



SUCCESS STORY

Program teaches women to establish agricultural enterprises

USAID-RED particularly supports women because they play such an important role in the agriculture sector. Including women in all levels of production and postharvest training has an enormous effect on family, food security, and income.

Juana Sarmiento is one of hundreds of women receiving support from USAID-RED. Sarmiento is from Quimistán in western Honduras. She used to plant corn and beans solely for her family's consumption, but in 2007 she attended a meeting held by USAID-RED. The program was promoting certain crops such as plantain. She saved a little money and started with the program in May 2008. She followed the program's technical advice and planted plantains on one hectare. From the beginning, she says that USAID-RED technical assistance was timely and precise.

"They taught me everything I know about soil preparation, irrigation, and other good agricultural practices. I suggest that everyone who wants to plant follow USAID-RED's recommendations." Sarmiento said.

These days Sarmiento has become a business woman. She sells her plantains to supermarkets and processors. In her first harvest she sold 57,000 pounds of plantains, earning \$10,176. She also earned \$1,580 from sales of plantain seedlings. In October 2009, she expanded her operation by one hectare of plantain.

"I have learned a lot from the assistance and trainings offered. Now I'm making money and continuing to take care of my home without any problems," Sarmiento said.

In 2009 USAID-RED, in conjunction with seven NGOs, provided assistance to more than 500 women producers. USAID-RED directly assisted 95 women, taking them on as lead clients. Participating women farmers created 200 new jobs and saw sales increases totaling more than \$800,000 because of program assistance.

The Rural Economic Diversification Program (USAID-RED) is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and made possible by the generous support of the American people. Its main objective is to increase incomes and employment opportunities in the rural communities of Honduras.



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Juana Sarmiento (right) meets with USAID-RED Agronomist Hector Gutierrez at her plantain nursery in Quimistán.



Gutierrez shows Sarmiento how to identify insects and disease.

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