

COOPERATIVA AGRARIA YAKATHEO DEL AMAZONAS COOPAYAKAT

PERU



Cooperativa Agraria Yakatheo del Amazonas Coopayakat (CAC Yakatheo) is an organization made up of 24 native Awajun communities and 3 mestizo villages in the Amazon Region in Peru. The cooperative purchases cocoa from the indigenous communities and sells them to food manufacturers and cocoa exporters.

CAC Yakatheo only formalized its operations in 2021. Since then, it has actively worked to strengthen its operational capacity and improve its production to benefit its 638 members. With few initial resources, it sold small volumes of cocoa to other cooperatives and local distributors in its first year of operations. These developments have fostered social and economic improvements in the indigenous communities and have opened their channels for mainstream markets.

Eventually, the cooperative built its pipeline and managed to sell its products to cocoa exporters and global food manufacturers. CAC Yakatheo is seeking a \$10k working capital loan from The Reciprocity Fund to purchase raw materials.

Impact Background

The Awajun indigenous community are inhabitants of the Alto Mayo basin sloping down the Amazon region in Peru. Their real origin has not been clearly established. Some studies say that they came down to the Andes centuries ago and have adapted themselves to the region. Others believe that they are immigrants from Central America or Melanesia who came either by coast or through rivers¹. The Awajun people are the second largest indigenous group in the Amazon with 55,366 inhabitants². They speak the Awajún language which belongs to the Jibaro ethno-linguistic family, one of the largest ethno-linguistic families in the Amazon.

The Awajun people are known to be skillful warriors. They successfully defended their land from the Incas and expelled the Spanish colonizers through a rebellion. Many of their economic activities revolve around subsistence agriculture, including hunting, fishing, and gathering forest products. They have always lived in total harmony with

IMPACT OVERVIEW

Encouraging social and economic development in the Awajun communities in the Peruvian Amazon	
No. of beneficiaries	638 members
% Women	23%

COMMUNITY

	Country	Peru
	Province	Bagua and Condorcanqui
	Communities	Awajun

¹ [Peru, Aguaruna \(atlasofhumanity.com\)](https://atlasofhumanity.com/peru-aguaruna)

² 2017 National Census

the Amazon Forest. With their deep connection to their natural habitat, they have intricate knowledge of the local ecosystem and usually rely on traditional practices to sustain their livelihood.

In the late 1950s, economic improvements began with the community trading cacao and other agricultural products. Growing and selling cacao became the primary source of income for Awajun farmers. However, limited access to markets and a lack of technical skills left them vulnerable to unfair pricing and difficulties selling their crops. Challenges like erratic weather, deforestation, and pests have harmed their ecosystem and reduced crop yields. Aside from these, Awajun communities have consistently faced threats of land exploitation from illegal logging, and government-sponsored mining and oil activities. These have left the communities grappling to overcome poverty and discrimination, limiting their access to economic opportunities and support systems.

Impact Delivery



CAC Yakatheo works with the Awajun indigenous communities in the province of Bagua and Condorcanqui in the Amazonas Region of Peru. The Awajun people living here represent one of the poorest groups in the country, with 62% of the population living in poverty³.

The cooperative's mission is to encourage social and economic development in the communities by increasing their market access and improving their operational capabilities. It started by building La ECA, a field school that provides training and education to cacao producers on sustainable field practices. They have introduced organic farming techniques such as shade cacao cultivation to make sure that the soil is being taken care of. Once the farms were established, business networking began. This includes liaising with the leaders in each community to be suppliers of cacao. Further training was conducted to build entrepreneurial skills and improve productivity.

In its first year of operations, CAC Yakatheo sold to other cooperatives such as APROCAM and CEPROA. This year, it has started selling to bigger companies including food manufacturers and exporters. In May, it participated in a fair that showcased samples of its native cocoa. A month later, the cooperative signed an agreement with the Ministry of Agrarian Development for technical assistance and training for technical management of cocoa cultivation to acquire organic certification⁴. These efforts aim to market cacao products, integrate the communities into the value chain, and provide the cacao producers with a stable income. CAC Yakatheo has 638 members, 88% are members of the Awajun indigenous communities, and 23% of whom are women.

³ [3e64c82c-2a09-46d1-80f0-2ebf91a41ee9.pdf \(rightsinddevelopment.org\)](https://www.rightsindevelopment.org/3e64c82c-2a09-46d1-80f0-2ebf91a41ee9.pdf)

⁴ [Amazonas:Yakatheo Cooperative develops actions to strengthen productive activities – Binational Development Plan of the Peru Ecuador Border Region \(planbinacional.org.pe\)](https://planbinacional.org.pe/Amazonas:Yakatheo-Cooperativa-desarrolla-acciones-para-fortalecer-actividades-productivas-Binacional-Desarrollo-Plan-de-la-Region-Peru-Ecuador-Border-Region)

Outcome

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- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Improvement of livelihood</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Increases the income of the Awajun indigenous communities by linking the farmers' produce to bigger markets.▪ Provides training to the communities to strengthen their operational capacities and improve their entrepreneurial skills. |
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| <i>Environmental preservation</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Provides indigenous communities with training on sustainable cultivation practices |