



SUCCESS STORY

Greenhouse program greatly improves farmer's income



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

García shows off his greenhouse tomatoes.



García tours a USAID-ADP demonstration greenhouse.

Luciano García was a subsistence farmer for much of his life. He grew small grains and some vegetables during the rainy season each year, selling whatever his family did not eat. García constantly struggled to increase his earnings. He even received training and seed donations from a local organization but his average income per harvest was only \$478. After a year of assistance from USAID's Agricultural Diversification Program (ADP), however, García has established a successful greenhouse production system that earned him an average \$5,383 in the same amount of time it would have taken him to raise corn and beans, representing a 1026 percent increase in income. His greenhouse has also extended his farm's total production time and during an 8-month period García earned over \$14,500 from tomatoes.

There was a time when García thought he could never own a greenhouse because he could not afford the building materials and irrigation equipment. But in March 2007, García met a USAID-ADP technician who offered to help. García applied for a bank loan to finance his part of the greenhouse construction and the production costs for the first planting. USAID-ADP assisted in buying the drip irrigation system and some of the construction materials.

By the beginning of August 2007, the greenhouse was complete and García started planting tomato seedlings. A month later, he was transplanting the seedlings into his 0.06 hectare greenhouse. At the same time, García continued to plant basic grains.

Managing the greenhouse became a family activity, as García, his wife and two children looked after the necessary tasks for tomato production with guidance from USAID-ADP technicians. When it came time to harvest, García hired additional help.

At the end of the first planting season, which lasted eight months, García earned \$14,574, dramatically changing his economic situation. Not only did he pay off his loan, but he now has the skills to better manage his field crops and to obtain better yields.

García says that he is teaching the techniques he is learning through USAID-ADP to other producers. Practices and techniques he is learning include use of organic products, adjusting pH levels, using yellow sticky traps to monitor pests, and pruning. He is now preparing for a new planting season and is happy that he is able to continue to provide an education for his children and a better life for him and his family.