



# **Empowering Producers, Strengthening Livelihoods:** ***Strategies for Closing the Living Income Gap***

**The Living Income**  
Community of Practice



# LICOP Facilitators



## **Moderator**

**Suzy Fogg**

Manager, Small-scale  
Producer Programme  
**ISEAL**



## **Coordinator**

**Mariana Bastos**

Project Coordinator,  
Impacts and  
Innovations  
**ISEAL**



## **Tech Support**

**Natalia Dabrowska**

Assistant, Events  
**ISEAL**

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Federal Ministry  
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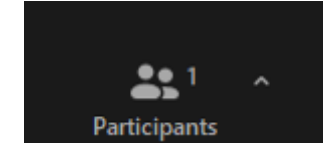
Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



# Session Guidelines

## RECORDING

- This session is being recorded and this will be shared with all participants on the Living Income webpage in the upcoming days .



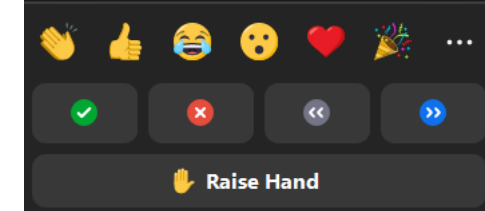
## INTRODUCE YOURSELF

- Edit your name and add your organisation in brackets; e.g., [Mariana \(ISEAL\)](#)
- To do this, simply click on the “Participant button”
- Next, in the Participant list, next to your name click on “Rename”



## HOW CAN I ASK A QUESTION/COMMENT?

- Attendees will remain muted during this session
- Please use the chat box to ask your questions
- There is a dedicated Q&As slot after the panel discussion



## TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES?

Reach out to [Natalia Dabrowska](#) in the chat box or to [livingincome@isealalliance.org](mailto:livingincome@isealalliance.org)

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# Agenda

- 1. Introduction: LICOP (20 min)**
- 2. Strategies for closing the income gap and producer empowerment (30 min)**
  - Cecilia Blasco, Executive Director at Smartfish Rescate de Valor AC
  - Maria Julia Oliva, Director of Policy and Sector Transformation at UEBT
  - Els Lindeboom, Manager for Community Development and Farmer Livelihoods at Beyond Beans Foundation of ETG
- 3. Q&A (15 min)**
- 4. Closure (5 mins)**



# The Living Income Community of Practice

**Living Income Community of Practice** is open to any entity committed to learning on the topic of Living Income and improving livelihoods of smallholder farmers

[www.living-income.com](http://www.living-income.com)

## The Living Income Community of Practice Objectives



Increase understanding of living income measurement and the income gap



Identify and discuss strategies for closing the income gap



Share learning and facilitate collaboration between actors

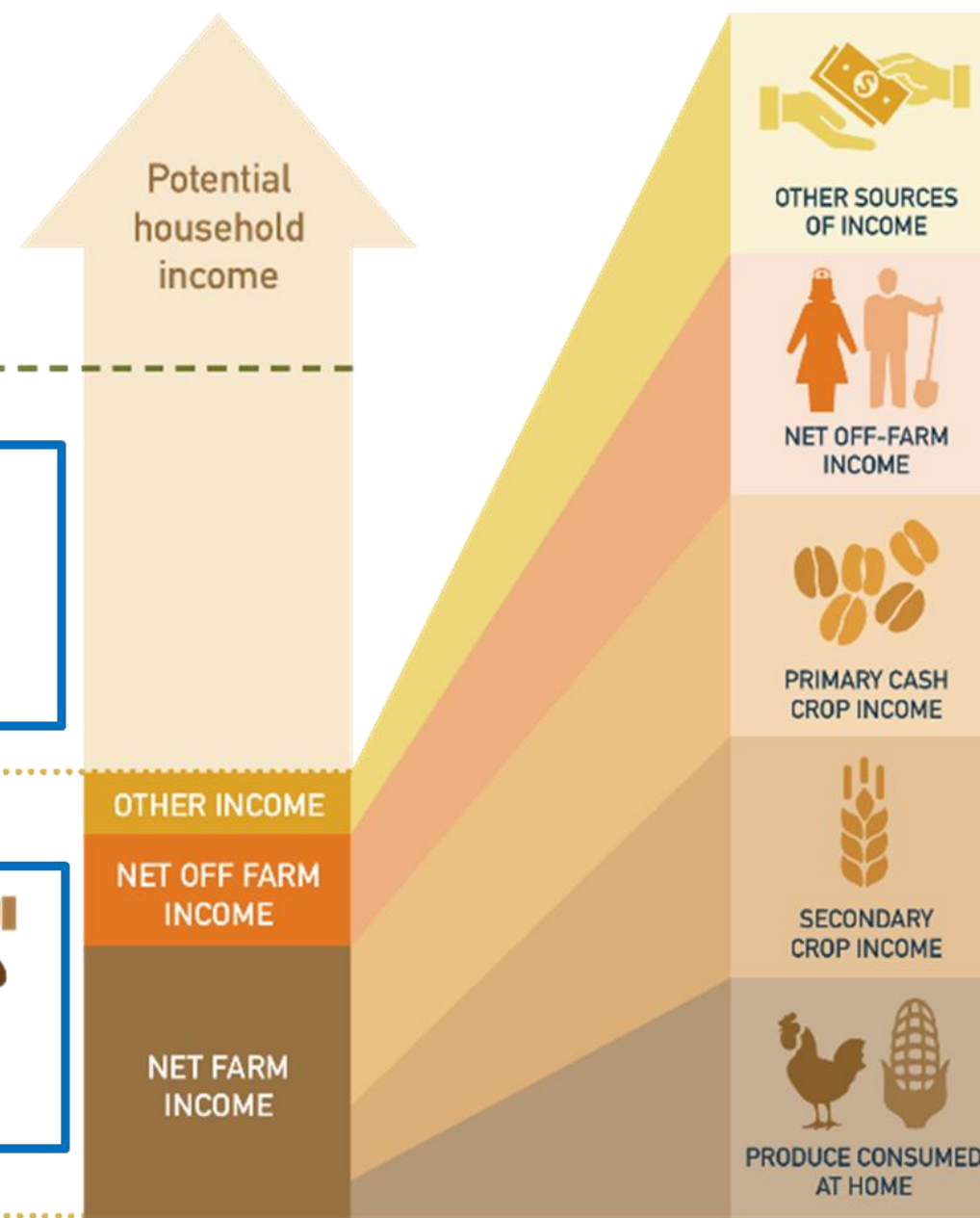
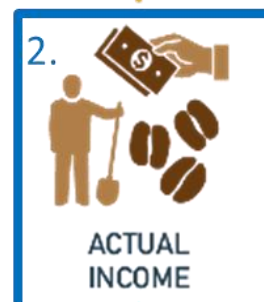
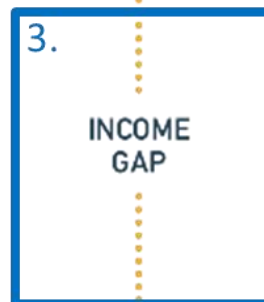
# Living Income Story



Living income is the income level that would enable a family to afford a **decent standard of living**.

It answers the question: 'how much does a typical household in a particular place need to earn, from all income sources, in order to live a decent standard of living?

Source: The Living Income Community of Practice



# Strategies for closing the living income gap





# Producer empowerment for sustainable livelihoods

- › **Aim: to develop understanding of different approaches to improving incomes that also strengthen producer empowerment**
  - Improving livelihoods requires addressing complex challenges & tackling context specific barriers
  - Beyond income alone: wellbeing encompasses more
  - Empowerment leads to more equitable outcomes and more sustainable business practices for all

# Dimensions of producer empowerment

- › **Economic empowerment** - building producers' control and agency over their work, their earnings and livelihoods
- › **Taking empowerment more broadly** - increasing producers' economic, social, cultural and political strengths and capacities to influence their lives
- › Can lead to a better standard of living and stronger position for producers in both their communities and the market



# Our Speakers

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**Cecilia Blasco**  
Executive Director  
**SmartFish Rescate**  
**de Valor AC**



**Els Lindeboom**  
Senior Programme Manager,  
Community Development &  
Farmer Livelihoods  
**Beyond Beans Foundation**



**Maria Julia Oliva**  
Director of Policy and  
Sector Transformation  
**UEBT**



# Value Rescue Model

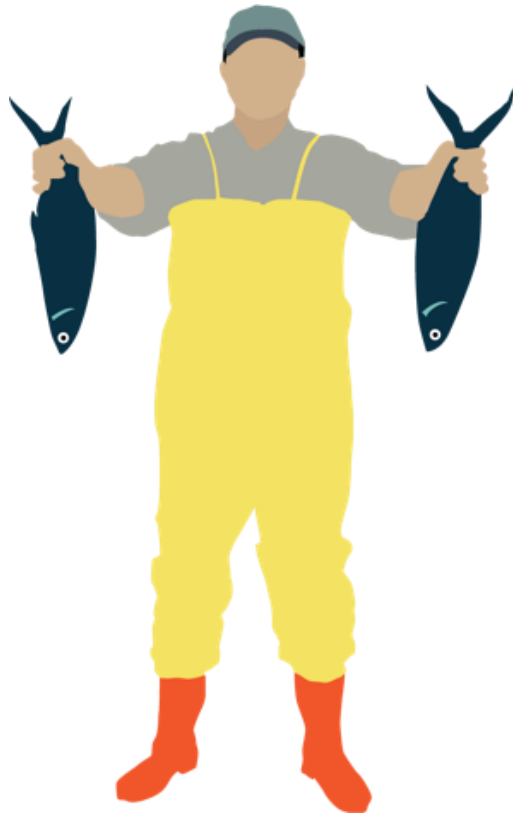




# SmartFish's Mission

Foster a market for environmentally sustainable and socially responsible seafood in Mexico.

To catalyze **supply**,  
we incubate  
artisanal fisher  
cooperatives



To generate **demand**,  
we engage large  
buyers to develop  
sustainable sourcing  
policies



# The SmartFish Group

A hybrid social enterprise

**SmartFish NGO**  
advises and trains  
fishers and coops.



**SmartFish Inc.**  
“social intermediary”  
that enables fishers  
to earn a higher  
percentage of the  
final price.





# Small-scale fisheries context

1. Long, opaque supply chains
2. Huge diversity of species, products, fishing gear, practices, etc.
3. Most globally-traded commodity
4. Fishers typically price-takers
5. Variable and unpredictable income streams
6. Data-poor (economic and environmental)
7. Women's role typically invisible



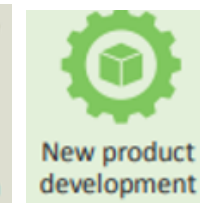
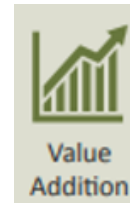


# VALUE RESCUE COMPONENTS

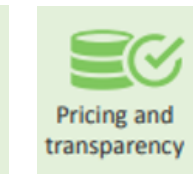
1. **Recover value:** recuperate value that is lost in:
  - i. Harvesting, handling processing, cold chain, transport
  - ii. Inefficient business practices (administration, production costs, planning, marketing, logistics, etc.).



2. **Add value:** local processing



3. **Retain value:** increase the proportion of value retained through enterprise development and disintermediation



4. **Incentivize environmental and social improvement**



# 1. VALUE RECOVERY: improve fishing practices







# Quality improvement



Bled (above) vs traditional (below)  
barred sandbass (*Paralabrax nebulifer*)

# 1. VALUE RECOVERY: improve business capacities



Generado el 17/05/2022 09:16:31

## Reporte de producción



Orden de producción:	8	Fecha de producción:	05/04/2022
Almacén:	B&K	Lote de producción:	P024010504220008
Tipo de Procesamiento:	Individual	Partida:	3

Consumo			
Especie-Presentación-Preservación	Cámara	Lote	Kilos
Jurel de Castilla-Lomo porcionado 180-202 gr.-Frozen	Bin 1	P024013103220007	6.600
Jurel de Castilla-Lomo porcionado 180-202 gr.-Frozen	Congelación	P024013103220007	208.670
Jurel de Castilla-Lomo porcionado 150-179 gr.-Frozen	Congelación	P024013103220007	32.870
Jurel de Castilla-Filete sin piel 180-200 gr.-Frozen	Congelación	P024013103220007	0.180
Jurel de Castilla-Filete con piel 150-179 gr.-Iced	Congelación	P024013103220007	3.000
Jurel de Castilla-Cubos 200gr-Frozen	Congelación	P024013103220007	50.200
Total:			301.520

Producción		
Especie-Presentación-Preservación	Cámara	Kilos
Jurel de Castilla-Lomo porcionado 180-202 gr.-Frozen	Congelación	221.970
Jurel de Castilla-Lomo porcionado 150-179 gr.-Frozen	Congelación	36.040
Jurel de Castilla-Cubos 200gr-Frozen	Congelación	21.340
Jurel de Castilla-Cubos 200gr-Frozen	Bin 1	20.000
Total:		299.350

Especie	Kgs. consumidos	Kgs. producidos	% de rendimiento	% de merma
Jurel de Castilla	301.520	299.350	99.28%	0.72%



## 2. VALUE ADDITION: process locally, differentiate



09:43 90%

nadir.com.mx

**Nadir** Iniciar sesión

Espece Embarcación Arte de Pesca

Congeladora

**Embarcación**

Nombre	Berenice
Matrícula	0302080013-7
Nombre del Propietario	S.C. Islote de Agua Verde, S.C. de R.L.
Estado	Baja California Sur
País	Mexico
Fecha de desembarque	03/04/2023
Lugar de desembarque	Agua Verde

# Traceability

- Official landing record (preform)
- More accurate data
- Internal control for cooperative (payroll, inventory)
- Payment from buyer
- Consumer facing information
- Product differentiation



E HernándezSmartFish AC





## 2. VALUE RETENTION: responsible intermediation



### Purchasing policies

- Only certified/verified/FIP'ed
- Digital traceability
- Open-book negotiations
- Maximize price to cooperative
- Foster strong fisher organizations

# 3. INCENTIVIZE FISHERY MANAGEMENT

FISHERYPROGRESS.ORG

Fishery Improvement Project  
Progress Tracking Database & Tools

Log Out | My Account

My Dashboard

Select Language

FIP Directory

Resources for FIPs

Resources for Buyers

Social Responsibility

About Us

Contact

Mexico Gulf of California grouper, snapper, triggerfish & yellowtail - hook & line

OverviewDetailsImprovement ProgressActions ProgressSocial Performance

Overview

FIP Description

A mixed-species hook and line FIP is being carried out in the Gulf of California in the region known as the San Cosme-Punta Coyote Corridor, in the state of Baja California Sur, Mexico.

MORE

FIP Objective(s)

1. Develop and implement measures that ensure the sustainable use of the finfish fishery for the benefit of local fishermen by June 2024

2. Generate guidelines for the management of mixed fisheries in Mexico, specifically in the CSCPC, BCS, Mexico by June 2024

3. Have an external recognition of the environmental and social performance of the fishery by July 2020

4. Communicate to the buyers and consumers in a standardized and transparent way the social and environmental sustainability attributes of the fishery by July 2022

FIP Type

Basic

FIP Stage

Stage 4: Improvements in Fishing Practices or Fishery Management

Start and Projected End Dates

July 2019 - June 2025

Unfollow this FIP

Print

PDF

Go to My Dashboard

FIP at a Glance

ENVIRONMENTAL

View current status

Starting Evaluation: July 01, 2019

39%

14%

43%

4%

Progress Rating

B

GOOD PROGRESS

Actions Complete

13%

87%

Next Update Due

JAN 2024

Target End Date

JUN 2025

Additional Impacts:

TRACEABILITY

SRV

ROUNDABLE

OTHER

SOCIAL

Risk Assessment : Not Required

Type :

Due Date : -

FIP Leads

Organization Name

Niparajá

The map displays the Gulf of California (Golfo de California) with 12 numbered locations along the Baja California Sur coast. The locations are: 1. Agua Verde, 2. San Marcial, 3. Santa Martha, 4. San Mateo, 5. Tembabiche, 6. La Habana, 7. San Dieguito, 8. Ensenada de Cortés, 9. Palma Sola, 10. San José, 11. El Pardito, 12. Punta Coyote. Other locations shown include Isla Catalana, Santa Cruz, Las Ánimas, Punta Alta, La Cueva, Nopoló, San Evaristo, and El Portugués. An inset map titled 'Macrolocalización' shows the location of the study area within Mexico, specifically in Baja California Sur.

## RISKS

1. Encourage overfishing
2. Food security
3. Exacerbating inequalities (gender, economic)

## SAFEGUARDS

### Intrinsic

1. Gear selectivity
2. Handling time
3. Vessel capacity

### Conditional

1. Screening criteria
2. Sustainability covenant (FIP Action Plan compliance)
3. Purchasing conditions / contract





# OUTCOMES 2014-2024



20  
CO-OP PARTNERS



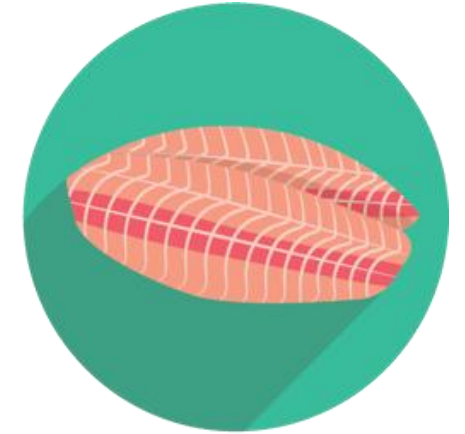
+2,745  
INDIVIDUALS TRAINED



+331 T  
LANDED



+109 T  
SOLD PROCESSED



+38% average increase  
to fisher



8 FIP in preferential  
markets



## Closing thoughts

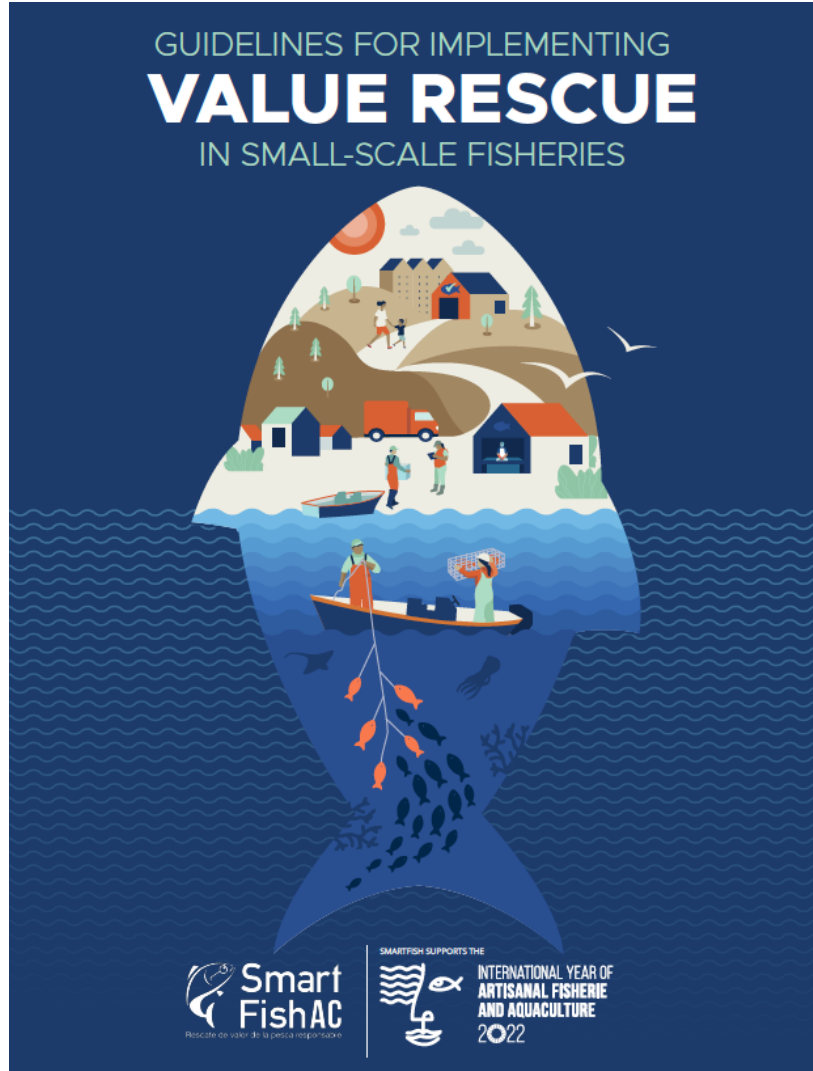


- Fair participation in fisheries management and markets drives conservation engagement
- Value rescue is scalable, replicable and complementary to other conservation and community development efforts
- Investment required in
  - capacity development
  - local infrastructure; and
  - **responsible buyers**



# Thank you!

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Cecilia Blasco  
[cecilia@smartfishAC.org](mailto:cecilia@smartfishAC.org)

<https://www.smartfishac.org/publications>





# LICOP Webinar Living Income

Els Lindeboom - Senior Programme Manager for Community Development & Farmer Livelihoods



BEYOND  
BEANS.



# About Beyond Beans

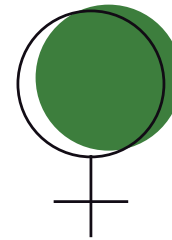
We support more than 100,000 rural farmer households with training on agroforestry practices and regenerative agriculture, provision of seedlings, and cash premiums.



Ghana, Nigeria,  
Côte d'Ivoire, Togo,  
Cameroon and Ecuador



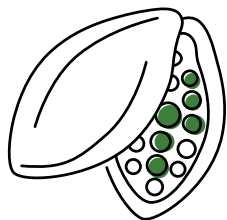
Addressing  
Child Labour



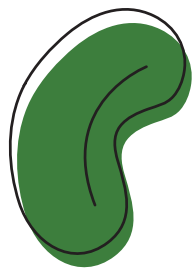
Promoting  
Gender Equity



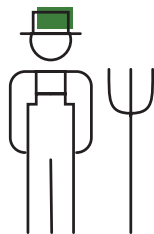
Developing  
Agroforestry



Cocoa

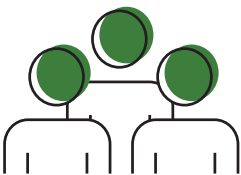


Cashew



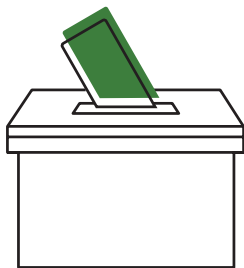
**100,000+**

Smallholder  
Farmers



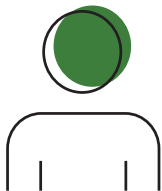
**500+**

Field officers,  
project staff and  
managers



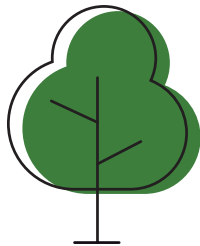
**600+**

Village Savings & Loan  
Associations (VSLAs)



**50,000+**

Farmer households  
covered by our Child  
Labour Monitoring and  
Remediation System



**250,000+**

Indigenous tree species  
planted in reforestation  
projects



**1 million**

Improved cocoa and  
cashew seedlings



# Our Commitment & Approach to Living Income



We believe a living income is only possible when **farmers are empowered** at both the household and community levels.

Our VSLAPlus+ and income-generating activity programmes address the systemic barriers to **income diversification, access to finance, and resilience.**

We **focus especially on women and households.** Our model combines savings groups, business training, and gender and child labour sensitisation.



# Addressing Living Income Through VSLAs

With **18,567 members (63% women)** our VSLA approach integrates access to finance, gender equality and child protection.

Through GALS training, **couples share control** over household assets, improve income dynamics, and work together towards common goals.

**CHILD training** raises awareness and protects children from child labour



# Linking VSLAs to Formal Finance Providers

We link mature VSLAs to microfinance institutions for formal banking access.

Only groups that are ready — digitally, socially, and financially — are connected.

We guide them through the transition with tailored support and local adaptation.

This strengthens access to finance, empowers women, and supports safer communities for children.





# Income Diversification Through IGAs

Diversified incomes **help families cope** with illness, inflation, and market shocks. They lead to resilience.

We support women and households, to **grow their strongest IGAs** through training in literacy, finance, and business skills.

In some communities, **non-cocoa income has increased by up to 50%**, improving farmer resilience, food security and children's schooling.





# Digitisation – Unlocking Financial Access

Most cocoa farmers are excluded from formal finance. **VSLAs provide the first step**, especially for women, to save and access credit.

With Webmate Ghana, we're **digitising savings** groups to build digital financial records.

This shift **makes farmers 'visible' to microfinance institutions** and unlocks long-term investment potential.





# Community-Based Solutions – Pruning Groups



We set up and train **pruning groups** to help farmers with the work on their farms.

## **What it delivers:**

Safer farms, higher productivity, and less risk of child labour.

## **How it works:**

the pruning groups offer services like pruning and spraying, especially where farmers lack equipment or labour.

The model builds on local ownership and peer collaboration.





# What Makes It Work?

Our approach is **locally adapted, gender-sensitive,** and rooted in real community dynamics.

What it delivers: Incomes grow, child labour drops, and gender equality improves.

We **empower families to close income gaps** by combining:

**VSLA development, gender empowerment, tailored IGA support, financial training and Child Labour remediation.**







ETG



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[www.beyondbeans.org](http://www.beyondbeans.org)





**UEBT**  
SOURCING<sup>®</sup>  
WITH RESPECT

# Closing the living income gap:

Strategies, action, lessons learned from botanical supply chains



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# Name the plant!





# UEBT VISION

A world in which all people  
and biodiversity thrive

# UEBT MISSION

To regenerate nature and  
secure a better future for people  
through ethical sourcing of  
ingredients from biodiversity







**UEBT**  
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## Our Focus: Botanicals

*For beauty and personal care, herbal infusions, herbs and spices, functional foods & beverages, fragrances and flavours, and natural pharmaceuticals*



Flowers



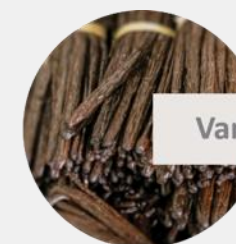
Roots



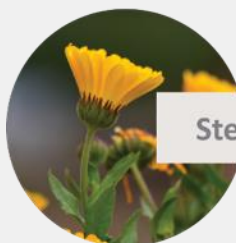
Herbs



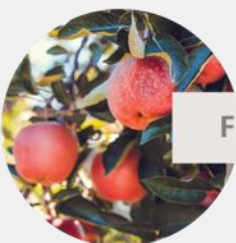
Spices



Vanilla



Stems



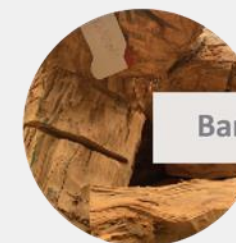
Fruits



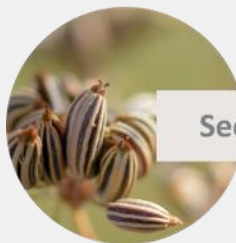
Nuts



Algae



Barks



Seeds



Leaves



Resins



Beeswax

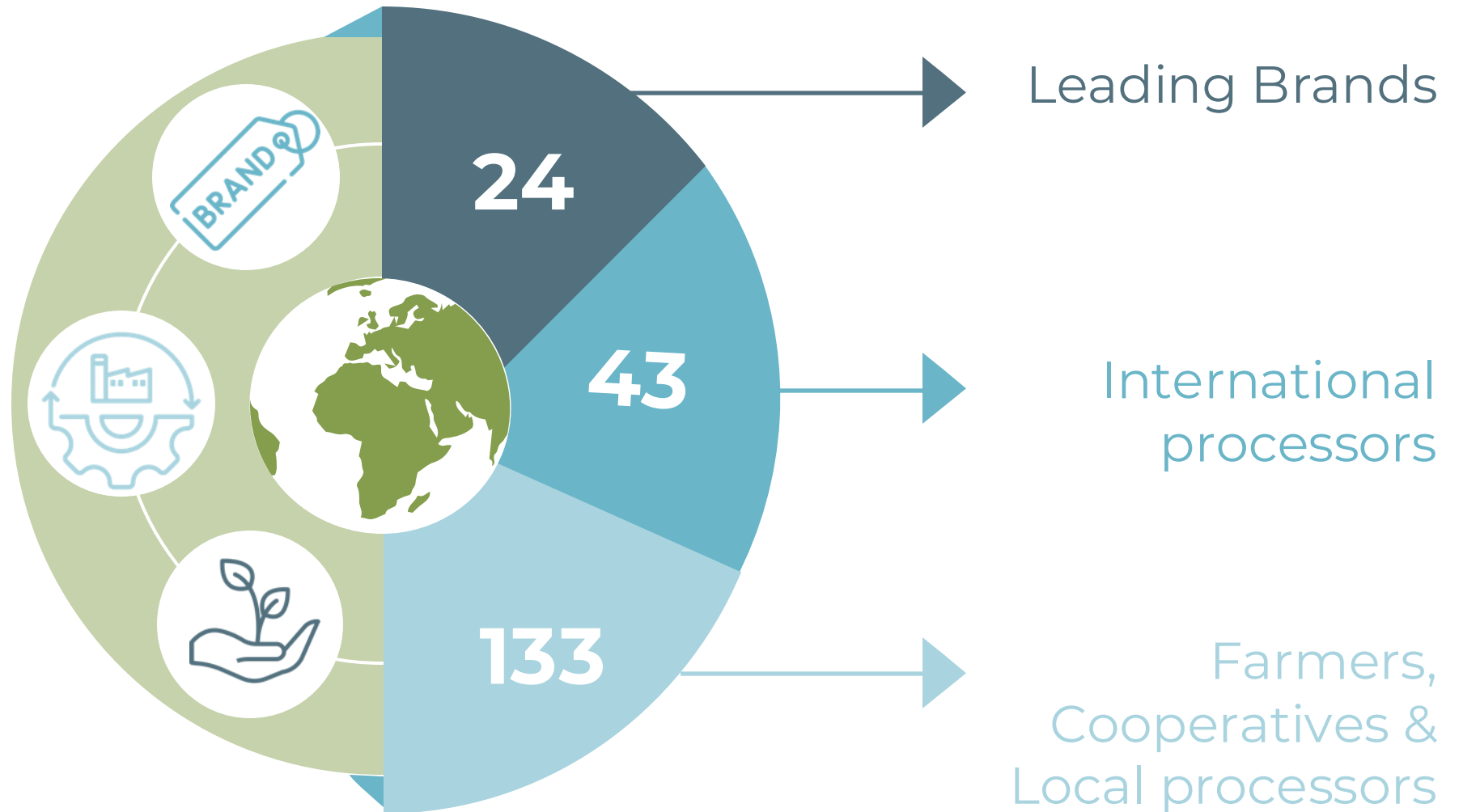


Woods



**UEBT**  
MEMBER  
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UEBT has **200** members including:



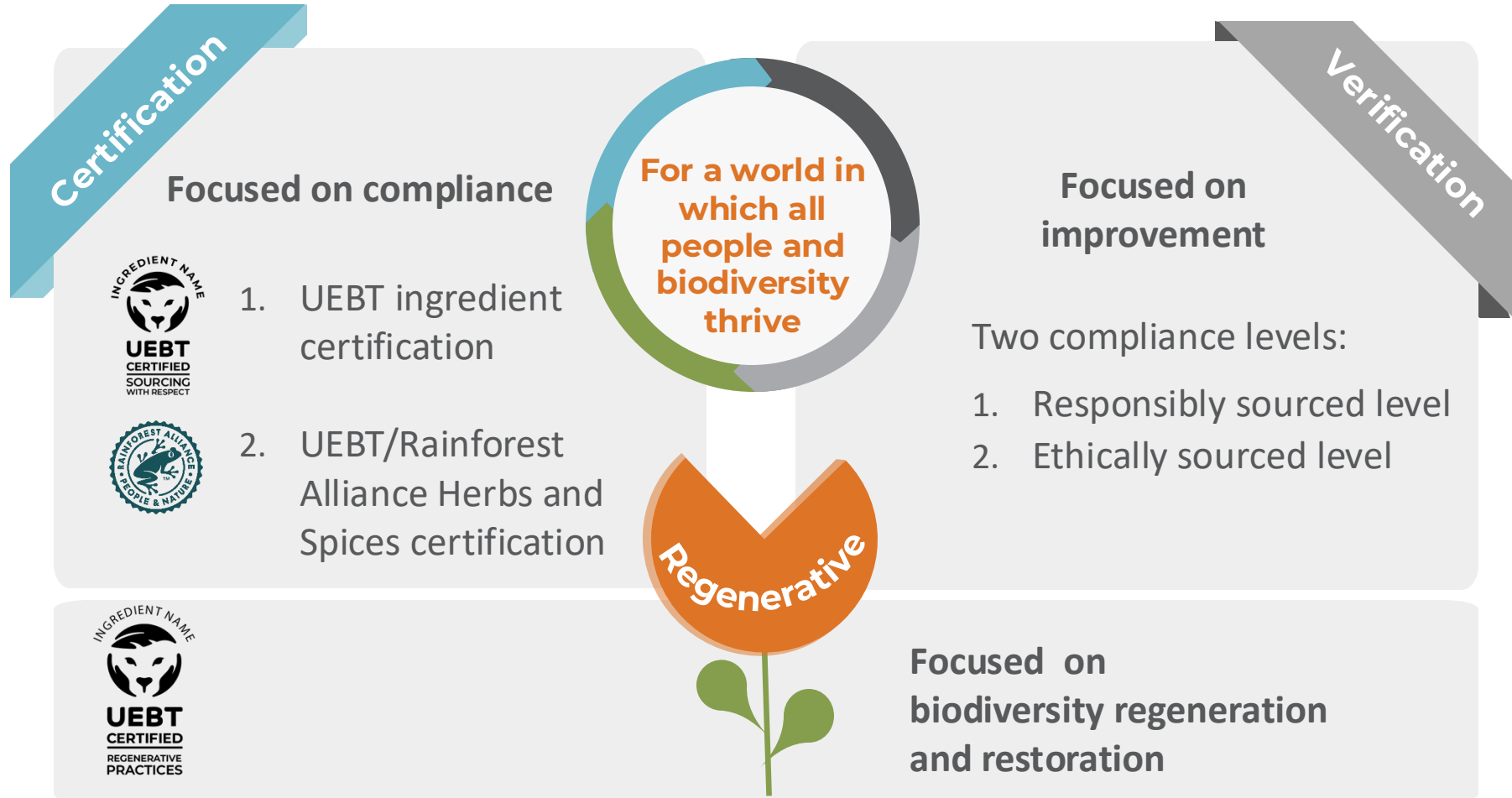
# UEBT members commitments

- 1 Review ethical sourcing policies and practices**  
Corporate policies and supply chain practices
- 2 Set targets for continuous improvement**  
Time-bound targets for due diligence and positive impact
- 3 Manage risks for people and biodiversity**  
Due diligence on cultivation and wild collection practices in natural raw materials
- 4 Promote positive impact for people and biodiversity**  
Improving cultivation and wild collection practices in strategic natural raw materials
- 5 Monitoring, reporting and communication**  
Monitoring of implementation and impact, with options for verification and certification





# Other UEBT programmes



# How do practices in UEBT standard promote conservation and sustainable use?



Maximum biodiversity



Healthy soil and water conservation



Minimum, adequate or no use of external inputs



Climate resilience

# How do practices in UEBT standard promote respect for people?



## Pricing and transparency



## Access and benefit sharing (ABS)



## Work terms and conditions



## Respect for rights

## Our approach to living income

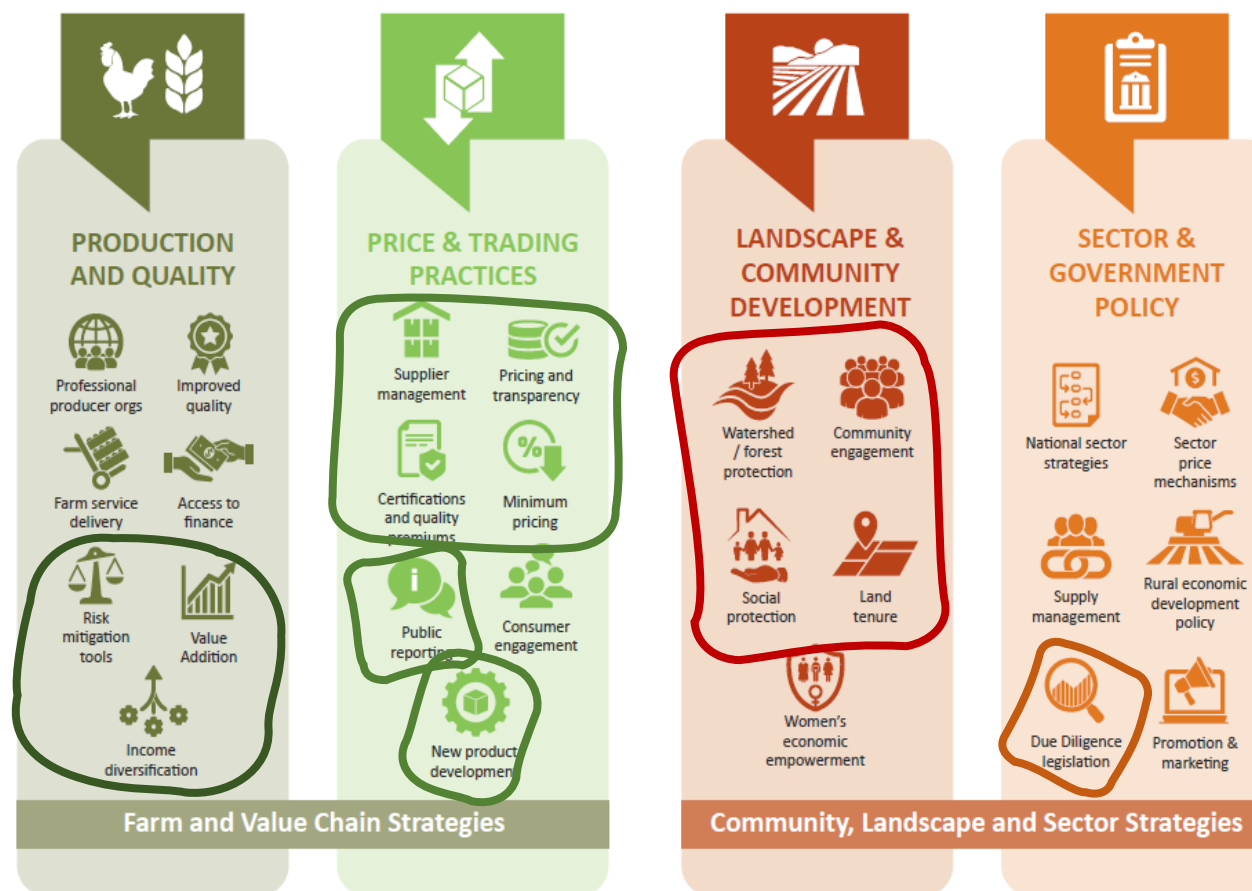
- Long-term sourcing arrangements, based on inclusive and informed dialogue
- Fair prices based on cost calculation, including time spent on cultivation or wild collection
- Commitment and measures to calculating costs based on living wage
- Commitment and measures towards living income





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# Links to LICOP framework?





# A botanical supply chain

- Wild collection
- Biodiversity rich, vulnerable communities
- Small-volume, high-value, seasonal
- Limited traceability
- Role of women in productive and stewardship activities
- Importance of biodiversity regeneration and climate resilience



# Key project components

- Long-term project financed by supply chain partners
- Baseline assessments and impact studies, including local needs and priorities
- Focus quality, traceability to individual producers and review prices to pickers.
  - No available benchmark, so studies conducted (picking time/cost of living)
  - If picking time valued at minimum wage, twice market price. If labour valued at living wage price, four times market price
  - Price aligned with min wage benefitting +10,000 women
  - Price aligned with LW: concern about unintended impacts, including picking intensity lowering yields, risk of child labour, increases in local taxes. Still aim but stepwise and through sectoral approach.
- Importance of complementing price: Project supporting access to education, producer empowerment through creation of picker associations, access to water and income diversification, biodiversity conservation through regeneration studies and reforestation.





## Some lessons learned

- Inclusive, rights-based approaches
- Complementary measures
- Stepwise strategies
- Sectoral platforms
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration
- Adaptive management
- Long-term commitment and sustainability



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**Thank you.**




















[www.uebt.org](http://www.uebt.org)



# Q&A



# The Living Income Community of Practice

	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
 <b>Webinar Series:</b> Building a Strong Foundation		 20 March Living Income 101	 7 April Living Income Measurement Approaches	 28 May Concept Application & Sector Work			 7 Aug Living Income 101	 September Living Income Measurement Approaches	 October Living Income Approaches to Close the Gap		
 <b>Webinar Series:</b> Strengthening Due Diligence	 27 Feb Due Diligence for Living Income					 July Responsible Business Contracts & Purchasing Practices for Living Income		 September Stakeholder Engagement: Due Diligence in Living Income			
 <b>Webinars Series:</b> Right Conditions				 22 May Strategies on Producer Empowerment	 June Gender Inclusive Living Income Strategies				 October Retailers Work on Living Income		 11 December Linking Environment & Livelihoods Resilience
 <b>Workshops</b>					 11 June Virtual Workshop					 3-7 November In-Person Workshop	



**The Living Income**  
Community of Practice

# **Living Income Virtual Workshop 2025**

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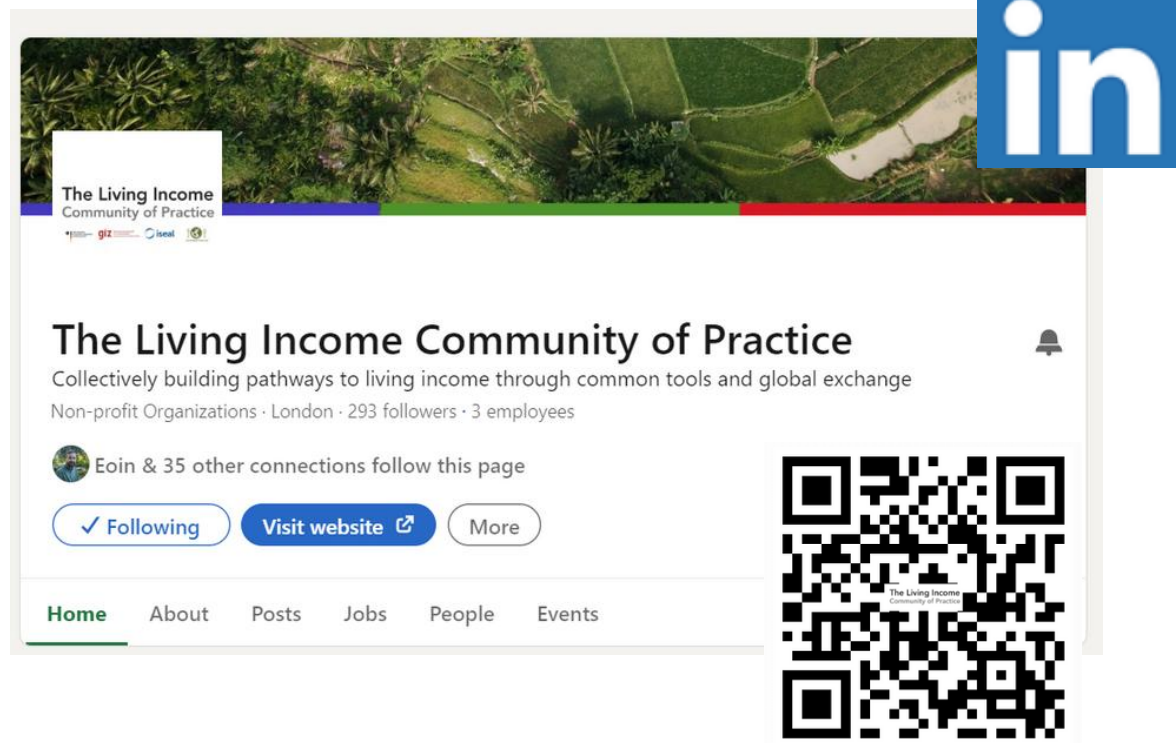
Pathways to Income Improvement in Asia:  
Addressing Barriers and Unlocking Opportunities

**Wednesday, June 11th**



**09:00 - 11:00 am United Kingdom | 1:30 - 3:30 pm India | 3:00 - 5:00 pm Indonesia and Vietnam**

To join this community, we invite you to follow us on our social media and sign up to our newsletter by clicking on the form.



## Sign up to our mailing list!

Join our mailing list to be kept informed of webinars, activities and new resources.



### Subscribe

\* indicates required

First Name \*

Last Name \*

Email Address \*

Organisation \*

Country \*

#### Organisation Sector

- ☐ Cocoa
- ☐ Coffee
- ☐ —



# The Living Income Community of Practice

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