



Banaqui Curimaná is a cooperative in the Curimaná district in Ucayali, Peru that produces and commercializes organic cacao from 70 families, all recognized as indigenous (Shipibo-Conibo). The organization operates under agroforestry and agroecological systems in Peru’s Amazon region, protecting the environment while producing cacao to sustain their livelihoods.

The Shipibo-Conibo are located on the banks of the Ucayali River, one of the most important rivers in the Peruvian Amazon. Over 70% of the native flora are used for medicinal purposes by the community, and the medicinal knowledge is passed from generation to generation. The Shipibo-Conibo cosmovision is based in four worlds: water, human beings, the spirit world, and the spirit realm. Its main economic activities are handicrafts based on the Amazon Forest's knowledge and importance, as well as fishing and agriculture with crops such as plantain, maize, beans, and cacao. Banaqui’s mission is to revalue the Shipibo-Conibo culture, traditions, and handicrafts (ceramics and weaving).

The organization benefits 70 families, but it's working to increase the beneficiary base by 25% in the next 12 months. Banaqui has established a member assembly, where all the beneficiaries participate and vote, and an administrative council for day-to-day decision-making and business management. Banaqui also purchases cacao from 30 external producers who will soon become cooperative members. All the beneficiaries dedicate most of their time to managing their cacao plantations and receive technical assistance to assess and increase quality and productivity.

IMPACT OVERVIEW

Production and commercialization of cacao	
No. of beneficiaries	70 families
% Women	16%

COMMUNITY

	Country: Peru
	Municipalities: Curimaná (Ucayali)
	Communities: Shipibo-Conibo

Peru exported approximately 62,000 tons of cacao and is one of the top exporters of organic cacao, with Europe and Southeast Asia representing the most attractive markets. Furthermore, Ucayali has over 20,000 hectares of cacao and is Peru's third-biggest producer region, after San Martín and Junín. However, behind this success lies a growing problem of deforestation and soil degradation, which endangers the region's fauna, flora, and cacao production. This adds to a poverty rate of 24% and extreme poverty of 2.4%, with the main economic activity being agriculture.



Banaqui tackles this by working hand in hand with 70 families in Ucayali.

The organization secures clients and markets for the cacao, negotiating competitive prices that allow families to improve their incomes and avoid losses. Furthermore, Banaqui handles the logistics and collects the beans at the farm door.

Banaqui also provides technical assistance to farmers, increasing their quality and productivity and maintaining sustainable practices to protect the

Amazon rainforest. Farmers are also trained in organic fertilizer production, improving soil and farmer health. Working with Banaqui, families have increased production from 800 kg per hectare to almost 1,100 kilograms per hectare yearly.

The 70 families own 1,414 hectares, or on average, 20 hectares per family. The land is used for cacao, poultry, plantain, and cassava. Of the 20 hectares per family, about 4.5 hectares are dedicated to cacao production. The organization purchases cacao at market price, around USD 8 per kilo. Thus, on average, a small farmer can produce 4.5 tons of cacao yearly, representing a potential income of nearly USD 36,000. In 2023, Banaqui purchased almost USD 470,000 in cacao, representing an average income per family of USD 4,700 (including the external cacao producers).

However, Banaqui can only afford to purchase about 20% of its members' total production capacity. Farmers are forced to sell to intermediaries, sometimes at prices lower than the market. Banaqui needs more working capital to purchase the entire harvest in cash.

Embodying the value of community, Banaqui also established a fund that is used in case of the death of an associate or someone in their families, promoting cultural events and providing personal protective equipment, school kits, and first aid kits to the families.

Banaqui ships the cacao in 25-ton containers, with an average value of USD 167,000 per container. Due to the international cacao price increase in 2024, a container costs around USD 230,000.

Banaqui’s exporting business represents 46% of the total revenue, and the rest of the cacao is commercialized with a local client (Agro San Gerardo). The organization secured a 100-ton contract with Altromercato, a retailer that sells sustainable products in Italy. Altromercato expressed interest in purchasing an additional 150 tons in June. This client pays 50% in advance and the rest upon shipment. Banaqui negotiated a price of USD 8 plus a 12% margin for a total of USD 8.96 per kilo. This client would represent USD 2.2M in revenue for 2024. Banaqui has one local and one international client, and it expects to sell nearly 400 tons of cacao this year.



Outcome

<i>Improvement of livelihood</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High-quality cacao commercialization improves income for indigenous families. ▪ The association’s services provide additional benefits (i.e. death insurance, school and medical kits).
<i>Cultural preservation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote culture, traditions and handicrafts elaboration reflecting ancestral knowledge and cosmology.
<i>Environmental preservation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cacao production under agroforestry and agroecological systems in the Amazon rainforest. ▪ Organic fertilizer production.