



Asociacion de Agricultores Tinecos (ADAT) is a twenty-nine-year-old association of 448 families, 68% of whom are of Mayan descent, who grow coffee, sweet peas, and avocado. The organization operates in Todos Santos Cuchumatán in the Huehuetenango province in Guatemala.

Together, they sell to importers in the United States, Canada, and Norway. ADAT is part of the CODECH SA, or the Coordinadora de Organizaciones de Desarrollo de Concepción Huista, a second-level organization that has the export license and handles marketing to customers.

The Mam are Mayan and speak their own language -one of the nine indigenous languages in Guatemala. There are more than 600,000 Mam in Guatemala and most are farmers who usually grow maize, beans, chilis, and coffee, part of it for subsistence consumption and part for sale.

ADAT provides its small farmer members with financial support by providing farming inputs, direct access to the market, and technical assistance. It also manages international certifications from Fair Trade, the Rainforest Alliance, NOP, and EU Organic, enabling growers to earn a fair trade and organic premium for their crops. The organization also provides technical assistance for neighboring small farmers who want to transition to organic production and start selling their produce to the coop in the future.

## Impact Background

Guatemala is the most populous Central American country (17 million in 2021) and home to the most indigenous people (40% of the population.) Guatemala is Central America’s largest economy, with a GDP of USD 95B in 2022. The country has experienced stable growth, 3.5 percent on average from 2010 to 2019, supported by prudent fiscal and monetary management. The country experienced one of the slightest economic contractions (-1.8%) in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region during COVID-19, and then the economy rebounded strongly to grow 8% in 2021

### IMPACT OVERVIEW

Production and commercialization of organic coffee, various vegetables, and avocado

No. of beneficiaries	438 families
% Women	31%

### COMMUNITY

	<b>Country</b>	Guatemala
	<b>Municipalities</b>	Todos Santos Cuchumatán
	<b>Communities</b>	Maya (Mam)

and 4.1% in 2022. A record number of remittances were received, boosting private consumption. The country's economy is expected to grow 3.4% in 2023.

However, Guatemala's economic stability has not translated into a solid reduction in poverty. The country's poverty and inequality rates are among the highest in LAC, with a large, underserved population, mostly rural and indigenous. In 2023, 55% of the population is estimated to live in poverty.

This is a major driving force for migration; 9 out of 10 Guatemalans who flee cite economic reasons. Over one million Guatemalan immigrants were living in the United States in 2020. This is seen in the case of Huehuetenango, where 73% of its population lives in poverty and is one of the leading departments contributing to emigration to the United States.<sup>1</sup>

At the center of Huehuetenango and sitting atop Sierra de los Cuchumatanes, the highest non-volcanic mountain range in Central America, is Todos Santos Cuchumatán. The population in this municipality is largely rural (98%) and overwhelmingly indigenous (88%). While not all poor are indigenous or rural, there is a huge overlap between these categories. USAID estimates poverty in Todos Santos Cuchumatán at 89%.<sup>2</sup> The largest indigenous community in Todos Santos Cuchumatán is of Mayan descent and speaks Mam. Supporting economic development in rural Guatemala, especially in places like Todos Santos Cuchumatán, effectively reduces forced migration and preserves indigenous culture.

### Impact Delivery

ADAT's strategic objective is to increase not just its membership base, but the productive capacity of each member. That is why ADAT works with each member and provides technical assistance to increase yields and diversify crops produced.

Through ADAT, farmers also get access to cheaper machinery, with some tools as low as 50% of the retail price. Furthermore, ADAT holds regular training on the proper use and maintenance of these assets to ensure the longevity of their investment.

ADAT also recognizes that climate change is one of the most important problems affecting its members. ADAT and other organizations in the municipality of Todos Santos Cuchumatán came up with an adaptation plan listing activities that could mitigate the area's vulnerability to climate change as early as 2015. To this day, ADAT carries out forestry projects and conducts training on climate change adaptation strategies.

One of the climate adaptation strategies developed with the communities is using native heritage seeds for corn. Cultivars called 7 Hojas and Tegua have been shown to be more resilient against droughts and strong winds, events that are becoming more prevalent in the changing climate. This serves as a reminder of the wealth in the wisdom of indigenous peoples and makes a compelling case to empower and listen to these communities, which have lived in harmony with nature for so long.



Figure 1 Pulper machine training

<sup>1</sup> [Migration from Huehuetenango in Guatemala's Western Highlands: Policy and Development Responses \(migrationpolicy.org\)](https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/migration-huehuetenango-guatemala-western-highlands)

<sup>2</sup> [Todos Santos Cuchumatán | USAID Municipal Fact Sheet](#)

**Outcome**

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- Improvement of livelihood*
- Financing of farming inputs
  - Premium pricing from international clients and through organic and free trade certifications
  - Prompt repayment (70% upon delivery, 30% upon payment of customer)
  - Access to affordable productive farming assets
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- Environmental preservation*
- Organic farming
  - Agroforestry practices and reforestation activities
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- Education and empowerment*
- Technical assistance on machinery, yield improvement, and organic practices
  - Trainings on climate change impact and adaptation strategies
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- Cultural preservation*
- Native seed preservation