

Lidieth Álvarez, providing opportunities for women in Nicaragua

Written by: Lidieth Álvarez Guzmán, Nicaragua, Genesis Group. October 27, 2011.



©Eric Becker / We Are Shouting

Lidieth Álvarez Guzmán is one of ten [iLEAP 2011 International Fellows](#). Lidieth is a part of the Central America Women's Leadership Fellowship, a program developed in partnership with iLEAP to equip and inspire women's leadership in sustainable social change throughout the region.

My name is Lidieth Álvarez. I am from Nicaragua, "Pinolero" by the grace of God. I live in the community of Limón #2, Tola Municipality, in the city of Rivas. I am founder and director of Genesis Group. I have certifications in: Rural Development Project Management, Accounting, Local Networks, Environment, and Entrepreneurship. Genesis is a homemade bread-making cooperative. There are ten of us, the majority of us women, and we make bread to sell on the street, to hotels, to restaurants etc. in the Pacific zone of Nicaragua. In addition, we provide a small revolving fund offering opportunities for women to start their own business. We have other groups that are developing their entrepreneurship from what they've learned from our workshops for women. We have trained 75 in three communities.

The Genesis Group develops different programs to benefit members and non members in rural communities. I have the opportunity to participate and promote community educational programs among women such as:

- Promotion of the cooperative (training to formalize the organization, education and skill building among partners and non-partners)
- Marketing program and entrepreneurship training
- Baking
- Sewing
- Sustainable development
- Sexual and reproductive health
- Gender
- Equality in the workplace
- Community sanitation
- Financial management for women entrepreneurs
- Women's leadership
- Managing grants for low-income youth
- Youth leadership and capacity building
- Teen and single mothers program for young women between 13-16 years old
- Creation of women-led businesses
- Literacy program for adults

I'm in Seattle participating in the iLEAP International Fellowship program, an intensive training program designed to strengthen and expand the leadership abilities of women and men leaders that strive to foster change and create a more equal and just society in their countries while providing continuation and build upon their dreams.

Through my participation in the program, my hope is to learn and adopt new methodologies and tools that allow me to strengthen my organization in order to maximize my time, human and financial resources, and to increase efficiency and

For more information, please contact:

Michele Frix, Program Officer • 206-547-9335 • mfrix@seaif.org

performance in all areas of our work, for example: planning methodologies, inclusive design strategies (e.g. broad participation).

Likewise I am sharing my experiences with other participants, identifying common actions, challenges, and learning different strategies to overcome obstacles and achieve goals. For example: implementing a program of rural women entrepreneurs while diversifying economic alternatives, including productive activities and income generation for women's entrepreneurship.

These initiatives are the ones that want to promote, but before doing so I have to know the subject well in order to avoid mistakes and failures.

Through the program we have had the opportunity to visit foundations, universities and NGOs in Seattle, for example:

- Antioch University
- Seattle International Foundation
- PATH
- Casa Latina
- Goodwill
- Northwest Center
- Microsoft
- The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

So far, the seminars and workshops have been very interesting and relevant to our work in our communities. I have strengthened my skills in digital media, which are essential to implement a communications strategy. I hope to apply all that I've learned to my work in my community. The program is comprehensive and focuses on strengthening the individual capacities of its participants. Upon my return to Nicaragua, I am sure our cooperatives will develop a level of pro-activity and efficiency.

For more information, please contact:

Michele Frix, Program Officer • 206-547-9335 • mfrix@seaif.org