

The Jamao Coffee in the Dominican Republic

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Abstract

The overall objective of the project was to promote the improvement of living conditions of the local population by supporting sustainable social and economic development processes in the Salcedo Province. Thus, the purpose was to increase family income by increasing coffee selling prices and strengthening organizational, productive, and commercial capacities of small local agricultural firms (COSCAFE and small associations of coffee producers).

The groups that have been directly and positively affected by the project (over 100 people) were the producers of the Coscafé association and the producers that are not members, but use the services offered by Coscafé; pickers who don't belong to coffee producers families (often Haitians); and members of Juntas de Vecinos (organized neighbors groups), who carry out the final hand cleaning of the coffee before export.

The ultimate beneficiaries of this project were all the members of coffee producers families, who were able to benefit from a higher income by selling the coffee in markets, where there is an emphasis on quality, and who were able to take part in the production process, thus reducing their underemployed and unemployed status.

The activities that have been carried out are: training of members and workers of coffee producers associations; rehabilitation of coffee processing structures in the farthest areas (structures for drying, storage, and waste/water treatment); training on physical and organoleptic quality control; training, technical assistance, and experience exchange, at national and international levels, on coffee production increase, harvest, and post-harvest treatment; creation of demonstrative parcels examples for quality coffee production; re-forestation, with fruit trees, of coffee production areas at high risk of erosion; training of Coscafé and Asocain members by means of exchange visits, at the local and international level, on management and marketing; and local and international commercial promotion.

Thus, the project's activities are centered on the product quality, because it is the only way in which it is possible to help Dominican small farmers in accessing new national and international commercial channels and for obtaining a higher price.

For more than 100 small and medium producers involved in the project, for their families and communities, to invest on quality has meant and means an alternative to poverty, acquisition of technical and commercial knowledge, and optimization of their own natural resources management.

The intervention in Salcedo has promoted the creation of a producers' consortium (Coscafé), which has allowed a 360% income increase per producer in five years, with a progressive increase of the number of participating producers. The certified organic production of Coscafé has increasing shares of export with international importers as "green coffee"; some shares are roasted and distributed in Europe by Caffè River of Arezzo under the "Caffè Jamao" brand, through the fair trade channel.

Coffee plantations have also been valorized by creating responsible tourist paths named "Ruta del Café" (Route of the Coffee). 'Ruta del Café' is not only a tourist itinerary, but also a program for local cultural identity protection and its purpose is to valorize the local cultural and environmental heritage by making activities, which raise awareness about environment protection for children and families, as well as the promotion of typical products and craftworks.

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