

THE GRAND

FROM EQUAL EXCHANGE, YOUR COFFEE ROASTER



Connecting over COFFEE



REFLECTIONS FROM OUR RECENT DELEGATION



**CHIAPAS,
MEXICO**

CO-OPS VISITED:

- Comon Yaj Noptic
- CESMACH
- Finca Triunfo Verde

FROM TRIP PARTICIPANT: **KATIE HUGHES**, owner of Perk on Main and Perk on Church

At Equal Exchange, we're often on the road. And sometimes that road is not paved, and it switchbacks up the precarious slopes of a coffee-studded mountain.

Much of our international travel is done by our Coffee Buying and Quality teams. But we don't stop there. We create time and opportunity for delegations to source, where our staff and sometimes our customers get to see the coffee chain - and Fair Trade impact - in action.

Whether our job is selling coffee at Equal Exchange, or running an independent café brewing up this coffee, we are each essential parts of this alternative supply chain. The experiences we have at source - from being hosted in a farmer's home, to harvesting coffee for a day, to cupping at the dry mill - help us witness and understand each of the crucial pieces of the chain, from seed to cup.



On the overall impact of the experience:

"I learned so much, and **the trip was one of the most relevant weeks of my life.** I already really appreciated coffee, but learning, seeing and experiencing the process from seed to cup was truly enlightening and enriching. I understand better the importance of organic certification and how the Fair Trade premium impacts lives of farmers and their families."

On one meaningful moment of the trip:

"In a round table discussion, one of the café owners on the trip asked the farmers, 'Are there any notable differences in your farm since switching to all organic practices?' A farmer responded, raising his hands up next to him, **'The birds and the butterflies are so plentiful.** You can hear the sounds of nature so much more. The soil run-off during heavy rains isn't as significant because of healthier root systems.' The other farmers nodded in agreement."

On what her customers are helping to create in these communities:

"I've been telling everyone **about the specific programs and improvements that the Fair Trade premium allows** the farmers to create: medical centers, small business loans, and schools."

