



SUCCESS STORY

A Prosperous Businesswomen that Courageously Embraced the Challenge of a Licit Livelihood

USAID promotes community projects in economic and social entrepreneurship

USAID Alternative Development Program establishes the foundation for sustainable economic opportunities in ex-coca growing regions.



Berith Saldana winner of the first place at the Selva Ganadora (Jungle Winner) competition. Berith's oil palm marketing project won amongst other 415 communities. Ambassador Rose M. Likins recognizes Berith Saldana's commitment to licit lifestyles.

Berith Saldana was born in Pajarillo, San Martin, Peru in 1965. She started working in oil palm cultivation in nearby Tocache and by the age of 18 became a producer for a Peruvian palm oil plant Endepalma. After a few years, when narcotrafficking and terrorism were rampant in the Tocache area, the plant went under. Berith decided to buy 15 hectares from them and started her own oil palm plantations. She courageously faced the worst years of Peru's republican history in one of its most violent areas, and in the mid-1990s took on the challenge of forming the Tocache Oil Palm Growers Association in the heart of illegal coca-growing territory. The Association started promoting oil palm growth and commercialization with 80 members. They have been supported by USAID Peru's Alternative Development Program since 2006. The Association now boasts 770 members, 308 of whom are women. After many years as its President, Berith is now its treasurer, as well as a prosperous businesswoman. Berith's communities competed in Selva Ganadora, a USAID supported contest to highlight community entrepreneurship. Berith is a clear example of how a woman can triumph in even the most adverse circumstances.

"USAID helps farmers establish long-term links with export markets for high value crops by strengthening producer organizations and promoting effective agricultural practices."