The pandemic arrived without regret, making its way through all nations, not respecting any of the distinctions that we humans have created, jeopardizing our normal way of life, disrupting logistics chains and entire markets.

This unexpected situation however, has also given us a lot of time to think, and we ask ourselves questions like, why does the food we buy come from the other side of the world if there is also land here? Is it necessary to use huge amounts of toxic chemicals to produce food? How is it possible that thousands of tons of food are wasted per year and at the same time there are millions of people suffering from hunger?

While we ask ourselves these questions, difficult in all respects to answer, we finish having a cup of roasted coffee, which is proudly cultivated in the foothills of our city, 15 km from our position; We put on our coveralls and prepare to work in our 160 m² aquaponic unit, where we produce 2 tons of Red Tilapia and 4.5 tons of various vegetables each year.

According to FAO, aquaponics is a production technique that allows using 80% less water per unit of land compared to traditional agriculture, which can be developed anywhere in the world, it does not use any toxic chemicals for the production processes and also contributes to the reduction of GHG emissions, since the products are local and it is not necessary to transport them thousands of kilometers.

If aquaponics is not the answer, then what is?
By Witiman Andrés Canacue Ortiz
As if that were not enough, it boosts the local economy, since we can pay four employees who judiciously collaborate with us selling products in organic markets in the city and support us in creating a Marketplace that will allow us to offer our services throughout Latin America, so that our model be replicated in other territories.

Early in the morning, before breakfast we have carefully packed in baskets the products that we will send to our clients at home, thus preventing them from leaving their homes and exposing themselves to the virus. They very kindly receive their vegetables and fish, they thank us for providing them with health and sustainability, which will make them stronger when facing contagions of any kind, and they prepare to prepare tasty Colombian recipes: baked fish with stew of tomatoes or a juicy mojarra dipped in lemon and served with green plantain patacones.

On the other hand, aquaponics is a tool that allows connection between communities and deep changes in the consumption patterns of society; these days, we have installed 5 production units in different sectors of the city. Now it will be the families who grow and harvest their own food. We, delighted, train them, teach them to plant their lettuces, chilies, cucumbers, peppers, watercress, aubergines, mints and other vegetables in small nurseries built with plastic trays, to monitor the growth of their fish and to prepare delicious recipes when they have their first harvests.

Faced with this unexpected event, we are learning about what it means to be human, and to discern about what things serve us and what we should discard, which leads us to reflect on something else: in a world where consumption patterns will become more responsible and food globalization will yield until local production prevails again, if aquaponics is not the answer, then what is?