

10 years of community-led change

# Ammilian Ammilia Report 2024

# Letter from our founder

Dear Supporters and Collaborators,

This past year, The Chain Collaborative (TCC) quietly turned double digits. While 10 years is certainly a milestone to celebrate, the fact that we barely found the time to make more than a simple social media post about our tenth birthday demonstrates that our work is why we are here, and it always comes first. And in 2024, there was a lot of work to do!

For starters, 2024 marked our third cohort (2024-2025) of the Community-Led Development (CLD) Incubator program, and our biggest cohort yet. We onboarded eight community-based organizations across six countries, including Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru, seeing them through the Learning & Design Phase. Meanwhile, we finalized the 2023-2024 East & Central Africa cohort, and prepared to onboard each group into our Alumni Network. The Alumni Network was new for our organization this year, and we are proud to share that we met with success! The alumni of the first CLD Incubator cohort came together quarterly to discuss topics of interest, joined learning webinars, and leveraged other opportunities, such as joining TCC's sustainability courses.

In addition to continuing our sustainability course offerings, TCC also resumed our consulting work throughout 2024, collaborating with Fairtrade International, Sustainable Coffee Challenge, and Root Capital.

As busy as it gets, it is still important to take time to reflect. So, in light of ten years, we end this annual letter by sharing ten things we are proud of, and that are certainly cause for celebration. A big thanks to each and every one of you for making this list possible.

**1. Karama Education Center (KEC):** The building of this primary school in Uganda in 2015 was our first project as an organization. KEC's growth in student body and programming has since been incredible, thanks to its amazing leadership.

**2. The growth of Now Africa Initiative (NAI):** NAI was our first community-led partner, whom we met in 2014. They went from being a loose group of farmers who had a dream of working together, to a thriving business with its very own dry mill, farmer field school, and more.

**3. The launch of the CLD Incubator program in 2022:** By listening to earlierstage partners, we learned that they valued our collaboration, but also wanted to learn from other leaders. This turned into our most successful program model yet!

**4. Our team:** While our team has evolved over the years, we are proud of the working environment we have created. In 2024, we said goodbye to one beloved staff member—Tessa Tracy—who is onto bigger and better things in the realm of youth empowerment! She will be forever missed, but we know she will always be a part of what has made TCC thrive. We couldn't have done any of it without you!

**5. Our Fellowship program:** There are few opportunities for passionate coffee professionals to work in the sustainability space. Our Fellowship program, however, is one of these opportunities, and we're thrilled to see applications and interest grow from people all around the world.

6. The launch of the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) Coffee Sustainability **Program:** In 2018, TCC worked alongside several other women in the coffee sector to design and launch an educational program focused on sustainability. The program has now has been redesigned by SCA, but we are proud to be part of the program's legacy and continue providing the new curriculum to students.

7. Our first-ever video: In 2023, we filmed a short video about our CLD Incubator, which was our first-ever professional video. Getting to shoot this video in Ecuador with our team and partners is an experience we'll never forget.

8. The Sustainability Reporting course: This past year, TCC launched our firstever on-demand course in collaboration with Coffee Knowledge Hub to train industry professionals in creating, managing, and executing a reporting methodology to demonstrate and communicate their ethical actions.

9. The launch of the Alumni Network: Alongside the launch of the CLD Incubator came the launch of the Alumni Network for past Incubator participants. While still in its infancy, we can't wait to see where this network will take us, and how it will support Incubator participants into the future.

10. Our partnerships: Last but not least, we are thankful for our partnerships with community-based organizations in coffee-growing regions, donors, students, clients, and more. You are what makes this all possible.

With love and gratitude,

MUTanullay Nora Burkey

Founder & Executive Director



# Our mission

The mission of The Chain Collaborative is to co-create opportunities and strengthen capacities for communityled change in the coffee sector.

Our vision

Our vision of the future is an equitable and responsive global coffee industry that recognizes, values, and accompanies the self-directed development of coffee communities worldwide.

Our believe that coffee communities make the best decisions about their own development and that sustainable change comes from local leadership. We know that local leaders possess the drive and capacity to

goals for positive impact; as an organization, we aim to invest in these capacities.

# 2024 highlights

### Community-Led Development incubator

#### Launch of the second Latin America cohort

In April 2024, we launched the second cohort of the Latin America CLD Incubator with eight community-based organizations across six countries: Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Peru. Each organization participated in the Incubator's six-month Learning and Design phase, meeting monthly with each other as well as with TCC to build their projects plans and evaluation frameworks. As of October 2024, each group entered the Incubator's nine-month Implementation phase, officially launching their community projects.

#### The first East & Central Africa cohort joins the Alumni Network

In October 2024, the first-ever East & Central Africa cohort of CLD Incubator completed all three phases of the program and officially entered the TCC Alumni Network. Winnie Ainembaabazi from Girl Power Foundation Uganda, one of the cohort's participants, was chosen to serve as the Alumni Network Leader for East & Central Africa for 2025-2026. Moving forward, the offboarding organizations will have the opportunity to foster longer-term relationships with each other, with TCC, and with future Incubator participants, as well as access new opportunities for growth.



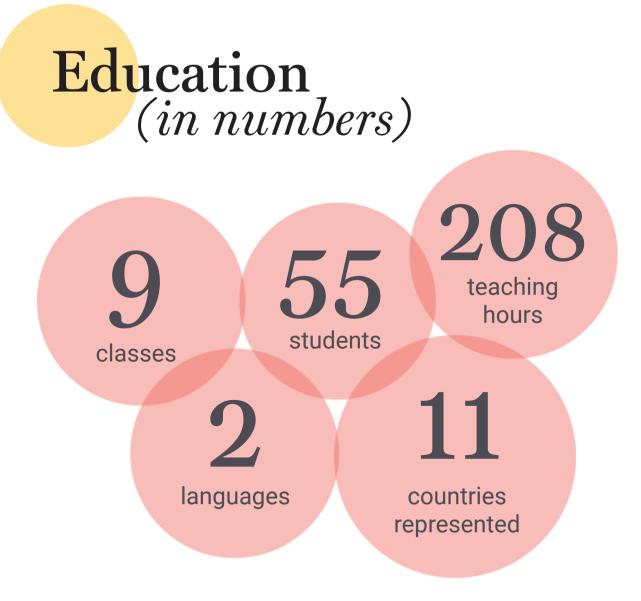
## Consulting

This year, TCC continued our consulting partnerships with three valuealigned organizations in the coffee sector. Two stick out as particularly interesting, as they allowed our team to take meaningful action on climate change.

**Conservation International:** Our Founder, Nora Burkey, has been supporting Conservation International's Sustainable Coffee Challenge team as the consulting Project Lead on their pre-competitive Latin America Coffee Carbon Footprint Baseline Study. This study aims to establish carbon footprint baselines for Arabica and Robusta coffee production in Brazil, Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru, while also demonstrating the feasibility of an industry-wide framework for carbon footprint sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Results from the study will further identify opportunities for carbon emission reductions.

**Fairtrade International:** In 2024, in collaboration with Expressing Origin, our team began a consulting assignment with Fairtrade International to design and pilot an indicator framework to measure agroecological practice uptake in the Fairtrade coffee, cocoa, and banana sectors. The goal of the framework is to assess and report the rate of transition towards agroecology among Fairtrade stakeholders, and identify associated challenges and opportunities. As part of this ongoing collaboration to date, we have developed the draft set of indicators, which will be tested in the field in 2025. The indicators align with global frameworks for agroecology and are further influenced by relevant environmental legislation.





In addition to the reach of TCC Education in 2024, this year also saw some important beginnings and endings in our course offerings.

**Beginnings:** In August, we launched our first-ever pre-recorded and ondemand course, Sustainability Reporting, in collaboration with Coffee Knowledge Hub. In this course, coffee professionals dive into the world of sustainability and transparency reporting, and learn about industry standards and best practices for effective communication. By exploring key topics such as certification and direct trade, as well as the differences between sustainability, impact, and transparency reports—and their associated data collection needs—students gain technical skills to build strong reporting systems and showcase their company or institution's ethical activities.

**Endings:** 2024 was the last year of the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) Coffee Sustainability Program, version 1.0, a version that TCC was active in developing. Throughout 2024, the SCA worked with a number of coffee professionals, including TCC staff and allies to revamp the program into version 2.0. We are excited about this new iteration of the program and look forward to teaching students under the new model beginning in 2025!

# Our impact

# CLD Incubator

Through our core program, the Community-Led Development Incubator, we build relationships with emerging organizations in coffee-growing regions of Latin America and East & Central Africa, providing access to often first-time funding for their communitydriven initiatives. Participants complete three program phases over the course of 18 months, which allows them to design a community-led development project alongside their community members, implement it with TCC funding and robust support, and report on its impact. At the end of the program, participants join an ongoing TCC-led Alumni Network of change-makers in the coffee sector.



# CLD Incubator Since it started

Projects leading to increases in participation from women and youth

> Projects leading to increases in climate resilience

18 11 28 270k

Incubator participants funded

Incubator applications received

Countries represented in the Incubator USD i

USD invested in community-led projects Projects focused on improved infrastructure

Projects leading to improved access to education

Projects leading to increases in income

Projects leading to increases in food security /sovereignty

# 2024 impact

In 2024, our first-ever East & Central Africa cohort (2023-2024) completed the final phase of the Incubator and entered the Alumni Network, while the 2024-2025 Latin America cohort completed the program's first phase and entered the second.

> Kyaffe Farmers Coffee Uganda

**Girl Power** Foundation Uganda

FEMAC Development DR Congo

Shol Rwanda

Comité

Casa

del Puma

Ecuador

Yuyarina Pacha de Jóvenes Ecuador ACRIM

Tinamit

Tolimán

Guatemala

Damas de San Ignacio Peru

Combrifol

Honduras

Nucleo Baní

Dominican

Republic

Fondo

Páez

Colombia

Ecuador

## Impact areas

TCC recognizes the multi-faceted needs in coffee communities beyond improved coffee production. That's why we resource local leaders and their community members to develop culturally-specific solutions. This ultimately creates the most meaningful impact—social, economic, and environmental—as projects are based entirely on community-led priorities. Over the years, the projects that local leaders have developed as part of the CLD Incubator have tended to fall into one of the following impact areas: Transformative Infrastructure



Education



Food Sovereignty



Alternative Income



Clean Water, Carbon & Climate



Gender Equity

# 2023 - 2024 **East & Central Africa cohort** *project highlights*





#### Abateraninkunga ba Sholi Rwanda

As part of the 2023-2024 CLD Incubator, Sholi designed and implemented a project to support young single mothers within their community and reintegrate them into the local economy. The project had two main components. First, they provided land, coffee and shade trees, and a comprehensive training program surrounding sustainable coffee production to a group of 72 young single mothers. Second, to supplement their income until they could see profit from the new coffee production, Sholi trained the women in artisan crafting and goat rearing, two alternative income options the women identified as being viable and interesting to them. At present, the women beneficiaries are actively tending their coffee plot, making crafts for sale, and increasing their goat herds, which is allowing them to support themselves as well as their children.

"When we visited the single mothers in their homes, we discovered they had diversified their agricultural activities [even further], including horticulture farming. The goats they receive are providing manure not only for their coffee plants but also for their other crops, helping these women become increasingly self-sufficient."



## **Project** *highlight*

## FEMAC Development DR Congo

FEMAC Development is a cooperative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that works to fight exploitation in the coffee value chain by reducing intermediaries in transactions and supporting farmers to produce betterquality coffee, thereby increasing their incomes. As part of the CLD Incubator, FEMAC worked on a project to improve socio-economic outcomes through collective coffee processing and improved sales. Their initiative included building a coffee washing station, complete with administrative offices, sunken wells, drying beds, and water catchment facilities. While armed conflict and other serious challenges hampered the success of some of these activities, FEMAC will apply to the Alumni Network Small Project Fund to complete the work. With more control over their value chain through processing, FEMAC hopes to retain more of their crops' value and return greater income to their member farmers.

"This project gave the community a boost of confidence. It was reassuring and built trust between FEMAC and the community because they realized that FEMAC was serious about supporting farmers and building sustainable change."



# 2024 - 2025 Latin America cohort project highlights

## **Project** *highlight*

#### Damas de San Ignacio Peru

Damas de San Ignacio is the women's committee of Cooperativa Agraria Frontera San Ignacio (COOPAFSI) in Cajamarca, Peru. They were founded in 2012 to support the organic women coffee farmers of COOPAFSI. During the CLD Incubator's Learning & Design Phase, Las Damas developed a cuy (guinea pig) husbandry project to enhance the income of their members through cuy sales. This will in turn support the food security of all cooperative members, and allow for the production of organic fertilizer from cuy manure. Now, during the Incubator's Implementation phase, Las Damas is establishing a facility to house over 100 female cuy in addition to males for breeding, and they will provide workshops to committee members on animal care. In total, this initiative will eventually benefit all 450 cooperative members of COOPAFSI, and indirectly support 2,000 people, as the women cuy managers will be able to sell both meat and fertilizer at reduced costs within the region.

"We came together as a women's group within the larger cooperative to encourage the participation of women in the social, business, and productive management of the organization, working as a team to improve the lives of our families. In 2016 we started marketing our own coffee brand, 'Las Damas de San Ignacio."





#### Comité de Jóvenes Ecuador

Comité de Jóvenes, from the remote Zamora Chinchipe province of Ecuador, was established in 2015 by the youngest farmer members of the larger cooperative, Asociación Agropecuaria Artesanal de Productores Orgánicos Cuencas del Río Mayo (ACRIM). As the youth committee of ACRIM, Comité de Jóvenes' goal is to engage young people in coffee production and offer training opportunities. During the CLD Incubator's Learning & Design Phase, Comité de Jóvenes developed a project to support 15 producers to establish three new coffee tree nurseries and plant 15 hectares (one hectare each) with new specialty coffee varieties. The varieties will diversify each producer's coffee offerings, and ensure quality and competitiveness in the market. Comité de Jóvenes' project also includes training on barista skills and cupping to increase members' capacity to assess the quality of their own coffee, and enhance their job skills.

"Our goal is to support young people by encouraging their involvement in coffee production. We aim to help them establish a livelihood through coffee farming, offering them a sustainable alternative for generating income."



## **Project** *highlight*

#### Fondo Páez Colombia

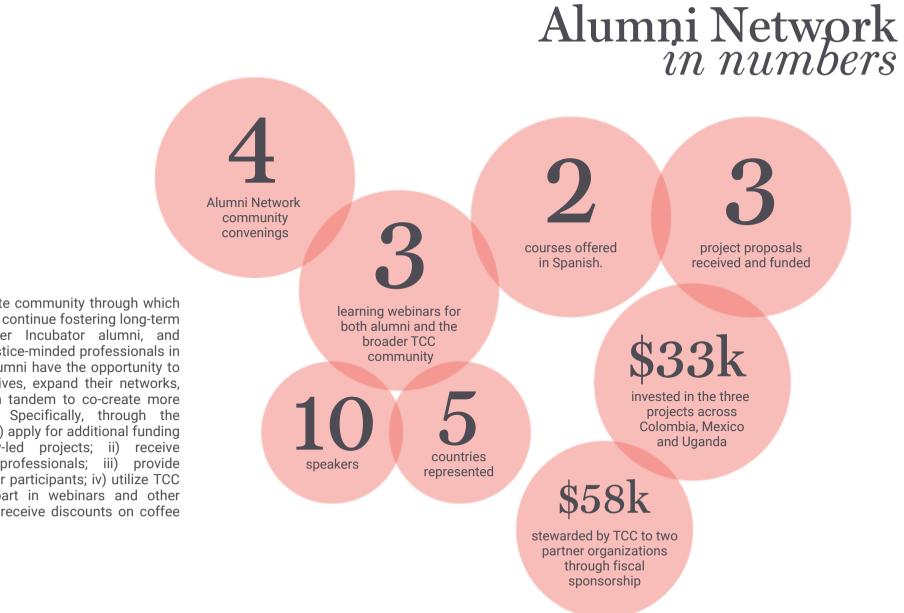
Composed of 523 indigenous Páez member families, Fondo Paez is a farmer association in Cauca, Colombia that has been cultivating organic coffee since the late 1990s. During the CLD Incubator's Learning & Design Phase, Fondo Paez developed a project that would contribute to their existing experimental farms initiative, which designates two farms as training hubs to teach producers about sustainable coffee cultivation, biodiversity conservation, eco-tourism, and modern soil management. Thanks to the Incubator, Fondo Paez will be able to establish a new coffee nursery and organic fertilizer plant as part of the experimental farms initiative, and distribute 130,600 coffee seedlings as well as fertilizer. They will also be able to pilot honey production and small-scale livestock farming on the experimental farms, which, if successful, will then be integrated into the training curriculum.

"In 2024 and 2025, we aim to gradually replace older coffee trees to increase the productivity of our partners' farms, which have been severely affected by climate change, especially by pests and diseases."





# Alumni Network



The Alumni Network is a remote community through which past Incubator participants can continue fostering long-term relationships with TCC, other Incubator alumni, and additional sustainability and justice-minded professionals in the coffee sector. Together, alumni have the opportunity to further their community initiatives, expand their networks, continue learning, and work in tandem to co-create more opportunities and alliances. Specifically, through the Network, alumni are able to to i) apply for additional funding to further their community-led projects; ii) receive mentorship from industry professionals; iii) provide mentorship to current Incubator participants; iv) utilize TCC fiscal sponsorship; v) take part in webinars and other learning opportunities, and vi) receive discounts on coffee education courses.

## Alumni Network Project highlight

#### Ofrenda A'bunna (Asoseykún) Colombia

AsoSeykún is an Arhuaco community from the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia that was part of the 2022-2023 CLD Incubator cohort. In 2024, AsoSeykún submitted a proposal to TCC's Alumni Network Small Project Fund. Thanks to support from Carrboro Coffee, we were able to approve their proposal, which sought to i) improve coffee infrastructure, ii) train youth in coffee production, and iii) enhance product traceability. Specifically, AsoSeykún:

- Repaired the roof and built fencing around their coffee drying beds to prevent damage
- Repaired the electrical system in their coffee warehouse
- Trained youth leaders in coffee processing
- Purchased a moisture meter and coffee scale to better control for the quality and quantity of their product
- Purchased a laptop and external hard drive to begin storing coffeerelated data and community information, including financial data, for enhanced product traceability

As a result of these efforts, AsoSeykún was able to increase their coffee processing and sales volume to 2,759 kilos for the 2024-2025 season, up by 33% from the 2023-2024 season.



# Coffee Sustainability Fellowship

TCC's Coffee Sustainability Fellowship provides an opportunity for emerging coffee professionals to work alongside our team and partners on our community-led development programs and consulting projects. Through the ten-month program, Fellows learn how to engage in coffee sustainability from an anti-colonial and anti-top-down perspective, and also complete the SCA Coffee Sustainability Program at no cost. In 2024, TCC welcomed four coffee professionals to join the Fellowship program.



Ana Sofía Narváez Nicaragua



Janina Vargas Ecuador



Livia Petzinger USA / Brazil

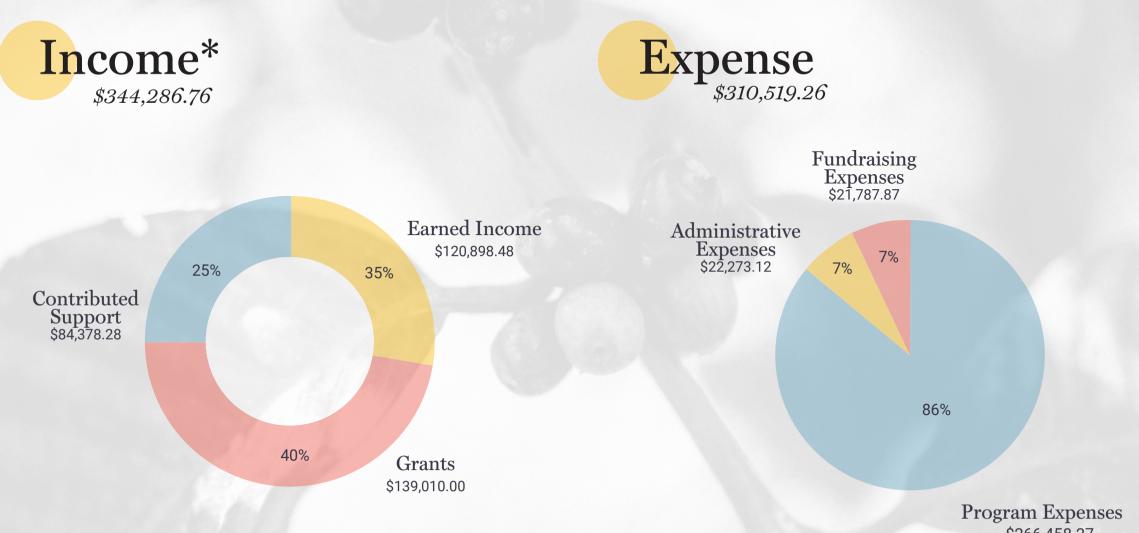


Sara Wohlmeyer Colombia

"This fellowship has taught me that coffee farmers are so much more than the stories we hear about vulnerability and poverty; they are modern professionals, passionate sustainability experts, and powerful agents for change within their own communities. This experience has given me the opportunity to not just learn from coffee producers first-hand, but to play an active role in supporting these leaders as they build their capacity for development and advance meaningful, sustainable projects by, with, and for their own communities."

-Livia Petzinger

# Financials



\* Earned Income refers to the earnings coming from our consulting and education activities. Contributed Support refers to the money raised through donations from companies and individuals. Grants refers to the funds we received from Foundations.

\$266,458.27

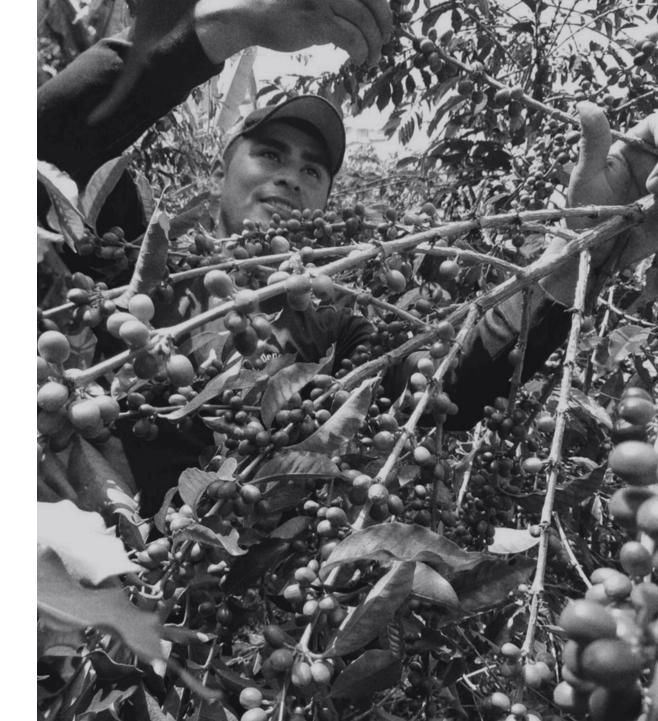
# Looking ahead

#### Programs: Onboarding of the next CLD Incubator cohort, East and Central Africa 2025-2026

In 2025, we will welcome our fourth overall cohort of the CLD Incubator program, which will be the second cohort from East & Central Africa. We are currently reviewing applications from local leaders in Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda. Selected participants will be onboarded to the program in April 2025. Meanwhile, the participants from the first East & Central Africa Incubator cohort (the 2023-2024 cohort) will be joining TCC Alumni Network. Winnie Ainembaabazi, the Founder of Girl Power Foundation Uganda, will serve as the Alumni Network Leader.

#### Education: Version 2.0 of the SCA Coffee Sustainability Program launches in 2025

The SCA has launched Version 2.0 of their Coffee Sustainability Program. Version 2.0 consists of four courses in total: Sustainability Foundation; Coffee & Climate; Coffee Economics; and Compliance, Governance & Reporting. The Foundation course is a pre-requisite for the remaining three, and provides students with a thorough understanding of how the industry can thrive when all actors across the value stream embrace sustainability, including its economic, environmental, and social components. The three higher-level courses dive deep into the most relevant challenges across the three pillars of sustainability, and share tools and resources for taking contextspecific actions. Students will walk away with an improved understanding of how to incorporate sustainability into their current roles and institutions, and they will build the awareness they need to create more sustainability-focused careers.



# Our supporters

## Thank you!

#### **Foundation and Corporate**

Better Grounds **Blooming Prairie Foundation** Caravan Coffee Roasters Carrboro Coffee Roasters Coffee Tools Distributing **Cooperative Coffees** Cotopaxi Madison Community Foundation MiiR Mortenson Family Foundation One Village Coffee Primavera Green Coffee Succulent Coffee Roasters Sweet Bloom Coffee Roasters Toddy Vista Hermosa Foundation (on behalf of Now Africa Initiative) Whiptail Coffee Yield Coffee Roasters

#### Individuals

Adam Monaghan Andrew J. Montemavor Angelica A Brisk Anika Manzoor Becca Roebber **Beniamin Myers** Cindy Weisbart Claudia Taylor Dave Patterson Edith Burkey Hillary Rodriguez Jason Finn Joseph Mears Kathleen Beckett Keith Brown Michael Patterson Nolan Tracy Rachel M Wyon **Richard Barton** Sandra Malard and Molly Alcott

#### In-Kind

Acaia Balzac Brothers Bay Area CoRoasters (CoRo) Carrboro Coffee Roasters Chemex Cotopaxi Crimson Cup Cxffeeblack Joe Coffee Just Coffee Cooperative Lucía Bawot MiiR One Village Coffee Onyx Coffee Lab Portrait Coffee Rise Up Roast Magazine Standart Magazine Sweet Bloom Coffee Three Keys Coffee Verve Coffee Roasters Whiptail Coffee

# Our staff & board

Staff



Nora Burkey Founder & Executive Director



**Carolina Pirola** Programs & Evaluation Lead



Camila Khalifé Impact & Communications Lead



Itzel Mendoza Alumni Network Co-Lead



Winnie Ainembaabazi Alumni Network Co-Lead



Becca Roebber President

Stephanie Landers Silva Treasurer

Adam Monaghan

Beamlak Bekele

Alejandra Rodríguez

**Benjamin Myers** 

President Emeritus In Loving Memory Hillary Rodriguez

## **THE CHAIN** *collaborative*

**10 years** of community-led change