

News

## Invest your savings in projects that empower the South (rather than in stock markets)



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Lupe benefits from Oikocredit's microloan.

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Rahmat, biologist and beekeeper.



Thanks to Oikocredit, Rahmat's business grew.





Oikocredit Catalunya logo.



Oikocredit Catalunya.

Oikocredit Catalunya promotes ethical finances and gets people and entities' savings to invest them in projects related to global development and self-employment in the South, particularly those involving women who live in rural areas.

**Lupe** is one of the founders of [Fortaleza del Valle Corporation](#), which was founded in 2005 in Ecuador to obtain fairer prices for the product she grows and sells for a living: cocoa.

Mother and farmer, cocoa is her source of income. From the Fortaleza del Valle Corporation, Lupe has received a microcredit from Oikocredit that she will invest in the installation of a new irrigation system.

Oikocredit Catalunya is one of the 30 associations that make up the [worldwide cooperative and social impact investor Oikocredit](#), which works in the field of global development and self-employment through ethical finances.

Oikocredit has its headquarters in Holland, but it funds partners in 71 countries around the world. The cooperative and social impact investor captures the savings of people or entities and **invests them in projects** in the South.

On the [website](#), Oikocredit partners can see exactly where their savings are invested, and their money remains out of the stock market. If this information is not enough, you just have to check the [facts and figures](#), which show a high level of transparency on Oikocredit's behalf.

As the worker at Oikocredit Catalunya Sergi Salavert explains, Catalan workers get savings from the North and invests them in the projects that the Dutch general headquarter suggests.

The international cooperative marks **the empowerment of women as a priority**, so it mainly invests in projects initiated by women who live in rural areas in the South.

"Experience has taught us that taking proposals from **entrepreneurial women** is what has a greatest social local impact in the long run", according to Sergi Salavert.

Oikocredit also invests in **renewable energies**, especially through smaller cooperatives and associations: it usually incentivates the activity of **smaller and local cooperatives** from the South to help them grow, as Lupe's success story highlights.

According to **Sergi Salavert**, Oikocredit has 747 international partner associations and cooperatives and it donates a big percentage of the total microcredits worldwide. Most of the donated capital comes from Germany, Holland, Switzerland and France.

[Coop57](#) is another Catalan cooperative that works for ethical finances, but contrary to Oikocredit, it invests especially in Catalonia and in other Catalan associations and cooperatives.

Even though Oikocredit Catalunya does not offer any credit service directly, the Catalan headquarter promotes ethical finances and savings. In Catalonia alone, Oikocredit has already collected about 9 million 700 thousand euros.

Oikocredit also has other Spanish headquarters in Euskadi and Seville, but the Catalan network is bigger than the other two and "maybe that's why we are more propitious," as Salabert states.

Rahmat is a biologist and beekeeper. After the nineties civil war in his native Tajikistan, however, he went unemployed and remained the same for three long years.

In 1994, he undertook his beekeeping business, and in 2011 he requested FINCA cooperative, also financed by Oikocredit, a loan. So far, Rahmat and his family have received five microcredits that have allowed them to expand their business and **improve their quality of life**.

Lupe and Rahmat are just two of the beneficiaries of Oikocredits microloans, but the list of associations and cooperatives that are part of Oikocredit and benefit from its **ethical finances** on an international scale is very long.

How can we know how ethical a financial service is? The answer is **transparency**, so start by checking the company or cooperative website: "the more visible the invested projects are on the entity's website, the **more ethical are the finances**", concludes Sergi Salavert.

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