



Elena, La Providencia, Guatemala



Elena, a member of the Agros Guatemala community of La Providencia, recently expressed how proud she is to be participating in her village's first Community Bank. With her first loan, Elena has purchased different colors of thread and fabric so she can make and sell embroidered shirts. Before joining the Community Bank and taking out a loan, Elena worked making shirts to sell at the market in Barillas, but could never purchase enough materials to make large quantities of shirts at once. She recalls being offered orders of dozens of blouses to fill for the Barillas market fair that she sadly had to turn down because she did not have the money to buy the materials. But now, with access to credit, Elena says that she is able to invest in materials and save her earnings to provide for her family and keep her business going.

Elena is just one of the fifteen women in La Providencia who has participated in the new Community Bank. With the first six-month land loan cycle, each woman has received \$100-120 to invest in their respective businesses. Now that they have started their first loan cycle and received training on using credit to support their businesses, the women say **they are proud to be managing credit and eager to repay their loans.** With the income they generate, the women say they ***"hope to help pay for education for our children and contribute to paying off our families' land loans."***

Community Banks first started in Agros communities in Guatemala, but the concept is spreading successfully to the other four countries where Agros works. Over the next several months with support from our partners like you, Agros is providing training and support to start at least nine community banks benefiting an additional 120 women and their families in other Agros communities in Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras. Agros believes gender equality is a key to sustainable community development and through Community Banks, women have a chance to make a difference in their lives and the lives of their families, community and region.



