



Monthly Update *September 2012*

SEPTEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

- USAID-ACCESO is providing training and technical assistance to 18,954 rural households, reaching a total of 81,052 beneficiaries, 13 percent of which are children under 5 years old; 48 percent of beneficiaries are women. The project operates in the six departments with the highest rates of poverty and malnutrition, working to improve food security and increase incomes.
- The total production area under project assistance is 17,400 hectares: including 9,210 hectares of coffee; 6,548 of basic grains; and 1,641 of horticultural crops. The main horticulture crops planted this month included bean, corn, potato, plantain, tomato, sweet potato, lettuce, papaya, and fruit trees such as Hass avocado.
- USAID-ACCESO and Syngenta partnered to promote the Empty Container Collection project, which provides coupons for discounts on the purchase of agrochemicals at local suppliers in Intibucá and La Paz, in exchange for clean, empty pesticide containers. The project promotes positive environmental practices while also increasing access to important production inputs for smallholder farmers.
- To date USAID-ACCESO has installed 114 solar dryers for coffee, beans, and corn, improving access to renewable energy technologies for project beneficiaries. Solar dryers ensure uniform drying, while keeping grains clean, off the floor, and away from animal contact. In September, 239 producers participated in 31 events on the use and maintenance of solar dryers, biodigesters, and eco-stoves. Eco-stoves reduce the incidences of respiratory diseases and consume less wood than traditional stoves.

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.



Cucumber producer in Copán harvest the crop to send to market. The family's income has increased thanks to new high-value crops and improved production practices.



Project technicians train farmers in pest and disease management to ensure quality crops and maximum yields.

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

Department	Client Households	Beneficiaries	Other Clients *
Copán	2,916	9,286	285
Intibucá	3,476	18,170	364
La Paz	3,006	13,741	527
Lempira	4,218	20,652	702
Ocotepeque	2,913	10,021	331
Santa Bárbara	2,402	9,082	555
Others	23	100	123
TOTAL	18,954	81,052	2,887

*Includes: SMMEs, buyers, input and service providers, municipal corporations, and counterpart organizations.



The project trained water treatment boards in Santa Catarina, Intibucá, improving the water quality for 1,400 residents.

TECNICAL ASSISTANCE

13,717 technical assistance visits were made during the month, of which 10,782 focused on production – training farmers in best practices for coffee, basic grains and horticulture crops, including soil preparation and management; pest and disease control; appropriate use of agrochemicals; transplanting; sowing; and irrigation system installation and management.

A total of 941 technical assistance visits focused on food preparation and diet diversity; 196 focused on animal production; 708 were on business skills (use of production logs); 84 on postharvest handling; and 559 on processing. In Intibucá, a community of 1,400 began using a new water treatment system after receiving technical assistance from natural resource management specialists. The new treatment system has drastically improved the quality of the town’s drinking water. Natural resource management specialists made 133 field visits this month to improve water and waste management, and the management of coffee pulp.

VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS

USAID-ACCESO continues to promote new product development and diversification to generate off-farm income and employment. In September, 408 participants attended 54 workshops; 31 individuals learned processing and commercialization techniques for dairy products. Other clients learned to process frozen beans to meet local market demand. They also received support in marketing and branding the new product.

Forestry specialists and local environmental protection authorities collaborated to promote the safe and legal use of wood to produce chests, jewellery boxes, and household décor. In September, 18 technical assistance visits assisted producers to understand consumer and market demands.



A project technician oversees the frozen bean processing. This small family business is increasing sales and income with the addition of processed products, which have year-round demand.



Eggplant exportation is stimulating economic growth in La Jigua, Copan. USAID-ACCESO trained the employees at this eggplant packing plant in postharvest handling.

ACCESS TO MARKETS

Eggplant exportation continues to increase incomes for producers in Copán, generating \$150,000 in total sales to date and creating new job opportunities. An export company opened a new packing plant that now employs 31 local residents who received USAID-ACCESO training in product selection and packaging.

In Santa Bárbara, six containers of high-quality allspice were exported to international markets, generating \$200,000 in gross sales for rural producers. The group received national recognition from the government as an official allspice exporter.

Producers in Ocotepeque sent a 40,500-pound container of sweet potato and plantain to Canada, generating approximately \$6,400 in sales. The producers plan to explore new export opportunities in international markets.



Feeding guides help parents monitor their children's diet and weight to maximize growth. Both mothers and fathers receive training in childhood feeding practices and the importance of a balanced diet.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

2,042 clients participated in 177 training events on personal hygiene and household cleanliness, diet diversity, the importance of eating healthy fruits and vegetables, and the active participation of parents in childhood feeding. All project health and nutrition interventions target children in the lowest weight percentiles. Families received training on the use of a child feeding guide developed by the project, which recommends the proper portions and timing of meals to optimize healthy and steady childhood growth.

To further increase impact and build local capacity, USAID-ACCESO is inaugurating 40 nutritional training canters, providing training and equipment to more than 300 health volunteers. The training canters will serve as meeting points where mothers and children can attend workshops. This initiative will benefit 6,520 client households in 60 communities.

IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY THROUGH FAMILY PLOTS

USAID-ACCESO works to improve food security and nutrition by promoting the consumption of healthy foods and working with client families to establish family garden plots. The small plots, which average 0.04 hectares in size, are typically located near client homes and are managed by the whole family. The crops grown on these plots include yuca, plantain, sweet potato, *malanga*, *moringa*, and citrus and avocado trees – all nutritious foods that contribute to overall household nutrition and contain critical iron and vitamins. To date, a total of 25 hectares of family plots have been planted with assistance from project specialists, benefiting 809 families in prioritized communities.



Maria Elena Carbajal and her three children are reaping the benefits from their flourishing household garden. The youngest child, Cristel, has been steadily gaining weight since the family began receiving project assistance.

Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Trainings – September 2012

Area	Participants	Events
Renewable Energy	239	31
Business Skills / Finance	1,205	113
Natural Resource Management	504	27
Postharvest and Certifications	365	31
Processing and Added Value	408	54
Production	9,684	1,171
ACCESO project	48	3
Nutrition and Health	2,042	117
TOTAL	14,579	1,551

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