ECO-PALMS

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Brigida Coutiño Espinoza, 32, lives in the Sierra Morena community in the Sepultura Biosphere Reserve, located in the Sierra Madre de Chiapas, Mexico. At 16 years old, Brigida worked with her husband in palm selecting and selling palm fronds illegally, a job only men were hired to do.

Today, Brigida and her husband work legally for a regional organization of palm producers' communities (PROPACH S.C.). This organization has been steered by Mexican association Pronatura Sur A.C., through Sacred Orchid of Chiapas Project, which is supported by Global Environment Facility (GEF). Here, women work in the selection process and sell palm fronds directly to the US market.

"Some say that this is not a job for women, but we are all very proud of it because there are not many opportunities for women here," says Brigida.

UMCOR partners with the University of Minnesota to build support in the US for the Eco-Palm Project, which provides fair trade palm fronds to churches on Palm Sunday. The project helps to sustain forestry, protect local jobs and helps preserve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers by ensuring fair wages.

HOW TO ORDER ECO-PALMS

Order Eco-Palms online at www.ecopalms.org.

Deadline for credit card orders is March 14 and the deadline for check orders is March 8.

Palms will be delivered between March 26–30, 2012

You can also support small-scale farmers by giving to Sustainable Agriculture and Development, UMCOR Advance, #982188

PHOTO: PRONATURA SUR. A.C.

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