

YOUR INVESTMENT YIELD IN THE WOMEN OF TIPITAPA

Where you might ask is Tipitapa? It is northeast of Managua, Nicaragua, bordered by a huge lake and a river—land that extends and extends. It is here that those displaced by earthquake, flood and war have been dumped, along with Managua's burning garbage. Not my observation, merely part of the history given by Ana Maria, my guide and Institute John XXIII dynamo in the field responsible for coordinating their work with 4-5 communities including Tipitapa. We are bumping along in her truck to take the trainer, equipment and supplies to a cooperative which has requested sales and marketing training.

It turns out we "know" many of these women—they are the ones we prayed for and backed three years ago. In our first adventure in supporting a big project, we chose to support the women entrepreneurs who received training in developing and sustaining new small businesses and were certified by John XXIII upon successful completion. We funded a very specific need: the equipment essential for their businesses.

What an investment that turned out to be! Let me introduce you to Doña Asalia. She gets up every morning at three to begin making her tortillas, working side by side with her daughter. Before she received her iron griddle, she could only make 300 tortillas a day. Now she sells 800 every day out of the front of her house.



Sra. Asalia and her tortillas



A customer for Asalia's tortillas

She and the others we invested in have formed their own cooperative, Coofemar, (Cooperativa Fe en Marcha) with the training and technical assistance of the Institute and are a completely independent entity who use their pooled funds to make loans to their members. They have opened their membership to include men and a few younger ones have stepped up to the challenge. Not only are their books immaculate, receipts in triplicate, and scrutinized by every member, but they have also joined an association of cooperatives and have successfully applied to the government to qualify for their government program that assists small businesses.



Coop Members Receiving Marketing Training

Next time I'll regale you with visits to Doña Claudia, Don Alvaro and more about the training. It's been great to see our efforts at work and see the blossoming of our investment in these warm, capable people.

~Marie Keefe