



COFFEE KIDS
GROUNDS FOR HOPE

ADESPA Case Study Paraxaj, Guatemala



ADESPA's support is helping to not only improve literacy among women and men in Paraxaj, but also encourage local entrepreneurship.

ADESPA – Association for Sustainable Development of Paraxaj

Paraxaj, Guatemala, is home to a group of 125 families living on a coffee plantation. In 2004, a group of six local volunteers created The Association for Sustainable Development of Paraxaj (ADESPA) to address the lack of health and educational services in Paraxaj and the surrounding area. ADESPA became a Coffee Kids partner in 2006.

Life in Guatemala

The people of Paraxaj live in conditions of social marginalization and geographic isolation. The majority cannot read or write, and their worldview is limited by a lack of education and available resources. The region confronts a high infant mortality rate and death during childbirth is common; given the lack of outside information, many believe this is normal and acceptable.

The lack of economic resources has created a strong dependence on the coffee crop and has prevented the community from having much hope or vision for improving their quality of life.

Coffee Kids and ADESPA

ADESPA's overall goal is to improve socio-economic conditions in Paraxaj through education. ADESPA offers adult literacy classes to community members, helping stimulate curiosity and self-esteem, and leading to greater awareness of their rights and economic options.

This year, ADESPA developed a technical training program to teach participants hands-on business skills. As part of the program, Coffee Kids financed a bakery project to teach business skills and provide the community with quality bread twice a week. The project also generated local employment and income for the participants and provided them with experience managing a small business.

2008 Results

- Over the past year, ADESPA has gradually modified the literacy project, converting it to a vocational school incorporating training in baking, construction and handicrafts.
- Twenty adults currently participate in ADESPA's improved literacy program.
- ADESPA's bakery training was attended by 34 participants, including 23 women.
- Eight participants (six women and two men) from the group now run the bakery, which they named *Kiniyen* meaning 'prosperity' in a local indigenous dialect.
- The group sells their baked goods in the community for a lower price than outside competitors and has a profit margin of 10-15%.
- ADESPA is developing a handicrafts project with its own resources. Participants are learning to create wide belts made of beads and used by women throughout Guatemala.