



### **Association for Research and Training of South-eastern Mexico (ICSUR)**

ICSUR is a nonprofit organization based in Chiapas, Mexico. The organization supports social and economic development in coffee-growing communities within the indigenous Zoque region.

### **Community Need**

Chiapas is one of the poorest states in Mexico. The overwhelming dependence on coffee production and lack of other economic opportunities has led to a wave of emigration. As a result many women in rural communities are left to care for their families alone when their husbands leave in search of work.

This trend has created both the need and opportunity for women to learn new skills and actively participate in community decision-making. Local men learn how they and their families can benefit from the new system of teamwork brought about by the social shift.

### **Coffee Kids and ICSUR**

For the first two years of Coffee Kids partnership with ICSUR, the group worked on an edible mushroom program. In that time, the project has reached the point of sustainability and has become an important source of food and income for participating families.



*Women collect fresh eggs from their coop as part of ICSUR's chicken-raising project. Participants are learning to produce meat and eggs.*

During the past year, Coffee Kids supported ICSUR's Chicken-Raising Project and Traditional Medicine Project. Many families in the communities served by ICSUR depend on mass-produced meat and eggs that are produced using growth hormones, antibiotics, and genetically modified food. The Chicken-Raising Project provides families with the knowledge and equipment to produce organic meat and eggs.

The Traditional Medicine Project teaches families in remote indigenous communities to produce effective, low-cost alternatives to high-priced pharmaceuticals. The project also revives the culture traditional healing through the creation of community herbariums and the establishment of herbal-medicine networks in the state of Chiapas.

### **2009 Results**

- Lessons in chicken production were given to 177 people in four communities.
- Three workshops on the creation of a community fund for chicken production, food security, eggs and meat production were conducted.
- Two exchanges were conducted to encourage information sharing between groups
- Each participant family saves a monthly average of \$35 USD by consuming half of the eggs and meat they produce. The balance is sold in local markets.
- Sanitary conditions were improved in 36 of 40 chicken coops
- The Traditional Medicine Project was presented to 172 people in five indigenous communities.
- Three workshops on ethno-botany, medicinal plant use, and one exchange on mayan medicine took place and involved 159 participants.
- Three community herb gardens were built.
- Six traditional doctors worked as promoters of the project in the communities.
- Each family saved an average of \$40 USD on doctor visits and medicines.