

The Cascade

Family union, fish farming, forest conservation and energy generation.

Eduar Fabian Parada Meneses and Sol Alexandra Lizcano Pabón are from the municipalities of Cucutilla and Mutiscua, Norte de Santander, Colombia. They are **a young, visionary and enterprising couple**. After completing their professional studies in the city, they went back home and teamed up to forge **their family business called “La Cascada” fish farming station**. They are a true image of the work capacity and tenacity of the people of Norte Santander, in the northeastern part of Colombia. A region strongly affected by the violence from the armed conflict, poverty and difficult access to education, health and basic services; particularly in rural areas. In addition, ongoing humanitarian crises as a transit point for thousands of migrants from Venezuela.

In this context, La Cascada is the **result of family union and mutual support to develop an economic activity**. The production station is located in the municipality of Mutiscua. Because of the rootedness and love for the territory, **this trout farm links to the conservation of the surrounding forest, stream and springs**. Clean water being the main input for the business.



Their project began in 2015 with the construction of the intake, the settling tank and seven (7) ponds; for a production of 400 to 500 kilos per month, equivalent to **20'000 trout**. In 2022, they arrived to twenty-nine (29) ponds for a production of 5 to 6 tons per month, an inventory of **130'000 trout**. The cascade pond method allows for oxygenation by gravity.

Eduar, Sol and their family are a team. Sol is in charge of managing the support staff, managing the accounts and product inventory. Eduar manages the production, quality and commercial aspects. They have two permanent employees and, in the harvest stage, they manage to employ up to 12 people.

As an important input in the production process, electric power was a case study for them. They dedicated themselves to learning about **hydroelectric generation** and studying the flows of the La Plata River, which



flows through their property. After the analysis and advice from a young student, also a member of the family, they opted for **a Kaplan turbine to take advantage of the waterfall and flow**. Thus, a flow of 20 liters per second is conducted through a four (4) inch pipe to the turbine; generating a mechanical energy movement in the shaft, then passing to the generator and transforming it into electrical energy. The energy is used directly in the process and also stored in batteries. It generates 150 watts/second. This is used to maintain basic equipment such as light bulbs, sockets, a sealing machine, one television and a machine to grind feed for the trout fry.

This family has been working with the **miPáramo initiative** for four (4) years. miPáramo is focused on improving local quality of life and on the conservation of the forest and the high Andean wetlands, known as “páramo”, with families of farmers. This initiative is supported, from the outset, by the **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** with **El Agua Nos Une** program, as well as by other public and private entities. miPáramo has provided La Cascada assistance to improve the production process and strengthen the business. This support involved contributions to comply with hygiene regulations and a vacuum packing and sealing machine. In addition, miParamo helped develop marketing strategies directed to local restaurants. Eduar, Sol and their family have been leaders in miPáramo, **preserving 7000 square meters of forest** on their land, as part of the Voluntary Conservation Agreement.

Message to family businesses

"I have always told people that the countryside is the future. I am from the countryside, I love it and this is where the opportunities are. If we look at the cities, there is mass consumption and it is at the countryside where food production takes place. I have a very personal phrase that I want to share with you: Whoever produces food... wins, because who does not eat in this world?" Eduar Parada.



VIDEO (Colombian) <https://bit.ly/3FDYD5s>

