



### **AUGE - Self Managed Development**

Based in the state of Veracruz, Mexico, Self Managed Development (AUGE) works with coffee-growing communities to develop programs that combat poverty in some of the poorest areas of Veracruz.

Over the past 13 years, the Coffee Kids/AUGE partnership has promoted an interest in personal entrepreneurship and created a culture of saving in the communities served. This partnership reached new levels of collaboration, including the construction of an educational center, which is used for training in microcredit and saving methodologies, medicinal plant usage, and youth programs.

### **Life in Mexico**

Each year, a mass migration occurs in small towns throughout Veracruz as fathers and sons – sometimes entire families – are recruited to nearby coffee regions to harvest coffee.

Living in temporary migrant camps, children miss up to three months of school. The families rely on this annual journey for their income and often have difficulty surviving one year to the next given the meager earnings. As a result, families have little to spend on health care or higher education. Given the scarce resources, few families look to save money or even try to access credit.

### **Coffee Kids and AUGE**

In 1995, Coffee Kids helped create AUGE and the Groups of Women Saving in Solidarity Project (GMAS), a women's savings program that promotes savings accounts, and a microcredit program that provides access to small, low-interest loans.

As emigration in search of work increases, many women become heads of their households for the first time. In addition to their domestic responsibilities, they have the added responsibilities of being the sole breadwinner in their homes.

GMAS savings groups promote savings accounts and microcredit as a way of alleviating dependence on income from coffee. The program also builds solidarity among community members, increases gender awareness and helps families meet immediate needs.



*AUGE's medicinal plant program is providing another outlet for income generation and diversification of local economies.*

### **2008 Results**

- Over 1,857 women and 567 men have formed 84 savings groups since 1995.
- Savings groups were organized by children with 452 children in 13 groups.
- The savings groups have accumulated a total of more than \$750,000 USD.
- Monthly training sessions were held for volunteer leaders of the microcredit groups to develop leadership and management skills.
- AUGE participated in an exchange with fellow Coffee Kids partner, FomCafé, and shared their experience and expertise on the use of medicinal plants.