Impact of PROCAMPO on Agricultural Producer Groups in Guatemala

Productores del Campo
Más Prósperos y Organizados (PROCAMPO)
This learning brief presents findings from the USDA-funded PROCAMPO implementation of activities aimed at improving agricultural production and market access opportunities for producer groups in Guatemala. It finds that targeted, need-centered training, technical assistance, and financial support activities can substantially benefit agricultural producer groups in Guatemala by increasing sales prices and profits, while decreasing production costs. The brief concludes with recommendations for future programming.

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About Counterpart International

Counterpart International partners with local organizations around the world to build inclusive, sustainable communities in which people thrive. A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, it forges community-based partnerships between citizens, government, civil society, and the private sector in the areas of food security, democracy, rights and governance, women’s empowerment, and climate resiliency to build the capacity of communities to shape their own destinies. Since 1965, Counterpart has operated in more than 65 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.
PROCAMPO’s Learning Series

Counterpart International has implemented USDA’s Food for Progress project in Guatemala, known as PROCAMPO (Productores del Campo Más Prósperos y Organizados) for over a decade. As the program comes to a close, the project team has gathered data from various participants, implementing partners, and other key stakeholders to document PROCAMPO’s accomplishments, successes, and lessons learned. The PROCAMPO Learning Series covers topics of financial services, accredited certification, trade fairs, and the impact of project activities on agricultural producer groups. The following brief focuses on the impact of engaging agricultural producer groups in activities aimed at improving agricultural production and market access opportunities in Guatemala.

PROCAMPO Overview

In 2016, Counterpart International began implementing PROCAMPO in Guatemala’s Western Highlands departments of Huehuetenango, Quetzaltenango, San Marcos, Sololá, and Quiche. PROCAMPO’s goal is to improve agricultural productivity and expand trade of agricultural products in Guatemala.

The project works in partnership with the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture (MAGA), the National Coffee Association (ANACAFE), the Federated Cooperation of Credit Unions (MICOOPE), the Agronomy Faculty of the University of San Carlos (FAUSAC), and the University of California at Davis (UC Davis) to improve the agriculture extension system, agricultural productivity, market systems, access to loans, and value chain development.

Counterpart International has delivered permanent, scalable solutions by:

- Re-establishing a functioning National Rural Extension System and creating the only academic rural extension training program in the country
- Strengthening the capacity of coffee and other agricultural producer groups, associations, cooperatives, and Rural Development Learning Centers by providing technical assistance to smallholder farmers
- Providing capacity-building grants to competitively selected producer groups to support agricultural development activities such as technical services, on-farm equipment, and agricultural inputs
- Expanding the outreach and availability of financial services in the agricultural sector
- Implementing trade promotion activities to enhance producer marketability, supporting farmers to obtain certifications to expand sales into new and established markets, participate in trade shows, and connect with buyers
- Providing training and technical assistance to agricultural producers on production practices, technologies, and farm management

Since its inception, PROCAMPO has graduated 420 extension agents from the Certificate Rural Extension Program, provided 191 in-kind and cash grants for improved agricultural productivity, provided over $60 million USD in agricultural financial loans to 9,757 smallholders and coffee producers, facilitated 58 contracts signed between buyers and sellers to support producer groups to expand sales and establish new markets, achieved $6.2 million USD in sales from 2,806 MT of coffee produced by project coffee producers, trained 54,972 coffee producers and smallholders on agricultural sector productivity or food security, created 2,946 new jobs, and benefitted 72,663 individuals directly as a result of USDA assistance.
Targeted, need-centered training, technical assistance, and financial support activities can substantially benefit agricultural producer groups in Guatemala by increasing sales prices and profits, while decreasing production costs.

This learning brief presents significant findings from PROCAMPO’s implementation of activities aimed at improving agricultural production and market access opportunities for agricultural producer groups in Guatemala.

Methodology

A comparative analysis was used to analyze quantitative survey data and qualitative data from focus group discussions. The project team gathered data from members of 50 agricultural producer groups who participated in PROCAMPO activities, including cooperatives, producer associations, and Rural Learning Development Centers, among others. A comprehensive review was used to assess the overall success of PROCAMPO’s interventions, including training, technical assistance, and financial support.

Results

PROCAMPO engaged local producer groups through training, technical assistance, and financial support, resulting in increased production and market access opportunities. The following results document the primary needs of agricultural producer groups, and the extent to which PROCAMPO initiatives addressed them.

Agricultural Producer Group Needs

The needs of producer groups should be centered in implementation activities. Of producer groups surveyed regarding their primary needs, 78% reported improved infrastructure, 72% reported improved techniques and technologies, 70% reported technical assistance and training, and 60% reported access to financial services.

Additionally, agricultural producer groups identified the need for support at different stages of the value chain, where 52% emphasized marketing and sales, 28% emphasized production, and 20% emphasized post-production.

Effects of PROCAMPO Intervention

Participating in PROCAMPO intervention, such as training, technical assistance, and financial support activities, has positively impacted agricultural producer groups by increasing average product sales price and profits, while decreasing production costs.
After participating in PROCAMPO:

- Over 67% of producer groups reported an **increase in average price received**, with the average price increasing 50%. Notably, over 12% reported that average price received at least doubled.
- Over 85% of producer groups reported a **decrease in average production cost**, with an average cost decrease of 19%. Notably, over 7% reported that production costs decreased by half.
- 100% of producer groups reported an **increase in profits**, with an average profit increase of 33%. Notably, over 10% reported that their profits doubled.

**PROCAMPO Intervention**

These positive impacts can be attributed to the support agricultural producer groups received through PROCAMPO, where 100% received **capacity-building training**, 100% received **technical assistance to adopt improved technologies**, and 92% received **financial support**. Through targeted training and support, agricultural producer groups were able to improve agricultural production, strengthen farm management skills, adopt improved technologies, and expand market access opportunities.

**Producer Group Feedback**

Producer groups’ perception of PROCAMPO was overall positive and **90% of producer groups reported that every PROCAMPO activity they participated in was beneficial**.

Of the feedback received from agricultural producer groups on PROCAMPO, the following were highlighted:

- **Training**: Producer groups suggested smaller training group sizes, more training opportunities, and follow-up training.
- **Technical Assistance**: Producer groups suggested follow-up technical assistance and a greater emphasis on climate-smart technologies. Technical Assistance: Producer groups suggested follow-up technical assistance and a greater emphasis on climate-smart technologies.
- **Financial Support**: Producer groups suggested more financial support opportunities and more varied financial services options.

**Conclusion**

Based on the qualitative and quantitative data collected, it is evident that the PROCAMPO project substantially benefited participating agricultural producer groups, with notable impacts of increased sales price, decreased production costs, and increased profits.
Recommendations for Future Programming

**Target Producer Group Needs.** There is a need for future interventions to continue prioritizing the various needs of producer groups. Prior to implementation, producer groups should be surveyed to determine what their primary needs are so that targeted activities can be developed to address them. For example, for those agricultural producer groups that specify needing improved techniques and technologies, activities could include provision of high-quality productive inputs, and training on adoption of improved practices, such as use of pest/disease control measures.

**Target Specific Stages in the Value Chain.** There is a need for future interventions to continue tailoring activities to specific stages in the value chain, such as production, post-production, and marketing/sales. Prior to implementation, producer groups should be surveyed to determine which stage they require the most support, so that targeted activities can be developed to address them. For example, for those agricultural producer groups that require additional support for marketing and sales, activities could include training on improved negotiation techniques, promotion of agricultural trade fairs and business roundtables, and support to obtain agricultural certification.