



SUCCESS STORY

Rodolfo Interiano: student turned businessman

Though Rodolfo Interiano studied how to run agricultural enterprises, he had never even planted a crop on his 2.5-hectare farm. When he decided to start production he did not know where to begin.

In January 2007, Interiano joined the USAID-RED program, which started providing him with technical assistance on growing jalapeños. Program technicians analyzed the land and laid out plans for planting. They also helped him buy and install a drip irrigation system.

Interiano generated \$100,000 in sales in the first jalapeño harvest. His yields were 50 percent higher than other growers who did not receive technical assistance from USAID-RED.

Based on his success, Interiano quickly expanded. By the beginning of 2008 he had added 2.5 hectares for Nathaly peppers and 4.5 hectares for tomatoes. He obtained gross sales of \$229,000. In 2009 Interiano planted an additional 6.3 hectares of jalapeño and 5.3 hectares of tomato, representing a 364 percent increase in planting area from the original plot. His gross sales reached \$468,000 in 2009.

“I owe my success to USAID-RED. All I had to do was follow their recommendations closely,” Interiano said.

Interiano has re-invested \$107,000 back into his farm on new equipment and supplies, and since he started working with USAID-RED three years ago, Interiano has maintained an average of 70 permanent jobs on his farm, paying a total of \$300,000 in wages. Interiano also allows USAID-RED to use his farm as a demonstration farm on field days. Other program farmers can visit his farm and learn about new production techniques.

In 2009, USAID-RED assisted more than 120 producers in the region of Copán alone. These producers have increased their sales by more than \$1.1 million and created 129 permanent jobs in 2009.

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.

Workers sort Jalapeños at Rodolfo Interiano's farm.



Farmers listen to a USAID-RED technician talk about pest and disease management.

“I owe my success to USAID-RED. All I had to do was follow their recommendations closely.”
— Rodolfo Interiano, farmer