



The Chajulense Association of Women United for Life (ACMUV)

ACMUV was created by a group of women associated with the Chajulense Association, a coffee cooperative in Chajul, Guatemala. In 2006, a change at the association forced a lay-off of women who had worked as coffee sorters. The Chajulense Association created a textile and weaving project to give the women additional economic opportunities. In 2008, the women's group became an independent, legally-recognized organization.

ACMUV began working with Coffee Kids in 2007. Through the textile project, the women learned how to improve their abilities and attended talks on gender, self-esteem, teamwork and organizational skills.

Community Need

In Guatemala, nearly 76 percent of the population lives on \$2 USD a day or less, including the town of Chajul, located in the Ixil Triangle, a remote region hit hard by Guatemala's civil war. Thirteen years after the war devastated the region, Chajul still suffers from high rates of unemployment, lack of infrastructure and elevated mortality rates.

ACMUV is working to confront poverty in the community by creating alternative sources of income, such as: textiles, eco-tourism and the production of organic cardamom, honey, and dairy products.

Coffee Kids and ACMUV

In 2008, Coffee Kids supported ACMUV's Microcredit Project that serves indigenous women from the communities of San Gaspar Chajul, Pulay and Tzotzil. The women increased the number of participants and successfully managed the association despite serious limitations, including: language barriers, infrastructure problems, and limited means of communication. The Microcredit Project was strengthened during an exchange with Coffee Kids' partner AUGE, an organization with extensive micro-

credit experience.

2009 Results

- Women in the Chajulense Association obtained legal status and registry for the Chajulense Association of Women United for Life(ACMUV).
- ACMUV generated an average monthly income of \$438 USD from the microcredit program to cover operational expenses.
- An exchange was held between ACMUV and Coffee Kids' partner AUGE. The event was coordinated by the women of ACMUV to learn more about microcredit.
- The organization grew from 45 to 80 members.
- \$10,000 USD was designated as seed capital for four microcredit groups (2 in San Gaspar Chajul, 1 in Pulay and 1 in Tzotzil).
- Only one participant was delinquent on loan repayment.



A participant in ACMUV's textile project works on a backstrap loom.