



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

# Transforming the VRAEM: The Land of Fine Flavor Cacao

### PROJECT GOAL

To accelerate the economic growth of the VRAEM region of Peru by strengthening the capacities of its farmers to grow, process and sell high quality cacao and other legal crops while elevating the region's status as a sought-after cacao producer.

Cacao production presents a meaningful and sustainable alternative to coca cultivation in the Valle de los Rios Apurimac, Ene y Mantaro (VRAEM) region of Peru. While coca cultivation has detrimental effects on the environment and undermines social structures, the VRAEM's climate and soil offer ideal conditions for cultivating alternative crops such as cacao, which is indigenous to Peru. Cacao from the VRAEM boasts internationally recognized flavor profiles and low cadmium content. Moreover, it holds significant marketing potential as a premium specialty crop, enabling farmers to secure higher prices that can uplift their families and communities.

Supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Lutheran World Relief implements a three-year economic development program in Peru called "Transforming the VRAEM: The Land of Fine Flavor Cacao" or "Transformando el VRAEM: La Tierra del Cacao Fino de Aroma." Focused within the departments of Cusco, Ayacucho and Junín, the program

accelerates the economic growth of the VRAEM region by strengthening the capacities of its farmers to grow, process and sell high quality cacao and other legal crops while elevating the region's status as a sought-after cacao producer. Farmers will benefit from training in climate-smart agricultural techniques and post-harvest processing, as well as support in accessing export markets and obtaining higher prices for their crops.

The Transforming the VRAEM project contributes to USAID's objective of expanding economic development in Peru and builds on Lutheran World Relief's decades-long commitment to strengthening cacao value chains around the world. Lutheran World Relief will continue collaborating with its established local partner – the women-led cooperative Qori Warmi – to ensure women and youth are an integral part of the project's success. Additionally, the program will work with two new local organizations, Quinacho and Cacao VRAE, to extend programming. Environmental considerations will also be central to the project with the advancement of context-relevant agricultural practices and the utilization of traceability technology that closely monitors crop expansion activities to prevent deforestation. By fostering climate-resilient agriculture landscapes and supporting a sustainable cacao value chain, Lutheran World Relief is

committed to advancing the productivity and wellbeing of farmers and their communities in the VRAEM for the long-term.

Lutheran World Relief has worked in Peru since 1979, partnering with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the government, rural enterprises and farmers to promote climate-resilient livelihoods, especially in the cacao sector. Lutheran World Relief's programming advances natural resource management and increases the effectiveness of public and private investments in rural development initiatives.


## EXPECTED RESULTS

- **1,200 cacao producers** across three departments of the VRAEM region will be supported to advance fine cacao production
- **20% increase** in earnings will be generated by cacao farmers who have strengthened their production capacity and cacao quality through the project
- **Three local cooperatives** will receive specialized training to standardize cacao processing methodologies.
- **Perceptions** will improve that cacao grown in the VRAEM is of exceptional quality and worthy of premium market prices

## CONTACT

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**CORUS**

### The Corus Effect

Founded in 1945, Lutheran World Relief is an international development and aid organization working across Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. We collaborate with local partners to grow inclusive and climate resilient rural economies, reduce poverty, and we respond to natural disasters and humanitarian crises.

Lutheran World Relief leads rural economic development programming at Corus International, an organization that unites an array of world-class nonprofits and businesses, each with specialized expertise. Our reach and capabilities are amplified by the other global leaders in our Corus family, including IMA World Health, CGA Technologies and Ground Up Investing. Together, we bring the multi-dimensional, holistic solutions needed to truly achieve lasting change.

