



THE CHAIN
collaborative

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

Co-creating opportunities and strengthening capacities for community-led change in the coffee sector.



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Letter from the Founder

Dear Supporters and Collaborators,

This year, I had the opportunity to join a group of women founders and directors working in the non-profit field. We came together once monthly to discuss what we were celebrating and what we were navigating in our organizations. In our last meeting of the year, I shared that we at The Chain Collaborative were celebrating our best year yet - not just financially, but also in terms of our team, board, partnerships, and impact. And now, I can't wait to share this same news with you all today.

After an intentional diversity process at the end of 2020, we started out 2021 welcoming a new board that would guide us to grow as an organization - and grow we did. We welcomed several new foundation, company, and individual donors; established a Perks Network for our monthly contributors; and built new in-kind and Special Project partnerships. We consulted for seven organizations and companies, taught over 70 students, and collaborated with additional institutions to teach coursework in coffee and sustainability. But none of that compares to the incredible work of our local leader partners on the ground.

In Ecuador, our partners at Alicia Roque Farms built drying beds and a storage space, navigated their first-ever harvest, and designed new community programs to support children and families.

Meanwhile, in Uganda, Now Africa Initiative (NAI) was able to maintain homeschooling for the children of their primary school as they continued to face a year of school closures. For their community of coffee producers, NAI was able to maintain their Lead Farmer program and even grow it in new directions - recruiting new youth and women leaders and starting a revolving loan fund. They continued their home garden program while also launching beekeeping lessons and soybean production training - all while supporting farmers through the coffee harvest, improving the infrastructure at their storage center, and much, much more.

There is a lot more to share about our impact this year, and we look forward to doing just that throughout this report. We also look forward to a 2022 filled with even more growth. In the next twelve months, we will be introducing our revamped and improved community-led development and fellowship programming; our new sustainability coursework and consulting packages; and bigger and better Special Project partnerships - such as with Digital Coffee Future and Sustain Coffee. There is so much work to be done and we'll be navigating it all, but we could not be more grateful to have you all on our side as we do.

With love and deep gratitude,
-Nora Burkey

Founder & Executive Director of The Chain Collaborative





Our Mission

Our mission is to co-create opportunities and strengthen capacities for community-led change in the coffee sector.



Our Values



At The Chain Collaborative, we often refer to the importance of "value alignment." When forging new partnerships, whether they be with funders, local leaders, team members, or other collaborators, these are the values we hold dear and the ones we look out for in others.

Integrity

For TCC, integrity means staying true to our community-led mission in everything we do; making and maintaining a commitment to our local leader partners, clients, students, and collaborators; and acting always with honesty, honor, and excellence.

Curiosity


We have an insatiable desire to learn about the world and the people who make it a special, beautiful, and meaningful place, and we know that it is the curiosity of our partners that drives them toward important inquiry and exceptional performance as well.

Partnership

We believe change requires close cooperation, and that the best way we can contribute to a more sustainable coffee industry is to inspire, promote, and foster the kinds of relationships and alliances that create true confederation, and foster real community-led change.

Belonging

Belonging connotes a feeling of familiarity, meaningful and felt contribution, and the ability to participate fully. As an organization, we commit to nurturing inclusivity in everything we do, because without it, we don't belong here, either.



Achievements at a Glance



01

Community-Led Development Incubator Launch

We spent much of 2021 making strategic changes to our programs and structures. Most importantly, we revamped our central Community-Led Development program to be an 18-month Incubator opportunity for local leaders in coffee-growing communities around the world.

Launching in April 2022, this model will foster collective learning and enable more leaders to create a lasting impact in their own communities, on their own terms.

02

Project highlights in Uganda and Ecuador

This past year, Now Africa Initiative in Uganda reached 90% completion of their multi-purpose center for storing and selling the coffee of their over 300 farmer members. The center provides an office and meeting space for other community programs as well. Meanwhile, Alicia Roque Farms in Ecuador started a micro-processing center complete with drying beds, a storage space, and machinery. They were able to pay higher prices to local producers and deepen their community ties.

03

Staff and Board Expansion

In 2021, we welcomed a new full-time Programs Manager as well as a new part-time Programs Associate from Nicaragua.

We also continued strengthening our Board through a rigorous and diverse recruitment process. Joining us for 2022 are four new Board Members and three new Board Advisors, all of whom are from coffee-producing countries and bring a wealth of experience and knowledge in both the coffee and development sectors.



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Community-Led Development Programs

Explore our Impact for 2021

At The Chain Collaborative, through our community-led development programs, we build relationships with local leaders in coffee-growing regions, cultivate their project design and management skills, and foster the development of their farming enterprises. This work allows global communities to combat intergenerational poverty and marginalization in the coffee sector on their own terms, and according to their own visions for change.



Current Local Leader Partners



Marlon Mera Falcones

Alicia Roque Farms
Manabí, Ecuador



Denis Twinamatsiko

Now Africa Initiative
Kanungu District, Uganda



**Ingrid Guilberth, Eylen Pineda,
and Luis Felipe Gonzales**

Biblioteca Girasol
Matagalpa, Nicaragua

Alicia Roque Farms



Alicia Roque Farms is a small coffee farm operated by Marlon Mera Falcones and Kat Castillo in the coastal province of Manabí, Ecuador. As part of their mission to revive local coffee production, Marlon and Kat focus on organizing and supporting small-scale farmers to produce high-quality, organic, and climate-smart coffee, and process it locally.

These practices are designed to improve coffee quality and productivity, and ultimately lead to increased incomes for farming families. As Alicia Roque Farms strengthens their coffee enterprise and processing capacity, they also plan to reinvest profits back into their community via programming focused on education for children, women's empowerment, food security, and more.

At the end of 2021, an Alicia Roque Farms associated producer proposed a potable water project in the community of Ambache Grande. With 2021 harvest profits and support from TCC, Alicia Roque Farms was able to work with the community's leaders to bring drinking water directly to the homes of 300 people.

Impact in Numbers

In 2021, Alicia Roque Farms founded a micro-processing center to collect, dry, sort, mill, store, and sell the coffee of their associated producer partners. In just six months, this is the impact they made:

- 36** Families directly benefited from locally-owned infrastructure upgrades
- 2** Raised beds were built to dry coffee appropriately, control for its humidity, and ensure its quality so that it could be sold for a higher price
- 10** Producers newly engaged with Alicia Roque Farms in 2021, after seeing their success to date
- 2X** Was the average increase in price that Alicia Roque Farms was able to pay to producers compared to their competitors
- 300** Quintales of coffee are now able to be stored at the processing center, providing a safe and controlled space for producers' coffee
- 2** Machines for coffee milling and selection were purchased for more localized control over processing



Partnership Highlight



Cotopaxi is an outdoor gear company that designs sustainable, practical and colorful outdoor gear, and returns a portion of their revenue to nonprofits driving global change.

In 2021, we became one of Cotopaxi's newest nonprofit partners! Driven by their passion for collaboration and investment in Ecuador, Cotopaxi has become the number one TCC-related funder and supporter of Alicia Roque Farms, accompanying them as they make strides in the founding of their micro-processing center.

We are so proud and grateful to be part of Cotopaxi's network, and are looking forward to the years to come as we work together to deepen our impact with Alicia Roque Farms, and engage with new local leaders in other coffee communities in Ecuador.

Now Africa Initiative

Now Africa Initiative (NAI) is a grassroots farmer organization located in Nyamigoye parish in Kanyantorogo sub-county, Kanungu District, Southwestern Uganda. NAI's mission is to play a catalytic role in contributing to the socio-economic transformation of rural Uganda through sustainable agricultural development and educational improvements.

In 2021, our partners at NAI were once again forced to adapt to the challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, Karama Education Center (KEC), the primary school they founded in their community, had to keep its doors closed to comply with strict, country-wide regulations. Still, KEC reached as many students as possible through their homeschooling program, and throughout the year, teachers conducted home visits and taught multi-grade lessons to small groups. As other COVID-related challenges continued to present themselves, NAI once again demonstrated their resilience, creativity, and power as a collaborative.



Now Africa Initiative Project Highlights



Multi-Purpose Center

NAI reached 90% completion of their Multi-Purpose Center in 2021. This is where they hold meetings, store and process coffee, and sell it for a profit. This past year, NAI received more coffee than ever before, and were able to attain high prices - increasing incomes for farmers.

Lead Farmer Program

In 2021, NAI continued its Lead Farmer Program, through which farmers learn good agricultural practices and then share their knowledge with others. In total, 23 new farmers became Lead Farmers in the program in 2021, almost all of whom were women. In addition, the group of Lead Farmers independently launched a revolving savings and loan fund, to save money from coffee sales and lend it out amongst themselves at a low interest rate.

Soybean Project

Also in 2021, NAI launched an alternative income initiative to support their member farmers, especially women, to intercrop soybeans with coffee and develop soybean by-products for sale. This project has led to greater soil health as well as increased nutrition for families who are now preparing protein-rich soymilk for their own consumption. Given the success of the project so far, many more farmers from NAI can't wait to join.

Organic Garden Project

Despite school closures, the Karama Education Center (KEC)'s school garden has thrived this past year. Students continue to learn about organic gardening and apply that learning at home to care for their family/homestead gardens. KEC has also built a rabbit house to train students in animal husbandry.

46.5K

kg of coffee purchased by NAI
(27% increase from 2020)

300

NAI farmers sold coffee to the
multi-purpose center this year
(20% increase from 2020)

33%

increase in cherry price paid to
farmers when compared to 2021

5,200

USD of NAI profits
reinvested into KEC to fund
school projects

70

farmers were trained in soybean
production and soy by-product
development for alternative income

Impact in Numbers

at Now Africa Initiative



completion of the multi-purpose
center for coffee storage and NAI
meetings

90%

of participants in the Lead
Farmer Program are now
women, and 20% are youth

40%

of surveyed NAI farmers
reported an increased sense of
pride in their work as a result of
NAI's support and collaboration

100%

of surveyed NAI farmers
reported a sense of trust as a
result of NAI's transparency and
follow-through

100%



Partnership Highlight

This year, Yield Coffee Roasters provided \$4,000 USD to match the funds raised by our Monthly Donors over the course of several months - all in order to support Now Africa Initiative to build new sanitation facilities at their primary school, Karama Education Center (KEC). The original sanitation facilities at KEC were built to accommodate only one-third of the current student body. But, as KEC became more popular, it needed to meet the growing demand of its 350+ students, meaning it needed to update its sanitation facilities. This was especially critical during the COVID-19 pandemic, to ensure that students could return to a safe and healthy environment after two years of school closures (the longest shutdown in the history of the pandemic).





Alicia Roque Farms

“Working with The Chain Collaborative, we have found a partner who believes in our vision. Through their support, we’ve learned how to organize a project, what details are needed to implement this project, and how to share power among emerging leaders.”

- Marlon Mera Falcones

Now Africa Initiative

“TCC has always been a very reliable partner since the birth of the NAI-TCC partnership and this was again ably demonstrated this year when the pandemic continued to create a bleak future, but amazingly a lot was achieved, thanks to TCC and its amazing supporters. Farmers were paid a good price for their coffee, a soybean project was accomplished, homeschooling was implemented successfully, the NAI office was completed, and a WASH project was initiated and completed at KEC. This greatly contributed to the resilience of our community.”

- Denis Twinamatsiko



Biblioteca Girasol

Founded in 2018, Biblioteca Girasol is a community library in the 500-person, coffee-growing community of Matapalo in Matagalpa, Nicaragua. Biblioteca Girasol is run by a team of 15 volunteer youth leaders and three volunteer coordinators, all of whom are from the community they serve. Together, they seek to expand educational opportunities, promote youth leadership, and offer a safe space for the community's children to learn, grow and collaborate.

Since initially engaging with The Chain Collaborative as a Special Projects partner in 2020, Biblioteca Girasol engaged even more with TCC throughout 2021 and will soon be joining the first-ever cohort of the Community-Led Development Incubator in April 2022.

Since partnering with TCC, Biblioteca Girasol has...



- Offered youth-taught art, craft, and homework classes to over 50 students, and lent books to over 100 children and other community members
- Launched a mental health initiative to provide workshops and counseling for Matapalo community members
- Grown a colorful community garden full of flowers and plants donated by youth leaders
- Participated in youth exchanges with other Nicaraguan teens who are making a difference in their communities
- Developed a scholarship program to support its youth volunteers to complete high school



"Through the support and trust that The Chain Collaborative has given us, little by little, we've reached our main objectives, ensuring that the children of Biblioteca Girasol could participate in various activities to strengthen their academic, social, familial, and spiritual development - always through the elaboration of projects that allow harmonious coexistence with nature and facilitate empowerment so that people can obtain the necessary tools for a healthy life."

- Eylen Pineda



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Courses

At The Chain Collaborative

TCC offers online, virtual coursework to coffee professionals and enthusiasts worldwide. We partner with a variety of industry-wide trainers and academic institutions to deliver content, promoting a shared understanding of the complexities of sustainability in the coffee value stream.

Courses

Our Authorized Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) Trainer provides all three levels of the SCA Coffee Sustainability Program online, serving a diverse student base worldwide. This past year, during our 2021 strategic planning sessions, we also developed a series of objectives to expand our course offerings in the future. Now, throughout 2022, we will be offering one new course a quarter in partnership with other industry leaders in education and sustainability. First up is a Sustainability Reporting course in Q1. We are also starting a TCC-led Book Club to host quarterly conversations about important topics. These are open to everyone interested in sustainability and justice, and deep-diving into a book or recent study.

Fellowships

TCC manages two fellowships for emerging leaders in the coffee and development sectors. First, the Program Fellowship is a 10-month opportunity during which Fellows complete the SCA Coffee Sustainability Program while working alongside TCC to learn more about community-led development and non-profit activities. Second, the Sustain Coffee Fellowship is an exciting 5-month opportunity to work directly on the development of the Sustain Coffee resource library, take several TCC courses, and receive training and mentorship in social media and coffee stakeholder outreach. In 2021, we began our most competitive recruitment cycle yet and will be welcoming a new cohort of fellows to our team in February 2022.

Impact by the Numbers



3 TCC Program and Sustain Coffee Fellows



32 unique resources uploaded to the Sustain Coffee online library



13 SCA Coffee Sustainability Program classes provided, 2 courses offered in collaboration with academic institutions



39 countries represented among the student body - 75 students in total



Education Partnerships

Collaborative Coursework and Student Engagement

Throughout 2021, TCC provided courses in collaboration with several institutions, alongside providing our own online classes. First, we taught the SCA Coffee Sustainability Program Foundation level to students of the San Diego Coffee Training Institute. Second, we built a relationship with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at both Cal State East Bay and Vanderbilt, in order to offer classes on coffee, sustainable development, and globalization to their networks. Third, we formed a partnership with Whittier College to provide opportunities to their undergraduates. After providing a lecture to a coffee-focused class, TCC was joined by three summer interns from Whittier, and most recently, embarked on a collaborative endeavor to write an industry-wide report on carbon and coffee, with the support of their Environmental Science department.





Consulting Partnerships

In terms of our consulting collaborations, 2021 was our most successful year yet. While maintaining our non-competitive and collaborative approach, we strengthened our partnership with Expressing Origin, developed 5 consulting packages, continued 3 ongoing relationships, and gained 4 new clients.

A small sample of our work for 2021



Caravela Coffee

This past year, TCC had the privilege to conduct a comprehensive, company-wide sustainability analysis for Caravela Coffee in partnership with Expressing Origin.

Together, we completed an in-depth review of Caravela's existing sustainability efforts, interviewed team members to gain a better understanding of their goals, and elaborated a series of recommendations and an action plan so that they could create more impact in the years to come.



Seeds for Progress

TCC collaborated with Seeds for Progress throughout 2021, first by offering grant writing and fundraising training to their staff. Later, we also provided support by taking the lead on several grant applications, drafting communications about their programs, and reviewing their social media presence. We look forward to continuing this relationship throughout 2022!



Cooperative Coffees

Over the course of the year, TCC continued our relationship with Cooperative Coffees as a partner on their three-year project with Interamerican Development Bank, Sustainable Food Lab, and Root Capital. "The Carbon, Climate, and Coffee: Moving the Needle from Cool Farms to Soil Carbon Premiums" project has, to date, trained Latin American cooperatives and farmers to measure and increase carbon storage in their soils using an adapted version of the Cool Farm Tool.

Special Projects

Special Projects are initiatives that are outside the realms of our core Community-Led Development Programs, Courses, and Consulting Services, but allow us to keep innovating with peers in the coffee sector to support the development of coffee communities worldwide.



Digital Coffee Future

Digital Coffee Future (DCF) is an interactive and virtual community that allows coffee industry actors to share and exchange knowledge about digitalization in the coffee sector. TCC supports the growth of DCF by partnering with them on webinars and course development, and by providing strategic guidance on their initiatives. In 2022, our Program Fellows will also work alongside DCF to support their efforts.



Sustain Coffee

Founded in 2018, Sustain Coffee was created to connect various actors within the coffee industry – researchers, cafe owners, roasters, farmers, non-profits, and more – to a comprehensive database collating available research and resources on sustainability. TCC has had the privilege of partnering with Sustain Coffee for several years. At present, we contribute a variety of resources to their platform annually and support their growth by co-managing the Sustain Coffee Fellowship.



In collaboration with Digital Coffee Future, TCC...



- ◆ Supported the development of an education program surrounding digitalization for both cooperatives and coffee professionals worldwide, which will go live in 2022
- ◆ Launched a webinar series to highlight the intersection between coffee digitalization and climate change
- ◆ Authored articles to share Digital Coffee Future (DCF)'s work with a broad audience via industry publications
- ◆ Offered guidance on strategy for a variety of DCF initiatives, including their inaugural Traceability Summit
- ◆ Shared our summer interns with DCF, so the interns could learn from and work with another organization in the sector, and so DCF could leverage a group of volunteers



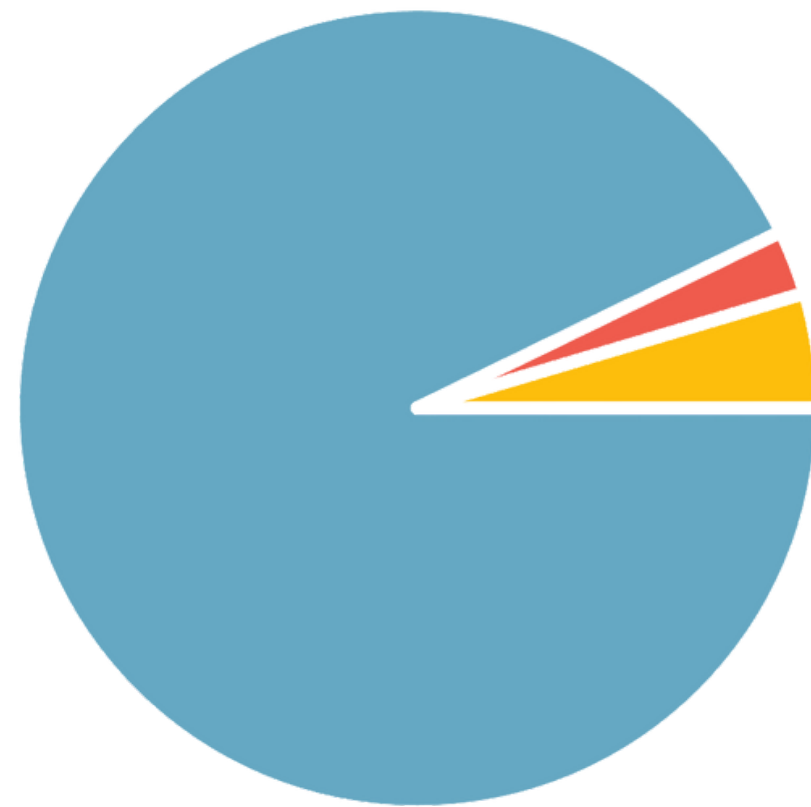
2021 Income

Grants: \$87,001.01

Earned Income: \$96,914.66*

Contributed Support: \$30,028.08

Income Total: \$213,942.75



2021 Expenses

Programs: 92.8%

Fundraising: 4.6%

Administration: 2.6%

Expenses Total= \$196,088.70

*98.4% of all administration and fundraising costs, as well as all staff and contractor salaries, were covered by our two earned income models

Supporters

seattlecoffeegear®



PROJECT BUNA

beginners



CARAVAN
COFFEE ROASTERS



PRIMAVERA
COFFEE IMPORTERS



YIELD
COFFEE ROASTERS

Supporters



Foundation & Corporate

- Amazon Smile
- Cotopaxi Foundation
- Beginners Animation*
- Blooming Prairie Foundation
- Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church
- Caravan Coffee Roasters*
- Coffee Tools Distributing*
- Connect Roasters
- Rebel Dog Coffee Roasters
- Jena and Michael King Foundation
- Linda and Leighton Taylor Family Fund
- MiiR*
- Mortenson Family Foundation
- Primavera Coffee*
- Rotary Club of Longwood at Kennett
- University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Foundation
- Vista Hermosa Foundation
- Yield Coffee Roasters



Perks Network Donors

- Cotopaxi
- Don Carvajal Café
- Junior's Roasted Coffee
- Little Waves Coffee Roasters
- MiiR
- Project Buna
- Rise Up Coffee Roasters
- Succulent Coffee Roasters

The following Perks Networks Donors also contributed in-kind to our annual auction:

- Cotopaxi
- Little Waves Coffee Roasters
- MiiR
- Project Buna
- Succulent Coffee Roasters



In-kind Auction Donors

- Acaia
- AeroPress
- Anticonquista Cafe
- Equator Coffees
- Nossa Familia Coffee
- Oatly
- Pachamama Coffee Cooperative
- Passenger Coffee Roasters
- Portrait Coffee
- Prima Coffee Equipment
- Roam Bravelly
- Seattle Coffee Gear
- See Beautiful
- Three Keys Coffee
- The Well Coffeehouse



Monthly Donors

- Adam Monaghan
- Anika Manzoor
- Becca Roebber
- Benjamin Myers
- Better Grounds
- Carolina Bevacqua
- Claudia Taylor
- Edith Burkey
- Hillary Rodriguez
- Jason Finn
- Sandra Malard and Molly Alcott

The following are monthly contributors to Biblioteca Girasol:

- Angela A Brisk
- Joseph Mears
- Leah Cohen



Individual Donors

- Adrien Jean
- Alexander Rodriguez
- A Faith Tracy
- Alejandra Gallo
- Anjali Mehta
- Brian Brinkmann
- Colleen Mori
- Cinzia Fissore
- Destani Cuccio
- Elisa Criscione
- Elizabeth Clawson
- Erica Lou
- Fionna Tejada
- Greg Jobin Leeds
- Helene S. Pierson
- Holly M. Wendt
- Jennifer Golden
- Jessie Tipton
- Joseph Tracy
- Karen Fleish
- Katherine K Garey
- Kimberly Lou
- Leslie Rule
- Lisa Arnoult
- Madelyn Nye
- Megan Lou
- Michael Lou
- Michael Zapanta
- Michelle Weinger
- Millard Herold
- Nicole Golden
- Osler Ortez
- Patricia Nolan
- Shirley Tiao
- Songabae Lee
- Steven Francis
- Tessa Tracy
- Thandiwe Nyambose
- Thomas Pestolesi

*These companies are members of the 1% for the Planet network, of which TCC is a non-profit partner

Looking ahead



Our Community-Led Development Incubator

In 2022, we will welcome our first two Incubator cohorts. Each local leader participant will design and implement a project in their own community.

The Now Africa Initiative Coffee Mill Project

Over the course of the year, we plan to raise \$50,000 in order to support NAI to establish the first locally-owned coffee mill in their region of Uganda.

Growing Team

We will continue to seek out new Board Members, Fellows, course instructors, and more, prioritizing diverse experiences and individuals from coffee-growing regions.

New Partnerships

We plan to foster new partnerships and maintain existing ones with companies, foundations, and others who share our commitment to community-led change.

Additional Courses

In collaboration with other educators, we will offer four new courses in 2022 and launch our first-ever Book Club to continue fostering our network of engaged supporters and students.

Strong Commitments

We will continue to follow through on our commitments to our local leader partners, our funders, our students, our clients, and our collaborators so that we can all achieve more, together.

Staff & Board

To all of our staff and board, we thank you for being a part of our impact story

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Staff: Nora Burkey, Founder and Executive Director | Tessa Tracy, Programs Manager | Francisco Reyes, Programs Associate | Ella Taylor, Communications and Development Assistant

.....

Fellows: Adrien Jean | Mimi Stockton | Teresa Garcia Plotkin

.....

Collaborators in Chief: Elisa Criscione, Founder of Expressing Origin and Digital Coffee Future | William Garde, Founder of Sustain Coffee | Erika Koss, Co-Trainer

.....

Board: Ben Myers, President | Becca Roeber, Vice President | Tina Kim, Secretary | Sherezad Safiq, Treasurer | Aaron Fender, Member | Kate McDonald Polakiewicz, Member | Hillary Rodriguez, Advisor | Nadine Rasch, Advisor | Jay Kim, Advisor | Matt Slater, Advisor | Areli Barrera Grodski, Advisor | Anjali Mehta, Advisor

.....



Ways to Support Us

We are so grateful to count on such an incredible community of supporters. If you are interested in getting more involved, below are a few options for ongoing support and collaboration.

Our Courses

Sign up for any of our upcoming offerings, like the Sustainability Reporting class or the SCA Coffee Sustainability Program courses. Expand your knowledge while contributing to transformational work, and join our Book Club too!

Our Monthly Donor Initiative

Sign up to give a monthly donation of any size. In return, you will receive monthly emails about the progress of NAI's coffee mill and will be put in the running to win a free coffee gift from one of our Perks Network company donors each month.

Join our Perks Network

If you are a coffee company, join supporters like [Succulent Coffee Roasters](#), [Project Buna](#), [Little Waves Coffee Roasters](#), and more to provide us with in-kind gifts that we can offer to our monthly contributors as a way to say thanks, or auction off to support the work of our partners.

Consulting Services

Visit our website to explore our menu of services and contact us to discuss how we can help your company or organization make a meaningful impact. We offer packages as well as one-off services in collaboration with [Expressing Origin](#).



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Thank you

