



Monthly Bulletin *February 2014*

FEBRUARY HIGHLIGHTS

- USAID-ACCESO is assisting 34,755 households in the most vulnerable communities in western Honduras, promoting production technologies and practices to increase incomes and improve the overall quality of life. The project is benefitting 184,802 people – 90 percent of whom live in poverty and extreme poverty conditions – through technical assistance and training in production, value-added processing, natural resource management, renewable technologies, disaster mitigation, and nutrition and health.
- This month, 186 new hectares were planted reaching a total of 46,306 hectares under project technical assistance, including: 18,797 hectares of coffee, 23,498 of basic grains, and 4,011 of fruit and horticulture crops. The crops with the highest planting area this month were: maize, coffee, beans, potato, green beans, pasture, tomato, eggplant, and papaya.
- USAID-ACCESO organized a business conference in Santa Barbara to bring micro-enterprises and potential buyers together. 140 individuals and about 20 companies attended the event, networking with various financial institutions to explore opportunities for possible expansion of their activities. Financial institutions in attendance included BANADESA, ODEF Hermandad de Honduras, BANPAIS, and Cooperative Pinalejo.
- In February, the project gave the second module of the vegetable production course to 50 producers in Santa Barbara. This initiative aims to improve farmers' ability to successfully manage their farm operations and to help disseminate the technologies to other farmers. The modules covered included project management, basic practices, drip irrigation, plant nutrition, pests and diseases, postharvest, marketing, and processing for pepper, tomato, eggplant, cucumber, banana, corn, watermelon, and zucchini crops.



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Access to crop diversification: Producers inspect an onion crop planted with good agricultural practices in the community of Nueva Esperanza, La Iguala, Lempira.



Access to new opportunities: The second business conference in Santa Barbara promoted micro-enterprise activities with potential buyers and financial institutions.

USAID-ACCESO client households, beneficiaries and other clients, February 2014

Department	Household clients	Beneficiaries	Other Clients *
Copán	5,462	24,114	1,318
Intibucá	5,641	37,134	1,106
La Paz	5,772	27,586	1,029
Lempira	6,679	44,783	1,917
Ocatepeque	4,402	24,873	814
Santa Bárbara	6,799	26,312	1,490
Others	0	0	724
TOTAL	34,755	184,802	8,398

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

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 is assisting 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.



Access to technical knowledge: Producers in the community of La Jigua, Copán receive training in basic production practices.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

USAID-ACCESO carried out 23,041 technical assistance visits this month. Of these, 15,592 strengthened farmers' knowledge in agricultural production topics including basic practices for coffee and horticulture crops; soil preparation and management; pest, disease, and weed identification and control; transplant and planting; fertilization program management; nutrient balance; adequate use of agrochemicals; soil conservation; and contour plowing.

1,843 technical assistance visits focused on childhood nutrition and improving personal and home hygiene; 1,201 on processing; 1,281 on business skills including production logs and reducing costs. 1,298 technical assistance visits in animal production focused on poultry farming and livestock management; 456 visits focused on natural resource management; and 676 on postharvest handling and certifications.

VALUE ADDITION

USAID-ACCESO processing specialists continued working with communities to create new products from locally available resources to generate off-farm employment opportunities. This month, 429 participants attended 61 training events during which they learned good manufacturing and processing practices, and techniques to produce frozen chicken tacos, frozen beans, and dairy and bakery products.

Forestry specialists continued promoting legal tree felling and working with woodcrafters to build furniture, doors, chests, and other in-demand products for sale to local markets.



Access to knowledge – traditional crops: Coffee producers receive training in best practices for preventing pest and disease problems, including leaf rust and coffee borer.



ACCESS to new markets: Through a partnership with supermarket La Colonia and Chef Catracho, the project presented recipes and in-store demonstrations using ingredients produced by USAID-ACCESO clients.

ACCESS TO MARKETS

In February, 70 participants attended seven training events on market information. The producers and buyers learned about quality standards and regulations, supply, and the negotiation process.

Marketing specialists continued coordinating tours of producers' plots to increase market exposure for small-scale farmers and deliver information about market logistics routes and formal buyer requirements. This month, the project organized 126 technical assistance visits that facilitated sharing market information, logistical details, and transportation coordination.



Access to nutrition and health: A young girl eats highly-nutritious food prepared by a mothers group under the guidance of the project’s nutrition and health specialists in the community of San Antonio, Lempira.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH

The nutrition and health team held 197 training events, giving 2,905 parents the opportunity to strengthen basic nutrition and health practices. This month, 1,438 participants received training in family planning and optimal spacing of pregnancies (two years between pregnancies) to contribute to a better quality of life. 330 participants learned about nutritious food preparation and practiced recipes for natural juices, rice with vegetables, fortified tortillas, bean soup, and other vitamin-rich recipes made from low-cost and accessible ingredients. 339 participants learned “healthy household” practices: the concept of establishing healthy and safe norms within the home to prevent diseases and improve hygiene practices.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

USAID-ACCESO, through its renewable energy component, encourages the installation of solar coffee dryers to ensure quality and add value to the final product. Dryers are also used with corn, beans, allspice, cashew, adobe and firewood. To date, with the project support, 813 solar dryers have been installed in the six departments.

USAID-ACCESO is also working with rural households to implement the use of inexpensive biogas stoves. These systems improve the quality of life in rural areas and encourage the proper management of natural resources and environment. The benefits provided by these technologies include reduced fuel wood consumption, reduced incidence of respiratory diseases, increased availability of organic matter for use in family plots, and additional time at home for other activities. To date, 1,176 homes have installed eco-stoves and 115 households have bio-digesters.



Access to technology: Solar dryers improve coffee yields, quality and sales prices, earning farm families additional income. Some farmers are renting their dryers for an additional source of income.

Trainings – February 2014

Area	Participants	Events
Renewable Energy	547	94
Business Skills / Finance	675	92
Natural Resources Management and Disaster Mitigation	388	20
Postharvest and Certifications	803	56
Processing and Added Value	429	61
Production	14,731	2,031
Market Information	70	7
Nutrition and Health	2,905	197
ACCESO project	-	-
TOTAL	20,548	2,558

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