

LWR

SPECIAL REPORTS

ALERT

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LWR THINKS COFFEE AND COCOA FARMERS ARE A

BIG DEAL!

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Improving Coffee from Crop to Cup

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Cocoa Brings Hope to Farmers



Lutheran World Relief
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

Affirming God's love for all people, we work with Lutherans and partners around the world to end poverty, injustice and human suffering.

DEVOTIONAL

A CHRISTIAN DEVOTION FROM LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Coffee farmer José Aquiles Espinoza holds coffee cherries still attached to the plant on his farm in Nicaragua. The red cherries are ripe and ready to be picked.

Morgan Arnold for LWR

TOUCH

By Ellie Roscher

Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Can you see anything?" And the man looked up and said, "I can see people, but they look like trees, walking." Then Jesus placed his hands on the man's eyes again, and his eyes were opened. His sight was completely restored, and he could see everything clearly. — Mark 8:23-25

I love this scene between Jesus and the blind man. It's intimate, a moment of human connection and restoration. Jesus touches the man, taking him by the hand and leading him away from the crowds. It's not about the spectacle; it's about the man getting relief and being welcomed back into society. Jesus' spit, his bodily fluid and his touch become the tools used to bring healing. And it doesn't work the first time! The man is brave enough to admit to Jesus he doesn't see clearly. They don't settle for just seeing. Seeing clearly, total restoration is the goal. What ultimately works? More touch, a second try.

Lutheran World Relief lives out of this passage, knowing that transformative change doesn't always happen on the first try, the first touch. LWR does slow work that is built on relationship, teamwork, listening, adjusting and clear seeing. It's the work of offering a vegetable farmer in India dignity by giving her access to a functional literacy program so she can write her name. It's the slow work of partnering shallot farmers in Mali with local banks to build credit lines that benefit the whole community. It's the technical work of training Nicaraguan coffee cooperatives to own every processing step from dirt to market. It's the intentional work of stitching a quilt, one

square at a time, so that a man in a refugee camp in Kenya can have something warm, colorful and all his own.

For more than 70 years, LWR has been empowering people around the world to claim their own solutions. LWR staff members walk alongside farmers and survivors of disasters, taking them by the arm, asking them to help LWR see the problems and solutions more clearly. Like Jesus and the blind man, the goal is for Lutherans in the United States and communities overseas to put their spit in the game, to touch each other. It doesn't always work at first, but eventually, because we are all invested, we see each other more clearly. And there is healing and restoration for us all.

Ellie Roscher is the director of youth and story development at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

This devotion is included in **Lasting Promise**, a compilation of devotions written by friends of LWR. Order free copies at lwr.org/resources or call 800.597.5972.



LWR WANTS TO GET TO KNOW OUR FAMILY BETTER!

Please visit lwr.org/familysurvey and complete our brief survey. It takes less than five minutes and you can enter to win a Fair Trade gift basket or an LWR Gift donated in honor of you or someone special to you!

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR FAMILY SURVEY PRIZE DRAWING WINNERS:

Earl Bruning from Ark., Sandra Webb from Mo., Pastor Jean DeVoll-Donaldson from Okla., and Ella Kunkel from Wash!

LWR THINKS
COFFEE AND COCOA
FARMERS ARE A

BIG DEAL!

(HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULD TOO!)



Jake Lyell for LWR

COFFEE AND COCOA ARE BIG BUSINESS AROUND THE WORLD.

In the United States alone, coffee is the largest food import, and chocolate generates more than \$20 billion per year in revenue. Yet many of the world's coffee and cocoa producers live in poverty.

Rick Peyser, Lutheran World Relief's senior relationship manager for coffee and cocoa, sat down for an interview to explain why this disparity exists and what LWR is doing about it, with your support.



lucrative and sustainable sources of livelihood for many farmers.

LWR: Why do coffee and cocoa farmers struggle so much?

Rick: Globally, there are approximately 30 million farming families growing either coffee or cocoa. Most of these families farm on small plots of land and live in poverty. This is mainly because the supply chains — all the steps from the farm to the final product — involve many people like processors and exporters. Unfortunately the farmer, who does most of the work, receives a disproportionately low amount of the profit made from the final product. Coffee and cocoa farmers also often tend to rely on that single crop to support their families, leaving them vulnerable to a variety of shocks, including changes in the climate and global market.

LWR: What are some of the challenges you've seen in growing communities as a result?

Rick: They lack access to sufficient nutritious food all year, clean water, education for their children, medical care, and more. Another big problem is that farmers who grow these crops are aging (with the average age in the mid-50's) while young people are migrating to urban centers where they see better economic opportunities. These things all threaten the sustainability of coffee and cocoa production, which both have the potential to be

LWR: What is LWR doing to help coffee and cocoa farming families and communities?

Rick: **Ground Up, LWR's Coffee & Cocoa Initiative,** is helping coffee and cocoa farmers address the basic challenges they are facing and enabling them to move out of poverty. We're partnering with other community organizations, governments and corporations, like the Starbucks Foundation, and providing technical assistance that helps farmers generate more income from their crops in sustainable ways and helping farmer cooperatives develop greater capacity to meet the needs of their members.

LWR: What do we hope will be the long-term impact of our work with coffee and cocoa farmers?

Rick: Our hope is that, by maximizing earnings from their crops, coffee and cocoa farmers will ultimately leave poverty behind. We also hope to help farmers diversify their sources of income to reduce their dependency on a single crop and market prices that are set thousands of miles away. By helping farmers to create additional sources of on-farm income, they are then able to improve and invest in their own productivity and livelihoods without external support.



Check out this issue's bonus content at lwr.org/specialreports. You'll find videos that feature coffee and cocoa farmers we work with and links to more information about our Ground Up Initiative.



SUCCESS

FROM THE GROUND UP

By Nikki Massie, LWR's Staff Writer

Today the Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative Enterprise (GCCE)

is made up of 16,000 members that produce high-quality coffee that sells for premium prices. In fact, last year the cooperative reported \$500,000 in profits.

By all standards GCCE is a resounding success. But things weren't always this way.

In fact, in 2008 GCCE was struggling. It had about 5,000 members and recorded \$250,000 in losses the previous year. This was mostly due to problems with coffee quality. Their beans had a defect rate of 12 to 18 percent — very high according to industry standards.

As a result, the cooperative could not get good prices for their coffee and coffee farmers continued to live in poverty.

This is the story of how your support helped LWR and GCCE turn things around.

CHANGE AT EVERY LEVEL

Starting at the farm level, farmers struggled to even support their families. When things got tight they sometimes had to harvest their coffee early, before it had reached peak quality. This resulted in low prices that kept farmers struggling.

The local primary societies lacked equipment to properly process coffee after harvest to preserve its quality and value. That meant farmers weren't delivering good quality coffee to the cooperative and, in turn, the cooperative didn't have good quality coffee to offer buyers.

IMPROVING COFFEE FROM CROP TO CUP

To improve the quality of GCCE's coffee, the cooperative literally had to work from the ground up.

To help farmers improve the quality of coffee straight from the tree, LWR supported the training of Community Knowledge Workers. These members of the community are trained to offer technical advice and are outfitted with smartphones that connect them to a database of agricultural knowledge.

We also worked to create systems of financial support for farmers through Village Savings and Lending Associations (VSLAs). These associations allow farmers to save money together and take out loans for various reasons, including household needs and farm reinvestment. This support allows farmers to hold off on harvesting their coffee until it is ripe and at its best quality.

Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative Enterprise (GCCE) members sort out defective coffee beans. This is the last of many quality control steps GCCE performs before shipping coffee to its buyers. The sorting is all done by hand.

LWR also helped farmers and primary societies purchase post-harvest processing equipment so that they could properly process coffee immediately after harvesting, which resulted in better quality coffee at the factory level.

A MORE SUSTAINABLE, MORE RESILIENT GUMUTINDO

The results of this work can be seen at every level of cooperative operations. Where in 2008, the cooperative reported defect rates of 12-18 percent, they currently have about a four percent defect rate. Through VSLAs farmers are able to save money, access loans and build credit to continue investing in their farms.

The vast improvement of coffee quality means that GCCE now counts Equal Exchange and Oxfam among its buyers — both companies pay top prices for their coffee.

This partnership has not only resulted in better quality coffee, but also sustainable coffee livelihoods and resilient coffee farmers who are equipped to support their families long into the future.

Special thanks to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for supporting this project.

HOW HAITIAN COFFEE FARMERS ARE FIGHTING BACK AGAINST A DEVASTATING PLANT DISEASE

By Nikki Massie, LWR's Staff Writer

THE ST. HELENE DE CARICE COFFEE

COOPERATIVE is about a three-hour drive from the city of Cap Haitien in northeast Haiti. About an hour of that journey is on unpaved, windy roads, leading up steep mountain hills. The landscape is breathtaking. The clay earth casts a reddish tint on everything within sight.

Farmers here have been growing coffee practically all their lives. One farmer, Charles Sylvain, told us it's all he's ever known how to do. And for many farmers it was a steady income that allowed them to pay their children's school fees and provide many of life's necessities. In fact, up until the 1980's, coffee was a profitable cash crop for farmers in Haiti.

But over the years, changing climate conditions — including rising temperatures and changes in rainfall — have made it more difficult to grow coffee. Then last year, Haitian farmers began to experience leaf rust, a devastating crop disease that kills coffee trees. Put together, these factors left coffee farmers struggling to maintain their livelihoods.

60 PERCENT OF COFFEE CROPS LOST TO LEAF RUST

Even before I found myself standing in the middle of a coffee field high up in the mountains of northeast Haiti, I was already acutely aware of leaf rust. LWR has been talking about it for quite some time. The disease spreads from one coffee plant to another through the air, attacking the plant, making it unable to produce the little fat coffee cherries that contain beans. Then it kills the tree — a tree that took three years to bear fruit.

Looking at the coffee tree it appeared ashen. It was a smoky gray color and its leaves had all fallen off. As to remind me of the tragedy of this disease, not far away there was a patch of healthy coffee trees, complete with verdant stems and leaves,

bowed slightly by the presence of still green coffee cherries.

Alexis St. Firmin, president of the cooperative, told us that overall they lost about 60 percent of their coffee crops to leaf rust last year. In listening to him talk, I wondered what kind of impact that had on the community. How did they cope?

Charles Sylvain told me that his family coped by cutting down on their number of meals per day. And like many farmers, Charles used his coffee income to pay for school and books. With the loss of income resulting from leaf rust he's had to change his children to a different, lesser quality school. It was heartbreaking to hear about these incredible sacrifices. But he's got hope, with good reason.

RISING ABOVE RUST

LWR partners locally with RECOCARNO, a coffee producers' federation made up of cooperatives like St. Helene de Carice. When leaf rust began eating away at farmers' livelihoods, we began to work together to find ways to help farmers save their crops and support their families.

Two important ways we are doing that are through crop diversification and coffee seedling selection. Several members of the cooperative took me on a tour of a demonstration field where farmers were growing plantains and mangoes and other crops. Agricultural experts provide technical advice to farmers on how to successfully grow these crops. The fruit that farmers are planting provide food and income, and also the shade that coffee trees need to grow and flourish.

In addition, this cooperative has identified two varieties of coffee resistant to leaf rust. The cooperative's nurseries have ramped up production of these two varieties in hopes that

they will, in fact, reduce the instance of leaf rust and allow for increased production.

On a broader level, LWR and RECOCARNO are working together to improve coffee quality and, in turn, the price farmers can get for their crop. We're also advocating for farmers so that the Haitian government better understands the challenges and needs of farmers so that coffee is once again a major export.

To hear that farmers have lost so much of their crop and yet have hope that they will again be able to grow coffee and support their families is just another testament to the good things God is doing through you with LWR. Thank you!



Charles Sylvain, a member of the St. Helene de Carice coffee cooperative, says he's realized a big loss in his coffee crops and income due to leaf rust. LWR and our local partner are helping farmers like Charles to diversify crops and grow disease resistant coffee varieties.

Allison Shelley for LWR



See more about our work in Latin America — including our work with coffee farmers in Colombia, supported by the Starbucks Foundation — at lwr.org/specialreports.

COCOA BRINGS HOPE TO FARMERS IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Kat Fiske, LWR's Program Associate for Communications, Asia and Middle East

Nestled in the green mountains of Mindanao's Calinan district in northern Davao City in the Philippines, Jowen Joromat tends to a cacao seedling, the plant that produces the beans that will eventually become cocoa. He carefully slits the tip of the seedling, inserting then taping a scion — a piece of stem from another cacao plant — in a technique known as grafting, which will rapidly multiply his cacao seedlings. Not far away his wife, Lorenda, finishes watering the crop for the second time that day and returns to recording the pre-order their nursery just received for three hundred seedlings.

The Joromats manage hundreds of cacao seedlings and the success of their nursery has prompted them to expand their operation to additional plots down the road. They are now also confident that they will be able to pay for all three of their children to attend college.

A little over a year ago this level of prosperity was only a dream for the family. The Joromats, like many other farmers in Mindanao, did not have quality fertilizer or the proper tools to maximize

their lands' productivity. They often experienced food insecurity and were not able to amass any household savings.

Since the early 1990s, the Philippine government has worked to transform Mindanao into the country's agricultural production center. However, changing climate conditions, natural disasters and conflict in the region have left many smallholder farmers in Mindanao struggling to feed their families, let alone produce enough to turn a profit in markets. Together with our local partner, the Cacao Industry Development Association of Mindanao (CIDAMi), LWR has been working to bridge this livelihood gap for smallholder farmers through cacao farming and technology.

Farmers, like the Joromats, receive start-up inputs like seeds and shears and training on cacao seedling growth, nursery management and business management. Lorenda attributes much of her family's success to the project's Household Development Approach, which is integrated into all trainings. In the traditional Philippine rural household, men farm and make most family decisions

while women raise the children, work inside the home, and have little voice in household or farming matters. This approach encourages the inclusion of all family members in household, budgeting and farming activities. In addition, farmers are encouraged to share what they learn with their spouses and children so that families can work together.

Farmers are also using a text message based application specifically designed for the project that allows farmers to get quick responses to their questions about cacao and nursery management. Any farmer wishing to grow cacao can use the application, and the word has been spreading rapidly through the region.

As for the Joromats, they feel very confident about their future. Looking out at their nursery, it's not hard to see why. Your gifts help grow both cocoa and hope for families in the Philippines — now and for many years to come.

Special thanks to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for supporting this project.

Jowen Joromat proudly stands in his cacao nursery. In addition to tending to his own nursery, Jowen has learned how to advise others families on their farming enterprise and household management.





Allison Shelley for LWR

FARMERS FAIR TRADE AND YOU

LWR works with small-scale coffee and cocoa farmers around the world to improve the quality, yield and value of crops so that they can earn more income to support their families and communities. Fair Trade strengthens our work by providing an opportunity for farmers to earn a fair price for quality crops and emphasizing sustainable agricultural practices that help farmers benefit from their crops season after season.



With LWR Fair Trade, you can put your faith into action by helping small-scale farmers create sustainable livelihoods.

LWR Fair Trade proudly offers an assortment of delicious products from small-scale farmers around the world. A portion of every LWR Fair Trade coffee, tea, chocolate and select food items purchased through our partner, Equal Exchange, goes to LWR's Small Farmer Fund and is designated to support our work with small-scale farmers worldwide.



Check out lwr.org/fairtrade to learn more and shop the Fair Trade selection.



FROM USING FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS DURING FELLOWSHIP EVENTS to buying products to enjoy at home or give as gifts, congregations and their members support farmers overseas through their Fair Trade ministries.

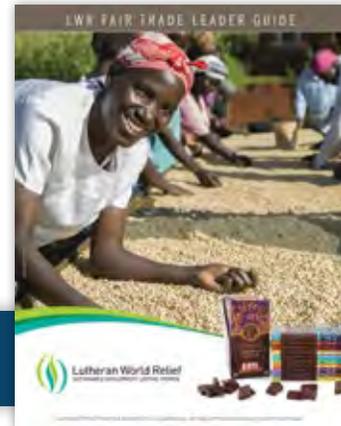
Greg Kasper has led the Fair Trade ministry at Christ Lutheran Church in Whitefish, Mont., for seven years. Every third Sunday, he sets up an area where members and visitors are greeted with Fair Trade coffee, chocolate, tea and foods that they can purchase before, between and after both worship services.

While most purchases occur in church, Greg uses his talent for building relationships to engage members of the local business community too.

“This ministry has helped me build a stronger sense of community in my church in a fun way while seeking to fulfill the word of God by supporting those less fortunate than myself,” says Greg.

THANK YOU TO OUR LWR FAIR TRADE LEADERS!

Order your free Fair Trade Leader Guide at lwr.org/resources or call 800.597.5972.





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Lutheran World Relief is a ministry of U.S. Lutherans, serving communities living in poverty overseas.

COVER IMAGE: José Alejandro Romero is a coffee farmer in El Salvador. Two years ago he harvested 60 times more than the last two years because of leaf rust, a devastating disease affecting coffee plants. LWR is working with farmers like José to combat leaf rust and grow other cash crops, like cocoa. (Sean Hawkey for LWR)

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LWRGIFTS | COFFEE AND COCOA

These LWR Gifts are all part of our work to help coffee and cocoa farmers overcome poverty.



COFFEE SEEDLINGS

need to be planted annually to replace aging coffee trees and keep farmers producing coffee and income.



COCOA SEEDLINGS

make more than sweet treats. They give farmers access to a valuable crop that changes lives.



A COCOA DRYER

is essential for producing the quality of cocoa farmers need to increase their crop value and raise family income.



IMPROVE A FARMER'S LAND

and give the gift of fruitfulness by empowering a farmer to make the most of her resources.



SPONSOR A FARMER EDUCATOR

and bring the gift of knowledge to small-scale farmers, like how to better fertilize and harvest crops and care for livestock.

Give coffee and cocoa farmers the gift of a better life. GIVE LWR GIFTS.



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