

IMPOSSIBLE DECISIONS

Gabriella's Story

Gabriella is a young widow living in a small village near Barranquilla, Colombia. Her husband was killed due to guerilla warfare, so she is raising her three small children alone in a small, two-room structure with dirt floors and a leaky roof. Her sister, who recently fled from her abusive husband with her two daughters, moved in as well. To make matters even more challenging, Gabriella's sister is currently suffering from malaria.

Every day at 3:00 a.m., Gabriella wakes up and begins making bread, which she sells to her neighbors. She travels long distances on foot to sell enough to make \$2/day. She dreams of purchasing a new oven and one day separating her bread shop from her home.

Gabriella did not finish school, but she hopes to give her nieces and children better opportunities by helping them finish their education. But currently, her children have not been able to attend school because school uniforms are required for all students—and the cost of uniforms per child is equal to a full day's wage.



OPPORTUNITY
International

Question 1

Today, Gabriella reached her goal and brought home \$2. But it isn't enough to support her family. How would you spend the \$2?

- Skip the day's meal for the entire family and purchase a school uniform so one child can go back to school.
- Purchase enough food to feed all five children. Gabriella and her sister will go hungry or eat anything their children leave behind.
- Skip the day's meal for the entire family and purchase malaria medication so that her sister can recover—and potentially help contribute to the family's income once she is well.

Question 2

The shop closest to Gabriella's house is closed, but she needs supplies to make bread. What would you do?

- Spend four hours traveling to and from the market to purchase supplies and hope that your customers haven't found another option by the time you are ready to sell.
- Skip baking for today and wait until the more convenient shop opens tomorrow—but know that means you will not earn enough to purchase food for your family.
- Send two of your children on the journey together, instead of sending them to school, and pray that they do not get caught in any violence on the way.

Question 3

Gabriella received the opportunity to bake for a local festival and will be paid \$80—more than an entire month's wages! What would you do with this one-time payment?

- Patch the roof so that rain and bugs no longer get inside—helping to keep everyone in the family healthy.
- Pay the next semester of school fees for three of the five children.
- Purchase a used oven to bake (and sell!) more bread, increasing your income in the long run.