



MEET EL GUABO OUR BANANA PRODUCER PARTNER

The story of El Guabo, one of Equal Exchange's producer partners, is a success story in grassroots organizing. In 1998, 14 small-scale banana farmers in southwest Ecuador decided to take the tremendous risk of sending one container (about 38,400 lbs) of bananas to Europe with the hope of selling it directly to a supermarket. By cutting out the middleman, they took the power back into their own hands. With the sale of this first container, the El Guabo Association of Small Banana Producers was born. The entrepreneurs transformed themselves from individual, marginalized growers into a democratically run organization with access to the international market.

Today, El Guabo is a farmer-run co-operative with 450 small-scale banana farmers. **Each farmer is committed to improving quality of life for themselves and their communities.** In addition to earning a fair price for their bananas, the co-op receives an additional \$1 per case (approx. 40 lbs of bananas) as a Fair Trade social premium. El Guabo's members voted to spend the premium on education, health care, environmental projects and infrastructure improvements. Additionally, El Guabo is giving back to the local and global community by sharing their highly successful co-operative model with other producer groups in Ecuador and throughout the world.

Pictured above: **Luis Gamboa (left) and his son, Denny,** members of El Guabo co-operative with a 12-hectare (30 acre) banana and cacao farm, wash bananas for export to the U.S. market.



www.equalexchange.coop

EQUAL EXCHANGE GOES BANANAS

YOU CAN CHOOSE WHAT KIND OF BANANA INDUSTRY YOU WANT TO SUPPORT. FINALLY.

Equal Exchange has challenged traditional trade models for over 20 years. Starting with the coffee industry in 1986, we have since provided market access to small-scale tea producers and cacao farmers internationally. More recently, we began working with small- and family- sized nut and fruit farmers here in the United States. Now it's time to tackle the very challenging banana market. Why? According to the USDA, the average American eats 26 pounds of bananas per year. That's a lot of bananas - and a big opportunity for impact. The banana industry is notorious for low wages

and heavy chemical use, causing major health problems across banana producing regions. Together, Equal Exchange and El Guabo are creating a trade model that respects farmers, builds communities, and supports the environment. By buying Equal Exchange bananas, you are choosing to connect yourself to these courageous banana farmers who are making history for themselves, and quite possibly, for the entire banana industry.

Join the banana revolution.
Go beyond the peel:

WWW.BEYONDTHEPEEL.COM

