

# PRODUCER PROFILE



**NAME:** Cooperativa Cafetalera Capucas Limitada /

**COCAFAL**

**PRODUCTS:** Coffee

**COUNTRY:** Honduras

FLO ID 19080

Fairtrade certified since 2009

Number of members 359



## INTRODUCTION

In 1999, Omar Rodriguez Interiano, a coffee farmer from the community of Capucas, wanted to share his knowledge about growing and successfully marketing coffee with local farmers. Together, they founded the Cooperativa Cafetalera Capucas Limitada (COCAFAL). Over the years more small farmers joined in the COCAFAL mission which continues to grow.

COCAFAL represents 12 rural communities from the region of Copán in western Honduras. The farmers live in the buffer zone around the Celaque National Park where you can find the country's highest mountain and miles of rare cloud forest. COCAFAL members must farm with sensitivity to the ecosystem so their coffee is around 65% organic, and they're working on converting the rest. In 2016 COCAFAL won "Small Producer Organization of the Year" at the International Fairtrade Awards. This award celebrates small producer groups who have excelled in production, sustained markets and met consumer demands to enhance their communities' livelihoods.

The organization promotes the sustainable development of their local economy through financial, technical and marketing services for members and their families. Poverty is reducing and living standards have improved in recent years, benefitting more than 2,500 people.



**Local infrastructure** As you can see above, COCAFAL works in beautiful, but often isolated, rural areas around Copán in western Honduras. In collaboration with local organizations, the cooperative has developed more infrastructure to reach these communities. It has helped to provide rubbish collection services and repair the local medical centre. ©COCAFAL

## COFFEE GROWING, PROCESSING AND EXPORT

Members are dedicated to growing sustainable 100% organic and Fairtrade coffees. As a result, COCAFAL members produce outstanding gourmet coffee, recognized as among the best specialty coffees grown in Honduras. They also collaborated with the Peace Corp to develop knowledge in dry or 'natural' coffee processing. The cooperative has installed an excellent system for wet processing, new drying machines and a fully equipped cupping laboratory so they can sample their roasted coffee. The cooperative has a good relationship with traders who will often visit farmers, cup and buy lots directly from farmers.

## COFFEE PROFILE

**Altitude** 1,400 – 1,600m

**Smallholders** Less than 5 hectares on average

**Total area of production** 1,622 ha

**Growing practices** 65% organic

**Coffee variety** Arabica: Catuai, Caturra, Borbón, Villa Sarche, Lempira, IHCAFE 90

**Coffee quality** SHG, HG: rich, smooth, fruity

**Harvest** January – April

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## BENEFITS OF FAIRTRADE

COCAFAL's General Assembly has 10 members, nine of whom are women. The General Assembly consults members about use of the Fairtrade Premium and is responsible for managing selected projects.

### Social and health

The Fairtrade Premium was invested in a community library. This provides a space for adults and children. The library has 11 computers with printers, and hosts IT training and a homework club for children. COCAFAL have invested in a sports programme for children and the upkeep of a football pitch. COCAFAL use the Fairtrade Premium to support the local health centre. They pay the monthly salary of a doctor to ensure the community always has access to health services.

### Economic

COCAFAL collaborates with local organizations to support over 200 of the poorest families in the region to build organic kitchen gardens. This enables families to grow nutritious food for the family all year round, especially outside of the coffee harvest during *los meses flacos* (lean months) when money is tight. COCAFAL is improving working conditions for everyone involved in the cooperative. Over the years, they have been able to pay a better salary to all workers.

### Quality and productivity

COCAFAL have set up a certification department to support members with training on how to maintain and increase participation in Fairtrade. COCAFAL have a lab to develop organic fertilisers in order to support the nutrition of ecological farms, and a scheme for investing in shade trees (see right).

### Women

COCAFAL are supporting a group of women to become coffee experts. COCAFAL uses the Fairtrade Premium to support rural credit groups for women. These small loans are being invested in diversifying income with beekeeping and sustainable tourism projects.

### Challenges

- In the area, the road and electrical infrastructure can be poor.
- The cooperative lacks access to expertise in coffee, both in production and commercialization.

## CONTACT:

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Children of members who benefit from COCAFAL's investment in rural schools. ©COCAFAL

**Education** The COCAFAL community had a shortage of teachers which was jeopardizing the future of the local school. They used the Fairtrade Premium to hire an additional teacher so their children wouldn't have to travel for hours each day to reach the next school. COCAFAL are developing a strategy to support young people with scholarships so they can get higher qualifications. The Fairtrade Premium is also used to hold training sessions in IT, the environment, certification and other social themes.



COCAFAL tree nursery ©Oiko Credit

**Environment** The seedlings of different tree species are sold at cost-price to members so they can diversify their farms, increase quality with shade-grown techniques, and protect indigenous bird and plant species. They have also launched a project for rubbish collection and tree nurseries in rural communities with Fairtrade Premium funds. The cooperative has donated trees to local schools so they can reforest protected areas.

