



## What is Project Ayuda?

Project Ayuda is a non-profit international development organisation founded by a number of students at the University of Warwick in 2008. It aspires to pull communities of Internally Displaced People (IDPs<sup>1</sup>) in Colombia out of poverty and hardship by creating a sustainable income for the affected communities. In particular we work with women and indigenous people, as they are often the groups that are most disadvantaged when it comes to adapting to the ordeal of displacement.

Project Ayuda targets groups of IDPs who are already producing goods such as handicrafts, soap or jewellery locally but have been unable to find a reliable market to sell them to. Project Ayuda markets such goods in the UK with the aim of securing the community a long term contract with a respected ethical retailer. Fair trade is becoming an increasingly prominent market within the UK and we believe that our innovative take on international development makes us particularly attractive to ethical retailers and so it is therefore through this market that we intend to promote and then sell the community's products. Whilst this market base is established, we also help the community with the logistics of setting up a successful export business to the UK, for example with shipment and any legal issues they may encounter, such as registering as exporters. Through numerous partners in Colombia, we also provide the community with essential training and equipment so that they are able to meet any demands that a long-term contract would entail, such as in product design, IT skills and finance management. When the project has been firmly set in place, Project Ayuda guides the business until our help is no longer needed, whereupon we disengage our services and leave the business to stand and run by itself. Once this is completed, Project Ayuda moves on to targeting a new community of IDPs and begin the process again.

## Project Embera

Project Ayuda is currently working towards completing its first project: Project Embera. We have been working with the Embera-Chami Indigenous Community, originally from the Honduras Reserve in the department of Caqueta. The community have been displaced four times by the ongoing conflict in Colombia, and had their home village completely destroyed by the rebel forces. Currently the Embera community, who have been a rural community for generations, are residing in the city of Florencia, where all 176 members live in three run-down houses in the slums on the outskirts of the city. A group of around 40 women from the community produce beautiful, handmade jewellery which they sell in Florencia, currently the community's principal source of income. However, its sale on the local market has been negligible and erratic, barely enough to cover the essentials of food, clothes and rent.

It is this jewellery that we have been marketing in the UK. We have already established a viable way for the community to export their products to England, and we have now received the first shipment of their products (worth £400), from which we have made a catalogue (which can be viewed on our [website](#)). We have been using this catalogue to market the Embera women's jewellery to numerous ethical retailers in the UK, and we are currently in negotiations with several prominent retailers, who have expressed a strong desire to work with us and to sell the women's jewellery on a permanent basis, providing they meet certain requirements with regards to training in order to ensure that they would be able to meet the demands that a long-term contract would entail. In the meantime, we have been selling the jewellery on a temporary basis in order to continue providing

<sup>1</sup> Please visit our [website](#) for information about Internally Displaced People in Colombia, and the situations that they face.



the community with a steady source of income and to see how it fares on the UK market, where it has been doing exceedingly well.

We have also been in negotiations with Acción Social, the Colombian government's agency for IDPs, where we are working towards drawing up a partnership agreement between ourselves, Acción Social and ASCUN (the Association of Colombian Universities). The agreement entails securing a three year plan for the Embera community, whereby they will be provided with new housing; support for food and education; regular medical check-ups; protection from the Colombian army to ensure that they are not displaced again and training at discounted rates from ACSUN.

## Project Ayuda's Vision for the Future

Whilst concentrating on completing Project Embera, over the upcoming year, Project Ayuda will also be focusing its energies upon expanding the project into other universities across the UK. We plan to use the experience, knowledge and contacts that we have built up over the past year to give new groups of students at different universities the opportunity to set up their own Ayuda project with a new community of IDPs. We are now also partnered with the Network of Displaced Women in Colombia, who represent over 75,000 displaced women in Colombia and will be able to provide new Ayuda projects with communities of producers with which they will be able to work with. From there, the original Project Ayuda team will be able to guide and support new projects through the logistics of successfully running an Ayuda project so that they are able to obtain the same degree of success that Project Embera has been able to. Our partnerships with Acción Social and ASCUN will also be able to assist new projects in providing direct support to the communities they are working with, giving them a head start in achieving their long-term objectives. The end result, we envisage, will be a network of different Ayuda projects working synergistically across the UK to aid a wide range of internally displaced communities in Colombia to escape from the situations of poverty and hardship in which they presently live.

## Sponsorship Opportunities with Project Ayuda

Project Ayuda is currently seeking sponsors to help us to raise the necessary funds to provide the Embera-Chami Community with essential training and equipment. This will enable them to meet the requirements set by the retailers with whom we are negotiating so that they can achieve their long-term objective of securing a long-term contract with (one of) these retailers.

However, sponsorship opportunities with Project Ayuda will be ongoing once Project Embera has been completed as, by then, we aim to have new Ayuda projects up and running (both at Warwick University and at other UK universities) that will need to raise funds through Sponsorship in order to successfully complete their projects.

## Working Together With Project Ayuda

A sponsorship partnership with Project Ayuda is a great opportunity to associate your company with an innovative, dedicated and forward-thinking organisation that makes a meaningful, sustainable difference in the lives of people who have not been able to escape from the vicious circle of poverty in which they presently live.

### By supporting Project Ayuda you will:

- ✓ **Have the confidence that your money will be well spent:** Project Ayuda is run on an entirely voluntary basis, meaning that our administrative costs are very low. Furthermore, each Ayuda project is structured so that it has an Events and Fundraising Department which is



responsible for raising the funds for all of its UK activities. This means that all Sponsorship money donated to Project Ayuda goes directly to where it is needed most: to the communities that we work with, helping to provide them with training and equipment to help them on their road to setting up a successful, self-sustainable export business

- ✓ Strengthen your **Corporate Social Responsibility profile**
- ✓ Increase your **brand awareness** among UK students: by sponsoring Project Ayuda you will be able to promote and advertise your company through numerous means, including:
  - On Project Ayuda's [website](#)
  - At **Project Ayuda events**: over the past year we have held a multitude of workshops, talks and events which have not only been attended by hundreds of students but also by representatives from organisations such as World Vision, War on Want and the Colombian Embassy for the UK
  - At **events that Project Ayuda participates in**: development summits; University fairs; fair trade events; talks and workshops related to International Development etc. For example, in 2009 Project Ayuda participated in the Warwick International Development Summit, the UK's largest student-led development summit, attended by hundreds of students from across the country and by leading academics, government representatives and representatives from organisations such as the UN. As part of our expansion plan, Project Ayuda will be dramatically increasing its presence at related events outside of Warwick University in the upcoming year, both inside and outside of University campuses across the UK
  - **Promotion** by Project Ayuda on **University campuses** (flyers, posters, stalls, student-press, [student hubs](#) etc). We currently have a strong presence at Warwick University and we aim to replicate this at other top UK universities in the upcoming year
- ✓ Offer your company an advantageous prospect to **connect** with top UK academics – both potential future **customers** and **employees**.

If you are interested in working together with **Project Ayuda** please contact:

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