

NURSERY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Strengthening nurseries to build a professionalized coffee seed sector.

THE PROBLEM

One of the essential, and largely invisible, problems facing the coffee industry is the lack of a coffee seed sector. When it's time to plant a new tree, most farmers either produce new ones from seeds collected in their fields or from neighbors, or obtain them from small local nurseries. On the surface, this sounds good: self-sufficient farmers making their own plants. But more often than not, it's a key constraint to profitability.

Why? The vast majority of smallholder farmers do not know the variety they grow in their fields, do not know that more appropriate varieties exist that could increase their profitability, and do not have access to better plants. Is it resistant to rust? *Will it tolerate droughts? Does it have the quality I seek for the market?* This information is either not available or not clear to farmers. This matters because different varieties do different things. And if farmers don't know or can't trust what they have, they are exposed to huge risk.

Plants obtained from local nurseries are rarely better than what a farmer can produce him or herself. Many nurseries are in remote areas and primitive, producing questionable varieties of questionable plant health. In most cases, these nurseries take or buy seeds from local farmers or institutions but do not take into consideration genetic traceability and purity of the seed—in other words, they often don't know for certain what variety they are selling. Training is limited or nonexistent for most nursery owners; most learn on-the-fly and have scarce access to technical assistance..

THE SOLUTION

To build a strong and professional coffee seed sector that doesn't leave out smallholder farmers, WCR is implementing a Nursery Development Program aimed at building the capacity of small entrepreneurial and cooperative nurseries to produce adequate volumes of genetically pure and healthy seedlings to small farms and farmers. Nursery staff are trained right at the nursery using a WCR-developed manual of best practices for producing genetically pure and healthy seedlings, as well as on good business practices. Nursery staff are trained-as-trainers for lasting impact.



IMPACT

Training small nurseries to operate technically-sound and profitable nurseries will result in expanded access to improved, resilient varieties for smallholders—leading eventually to increased production and profits. It reduces farmer risk and strengthens needed renovation programs in target countries. The program will also build stronger rural organizations and create new entrepreneurial business opportunities in coffee farming communities.

The owner of a small nursery shows examples of healthy root structures.

LOCATION:	Perú, Puerto Rico, Honduras, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Indonesia
TIMELINE:	Ongoing
LEADERS:	Emilia Umana and Kraig Kraft
MAJOR FUNDING:	USAID, USDA, Keurig Dr Pepper, Lavazza Pro, Starbucks Foundation