



USAID | BOLIVIA

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUCCESS STORY

Bolivian coffee - a taste of the future

Bolivian producers sell their organic coffee in 22 countries through international event promoted by USAID/Bolivia



Zenovia Charca de Huayhua, first prize winner of the Cup of Excellence 2008 competition. Coffee producers in the Yungas of Bolivia are proud of the high quality of their product. They are now able to meet the requirements of demanding markets in more than 20 countries around the world.

Over 8,000 producer families assisted by USAID are moving out of poverty, changing their outlook on life and production standards for new commercial crops that hold greater market potential .

The life of Zenovia Charca de Huayhua, her husband and three children has changed dramatically this year. As the winner of first prize in the 2008 Cup of Excellence competition, she will receive more than 12 dollars per pound for her high quality coffee—more than eight times the price she would get without the competition. *“The money will support my children’s education. I hope to do even better in the next competition. I am very happy because without this event, I would not have sold my coffee at this price”*, said Zenovia when she learned she will get a \$25,000 check for her coffee.

Zenovia, together with around 4,000 producers, is receiving assistance from USAID to improve the quality and productivity of their coffee fields. As part of the program, USAID has helped people like Zenovia to enter successfully the Cup of Excellence Competition (COE) - owned and managed by the Alliance for Coffee Excellence - where judges select the very best coffees produced in a country and sell them through internet bidding. In 2008 the event was sponsored by the Bolivian Federation of Coffee Growers and Exporters, a group of 35 producer associations comprised of over 1,800 families in the Yungas region of Bolivia, where 90 percent of the Bolivian coffee is grown.

Yungas is also a region in Bolivia where coca production has increased in recent years. Coffee producers like Zenovia have embraced production of specialty coffees as a way to promote their own development and prevent the expansion of coca plantations.

In 2008, 29 winning coffees from 269 samples were chosen for the COE competition by a group of national and international cuppers representing nine countries around the world. The winning coffees were offered via internet to buyers from 22 countries. By working to meet international quality standards, the producers are now paid almost four times more than the pre-competition price. This has been possible primarily due to improved quality and higher productivity.

“The competition has shown us that we are all capable of doing better; it gives us an incentive to improve the quality of our coffee. It also gives us an alternative to improve our lives. We are thankful for this” says Cruz Quispe Mamani, one of the other winners.