



COFFEE COOPERATIVE



# FAIR TRADE PRODUCER PROFILE

## SOPPEXCCA, Nicaragua

*“If it had not been for Fair Trade and the opportunities that SOPPEXCCA has provided for women, I never would have had the opportunity to participate in cupping competitions, and I never would have known that my coffee is among the best in Nicaragua.”*

—Rosa Adilia Toledo  
SOPPEXCCA member

The Society of Small Producers for Coffee Export (SOPPEXCCA) is a union of coffee cooperative comprised of 650 producers from the province of Jinotega in northern Nicaragua. SOPPEXCCA emerged in 1998 when its successor organization fell deeply indebted under a poor administration. Despite the severe challenges of Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and the 380% price collapse in 1999, SOPPEXCCA has become one of highest quality coffee cooperatives in the country. Under the leadership of director Fatima Ismael, the self-sustaining co-op produces, processes, and markets its own coffee. SOPPEXCCA's 65% female membership and gender-equality blends makes this a truly exemplary cooperative. SOPPEXCCA became Fair Trade certified by Fairtrade Labeling Organizations International (FLO) in 1998.

### With proceeds from the Fair Trade price, the co-op has been able to

- **Invest in organic training.** SOPPEXCCA has provided members with technical assistance for the transition to organic production
- **Empower women.** Members established a women's collective, “Las Hermanas,” through which women produce and market their own coffee
- **Support education.** The cooperative funded the construction of a new school and provided members' children with school supplies and food
- **Provide micro-credit.** SOPPEXCCA has provided access to credit for all members, including a specific fund for women's programs
- **Improve women's health.** The cooperative has educated female co-op members about reproductive health issues and facilitates access to free gynecological cancer tests.

### Recent Highlights

- **Quality Recognition.** SOPPEXCCA farmers were awarded 8th, 12th, and 18th place in the 2004 “Cup of Excellence”, Nicaraguan's cupping competition. The cooperative's farmers won 13th and 17th place in 2005's competition
- **Sales Tour.** In April 2004, two female representatives from Soppexcca met with current and potential importers and roasters in California and Washington



### ABOUT THE COOP

**Date Established:** 1997

**Number of Members:** 650

**Annual Production:** 22 Containers

### ABOUT THE COFFEE

**Varieties:** Caturra, Bourbon

**Elevation:** 1,000 - 1,400m

**Processing:** Wet processing and sun drying

**Bean Characteristics:** SHG

**Cup Characteristics:** Good flavor and aroma, balanced acidity

**Harvest Season:** Nov - Mar

**Export Season:** Jan - June

**Organic Production:** 30%

**Organic Certification Agency:** BIOLATINA