

INVEST

INVEST IN OPPORTUNITY COLOMBIA

In Colombia, Opportunity International's dynamic model includes two entities – Opportunity International Colombia Finance Company (OICCF) and AGAPE, our transformational sister NGO that focuses on providing training services designed to support all aspects of our clients' lives – personal, social, spiritual and economic. By providing entrepreneurs with financial services and transformative training and support, Opportunity is empowering Colombian entrepreneurs to grow local businesses, create jobs for neighbors, send their kids to school and drive permanent, lasting change in their lives and in their communities. Opportunity's innovative services include:

TRUST GROUPS

Opportunity's Trust Group loans are an essential starting point for many women who have very little or no collateral to qualify for a traditional loan. Within Trust Groups, members mutually guarantee each other's loans in lieu of collateral and meet weekly for training, repayment and spiritual and personal support. AGAPE also conducts workshops for Trust Groups that focus on family and community relationships and the importance of savings – in 2015, AGAPE trained more than 2,100 clients across 93 Trust Groups. Opportunity's powerful Trust Group vehicle encourages clients to wisely invest their loans to grow their businesses and build a sustainable income that will support their families and, potentially, additional employees.

SELF-HELP SAVINGS GROUPS

To support some of the most marginalized entrepreneurs, AGAPE launched a Self-help Savings program which organizes groups of unbanked entrepreneurs into savings groups. In the groups, members pool their savings and lend out funds as necessary to fellow group members, acting as an informal line of credit. Over time, the savings pool grows, empowering group members to eventually graduate and open their own savings accounts and access formal loans from banks like OICCF. With a more secure financial foundation, low-income entrepreneurs are able to invest in and grow their businesses and work their way out of poverty.

TRANSFORMATIVE TRAINING

To ensure clients receive effective, transformative training, AGAPE develops training materials and programs to specifically address our clients' needs. AGAPE's workshops, such as Savings Awareness Training for Clients and Leadership Training for Trust Group Leaders, and educational materials have been rated by clients very positively and useful in improving skills.

HOME IMPROVEMENT LOANS

Opportunity's Home Improvement loans are helping clients invest in their homes and improve the living conditions of the poorest populations in Colombia. Home Improvement loans enable clients to build better bathrooms, put in concrete floors, repair roofs and improve kitchens. Opportunity trains its staff to support clients and ensure they do not become over-indebted, providing technical assistance throughout the construction process. AGAPE has also developed a 10-booklet series of informational materials on how to accomplish home improvement projects.

