



FAIR TRADE CERTIFIED™

FAIR TRADE COFFEE COOPERATIVE PROFILE

# MEXICO



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## FAIR TRADE COFFEE COOPERATIVE PROFILE

# CEPCO, México



### About the Co-op

**Date Established:** 1989

**Number of Members:** 16,000

**Annual Production:** 100 containers

### About the Coffee

**Varieties:** Typica, Bourbon, Mundo Novo

**Elevation:** 1,500m - 1,800m

**Processing:** European, sun drying

**Bean Characteristics:** Emerald green, screen over #17

**Cup Characteristics:** Soft and balanced

**Harvest/Export Season:** December - March

**Organic Production:** 80%

**Organic Certification Agency:** OCIA, Naturland, Certimex

The Oaxacan State Coffee Producers Network, CEPCO, emerged in 1989 when the Mexican coffee industry was in crisis. Coffee prices were so low that many small-scale farming families could not survive. In response, 16,000 farmers throughout Oaxaca, including Mazateca, Mixteca, Papaloapan, Sierra Norte, Istmo, Costa and Sierra Sur indigenous communities, each with less than 5 hectares of farmland, came together to address the crisis collectively. They created CEPCO to bypass local middlemen and export their coffee directly. They now sell much of their coffee to the Fair Trade market and are guaranteed a price that will support the co-op's member families.

CEPCO uses the premiums from Fair Trade coffee to sponsor programs in the community, including:

- A microcredit project and a credit union
- A women's organization initiative
- A life insurance program
- A rural development project
- Purchase of village warehouses, trucks, and scales
- Technical assistance for improvement in coffee quality and yield

CEPCO is currently undertaking a major initiative to promote organic coffee. With the help of academic institutions and environmental NGOs, CEPCO is participating in the Mexican Civil Council for Sustainable Coffee, enhancing the long-term environmental sustainability of their farming.



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## FAIR TRADE COFFEE COOPERATIVE PROFILE

# Huatusco, México



### About the Co-op

**Date Established:** 1992

**Number of Members:** 1,908

**Annual Production:** 200 containers

### About the Coffee

**Varieties:** Typica, Mundo Novo, Bourbon, Caturra, Garnica

**Elevation:** 900m - 1200m

**Processing:** Wet processing, sun drying

**Cup Characteristics:** Fine body, good aroma, high acidity

**Harvest/Export Season:** Oct-March, Dec-May

**Organic Production:** 3%

**Organic Certification Agency:** OCIA

After experiencing several failed governmental projects aimed at assisting coffee producers in Huatusco, the Union Regional de Pequeños Productores de Cafe decided to take matters into their own hands and established a cooperative in 1992. They now have 1,908 official members, 463 of whom are women.

In 1995, the co-op began selling some of their coffee at Fair Trade prices. They are now hoping to increase their share of this important market as the benefits have been immediate. Fair Trade has contributed to a number of substantial improvements in their communities, such as:

- Building education facilities in rural areas
- Building regional health centers for several villages
- Improving roads
- Building sports centers for children

In addition to the support the co-op gives to its member families, the organization generates 60 full-time jobs and 200 part-time jobs. Representatives meet regularly in a regional coffee congress to develop and implement projects that benefit the whole community, including:

- Expanding processing plants to reduce water consumption and pollution
- Reducing fuel and energy use
- Diversifying their crops and replacing coffee plants in areas not suit able for coffee with corn, beans and flowers

Improving the overall quality of their coffee Huatusco is teaching their farmers to use more environmentally friendly techniques such as the use of organic fertilizers. The co-op is currently implementing a program to increase the proportion of coffee and number of producers that are organically certified.



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## FAIR TRADE COFFEE COOPERATIVE PROFILE

# Ismam, México



### About the Co-op

**Date Established:** 1985

**Number of Members:** 1,500

**Annual Production:** 180 containers

### About the Coffee

**Varieties:** Typica, Bourbon

**Elevation:** 800m - 1600m

**Processing:** Wet processing, sun drying

**Cup Characteristics:** Medium body and acidity, delicate flavor with sweet undertones

**Harvest/Export Season:** December - April

**Organic Production:** 100%

**Organic Certification Agency:** OCIA, Naturland

In 1985, the Catholic diocese from Sierra Madre de Chiapas, Mexico hosted a conference of small farmers from more than 100 rural communities. These Mayan farmers formed the co-op ISMAM in an effort to take control of their livelihoods by addressing their common needs for technical assistance, processing equipment, and improved market access. Today, approximately 8,000 family members benefit from the organization's existence.

Since its inception, ISMAM has strived to make coffee farming an environmentally-friendly, profitable pursuit for its members. One hundred percent of ISMAM's coffee is produced using traditional, organic farming methods.

With proceeds from sales to the US and Europe through the Fair Trade market, co-op members have experienced the following benefits:

- Reduced migration rates and increased stability. Higher incomes for farmers allow families to stay together, thereby helping to preserve indigenous culture and local traditions
- Technical assistance and training. Four agronomists and thirty-five promoters assist with a project designed to maintain the quality of the coffee, respect the environment, and promote crop diversification
- Sponsorship of women's groups and encouragement of women to participate in leadership positions
- Financing before the harvest. The cooperative is able to provide guaranteed prices before the coffee is harvested, thereby reducing the crushing anxiety that is a fact of life for most small farmers
- Improved educational opportunities. All co-op members are now sending their children to elementary school, and some to high school

*"The more Fair Trade coffee we sell, the more stability we have in our community and the less people are forced to migrate."*

Jorge Aguilar, Director of Marketing and Sales for ISMAM



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## FAIR TRADE COFFEE COOPERATIVE PROFILE

# La Trinidad, México



### About the Co-op

**Date Established:** 1998

**Number of Members:** 250

**Annual Production:** 10 containers

### About the Coffee

**Varieties:** Typica

**Elevation:** 1,200m

**Processing:** Sun drying

**Bean Characteristics:** Emerald green, screen over #17

**Cup Characteristics:** Medium-high acidity, fine body

**Harvest/Export Season:** December - May

**Organic Production:** 80%

**Organic Certification Agency:** OCIA

Two years after farmers established La Trinidad in 1998, the co-op began selling its coffee to the Fair Trade market. Members have seen their income increase dramatically and have already used Fair Trade premiums to improve their coffee production techniques. To date, the co-op has:

- Improved its processing plants and washing tanks
- Started a tree nursery to renew its coffee plants
- Established a savings program so farmers can get loans to invest in their farms

Members of La Trinidad hope that with a few more years of selling to the Fair Trade market, they will be able to implement social, educational and health programs for the community as a whole. They are also planning to use Fair Trade premiums to diversify their crops so they are not reliant on a single crop for their income.

Approximately 80% of La Trinidad's coffee is organic, and the co-op has funded technical training for technicians to supervise and implement organic practices.

*"The farmers of La Trinidad are motivated to produce high quality coffee because they are being paid a fair price."*

Jorge Cuevas, Rain Forest Trading



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## Productores Orgánicos de la Sierra, México



### About the Co-op

**Date Established:** 1995

**Number of Members:** 275

**Annual Production:** 44 containers

### About the Coffee

**Varieties:** Bourbon, Typica, Caturra

**Elevation:** 1,200m - 1,800m

**Processing:** Wet processing, sun drying

**Bean Characteristics:** Emerald green, screen over #17

**Cup Characteristics:** Medium-high acidity, fine body

**Harvest/Export Season:** Nov-Mar/  
Jan-July

**Organic Production:** 29 Containers

**Organic Certification Agency:**  
Naturland, OCIA

POSI (Productores Orgánicos de la Sierra) is a coffee cooperative representing 28 communities and 275 families of the Motozintla and Siltepec regions of Chiapas, Mexico. In 1988, the church began searching for a solution to the numerous problems facing the community's coffee producing families -- such as high production costs, lack of technical assistance, low coffee prices, and deteriorating natural resources. In response, the region's coffee growers informally established the cooperative POSI. In 1995 the cooperative was legally founded and shortly thereafter became Fair Trade Certified.

The members of POSI are dedicated to applying ecological production practices in order to preserve their remaining natural resources and to raise consciousness in their neighboring communities. The cooperative is gradually increasing the percentage of its organically certified coffee, and by 2003, 100% of its coffee will be Certified Organic.

Fair Trade revenues have been used to:

- Fund technical assistance and quality improvements in organic agriculture for sustainable coffee production
- Diversify crops to establish food security
- Provide members with economic support in the case of a medical emergency
- Improve wet processing facilities by purchasing tanks and de-pulping machines
- Enable co-op members to provide their children with an opportunity to receive higher education
- Purchase three vehicles for transporting the organization's representatives

*"With the premium I receive from Fair Trade, I am able to provide for my children and improve my home. Now I do not owe any money to the coyote or the money lender, and I have begun to grow a wide variety of crops."*

Gustavo Velázquez López, POSI Member



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## Unión de Ejidos San Fernando, México



### About the Co-op

**Date Established:** 1984

**Number of Members:** 1400

**Annual Production:** 52 containers

### About the Coffee

**Varieties:** Typica, Bourbon, Mundo Novo

**Elevation:** 900m - 1,600m

**Processing:** Wet processing, Sun drying

**Bean Characteristics:** Green-bronze color

**Cup Characteristics:** Good acidity, good body

**Harvest/Export Season:** Nov-Mar/  
Feb-April/Feb-Sept

**Organic Production:** 80%

**Organic Certification Agency:**  
Certimex, Naturland, Imo Control

Founded in 1984, the Unión de Ejidos San Fernando is an association of farmers of the Zoque and Zetil indigenous groups in the San Fernando and Ocozocoautla municipalities of central Chiapas.

The co-op provides technical assistance in organic farming methods. Currently, at least 75% of its members are organically certified and implement soil conservation techniques.

San Fernando's social programs include:

- An organic vegetable and medicinal plant production project run by 19 groups made up of 400 women who farm to feed their families and to earn extra income
- Technical training for members provided by a team of 15 experts
- A community grocery store which supplies to over 30 communities
- Youth lodging to enable students to continue their studies through high school and university levels far away from home
- Savings and credit programs for farmers
- Home building and improvement programs for co-op members

The union exports to the Fair Trade markets in Europe, Japan and the US.

*"We are glad to have this opportunity. Otherwise we would have no alternative but to stay home and cultivate the soil. After this, I want to continue studying agronomy or accounts so I can come back and help my people."*

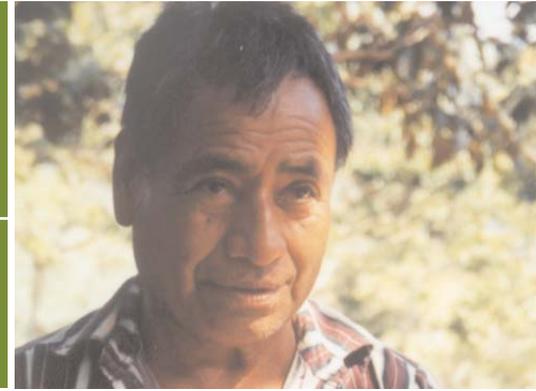
A member's child, Unión de Ejidos San Fernando



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# Unión Majomut, México



### About the Co-op

**Date Established:** 1983

**Number of Members:** 1,500

**Annual Production:** 40 containers

### About the Coffee

**Varieties:** Typica

**Elevation:** 1,000m - 1,700m

**Processing:** Wet processing, Sun drying

**Bean Characteristics:** HG, SHG

**Cup Characteristics:** Good acidity, good body

**Harvest/Export Season:** Nov-Mar/  
Dec-Jul

**Organic Production:** 80%

**Organic Certification Agency:**  
Certimex, Naturland, FVO, Imo Control,  
Bio Suisse

In 1992, Unión Majomut became Fair Trade Certified. Unión Majomut is a coffee cooperative comprised of 1,500 producers in 29 communities in the highlands of Chiapas.

With a strong commitment to sustainable farming, Majomut provides technical training and assistance in organic production for its farmers. The 10-member technical assistance staff includes three agronomists, two bilingual agricultural technicians, managers, accountants, anthropologists, and computer and communication specialists.

Majomut offers its members other services, including:

- Training 28 women's groups in organic coffee production, chicken farming, food safety and health care
- Education about the issues of small-scale coffee production through investment in their local coffee museum and café in San Cristóbal de las Casas
- Access to their own small coffee roasting and milling operation in order to sell ground coffee to the local market
- A microbank available to members

Majomut exports to Europe, Japan, and the US.

*“Fair Trade means a relationship between a consumer who will receive a product of excellent quality and a producer who gets a fair price for it. We will all do our best to deliver a product of the best quality but we have something in addition to quality which no other seller can offer to the consumer- the chance to develop communities through supporting farmer-owned organizations and to care for the environment through the purchase of organic coffee.”*

Victor Perezgróvas, Export Manager, Majomut