



**Grow Ahead**  
*Crowdfunding Climate Resilience*

**Grow Ahead**  
PO Box 86104  
Portland, OR  
97286 USA  
[www.growahead.org](http://www.growahead.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
November 2, 2017

**CONTACT:** Lauren Berlekamp 202-657-7754  
[lauren@wearemovementmedia.com](mailto:lauren@wearemovementmedia.com)

## **Grow Ahead and Coop Coffees Successfully Crowdfund Farmer-to-Farmer Training for Climate Resilience**

### ***Online Lending and Crowdfund Platform Works with Coffee Cooperatives to Share Carbon Sequestration Strategies through Reforestation***

**PORTLAND, OREGON** — Grow Ahead and Coop Coffees successfully raised US\$15,000 for the first Farmer-to-Farmer training of Grow Ahead’s farmer climate resiliency program. This event took place October 16 – 22, 2017 in Somoto, Nicaragua, with field visits to successful reforestation project work in Limay and San Juan Rio Coco. The training highlighted “lessons learned” during the 10-year reforestation work supported by the local Taking Root team and facilitated peer-to-peer learning about reforestation as a tool for soil, water and climate resiliency between coffee-producer cooperative representatives from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru, as well as from Coop Coffees roaster and importer staff and supporting organizations.

“This was a great opportunity to see the positive impact of reforestation in action. The technology being used here is incredible,” says José Fernando Reyes of Cooperativa Norandino, an association of small-scale coffee producers in northern Peru. “The simplicity and the utility of these tools is impressive and we need to be thinking about how we can work together to create a collective platform and extend these services.”

Recent research reveals that due to changes in climate, up to 50% of current coffee producing regions will no longer be suitable for production by 2050. The majority of the world’s coffee is produced by farmers whose income is largely dependent on coffee alone, so there is a need to support the diversification of income and the adaptability of farms.

“In order to ensure a food secure future, it’s critical to increase the resilience of farmers whose livelihoods are threatened by climate uncertainties,” says Grow Ahead Director, Ryan Zinn. “Grow Ahead’s mission is to support small-scale farmers address the challenge of climate change in their communities through crowdfunding for grassroots solutions. Farmer-to-farmer trainings are one of the most effective methods to do this, facilitating the exchange of practical experiences and best practices.”

### **Harnessing the Power of Carbon Credits for Economic Diversification for Farmers**

Local host Taking Root is a pioneer in harnessing the carbon offset industry to promote economic development and diversification among small-scale farmers in Central America. They’re using reforestation as a tool to mitigate climate change, restore ecosystems and improve livelihoods by

encouraging small-scale farmer families to reforest underutilized parts of their farms using native tree species in exchange for direct payments from global carbon markets. Their impact to date is remarkable—they've paid \$1.9 million to communities, they create 1,200 jobs annually, and they've planted 2.2 million trees. Their participation in Grow Ahead's first Farmer-to-Farmer training focused on connecting networks of small-scale coffee producers.

"This has been a very interesting experience for me. I have seen that including certain kinds of trees in my coffee fields has actually been able to change the cup profile," explains participant Franklin Edgardo Castillo of Café Orgánico Marcala (COMSA), an organic, fair trade coffee coop operating from Honduras. "Now I have also learned that it can capture carbon and bring it down to the soil."

"Trees are much more resilient to extreme weather and sustainable, reforestation plans are designed to provide long-term income for farmers. When droughts, storms or floods destroy agricultural crops, the trees are still there to provide a reliable source of income," explains Monika Firl, Coop Coffees Director of Sustainability. "Participants are planning to take the knowledge they gained from this workshop, and implement all or aspects in their local communities. Our goal is to get several proposals for future project work moving forward with our partners in the very near future." says Firl.

###

### **ABOUT GROW AHEAD**

Grow Ahead is an online lending and funding program that connects individuals and organizations directly to small-scale family farmer organizations. By lending and contributing through Grow Ahead, consumers and organizations can support the agroecological solutions and farmer-led trainings that have a proven track record of success in farming communities.

To learn more about Grow Ahead, please visit: <http://www.growahead.com>

### **ABOUT COOP COFFEES**

Coop Coffees is a green coffee importing cooperative committed to supporting and partnering with small-scale coffee farmers and their exporting cooperatives. By importing directly from our partner-farmers, we do business in a way that creates a fairer, more transparent and sustainable system of coffee trade that directly benefits farmers, and their families and communities.

To learn more about Coop Coffees, please visit: <https://coopcoffees.coop/>