

Youth info-brief

your work in a nutshell



Global
Landscapes
Forum



The Youth Infobrief series on Food and Livelihood, published by the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) and the Youth in Landscapes Initiative (YIL), is meant to put a spotlight on some of the remarkable work being done by young people around the world on food and livelihoods.

Food sovereignty approach to enhance governance in protected areas

Bio

I am Ana Yi and I stand for fair and healthy food systems. I harness my expertise in communications to engage friends and colleagues in initiatives on peace-building, agroecology, nature conservation, and knowledge sharing. While joining these projects, I came to be more aware of biological and social interconnections across our living planet, so our decisions have the power to sustain life and wellbeing for all, especially those that are most in need. I co-founded the International Network of Students for Peace in Peru (RED ESPAZ) thirteen years ago and I enjoy my time supporting youth movements and social campaigns around the globe. I am from Peru and I am currently living in Spain.



Project Description

'How can farmers settled in the Alto Mayo Protected Forest align their agriculture practices to protect it and enhance local development at the same time?' This question drove my field research in the San Martín region, northern Peru. This landscape hosts unique biodiversity and marvelous landscapes like cloud forests and living rivers, and it's a source of livelihood for about 4500 people, yet the forest is threatened by illegal logging and clearing land for agriculture.

Amidst these issues, the Peruvian National Protected Areas Service, together with a technical partner, have been implementing Conservation Agreements (CA), an incentive-based tool for engaging farmers in conservation. About 1,000 of CA's subscribers have committed themselves to apply organic techniques and discarding timber activities for the Amazonian forest restoration.

Under CA, families have improved living conditions and incomes, mainly because of specialty grades coffees plantation, a type of coffee of high quality intended to be exported. A small number of families are producing dragon fruits and honey from endemic bee species to diversify the economy gradually, while they are growing part of their daily food in gardens.

CA works for supporting farmers in meeting their needs; however, this solution is strongly dependent on technical and financial inputs. For instance, in Nueva Zelandia, one of the Alto Mayo Forest's communities, farmers find it difficult to continue producing and exporting organic coffee

Project outline

The geographic area of the project:

Alto Mayo Protected Forest, San Martin region in northern Peru

Year of Development\Duration

Research 1 year

Target people

Small farmers

Main theme

Food sovereignty and organic agriculture

Organization

University of Alicante

Contact person

Ana Yi Soto

ana.yi.soto@gmail.com

without NGO technical assistance. By themselves, a significant number of farmers prefer trading total or partial coffee production to local brokers, due to logistic costs to access global markets with higher prices.

In economic terms, coffee exportation alleviates extreme poverty, though farmers are still subject to extremely variable commodity prices. Thus, from a social and cultural perspective, how can technical actors and communities define a food system that goes beyond revenues and global markets and embraces the social fabric?

My project draws from the 'Conservation Agreements' technical design to identify improvement opportunities based on the Food Sovereignty (FS) approach. Defined by La Vía Campesina, FS is known as "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods (...) It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute, and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations."

This approach, adapted to the Alto Mayo Protected Forest management, can contribute to aligning productive models with conservation, and making sure the right to food, local governance, and proximity trade serves as foundations for sustainable development.

Upscaling possibilities

In practice, food-sovereign farmers are able to redirect organic techniques towards native forest products, link their production to landscape's features, showcase biological richness through ecotourism initiatives, and connect with local and regional markets by supplying particular crops.

Above all, farmers settled at the Alto Mayo Protected Forest can help local authorities and corresponding public entities to highlight conservation objectives. Farmers can serve as the living testimony of how much humans depend on healthy and protected landscapes.

Challenges

1. Conservation approaches that tend to prescribe and determine actors' roles.
2. Governance and stewardship aspects are not considered crucial in the technical approach.
3. The current exportation model deepens farmers' dependence on commodity prices and prevents them from growing food for the local population.
4. Conservation models and a development vision are not built from the bottom up.

What is your tip for young people developing their own project?

Although projects start from reflecting on a problem, let's stay focused on creating shared solutions. Put yourself in the shoes of the locals to understand what is at stake when we apply our technical advice. Be constantly curious to explore alternatives to reach the project's goals and humble to identify what needs to be improved or discarded. Let's harness the human connection and build meaningful relationships while doing our job.

Global Landscapes Forum

The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) is the world's largest knowledge-led platform on integrated land use, dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement. The Forum takes a holistic approach to create sustainable landscapes that are productive, prosperous, equitable and resilient and considers five cohesive themes of food and livelihood initiatives, landscape restoration, rights, finance and measuring progress. It is led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), in collaboration with its co-founders UN Environment and the World Bank and Charter Members.

Charter Members: CIAT, CIFOR, CIRAD, Climate Focus, Conservation International, Crop Trust, Ecoagriculture Partners, EFI, Evergreen Agriculture, FSC, GEF, GIZ, ICIMOD, IFOAM - Organics International, INBAR, IPMG, IUFRO, Rainforest Alliance, Rare, RRI, SAN, UN Environment, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, part of Wageningen Research, WFO, World Agroforestry, World Bank Group, WRI, WWF Germany, Youth in Landscapes Initiative.

Funding partners



Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Nature Conservation
and Nuclear Safety



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development