

Canada–Latin America: A Wide Range of Partnerships Between Cooperative Organizations

As major influencers in Canada’s socio-economic development, Canadian cooperatives and mutual associations have established a number of partnerships with Latin American organizations over the years. Their goal is to contribute to the region’s progress by participating in local development and innovation initiatives.

With 100 years of combined experience in Latin America, the three main Canadian organizations working to promote co-ops internationally—namely Développement international Desjardins (DID), Société de coopération pour le développement international (SOCODEVI) and the Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA)—have carried out dozens of projects in some 30 countries, with the support of major lenders, including Foreign Affairs, Development and Trade Canada, and, in some cases, in partnership with other development agencies.

DID, SOCODEVI and CCA are members of cooperative networks within Canada, which broadens the impact of partnerships between cooperatives from the North and South and helps promote the values of inter-cooperation that drive them. The result is mutual reinforcement and wide-ranging benefits.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT



Colombian Agricultural Finance System Support Project (PASAC)

In **COLOMBIA**, DID is helping develop the agricultural sector through a three-pronged approach that includes: strengthening farm financing, setting up farm insurance mechanisms and promoting financial literacy among farmers. Initiated in 2014 and expected to run five years, this project is being carried out jointly with Coopcentral cooperative bank, Colombia’s Ministry of Agriculture and several local stakeholders. SOCODEVI and the CCA are also very active in Colombia.

Rural Economic Development Project of the Department of Sololá (PROSOL)

In **GUATEMALA**, SOCODEVI is promoting economic development in the Department of Sololá as a means of reducing poverty and increasing job creation. Achieving this objective will help improve the likelihood of achieving certain commitments contained in Guatemala’s peace agreements. Through this seven-year mandate, the goal is to attain better results and improve economic development opportunities for target populations in the department of Sololá.





Sustainable Crop Diversification

In **PERU**, the CCA and local partner Norandino have already seen significant results related to the production and sale of organic, fair-trade coffee, cocoa and cane sugar. Run jointly with La Siembra, a Canadian worker cooperative, this four-year project is making a big difference in increasing the incomes of participating communities. Through training and technical assistance, this project aims to improve local skill sets and to develop new markets.

Development of an Agro-Industrial Value Chain in the Spice Sector

In **BOLIVIA**, SOCODEVI launched, in 1998, a major support project for the diversification of economic and farming activities in Chuquisaca, one of the country's poorest departments, with the aim of increasing family incomes.

Working with farmers who are members of the AGROCENTRAL network of cooperatives, the SOCODEVI team took up an enormous challenge: identifying new products that would be more profitable and growing them while ensuring the long-term sustainability of the system and natural resources.

Today, the emergence of a new industry to produce, process and market spices, in particular oregano, has changed the lives of thousands of farming families. This project will continue until 2018.



SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT



Financial Centre for Businesses

In **PANAMA**, DID has partnered with the Latin American Confederation of Savings and Credit Cooperatives and other development agencies to set up and operate a financial centre for businesses. The centre provides micro and small businesses with the financial services they need to grow, create jobs and stimulate the local economy. https://youtu.be/hxRwdlre_i0 (Spanish)

National Support Program for Organizing Haitian Entrepreneurship (PANSEH)

In **HAITI**, DID has been active since 1987 with numerous large-scale projects, all aimed at improving access to financial services and providing structure to the cooperative and agricultural financing sectors. DID has just committed to a new five-and-a-half-year mandate to structure and promote entrepreneurship. Working with Haiti's Ministry of Commerce and Industry and numerous Haitian partners, including the cooperative financial network Le Levier, PANESH will help improve access to financial and non-financial services for micro, small and medium businesses in Haiti.



FORESTRY

Improved Revenues for Forestry Cooperatives



In **HONDURAS**, SOCODEVI has helped strengthen cooperative agroforestry industries in Honduras by supporting added-value forest products since 2003. Ultimately, this project aims to improve the living conditions of families through the rational and sustainable use of forestry resources. The improvement in economic and organizational performance has enabled dozens of Honduran cooperatives to obtain Forest Stewardship Council certification for their community forest management. <https://vimeo.com/62608992>

STRENGTHENING COOPERATIVES

Supporting the Cooperatives Department

In **BARBADOS**, the CCA was invited by the local government to provide support to the country's Cooperatives Department and help develop the country's non-financial co-op sector. The CCA will help draft and implement a strategic plan and provide training to the department's staff through webinars and other innovative tools. These interventions will focus primarily on co-operative principles.

Cooperative and Mutualist Partnership Program 2012-2017

In **BOLIVIA**, SOCODEVI is working to improve living conditions for target populations that are members of cooperative and associative enterprises, while improving their empowerment capacity. The program aims to help cooperative businesses step up their performance, adopt suitable



environmental practices and improve their overall business environment. The program also provides support to the Directorate-General of Cooperatives to improve the legal framework, promote economic development for cooperatives and develop three agricultural networks. See some of SOCODEVI's work in Bolivia at: <https://vimeo.com/125685176> (French) or <https://vimeo.com/121147662> (English)



For more than 45 years, **Développement international Desjardins (DID)** has been working with developing and emerging countries towards the goal of sharing the expertise and experience of Desjardins Group, the largest cooperative financial group in Canada. DID's goal is to provide disadvantaged communities around the world with access to secure, diversified financial services that fit their needs. A pioneer in the deployment and development of microfinance around the world, DID today is a leading contributor to the sector. DID has been active in Latin America since 1974 and has since worked in 26 countries in the region.

www.did.qc.ca

Société de coopération pour le développement international (SOCODEVI) is a network of cooperative enterprises and mutuals that share their technical expertise and knowledge with partners in the developing world to generate, protect and distribute wealth. Since it was founded in 1985, SOCODEVI has assisted more than 680 cooperative and mutual businesses and organizations in 40 developing countries and impacted the lives of 12 million people. SOCODEVI has been active in Latin America since 1985 and has worked in 19 countries in the region.

www.socodevi.org

The Canadian Co-operative Association (CCA) supports the promotion, development and strengthening of co-op federations and credit unions to benefit people in Canada and around the world. CCA members come from various economic sectors, including finance, insurance, agri-food, housing, healthcare and the service sector. For more than 40 years, the CCA's international development program has been helping reduce poverty through the creation and development of co-ops, credit unions and community-based organizations.

www.coopscanada.coop/id