



Project Concern International International Food Relief Partnership Program



Single-Year Assistance Program (SYAP)

**Final Results Report
December 1, 2010**

A. PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION

Date of Report Submission:	11/01/2010
Cooperating Sponsor(s):	Project Concern International
Country:	Guatemala
Program Location(s) in country:	Huehuetenango
Program Start Date:	10/01/2009
Program End Date :	08/31/2010
Program Name, if any:	Improving Food and Nutrition for School Children and their Families in Huehuetenango, Guatemala
TA Number(s) or WFP Project Number(s):	AID-FFP-G-09-00028
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B. PROGRAM OBJECTIVE(S) AND ACTIVITIES

(B1) Briefly describe the overall purpose/objectives of your program, and the main beneficiary groups.

The overall purpose of PCI's program was to "improve food and nutrition for school children and their families in Huehuetenango, Guatemala." The project targets some of the most food insecure communities of Huehuetenango, working with local schools as a platform for an integrated approach to food and nutrition security and community-based health.

The primary objectives of the project were to:

- Increase the capacity of local communities to provide leadership in food and nutrition security
- Improve household nutrition behaviors, and
- Improve school attendance.

To accomplish the above objectives, PCI distributed the Breedlove Harvest Blend commodity beginning in November 2009 as a take home ration to school children of 3 to 15 years of age from 17 schools of the rural municipalities of Santa Eulalia and Santa Barbara in the Department of Huehuetenango. During the school year that ended in November 2009, a total of 4,365 children and their families benefited from the project. Due to an increase in enrollment at the participating schools, the project included 4,827 school children and their families during the 2010 school year calendar.

Participating families received training in the preparation of the Breedlove commodity and received a variety of recipes to use at home which include complementing them with locally available foods and herbs. In addition, teachers and mothers received trainings in health and the importance of a good nutrition.

(B2) Provide a short summary of major program activities (general free food distribution, supplementary feeding, therapeutic feeding, Food for Work, Food for Agriculture, complementary feeding, etc.).

Project activities included the following:

1. Signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the Ministry of Education in Huehuetenango which included support for the identification of schools with the most need, assistance with the baseline gathering and motivation and support to school directors and teachers for participation in the program.
2. Presentation of the program to school directors, teachers and Parent Teacher Associations(PTAs) as well as to municipal authorities of Santa Eulalia and Santa Barbara, and local representatives of the Food and Nutrition Security Council. Demonstrations were provided on the preparation and use of the Breedlove Dehydrated Soup. Participants were very grateful to USAID and PCI for reaching out to isolated rural communities through the schools, and confirmed their participation to community activities related to the program.
3. Training of key staff. Three field technicians from Santa Eulalia and Santa Barbara were selected to provide technical assistance and to monitor project's activities at schools. The technicians were hired to promote the project to PTAs and families. The technicians were trained and implemented the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system of the project. One of their first

M&E activities included carrying out a base line survey, gathering critical data on hygiene, health and nutrition both at school and family levels. The information gathered helped to confirm the number of beneficiaries and the design and implementation of subsequent trainings.

4. Household visits were part of the technicians' activities. The household visits were intended to confirm and reinforce hygiene practices, the adequate use and preparation of the Breedlove soup, check on the families' nutritional status, and inquire about children who have missed school. When malnutrition or other health issues were identified, caretakers and children were referred to the Casa Materna, where PCI implements maternal child health activities in Huehuetenango.
5. Once a month the field technicians met with the committee for education and nutrition called "CENA" (*Comité para la Educación, Nutrición y Alimentación*) at each benefiting school. The CENAs consisted of community volunteers representing parents and teachers. During these meetings, the CENAs were trained to facilitate and reinforce health and nutrition behavior change at the household level using key messages and actions focused on: improving food preparation and handling; nutrition and healthy feeding practices for children and pregnant or breastfeeding women; personal and household hygiene (hand washing, water quality and prevention/ treatment of diarrheal diseases); and the importance of nutrition. During these meetings, the project's results and progress were also reviewed, follow up for ongoing activities was provided, challenges were discussed and suggestions for improvements were made and lessons learned and best practices shared.
6. Twice a month, the technicians held meetings with school staff to review school attendance and analyze the reasons for desertion and strategies to increase enrollment and attendance.
7. Direct food distribution. On October 1, 2009, the first two containers of Breedlove Dehydrated Soup arrived at the port in Guatemala. The commodities were delivered to PCI warehouse in Huehuetenango on October 18, 2009. The second two containers arrived in Guatemala on March 10, 2010, and were delivered to PCI's warehouse on April 25, 2010. In total, 6,250 boxes or 75,000 bags of dehydrated soup arrived safely to PCI's storage facilities. Distribution of commodity was arranged as soon as the commodity was available in PCI's warehouses.

There is no commodity loss to be reported. All commodities were received by PCI in perfect condition and sent to the schools warehouses for distribution. Typically, once the commodity was received by the school, arrangements were made for the product to be distributed the following week. Each distribution was accompanied by food preparation demonstration and a health and nutrition fair. The health fairs were also an occasion to provide children with recreation through games and contests, and for mothers to receive additional information in health and nutrition.

Below, are pictures of women receiving and carrying the boxes of commodity to their home:



The following table details how the commodity was distributed among the municipalities:

Table 1: Commodity distribution

Municipality	Number of commodity boxes distributed
Santa Eulalia	3,945
Santa Barbara	1,955
Santiago Chimaltenango	350
Total	6,250

It should be noted that the Council for Food and Security Nutrition together with the Ministry of Health had requested support from PCI and other NGOs in the area to attend a food shortage crisis in Santiago Chimaltenango after Hurricane Agatha. PCI contributed with 350 boxes of Breedlove in order to attend the emergency. PCI staff directly distributed the commodity to 350 affected families identified by the Municipality of Santiago Chimaltenango..

C. LINKING RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT

(C1) Did the program establish program strategies and activities to accelerate the establishment/ reestablishment of beneficiaries’ livelihoods and self-sufficiency? (Yes/No)

Yes.

(C2) If yes, what were the strategies and activities?

“Improving Food and Nutrition for School Children and their Families in Huehuetenango, Guatemala” used a variety of strategies and activities to ensure long lasting results in the benefiting communities. The project was implemented in some of the most food insecure communities in rural Guatemala. Schools were used as a platform to implement an integrated approach to food and nutrition security and community-based health. The population in Santa Eulalia and Santa Barbara where the project was carried out is over 95% indigenous and has very limited or no access to health programs or services. According to a 2007 food and nutrition vulnerability survey by the Huehuetenango Health District, Santa Bárbara was ranked the *most* vulnerable municipality in Huehuetenango, while Santa Eulalia ranked closely behind in eighth place of out of 33 municipalities.

National studies have demonstrated a daily chronic deficit of 492 kilocalories per capita in rural areas, with the majority of people, including children, eating only two meals a day. In this project’s targeted

municipalities, 62% of children suffer from chronic malnutrition.¹ Moreover, according to the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP, 2003), 55% of Guatemalan school age children are anemic, which impacts cognitive functions, including attention span and learning. The majority of children who attend school in rural areas arrive with empty stomachs. In addition, there is also evidence that a lack of education contributes to hunger and malnutrition among succeeding generations of children.

This project which was made possible thanks to the support of USAID- Food For Peace – IFRP program carried out specific objectives to counteract the chronic problems described above. By training school teachers and caretakers on the importance of a good nutrition, the impact of good hygiene on their families' health, important messages and examples conducive to a healthy life were disseminated. One of the successes of the project was the interest and attention paid by women during the training and the initial steps taken towards exercising improved health and hygiene practices at the household level.

By providing a food complement together with important messages on the use of local nutritious ingredients, families were given new tools to improve nutrition for a lasting and profitable impact on benefiting families of the municipalities of Santa Eulalia and Santa Barbara.

School attendance rates and children's learning capacity (student attention span, ability to focus, etc.) have improved as a result of the program. The training and food distribution provided by the program were great mechanisms to engage parents in health and nutrition activities and also increased their willingness to allow their children to attend school. The participation in these activities also strengthened community ownership and organization mechanisms central to the success of current and future community health and development effort and has had a positive impact on the health and nutrition of families and the community as a whole.

Including schoolchildren as integral participants in the program, disseminating take-home messages through them messages, and motivating them to stay in school will have an impact on the future of the communities at stake. Indeed, children were extremely proud to participate in the program, and registration and attendance increased very significantly in participating schools. School directors reported that the program was a success and requested that "additional projects be put in place, following the same methodology which strengthened the partnership between children, their parents, their educators and the development community".

Following, is a picture illustrating how children proudly got involved and participated in the food distribution in Santa Barbara:

¹ Guatemalan Ministry of Health Departmental Nutrition Surveys, 2008.



(C3) What results were achieved during the project period?

The following table provides an overview of the results achieved during the life of the project (LOP):
 September 1, 2009 through August 31, 2010:

PROJECT MONITORING AND EVALUATION FRAMEWORK WITH ACTUAL RESULTS

Intermediate Results	Strategy	Illustrative Indicators	Targets	Actual Results
1. Increased capacity of local communities to provide leadership in food and nutrition security	Implementation of Breedlove commodity distribution at school level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of received rations distributed to project beneficiaries² • Percent of participating schools with trained CENAs • Number of teachers trained in good nutrition and health practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% • 100% • 32 teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100%* • 100% • 159
2. Improved household nutrition behaviors	Community education campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents of participating children trained in nutrition, and hygiene & sanitation practices • Proportion of children participating in school health fairs in each municipality • Number of household visits conducted per month to provide one-on-one counseling to high-risk households³ • Proportion of high-risk households with improved household nutrition behaviors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1500 parents • 90% • 20 visits • 75% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,469 parents • 95% • 31 • 75%
3. Improved school attendance	School rations for students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent of children attending school regularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% baseline increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89%

* Please note that due to a very serious food crisis in the municipality of Santiago Chimaltenango in Huehuetenango, PCI’s partners in the project (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and the Council

² ‘Received’ means that the commodity has arrived at PCI’s storage facility.

³ “High risk” includes households whose children are not attending school or who appear undernourished.

for Food and Nutrition Security) requested that some Breedlove rations be sent to that municipality in support of underserved children and their families. A total of 350 boxes of Breedlove were sent to community health centers in that municipality for distribution as a response to the food shortage emergency. In total 6,250 boxes of Breedlove soup were received by PCI, of which 5,900 were distributed through the school or used for demonstration purposes, and 350 sent to Santiago Chimaltenango.

The commodity was distributed during 3 distributions. During each distribution, families with one school age child received one box of 12 bags of the commodity, and families with two children or more of school age received a box and a half or 18 bags of commodity at each distribution. This distribution measure was agreed upon among CENA's members and adopted at all participating schools.

D. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

(D1) On the whole, did the program achieve agreed-upon objectives and targets (beneficiary levels, etc.)? (Yes / No)

Yes, agreed-upon objectives and targets were achieved and some were exceeded.

(D2) What objectives/targets were achieved or exceeded, and how? Explain the significance of what was accomplished and identify reasons for greater than expected results or factors that led to higher than expected achievement. Provide supportive data, if available.

Specific achievements of the project include:

➤ Improved access to food.

The commodity was distributed three times over the LOP. The first distribution took place in November 2009, the second until May 2010 and the third in June 2010. At the beneficiaries' request and following an agreement reached among CENA members, one box of 12 bags each of commodity was distributed to families with one-two children of school age, and a box and a half or 18 bags to families with three or more school age children.

The commodity was extremely well received by beneficiaries. Social workers and educators from MOSCAMED helped in the training on food preparation and demonstration and a significant number of recipes were tried out and shared with families. Participants showed great pride in sharing new recipes that were palatable to both children and adults in the household. There are many anecdotes from beneficiaries thanking PCI and its donor for the commodity received as they reported harder times to access food due to a very dry season followed by floods and the high cost of food in local markets. This project definitely came as an alternative to food access and reduction of food insecurity.

PCI has received approximately 157 requests from neighboring schools and local authorities to implement a similar project in their areas, especially in Santa Barbara.

- Trained school committees ("CENA").

The 17 schools that participated in the program were strengthened by the CENAs who currently receive support from the Community Development Council as well as the Food Security and Health Committees. The CENAs showed great initiative and responsibility for the storage and

distribution of the Breedlove soup and their participation for the promotion and implementation of the health and nutrition fairs was an important factor in the success of these activities.

CENA members also attended trainings which covered the following topics:

- Causes and effects of malnutrition
- How to identify malnutrition and levels of malnutrition
- The four pillars of food security and successful approaches to food security
- Early signs of malnutrition risk and adequate case referrals
- Family planning
- Pregnancy care and exclusive breastfeeding
- Using the "canguro" (kangaroo) method for low birth weight and premature babies

In addition, at the request of CENA members, the following information was shared with them:

- Results of the 2008 survey conducted by the Ministry of Education on malnutrition rates in school children of Huehuetenango
- Prevention of Sexually Transmitted Diseases

The level of education achieved on the subject of malnutrition and food and nutrition security is very encouraging. The survey on school children malnutrition which was shared with CENA members proved to be a great tool to increase malnutrition awareness and make community members empowered to seek solutions to the issue.

➤ Teachers trained

Thanks to additional resources raised by PCI and in response to the teachers' requests, PCI was able to include some teacher training as part of this project. Trainings were done on a quarterly basis and included the same topics as the CENA trainings.

➤ Improved nutrition practices at household level

One of the achievements that PCI is particularly proud to report on is the participation of fathers at the health and hygiene training sessions. At a never before reached rate, both men and women participated in the trainings and took much interest in the information provided. Some statistics on these training sessions include:

- 67% of families who received the take home ration, participated in at least 5 health and nutrition trainings (health, nutrition and hygiene, breastfeeding, etc)
- 33% received at least one training session on Breedlove preparation and improved hand washing practices. Participants in the hand washing training session received soap, a small towel and a plastic bin to use for proper hand washing at household level.

➤ Health fair

During the distributions at each school, nutrition and health fairs were held for women and children under five years of age to receive health consultations. In Santa Barbara, where a tick infestation had been reported among the population, special emphasis was given to the prevention of the tick contamination, and shampoo was distributed to school children.

(D3) What objectives/targets were not achieved, and how? Identify reasons for performance shortfalls or factors that led to lower than expected targets, and discuss how these problems were or will be addressed (or how these should be addressed by FFP). Examples might include civil unrest, personnel issues, shipping or ground transportation delays, budgetary constraints, etc. How will these experiences be incorporated into future implementation to improve performance?

Some of the challenges encountered during the project implementation, are summarized below:

- There were unusually long delays at the Guatemalan port of Santo Tomas Castillo to clear the commodities after receipt of the second Breedlove shipment. Due to bureaucratic procedures and government delays, the containers remained at the port for a significant period of time before being cleared from customs. This unfortunate situation resulted in reducing the number of distributions to three instead of four.
- 100% of the parents (specifically mothers) participated in the training on food preparation but only 67% attended the remaining training on health, hygiene and nutrition. Food distribution was a major motivator for participation in the trainings. Mothers failed to attend the trainings when there was no food distribution included.
- A teachers' strike at the beginning of the 2010 school year affected some of the planned activities. The strike was a result of the lack of resources made available by the government to public schools. During the strike, PCI continued working with the CENAs and school children parents. Eventually when the teachers returned to the schools, they were eager to participate in trainings and PCI organized special trainings geared towards teachers who massively attended these events.
- Lack of resources at the municipal level resulted in lesser contributions from the municipal governments than anticipated. However municipal governments did their best to help cover transport costs from Huehuetenango to the benefiting communities.

(D4) Provide any additional information on the overall performance of your program, including success stories, lessons learned, best practices, etc. (or provide as a separate attachment). Although individual and household examples are welcome, community- and program-level examples are most useful for reporting program successes and lessons learned to a wider audience.

Lessons learned:

- In the past, PCI Guatemala has implemented IFRP projects both in Huehuetenango and in Chiquimula. This project differs from previous projects because the commodities were distributed through local schools. The experience was extremely satisfying and worth replicating. The outreach through schools seems to be a great strategy and participation of male parents seem easier to achieve.
- The IFRP is a quick impact project which responds to a need for food in needy communities. The impact of the food distribution is hard to measure in such a short period of time.
- There is still much work and training needed at school level for the improvement of health and hygiene behaviors. PCI Guatemala believes that longer terms initiatives and constant reinforcement over time are needed in order to achieve behavior changes.

Best practices:

- PCI's experience with local and institutional coordination has been very rewarding under this project. It is a result of PCI's presence and credibility in Huehuetenango, but also the fact that local institutions recognize the need to coordinate among different actors in order to reach improved results. For this project, PCI received support from the Ministry of Education, Ministry

of Health, local governments, the Council for Food and Nutrition Security, MOSCAMED, school directors and teachers and the community at large.

- The project served as a platform to promote the services available at Casa Materna, PCI's maternal child health project in Huehuetenango, and an increased number of women and children from Santa Eulalia and Santa Barbara are now being referred to Casa Materna, which will result in improved health for the population of these communities and access to free health services when needed.

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