



# 2016 Ecuador Earthquake Recovery Efforts with Fortaleza del Valle and UOPROCAE

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## In April of this year,

Ecuador was hit by a 7.8 magnitude earthquake, one of the worst natural disasters there in decades. 660 people were killed and more than 4,000 were wounded. The epicenter of the earthquake was located near the town of Muisne – a community that is part of our partner organization UOPROCAE, or the Union of Producers of Cacao of Arriba Esmeraldas. One of the cities that suffered the worst infrastructure damage was Portoviejo, close to our other cacao partner organization Fortaleza del Valle. We reached out immediately to both groups and were very relieved to learn that there were no fatalities among the members and staff of the UOPROCAE or Fortaleza del Valle. However, damage to personal property and the property belonging to the farmer organizations is significant.

Some might recognize Fortaleza del Valle as a supplier of cocoa beans in Equal Exchange's Ecuador 65% Organic Dark Chocolate and 88% Extreme Dark bars. Both Fortaleza and UOPROCAE were our partners in the USAID Co-operative Development Program that ended in 2015.

Working together for three years on this project with Fortaleza allowed the two organizations to develop a much closer connection, and allowed us to appreciate much more deeply the quality of the people and the cacao they produce. Led by General Manager, Berto Zambrano, the 900 members of Fortaleza make up the most prominent Fair Trade cacao organizations in the country.

We did not work with UOPROCAE for very long but it was wholly worthwhile. They are a small and young group and with that they were open to new ideas in a way that some more established co-ops are not. The General Manager, Francisco Peñarrieta, is the son of a farmer member. He truly cares about the organization and is working hard to grow this organization to benefit small-scale farmers.

We had the opportunity to speak directly to members of both organizations at a quality workshop we invited them to in Lima during the month of July 2016. During that time, Ecuador was hit once again by earthquakes in the Esmeraldas region. Luckily, there were no fatalities but the damage escalated.

As most people know, funds for disaster relief tend to flood in directly following the event and both organizations received some emergency food supplies, but there is still much to be done. Equal Exchange is working with the groups to identify their needs and support them in what will surely be a long recovery process.



### Earthquake Affected Areas

Coastal Northern Ecuador was hit hardest, precisely where both our partner organizations are located.

**The more support the better, so please read on to SEE HOW YOU CAN HELP.**

**Much of the damage** occurred to the homes of members of these partner organizations, but their organizational infrastructure was also affected. We are focusing our support for the rebuilding and replacing communal infrastructure at the moment, but if there are additional funds available, we will work with the two associations to address some of the housing needs. UOPROCAE alone reports that 50 homes have been affected, with 10 completely destroyed and 40 with compromised walls, beams, roofs, etcetera. These families are living in tents, with neighbors and relatives or in hostels. Amongst Fortaleza members, 63 homes were destroyed and 137 require some type of repairs. According to one analysis done there, the highest priority is to re-house 40 families; 17 of which have a family member with a disability.

Current Unresolved Damage to Organization's Post-Harvest and Administrative Infrastructure as of the week of August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and Estimated Cost of Repair/Replacement:

**Fortaleza del Valle:**

Control box of Mechanical Drying Unit	\$1,600.00
Floor of the Fertilizer Plant	\$4,000.00
6 Motors and cables of Cacao Conveyor Belts	\$4,100.00
Mesh beds of the Solar Dryers	\$4,000.00
Security Cameras	\$1,800.00
Refrigerated Truck for Finished Chocolate Transport	\$7,000.00
Heat Transformer Unit	\$3,500.00
General damage to drying beds and fermentation area	\$12,000.00
Water pump and Tank	\$1,200.00
Damage to exterior wall and vehicular access	\$2,100.00
Administrative Office repairs	\$2,800.00
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE</b>	<b>\$44,100.00</b>

**UOPROCAE:**

Sua Post-Harvest Center – general damage to warehouse and security guard hut	\$3,200.00
Sua Post-Harvest Center – roller track drying beds 18x18 meters	\$1,800.00
Sua Post-Harvest Center – computers	\$350.00
Sua Post-Harvest Center – Flavor Lab/Tasting Panel Area walls	\$600.00
Muisne Post-Harvest Center – 1 drying bed destroyed	\$2,000.00
Muisne Post-Harvest Center – Entrance to the center needs immediate repair due to mudslide, requires hiring tractor for 4 hrs	\$1,300.00
<b>TOTAL ESTIMATE</b>	<b>\$9,250.00</b>

## What can we do?

**Equal Exchange is committed to donating \$10,000 to support our partners in their recovery efforts.** We are reaching out to you because as you can see, they could still use more help to get their businesses up and running again at full capacity. We acknowledge that their needs are much greater than we can address alone, but we need to start somewhere.

Our friends at *Cooperative Development Foundation* have also committed to a \$10,000 donation and will be accepting your donations via their website (see below for details). These will go directly to our partner organizations to make the repairs to their offices and post-harvest processing centers detailed above. We will update you in a few months on the progress that has been made on these repairs, and to let you know how folks at Fortaleza and UOPROCAE are doing.



If you have any questions, or need more information, please contact Equal Exchange's Grant Projects Coordinator, Cristina Liberati, at [liberati@equalexchange.coop](mailto:liberati@equalexchange.coop).



Post-earthquake photos provided by UOPROCAE



## How to Donate

If you would like to contribute to the recovery of cooperators and cooperatives in Ecuador, please click the “**Donate**” button on this webpage:

<http://www.cdf.coop/ee-earthquake/>

If you prefer to write a **check**, you can send your donation to CDF 1775 Eye Street NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor, Washington, DC 20006; please note that your donation is for Ecuador Earthquake Disaster Recovery.

CDF also takes no administrative fee for disaster recovery donations; as a result, 100% of your donation will go to cooperators and cooperatives in need of assistance.

All donations to CDF are tax-deductible and donors of \$25 or more will receive a letter of acknowledgement which can be used for tax records.

If **cash** donations are collected by an organization which then sends a single check to CDF, we ask that the organization send a list of donors with mail or e-mail addresses and the amounts donated so CDF can send acknowledgement letters for donations of \$25 or more.

**We will accept donations through January 31, 2017.**

### ***About the Co-operative Development Fund’s Co-op Disaster Recovery Fund:***

CDF’s Co-op Disaster Recovery Fund aids cooperatives and members impacted by disasters and promotes co-op enterprise in recovering areas. Contributions to the fund come from cooperative members and organizations across the United States.

This money is not for immediate relief as there are many organizations for that purpose. This money is to help cooperators rebuild their lives, to help cooperatives re-open to serve their members, and to promote cooperatives as a tool for rebuilding and economic development. CDF works with the local cooperative leadership and cooperative development organizations with projects in the affected countries to be sure that funds are distributed to cooperators and cooperatives most in need.



The Cooperative Development Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit foundation headquartered in Washington, DC. CDF's mission is to promote community, economic and social development through cooperative enterprises. ([www.cdf.coop](http://www.cdf.coop)).