



"Message from the tree" final report

A look back and what we learned in our first project.

Introduction

In fall 2022, we began formulating the vision for our first joint project.

We had set ourselves the goal of planting 1,000 native trees on the grounds of the Colegio Fervan Campestre. The idea was to give the 400 students an understanding of the importance of the flora and fauna in their immediate surroundings as part of the curriculum and to provide impetus for sustainable management. To make school more tangible by combining theory and practice. To bring people from different continents closer together.

In October 2024, the students - with the financial help of many German supporters - had even exceeded the target with 1,146 trees planted. A good time for us to draw a conclusion and devote our energy to the next project

In the following, we have briefly documented our journey together and written down our experiences.

Initiation and project goals

At the beginning, true to [our motto](#) "Think big, start small", we had great ambitions and gave a lot of thought to what we wanted and what we wanted to achieve with the project. Apart from the number of trees, we deliberately did not formulate any hard facts. We wanted to get to know each other first - after all, CoDe, Colombia and Germany are quite far apart. What we wanted to achieve with the project:

- To get to know each other better and to learn from each other
- Planting 1,000 native trees
 - the curriculum with practical experience
 - Reforestation of the decimated cloud forest
- Develop/strengthen awareness of sustainability, flora and fauna
- Connecting Colombians and Germans and promoting understanding of the respective challenges
- To motivation for German and English language lessons



With these ambitions in mind, we started in the last quarter of 2023 to raise funds for the project.

The idea is simple - for 10 euros, a donor can have a tree planted. The students at the Colegio Fervan Campestre take over the sponsorship of the tree. In the first year, there are also messages from the tree, which are prepared as part of the English and German language lessons at the school. The donors receive news about the trees planted with their money and the students have an incentive to engage more intensively with the foreign language - creating a cross-border project for sustainability.

Milestones and results

We have reached several milestones over the course of the project:

- **31.03.2023:** 465 trees are planted by the students of the Colegio Fervan Campestre.
- **04/2023:** The [1st message from the tree](#) is sent in German.
- **05-07/2023:** We try to expand our network and meet interesting people who are involved in reforestation or photovoltaic projects in Colombia. The conversations are very interesting, but unfortunately we have to realize that we all have no additional capacities. Everyone continues to focus on their own projects - postponed is not canceled.
- **07/2023:** The [2nd message from the tree](#) is sent in English.
- **06-11/2023:** We are trying to set up a joint bee project. The idea is to provide a curriculum from Germany that can be implemented at the school. Great idea, but unfortunately that's as far as it goes for now.
- **10.12.2023:** another 100 trees are planted by the students at the Colegio Fervan Campestre.
- **12/2023:** We receive the information that there is no free space for more trees at the Colegio Fervan Campestre, so unfortunately we have to stop the fundraising campaign.
- **01/2024:** The 3rd message from the tree is sent in German.
- **06/2024:** The Colegio Fervan Campestre takes the opportunity to buy a plot of land adjacent to the school - there is plenty of space for new trees, we still have money and we can continue planting. 😊
- **03.10.2024:** another 581 trees are planted by the students of the Colegio Fervan.
- **10/2024:** [The 4th message from the tree](#) is sent as a video - the last planting campaign to date.
- **01/2025:** We successfully complete the project 😊



We are delighted that the fundraising campaign can continue (see next section) and that we can devote ourselves to our next project close to our hearts at the same time. The year 2025 will focus entirely on photovoltaics.

It goes on - tree donations are still

The [Starkmacher](#) have kindly agreed to continue the fundraising campaign and once again accept donations for the planting of more trees at the "Colegio Fervan Campestre"

If you would like to help keep the cloud forest at the Colegio Fervan Campestre growing (there is plenty of room for more trees), please donate to the following address:

Starkmacher e.V
PAX Bank Cologne
BIC: GENODED1PAX
IBAN: DE35 3706 0193 0028 5880 11
Transfer purpose: CoDe

Insights and what we have learned

First things first: we reached our target and even exceeded it by ~25%. This is great and makes us very grateful, because without the support of so many people and companies this would not have been possible. It's a wonderful feeling to have reached so many people.

The curriculum for the school has been supplemented and the combination of theory and practice has been very successful. For us Germans, it was impressive to experience the enthusiasm shown by the school management, teachers, students and organizations (e.g. Goethe-Institut Bogota) in the school environment. The joy and enthusiasm with which the two major planting campaigns were carried out was impressive. For those of us involved in the project, it was very touching and brought us much closer to the people.

The "News from the Tree" was very well received by the German recipients and motivated the students for their foreign language lessons.

The bee project and the cooperation with additional partners were wonderful, promising ideas, but it takes drivers and a lot of patience to advance new topics. There was not enough capacity available from the core team for this. Perhaps the time was simply not yet ripe.

One key finding - not surprising, but we would like to mention it nonetheless:



The distance between Colombia and Germany is enormous. So are the climatic and geographical differences. The vegetation in the Andes and in Germany is completely different - an exchange between experts is exciting, but not necessarily transferable 1:1. Forestry in Germany and Colombia require different approaches - the bee colonies in Germany and Colombia also differ.






Conclusion

The "Message from the tree" project was a successful and sustainable collaboration. It has shown us that we can achieve a lot together with perseverance and commitment. We have learned a lot from each other over the past two years and are looking forward to our next joint project with the Colegio Fervan Campestre. We have set ourselves the goal of managing our photovoltaic project without donations - if we can achieve this, sustainable development in this area will be easier.

Acknowledgments

A big thank you to everyone who contributed to the project, in whatever form - through donations, active participation or simply words of encouragement. Without your commitment, this success would certainly not have been possible.

Many thanks to the core project team! Great performance - extra mile!

Image	Role
 Klaus Lohnert	Klaus was responsible for overall coordination and project development. Organized various events and fundraising campaigns.
 Monica Guterrez	Monica is responsible for the development of the Colegio Fervan Campestre and coordinates the implementation projects and networks. In the project, she coordinated the planting campaigns and news from the tree.
 Nick Bosch	Nick is the deputy chairman of Starkmacher e.V. He was responsible for coordinating the project's finances, coordinating incoming donations, issuing donation receipts and ensuring that the money reaches the school.
 Marion Lohnert	Marion took care of our web presence and was actively involved in the implementation of various events.
 Clara Thiele	Clara took care of the creation of the flyers, supported the creation of the website and was a constant source of inspiration for the implementation of various topics.