

**Ana Mery González is an environmental technician. Destapa Futuro allowed her to enjoy the best fertilizer in life: to work in benefit of biodiversity. Today, Abonarte Ltda. imports from Brazil the only earthworm breeding system worldwide, which is used to optimize its processes with the top quality standards and a social project to recycle fruits and greens.**

**Destapa Futuro:**

## **“THE ART OF FERTILIZING LIFE”**

Ana Mery González is a natural resource management technician and has worked as such for quite some time. 40 years ago, from the Municipality of Cocuy in Boyaca, she came to live in Bogotá to work as a community leader. As a mother of two children - Laura and Nicolás – she studied in Sena to look for an alternative solution to the organic residue problem in the capital city.

During an environmental investigation with a group of friends, she became interested in earthworm breeding. Right after she noticed that it was not possible to promote it from a political standpoint, she gave it a business profile, which was not successful due to the lack of funds.

These two continuous failures did not stop her. One afternoon – 15th September 2006 – while reviewing the agro-ecology subject, she heard about Bavaria’s promotion, *Destapa Futuro*, on the radio. “I heard that one could present any business idea, and that was actually the last day to register” recalled Ana Mery.

Lucely Guerra, a food engineer that she’d met a year back, became Ana Mery’s partner and submitted their registration by e-mail; they were selected and that’s when the process began. “They taught us to prepare a business plan with the best organic residue treatment methodology available in Colombia” affirmed Ana.

“Today, thanks to the Destapa Futuro program, we have the best cutting-edge technology available worldwide. We imported an earthworm breeding system in boxes, which is only available Brazil, and is protected by copyright worldwide”, explained the environmental technician at the farm El Bosque, in the outskirts of the crystal clear Tunjuelito river – settlement of Mochuelo in the locality of *Ciudad Bolívar*, right next to Usme – where her fertilizer producing company operates, known as “*Abonarte Ltda.*”

In a 2.72 hectare extension, amidst eucalypts and a cool temperature, Ana Mery, Lucely and Oscar Ríos, a zoo-technician work together. Every day, they turn a large quantity of egg shells and raw fruit and vegetable peel with coffee residues and tea bags into a fertilizer full of nitrogen, which is sold to farm workers in Usme, Ciudad Bolívar and Sumapáz to nourish potato and pea crops.

Within a warehouse, covered by a large plastic and in the middle of a strong smell of decomposed food, organic residues are chopped and sun-dried, placed in a box system

within a fully controlled environment to avoid contamination with bacteria. “That’s when the work of the little worms begins... they quietly produce the fertilizer”, explained Mery.

Today, “Abonarte Ltda.”, thanks to the Destapa Futuro program, has employed five persons who provide for more than 20 people in the region... comfortably affirmed Oscar, an experienced zoo-technician who graduated years back from *Universidad Nacional*.

On the mean time, Fabián Sánchez – a rural fellow of a low socioeconomic level – while lifting these heavy drums containing organic residues to be chopped stated that “what is garbage for some, is valuable to others”, referring to the waste that people usually throw to the garbage.

Gilma, a single mother, is also part of the team, who helps in the daily activities of the farm. In addition, the community mothers of Ciudad Bolívar help to collect the material, with the eventual support of Tato, a homeless person.

The community mothers, whose main work is to recycle fruit and vegetable wastes, will benefit from the reduction of the waste collection rate through a covenant that we are processing with the Mayor’s Office, stated Lucely.

In addition, Ana Mery, surrounded by dogs and fowl, mentioned her desire to continue with her work in the environmental area. “We are fully accountable, as human beings, for the environment in which we live... this cannot be limited to a nice speech, or to what everyone wants to hear, because contamination is the cause to environmental deterioration”, she affirmed.

Destapa Futuro is the core and the backbone of “Abonarte Ltda.”, the projection of which is to collect one ton/day of organic waste in order to increase the production of fertilizers and mitigate its current demand.

This is the reason to the slogan: “*Abonarte Limitada, el arte de abonar la vida*”, which as a matter of fact does not use a worm as its symbol, but a salamander. “Because the salamander is the symbol of biodiversity and the resistance to the world deterioration” explained Ana Mery, although she immediately defended the worm. “None of us is essential in this company, except for the worm, because it is clean... The secret of this work is the transformation, and the worm actually transforms”.