



Monthly Update *December 2012*

DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

- USAID-ACCESO is equipping 21,390 household clients in western Honduras with the skills and knowledge they need to increase incomes, food security, and overall living standards
- The project is benefitting more than 84,890 people – 44,059 of which are women – using an integrated approach, providing technical assistance and training in production and postharvest practices, basic practices in nutrition and health, business skills, market linkages, processing, and off-farm business opportunities.
- The total area under production is 18,761 hectares, including 9,881 hectares of coffee, 7,044 hectares of basic grains, and 1,837 of fruits and horticulture crops. The crops with the largest planting area this month were coffee, cocoa, corn, bean, papaya, and onion.
- Smallholder producers from more than 17 communities in La Paz participated in the first production contest for maize. All 20 participants surpassed the national average of maize production of 34 quintals per hectare, with production averages ranging from 45 to produced 157 quintals per hectare. The top five producers received cash prizes and agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, agrochemicals, knapsack sprayers, and high-quality seed. Event sponsors – including Del Campo, Syngenta, En-Hacore, Duwest, Cadelga, Bayer, BANADESA, and the municipalities of Guajiquiro, Santa Ana, Yarula, Chinacla, San José and Marcala – donated more than \$3,700 in prizes.
- To encourage local commercialization, USAID-ACCESO held a fair in the department of Lempira for its clients. Participants had the opportunity to sell their crops, including passion fruit, carrots, cabbage, chayote, parsley, and basil produced with technical assistance from the project. Tortillas fortified with leafy green to make them more nutritious were also for sale at the event. Processing micro enterprises, local artisans, and rural financing agencies also showcased their goods and services.

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.



Ángel Argueta, first prize winner of the maize production contest, achieved yields of 157 quintals of corn per hectare, more than quadrupling the national average yield of 34 quintals per hectare.



Producers receive direct technical assistance on their plots, making communication more effective for implementing good agricultural practices for coffee production.

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

Department	Client Households	Beneficiaries	Other Clients *
Copán	3,325	9,838	1,220
Intibucá	3,682	19,370	1,157
La Paz	3,170	15,118	1,322
Lempira	4,351	21,122	1,908
Ocotepeque	3,001	10,138	880
Santa Bárbara	3,861	9,305	1,309
Otros	-	-	770
TOTAL	21,390	84,891	8,566

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



Technical assistance and training in postharvest handling is an essential component for developing commercial operations. Small-scale producers learn to sample coffee beans after harvest for quality control before sending them to market.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In December, project technicians carried out 3,764 technical assistance visits, 3,006 of which focused on good production practices for coffee and horticulture crops, including soil preparation and management; planting and transplanting; identification and control of disease, pests and weeds; appropriate use of agrochemicals; land conservation; fertilization program management; irrigation system installation; and coffee processing effluent treatment.

There were 98 nutrition and health technical assistance visits focused on healthy food preparation and household hygiene; 37 technical assistance visits in animal production concentrated on livestock management and commercialization; 98 in basic business skills emphasizing the importance of recordkeeping and production logs; 176 in postharvest handling, including product classification and packaging; 141 on value-added processing techniques, using locally-available raw materials; and 51 natural resource management and disaster mitigation visits.

VALUE-ADDED

Project specialists continued working with client households to add value to their crops and generate additional income. In December, 16 training events were held with 108 participants who learned how to better market value-added products, some of which were already part of their daily diets, such as corn and flour tortillas. Participants also learned how to process fruit and vegetables into products such as jellies, fruit concentrates for drinks, dehydrated fruits, and pickled goods, among other products that are in high demand in local markets.



Owners of La Tutulina, a women-managed tortilla business in Tutule, La Paz, are able to work full-time in the community thanks to project-supported improvements to their business planning and production operations.



The business *Tajaditas El Buen Gusto* has received technical assistance in legal registration, allowing it to access financial services and formal markets.

ACCESS TO MARKETS

By providing access to free legal services and assistance in developing the required standard documents, the project has simplified legal registration for small businesses; reduced the time and cost associated with the process; and facilitated access to new markets. Considering that 12,848 current household clients (out of 15,636 total) live in extreme poverty, reducing administrative and policy barriers is crucial to promoting sustainable development in assisted communities.

Thanks to USAID-ACCESO, 42 small businesses, rural savings banks, and producers associations in western Honduras have been legally registered, benefitting approximately 2,100 families.



A mother implements basic health and hygiene practices, washing her hands using the water delivery and filtration system installed with project support.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH

This month, 318 parents received training in basic nutrition principles, family planning, and the advantages of exclusive breastfeeding for children under six months old during 25 training events.

Under the nutrition and health component, the project is promoting home improvements to reduce the incidence of disease and improve overall quality of life. One such improvement is covering adobe floors and walls with a thin layer of cement or plaster to reduce problems with dust, insects and bacteria. Other improvements include installing eco-friendly stoves that eliminate smoke inside the house and reduce the use of firewood, and water delivery and filtration systems, which provide easy access to clean water and dispose of dirty water outside the home. To date, 550 families have received at least one of the three improvements, reducing the incidence of diseases that primarily affect children.

The project expects to improve the living conditions of 2,000 families, benefitting more than 12,000 people in 237 communities with the highest levels of poverty and malnutrition in Western Honduras.

STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS

USAID-ACCESO is establishing alliances and agreements with key public and private sector organizations, including input and equipment providers, financial service agencies, and nongovernmental organizations to promote technology implementation, economic development and aspects of sustainability.

This month an agreement with BANADESA (National Bank of Agricultural Development) was officially signed. BANADESA will finance horticulture and basic grain producers in La Paz and Intibucá that are following a project-designed calendarized planting schedule. To date, USAID-ACCESO has forged 28 public-private alliances and signed 13 letters of agreement with public institutions.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

USAID-ACCESO and BANADESA's official agreement will finance horticulture and basic crop producers in La Paz and Intibucá.

Trainings – December 2012

Area	Participants	Events
Renewable Energy	181	22
Business Skills / Finance	378	50
Natural Resources Management	165	12
Postharvest and Certifications	303	40
Processing and Value Added	108	18
Production	3,100	473
Market Information	168	11
Nutrition and Health	318	25
TOTAL	4,721	651

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