



The Association for Sustainable Development of Paraxaj (ADESPA)

In 2004, a group of six local volunteers created ADESPA to address a lack of health care and educational services in and around Paraxaj. Since then, ADESPA has grown into a valued support system for impoverished coffee farmers and their families. ADESPA's overall goal is to improve socio-economic conditions through education.

Community Need

Paraxaj, Guatemala, is home to a group of 125 families living on a coffee plantation. The families have few economic resources and lack adequate access to health care. Given the meager income from coffee and geographic isolation, the community has few resources to dedicate to quality of life initiatives.

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.

Coffee Kids and ADESPA

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. In 2008, Coffee Kids supported ADESPA's initiative to improve the Adult Literacy Project and make it more accessible for adults through radio broadcasts.

Other Coffee Kids' funds were used for artisan workshops where women learned to produce shoes and beaded belts, and received the necessary training to market their products. ADESPA's Bakery Project worked to standardize their baked goods and lower prices to make their products more accessible. The Handicraft and Bakery Projects are now generating local employment and contributing to the economy of Paraxaj.

2009 Results:

- ADESPA collaborated with the Guatemalan Institute for Radio Education to produce on-air lessons that were broadcast to the community five days a week.
- Bakers in the Bakery Project increased daily production from 40-70 pounds per day to 100-150 pounds over the past six months.
- A motorbike was purchased to make bread deliveries and increase profit.
- Women in the Handicraft Project improved the quality of the shoes they produce. Profit has increased 25 percent in six months: from \$2.5 to \$3.13 USD per pair.
- The women are learning to create new designs and will sell them in Guatemala City.
- ADESPA's projects directly benefit 35 people and their families (210 people).



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