

Chapter 10

Support for Rural Entrepreneurs by Universidad EAN: Impacta Rural Modality of the EAN Impacta Program

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ABSTRACT

The EAN University, as a pioneer and leader in the comprehensive training of professionals aimed at fostering the entrepreneurial spirit and strengthening entrepreneurial skills, created in 2012 the Institute of Entrepreneurship, Leadership, and Innovation (IDELI), which by 2016, with the incorporation of the attribute of sustainability in all the activities of the university, changed its name to Institute for Sustainable Entrepreneurship, and in 2021, it becomes the Impacta Management - Sustainable Entrepreneurship. Impacta - Sustainable Entrepreneurship represents one of the materializations of the higher purpose of EAN University. This chapter shares the methodological contribution of Impacta Rural through the implementation of its first pilot and the learnings from the accompaniment to the rural entrepreneur based on the recognition of their territory and context.

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INTRODUCTION

Colombia, along with other Latin American countries, is characterized by a high percentage of rural population in the 21st century (Pérez and Pérez, 2002), as well as a great ecosystem and cultural diversity. Although throughout history the Colombian rural sector has played a determining role and is considered an axis for the economic development of the country, at the same time it has suffered the consequences of economic models characterized by the dynamics of modernization, transformation and internationalization that have generated lag in social and economic matters, revealing the urban biases that our development has had and, therefore, the great debt that the country has accumulated with the rural sector (Mission for the Transformation of the Countryside, 2015).

The countryside has also been the main scenario of more than fifty years of armed conflict. In rural areas, all this has caused outbreaks of inequality and poverty, as well as a large gap between the rural and urban world. The rural population in Colombia is made up of peasants and small, medium producers, dedicated to agricultural and non-agricultural activities, such as agriculture, livestock, aquaculture, fishing, forestry and crafts whose income comes mainly from family work. Likewise, indigenous communities and part of the Afro-descendant communities make up the rural population (Mission for the Transformation of the Countryside, 2015).

The importance of rurality takes in entrepreneurship is linked to the need to provide solutions to vulnerable and specially protected sectors, strengthen the countryside relations and improve the conservation conditions of the country. Under this premise, within the program of accompaniment to entrepreneurs and sustainable entrepreneurs Ean Impacta of Ean University, the Impacta Rural modality is established, which aims to develop technical skills in the use of methodologies and tools that allow the creation and strengthening of innovative, sustainable and scalable ventures from a rurality approach and based on the exploration and recognition of the territory, its context, social relations, and key actors, as determining factors to strengthen their business ideas and move towards sustainability. This modality of accompaniment is structured in a differentiated manner according to the needs of rural entrepreneurs and the state of their rural entrepreneurship initiative.

In addition, it seeks to strengthen local capacities and is operated through allies with experience in the territory, who have a previous link and relationship with the communities. In this way, Ean University, through its entrepreneurship unit, Impacta - Sustainable Entrepreneurship, continues to materialize the objective of promoting entrepreneurship and sustainability as allies of market transformation and societies, and sustainable entrepreneurship as a tangible way of contributing to the transition toward sustainable and resilient development in the country (Ean University, 2020, Chapter 5). In this article, we take a tour of the construction that has had the methodology of Impacta Rural modality, its accompaniment cycles for rural entrepreneurs, as well as the learning path that is generated for entrepreneurs and regional mentors; communication with the Regional partner, and associated times and milestones associated. Once described above, the case study will address the learnings, challenges and main differences that have had accompaniment to rural entrepreneurs in the course of their execution compared to accompaniment of entrepreneurs who develop in city.

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