



Cafe Lahu
EMPOWERING PEOPLE

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

First year planting the future in Kanglaung
(Chiang Rai, Thailand)





Key figures 2025

51

families in the community

30

families involved in Cafe Lahu

6

pilot families

240

fruit trees planted

2

training sessions

6

water tanks (2.000 L)

1

Cabin built

1.500

coffee plants

2

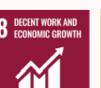
agreements with universities

<https://www.cafelahu.org/>

website launched



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**





Letter from Mei and Imma

To everyone who has accompanied us on this journey

As 2025 comes to an end, we take a moment to look back and reflect on the first months of Cafe Lahu. It is time to pause and recognize the great progress made along this path towards a new way of doing things in the small Lahu community of northern Thailand.

A more sustainable model, in harmony with nature and respectful of culture, that we hope will inspire many other communities.

It was in 2024, during that reunion in Kanglaung, when we first began to imagine a project that could improve the lives of this community, originally from Myanmar. A project that could act as a driver towards a more sustainable future. It was Mei's dream since she was a child.

For a year, we aligned visions and began to shape a plan. But it was not until 6 March 2025, after spending a few days together again, that everything became clear: the project had to be shared with the community from the very beginning. We had to build it together, from the start. And so this journey began..

In these nine months, many milestones have been achieved: 30 families committed to change; the creation of the administrative structure and governance model; the pilot experience of six families who have already planted 240 fruit trees; moments of shared learning and ecological awareness; the construction of six water tanks to help young plants survive the dry season; the first coffee plants; strategic alliances with universities that will help us grow; and the launch of our window to the world: <https://www.cafelahu.org/>

And above all, the hope of an entire community to build a better and more sustainable future for younger generations, while preserving their ancestral culture — led by a woman.

We are deeply aware that none of this is possible alone. We are moving forward thanks to all of you who walk this path with us. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you..

Thank you for dreaming with us of a better world. Mei and Imma





1. Executive summary

Year 1: Foundations and first pilots

Main achievements of the year

- **30 families** willing to embrace change.
- Design of the **roadmap** to achieve it.
- **Reforestation pilot:** 6 families planted 240 fruit trees.
- **Coffee planting pilot:** 1.500 catimor coffee plants..
- 2 training sessions on organic farming and **ecological awareness** (60 participants)
- 6 **water tanks**(2.000 L) to support young plants during the dry season.
- **Governance structure:** Associació SomLahu (Barcelona) and Lahu Association (Thailand).
- **Window to the world:**
<https://www.cafelahu.org/>
- **Responsible tourism:** start of sustainable cabin construction
- **Academic partnerships** (NHL Stenden University in Holland/Bangkok , UIC in Barcelona).

First changes observed

Beyond the numbers, the project is already generating meaningful change: better organization, shared responsibility, a common vision for the future – and above all, hope!





1. Executive summary

Roadmap

Cafe Lahu is a long-term initiative. Deep social, economic and environmental change requires time, consistency and trust. The roadmap outlines the key milestones planned for the coming years.

Each stage builds upon the previous one, respecting the rhythms of nature and of the community itself, with a clear objective: **to improve the lives of Lahu families without losing their cultural identity and in harmony with their environment.**



This is a shared commitment between the Lahu community and all the people who support the project.



2. About Cafe Lahu

History, mission and values

Cafe Lahu is a community-led initiative born in Kanglaung, a small village in the mountains of northern Thailand. It is led by Mei, a young Lahu woman, together with Imma, from Barcelona.

They met in 2012 during a volunteer programme at a school for girls from ethnic minorities at risk of social exclusion. One of those girls was Mei.

The project aims to fight poverty, improve environmental conditions, empower the Lahu people and preserve their traditions. It has been Mei's dream since childhood: *"to support her community through ecologically sustainable development"*



**Cafe Lahu supports indigenous People.
Protects biodiversity. Fights climate change.
Empowers women.**

“Preserving Lahu culture in connection with nature and offering a better future for children and young people.”

— Cafe Lahu



FUTURE



NATURE



PASSION



COMMUNITY



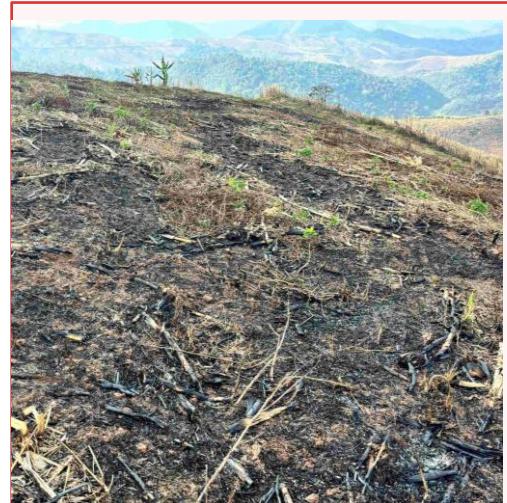
COLOR



3. The challenge

Towards a sustainable future

The Lahu community of Kanglaung, located in the mountainous north of Thailand near the Myanmar border, has traditionally depended on subsistence farming and corn cultivation. In recent decades, the expansion of large-scale corn monoculture driven by external market demand has caused serious environmental and social damage. The climate and altitude are ideal for high-quality organic coffee. Combined with agroforestry and reforestation, coffee can restore soil health and generate more stable income.



Corn monoculture depletes the soil, causes erosion and requires heavy chemical use, which contaminates water sources and affects human health and biodiversity. Hillsides once covered in forest are now bare, vulnerable to landslides and unable to retain moisture during dry periods. The economic model is also unsustainable: volatile prices, debt cycles and the consequent migration of young people.



The climate and altitude are ideal for high-quality organic coffee. Combined with agroforestry and reforestation, coffee can help restore soil health and generate more stable sources of income.



4. Key objectives

Five goals guiding our mission

- **Cultural heritage:** Protect traditional knowledge, crafts and language
- **Women's Empowerment :** Promote female leadership
- **Environmental sustainability:** Achieve positive environmental impact
- **Economic sustainability:** Generate stable income for the Lahu community
- **Scalability:** A replicable model for rural sustainable development

**Cafe Lahu helps indigenous People.
Protects biodiversity.
Fights climate change.
Empowers women.**



5. Our approach

Six Strategic pillars

Regenerative agriculture

Replacing monoculture with agroforestry systems that regenerate the soil and biodiversity.

Ecological awareness

Creating educational opportunities and promote environmental awareness for all ages.

Volunteering

Welcoming volunteers who wish to contribute their skills while learning from Lahu culture..

Water infrastructure

Improving access to and the quality of water for both agriculture and everyday life.

Indigenous culture

Preserving and promoting Lahu cultural heritage.

Women's leadership

Promoting the leadership of women and young people in decision-making processes.



**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS**





6. 2025 Highlights

Milestones and dates

March 2024	The project began to take shape.
March 2025	A key decision was made: the project was built collectively from the very beginning (30 families committed to joining).
April 2025	The first fundraising campaign was launched: Coffee Flower Necklaces.
May 2025	The coffee pilot started.
June 2025	The first training session was delivered (39 participants), and the fruit tree pilot began (6 families).
July 2025	Associació SomLahu (Barcelona) was officially registered. 
Sept 2025	Lahu Association (Thailand) was officially registered. 
Oct 2025	www.cafelahu.org was launched.
November 2025	Six water tanks were built (2,000 liters each). Field visits and the second training session (21 participants).
December 2025	One cabin for the responsible homestay pilot. An agreement was signed with NHL Stenden University





7. Activities and Milestones 2025

6 areas of action

This year, we have worked across six complementary areas:

- 7.1 Sustainable agricultural transition
- 7.2 Ecological awareness
- 7.3 Water and resilience
- 7.4 Culture and community strengthening
- 7.5 Communication and transparency
- 7.6 Preparation for responsible tourism





7.1 Sustainable agricultural transition

Fruit tree and coffee pilots

Objective: To initiate a transition towards a sustainable and environmentally respectful economy by diversifying future income sources, improving agroforestry systems, and building long-term care practices.

Actions:

- Selection of six families to participate in a reforestation pilot with fruit trees
- Planting of 240 fruit trees.
- Follow-up visits and practical problem-solving.
- Coffee pilot: planting of 1,500 Catimor coffee plants.





7.2 Ecological Awareness

Training in organic farming and environmental awareness

Training session 1 22 June 2025

39 participants

- Planting techniques and basic crop care
- Organic inputs
- Community agreements: “no chemicals”

Training session 2 16 December 2025

21 participants

- Practical workshops (soap and dishwashing liquid)
- Visits to pilot plantations
- Care plan for the dry season





7.3 Water and resilience

Six water tanks (2.000 L)

Objective: To ensure the survival of young plants during the dry season, one of the main limiting factors for the success of the project.

Accions:

- Construction of six water tanks (2,000 liters each)
- Care plan: frequent irrigation (at least every two days during critical periods)

6 Water tanks
for the dry season





7.4 Culture and community strengthening

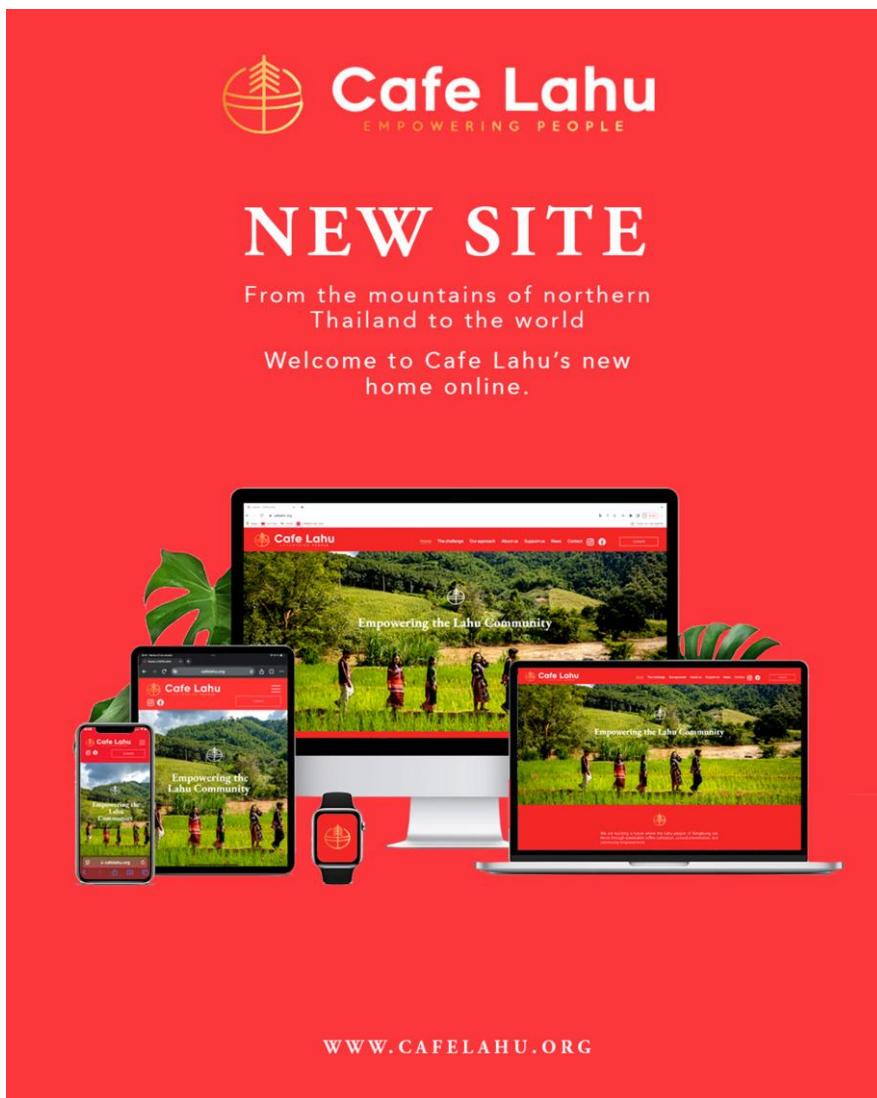
- Community meetings, shared agreements and collective decision-making
- Spaces for learning and building trust
- Promotion of local leadership and active community participation





7.5 Communication and transparency

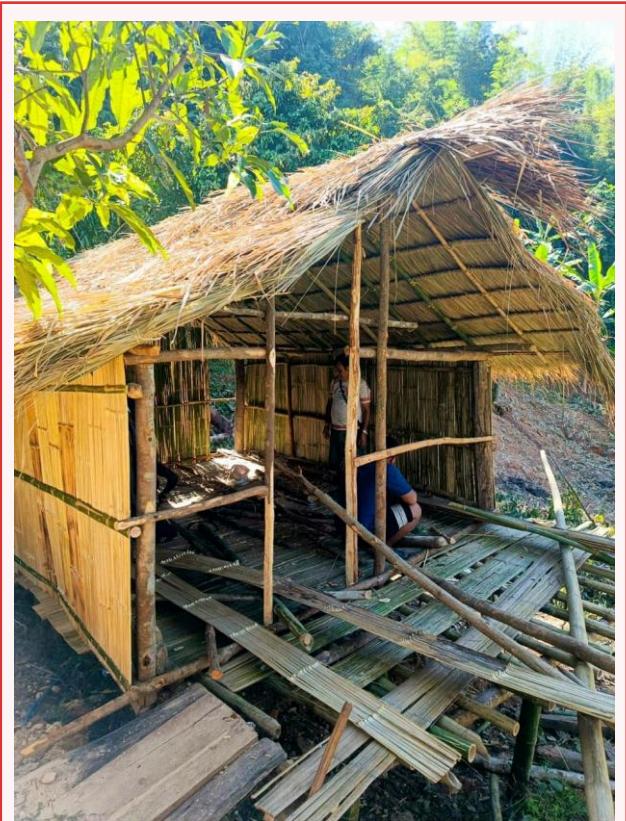
- Launch of www.cafelahu.org as the project's window to the world.
- Launch of the Cafe Lahu Instagram account <https://www.instagram.com/cafelahu/> as an agile and visual communication channel to share the day-to-day life of the project and small stories that bring Lahu culture closer.
- Publication of progress updates, milestones, needs and learnings.





7.6 Preparation for responsible tourism

- Pilot infrastructure (four cabins): the first cabin has been built.
- Establishment of community rules, respectful behaviour guidelines and fair benefit-sharing.
- Initial academic collaborations to share experiences and strengthen methodology, evaluation and learning.





8. Our impact

Direct Results

6 pilot families

240 fruit trees planted

1.500 coffee trees planted

2 training sessions (60 participants)

6 water tanks(2.000 L)

2 associations (SomLahu and Lahu Association)

1 Lahu style cabin for responsible tourism





8. Our impact

Testimonials

Testimonio de Na-u

My name is Nau. I am from the Lahu tribe. Due to the war, I moved from Myanmar to Thailand 20 years ago.

I work as a farmer and have been growing corn and rice for many years. However, the costs of farming are very high, and prices are unpredictable. Because of this, I decided to join the Cafe Lahu Project. I wanted to try something new to improve my life.

Since joining, I have received fruit tree saplings from the project and have already planted them. I was also provided with materials to build a water tank, which my husband and I have already finished constructing to store water for the dry season.

I am very grateful to the project for seeing our importance. I am committed to learning more and taking great care of these trees as they grow.



Testimonio de Namu:

My name is Namu. I am Lahu. I was born in Kaeng Luang Nok village. I graduated from high school in Chiang Rai. After graduation, I went to work in the city for more than two years.

My father was in poor health and had to go to the doctor all the time. So I decided to come back to take care of my father and do farming. My father was in poor health because he had been farming with chemicals for a long time.

If I have the chance, I would like to do sustainable farming that is environmentally friendly and to improve my family's health.



I am very happy to know that there will be a project to promote coffee planting. It makes me see the change in the future. I want to learn how to plant coffee and coffee has a good price.



8. Our impact

Testimonials

Testimonio de Mei:

Over the past year, we have started something truly important together, as a community.



We have not only built water tanks or prepared the land; we are building a new and sustainable future..

Now, many more families are getting ready to plant fruit trees, and our next major goal is coffee. Coffee trees are our true hope. They mean that we can take care of the forest while, at the same time, having a better life.

I am very happy, and I promise to take care of this project until we can harvest and sell our coffee together.

Finally, I would like to thank all our donors for giving us this opportunity and a future. Your support has made it possible for this dream to become a reality.



9. Partnerships and Collaborations

Universities, technical support and network

Universities:

NHL Stenden University (Minor Design Asia)

A visit is planned for 2026 focused on learning, experience design and respectful cultural exchange. This collaboration will serve as the first pilot experience for community-based stays and responsible tourism.

UIC Barcelona — Master's Degree in Cooperation and Development

Collaboration aimed at strengthening the project's methodology, evaluation and learning processes.

Technical and local support:



Mr Tanapol Chemuer: coffee sector expert, SCAA-certified roaster and owner of Akha Jungle Coffee.
He has provided technical advice for the coffee planting pilot





10. Governance



Associació SomLahu (Barcelona)

Spanish non-profit association
Incorporated on: 21/07/2025
Registration. No. 78009

Raises funds from Barcelona to support the project



Lahu Association (Tailandia)

Thai non-profit association
Incorporated on: 22/09/2025
Registration No. 7/2568

Manages the project in Kanglaung (Thailand)

The Associació SomLahu (Barcelona) and the Lahu Association (Thailand) work in a **coordinated and complementary manner**.

They maintain **continuous communication** and make joint decisions regarding project planning, priorities, budgeting, and monitoring.

Project implementation on the ground is carried out in Thailand, while fundraising and financial management are coordinated from Barcelona, ensuring **transparency, coherence, and accountability** throughout the entire process.

Principles of Accountability

- Community-based decision-making and shared agreements
- Transparent communication
- Ethical approach to visits, tourism, and volunteering
- Cultural respect, informed consent, and protection of the community and its essence





11. Finance

Income has mainly come from the different fundraising campaigns carried out since April, as well as from membership fees and individual donations. A total of **139 individual donors** contributed during 2025.

The funds raised have been allocated **85%** to the launch of Café Lahu's different initiatives, while the remaining **15%** has been set aside as a **surplus (remaining funds)** for future years..

TOTAL REVENUE

5.903,15 €

TOTAL EXPENSES

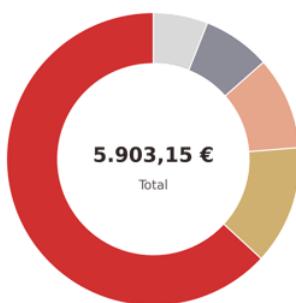
5.299,74 €

SURPLUS

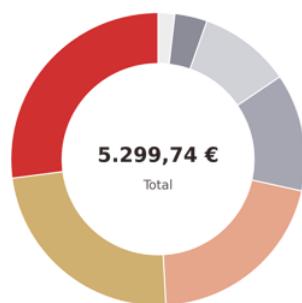
603,42 €

Result of the exercise (surplus) allocated to future years

Where does the revenue come from?



What are they invested in?



Notes: Period: March–December 2025. Amounts in euros. Consolidated data from Associació SomLahu and Lahu Association..



12. How to Support Cafe Lahu

You can continue supporting Cafe Lahu through:

- Donations <https://www.cafelahu.org/donate>
- Volunteering
- Corporate and institutional partners (universities, foundations, CSR Programmes)
- Sharing the project



More information: <https://www.cafelahu.org/>



11. Our Team

Promoters



Mei Chaoue: Co-founder
Bachelor in Chiang Rai University
Clear purpose: to help and develop her community.
Imma López: Co-founder
Economist with a strong financial and consultant background and with experience in non-profit projects.

Advisors



Ms Bunyang Keaochonphu
Advisor and trainer
Expert in Organic agriculture and Food processing,



Dr Mark Azavedo Advisor
Academic and researcher specialist in Arabica coffee production, marketing and sustainability in Northern Thailand.

Associació SomLahu (Barcelona)



President: Imma López
Secretary: Mónica López
Treasurer: Joan Monrabà

Lahu Association (Chiang Rai)



President: Mr Pichaiphuchit Suwinmanee
Vice president: Mr. Ekachai Pujong
Secretary: Ms. Namu Laeps
Treasurer: Ms Nutchanat (Mei) Chaoue



Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who has made this first year of Cafe Lahu possible. Every gesture of support has contributed to building this network of trust..

Thank you for dreaming with us of a future in harmony with nature, while preserving the essence of Lahu culture.

Adela T	Bunyang K	Inma V	Mark A	Olga O
Adriana A	Carla V	Isabel G	Marta A	Olga R
Aissarapong L	Carme B	Ivette O	Marta B	Olga R M
Alberto S	Carme E	Jaime L	Marta C	Olga V
Alexis O	Cecilia A	Javier S	Marta D	Patrici S
Amparo A	Celia D	Joan M	Marta G	Paula S
Ana C	Clara I	Jordi L	Marta S	Puri M
Ana L	Claudia S	Jose Miguel D	Martí M	Raquel V
Ana Tere V	Conchi B	Josefina LL	Mayte R	Raul L
Anais M	Cristina M	Josep R	Mcarmen C	Rosa M
Anayansin C	Cristina S	Judith C	Mercè M	Rosa V
Andrea B	David S	Judith U	Mercè MG	Sandra A
Andrea P	Deborah C	Julia G	Merce V	Sara G
Andrés V	Eduard V	Laia P	Mercedes VP	Sara N
Angela C	Elena M	Laura C	Mertixell C	Sonia M
Ángeles G	Elisabet C	Laura D	Mertxe H	Tanapol Ch
Ángeles V	Elisenda D	Leni P	Mireia M	Teresa
Anna B	Elvira DO	Leticia G	Mirentxu	Teresa G
Anna C	Emma O	Lidia L	Monica L	Teresa V
Anna P	Enric A	Lourdes Q	Mònica L	Ursina C
Anna S	Ester M	M Angeles P	MònicaR	Xavi T
Anna T	Ester S	Maite B	Montse G	Xenia G
Antonio B	Eva P	Marendra A	Montse M	Zuriñe
Ariadna P	Evelyn V	Maria B	Montserrat O	
Bea G	Franc C	Maria	Negri B	
Beatriz B	Gabriel B	Maria E	Noelia M	
Beatriz G	Gemma M	Maria M	Noemí D	
Beatriz R	Giovanni G	Maribel M	Noemi G	
Begoña H	Gonzalo L	Mariona M	Nuria T	
Begoña R	Inés C	Marisa M	Olga B	

