



# STRONG WOMEN = STRONG COFFEE CASE STUDY

## PUTTING A STRONG AND EMPOWERED FOOT FIRST

*In Veracruz, Mexico many small holder coffee families struggle to support children's education. IWCA Mexico and local partner, VIDA AC work together to provide key resources for important first steps.*

The state of Veracruz, Mexico is the country's second largest in coffee production. The region includes approximately 139,000 hectares distributed throughout 842 communities and 82 municipalities. It is home to 86,000 coffee producers, including people identifying as the indigenous cultures of Nahuatl, Totonac and Popoluca.

Access to education is a significant challenge for youth in Veracruz. A significant barrier for too many youth begins before travel to school is even considered: having footwear to complete the journey safely and with pride. This is especially important in the Great Mountains regions of Veracruz given the long distances and rugged terrain that must be traveled.

Recognizing an opportunity to leverage their coffee networks to address this critical need, IWCA Mexico launched a campaign to collect footwear for children ages 6 to 12. In 2018, the IWCA Mexico Chapter partnered with a local social engagement organization, VIDA AC

(Vinculación y Desarrollo Agroecológico en Café A.C), to distribute the shoes. Ultimately, they were able to provide proper footwear to 516 children from three municipalities.



### Mexico Country Context

- **Population** (2017): 126,200,000
- **Poverty** (2016): 2.2 % population at International Poverty Line US\$1.90/day.
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII)** (2017): .34  
0=equality, 1= high inequality
- **World Risk Index Ranking** (2015): 92  
1=high disaster risk, 171=low disaster risk

#### References

**Population & Poverty:** <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/MEX>  
**GII measures human development & status by gender:** <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>  
**World Risk Index measures exposure & vulnerability to natural hazards:** <https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=ee5978152b5c4cd2aaaaaf3a14d379c8&extent=-180,-86.3126,180,88.0275>

## About Veracruz, Mexico

Despite being well known for producing delicious coffees, Veracruz is among the states with the highest rate of migration and marginalization in southeastern Mexico due to the lack of public development policies. There is a strong indigenous influence and close relationship with the natural environment in some coffee regions of the state.

The vast majority of producers are smallholders and maintain their farms as polyculture (multiple crops) and rustic systems. Overall, producers in Veracruz can be group into 3 types: Small producers or smallholders, larger scale agricultural or agroindustrial producers, and secondary producers, which are those that do not have coffee as their main activity.



## The Journey Continues

In August 2019, the IWCA Mexico Chapter was pleased to build a new partnership with private donors from Germany, whose generous contributions made it possible to provide all 516 children with new shoes to start a new school year.



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The Mexico Chapter was created in 2016 with the mission to facilitate the empowerment and visibility of the women across the coffee value chain in Mexico. The Chapter is active in six regions of Mexico: Chiapas, Veracruz, Puebla, Oaxaca, Monterrey, and Mexico City. As of September 2019, IWCA Mexico estimates that more than 2500 families are beneficiaries of their work. To contact the IWCA Mexico leadership and learn more, please visit the Chapters page of the IWCA website: [www.womenincoffee.org](http://www.womenincoffee.org).

The mission of the International Women's Coffee Alliance (IWCA) is to empower women in the international coffee community to achieve meaningful and sustainable lives; and to encourage and recognize the participation of women in all aspects of the coffee industry.