

Sustainable development in corn trading companies in Guasave, Sinaloa, Mexico

El desarrollo sostenible en empresas comercializadoras de maíz de Guasave, Sinaloa México

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Abstract

The agreement "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seek to achieve the well-being of people and the planet. All social actors are responsible for its compliance, but companies play a fundamental role, so they must work to manage their operations in an aligned manner towards these SDGs. The corn trading companies are not the exception and therefore, this research seeks to know the actions carried out by these companies and that contribute to the 2030 Agenda, for this, semi-structured interviews were used with the leaders of these companies, with questions focused on the 5'P of the SDGs. In this sense, it was obtained as a result that there are actions by the companies studied to contribute to the SDGs, although this is done unconsciously. It was also found that the SDGs with the greatest impact are those that are in the spheres of people and prosperity. It is concluded that it is extremely important for companies to adhere to the SDGs in their strategic planning, and to begin directing efforts towards raising awareness of these at all levels of the organization.

Sustainability, Corn traders, Agenda 2030

Resumen

El acuerdo "Transformar Nuestro Mundo: La Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible", consta de 17 Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS), los cuales buscan lograr el bienestar de las personas y el planeta. Todos los actores sociales son responsables de su cumplimiento, pero las empresas juegan un papel fundamental, por lo que deben trabajar en gestionar sus operaciones de manera alineada hacia estos ODS. Las empresas comercializadoras de maíz no son la excepción y por lo tanto, la presente investigación busca conocer las acciones que ejecutan estas empresas y que aportan a la Agenda 2030, para ello, se recurrió a entrevistas semiestructuradas a los líderes de estas empresas, con preguntas enfocadas a las 5'P de los ODS. En este sentido, se obtuvo como resultado que si existen acciones por parte de las empresas estudiadas para aportar a los ODS, aunque esto se hace de manera inconsciente. Se encontró también que los ODS con mayor impacto son aquellos que se encuentran en las esferas de personas y prosperidad. Se concluye que es sumamente importante que las empresas adhieran los ODS a su planeación estratégica, y se empiece encaminando esfuerzos hacia la concientización de estos a todos los niveles de la organización.

Sostenibilidad, Comercializadoras de maíz, Agenda 2030

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1. Introduction

The year 2010 was of great relevance for sustainability, as the United Nations (UN) community signed the eight Millennium Development Goals, which sought to eradicate poverty, hunger, inequality, lack of education, disease and the degradation of the planet's ecosystems. Great progress was made with these goals, however, at the end of their period of validity (2000-2015), a pressing need was perceived to continue working on sustainability and on the goals that had not been achieved (Ramírez, 2010).

In September 2015, during the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development, UN member countries signed the document "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". This important agreement aims to eradicate poverty, inequality and injustice, as well as to achieve peace, prosperity, well-being of people and planet, generating partnerships (United Nations National Development Programme, 2019). In this way, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) address the greatest challenges in terms of sustainability, seeking to ensure that everyone benefits (UN Women, 2019).

To meet the 2030 Agenda and achieve a better planet for all, it is necessary that companies assume an exceptional commitment, since, by their nature, they are positioned as transcendental agents in this important plan of action towards sustainable development. For this reason, the UN called on economic entities to work to achieve the SDGs.

Private entrepreneurship, investment and innovation are major drivers of productivity, inclusive economic growth and job creation. We recognise the diversity of the private sector, including microenterprises, cooperatives and multinationals. We call upon all businesses to harness their creativity and innovation to solve sustainable development challenges (United Nations, 2015, p. 33). Businesses must wake up to the reality of the economic, social and environmental challenges facing the world and work individually and together to address them, as "strong and visionary business leadership is essential to achieve the necessary transformation that will drive the inclusive and sustainable economic growth required by the SDGs" (World Business Council for Sustainable Development, n. d., p. 20).

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This requires a new and better way of running companies and managing their resources, since according to the Global Compact (UNGP) (2019), the way business is done is currently changing, and sustainability needs to be placed in the company as a necessity and not as an option. This gives companies greater operational efficiency, profitability, resilience, brand value, access to capital, among others.

In this sense, there are studies that show the situation of the business context in terms of sustainable development. Van der Wall and Thijssens (2019), in their research, have reflected the situation of business participation in the SDGs, analysing the sustainability reports of the 200 largest publicly traded companies in the world, finding that there is limited participation of companies in the fulfilment of the SDGs, which was associated with the size of the company, adherence to the Global Compact and commitment to sustainability.

Pohlmann, Scavarda, Alves and Korzenowsk (2019) analysed the role of the focal company in achieving the SDGs in a Brazilian poultry company, finding that, to comply with the 2030 Agenda, there is a significant need to focus on issues of corporate social responsibility, green supply chain management, industrial ecology, stakeholder theory, circular economy and sustainability science. It is also mentioned that there is progress in terms of corporate adherence to the SDGs, but there is still a need to shift transformation processes towards a sustainable vision.

Meza (2019) also studied the role of companies in the oil and gas sector in achieving the SDGs in Latin America, stating that the company has already identified the SDGs to work on in their organisation, however, it is necessary for them to include the sustainable vision at the corporate level, to be accountable for their results and to engage in sustainable programmes focused on developing new business models. In this context, this document finds its relevance as a research focused on studying sustainable development in companies, since, according to López (2018), "The SDGs present an opportunity to develop and implement solutions and technologies from the business world, which allow them to face the world's greatest challenges in terms of sustainable development".

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Thus, the journey of companies towards sustainability and contribution to the 2030 Agenda, leads them to obtain remarkable benefits such as the optimisation of competitiveness and performance (López, 2018).

Likewise, the subject of the study is maize marketing companies in the municipality of Guasave, Sinaloa, Mexico. In this sense, it is important to mention that Guasave is an eminently agricultural municipality, also known as "the agricultural heart of Mexico", with maize being one of the most representative crops. Therefore, maize trading companies play a fundamental role in the region's economy and food security.

This study seeks to find out about the actions carried out by maize trading companies that contribute to the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. This contributes to creating an overview of the reality of these companies in relation to the world's most important global plan for sustainability.

2. Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 169 targets and 232 indicators (United Nations, 2015), and is characterised as universal, indivisible, civilising, comprehensive and transformative (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2020). The 17 SDGs are:

1. End poverty.
2. Zero hunger.
3. Health and well-being.
4. Quality education.
5. Gender equality.
6. Clean water and sanitation.
7. Affordable and clean energy.
8. Quality education.
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure.
10. Reduction of inequalities.
11. Sustainable cities and communities.
12. Responsible production and consumption.
13. Climate action.
14. Underwater life.
15. Life of terrestrial ecosystems.
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions.
17. Partnerships to achieve the goals.

3. The 5'P's of the 2030 Agenda

The United Nations (2015) explains that the 2030 Agenda is made up of 5 spheres (5'P): people, planet, prosperity and partnerships, which pursue the goal of achieving a better planet, leaving no one behind. The people sphere seeks to eradicate hunger, poverty and inequality, as well as to achieve a dignified life in a healthy environment. The planet sphere works against degradation, climate change, pollution and the extinction of species, while the prosperity sphere seeks economic and social fulfilment, respecting the limits of nature. In this way, the peace sphere works to achieve violence-free and inclusive societies, while the partnership sphere works to bring people and countries around the world together in solidarity to address major global challenges. Each of the above-mentioned spheres is highly relevant and is immersed in the 17 SDGs that make up the 2030 Agenda, as shown in Table 1.

Sphere	ODS
People	ODS 1, ODS 2, ODS 3, ODS 4, ODS 5.
Planet	ODS 6, ODS 12, ODS 13, ODS 14, ODS 15.
Prosperity	ODS 7, ODS 8, ODS 9, ODS 10, ODS 11
Peace	ODS 16
Partnerships	ODS 17

Table 1 5' P of the 2030 Agenda

Source: Prepared by the authors, with information from United Nations 2015

The 5 spheres of the 2030 Agenda are a fundamental element for this article, as they were taken as a basis for the collection and presentation of information, with the intention of achieving a better fit when seeking concordance between the actions implemented by companies and the SDGs, in turn achieving a better understanding.

4. Methodology

This is a deductive, non-experimental, correlational, explanatory and mixed approach research. The 12 maize trading companies in the municipality of Guasave, Sinaloa, Mexico, which have the following characteristics, are taken as the population.

- Located in the municipality of Guasave, Sinaloa.
- Originally from the municipality of Guasave, Sinaloa.

- Small enterprises (with no more than 30 workers).
- Storage capacity of no more than 60,000 tonnes.

Nine of these companies participated, applying one semi-structured interview per company, which was answered by owners, directors or middle management, as these are the people in charge of making decisions regarding the actions that the company will take in terms of sustainability. The interview had a total of 11 questions, which were grouped into 5 sections, responding to the areas of the SDGs: well-being of people, protection of the planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships.

5. Results

To begin with, it is important to mention that only one of the nine companies participating in the interview said they were aware of the 2030 Agenda and could identify how their actions contribute to it; however, this company does not have a specific action plan to contribute to the SDGs. The rest of the companies said they had not heard of the 2030 Agenda, and therefore were not able to identify in the first instance, if their company had actions that contribute to this international agreement.

The interview sought to find out from the representatives of the maize trading companies what actions they take to benefit the community and the environment, in order to classify them in the 5 spheres of the Sustainable Development Goals.

- People sphere
- Planet sphere
- Prosperity sphere
- Partnership Sphere
- Peace Sphere

People sphere

The people sphere is one of the spheres most attended to by the maize trading companies, as they said they were open to supporting the people who come to them. Table 2 shows the responses of the interviewees regarding the actions implemented.

Informant	Actions
Company 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support to fire council – Sponsorship of field trips
Company 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ESR Certification – Peaceful environments within the company – Support for the needs of schools and churches – Financial support to nursing homes, homes for the homeless, red cross and firefighters.
Company 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sponsorship of sports teams and social events
Company 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Financial support to students for congress attendance – Support for social service
Company 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Donation of oxygen tanks – Support to a home
Company 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support to the food bank – Loans to producers – Jobs for people in the region – ESR certification
Company 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Delivery of food to hospitals – Provision of medicines to sick people – Drug prevention talks to young people
Company 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Financial support to Red Cross – Financial support to students for study trips
Company 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support for Red Cross, firefighters and youth integration center – Support for field trips

Table 2 Actions in people's sphere
Source: Own Elaboration

Among the most important actions are the support to organisations such as the old people's home, the firemen's council, the home and the Red Cross; this support is mainly financial and it was found that all the companies help at least one of these institutions. On the other hand, 3 companies expressed that they support young people who request it, with financial contributions that allow them to go on study trips and sporting events. Likewise, two companies work to reduce hunger in the community (SDG 2), as one delivers food to hospitals for the families of sick and poor people and the other is associated with the food bank, acting as a donor and volunteer.

The companies were also concerned about the issue of health (SDG 3), as two companies said they support sick people who cannot afford to buy medicines on their own. Similarly, two companies commented that they focus on drug prevention, one by drug testing their employees and referring them to rehabilitation centres if required, and the other by giving prevention talks to young people.

Planet Sphere

This sphere presents important opportunities for improvement regarding the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the maize trading companies, since the actions implemented are not many, and in addition to this, it was identified that one company stated that it had no actions, while four others only carry out one action in favour of ecosystems. Table #3 shows the contributions of the companies in this area.

Informant	Actions
Company 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness and training for producers in sustainable agriculture. - Training in the correct handling of insecticide container residues - Recycling
Company 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of solar panels - Recycling - Waste management
Company 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recycling
Company 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In-plant cleaning program
Company 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recycling - Reduction of polluting products
Company 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recycling - Sustainable agriculture courses - Solar panels and capacitors - Gas cars
Company 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recommendation of products less harmful to the environment
Company 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recycling
Company 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No actions identified

Table 3 Shares planet
Source: Own Elaboration

In this way, it is important to mention that the most frequent action carried out is the recycling of Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) bottles within the facilities, which were used for the consumption of the company's workers (SDG 12). Another important action is the approach to farmers to raise awareness of sustainable agriculture, through courses, recommendations and the offer of agricultural products with lower environmental impact and training.

Two companies were also identified as implementing actions on energy issues (SDG 7) through the installation of solar panels, one of them also using capacitors and gas-powered cars. It is worth mentioning that none of the companies studied have prepared an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), nor do they have an Environmental Management System (EMS) in place.

In this sense, the participants said that the actions taken in favour of ecosystems are due to the awareness that the planet is experiencing serious environmental problems and are based on empirical knowledge to identify when the company is affecting nature and to take actions to help reduce this impact.

In this context, it is perceived that maize trading companies have great opportunities for improvement in this area, so it is necessary to implement actions to reduce or eliminate negative impacts and enhance positive impacts.

It is important to point out that the larger companies are the ones that are most aware of and work on environmental issues, as they carry out actions inside and outside their facilities, allocating resources to achieve better interaction with the ecosystems on which they have an impact.

Prosperity sphere

The prosperity sphere is also relevant, and maize trading companies contribute in different ways, as shown in Table #3, where the specific actions of these companies to achieve a more prosperous environment are mentioned.

It can be seen that those actions related to economic growth (SDG 8) stand out, such as the offer of formal and well-paid jobs, training and support for producers with financing for equipment and the comparison of inputs, the latter with the aim of making these processes more sustainable, achieving a better harvest and thus a better income for their families.

The companies studied also contribute to improving the sector's grain storage infrastructure (SDG 11) by investing in technology to automate grain collection, storage and shipping operations, which contributes to process efficiency.

Peace sphere

A peaceful environment inside and outside the maize traders is of great importance for their proper functioning (SDG 17), Table #4 shows the actions taken by the companies studied to contribute to creating peaceful environments.

Informant	Actions
Company 1	– Investment in technology – Training for producers
Company 2	– Supply of decent and well-paid jobs
Company 3	– Training of farmers in agricultural technologies for the field
Company 4	– Job offers
Company 5	– Investment in environmentally friendly equipment
Company 6	– Process automation to eliminate waste – Technology investment in silos – Technology training
Company 7	– Fair payment to the producer
Company 8	– Job offers
Company 9	– Supply of formal jobs – Prompt payment to the producer

Table 4 Prosperity actions
Source: Own Elaboration

In this sense, the participants shared that their companies work to promote peace internally, however, only one said that they carry out actions that contribute to creating peaceful environments outside the organisation, stating that they financially support schools in the region to carry out events that promote healthy coexistence.

In this context, it is worth noting that the organisation of social events to promote peace and healthy integration among employees is the most important for the maize traders, as five out of nine participants said that they carry out this type of activity. Another action carried out by 4 out of 9 companies studied is personal and timely attention to employees, expressing openness to listen and provide solutions to problems that could lead to violence, harassment, discrimination, etc.

Similarly, 4 out of 9 companies have a code of ethics and conduct to promote peaceful environments; however, it should be noted that not all of them have it in writing, but rather it is perceived and lived by the employees as values understood as part of the company's day-to-day work.

There are also companies that seek peaceful environments through more formal actions, such as the application of NOM 051, which seeks to identify psychosocial risk factors that could affect the mental health of workers. It is important to note that this is mandatory, however, only two of the companies stated that they meet the requirements of this standard.

There is also one company that stated that it has strategically planned actions to achieve an adequate working environment, such as the complaints and suggestions box and internal climate satisfaction surveys, where employees can anonymously express the company's situation in terms of working environment, in order to identify opportunities for improvement and solve labour relations problems that may arise.

It is important to note that a company was also identified that seeks peace through constant monitoring for the detection of drug use among employees, to subsequently support rehabilitation, in case of detecting workers who are consuming such substances, thus contributing to their peaceful coexistence with their co-workers, families and society. The company also holds regular motivational talks to promote mental health and happiness among its employees.

Partnerships

The maize trading companies present opportunities for improvement in the area of partnerships (SDG 17). This can be seen in the results obtained in the interviews, which are shown in Table #5.

Informant	Actions
Company 1	– Code of ethics and conduct – Attention to staff
Company 2	– Code of ethics – Monitoring and detection of drug use and support for the rehabilitation of employees. – Celebration with employees and family – Motivational talks – Attention to staff
Company 3	– Attention to collaborators – Employee training
Company 4	– Support for social events in schools – Organisation of company meetings and celebrations
Company 5	– Meetings and celebrations with staff
Company 6	– NOM 051 – Complaints box and complaint process for employees – Internal climate satisfaction surveys – Code of ethics
Company 7	– Celebrations among partners
Company 8	– NOM 051 – Attention to employees – Code of ethics
Company 9	– Celebrations among partners

Table 5 Prosperity actions
Source: Own Elaboration

As can be seen in the table above, it was found that 5 out of 9 companies explained that they do not have partnerships with other institutions, organisations or individuals to work for the benefit of sustainability.

The rest of the maize traders reported having alliances, especially with the education sector; in addition, one company reported having alliances with churches to carry out food donation programmes for people with limited resources. In this sense, one company was found to have alliances with institutions such as the Interdisciplinary Research Centre for Integral Regional Development CIIDIR, for the dissemination among farmers of the research results obtained by this institution; likewise, one company stated that it collaborated with the Guasave Food Bank by acting as volunteers.

Observing the contributions of the maize trading companies, it is clear that there is a lot of work to be done, as it is important that they work as a team with the government, private and academic sectors and society in general to carry out high-impact actions that contribute to the SDGs.

6. Discussion

This study sets out the actions carried out by maize trading companies that contribute to the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals and, in this context, it is important to look at the actions present in the business context, identifying what other organisations are doing to contribute to the 2030 Agenda.

In relation to the people sphere, it is found that maize trading companies focus, to a greater extent, on providing financial support to institutions such as old people's homes, homes for the elderly, the Red Cross and firefighters, as well as to people in need, such as the sick and students with limited financial resources. Espinosa (2019), for his part, comments that the company Aura, located in Spain and dedicated to the commercialisation of mineral water, contributes to the well-being of people by guaranteeing access to drinking water for people who do not have this resource.

Meanwhile, Arano (2019), explains that the company Calidad Pascual, dedicated to the food sector in Spain, also carries out actions that contribute to the welfare of people, as it has various projects aimed at this purpose, among which are programmes focused on promoting sport, entrepreneurship, access to water, the supply of products with high nutritional value and the creation of healthy eating styles.

Mejide (2019) states that Suez is a Spanish company that offers water treatment services, and its actions to contribute to the SDGs are aimed at offering preferential rates to vulnerable people, promoting employment for women and people with disabilities, as well as promoting innovative entrepreneurship.

It can be seen that Aura, Calidad Pascual and Suez are working to contribute to the SDGs, carrying out actions that are directly related to their main activity, in this sense, it is necessary that the maize trading companies also do so, carrying out actions to benefit people, with a focus on food and maize, going beyond the economic contribution.

On the other hand, in terms of the planet, the trading companies are working on actions focused mainly on recycling and training producers in sustainable agriculture. In this context, Suez is working on actions in favour of the environment, such as reducing energy and water consumption, transforming its operations towards a circular economy, raising awareness of environmental care, and preserving biodiversity in its facilities (Mejide, 2019),

Similarly, Calidad Pascual implements an efficient livestock production model, as well as programmes to reduce the carbon footprint, the environmental impact of supplier farms and the protection of ecosystems (Arano, 2019). Likewise, Aura focuses on working with recycled and recyclable PET and promoting circular economy programmes (Espinosa, 2019).

It is important to mention that maize traders present important opportunities for improvement, due to the limited actions carried out in this field. These companies should analyse their environmental impact carefully and, based on the results, create and implement action plans to counteract the direct impacts and externalities detected.

Turning to the prosperity sphere, maize trading companies work in important ways as their operations enable investment in more efficient technologies for operation, training of farmers in field technology and generation of formal jobs, the latter being one of the most important contributions of these types of companies to the economic prosperity of the region.

Aura's contributions to prosperity lie in the impact they have by offering formal jobs and bringing water to crops and homes in vulnerable areas, reducing the inequalities that come with not having access to sanitation and thus achieving a better quality of life (Espinosa, 2019). On the other hand, Calidad Pascual's actions in relation to the SDGs are based on the offer of formal jobs with opportunities for women and people with disabilities, as well as programmes to support entrepreneurship and sustainable construction projects.

Similarly, Suez works for the prosperity of its region by guaranteeing access to water for vulnerable people, offering secure jobs and implementing inclusive work, as well as investing in innovation and development to improve people's quality of life.

It is noted that the provision of employment, due to the nature of a company's operations, is a common contribution of the organisations mentioned above, however, the maize traders do not have a strong inclination towards safe and inclusive employment, as is the case with Suez and Calidad Pascual, who emphasise their focus in this area. It should be noted that all the companies presented actions to promote prosperity, responding to their operations and business models.

In the peace sphere, maize traders have focused on internal actions, with the aim of creating a good environment and culture in the company. Among the most common actions are the creation of codes of ethics, informal meetings and celebrations to encourage healthy coexistence, as well as attention and support to staff to resolve non-conformities in their work environment.

In this context, Calidad Pascual does not present actions with a direct impact on SDG 16 focused on peace, however, it has the Great Place to Work distinction (Arano, 2019). For its part, Aura argues that its contribution of water to vulnerable areas helps to create inclusive, effective and responsible institutions (Espinosa, 2019), while Suez does not mention actions directly focused on promoting peace, however, its work aimed at bringing water to vulnerable areas can contribute to this end (Mejide, 2019).

In this way, it can be seen that Calidad Pascual and the maize traders are focused on achieving peaceful environments within the organisation, while Suez and Aura work more on external impact. It is worth mentioning that there are opportunities for improvement in the area of peace in the four aforementioned companies, so increasing efforts in this area could have a major impact on the internal and external environments of these organisations.

Finally, in the area of alliances, a few of the maize traders reported having partnerships mainly with chambers of commerce and working together on some projects with universities; however, most of these companies reported not having alliances. Espinosa (2019) states that Aura works together with 10 organisations, including non-profit entities and companies, to bring water to areas in need, with partnerships being a fundamental element in achieving the company's purpose.

Arano (2019) states that Calidad Pascual has agreements with four non-profit organisations to carry out its programmes to support entrepreneurship, innovation and the promotion of values. Mejide (2019) shares that Suez maintains DISS (Digital, Innovation, Sustainable, Social) alliances to promote digital and social development, innovation and sustainability, which has been of great importance in achieving the company's objectives.

Strategic alliances are key for companies to increase their impact for the benefit of sustainable development. Arano, Suez and Calidad Pascual have managed to understand this reality and work accordingly, being aware of the importance of working as a team with the different actors in society.

However, maize trading companies need to take the next step and seek to broaden the impact of their actions through alliances, taking advantage of intellectual and economic resources from inside and outside their organisation, so that progress in sustainable development increases and benefits more people, so that no one is left behind.

7. Conclusions

The 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs are the hope for a world with better opportunities, environmental conditions and a better quality of life for all, without distinction. For this reason, all social sectors must act to achieve them, highlighting the importance of the role of business.

However, seven years after the launch of the SDGs, while some companies are born and others lead with vision in the 2030 Agenda, implementing the SDGs from their *raison d'être*, or from their strategic planning, others are alien to the sense of commitment to this Agenda and to sustainability.

This study shows that maize trading companies do have some actions that contribute to sustainable development, especially in the sphere of people and prosperity, because thanks to the nature of their operations they have the opportunity to provide jobs and participate in the development of the region due to the direct contact with the farmer. However, all actions in these and the rest of the spheres are carried out in an arbitrary manner since, not being aware of the 2030 Agenda, they do not execute actions specifically targeted and planned to achieve its fulfilment.

Ignorance of the 2030 Agenda can put maize trading companies and their region at a disadvantage, as this can limit the benefits they can achieve by implementing the SDGs. It should also be noted that, although the people and prosperity spheres had the highest number of actions that contribute to the SDGs (although not consciously), there is still much work to be done, especially in those aspects related to SDG 2 on zero hunger, since working with one of the most important grains for Mexican food opens up a wide range of opportunities to contribute to sustainable development, which must be identified and addressed.

The areas of peace, partnerships and planet show fewer actions that contribute to the SDGs, so it is vital to focus efforts on creating more and better strategies that contribute to these goals. It is considered necessary for maize trading companies to be aware of the 2030 Agenda and, in turn, for their internal and external stakeholders to become demanding in terms of their performance and contribution to the SDGs.

8. Recommendations

Based on the information obtained in this study, the following recommendations are proposed to maize trading companies:

- Raise awareness of, train and educate on Agenda 2030 issues at all levels of the organisation.
- Include the 2030 Agenda in the entire strategic planning process, creating plans, programmes and projects focused on meeting the SDGs.
- Include the SDGs in the organisational culture.
- Create strategic alliances to launch projects with all sectors of society to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.
- Place special emphasis on creating projects focused on ending hunger in its area of influence, offering safe and nutritious grains, participating in food security in the region, as well as achieving sustainable agriculture.
- Participate in projects to promote peace in the external context of the company, with a special focus on the prevention and elimination of drug use.
- Pay close attention to the environmental sphere, starting with an environmental impact analysis.
- Invest in clean technologies.
- Replace the use of chemicals used in grain storage processes with environmentally friendly methods or products.

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