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Integral Formation at a Springboard for Entrepreneurs

Flor is from Guatemala and she's tried to help those in need throughout her life. At 82, she still collaborates with Junkabal, a training and development centre for women that has come a long way to become what it is today: an opportunity for many families to thrive.

08/23/2025

Flor's story is part of the "Journey of a Journey" multimedia project for the 50th anniversary of St. Josemaría's trip to several Latin American countries from May 1974 to February 1975. Below is a transcript of her story.

Well, my name is Flor de María Coronado, but everyone calls me Flor. I'm 82 years old and I've been in the Work for 55 years. I'm an associate.

Junkabal is a training centre. At the moment it has various activities: we could say a school with formal education, but it also offers a range of training courses for women, so they have something to help them get ahead.

So, it's a real breeding ground for entrepreneurs. But apart from that,

we were in an area of great poverty. It's not like that now, but back then the poverty was enormous. We had to think not only of the girls at the school, but also of those families who lived among the rubbish, in the dump. So we made an agreement with Caritas and set up a nutrition centre.

We gave them food on Sundays, but what was done at that time was food in exchange for work: they would sweep or paint kerbs and they were given food. Then we changed that so it wasn't food for work, but food for training. So they would receive food if they took part in training. That was very good, because of course it meant teaching them how to work, teaching them how to get ahead. I would say we were dealing with around 400 families, and that helped a lot, also with the university work.

Junkabal has experienced continuous growth. Now it's the Junkabal Foundation. It has a very high-quality school, always ranking very well. And apart from that, women are still being trained in all the technical areas. So the impact is huge.

The formation of the Work affects everything. It's an integral formation, so you are being formed in every aspect of yourself. And, of course, good is diffusive. If you are well formed, what you want is to spread that and help form others. So it has had a very big impact.

Maybe one thing leads to another. When I was at Junkabal, the opportunity came up to carry out an expansion project. So the Belgian government financed a four-storey building. And, of course, the dilemma was: director or projects? So I started working on projects. And

this project, having a projects office, led to more. Then there was another expansion of Junkabal: the workshop school Las Gravileas and Shoi, which is a completely different context because it's the highlands, indigenous women.

But everywhere, what has been done is to provide integral formation and to promote opportunities so they can get ahead.

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