

# COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## ANNUAL REPORT (OCTOBER 2022 - SEPTEMBER 2023)

USAID's [Cooperative Development Program](#) (CDP) is a global initiative that strengthens the capacity of [cooperative](#) businesses, credit unions, and cooperative ecosystems.

Located in the Bureau for Inclusive Growth, Partnerships, and Innovation's Local, Faith, and Transformative Partnerships Hub, the CDP enables new and underutilized stakeholders to drive the development process by partnering with U.S.-based cooperatives and Cooperative Development Organizations (CDOs) for five-year activities.

With the goal of advancing sustainable and inclusive development globally, CDP invests in cooperatives to build social cohesion, stabilize economies, and support local communities. The program currently works across multiple sectors throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America.



In Cobán, Guatemala, farmers from the Federation of Cooperatives of las Verapaces smile as they hold a basket of freshly harvested cardamom pods.

The purpose of the program is to foster sustainable cooperative systems that deliver value to cooperative members and their communities. This is accomplished by strengthening cooperative business performance, creating environments where cooperatives can thrive, and enhancing the development community's support to cooperatives.

This report highlights the achievements of the program and its partners during Fiscal Year (FY) 2023.

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*By becoming cooperatives [with support from the CDP], these groups can formalize, become better organized and equipped, increase their capacity and thereby their sales. A world of opportunities opens for them.*

”

– USAID/Peru

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*Through USAID support, we have gained knowledge and skills in managing our financial resources, including proper documentation and loans and savings.*

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– Cooperative Member, Kenya

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*Cooperative development should be at the heart of USAID's localization approach. Cooperatives are community-based, democratic private sector organizations ... In a way, they embody the best of two worlds: civil society and the private sector.*

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– USAID/Paraguay

### QUESTIONS ABOUT THE COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM?

For more information, please contact Emily Varga, Senior Advisor for Cooperative Development, at [emvarga@usaid.gov](mailto:emvarga@usaid.gov).

## GLOBAL IMPACT

With support for cooperatives and credit unions, the program advanced sustainable, locally-led, and inclusive development around the world during FY 2023.



### 22 COUNTRIES

The program worked in 22 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.



### 314 LOCAL COOPERATIVES & CREDIT UNIONS

314 local cooperatives and credit unions strengthened their capacity through this program.



### \$123.7 MILLION IN INCOME & SERVICES

Members of program-supported cooperatives and credit unions received income and services valued at more than \$123.7 million.



### 9.9 MILLION PEOPLE

Over 9.9 million people, including cooperative members and their households, benefited from this program.



### 871,173 WOMEN & YOUTH

871,173 women and youth directly benefited from this program.

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*[With support from the CDP] our milk production has increased significantly and contributes to a greater profit for our cooperative.*

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– Cooperative Member, Peru

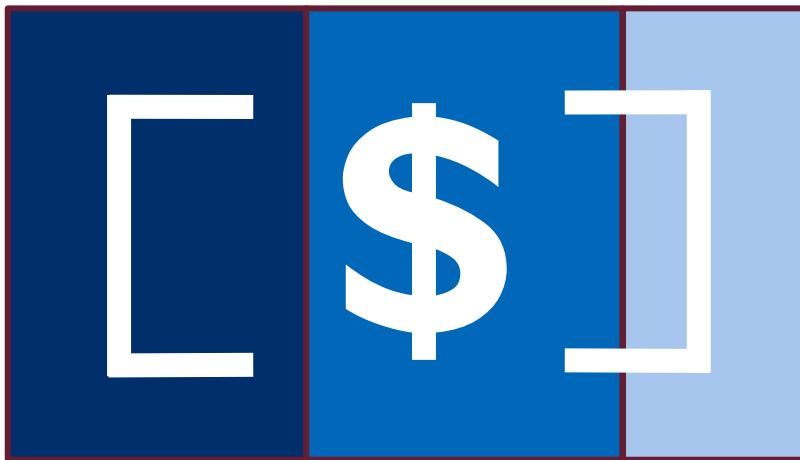


Worker-Owners of Kigro Recyclers Worker Cooperative, established by youth entrepreneurs as a waste collection enterprise in Nairobi, Kenya, sort through collected waste to recycle for cash.

## RESOURCES LEVERAGED

In FY 2023, the program mobilized more than \$42.2 million in funding for cooperative development worldwide, including the program investment, contributions from host country governments, and contributions from the U.S. and local private sector.

Compared to FY 2022, CDP increased its contributions from private sector and host government partners by 56 percent.



**\$17.6 million**

USAID earmarked funds contribution

**\$21.6 million**

Private sector partner and host country government contributions

**\$3 million**

USAID's Gender Office

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

### CULTIVATING GENDER INCLUSION & WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Globally, agrifood systems are a major employer of women, with 36 percent of women employed in the sector.<sup>1</sup> Yet, in spite of the crucial role these jobs play in supporting their livelihoods and welfare, women have long been marginalized and excluded from fair and safe labor conditions, formal training, and leadership opportunities within the sector. Equal Exchange, a U.S.-based fair trade cooperative and partner of USAID since 2018, aimed to make changes in the industry.

Working with eight agricultural cooperatives in coffee, cocoa, banana and sugarcane across Mexico, Guatemala, Peru and Paraguay, Equal Exchange prioritized gender mainstreaming and women's economic empowerment in their USAID-funded Cooperative Development Program (CDP), recognizing the crucial contribution and need for a safe working environment for women in these communities.



Erika León, member and former executive of the Río y Valle Cooperative in the organic banana value chain, stands in front of her cooperative's farming equipment.

In close partnership with local partner Norandino Cooperative, the program significantly increased the number of trained individuals to advance gender equality and female empowerment, from 31 members in 2022 to 298 in 2023. Specifically, with the support of gender specialists assigned to each local cooperative, skills were cultivated to prevent, address, and eliminate workplace sexual harassment. Additionally, they formulated gender policies in alignment with USAID's gender equality and women's empowerment policy. For many of these communities, this was the first time gender equality was operationalized within their cooperative.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fao.org/3/CC5060EN/online/status-women-agrifood-systems-2023/chapter1.html>

## IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT CONTINUED:

With the implementation of gender policies and workshops, cooperatives like Norandino have begun to see a mindset shift among men on gender and inclusion – a step forward to create a safer working environment for all members. "These workshops [on mainstreaming gender perspectives] allow us to identify attitudes that we believe are normal and that may make our female colleagues uncomfortable; they help us clarify a lot in order to coexist with respect in the workplace," said Martín Domínguez, Industrial Complex Manager at Norandino Cooperative.

In 2023, member participation in CDP training, peer exchanges, and other learning sessions on production, quality, governance, and capitalization rose by 18 percent from 1,764 participants in 2022 to 2,082 participants in 2023. Approximately 30 percent of participants were female. This increase in trained members is reflected in the rise of trained members in the Manduvirá (Paraguay), Manos Campesinas (Guatemala), and Río y Valle (Peru) cooperatives. Through USAID funding, Río y Valle Cooperative established a pilot leadership school which has opened up opportunities for all members, including women, to participate in cooperative training and learning opportunities which has helped begin to close the gender gap in cooperative leadership roles.

Erika León, member and former executive of the Río y Valle Cooperative, had the opportunity to empower herself through the cooperative's leadership school and within decision-making spaces. "I am proud to be part of my organization, to have improved my leadership skills, and to understand that I also have the same rights as a man in participation and opinion," said León. "This was the result of being part of one of the councils of our cooperative, where I found a space where there were training sessions on governance, self-esteem, leadership, and gender equity." Through the USAID-funded CDP program, women, like Erika, are able to access the resources and knowledge to overcome barriers, engage in leadership opportunities, gain ownership of their cooperative, and cultivate their own economic empowerment.

Throughout 2023, the CDP has invested in partnerships with U.S.-based cooperatives, like Equal Exchange, to leverage an additional \$3 million and advance gender equality, women's empowerment and economic opportunities through cooperative development. These investments have led to increased inclusion and opportunities for women in agrifood systems, thereby advancing USAID's mission to champion inclusive development.



Erika León, member and former executive of the Río y Valle Cooperative, examines canavalia pods with the cooperative president and technical team leader.

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*Thanks to the cooperative and the Cooperative Development Program (CDP), which conducted leadership schools, I was able to mitigate sexism in my home and improve family relationships. I managed to implement a boutique, empowered myself, and now I am a woman who recognizes that limitations and fears can be dispelled by actions that improve society.*

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– Erika León,  
Río y Valle Cooperative