



sugar CO-OP PROFILE

MANDUVIRÁ CO-OP

SMALL FARMER
Grown



Co-op members Emilce Garcete and her husband Gilberto Martinez (above left)
Many farmers use ox teams to plow their fields and transport their cane (above right)



Co-op Data

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| CO-OP NAME: | Cooperativa Manduvirá Ltda. |
| LOCATION: | Paraguay |
| FOUNDED IN: | 1975 |
| CURRENT GENERAL MANAGER: | Andrés González Aguilera |
| CO-OP PRODUCTS: | Sugar, Panela, Molasses, Sesame |
| PRODUCT VOLUMES: | 12,000 + MT sugar |
| CERTIFICATIONS: | Fair Trade, Organic, SPP, Kosher |
| WEBSITE: | www.manduvira.com/es |
| SOCIAL MEDIA: | es-la.facebook.com/Cooperativamanduvira #manduvira @coopmanduvirapy |

What makes this co-op special?

Manduvirá is located about forty miles to the north of the capital Asunción in Arroyos y Esteros, meaning “streams and wetlands,” ecologically known for its diverse palm landscapes and migratory birds. Thanks to Manduvirá and a local culture of environmental ethics, their region is known as the “Organic Valley” of Paraguay. Even though Arroyos y Esteros is close to the capital city, 80% of the population is rural and depends directly on agriculture to make a living.

Paraguay is a very distinct country in South America. It has had the longest ruling dictatorship, is officially bilingual in Guaraní and Spanish, and has an early history of isolation from other countries. Manduvirá was first founded by a group of teachers in 1975 to provide small loans to the rural community. Organizing like-minded producers has its effect. The rural community began combining their products, including sugar, and selling them together. These small farmers pursued fair trade certification in 1999 and then organic certification in 2005.

Now, Manduvirá has taken big leaps and it now owns the first and only farmer-owned organic sugar mill in the world, allowing the cooperative to process and export its own sugar without going through

Relationship between Equal Exchange and Manduvirá

Commercial Collaboration:

YEARS OF RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN EE AND CO-OP: 15 years

EE PRODUCTS:

- Bars/Minis
- Chicks
- Cocos
- Sugars

VOLUMES PURCHASED IN 2016: 167 MT

Non-Commercial Collaboration:

VISITS TO PARAGUAY: 2010, 2015, 2017

Farmer Data

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| NUMBER OF MEMBERS: | 929 producers |
| AVERAGE PRODUCER AGE: | 40 |
| GENDER: | 19% women |
| AVERAGE FARM SIZE: | 5 hectares, 12 acres |
| AVERAGE FARM PRODUCTIVITY: | 40 MT/hectare |
| AVERAGE ANNUAL (NET) INCOME: | \$750/hectare of sugarcane |
| PARAGUAY MINIMUM WAGE (ANNUAL) | \$408/month |

FARMER PROFILES/STORIES



Andrés González

In 2003, the cooperative was still selling its sugar to a major regional mill. The mill was paying them so little money that the cooperative decided to organize itself and demand higher prices. Andrés González

agreed to be general manager under two conditions: (1) The protests had to be planned out (2) The protests had to be nonviolent. After three weeks of boycotts and peaceful demonstrations, the mill finally broke down and renegotiated a higher price. This was one of the first examples in Paraguay of a peaceful negotiation between organized small farmers and agro-industrial monopolies where violence was avoided. This victory empowered the cooperative. Step by step the cooperative was able to grow. In 2005, they rented out a mill. In 2008, they began planning to build their own mill, and in 2014 they opened it for their own production. *"If we are going to complain, don't complain at home, don't complain to kids, complain in a place that makes a difference."* -Andrés González



Silvestre Santa Cruz

Silvestre Santa Cruz grows over 100 tons of sugarcane on just three acres. He is able to achieve such high yields due to his biodynamic practices. He belongs to a group of 53 biodynamic producer members who attend

trainings and prepare their bio fertilizers and additives together. For his household consumption, Silvestre also uses his three hectares to grow corn, beans, and squash and to raise chickens, hogs, and cows.



Olga Salvioni

Olga Salvioni has been a member of Manduvira for 10 years. She is the proud mother of five children—three of which have or are studying professional degrees. In addition to her sugarcane fields, she also works in their

household garden and greenhouse. She works weekly with a neighborhood women's committee to sell her produce. Manduvira staff helps the committee choose the right seeds, troubleshoot pests, and improve soil health.

the usual supply chain of selling through a middleman or renting out a distant mill. The cooperative prefers to have many diverse clients to support their vision for a sustainable future. With Fair Trade premiums, the cooperative invests in member programs such as a local dentist clinic, technical crop assistance and school uniforms. The co-op also distributes 50% of its premiums as cash payments to farmers which supports farmers to cover household costs in-between harvests when incomes are at their lowest. In the future, the co-op hopes to use their mill as a technical-industrial school, available as a space to study and intern.



The raw cane is hoisted into the mill to extract its juice.

What makes the relationship between Equal Exchange and this co-op special?

Equal Exchange has been working with Manduvira since we launched our very first hot cocoa mix in 2002! At the time Manduvira was selling its sugarcane to a sugar mill who processed the cane into sugar and sold the sugar directly to the European Market. The sugar was then imported into the US from Europe to be blended in our hot cocoa. Since 2002, there has been a lot of positive steps to make this a far more direct relationship. Now, Equal Exchange directly imports Manduvira sugar produced in Manduvira's own mill. Manduvira is one of our key partners that allows us to support more value-added in origin countries for our chocolate products.



Since its inauguration in 2014, Manduvira's sugar mill has created over 100 steady jobs for their community.

Chocolate Products:

