Continuous capacity building among producers, as well as trainings and empowerment-sessions, are vital actions and strategic guidelines for Nuestra Cosecha. The project coordinates closely with, and invites those who carry out public purchases, as well as the Ministries that have relevant roles and responsibilities based on the School Feeding Law. The parent organizations, feeding commissions, school principals and suppliers have been the target population for training sessions and workshops carried out by various project specialists since July 2019.

**Capacity strengthening for suppliers**

The topics covered with the suppliers in Santa Eulalia and Santa Cruz Barillas include quality control, preparation of a planting plan, crop management for diversification, and production cost planning in order to agree on sales prices. To date, the project has provided theoretical and practical content with ongoing accompaniment of the farmers in the field by conducting farm visits.

In recent months, the project has worked in a personalized manner on the topic of production costs as an incentive for farmers to be able to continue investing and expanding their agricultural production. It has also allowed them to become aware of earnings and profitability, as well as the cost of their own labor. The idea is to provide tools so that they can become competitive in the marketplace. María Lucrecia Diego Marcos, who has been working with laying hens for the past three years, tells us that she began the business because her mother had the desire to invest in something of her own.

Additionally, as a complement to the project’s training, the Agro-Chemical Professional Association (AGREQUIMA), a leader in productivity and land sustainability processes, hosted a session on good agriculture practices, pest control, management of pesticides, and maintenance and calibration of fumigation equipment with 10 suppliers from Santa Eulalia and 11 suppliers from Santa Cruz Barillas.

“Need was what compelled us to take a chance. I was separated from my husband and didn’t have anyone to support me and my children, so we decided to give it a try.”

Maria Lucrecia Diego, school feeding supplier
“Need was what compelled us to take a chance. I was separated from my husband and didn’t have anyone to support me and my children, so we decided to give it a try”. She had never taken on an economic activity of this size, and had plenty to learn about production costs: “I had never carried out this exercise in so much detail. It has helped to be able to see what my earnings are on the money I have invested. This encourages me to want to get more chickens and invest more”. María Lucrecia calculated her investment and earnings for a year of work and now has a clearer idea of her accounts. In her specific case, including labor, materials, inputs, fixed and marketing costs, she has a profit of approximately 27%. In four months, she has invoiced US $575, that is, 0.22 tons of eggs.

“I had never carried out this exercise in so much detail. It has helped to be able to see what my earnings are on the money I have invested. This encourages me to want to get more chickens and invest more”.

María Lucrecía Diego

Capacity strengthening for the educational community

The following project topics were covered with parent organizations, school principals, and representatives from feeding commissions: food quality, safety and the specifications that should be taken into account when suppliers deliver their products, as well as preservation and storage of commodities.

In order to carry out these workshops, the Nuestra Cosecha specialists used specific tools created by the project for control, follow up and communication, namely: the protocol for quality and safety requirements for fruits, vegetables and animal products; the technical guides with specifications for each product; the quality control record; instructions for use of refrigerators that were donated; and a poster with basic advice for preservation of products.

The invitations and outreach for these workshops were successful, with an attendance of approximately 50 individuals. The workshops helped attendees, individuals with whom we work in the process of public purchases under the LOA, gain important skills and knowledge.

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50 School representatives trained

Training topics:
- Food quality and safety
- Use of refrigerators
- Conservation and storage of commodities