and economic development, among others. Although there is still time to implement them in all companies, citizens and the market are inclined to favor companies, initiatives and undertakings that generate welfare balances and contribute to sustainability. According to the global communication agency Edelman, at an international level 64% of buyers choose brands because of their position in relation to social issues. That is: almost two thirds of today’s consumers make their consumption decisions depending on how close they are to the corporate values of the companies³⁸.



³⁸ Business leadership in times of crisis. Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP), Corporación Reconciliación Colombia (CRC), USAID’s Partnerships for Reconciliation (PAR) program and ACIDI/VOCA, 2020 Retrieved from: http://empresas pazddhh.ideaspaz.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/FIP_LiderazgoTiempoCrisis_Final.pdf

Reconciliación Colombia and the Centro Nacional de Consultoría conducted a survey to understand what Colombians would like to see in the business sector in an ideal scenario. The results showed that, in first place, there is employment (74%), followed by the environment (55%) and the contribution to the development of the territories (33%). These results show how citizens are increasingly distanced from that business sector that only generates profits for its own and challenges entrepreneurs to think about the territories and work for them³⁹.

The four initiatives that are the object of this study have been interested in knowing and making part of the territory, as well as recognizing its value in productive, geographic and human terms. They have also worked hand in hand with the communities present there and are based on the principle of generating value and sustainability. These are aspects that must be consolidated in the narrative and made more visible; doing so will allow them to motivate and influence new initiatives and undertakings so that they can replicate these types of strategies and positions.

9. Organizational culture and leadership: essential for success

Any undertaking or productive initiative requires strong leadership, with management capacity and confidence-building that mobilizes the collective around and outside the initiative. The leadership styles of the initiatives are multiple. For example, in the case of Confecciones La Montaña:

“There are very strong leaderships. One thing to emphasize is the logic of relationship from which they come: we know that these changes do not happen overnight. In the process of reincorporation, they become a community, but there are still aspects of the leader’s logic that can benefit these economic dynamics”. Piedad Pérez, UNDP Sustainable Rural Development Professional, partner of Confecciones La Montaña.

A common element of great importance for the sustainability of the enterprises is the capacity to empower and promote new leaderships. One example is the Impulse Travel initiative which, in addition to working on the business model, is concerned with strengthening community leadership:

“We realized with the communities that income generation was reaching a point, but from there to there were many things happening that conditioned the impact strategy we had in these places. That is why we began to work with the communities beyond tourism, on issues of leadership and association, in order to see that the tourism and social transformation projects that we were supporting became solid businesses, with impact, leadership and sustainability.

All of this was done so that the communities and local initiatives would not depend on Impulse”. Rodrigo Atuesta, Impulse Travel.

Leadership - besides empowering, being a reference and innovating - must generate an organizational culture favorable to the sustainability of the initiative. Enterprises are nurtured by an organizational culture that reinforces positive practices, such as continuous improvement, monitoring and evaluation of results; the quality of relationships within the organization, and ways to address conflicts, among others. These organizational elements require attention, planning, execution, continuous improvement and, of course, leaders who are in charge of these processes.

“Impulse has had very dynamic organizational processes, but always with an awareness of how we are doing. We understand that the only constant is change, even in the organizational field. We have gone through many work schemes, according to different moments of maturity. Something that has been constant is a strategic framework that is called the OKR (Objectives and Key Results); basically, it is a framework that helps to work in alignment, to choose the objectives that are really important and to work on prioritization. The work on organizational culture at Impulse has always been strong and constant: we talk about value, purpose and we have team moments where we can show you how we are on a personal level”. Rodrigo Atuesta, Impulse Travel.

In addition, it highlights those leaders who manage to promote change in complex contexts and mobilize around a common purpose, regardless of having different positions. One example is the National Coffee Board, which has had leaderships that made possible its consolidation, the articulation of different cooperatives of ex-combatants that work around coffee in order not to duplicate efforts, not to compete among themselves, and to have a greater impact on the coffee exercise. The leaderships present there have managed to overcome the difficulties and unite for the same purpose: the commercialization of coffee.

“I do not think that we would have been able to reach this point (consolidation of the project) if there was not a group of people that have found an inner strength and a purpose of life in trying to take the instrument that was peace and turn it into a path for many people that were in illegality”.

Carlos López, Ascafé.

³⁹ Business leadership in times of crisis. Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP), Corporación Reconciliación Colombia (CRC), USAID’s Partnerships for Reconciliation (PAR) program and ACIDI/VOCA, 2020 Retrieved from: http://empresaspazddhh.ideaspaz.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/FIP_LiderazgoTiempoCrisis_Final.pdf

Within the initiatives of ex-combatants and the associations that are part of the Selva Nevada initiative, representative leaderships have been identified that manage to mobilize around their efforts and decisions.

“There are producers who are the ones who pull the strings, the ones who take the lead. A group of people gather around them and their leadership, and they are legally constituted long afterward”. Catalina Álvarez, Selva Nevada.

According to Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP), Corporación Reconciliación Colombia (CRC) and USAID’s Alliances for Reconciliation program and ACDI/VOCA, citizens are increasingly demanding ethical commitment, leadership and action from the business sector in the face of environmental challenges. The Edelman Trust Barometer measurement shows that “76% of global respondents believe that business leaders should take the lead in addressing social issues and challenges”⁴⁰.

10. Gender gap: a pending issue.

Promoting gender equity and women’s participation in peacebuilding is key to building more just and sustainable societies (UN, 2015). In Colombia there has been important progress in recognizing the role of women in various spheres of society, and a great achievement in including a cross-cutting gender approach in the Peace Agreement signed with the FARC-EP in 2016 (GPAZ, 2020). However, large gender gaps persist. In the economic dimension, in 2019, women’s labor participation was 53%, while men’s was 73.7%, indicating a gap of 20.7%. This gap is particularly high in rural areas, where it reaches 35.8%, and among the population with no schooling, with 34.3% (GEIH, 2019).

These gaps increase particularly in post-conflict areas and areas prioritized for the implementation of the Peace Agreement. In a study conducted in four DPTF regions, it was identified that 82% of people with incomes below the minimum wage in post-conflict zones are women; that only 30% of those

working are women; and that 1 out of every 2 women is dedicated primarily to domestic works⁴¹. It was also found that 6 out of every 10 Colombians who were interviewed in these zones do not agree with changing traditional gender roles.

Other barriers that make it difficult for women to generate income are low land tenure and access to productive assets, credit and financing. Regarding the former, the Ministry of Agriculture established that, in 2018, women registered a land tenure and management of 21.9%, while men registered 51.7%. As if this were not enough, under point 1 of the Peace Agreement, only 5.5% of the hectares formalized through the Land Fund have been given to women (2020).

The four initiatives studied coincide on the need to strengthen the role of women and give them the necessary protagonism to transform the territories. The initiatives have implemented some actions to reduce gender gaps: for example, linking women within the enterprises, either as beneficiaries, partners or allies.



Stock photography Impulse Travel

⁴⁰ Business leadership in times of crisis. Fundación Ideas para la Paz (FIP), Corporación Reconciliación Colombia (CRC), USAID’s Partnerships for Reconciliation (PAR) program and ACDI/VOCA, 2020. Retrieved from: http://empresapazddhh.ideaspaz.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/FIP_Lid-erazgoTiempoCrisis_Final.pdf

⁴¹ Semana Rural. “The Daring of being a rural woman in Colombia” Retrieved from: <https://semanarural.com/web/articulo/la-osadia-de-ser-mujer-rural-en-colombia/621>



Stock photography Impulse Travel

“Impulse has implemented a gender focus, not only in the company, but we replicate it outward with the community leaders we work with. We look for ways to include women and their voice in the tour narratives. We have been working so that our travel experiences transform the narrative of Colombia, to leave behind the narratives of conflict and drug trafficking, and position a new one of social transformation and resilience. In this, women have been key”.

Lizeth Riaño, Impulse Travel.

Those initiatives that have arisen after the signing of the Agreement and that are led by former combatants - as is the case of Mesa Nacional de Café and Confecciones La Montaña - are committed to the gender issue out of conviction, but also with the aim of implementing what has been laid down in the Peace Agreement, which recognizes that, in order to achieve the transformation of the territories and achieve a more democratic society, the participation of women, the LGBTI population, and the ethnic and Afro communities is required.

“In all the spaces that we are, we apply the gender approach in the framework of the implementation of the peace agreements. We are clear about the importance of women’s participation in all scenarios; therefore, in the training spaces that we have had, the relationship between men and women has been approximately 50-50. The coordination spaces of the table are directed mainly by women. The Afro communities are also taken into account, in order to work on the implementation of all the approaches”. Antonio Pardo, Mesa Nacional de Café.

Regardless of the progress and strategies that have been implemented since the initiatives, there is still a long way to go. There are many activities and strategies that must continue to be implemented in order to achieve gender equity.

“The main challenge to break the gender gaps begins in the organizations, with a conscious position and decision of the directives to contribute to gender equity. The reduction of gaps is not only based on placing women in managerial and leadership positions, but must go beyond asking what women’s work implies, unlocking talents, giving them the capacity to make decisions and move processes. Therefore, it is very important that organizations implement training programs to exploit women’s capabilities.” Lizeth Riaño, Impulse Travel.

Concluding thoughts

This initiative around the productive sector and peace, besides being a learning exercise, is above all a recognition of those people who in the midst of complex conditions have undertaken the path of leading productive initiatives that seek, in a decisive manner, to transform the territory and improve the quality of life of communities and regions highly affected by the armed conflict. It is also a recognition of those who made the decision to make their way in the legal arena and make the enterprise a successful formula for the reincorporation of ex-combatants into the economic and social sphere.

Although the four initiatives continue to work towards financial sustainability, they have already generated value in their operating environment: on the one hand, they generate income for their partners at the economic, social and community levels; and on the other, they contribute to the processes of territorial transformation and peace building. However, there is still a way to go.

In the first place, many of the challenges faced by the initiatives are derived from the context: in Colombia there is an immense gap in terms of public goods and services between rural and urban environments; in that sense, consolidating a competitive enterprise in rural environments continues to be considerably more difficult and costly. Similarly, the deterioration of security conditions in the country - particularly in rural areas and those prioritized in the implementation of the Peace Agreement - poses great threats to these processes of strengthening local markets and the search for and consolidation of productive alternatives in the legal sphere. It is still necessary to seek mechanisms to protect the life of communities in these territories.

Secondly, despite the great advances in the consolidation of alliances with different business, cooperation and educational actors to strengthen this type of enterprise, in Colombia it is still necessary to work to strengthen relations of trust between different actors. Bringing together and strengthening the bonds of trust between rural communities, ex-combatants, the institutions and the business sector will promote an environment of competitiveness through the consolidation of alliances that strengthen the sustainability of the productive initiatives that contribute to peace. In the same way, it will generate great contributions to territorial transformation, an indispensable requirement for the construction of stable and lasting peace.

Although from each learning process there are still challenges for its sustainability, the advances and lessons learned are very valuable, not only for its own strengthening but also as a reference for other enterprises and initiatives that begin the same path.

Lessons of peace and the Productive sector

Lessons from the experience of Confecciones la Montaña, Selva
Nevada, Mesa Nacional de Café and Impulse Travel



WITH THE SUPPORT OF:

