



## Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/plantain-chips-provide-economic-%E2%80%9Cblessings%E2%80%9D>

## Plantain Chips Provide Economic “Blessings”



Fintrac, Inc.

Glenda Nery Medina (left) and Lourdes Medina Hernández started their own plantain chip processing business in 2013. Thanks to technical assistance from Feed the Future, their monthly sales have increased by nearly 1,000 percent.

Glenda Nery Medina and Lourdes Medina Hernández wanted to earn their own money to help improve life for themselves and their families. But in rural Honduras, where doors to economic opportunity are often closed to women, building a business is easier dreamed than done. Compared to men, women have limited access to business training and financial services. Just 29.6 percent of women in rural communities are officially counted as being economically active, compared to 77.2 percent of men. As a result, women lack the financial resources and access to training that are necessary to establish a successful business.

Thanks to a Feed the Future project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, however, the two Honduran women were not stuck with an unfulfilled dream. Working with the ACCESO project, they gained the technical skills for food processing. They tried out their newfound skills on milk, candy and baked goods but settled on plantain chips as the product with the greatest potential for generating sales.

In 2013, the women were ready to open their business. They called it Fuente de Bendición, or Source of Blessings. In the early days, their operation generated about \$170 per month. But with continuing support from ACCESO, and later, the ACCESS to Markets project, the women made improvements in their production efficiency, packaging and labeling. By incorporating basic technologies such as new stoves into the process, they were able to ensure quality control and workplace safety.

ACCESS to Markets sets a priority on the inclusion of women in all its project activities, empowering them to achieve economic autonomy through targeted trainings that increase their access to knowledge, inputs and markets.

Now the women are processing 1,500 plantains a day, turning them into 1,300 bags of chips. Their monthly sales now exceed \$1,900 and earn them a profit of more than \$800 a month—a dramatic increase from their initial operations.

They sell their chips to small bodegas in their own community as well as neighboring towns, and recently, they began to receive weekly orders from larger buyers, which they deliver every Friday. They have reinvested part of their earnings into new equipment and a delivery truck.

ACCESS to Markets has also helped to ensure a year-round supply of plantains for Fuente de Bendición by linking the business to plantain producers.

For anyone who might doubt women's ability to run successful businesses, women like Medina and Hernández offer clear evidence to the contrary. Access to training, low-cost technology, and market networks combined with women's own commitment and perseverance translates into greater opportunities to start income-producing enterprises. "Thanks to the project, we have all of this," said Medina, gesturing to her spotless kitchen equipment. "Women can move forward, regardless of obstacles [we] face."