



BREAD OF HOPE

Dulce Nance

Violence against women is often associated with physical aggression, but it also has an economic dimension where men limit women's income and control over their own finances. One protagonist shared: "In southern Honduras, little is said about the economic violence we face as women, and that's why we've decided to start our own businesses, to have money and the freedom to decide how to use it," mentioned Carminda Villalobos, a member of Panadería Dulce Nance in Valle, Honduras.

Like any microenterprise, the beginnings were challenging. "In 2023, we organized 15 women to sell food, but the bakery was born out of necessity because there wasn't one in our community. Due to a lack of equipment and a large oven, we had to bake in many batches," expressed Ingrid Santos, president of the group. The looming shadow of abandonment threatened their sustainability.



But hope appeared to light their path: “iDE Honduras supported us with equipment and a larger oven. If we used to produce 100 loaves per batch, now we make double that. The dough used to take an hour to knead, but now it takes only half the time, and we also get more loaves per pound of flour. We didn’t have the knowledge to open markets, but with the training we received, we now deliver to customers using WhatsApp and Facebook,” Ingrid continued to share.

This region has a high rate of emigration, a reality explained by young Ledis Alvarado: “Young people emigrate because there are no opportunities; most jobs require a high school diploma or a university degree. The bakery is a chance for us. We distribute the profits, and now I can even help my family. I graduated as a tourism bachelor, but I never worked because the COVID-19 pandemic hit right after my graduation.”

The support from iDE Honduras solidified the microenterprise, and Carminda’s words are encouraging: “In 2023, our sales were around 100 US Dollars per month, and this year they’ve risen to 600 or even more at times. I have two children studying, and the profits have helped me immensely. Everything that comes into the hands of women goes to the household. We are the best at managing, yet we have the fewest opportunities to handle the household income.” This story not only highlights the power of female entrepreneurship but also demonstrates that empowering courageous women economically translates into a positive and tangible impact on their families and communities.