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November 7, 2007

U.S. Supports Professional Training for El Alto Carpenters

Last Thursday, the Carpentry Micro Entrepreneur's Association of El Alto (ACMEA) completed an important training course that will allow its associates to improve their productive capabilities, their work quality, and their production, so that their products can meet current demand in both domestic and foreign markets.

With the support of the United States Government, more than 20 carpenters, who are self-employed micro entrepreneurs, completed three training modules that included both theoretical and practical aspects of their trade. The courses included training in:

- Market and technology trends
- Industry design and management
- Wood finishing techniques for quality furniture
- Selection, sharpening and appropriate use of cutting tools
- Best practices in electricity use

Currently, most businesses affiliated with ACMEA can only sell their production in local fairs due to their products' limitations in quality and quantity. Under such circumstances, this training program sought to help them improve their productive skills. With improved production, these micro entrepreneurs will have a better chance to access new markets that create opportunities for economic growth.

Recent studies show that most poor segments of the Bolivian population work in micro businesses. Moreover, 83% of the economically active people are self-employed in informal businesses. Also, in order to get generate a daily income, these workers have to appeal to their own talent and skills in micro and small companies, which are not very productive or profitable. Therefore, the social impact of training programs, such as this project supported by the U.S. Government, is remarkable. These programs contribute to elevate the living standards of poor segments of society and promote competitiveness.