



Will Márquez

COFFEE PRODUCER BECOMES A BUSINESS LEADER

Will Márquez is a young coffee producer of 29 years, affiliated to the San Carlos cooperative in the department of Morazán where access to work and higher education is very limited. Public instances do not reach this territory far from the capital of El Salvador. The San Carlos cooperative, like 10 other associations and cooperatives, are affiliated to ADEL Morazán, an association that promotes the economic development of the department.

As a young producer, Will has participated in the process of leadership training for young people and has strengthened his knowledge of Territorial Development, entrepreneurship and export. Additionally, on the productive side Will has been favoured with the training for young coffee tasters thanks to the efforts of ADEL MORAZAN who combined leadership training with technical skills development.

Will is in charge of the export and marketing, quality control and cupping of coffee in the cooperative, useful experiences for his cooperative. He is the only certified taster in the department of Morazán. As a result, San Carlos has managed to export for the second consecutive year. By exporting, the cooperative has contributed to the economic development of the Department of Morazán.

For Will, the **personal changes that contribute to his self-confidence and the exercise of leadership**, gave him the possibility to learn and relate and cooperate closely with people in order to grow and overcome their needs together.

"I used to be a very shy person to speak, but as I progressed in the trainings, I discovered my desire to relate more with people. And I'm learning, I have always liked territorial development, youth leadership. Today I am the leader of 45 people here in the cooperative".

In the **productive field**, Will reflects how **ADEL's contribution to professional development has influenced his personal transformation**: *"As a member of the cooperative, it has been useful to learn about the coffee processing and treatment, training in quality control, good agricultural practices and manufacturing. The perception changes because we have been working empirically. Now there is an appropriate product entry registration, there is already an internal control and knowledge that helps the employees to work as orderly as possible, so we do not have problems when it comes to delivering and verifying our coffee".*

Based on Will's words, we identify the contribution of the organization ADEL Morazán in an effort to strengthen the organizational competencies of PARTICIPATION and INCLUSION. As part of his social and professional development Will recognizes that strengthening his leadership skills has allowed him to play a role on the Board of Directors of ADEL since 2019:

"To be part of the Board of ADEL, I feel that it is something quite big. Being still in leadership trainings, and already I do enter as a director of ADEL. It makes me feel quite well, with a larger scope, because ADEL has a role at the department. Sometimes you feel small with those very important people. They motivated me to contribute my ideas, they recognized that I had good ideas, they asked me to help them to make proposals. Their trust motivates me to give my point of view in some decisions. Also, I became more serious, because there is a time for everything, like joking; I'm more serious to take my responsibility in the decisions of the board of directors of ADEL. Today I have taken the initiative to understand better the different companies of the ADEL group, what they really are about, who are their leaders, what is their trajectory... it is all interesting for me in order

to be able to contribute in the decision taking about those companies at a certain moment.

Being part of the Board of Directors of ADEL is significant because it allows me to expand my service to other territories, not only in my cooperative".

For Will, the processes of youth leadership are necessary to have young people prepared in social and economic areas. He also stresses the importance to assure adequate conditions for the representation of women to stimulate respectful relations between men and women; like this, it makes it possible to take part in the administration: *"We all have the right to be part of the board of directors, and women need training. I think it is necessary to sensitize the different boards of directors to deal with the situations that people go through in rural areas, to change people and their "macho" thoughts. Also, I think it is important to incorporate more young people to become members..., promote entrepreneurship to give knowledge, resources, tools to them. As long as we continue to support and prioritize towards young people, delinquency and labor marginalization due to lack of experience will decrease (in the community), employment will be promoted, and businesses will be created in the department."*

Will Márquez's change process is supported by an institutional decision: the strategy and services designed for the inclusion of young people, enhanced by a commitment assumed by ADEL Morazán. ADEL has encouraged participation in the process called "Future Governance", which from the initial stage (two years ago) contemplates the inclusion of young people in the management of the organization.

What is the most significant change?

Will's journey demonstrates the potential for growth by expanding the collaboration of young people in productive organizations, **participating in governance bodies and having the technical skills to contribute to individual economic development, to the management of his cooperative, and to the governance of the ADEL Morazán.**

The **key contributions of the TRIAS program** in strengthening entrepreneurial youth and their organisations were: promoting services for young people, articulating alliances with YOUCA that promotes youth entrepreneurial leadership, advising on advocacy methodologies and networking, as well as opening the debate for the generational approach and its incorporation into the organizational culture.