



COCOA COOPERATIVE

# PRODUCER PROFILE

## Conacado, Dominican Republic

*“In our country there was no tradition of fermenting cocoa. With Fair Trade income we were able to implement a fermentation program to improve the quality of our cocoa and to convert our production to certified organic. This improved our position in the export market. The Fair Trade market is a very important market for the survival of our associates.”*

—Isidoro de la Rosa,  
Executive Director of CONACADO

CONACADO (National Confederation of Dominican Cocoa Producers) is a group of 9,500 small scale cocoa farmers in the Dominican Republic. Founded in 1988 as a response to low global cocoa prices, CONACADO aims to decrease dependency on middlemen by exporting their products directly to consumer markets. Cocoa accounts for 90 percent of CONACADO's members' cash income, so earning the Fair Trade premium makes a significant difference in the farmers' lives.

Most of CONACADO cocoa is certified organic and is grown under the shade canopy of fruit-producing trees that provide food security for the farmers. Sales to the Fair Trade market have enabled CONACADO to set up a nursery that supplies low-cost plants to farmers so that they can grow most of their own food. Inspired by the success of CONACADO, some producers' wives have formed associations and have started businesses making wine, liquor, jams, chocolates, and organic fertilizers.

### CONACADO provides its members with the following assistance:

- **Financial support.** The cooperative provides members with interest-free loans and access to credit.
- **Export assistance.** By storing crops in warehousing facilities and transporting members' crops to market, CONACADO helps members attain higher prices for their cocoa.
- **Rural infrastructure.** CONACADO contributed to local road and bridge maintenance, a community center and library, and improved access to potable water.
- **Health care.** The co-op invested in a rural health care clinic for a community whose clinic did not meet basic minimum conditions. The co-op also provided free medical assistance and informational sessions on STDs.
- **Education.** CONACADO supported the construction of a new school and contributed to school repairs in five regional sections of the co-op. Low-income students received scholarships and school materials to support their studies.
- **Quality improvement.** CONACADO recently constructed five new fermentation centers, roughly 8 new drying centers, and two central warehouses.

### Website and Updates:

- **Website.** [www.conacado.com](http://www.conacado.com)
- **Updates.** In 2004, the cooperative lost over 40% of its total production to Hurricane Jeanny.



### ABOUT THE COOP

**Date Established:** 1988

**Number of Members:** 9,500

**Annual Production:** 6,500 Tons

### ABOUT THE COCOA

**Varieties:** 20% Trinitario, 65% Forastero, 15% Criollo

**Processing:** 4-5 days fermentation in stepped boxes; 7 days sun drying.

**Product specifications:** 7% humidity; over 85% fermentation

**Products:** Cocoabeans, butter, liquor and powder

**Harvest Season:** March-July (maincrop); October-February (midcrop)

**Organic Production:** 60%

**Organic Certification Agency:** BCS, BIO SUISSE, NOP, DEMETER; OKO Garantie