

CENCOIC

COLOMBIA



The Indigenous Central Cooperative of Cauca (CENCOIC) is a coffee cooperative founded in 1980 as the commercial arm of the Regional Indigenous Council of Cauca. CENCOIC supports the economic health of its members while simultaneously promoting their socio-political development and preserving indigenous culture.

Most of CENCOIC’s 3000+ households belong to the Nasa tribe, the third largest indigenous group in Colombia, however, Misak families are all also members. Cauca has a long history of coca cultivation, illegal mining, and drug trafficking. CENCOIC’s success with coffee commercialization means locals can earn a solid livelihood without resorting to illegal and dangerous activities.

In addition to a successful coffee business, CENCOIC also runs a buying cooperative that purchases medicine and medical supplies in bulk on behalf of its members. CENCOIC members don’t just make more money with the cooperative, they save more money too.

IMPACT OVERVIEW

Income improvement and promotion of sustainable agricultural practices among indigenous populations in Cauca, Colombia.

No. of beneficiaries	3200 families
No. of indigenous farmer groups	24
Cost of goods	\$8,320,000 in 2020

COMMUNITY



- Country**
Colombia
- Municipalities**
Cauca, Caldono, Píndamó, El Tambo, Santander de Quilichao, Toribio, Jambaló, Inza, Buenos Aires y Suárez.
- Indigenous communities**
Nasa, Misak

CENCOIC was one of the earliest Colombian entities to achieve Fair Trade Certification (1995) and the cooperative has consistently focused on improving the quality of its coffee. The average CENCOIC family farms just 0.87 hectares (2.1 acres), so achieving a high price for the coffee is critical to poverty alleviation. Currently, CENCOIC members come from the towns of Caldono, Piendamó, El Tambo, Santander de Quilichao, Toribio, Jambaló, Inza, Buenos Aires y Suárez.

Impact Background

The Department of Cauca has one of the highest proportions of indigenous inhabitants, and, not coincidentally, one of the highest rates of poverty in Colombia as well. Whereas the country as a whole reports 42.5% poverty, that figure is 55.6 for Cauca (DANE, 2020.)

The Department of Cauca continues to experience political violence, forced displacement, and acts of terrorism. In the first four months of 2021, more than 5,500 residents of Cauca were forcibly removed their communities and the assassination of indigenous leaders remains commonplace. CENCOIC’s primary focus is to increase income for its members by aggregating, grading, processing, and exporting arabica coffee, but increasingly CENCOIC’s work serves to insulate indigenous Colombians from political violence.



Impact Delivery

CENCOIC promotes prosperity for indigenous peoples in Cauca, Colombia, as well as environmental conservation through the sustainable production of fair-trade coffee. For this, they are committed to:

Outcome

Improvement of livelihood

- Strengthening of economic opportunities within indigenous territories
- Production of coffee under fair-trade and sustainable standards
- Guarantee the local supply of medicines and provide access at affordable prices

Economy and cultural strengthening

- Protect, respect and reinforce their indigenous identities
- Own Economy: guarantee the distribution of their own products (besides coffee) within the local communities