



Union San Pedro is an association that has been producing and commercializing specialty coffee in San Pedro el Alto, Oaxaca state, Mexico, since 2011. The organization integrates 213 families, all recognized as indigenous (Zapotecs). Union San Pedro has been exporting specialty coffee to Germany and Canada since 2009 and 2017, respectively, and is highly appreciated due to inclusive, reforestation, and conservation practices.

The Zapotecs call themselves “Binnizá,” meaning “people that come from the clouds”. The Zapotecs live on the Tehuantepec isthmus, the country's narrowest part, in the southern part of Oaxaca state. Before the Spanish conquest, the Aztecs and Mexicas used this region as a primary route to Central America. The Zapotecs often sow maize for consumption and mango, melon, watermelon, and sugar cane for commercial purposes. Most Zapotecs live in poverty and only own small parcels.

Oaxaca has a poverty rate of almost 64%, making it the fourth poorest state in Mexico. Over 70% of its population lives in rural areas, and most are dedicated to agriculture, livestock, and fishing. Union San Pedro tackles poverty by facilitating commercialization channels for specialty coffee and promoting the inclusion of diverse crops on small farms to maximize the households’ income and increase food security through auto-consumption.

The specialty coffee market was valued at USD 8.5B in 2022 and is expected to grow 14% from 2023 to 2032. Europe is the principal market for this coffee (46%), and North America is predicted to become the lead market by 2030. In

IMPACT OVERVIEW	
Produce and commercialize specialty coffee in international and national markets.	
No. of beneficiaries	213 families
% Women	50%
COMMUNITY	
	<b>Country:</b> Mexico
	<b>Municipalities:</b> San Pedro el Alto, Oaxaca
	<b>Communities:</b> Zapotecs

Mexico, the demand for organic and sustainable products has been increasing, and it's a market valued at USD 63M by 2021. Furthermore, specialty coffee represents nearly 50% of coffee consumption in the country.

Union San Pedro's principal product is shade-grown coffee cultivated in agroforestry systems (diversifying crops), developed with WWF support. These eco-friendly and sustainable practices permit the organization to produce vanilla, cardamom, honey, and cacao through organic fertilization, representing additional income sources for indigenous peoples' households. Furthermore, agroforestry has proven to be a successful strategy to mitigate the effects of climate change and deforestation.

Small farmers are located along the Copalita River, a critical ecosystem in Mexico that hosts 26 of the country's 34 vegetation types. Union San Pedro contributes to the conservation of 260 hectares of forest. Zapotecs conceive nature as part of their existence and sustenance base. Union San Pedro also empowers women and the youth by helping them develop micro-entrepreneurship, financing and promoting locally added-value products and handicrafts, and incorporating new crops on the farms.



Each farmer owns, on average, two hectares of coffee, with a yearly production of 222 kilograms of parchment coffee per hectare. Generally, an average coffee producer can harvest 1,110 kg of fresh coffee. A coffee grain loses up to 80% of its weight during drying. Union San Pedro purchased over 51,000 kilograms of dry parchment coffee in 2023. Each kilo was paid at USD 5,58 to farmers, representing an annual income of USD 1,336.

The organization provides technical assistance to smallholder farmers to implement agroforestry systems and sustainably manage crops. Union San Pedro also promotes micro-entrepreneurship with a youth and women empowerment perspective. These practices allow the organization to perceive better prices in the market and increase coffee quality.

Due to the organization's agroforestry system approach, other crops represent an additional income of almost USD 1,500 per farmer yearly.

Union San Pedro has exported specialty coffee to Chocosol Traders in Canada since 2008 and Red Beetle Coffee Lab in Germany since 2017. Both clients are still working with the organization and have already set contracts for 2024. The deals represent around USD 150,000 in revenue and 30,000 kg in parchment coffee purchases to small farmers. Coffee exports are nearly 75% of income; the rest is sold locally.

We spoke with Red Beetle Coffee, and they said Union San Pedro is the organization among whom they work that evidences the best yields per hectare due to their sustainable practices. Red Beetle is pleased to work with the organization and expects to keep working with them, offering competitive prices for coffee and supporting technical assistance initiatives. The company also highlighted the importance of the reforestation project that Union San Pedro implements. Currently, the organization plants nearly 60,000 trees yearly.

SVX provides technical assistance to Union San Pedro through the "Emprendimientos en Paisajes Sostenibles" program to strengthen its scalability and growth and structure its environmental projects. SVX is also helping the organization to make the accounting process more robust. The 2023 financial statements were constructed with SVX, setting the new parameters for future financial reports.

## Outcome

---

*Improvement  
of livelihood*

- Income generation by selling specialty coffee.
  - Promote other crops among small farmers to diversify income streams.
- 

*Cultural  
preservation*

- Promote the conservation of the Zapotec language during meetings and the organization's related documents through translation.
  - Establish educational sessions for children to teach and promote the Zapotec language.
- 

*Environmental  
preservation*

- Agroforestry production with organic fertilization and zero deforestation.
- Native trees reforestation and 260 hectares under conservation systems.