



Monthly Update *August 2012*

AUGUST HIGHLIGHTS

- USAID-ACCESO is currently assisting 17,861 client households (89 percent of which live under the poverty line) in Western Honduras to move out of poverty and malnutrition through participation in project activities.
- USAID-ACCESO has a total of 77,820 beneficiaries; 10,030 of which are children under five years old; and 2,941 of those children are under two years old. These children are direct beneficiaries of project activities such as family plots; food preparation trainings; promotion of fruit and vegetable consumption; and workshops on improved household sanitation practices.
- The total production area under project assistance is 14,670 hectares: 7,767 hectares of coffee, 5,481 hectares of basic grains, and 1,421 hectares of horticultural crops. The main horticulture crops planted this month include gherkin and eggplant for export markets; and potato, tomato, cabbage, and carrots for local markets.
- United States Ambassador to Honduras, Lisa Kubiske, and USAID/Honduras Mission Director, James Watson, visited communities in the department of Intibucá. The visitors were able to speak directly with the small-scale producers and their families, and to learn about the project's integrated strategy and the impact it has had on rural clients.
- USAID-ACCESO continues exploring renewable energy options for project beneficiaries. In August, 197 producers were trained during 23 events on the installation and use of eco-friendly stoves, solar dryers, and biodigestors. Biodigestors generate gas that can be used to fuel stoves or lamps, a great alternative for households with no access to electricity.

About USAID-ACCESO

USAID-ACCESO is a four-year initiative funded by the people and government of the United States of America through the US Agency for International Development (USAID). This project is part of the global Feed the Future initiative of the US 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 these rural households above the poverty line and malnutrition conditions through economic development and increased incomes.



Miguel Angel Fuentes stands proudly in his plot where he grows beans for export and has drastically improved the yields and quality of his maize and bean crops thanks to project support.

USAID-ACCESO client households, beneficiaries, and other clients, August 2012

Department	Client Households	Beneficiaries	Other Clients*
Copán	2,741	8,924	241
Intibucá	3,227	16,467	336
La Paz	2,757	12,850	508
Lempira	4,081	20,480	594
Ocotepeque	2,728	10,036	302
Santa Bárbara	2,304	8,963	539
Others	23	100	103
TOTAL	17,861	77,820	2,623

**Includes: MSMES, buyers, input and service providers, Municipal Corporations, counterpart organizations, among others.*



Business and finance skills training is an important part of the project's technical assistance. Participants learned how to keep records, calculate production costs, and conduct cost-price analyses.

TECNICAL ASSITANCE

The project made 14,104 technical assistance visits, of which 10,981 focused on improving agricultural production and building producers' capacity in technical areas such as improved agricultural practices in vegetables and coffee, raised bed preparation and management, seedlings and transplanting, integrated pest management, and greenhouse management. Field visits allow producers the opportunity to exchange ideas and learn about new crops and technologies.

Technical assistance visits were made in support of all project components including 1,160 in nutrition and health, 268 in animal production, 690 in business and finance skills, 100 in postharvest handling, 527 in processing, 122 in natural disaster mitigation, and 45 in natural resource management.

200 project-assisted producers attended the first financial fair in La Paz, where they met with a number of local credit agencies. Expanding access to credit is one of the project's key objectives.

VALUE ADDED

USAID-ACCESO helped more than 70 female entrepreneurs take advantage of a national holiday by constructing 1,050 piñatas that generated net income of \$5,000. The women made the piñatas using recycled materials such as paper, newspaper, and leftover flour.

USAID-ACCESO continues to work with clients to develop new products and explore new income-generating activities. In August, 93 workshops were held in which 544 participants learned to make piñatas, jewelry, handcrafts, and other innovative products. After 21 bakery trainings, 230 individuals will now be able to reduce their production costs by up to 50 percent. Assisted communities are also improving the quality, cleanliness, and packaging for their products.



Women entrepreneurs learned to add value to previously discarded materials in piñata-making and cost calculation training in Intibucá.

ACCESS TO MARKETS

In order to promote client agricultural products, USAID-ACCESO sponsored a cooking demonstration and tasting in a popular mall in the city of San Pedro Sula. A local gourmet chef prepared recipes using high-quality onions, eggplants, garlic paste, green peppers and others that were produced by USAID-ACCESO clients. This event featured products from 80 producers and 10 client MSMES. The successful event will be replicated in 11 additional locations next month.

46 technical assistance visits were held connecting producers to national and international buyers. Specialists also coordinated shipments of two containers of allspice to the United States, directly benefiting 150 producers of Ilima, Santa Bárbara.



Shoppers tasted dishes prepared with USAID-ACCESO's client produce at a gourmet food tasting event in San Pedro Sula.



A young girl in Copán enjoyed a fortified tortilla at a food preparation training event.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH

In August, 141 events were attended by 2,204 parents who learned improved food preparation techniques, diet diversification strategies, and better household hygiene and sanitation practices. Fortified tortillas, prepared with green leaves or carrots, and iron-enriched soups have a direct impact on children’s health. Mothers learned how to prepare these nutrient-rich foods using readily available ingredients during household visits and on-site trainings.

Children in target communities are already showing positive improvements thanks to the comprehensive nutrition and health activities, which include trainings, food preparation workshops, and the implementation of the “healthy home” component to prevent health common problems. From April to July 2012, the percentage of children under two years old that demonstrated consecutive weight gain increased from 30 to 54 percent (of 1,288 children under the third percentile). Consistent growth leads to a reduction in the overall number of children in the bottom third percentile of weight.

NUTRITIONAL TRAINING CENTER OPENS

As part of USAID-ACCESO’s strategy to maximize the impact and reach of its trainings, a nutritional training center was inaugurated in the community of Yaruconte, Copán. The center was fully equipped by USAID-ACCESO with the necessary tools to prepare healthy meals, including an eco-stove, pots, plates, glasses, silverware, and containers for proper food storage. During the inauguration, participants learned to prepare rice with vegetables, fortified tortillas, and eggs enriched with green leaves.

The center is directly benefiting 31 households in Yaruconte with children under 2 years old. It is the first of 20 similar nutritional training centers that will open in the coming months in prioritized communities.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Parents, children and USAID- ACCESO staff at the inauguration of a Nutritional Training Center in Copán.

Trainings – August 2012

Área	Participants	Events
Renewable Energy	197	23
Business Skills / Finance	2,500	149
Natural Resource Management	580	24
Postharvest and Certifications	280	27
Processing and Added Value	544	93
Production	11,175	1,369
ACCESO project	8	1
Nutrition and Health	2,204	141
TOTAL	17,488	1,787

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