



## SUCCESS STORY

# Overcoming Tragedy with Microcredit

### Microfinance firm opens branch near marketplace to increase accessibility



Bermudes Ramos and his family were able to rebuild their stall after a devastating fire in Santa Cruz's Los Pocitos market through microcredit.

***USAID has supported the creation and growth of microfinance in Bolivia for over two decades, helping to create a worldwide model based on outreach, innovation and sustainability.***

Telling Our Story  
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Bermudes Ramos now has two busy stalls in the open air Los Pocitos market outside of Santa Cruz, Bolivia, but he faced a crisis that could have destroyed all of his hopes for a better future.

“After the market burned to ashes in 2006, we didn’t even have food to eat,” said Bermudes. Fortunately for Bermudes and many of his fellow market vendors, the microfinance provider FIE had been lending to them for several years and understood their situation.

Working with families on a case-by-case basis, FIE either reprogrammed or extended extra credit to help clients get back on their feet. But FIE’s distance from the market meant contact was limited to one staff visit there a week.

Under a USAID program, FIE received funds to help open a staffed micro-branch next to the market. USAID’s contribution lowered the risks of the investment and led to FIE’s decision to open a branch they otherwise wouldn’t have.

Now market sellers, clients and residents have access to a wide array of financial services — credit, savings products, payment of water and telephone bills, and even remittances. It is no longer necessary for clients to close down their stalls and travel to make loan payments or deposit savings, meaning that even more market sellers can join Bolivia’s other 630,000 microfinance clients who have access to the services necessary to grow their businesses.

USAID has supported the growth and sustainability of microfinance in Bolivia for over 20 years, through regulatory reforms and institutional support. USAID plans to continue working to expand the outreach of financial services beyond the market and into the new neighborhoods being formed outside of Los Pocitos.

As for Bermudes and his family, they’re proud to show the results of their hard work and effort.