

# The MAIN Link



**A NETWORK OF  
COOPÉRATIVES  
AND MUTUALS  
THAT COOPERATE,  
ENRICH AND  
SHARE**

## AGENDA

**Training session on international development**  
– April 16 and 17

**SOCODEVI Annual General Meeting** – June 5

**3<sup>rd</sup> SOCODEVI Foundation Golf Tournament**  
– August 26 in Drummondville

**SSQ Quebec City Marathon benefits  
the SOCODEVI Foundation** – August 30

## COOPERATION AT WORK IN THE HONDURAN FOREST

Located in the heart of Central America, bathed by the Caribbean, the Honduran coast displays its dazzling variety of plant life against a vast mountain backdrop. In the department of Atlantida, in the centre of the coastal zone, forestry workers have formed cooperatives and associations. For several years now they have applied a model of forestry management and exploitation that is both sustainable and profitable for their communities.

The consolidation of dozens of agriforestry groups working in deciduous forests is the focus of work carried out by SOCODEVI in this region of Honduras since 2003. In Atlantida, especially in the forest near the community of Mezapita, the timber harvested comes from particularly valuable species.

The members of Grupo Forestal Mezapita, a collectively owned enterprise founded in 1995, work in difficult conditions on the steep slopes of the forest to improve living conditions for themselves and their families.

Roberto Ramirez, a member of the group, is confident about the future. “Despite the difficulties and an unstable legal framework, forestry work is a source of pride for us. Our associations and groups take care of this resource because it is valuable for our communities. In addition, because we are a cooperative type of enterprise, it is also an economic and social legacy for our children,” he said.



Worker-members of the Mezapita forestry group in Honduras

With support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the associative model proposed by SOCODEVI made it possible to make progress in drawing up management plans and developing forestry activities and the organizational and productive capacities of the

agriforestry cooperatives and groups in Honduras. Furthermore, since 2007, the PPCM cooperative and mutualist partnership program carried out by SOCODEVI and its member institutions helps develop the processing and commercialization of the products of the organizations supported in order to increase worker income.

It should be mentioned that in another region of the country, near the capital Tegucigalpa, the PPCM also helps improve harvesting techniques and commercialization of resin, along with all entrepreneurial aspects linked to this activity. In addition, the cooperatives in the program receive training sessions to develop sustainable management of their pine forest resources.

The main support for our activities in the forestry sector, the expertise of the Fédération québécoise des coopératives forestières, is put to work at all stages of our support plan. Sustainable and profitable forestry development is always possible!

## NEW IN THIS ISSUE

*A cooperative advisor's  
personal account*

André Tremblay, of the Fédération québécoise des coopératives forestières, explains the challenges facing the forestry chain in Bolivia

SOCODEVI's member institutions



## SUPPORT FROM SOCODEVI MEMBER INSTITUTIONS



**La Coop**  
fédérée

### Support for the Ukrainian dairy sector

Serge Riendeau, President of Agropur, and Denis Richard, President of the Coop fédérée, met with Ukrainian authorities and SOCODEVI's partners in Ukraine as part of a mission September 20 to October 5, 2008. The main objective of their stay in Ukraine was to plan the numerous contributions that will be made by Agropur and the Coop fédérée as part of our support to the dairy sector in this country.



### PPCM follow-up mission in Honduras

From October 21 to 28, Alain Leclerc and Réjean Lantagne, respectively President and Director General of SOCODEVI, met with representatives of the national organizations of the Honduran cooperative movement. These organizations are partners with SOCODEVI in the PPCM cooperative and mutualist partnership program. The participants in the mission were able to meet with leaders from the partner organizations, the Honduran Confederation of Cooperatives (CHC), the Institute for Cooperative Training (IFC) and the National Council of Women Cooperative Members (CONAMUCOPHL) along with the Institute for Cooperative Development (IHDECOOP) and discuss the objectives of the PPCM and the problems faced by the cooperative movement in Honduras.

### Sharing of expertise and experience with the Senegalese cooperative movement

From November 3 to 13, Alain Leclerc and Réjean Lantagne were in Senegal for discussions with leaders of the cooperative movement and government authorities. A training session on cooperative governance was held for the main leaders of the movement and the local management personnel of the cooperatives.



### Support mission to Panama

From October 28 to November 2, Jacques Desbiens, Chairman and President-CEO of Union-Vie, carried out a support mission in Panama. The main goal of this mission was to learn about the FEDPA insurance company, how it operated, and its needs regarding technical support and coaching. The mission was also an opportunity to discuss and recommend work approaches and business strategies with FEDPA to continue its growth.



### Support for the creation of a support centre for collective entrepreneurship for young people in Bamako

Claire L'Heureux, Director General of the Coopérative de développement régional de la Montérégie, and Maia Poulin, development officer for the Coopérative de développement régional de l'Estrie, took part in a support mission to Mali. The objective was to help establish a support centre for collective entrepreneurship for young people in Bamako, the capital of Mali. The first mandate of the mission was to carry out a diagnostic with the staff of the centre in order to design a training program and set up support and advisory services.



### Support mission to develop forestry worker cooperatives in Bolivia

André Tremblay of the Fédération québécoise des coopératives forestières took part in a support mission to Bolivia whose objective was to continue development of a forestry program there. Carried out from November 1 to 15, this mission was able to identify the first groups that will benefit from our coaching in order to develop forestry cooperatives and draw up a work plan. More details in *A cooperative advisor's personal account* by André Tremblay



### Support for cooperatives of corn producers in Cameroon

From November 16 to 29, Luc Pelland, President of COMAX took part in an analysis of the corn production chain in Cameroon examining production, storage and commercialization. The mission also had the objective of developing a business strategy for the two producer cooperatives to improve the sector.



### Support for coffee producers and insurance cooperatives in Honduras

From December 8 to 12, 2008, Guy Bouchard, coordinator for the SOCODEVI Foundation and board member of La Capitale General Insurance, met with the members of the Cooperativa Cafetalera Primera Alianza Limitada, a group of Honduran coffee producers. Through the SOCODEVI Foundation, this organization received a donation of \$10,000 from La Capitale to improve their productivity and services offered to members. During his visit, Guy Bouchard also delivered a training session for sixty men and women directors of insurance and savings and credit cooperatives from Tegucigalpa.



### Increase in the influence of the cooperative movement in Bolivia

Gaétan Desroches, Chief of Operations at the Coop fédérée, was a guest speaker at a seminar on the cooperative model held in Bolivia last December. Accompanied by the director general of SOCODEVI, Gaétan Desroches presented the perspectives for development of the global agricultural sector and the challenges for the cooperatives in this sector. This mission also furthered discussions with partners of the PPCM cooperative and mutualist partnership program carried out by SOCODEVI in this country.

# A COOPERATIVE ADVISOR'S PERSONAL ACCOUNT FORESTRY INTERCOOPERATION IN BOLIVIA

By André Tremblay, cooperative development advisor  
with the Fédération québécoise des coopératives forestières

At the beginning of last November, I had the opportunity to take part in a technical assistance mission to Bolivia with SOCODEVI. The main objective was to analyze the feasibility of SOCODEVI involvement in the forestry chain in this landlocked country in the Andes.



On the right, André Tremblay with Martin Beurivage, SOCODEVI-Bolivia cooperative advisor, during his mission in Bolivia

The mission took place in two distinct areas, the department of Chuquisaca and the Chiquitania region. In the department of Chuquisaca, the objective was to carry out exploratory inspection tours to determine if there was forestry potential where the cooperative model could be introduced. This region is very mountainous and vegetation varies greatly depending on altitude and rainfall. We were able to identify a sub region with sufficient forest for small-scale forestry operations.

The Chiquitania region, approximately five hours by road from Santa Cruz, was very different. It has vast tropical dry forests where there has been no deterioration caused by poor forestry practices. A previous mission had identified a non governmental organization that supported four groups of communities holding rights to large forest tracts of 44,000 to 1 million hectares per group.

These are indigenous communities to which the Bolivian government has ceded land as communally owned indigenous territories

known as TCOs (*Tierra Comunitaria de Origen*) where the communities have the right to exploit resources, carry out agriculture and raise livestock. In this region, we saw that there is already a forest-based economy built around the harvesting, transportation and sawing of timber, mainly for export.

## User's guide to local forestry

We travelled to one of these communities, called Zapocó. This is an indigenous community of 300 individuals with a TCO of 44,000 hectares, 20,000 of which are covered by a forestry plan. According to Bolivian forestry laws, the forestry plan must divide the territory into 20 lots and annual operations must be concentrated in one of these lots. In this case, that meant operations in only 1,000 hectares per year.

Harvesting is selective, only trees marked by a technician are felled and removed. Following their forestry plan, the members of the communities do not cut down any tree with a diameter of less than 50 centimetres at chest height. These deciduous hardwood trees offer extremely high quality timber. Skidders are used to haul out the logs.



André Tremblay at a forestry camp in the Santa-Cruz region of the Sierra

## A production chain with no legal status

The mission concentrated mainly on organizational aspects. We held a training workshop during which we presented the cooperative model and the network of forestry cooperatives in Québec. Regarding organizational aspects, we identified improvements to make to their method of operating in terms of the structure of their organization. The TCO is ceded to the community as a whole and it is managed by a council of elders. However, the forestry activities do not have a legal existence distinct from the community, which leads to difficulties arising from running and financing an activity that is not carried out by a legally constituted enterprise.

## Sharing expertise: a two-way street

The members of the communities visited were very impressed by the degree of organization of the Québec forestry cooperatives and the extent to which operations are mechanized. For our part, we could only dream of the possibilities when we learned that these communities held exploitation rights over vast areas of forest, something which most of our forestry cooperatives in Québec do not have. We were also impressed by the richness of their forests (density and presence of valuable species such as mahogany).

As you can see, the transfer of expertise is never a one-way street because each party learns from the other.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



The contest winners at the heart of a coffee plantation in Honduras. From left to right: Marie-Claude Tessier (Agropur), François Godin (SSQ) and Annie Normandin (FCFQ)

### Awareness mission in Honduras

From November 2 to 11, the winners of the 5<sup>th</sup> Make Development Last contest enjoyed their reward carrying out an awareness mission in Honduras. Accompanied by our communications advisor Pedro Rodriguez and our coordinator in Honduras Gaby

Breton, and followed by a camera crew, Annie Normandin (FCFQ), Marie-Claude Tessier (Agropur) and François Godin (SSQ) travelled across Honduras to learn about all the sectors in which SOCODEVI is active in this country. The next Make Development Last contest will be held in February 2010 to celebrate SOCODEVI's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### Solidarity in the fight against climate change

SOCODEVI is proposing a concrete way to get involved the fight against climate change and display solidarity: the Tree of Intercooperation. Institutions hosting events can calculate resulting greenhouse gas effects, in particular those created by transportation, with a calculator that can be downloaded from the SOCODEVI website. SOCODEVI member institutions can compensate for such emissions by planting trees in Québec or Central America. Full details at [www.socodevi.org](http://www.socodevi.org)

Visit [www.socodevi.org](http://www.socodevi.org)  
SOCODEVI's  
new web portal

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Last November, the government of Senegal decided to allocate 2,000 lots for the construction of cooperative housing in the Thiès region. This represents a major challenge considering the financing constraints faced by most of the members of these cooperatives and their lack of experience, not to mention that there, as here, the construction of housing requires constant supervision by future owners who are ill equipped for the job.

Through its PPCM program, SOCODEVI intends to support the Thiès regional union of housing cooperatives to help them develop professional and sustainable services for 40 member cooperatives, so



Urban scene in Dakar, capital of Senegal

that they are able to meet the challenge of building housing on these lots at the best price and as quickly as possible.

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