



FUNDOPO – cocoa smallholder organisation

The organisation Fundación Dominicana de Productores Orgánicos, FUNDOPO for short, was established in 2000 with a group of farming families and became Fairtrade-certified in 2005. It began with 84 families and is now one of the most successful smallholder organisations in the Dominican Republic. PRONATEC was involved right from the start and has been a strong partner for the more than 3,000 small-scale cocoa farmers ever since.

In the past, the smallholders in the Medina, Yamasá and Puerto Plata regions were barely able to survive on sales of their conventional cocoa beans. Today, they get a fair price for their organic beans and use the Fairtrade premium to fund community projects that benefit the whole region.

Because they can see the prospect of earning an attractive income, many people remain living in their local rural area and invest in their cocoa and other crop smallholdings instead of moving to the cities. This benefits not only the smallholders and their families but also seasonal workers and numerous schoolchildren.

The history of FUNDOPO has always been closely connected with YACAO – PRONATEC's subsidiary in the Dominican Republic. YACAO buys the entire harvest from the FUNDOPO smallholders at a fair price and handles everything to do with quality control, fermentation, drying and export.



LATEST FAIRTRADE PROJECTS

- **Improving quality** – warehouses, collection points, education centres
- **Supporting members in need** – construction of 6 private houses, renovation work, paying for doctors/medicines for 250 members
- **5 minutes instead of 1 hour** – improving the road for delivering the cocoa

Here's how FUNDOPO supports local smallholder families

- **Higher incomes** thanks to the organic/Fairtrade premium and minimum prices – on average 35% above the global market price
- **Better yields** by offering advice, training, seedlings and show farms
- **Better health** by paying for doctors/medication
- **Better quality of life** by building houses, renovating old ones, improving the water supply
- **The whole region benefits** from valuable community projects

Here's what FUNDOPO stands for

- 2 tree nurseries
- Coordinated cocoa harvesting, advice and training
- Awareness campaigns about waste/waste water management, biodiversity, integrated pest control
- Show gardens
- Democratic management of the Fairtrade premium



"I used to work as a day labourer in the dairy industry, but when I was 39 I bought my own cocoa garden. I like the cacao tree. It has helped me to feed myself and my family every day."

Crucito Suazo, 65, smallholder cocoa farmer, member of FUNDOPO since 2008



Sustainability through agroforestry and upskilling

The FUNDOPO smallholders have often been tending their plots of land for generations. They alternate cacao trees, shade trees and other crops such as citrus fruits, sapote and avocado. That is good for the fertility of the soil, increases resilience to climate change and encourages biodiversity. The cacao trees are neither watered nor fertilised. The soil is left undisturbed, with fallen leaves and plant residues providing valuable humus and fertiliser in a natural cycle.

The smallholders have the opportunity to obtain mixed bundles of different varieties of cocoa seedling from FUNDOPO's tree nurseries at cost price. This protects cocoa farming in the Dominican Republic from the pests and diseases that are a threat in monocultures. Training courses on sustainable cocoa cultivation and subjects such as waste/waste water management and integrated pest control are bringing about lasting improvements.

FUNDOPO at a glance

- 2000 launch of small farmers' movement
- Fairtrade-certified since 2005
- 3,500 members (of whom 506 are women)
- 17'705 hectares in cultivation

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● cocoa cultivation areas

