



SUCCESS STORY

Widow carries on husband's plan to build processing business

After Dilcia Mejía's husband died in a tragic car accident, she wanted to continue the food processing business that her husband, Néstor Molina, wanted so badly to build. Molina left only a business plan and some start-up processing equipment. With the plan in hand, Mejía, a ballet teacher by trade, started small and shifted focus to processed beans. She turned to USAID's Rural Economic Diversification (RED) program for help.

USAID-RED helped Mejía install plant equipment, obtain legal documentation and meet food safety regulations. Mejía's company, Invermoll, rapidly expanded with the assistance.

When they started, Invermoll was processing only 20 pounds of processed beans per day and selling them locally in Comayagua. After two years of assistance from USAID-RED, the plant is processing up to 800 pounds per day, an astounding 3900 percent increase. Mejía plans to expand and she recently secured a loan and invested \$25,800 in industrial stoves, refrigerators, de-pulping equipment, packaging machines, sealers, and other processing equipment.

Mejía says her sales are taking off because of excellent quality. Invermoll sells ground beans in half-pound packages, stewed beans in one-pound packages, and whole, cooked beans in five-pound packages. From plant set up to production, USAID-RED helped Mejía in food safety, hygiene, personal safety and marketing. She started selling outside her hometown in La Paz, Siguatepeque and La Villa de San Antonio. Most of her products go to seven supermarkets, 20 small stores and other select locations.

"I've noticed that when people return to Honduras, they head straight to the supermarket for my beans," Mejía said. "I guess they missed them. My goal is to reach Latino markets in the United States."

Mejía is an admirable example of perseverance. Not only did she manage to build a business from scratch, but she was able to do it after the loss of her husband. This ballet instructor has become a successful business woman, supporting herself and generating two full-time jobs and two part-time jobs.

USAID-RED, a program with funding from the American people, is designed to significantly increase rural incomes and employment opportunities throughout Honduras. The program focuses on expanded production and sales of high-value and added-value agricultural products.

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Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Dilcia Mejía built a successful processing company from scratch with the help of USAID-RED.



Two women sort beans at Invermoll in Comayagua.

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— Dilcia Mejía, Invermoll