



Birds are seen in Planadas.



Coffee cooperative

ASOPOP is working on another project to bring value to a region that was for a long time inaccessible due to the conflict: coffee. Everywhere in the valley, coffee crops cling to the mountain slopes. The climate-oscillating between sunshine and heavy rain-in this Andean cordillera is ideal. With market prices at record levels, coffee has contributed to bringing prosperity. More than 6,000 families in Planadas live off coffee. A cooperative mod-

el sees ASOPEP buying the high-quality commodity from its 300 members to then resell to 50 clients based in Europe, Asia and the United States.

"The idea is to provide knowledge as much as technical assistance to the producer, so that he can understand the true value of his coffee, in what country it is sold and at what price. And in the end he receives genuine revenues," said Enciso. The association looks after every part of the process: selection, drying, roasting, and the crucial tasting element that allows them to classify the grains and thus set the right price for the right customer. The association has already trained 25 tasters, including 19-year-old Vanessa Castro, who can now detect flavors, fragrances and even degrees of acidity from a single whiff.

"We understood the importance of processing and valorizing our coffee," said Enciso, who beams with pride at the eight international certificates the group has received. "Here there is a future. The war has disappeared, there's work, resources, nature ... We've started living and producing together again. We're united." — AFP



Coffee beans are seen at the Association of Ecological Producers of Planadas (ASOPEP) headquarters in Planadas.



Indigenous people and children of former FARC guerrillas watch birds at a lookout in Planadas.



A bird is seen in Planadas.