

# BATS'IL MAYA

MEXICO



Bats'il Maya is a coffee roaster and distributor. It is a member of Yomol A'tel (*"Together we work, walk, and dream"* in Tzeltal language), a group of cooperatives that aims to improve business outcomes of indigenous farmers in Mexico. Founded in 2000, Yomol A'tel is based in Chiapas and is a vertically integrated coffee operation employing more than 70 indigenous people and working with an additional 361 Mayan coffee-producing families. Aside from Bats'il Maya, Yomol A'tel cooperatives include:

Name	Role
<b>Coffee value chain</b>	
Café Ts'umbal Xitalha'	Coffee planting and harvesting
Capelitic	Retails Yomol A'tel coffee and operates a café chain with branches in CDMX, Guadalajara, and Puebla
<b>Other</b>	
Xapontic	Retails personal care products handmade by Tzeltal women
Chabtic	Produces and retails organic honey
Comon Sit Ca'teltic	Microfinance entity providing capital to Yomol A'tel farmers and financial services to Tzeltal families

## IMPACT OVERVIEW

Strengthens agricultural livelihoods, promotes agroecology, and boosts the Tzeltal economy by promoting cooperative ownership

No. of beneficiaries	361 families
No. of indigenous communities benefitted	64 communities
Expectation of future impact	560 communities

## COMMUNITY



**Country**  
Mexico

**Cities**  
Chilón

**Indigenous communities**  
Tzeltals and Tojolabales, both related to the Maya

Collectively, these businesses generate over USD 1.4M in annual revenue while providing stable incomes for some of the most economically marginalized communities in Mexico, who would otherwise sell their unprocessed parchment coffee into the global commodity market. By bringing their product from field to cup through fair trade networks, these businesses offer economic security which, in turn, keeps communities intact.



### Impact Background

Bordering Guatemala, the State of Chiapas has Mexico's highest rate of illiteracy, highest rate of poverty and the most acute infrastructure deficiencies. Not coincidentally, Chiapas also has Mexico's highest percentage of people of indigenous ancestry. The Tzeltal community, the largest indigenous group in the state, struggles with extreme poverty, food insecurity, and social and economic exclusion. Ricardo Hausmann, Luis Espinoza and Miguel Angel Santos of Harvard have identified a key source of the state's economic woes as *"its inability to produce goods that can be sold beyond its borders. Its exports per capita are the lowest in Mexico and are concentrated in a group of primary agricultural products traded in highly competitive markets with low margins."*

### Jesuit Principles

Yomol A'tel is a Jesuit-led initiative to liberate the Tzeltal communities from the exploitative middle-men and poor business practices that left hundreds of farmers and families in poverty. In 1958, the Mission of Bachajón of the Society of Jesus began its work in Chiapas, and even today, members of the Bachajón Mission advise Yomol A'tel and Bats'il Maya. While they hope that the Tzeltal will one day enjoy "having life and having it abundantly," all of Yomol A'tel's impact goals revolve around the union of Jesuit and Mayan principles. Some of these principles include: solidarity, Lequil Cuxlejalil (Good Living), Dignity, Sovereignty, Quality, Inclusion, and Interculturality.

### Impact Delivery

Yomol A'tel delivers increased income, agricultural empowerment, and ecological enhancement and sustainability to indigenous farmers. Through Bats'il Maya, it empowers 64 Mayan communities and 361 coffee-producing families to bypass commodity markets for their coffee by selling fair trade certified, processed coffee directly to US roasters and roasted and brewed coffee directly to Mexican consumers. In addition, Bats'il Maya focuses on sustainable and organic coffee-producing techniques so that their ancestral lands remain healthy and a source of economic stability for generations to come.

### Sustainable livelihoods

By owning their own drying, milling and roasting facilities, the cooperative builds wealth and demonstrates the transformational capability of community-owned and led enterprises. Not only do cooperative members benefit

from higher and more stable pricing for their coffee, but they also benefit from sustained and self-directed investment into the physical and human resources of their villages.

### *Ecological impact*

Through its organic practices, Yomol A'tel is able to improve improves ecological outcomes, including improving soil fertility, forest canopy restoration, and conservation of native seeds. The cooperative also promotes natural pest and disease control and vermiculture composting to eliminate reliance on petroleum-based fertilizers.

