



**LANDS
FOR LIFE**

Lands for Life

**A behavior-centered approach to productive
landscapes in Colombia and beyond**

The Issue

Agriculture is a primary driver of land-use change. And it's a sector with enormous potential for shifting practices to more sustainable land-use and conservation objectives.

However, the single most significant barrier to adopting more sustainable agricultural practices around the world is insufficient training and information. In the face of rising water scarcity, degrading soil, increasing pests and diseases, and a changing climate, smallholder farmers resort to quick, short-term solutions that progressively degrade soils and water and expand the agricultural frontier. These entrenched practices undermine the resilience of both natural and human systems and generate a high carbon footprint.

Colombia mirrors this global situation. Agricultural reforms have focused on short-term agricultural productivity, neglecting to address the negative longer-term environmental impacts on water, soil health, and climate.



Effective rural development must be predicated on enabling communities to become themselves agents of change."

– **José Antonio Ocampo**

Member of the Board of the central bank of Colombia, former Minister of Finance and Agriculture, Professor at Columbia University, and Chair of the United Nations' Committee for Development Policy

The Solution

Through *Lands for Life*, Rare in Colombia mobilizes extension agents, local leaders, and small-scale farmers to address conservation and development challenges and empowers them to become agents for change. We work at various levels, from villages and municipalities to the national level, shifting mindsets and behaviors to ensure that agricultural productivity becomes synonymous with protecting ecosystems and safeguarding their services.

The program is building a scalable approach to change—one that leverages behavioral strategies to increase adoption of climate-compatible agricultural practices that deliver on soil health, watershed management, agroforestry, and restoration objectives. Through capacity-building and behavior-centered design, the program changes how extension agents, local leaders and authorities, and smallholder farmers interact with the land, water, and forests around them.

Empowering farmers and rural communities to adopt more sustainable and climate-compatible agricultural practices unlocks direct benefits for people and nature: improved yields and productivity, safeguarded habitats and biodiversity, increased resilience to climate change, enhanced carbon sinks and water security, and improved livelihoods for millions of people.



8 out of every 10 farmers in Colombia are small-scale family farmers



Agriculture accounts for nearly **20%** of jobs in Colombia



The land sector produces **55%** of Colombia's greenhouse gas emissions



Improved extension services are pivotal for transforming agricultural systems



Only **16%** of Colombian farmers have received technical assistance



“Agricultural innovation requires changing how we gain and exchange knowledge and build social capital.”

– **Juan Lucas Restrepo**
Director General of Bioversity International and CEO designate of the Bioversity and CIAT Alliance



Where We Work

The Andes are the lifeblood of Colombia and the Amazon. High-mountain páramo ecosystems provide fresh water to over 70% of Colombia's population and critical connectivity with Amazon ecosystems. Colombia is home to over 60% of the world's páramos and nearly 10% of the planet's biodiversity, with high biodiversity concentrations in the Andean region.

Lands for Life focuses on high-biodiversity watersheds and strategic ecosystems, including the páramos, in the Tropical Andes. Over time, Rare aims to scale the program across Colombia.

A Network for Impact

Lands for Life works across a dynamic and extensive network of partners in Colombia and beyond.

Partner national and regional authorities come from both the agriculture and environment sectors. Public and private institutions include universities, such as Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Universidad del Valle, and Universidad de los Andes; national and international research centers such as AGROSAVIA and International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT); and nongovernmental organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy. We also partner with large-footprint companies in Colombia, such as AB InBev Bavaria.



“Water stewardship requires generating deep ownership by communities through targeted support and new ways of valuing their natural resources.”

– **Dominique Reyes Kling**
Corporate Affairs, Bavaria - Anheuser-Busch InBev;
Director, Bavaria Foundation Director

“I have strengthened my skills and those of my team with behavior change tools that enable us to carry out more effective processes with smallholder farmers.”

– **Magda Ortiz**
Extension Agent and Administrative Director, Asoamaime
(Water Users Association)

Rare inspires change so people and nature thrive

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