



Monthly Bulletin *February 2013*

FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS

- USAID-ACCESO is assisting 27,424 household clients in the six departments of Western Honduras that display the highest levels of poverty and malnutrition. The project benefits a total of 91,793 people, of which 11,845 are children under five years of age. USAID-ACCESO's integrated approach increases household production to improve food security, increase income sources through the introduction of market driven production programs, and links small-scale producers and businesses to local, regional, and international buyers.
- By the end of February, the total production area had increased by 95.6 hectares, reaching a total of 22,734 hectares. Of this, 12,565 hectares were coffee; 8,044 hectares of basic grains; and 2,125 hectares of fruit and horticulture crops. The most planted crops for the month included: coffee, corn, bean, potato, onion, cabbage, sweet potato, potato, carrot, and tomato.
- Thanks to project intervention, 600 families from 12 different communities in the department of Intibucá benefitted from the construction of a box culvert bridge. On February 5, members of the municipality of Intibucá, USAID-ACCESO staff, and local residents inaugurated the bridge, which will provide better access to other towns and markets. The project is helping rural communities commercialize their horticulture crops, basic grains, coffee, and processed products.
- 236 persons participated in natural disaster mitigation events and workshops. Attendees learned how to design prevention plans and took part in drills for emergency situations such as landslides and storms.

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 to lift these rural households above the poverty line and malnutrition conditions through economic development and increased incomes.



Residents of the community of Santa Catarina with USAID-ACCESO staff in the inauguration of a box culvert bridge that is benefitting approximately 600 families in 12 different communities.

USAID-ACCESO client households, beneficiaries and other clients, February 2013

Department	Household Clients	Beneficiaries	Other Clients *
Copán	4,520	10,746	1,201
Intibucá	4,060	20,244	1,198
La Paz	3,563	16,098	1,235
Lempira	5,281	23,281	1,828
Ocotepeque	4,299	11,302	708
Santa Bárbara	5,701	10,122	1,334
Otros	0	0	796
TOTAL	27,424	91,793	8,300

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



The natural disaster mitigation specialists introduce new evacuation routes in rural communities. Through practice drills, participants put to practice their acquired knowledge.



Technical assistance in agricultural production is complemented with technical assistance visits of renewable energy, promoting access to accessible technologies such as solar dryers, which increase yields and improve the drying process for coffee crops.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In February, a total of 11,767 technical assistance visits were made. Of these, 9,166 focused on agricultural production, including best practices for coffee; irrigation system installation; soil conservation; bed preparation and contour plowing; and weed, disease, and pest identification and control.

Technical assistance in agricultural production included 108 visits focused on renewable energy and promoting access to efficient and eco-friendly technologies such as bio-digesters and solar dryers. 378 technical assistance visits on processing and value addition took place, with particular emphasis on improving procedures and commercialization systems. 836 visits were in nutrition and health, and included height and weight monitoring for children less than 2 years of age. 544 technical assistance visits in business and financing centered on the use of production logs and access to financing services. Additional technical assistance outreach included 227 visits in animal production, 209 in postharvest handling, and 81 visits in natural resources management.

VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS

With the objective of generating off-farm income and employment, USAID-ACCESO continues to improve access to information and growth opportunities for small businessmen and women in western Honduras. Through 32 workshop events, 252 small-scale entrepreneurs and their employees learned to process horticulture crops, transforming them into commercial high-value products that generate household income. Among the products developed were garlic paste, pickled products, sweets, processed beans, sugarcane juice (panela), dairy products, and processed fruits.

During the month, animal production and processing specialists conducted workshops on chicken coops and piggery management, teaching participants how to feed, weigh, and manage animals. They also demonstrated how to best prepare and present chickens, hens and pigs for sale to restaurants and shops.



Participants receive training during a field day in garlic processing by converting it into a commercial product that generates additional income for the household.

MARKET ACCESS

The project's marketing activities form an integral component of the technical service provision. Where possible, market led production programs are established with pre-identified buyers, where terms and conditions are established pre-production. Given the very small farm sizes and production operations, this requires coordination between clients to achieve volumes, ensure market compliance and competitive logistics costs.

During the month, 139 technical assistance visits to producers and MSMEs were made to survey and improve the capacity for market opportunity identification, negotiation, and commercialization routes. A total of 113 people were trained in market requirements, exportation procedures, and market studies. Additionally, a contract was signed with a United States buyer for two containers of allspice.



Training in best poultry practices and management helps small-scale farmers obtain higher prices from restaurants or stores.



Basic improvements in household conditions are essential in disease prevention and the families' wellbeing.

BEEKEEPING INCREASES FAMILIES' INCOME

Improved production and product diversification among small-scale beekeepers is a result of USAID-ACCESO technical assistance and trainings that improve beekeeping practices and generate income in rural households.

Through the projects training and technical assistance activities, beekeepers are improving beehive management and obtaining diverse products such as honeycomb and pollen that, once dried, is in demand for its high vitamin and protein content. In one four-month season, a family with access to one beehive can obtain 72 trays of honeycomb, with a price of \$3.00 dollars per tray, generating an additional income of \$216 per beehive and approximately \$207 of pollen sales. To date, 449 participants have been trained in beekeeping, benefitting approximately 2,694 people with product diversification from beehives.

NUTRITION & HEALTH

96 training events reached 1,373 participants who learned about family planning, exclusive breastfeeding for children under 6 months, and diet diversity. Through food preparation demonstrations, parents learned to prepare rice with vegetables, rice cakes, carrot cakes, eggs with green leaves, squash cakes, and other healthy meals to keep improving the nutritional conditions of children in the bottom nutritional percentile.

The training activities are followed up with household visits to help implement basic household improvements and practices in order to prevent family disease and illness.

The project's nutrition and health staff have to incorporate creative solutions for critical situations in their daily jobs. In the community of Ojo de Agua, Lempira, families of children in the bottom third nutritional percentile learned about powdered moringa, a green leaf high in vitamins and iron that helps prevent anemia.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

In beekeeping trainings, participants develop new products and presentations such as integrating beehives into honey bottles for new markets that increase household incomes.

Trainings – February 2013

Area	Participants	Events
Renewable Energy	104	16
Business Skills / Finance	727	89
Natural Resources Management	736	38
Postharvest and Certifications	396	34
Processing and Added Value	252	32
Production	8,528	1,056
ACCESO project	171	9
Nutrition and Health	1,373	96
TOTAL	12,287	1,370

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