



VENEZUELA

Artesanal production of Cassava

We had the unique opportunity to meet Eude, a leader of the Waraos community. Eude is one of the beneficiaries of the IOM project in Bolívar state. Eude says that since she was a child her mother taught her and her sister the art of making cassava. The process of scraping and processing the yucca plant (that is the base of the cassava) was an arduous task that she performed every day and she remembers how her hands hurt.

She said to herself then "I don't want to do cassava ever again" but now it's become her livelihood. She emphasizes that she did not intend to engage in mass production of cassava, however, with the arrival of the IOM team in his community, this awoke in her and family an interest in how this could create economic independence and allow them to not only sit and wait for food assistance.

The IOM team supported them with a toolkit and seeds for planting items which was useful to increase their production, allowing the family to eat from their own harvest with the surplus, serving as a method of food exchange, obtaining in return protein which was mainly fish. These exchanges allowed for network of exchanges with different indigenous communities in the state of Anzoátegui.

In addition to the aforementioned kits, they also received some inputs to improve their product such as budares (local stove), a grater, and a bicycle with basket to transport the product, along with strengthening their production knowledge. This support motivated the family to complement these items with locally developed

solutions such as an artisanal press for processing the yucca.

Eude comments that the production of cassava has been among other things, a way to unify and increase family integration, as each member of the family carries out a specific activity so, the profits are distributed. Everybody feels productive and able to share household expenses.



When Eude undertook a trip to Caracas to a meeting of indigenous peoples with leaders, ministers, captains, and other authorities she carried 10 cassava cakes for the meeting, however during the tour, her fellow travellers asked her if they could try the cassava that she and her family made, and word spread of the quality and taste of her cassava cakes. Upon arriving at their stay in Caracas, the captains of the different indigenous groups requested their presence and asked to try the cassava with cumache (hot sauce made of ants, yare and chili), and from this the captains agreed on ways to market cassava from the north to the south of the state of Bolivar, developing amongst themselves logistical hubs to receive and move the cassava.

Currently Eude and her family, have an agreement with groups of neighbouring indigenous peoples, Pemones and Kariñas, in the state of Bolivar, where they meet at a central point to distribute the product to different regions of the territory.

According to Eude the IOM support has given them the confidence they needed to go out and build on their own strengths.

