



SNAPSHOT

Single Mother's New Produce Business Transforms Family

USAID-ACCESO promotes income generation for women through the creation of job opportunities across the agricultural chain.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Teresa Reyes sells produce from project-supported smallholders in a local market. Her new business has helped her increase her monthly income by more than 7,000 percent.

“They gave me an idea and helped me grow a better business.”

Teresa Reyes

—Single mother and entrepreneur

In Honduras, 52 percent of rural residents are women. Most of these women have little hope of escaping poverty because of few economic opportunities outside the home for women. One of USAID-ACCESO's goals is to promote income generation for women through job creation across the agricultural value chain. In Cabañas, Copán, the project helped link a group of smallholder farmers to a struggling single mother, creating a lucrative value chain for both parties.

In October 2011, USAID-ACCESO production specialists began working with a group of 12 producers in Cabañas, introducing both good agriculture practices and high-value vegetable crops to increase the farmers' yields and incomes. The farmers are earning an average of \$410 per 0.06 hectare, all of which is new income. After witnessing the success of the producer group, the local project specialist approached a local woman with a business plan.

Teresa Reyes, a single mother of three, was struggling to put food on her family's table by selling cooked meat in the streets. She was earning a maximum of \$25 a month through this venture.

In February 2012, with assistance from the project specialist, Reyes bought vegetable crops from the producer group. Her first purchase was on credit, which she paid back after her first sales. Reyes new produce stand was the first horticulture marketplace in Cabañas, offering healthy and fresh vegetables such as onions, radishes, peppers, cucumbers, and carrots to local residents.

The improvement in the Reyes' family's quality of life has been astronomical: she is now earning an astonishing \$1,806 per month, 72 times her previous monthly income. Her daily sales average around \$77, with some noticeable increases during special occasions and holidays.

“On Christmas Day I made \$206, I had never made that amount of money in one day. I bought food and celebrated Christmas with my daughters,” she said.

Reyes' success has motivated other local women to set up market stand next to hers, creating a proper market in Cabañas. Two local farmers began growing radishes and cilantro specifically to sell to Reyes. Recently, the mayor offered her and the other shop owners a market shed to help formalize their businesses and provide a permanent location for commerce.

“USAID-ACCESO helps people a lot,” Reyes said. “They gave me an idea and helped me grow a better business.”

With her improved financial situation, Reyes is ready to keep growing both in volume and vegetable diversity by supporting more local producers. She wants to provide a better life for her daughters, especially through access to education. The girls can now afford school fees, supplies, and transportation.

Specialists continue working with women in other communities, looking for new ways to involve women in economic and agricultural growth. To date, the project has helped create thousands of jobs in the rural communities of western Honduras.