

PRODUCER PROFILE

Name: Solidarity for the Promotion of Coffee Actions
and Full Development (SOPACDI)

Product: Coffee

Country: Democratic Republic of the Congo

FLO ID: 26275

Fairtrade Certified Since: 2011

Number of Certified Members: 11,743

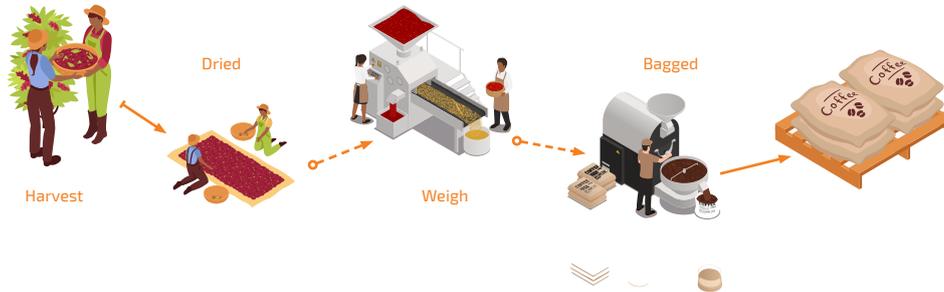


Introduction

SOPACDI (Solidarity for the Promotion of Coffee Actions and Full Development) is a cooperative with total members of 11743 small coffee farmers (among them 3468 women). Their head office is based at Tsheya on Buzi-Bulenga Peninsula in Kalehe territory, South Kivu province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It was created in 2003 by 276 small coffee farmers among them 3 wives on the initiative of M. MUNGANGA MAHEMU Joachim. The main reason for establishing the cooperative was to assist farmers in realizing the true benefits of growing coffee by increasing coffee prices and creating an avenue for selling coffee together. This was done to avoid the problems associated with many individual farmers selling and transporting coffee to foreign countries across the lake, which frequently resulted in loss of life on the lake, especially during bad weather.

SOPACDI aims to empower the smallholders by improving quality, quantity and by selling their coffee on the international market. The cooperative also improves housing and public infrastructure—roads, bridges, health canterers and schools.

Coffee Growing & Processing



SOPACDI grows its coffee near Lake Kivu in the Congolese highlands. The plentiful rainfall and mild climate create ideal conditions for producing high quality coffees. Producers pick ripe coffee cherries and transport them to SOPACDI's washing stations. Coffee is then washed and dried in the sun, before being transported by boat for secondary processing in Goma. After this the coffee is transported to the Kenyan port of Mombasa or Tanzanian port Dar-es-Salam for international export. SOPACDI owns 4 central washing stations, central drying station and a cupping laboratory.

Benefits of Fairtrade

Increasing production and income

SOPACDI grants free service to its members for the improvement of plantations. It has put at their disposal 35 qualified agronomists for their training and sensitization in good farming techniques (composting, liquid bio-fertilizers, bio-treater, anti-erosive techniques, agroforestry, etc.) and in environment protection. Moreover, every year SOPACDI supplies young coffee and umbrage plants to its members for the rejuvenation of their plantations thanks to social bonus. Due to these actions, the production and income of most of our members increases gradually.

Coffee price

Despite the fluctuation of the purse, on which the price of coffee is dependent, the members sell their coffee at SOPACDI cooperative, which is bound to respect the guaranteed minimum price as indicated by the Fairtrade certification. The price of cherry per Kg has risen to the point where no farmer feels like selling coffee in neighboring countries. Furthermore, thanks to the cooperative, farmers are now safe from the brokers whose action mainly consisted in cutting back on farmers' advantages. In order to ensure permanence at the local market, SOPACDI buys cherries produced by its members even when it has no sales contract. Thus, the farmer has no worries about his production sales.



The second payment

In addition to the price obtained from coffee sales and the tax exemption (note that the collectivity annual tax to be paid by each farmer is paid by SOPACDI), every member of the cooperative receives a second payment in proportion to the delivery of everyone at the end of the year or the coffee season depending on the co-op's good achievement on sales. This increases each member's income and enables them to take responsibility for themselves and to take care of their households.

FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Social bonus

Thanks to social bonus obtained from sales of Fairtrade certified coffee, organic, etc, the cooperative supports education through rehabilitation of schools and providing scholarships to needy students. The cooperative also supports health initiatives by equipping health centers with beds, mattress, etc, and buying compounds for some health posts (Butumba, Mutchibwe, Birambo, Kiluku, etc.).

Rehabilitation of bridges on some roads in agricultural areas has also been done, improving accessibility.

Unemployment reduction

Every season, around 200 people, mostly young, get temporary jobs in various washing stations of SOPACDI. More than 500 women are hired for a daily job.



Promotion of pygmies

SOPACDI has built 6 classrooms at Kimioka II primary school to facilitate the integration of pygmies, destitute, and marginalized people in the region. They have also provided the school with stationery, occasionally supports payment for the teachers, has given a scholarship to two finalists from that school in the best secondary school in the region and has distributed ploughing materials and seed.

FOR THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Outbreak of other cooperatives in coffee sector

SOPACDI's relative success arose creative mind within other people. At the moment, there are more than ten cooperatives in the region that are as a result of SOPACDI imitation, and they are fortunate to be moving forward. Thus, SOPACDI has been a model in the region.

Gender promotion

The woman who was underprivileged by the former ancestors' custom is now regaining her right place within society. SOPACDI has been sensitizing both men and women about human rights in general and woman's rights in particular. This action has yielded positive results. Men have been awarding shares of their coffee plantations to their wives, allowing women to be considered members on their own side.

Moreover, in its management policy, SOPACDI integrates at least one woman in each organ of the cooperative. Women make up more than 30% of the Board of Directors.

Participation in the alleviation of the climate warming effects

SOPACDI has been Fairtrade certified since 2011, organic since May 2012, UTZ since 2015, and SPP (symbole des producteurs paysans) since 2016. These four certifications advocate for the protection of the environment, which is our common habitat. This is why SOPACDI teaches its members on a daily basis to work actively to fight against erosions, grow and protect umbrage trees in their farms and practice agroforestry, to protect animals, etc.

SCAA and SPP awards

SOPACDI has successively obtained the prize from the American Specialty Coffee in 2014 and from Global Symbol of Peasant Producers in 2017. Those prizes were the first ones of this type in DR-Congo. The former for SOPACDI's success in restoring the reputation of the coffee from its country on the international market and the latter for having been the best producer member of SPP organization for the year.

Production rise

SOPACDI's task of training small coffee producers in the region, which served as a model for other cooperatives that work closely with them, has had a significant impact on production growth. From 2010 to the present, the member's plantations have gradually improved, and our country's exports have increased in both volume and receipts.

For SOPACDI on its own

Increase of its facilities:

- Four (4) washing stations, two (2) warehouses;
- Five (5) mini-washing stations
- An apartment building for its administrative head office
- A cupping laboratory



Challenges

- Climate change
- Markets
- Price fluctuations



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