



**Iniciativa FomCafé - Fostering Community Initiatives in Coffee Regions**

Fostering Community Initiatives in Coffee Regions (FomCafé) works with coffee-growing communities in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. Coffee Kids has supported FomCafé since 2000. In that time, FomCafé has created and implemented projects in edible mushroom production, microcredit and savings groups, family gardens, organic honey production and health care.

**Life in Mexico**

The communities where FomCafé works confront poverty, inadequate access to health care and education, and geographic isolation. As in many Latin American countries, women in these communities lack opportunities to develop organizational and entrepreneurial skills. Once given the chance to create and implement small community development projects, they excel; but the women's groups require ongoing support and a safe environment in which to develop their skills and share their struggles, doubts and successes.

**Coffee Kids and FomCafé**

Coffee Kids provides support to FomCafé for expanding and strengthening three ongoing projects: edible mushroom production, family gardens, and microcredit and savings groups.

The edible mushroom project alleviates poverty and hunger by providing a nutritious food, which can be sold to supplement family income. The project utilizes waste from local corn, bean and wheat harvests to serve as the base in which the mushrooms are grown. Once the mushrooms are harvested, this material can be used as a soil conditioner.

The family garden project minimizes the effects of poverty and hunger by diversifying diets with fresh, organic fruits and vegetables. The produce provides an alternative source of income for those who can sell their surplus in the local market.

Microcredit and savings groups allow primarily women participants to pool their resources and help each other start or expand small businesses with small, low-interest loans. Also, loans are made in special circumstances to pay for medical expenses and other emergencies.



*FomCafé's organic gardening project is helping local families confront the food crisis affecting families worldwide.*

**2008 Results**

- Two new modules for edible mushroom production were built in the communities of San Juan Teponaxtla and Buena Vista, bringing 11 new families to the project.
- A total of 12 modules have been built and are being supervised by FomCafé with more than 75 people actively involved in the mushroom project.
- Two communities that have been working with the mushroom project since 2005 leveled and repaired their mushroom modules.
- A family garden project was established by 16 families in the community of La Muralla. They received training on organic gardening and had their first crop in less than three months.
- One new microcredit group of 13 women received training in the elaboration and revision of statutes and financial planning. FomCafé provides support for seven other groups (119 participants) as well.
- FomCafé participated in an exchange with AUGE, a Coffee Kids partner in Veracruz, Mexico, to learn about the use of medicinal plants.