

Seeds of Identity School

Training a new generation of seed guardians

Semillas de Identidad programme · SWISSAID / Colombia

Mariana Córdoba · 18.11.2026

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What did you do, and why?



The challenge

- Seed knowledge sits with older farmers and is **at risk of being lost**
- Seed networks lacked **trained guardians** to produce quality native and creole seed for local and regional **supply**

What we did differently

- A school **co-designed with local promoters** and **run by the seed networks**
- 5 regions, 10 departments, since 2019
- One-year cycle: **in-person modules + practice on their own plots**

Why it matters for the transition

- Seeds are the first link in transforming conventional production systems into agroecological ones, and the basis of **food sovereignty**
- ESI has improved seed quality and generated knowledge for the seed networks

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What changed, and why does it matter?



Concrete changes

- Better seed production and distribution: farmers **trust the quality**
- Women and youth join the networks and earn **income**

What makes it distinctive

- Conservation **in situ**, not in gene banks
- Quality certified by a **Participatory Guarantee System** run by the networks (not by institutional regulation)

900+
seed guardians benefit

600+
people trained

40% / 60%
men / women · 40% youth

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What made it work, and what did not?

What made it work

- Prior experience with agroecology schools
- Regional leadership; experienced peers as guides
- Curriculum built on what people already knew
- Practice sites close to everyone
- Participatory research

What did not (yet)

- Keeping youth engaged → solidarity-economy circuits
- An online version, still pending



Today we would

-Stronger research support for students - More resources for youth-led economic initiatives
-More training in solidarity economy

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What can others learn and apply?



The School as the backbone of a regional agroecological transition

With **participatory research** and **solidarity-economy circuits**, it becomes a long-term process owned by the seed networks, not just a training method.

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Thank you!

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