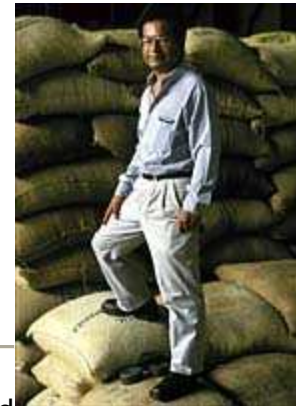


The Grameen-Ashoka Dialogue

Arturo Garcia

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Innovation: Arturo Garcia was elected an Ashoka Fellow in 1989 as he was developing a successful model of peasant-owned and operated cooperatives that were more effective than the government institutions which were created to help the small farmers ("campesino") population. These self-help cooperatives are helping campesinos control the production, marketing, and distribution of local cash crops, especially coffee, wood, and coconuts. RASA is developing marketing alternatives for small farmers to compete effectively in a globalized economy.

Business Model	
Market Opportunity	Linking thousands of small coffee farmers with sustainable and more profitable markets. Fostering a direct collaboration between consumer organizations and small farmers cooperatives.
Current and 5-Year Outreach	12,000 campesinos nationally. In 5 years RASA expects to have at least 80,000 members across the nation and another 20,000 in Central America. Declining prices for coffee in the international markets have decreased RASA's revenues from US\$2.5 million to \$500,000.
Product/Service	Training and technical and marketing assistance for self-run cooperatives. Management of various points of the production and distribution chain, allowing campesinos to collectively increase their abilities to compete in the market.
Operations Infrastructure and Delivery Mechanism	Collection and local processing of agricultural products. Packaging and marketing under one label.
Marketing and Promotion	Farmers from successful cooperatives travel to new locations to share their experiences and recruit new members to the network. National marketing campaign promotes consumption of coffee produced by small farmers in public locations and at events. Radio, TV and press coverage.
Human Resources	Technical trainers, process technicians, quality control specialist, sales director, US sales representative. Awareness of best practices in ecology, social organizations, replication strategies, and organizational development.
Current and Potential Partners	Other NGOs for networking and events, including the Fundaci3n Ayuda en Acci3n (Spain) which is turning its 180,000 volunteers into coffee promoters and connecting RASA with other cooperatives in Central America.
Investors	Purchasers-United Airlines, Ben & Jerry's, America's Acid-Free Coffee Inc., The Federated Group; government programs; NGOs.
Funding Needed to Scale	More than funding, RASA's engine of growth is the creation of markets. But to guarantee a growing operation that attracts the necessary resources, US \$1.5 million is needed.