



SUCCESS STORY

YOUNGER GENERATION TEACHES ITS ELDERS ABOUT NEW TECHNIQUES

USAID-RED signed an agreement with CARITAS in June 2009 to establish mechanisms strengthening food safety under the market access component. Under this agreement, USAID-RED technicians teach production practices to CARITAS facilitators and their producers in order to increase their knowledge base, access to food products and provide a source of income.

In the community of Monte Galán, Guaimaca, Francisco Morazán, Santos Hernández (62) and his son Josué Cruz (21), have shared a learning experience. They both grow basic grains, but this year Josué's yields were much higher.

Don Santos planted 1.25 manzanas of corn in 2009 and harvested 1,400 pounds, while Josué planted 0.5 manzanas and harvested 3,000 pounds. Josué said that the difference was "I planted using the techniques I was taught; I went to a workshop offered by USAID-RED/CARITAS technicians and they showed us how to plant effectively."

"I planted just one seed per hole; we used to plant 3 or 4 in the same hole. My dad finished planting before I attended the workshops and he planted like he always had. I planted using less fertilizer. Since we used to plant more seeds we needed more fertilizer and had to plant with more space in between," said Josué.

Josué's results show that his yields increased from 1,100 pounds/manzana when using traditional production practices, to 6,000 pounds/manzana when using some of the basic practices taught by USAID-RED, representing an increase of 545%. The substantial increase guarantees that Josué will fulfill the three pillars of food security: availability, access and stability. Not only, but Josué has successfully lowered production costs by reducing the amount of fertilizer used. "I used to use more fertilizer, [but now that I don't], it lasts me longer."

Traditionally in the zone farmers help each other with crop tasks. Miguel, Josue's neighbor, is planting beans; Josué shared his experience using the new techniques to plant corn, while Miguel let himself be guided. Today, he is using the following basic practices: raised beds, planting density, improved irrigation and fertilization practices. Miguel also expects higher yields this season which he hopes will provide enough food for his family and some left over for sale. Don Santos, Josué's father, also learned from his son and this year will plant differently having seen what Josué harvested.

Tomas Barahona, a CARITAS technician has also learned a lot from this experience. He now promotes the technical practices he learned from USAID-RED to producers in other communities, further expanding the knowledge base to generate better production with lower costs and high quality products.

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



Photos by Fintrac Inc.

Josué Hernández (center) learned new planting techniques from USAID-RED/CARITAS. He shared what he learned with his father, Don Santos (right) and his neighbor (left).

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- Josué Hernández, Guaiamaca, Francisco Morazán