

Central de Cooperativas El Ceibo Ltda, Bolivia

Thanks to Fair Trade, we are able to sell our cocoa at a better, more stable price. These conditions benefit the member families of El Ceibo...By buying our cacao, you are joining us in solidarity, and you are sustaining us and driving a fair price for cacao farmers. You are encouraging the construction of a more just and sustainable world for all, producers and consumers alike.

--- Felipe Cancari Capcha, El Ceibo Member



El Ceibo is named after the deep-rooted and majestic tree of the Andean rainforest that grows steadily and seems to never die. In the 1960s, the official Bolivian government cooperative, in which membership was compulsory, went bankrupt. Due to the difficulties of transporting their cocoa to La Paz and their lack of knowledge of market prices, farmers were forced to sell to local intermediaries. Farmers in the Alto Beni region of northeastern Bolivia formed small cocoa-farmer cooperatives in the early 1970s. Thirty-seven of these co-ops then united to form the stronger union of El Ceibo in 1977.

El Ceibo is deeply committed to protecting the native Andean rainforest and became the first certified organic cocoa cooperative in the world in 1988. Utilizing a tiered cultivation system, El Ceibo is working to avoid the degradation of their native rainforest. Natural and organic methods are used to control pests. Today, El Ceibo farmers grow 70 percent of the total organic cocoa cultivated in Bolivia. El Ceibo was also the first cooperative to process its own cocoa into chocolate and powder.

The Fair Trade premium has enabled El Ceibo to establish various social and productive programs.

Education:

The cooperative provides an allowance for the school fees of the members' children.

Productive Investment:

El Ceibo members have invested in trucks and improvements to their processing plant. The co-op also created crop diversification programs to reduce farmers' dependence on cocoa for export earnings.

Fair Trade Certified™ Producer Profile



Environment:

The co-op has created a cacao tree nursery and initiated research on alternative cultivation methods. El Ceibo also offers incentives for organic production and operates a technical assistance program in agroecology and forestry.

Credit Program:

El Ceibo gives out yearly bonuses to members aged 65 or older.

Health:

All co-op members are entitled to health and accident insurance, and the co-op manages a Safety Fund for medical emergencies.

