

# SHOULDER TO SHOULDER

*With the potato producers  
of Coopagros in Peru*



**SUPPORT THE “COALICIÓN CHUÑO”**

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# COOPAGROS, LEVER FOR CHANGE

Kishuara is a godforsaken district that, when the world was created, got lost in the folds of the Andes mountains. 150 family farms have united in the Coopagros cooperative to say a collective farewell to subsistence farming. At an altitude of over 3,000 metres, they are turning their native potato into the hub of their self-development.

## THE “COALICIÓN CHUÑO”

In the Coalición Chuño, Trias mobilises knowledge and know-how in and outside the Belgian potato sector. Farmers, potato processors, researchers, students and donors coordinate their efforts to support Coopagros. This young cooperative of Peruvian potato growers from the Andes mountains invests in the production, processing and sale of freeze-dried potatoes. An innovation that we are making a concerted effort for with our Belgian partners. In the Andes mountains, Trias strengthens the position of farmers in various production chains: quinoa, trees, guinea pigs, fruit and vegetables.

One of the local partners is Coopagros, a cooperative of 150 farmers who produce freeze-dried potatoes in the south of Peru at an altitude of over 3,000 metres.

Trias strengthens the internal functioning and service provided by Coopagros. To develop the niche market of freeze-dried potatoes, the Peruvian

farmers need a freezer room. For the construction of such an installation, Trias has mobilised a broad coalition in Belgium with Belgapom, Rotary Torhout, ILVO, VTI and VLTi Torhout.

## POTATOES, AN INSTRUMENT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY AND UNDER- DEVELOPMENT

When the United Nations, in collaboration with the FAO designated 2008 the international year of the potato, this will have raised a lot of eyebrows. However in the meantime, we have learned that the potato is not only nutritious and sustainable (it requires less water than rice and less land than cereals), but also that the cultivation of potatoes in developing countries helps the local population in their fight against malnutrition and poverty. Now the potato's share in food in developing countries is already on the rise, whereas it is falling in the Western world.





## WHY COOPAGROS AND THE PRODUCTION OF CHUÑOS?

Coopagros needs the additional support from the Belgian “Coalición Chuño” due to the isolated location of its plots of land. There are no providers of fertilizers, credits or other production resources which are a necessity for the potato growers. They have to develop such services themselves with their cooperative, and we want to help them with that.

Chuños are freeze-dried potatoes that have a long shelf life and play an important role in Peruvian (and Bolivian) cuisine. The dried potatoes can be used both in soups, as the main source of carbohydrates in a meal or even in desserts. They can be used in numerous dishes when they have been soaked and crumbled.

The name is a Quechuan word (the language of the native population) “ch’uñu”, that means ‘frozen potato’. Production is based on a century-old tradition which has Inca roots, stemming from the 13th century.

After harvest, the potatoes are spread on the ground so that they slowly freeze during half a dozen ice cold nights in the Andes mountains. In between, the tubers are stamped on with the feet, which removes the skin and any moisture. Then they are washed in the mountain streams and dried further. In this way, white (washed) and black (unwashed and sundried) chuños can be produced.

As a result of climate change, frost at high altitudes is no longer a certainty during harvest time. The “Coalición Chuño” wants to help the Coopagros cooperative to build a freezer room, that will guarantee the continual supply of this unique product – and thus the added value for the growers.

The process to freeze the chuño potatoes is very specific: it has to occur slowly to destroy the cell walls of the potatoes. This means that the Coopagros freezer room will be a real first in the wider region.

COALICIÓN CHUÑO

*Production is based on a century-old tradition which has Inca roots, stemming from the 13th century.*

# HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE?

The partners of the “Coalición Chuño” are each bearing their own responsibility.

Thus ILVO, VTI and VLTI Torhout are cooperating on the technical aspect of the freezer room in close consultation with the Coopagros and Trias people in Peru.

Belgapom and Rotary Torhout are setting up events to collect the funds needed to build the freezer room in Peru.

Various members of Belgapom have on the occasion of a company open day or event asked visitors to deposit a contribution on the account of:

ENTREPRENEURS FOR ENTREPRENEURS

IBAN : BE12 2300 0606 0092

BIC: GEBABEBB

Reference: “Gift for Trias Coopagros Peru”

Thanks to the collaboration with Entrepreneurs for Entrepreneurs in cooperation with Viafonds, your contribution will be further increased. What’s more, contributions of €40 or more are tax deductible.



## VISIT THE “COALICIÓN CHUÑO” STAND AT INTERPOM PRIMEURS!

The students of VTI and VLTI Torhout will present the “Coalición Chuño” project at their own stand at the **Interpom Primeurs international potato trade fair** from **27 – 29 November 2016** in **Kortrijk XPO**. You can find them at **stand 694 bis** in **Hall 6** (near to the VLAM stand).