



MONTHLY UPDATE– NOVEMBER 2011

BACKGROUND

This is the eighth edition of the USAID-ACCESO monthly update, with information on current and future project activities. USAID-ACCESO is a four-year initiative funded by the people and government of the United States of America through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The project is part of the global Feed the Future initiative of the United States government and the main investment by USAID in Honduras.

USAID-ACCESO will assist more than 30,000 clients in the departments of Copán, Intibucá, La Paz, Lempira, Ocotepeque and Santa Bárbara. The project is working to lift 18,000 rural households out of extreme poverty and malnutrition conditions through economic development and increased incomes.

TECHNICAL AGREEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

USAID-ACCESO formalized collaboration with the Honduran Coffee Institute (IHCAFE) and the Secretary of Labor, the latter through a technical cooperation agreement with support from local governments and the United Nations Development Program. Memorandums of understanding with DICONSA, an irrigation equipment supplier; Del Campo Agricultural Solutions, an equipment and input provider; and the Honduran Association for Development (AHDESA) will allow USAID-ACCESO to offer new technologies, credit and financing programs, and discounts to beneficiaries.

FISCAL YEAR 2011 RESULTS PRESENTED TO ACCESO CONSORTIUM

USAID-ACCESO implementing partners Aldea Global, FHIA, CARE, FUNDER, and EAP Zamorano attended a presentation of project results from the first year of implementation. Attendees confirmed their commitment to exploring opportunities to integrate, and where possible, complement the project's other activities. The presentation ended with a field trip to a project-assisted community to observe the integrated technical approach in action.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED

The advisory committee held its first meeting last month. The committee, chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Ing. Jacobo Regalado, will provide advice to the project with the goal of improving efficiency and performance. Other members include representatives of FHIA, the National Federation of Agriculturists and Cattle Farmers of Honduras (FENAGH), a mayor, the Association of Honduran Municipalities (AMHON), the Inter-American Development Bank-Multilateral Investment Fund (BID-FOMIN), the Access to Land Project (PACTA), the Rural Competitiveness Project (COMRURAL), IHCAFE, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, and USAID. Topics covered included budget, roles and responsibilities of committee members, and an analysis of the project's first six months.



USAID-ACCESO is teaching smallholder farmers to diversify their crops to increase yields and income.



All photos by Fintrac Inc.

USAID-ACCESO client households, beneficiaries and other clients, November 2011

| Department | Client Households | Beneficiaries | Other Clients * |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Copán | 1,130 | 3,125 | 143 |
| Intibucá | 2,079 | 12,626 | 106 |
| La Paz | 1,748 | 9,000 | 198 |
| Lempira | 2,188 | 11,773 | 125 |
| Ocotepeque | 1,241 | 4,631 | 110 |
| Santa Bárbara | 1,487 | 7,114 | 180 |
| Others | | 44 | 86 |
| TOTAL | 9,873 | 48,313 | 948 |

*Includes MSMEs, buyers, input and service providers, municipal corporations, and counterpart organizations

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PRODUCTION

- An additional 162 hectares were planted in November, for a cumulative total of 5,688 hectares of production area under the technical assistance program. Of the total, 3,049 hectares are planted in coffee, 2,033 hectares in basic grains, and 606 hectares in horticulture (includes vegetables, fruits, and ornamental crops).
- 1,042 training events were carried out on agricultural production topics, with 9,713 participants.
- 328 participants were trained in 30 events on animal production, including good feed practices, construction of low-cost chicken coops, disease prevention and management, and the proper use of veterinary drugs.
- 32 farmer exchange visits were carried out with 389 participants to promote the adoption of good agricultural practices for high-density bean production, improved cabbage production, high density plantain, and integrated crop/small animal production systems. Clients also received training to start family garden plots.
- Thirty-two postharvest trainings were given to 383 participants, in addition to three events for 49 participants on farm certification. Trainings focused on harvest and postharvest handling for corn and beans, with an emphasis on proper grain storage, grain moisture control, safe use of chemicals, coffee pulping calibration and the use of solar coffee dryers. Clients invested \$1,210 in postharvest infrastructure for the month.

ACCESS TO MARKETS

- Conducted 11 trainings with 127 participants aimed at finding new niche markets, analyzing price trends, and exploring opportunities for farmers to diversify into high-value crops such as beans, herbs, oriental vegetables, green beans and peas.
- Explored opportunities for organizing agriculture fairs with support from municipal authorities and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to promote local agriculture production and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- Fact-finding trip to El Salvador to investigate new markets and buyers for producers and SMEs.
- Continued to strengthen client skills in calendarized planting programming for horticultural crops to better serve local and national markets year round.
- New alliances formed with coffee retailers and exporters interested in working with project-supported coffee farmers.

US AND HONDURAN GOVERNMENT VISITORS

The Assistant Administrator of USAID for Latin America, Mark Feierstein; the Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Jacobo Regalado; USAID/Honduras Mission Director, William Brands; and other USAID officials visited the community of Paihislal, Intibucá. The tour included a demonstration of health and nutrition activities, a field visit to see production of high-value crops, and a stop at a fresh produce packing facility. The tour demonstrated USAID-ACCESO's integrated approach to increasing incomes and food security in poor, rural areas of Honduras.



Training session on carrot planting, Lempira.



High-density bean crop, Santa Bárbara.



Broccoli planting using basic practices and drip irrigation, La Paz.

Baseline profile of USAID-ACCESO families to date

- 6,376 of 9,873 family households (64 percent) are living in extreme poverty and 619 households (6 percent) in poverty.
- 5,519 of the 44,153 beneficiaries (12 percent) are children under five years old; 12,138 (27 percent) are children between six and 14 years old; 21,749 (49 percent) are people between 15 and 49 years old; and 11 percent are adults over 50 years old.
- 52 percent of the beneficiaries are men (22,960) and 48 percent are women (21,193).

BUSINESS AND FINANCE SKILLS

- Finance and business skills specialists held 94 training events with 1,041 participants. To date, 14 service providers and 30 input suppliers have received assistance.
- Supported two organizations applying for funds from COMRURAL. The project is working to develop a Rural Development Agenda at the municipal level, and also working with a cooperative to start an agro-store to diversify revenue and provide better service to their customers.
- Continued to work with the marketing component to support, establish and formalize producer associations participating in local fairs and markets.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH

- Trained 2,336 participants in 133 events, of which 1,843 were women. Workshops focused on preparation of nutrient- and vitamin-rich foods (especially iron and Vitamin A) using local ingredients. A special emphasis was given to teaching women how to prepare fortified tortillas, an iron-rich food that helps prevent anemia in mothers and children. Trainings also introduced healthy recipes using carrot, broccoli, potato, Chaya, orange and guava. Home visits to monitor the health and nutrition of children under two years old continue to be a priority.
- With support from Atención Integral a la Niñez en la Comunidad (AIN-C), USAID-ACCESO is working with mothers' groups to ensure that health and nutrition is integrated into all project activities.

VALUE ADDITION AND MICROENTERPRISE

- A total of 920 people participated in 119 training events. The workshops focused on creating healthy supplements to children's diets, basic hygiene and food safety. Other workshops offered instruction on how to make wheat flour tortillas, pizza and new bread products to diversify the product lines of the small scale rural bakeries while ensuring high nutritional value. Food processing workshops taught processing techniques for producing passion fruit concentrate for local and regional markets, and for ground beans for the local market.
- Technical assistance is being provided to 52 micro-, 50 small-, six medium-sized companies, and 22 large companies. These off-farm businesses improve revenue and increase employment opportunities in rural communities for many households that do not have access to land or participate in other businesses. The initial focus of the assistance is to add value to local products, so that they can compete in local markets with products produced outside the area.

MAIN GOALS OF ACCESO

- Bring 30,000 rural households living in poverty and extreme poverty above the poverty threshold;
- Generate \$73.95 million in net profits for the clients assisted by the project; and
- Create 10,425 permanent jobs in the assisted communities.



Mothers learn how to prepare nutritious food for their young children as part of USAID-ACCESO's nutrition and health component, La Paz.



Beekeeper training, Lempira.

November 2011 Trainings

| Area | Participants | Events |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Renewable Energy | 71 | 8 |
| Business Skills | 1,041 | 94 |
| Natural Resource Management | 366 | 20 |
| Postharvest | 383 | 32 |
| Processing and Value Addition | 920 | 119 |
| Production | 9,713 | 1,042 |
| Project Presentations | 174 | 13 |
| Market Information | 127 | 11 |
| Health and Nutrition | 2,336 | 133 |
| Other themes | 429 | 38 |
| TOTALS | 15,560 | 1,510 |

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Trained 366 participants in 20 events, which covered water analysis and monitoring, watershed management, and solid waste and effluents management.
- 173 technical assistance visits to water management boards, which had a direct impact on 105 families in the community of Yaruconte (Cucuyagua), 120 families in El Tigre (Trinidad), 110 families in Platanares (San Pedro Copán) and 140 families in Jimilile (Corquín), all of who now have access to treated potable water. Assistance included water flow calculation, demonstrations of the proper use and maintenance of drip hypo-chlorinators, and the rehabilitation of drip hypo-chlorinators for community water treatment.

NATURAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND MITIGATION

- Conducted training workshop with Municipal Emergency Committee (CODEM) in the municipality of Cucuyagua on emergency preparedness. USAID-ACCESO works with municipalities without an official risk management plan to develop and disseminate these plans.
- In Santiago de Puringla, ACCESO technicians provided support to repair a collapsed sewer and to mitigate the effects of the sewage spill, using biochemicals. The project is also making recommendations to improve the design and structure of the sewage system.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

- Worked with the Association of Honduran Coffee Producers (AHPROCAFE) in Lempira to develop a plan for the installation of solar dryers and bio-digesters.
- Presented the USAID-ACCESO project to the USAID-PROPARQUE project, and discussed coordinating activities.
- Trained 71 participants in eight workshops on renewable energy systems; participants reported investing \$1,466 in renewable energy equipment, including solar coffee dryers, biodigestors and improved stoves (EcoJusta stoves).
- Eleven technical assistance visits conducted to show clients how to maintain their EcoJustas stoves for better energy efficiency. Clients also learned how to service their bio-digesters for optimal gas production.

USAID-ACCESO CONTACTS

For more information or if you are interested in being assisted by the project please contact:

| | | |
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| Copán | Hugo Ávila | 9923-6826 |
| Santa Bárbara | Leopoldo Aguilar | 9997-0130 |



Project technician examines water source, La Paz.



Community team investigates damaged road conditions in Yarula, La Paz.



Installation of a solar dryer for coffee, Lempira.

POVERTY REDUCTION – WHAT INCOME DOES A FAMILY NEED TO MOVE OUT OF POVERTY?

The project's goal is to assist 30,000 households move out of poverty, including a minimum of 18,000 households in extreme poverty, in six departments in Honduras with the lowest human development indices. Households in extreme poverty and poverty are those that do not generate a daily income over L. 35 (Lempira) and L. 46 respectively, for each family member. To achieve this goal, client households must generate a minimum annual income of L. 16,790 for each family member. An average family of six requires an annual income of L. 100,740 to be classified as being above the poverty line.

The project is changing the traditional basic grain growing practices by introducing four or five basic production practices that do not require additional cost inputs. Through these enhancements, client households are tripling their yields – a 0.5 hectare plot of corn now achieves yields of 2,500 to 3,000 lbs as opposed to 700 to 1,000 lbs. These increases enable clients to meet their household food requirements and in some cases create a surplus for sale. They also allow for more efficient land use, a necessary condition for clients to begin producing high-value crops for income generation.

For growers now in their second crop cycle, USAID-ACCESO is introducing market driven production systems of high-value crops such as potatoes, carrots, cucumbers, broccoli, cauliflower, bananas, passion fruit, and garlic. Using an average net income of L. 80,000/hectare (based on the results of 6,000 producers under a previous Fintrac-implemented project in Honduras) as a benchmark, each client household will have to plant 1.25 hectares during the year to overcome poverty (assuming horticultural production is the only source of household income). The following table shows some examples of productivity, costs and projected revenues of crops with technical assistance:

Production and Income

| Crop | Days to harvest | Commercial Production | Production Cost | Average Price | Profitability |
|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Corn | 128 | 1,000 Lb | L. 1,325 | L. 2.30/Lb | L. 889 |
| Bean | 128 | 3 QQ* | L. 1,626 | L. 1,820/QQ | L. 194 |
| Potato | 90 | 35 QQ | L. 7,016 | L. 300/QQ | L. 3,484 |
| Passion fruit | 180 | 3,369 Lb | L. 8,344 | L. 4.40/Lb | L. 6,480 |
| Garlic | 120 | 600 Lb | L. 12,646 | L. 35.00/Lb | L. 8,354 |
| Carrot | 105 | 5,031 Lb | L. 5,679 | L. 2.00/Lb | L. 4,384 |
| Onion | 90 | 3,300 Lb | L. 7,644 | L. 3.05/Lb | L. 2,363 |
| Banana | 330 | 4,813 Lb | L. 7,454 | L. 2.25/Lb | L. 3,375 |

*A quintal (QQ) is a measure of weight equal to 100 pounds.

For client households without access to a sufficient planting area, the project is developing off-farm businesses and value-added processing to generate income and self-employment.

USAID-ACCESO helps client homes generate more revenue through combination of higher agricultural, horticultural, and animal productivity, the development of profitable off-farm enterprises, and the creation of employment opportunities.

USAID-ACCESO's economic development activities are integrated with nutrition and health, natural resource management, disaster mitigation, renewable energy, and potable water activities, and implemented in coordination with the government, municipalities, the private sector, and other institutions.

A client household with an average of six family members needs an annual income of L. 100,740 to move out of poverty. Planting two cycles a year on one hectare using project technology generates L. 20,500 from corn in one cycle and L. 80,000 from a high-value cash crop in the other cycle, for a total of L. 100,500 in income.

USAID-ACCESO clients are improving their incomes, as well as the overall nutrition of their households.



Children of beneficiary families.



Nutrition and health field visit, Copán.



Mothers are learning to prepare fortified tortillas for their children, La Paz.