



COFFEE KIDS
GROUNDS FOR HOPE

SOPPEXCCA Case Study Jinotega, Nicaragua



Students in SOPPEXCCA's 'Muchachitos del Café' program show off their workbooks.

SOPPEXCCA – Society of Small Producers for Coffee Export

The Society of Small Producers for Coffee Export (SOPPEXCCA) is an association of coffee cooperatives representing 650 farmers in Jinotega, Nicaragua. The association has established two projects: *Jóvenes Ambientalistas* (Environmental Youth Movement) works with adolescents and *Muchachitos del Café* (Coffee Children) serves young children in rural schools.

Life in Nicaragua

The formal education system in Nicaragua does little to encourage active participation, individual decision-making or leadership in students. This is especially true in poor rural areas.

In response, SOPPEXCCA created youth projects to provide educational opportunities for their children and promote essential concepts, such as personal expression, teamwork, leadership and social awareness.

Coffee Kids and SOPPEXCCA

Coffee Kids began working with SOPPEXCCA in 2006, supporting their *Muchachitos del Café* project. In 2007 Coffee Kids expanded its support to include the *Jóvenes Ambientalistas*. The goal of these projects is to nurture a new generation with the education, confidence and leadership skills to improve their own quality of life and that of their community. SOPPEXCCA also hopes to protect the local environment and natural resources through community education. Project participants learn about democratic processes, work together to identify local environmental issues and carry out environmental educational campaigns in their communities.

2008 Results

- SOPPEXCCA's *Muchachitos del Café* project worked with 545 children in five schools.
- Cultural courses to reinforce cultural identity were attended by 106 children (14 in music, 12 in traditional dances and 80 in painting).
- Children in each participating school carried out democratic elections to choose group representatives.
- SOPPEXCCA's *Jóvenes Ambientalistas* project worked with 180 young people providing workshops on organizational administration, youth leadership, communication techniques, gender issues and environmental awareness.